

# **VOLUNTEER ACTION FOR CHANGE KENYA**

## **VACK Jitolee Afrika**

*"Volunteering to Better All"*



## **ORGANIZATION PROFILE**

**2015**

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## Welcome to Volunteer Action for Change Kenya (VACK Jitolee Afrika)

Volunteering plays and has played an indispensable role in human civilization. **Volunteer Service** is all about contributing one's time or talents for helping others for various worthwhile purposes. Volunteering is a two way process of gaining firsthand knowledge, experience and lending a helping hand to society.

**Volunteering in Kenya** is a unique blend of work and cultural submergence as Kenya is a conglomerate of different culture, languages, traditions and people.

While providing **Volunteer Service in Kenya**, you have a number of options for socio-geographical expeditions integrated with social work and a journey towards inner-self. Here you can enjoy a variety of ecological variations ranging from rain forests to the great desert, or from world-famous sea coasts to Mt. Kenya. The culture is cultivating and traditions will provide room for you to learn more about the different communities.

Here you can find innovative ways to combat issues like illiteracy, malnutrition, poor health and living conditions and develop ways to confront challenges like promoting natural resource conservation to micro-business or from health campaigning to livelihood development.

Contribute your talent and time for social up-gradation and you will have a life-changing experience of revelation, spiritual and mental gratification.

With our experience and network across the nation, we provide you the projects in accordance with your requirements. Our programmes are safe, affordable and meaningful with flexible dates to start with, that are open year round.

Our team at **VACK** cooperates with local organisations to provide a strong field support. We make sure that your efforts are in right direction and reach those in need. We keep the safety and security of volunteers at topmost of our priorities; also we provide you facilities like food and accommodation.

People of all age groups, with any skill set who want to contribute to a lasting change, are invited.

More and more people join international voluntary service activities. A chance to bring concrete solidarity to local based communities, to travel fully respecting the visited countries, to meet local people in an international environment sharing with their the daily work.

## What voluntary service is about?

Voluntary Service Activities are defined by volunteers and their organisations as learning and working for the common good. Voluntary Service activities are:

- Without a profit making motive for a limited time,
- Without compulsion by the state,
- Motivated by personal engagement, on the basis of volunteer contracts in the framework of voluntary service organisations.

The fields of action include social - serving handicapped, elderly or marginalized people, cultural work, development projects, reconciliation, education, environment protection, 'grass roots' initiatives etc. Volunteers participate in the ongoing processes of political and social change. They are learning by doing in the social or non-governmental sector. Volunteers and their organisations participate in local projects which promote intercultural and social learning. The volunteers engage themselves on the basis of a personal decision concerning their own development and commitment to the volunteer philosophy. Volunteers shall not be used as 'cheap labour' but rather add value to the hosting projects.

We define a volunteer as a person who:

- Takes part in a continuous, full-time activity, following a free and informed personal decision, engages himself/herself in a personal social and/or an intercultural learning process by participating in activities proposing solutions for new needs or creating new approaches to already recognized problems, part of the process of a changing society,
- Is active in projects which promote the common good, which are non-profit making, i.e. projects fostering international understanding and reconciliation, awareness and consciousness building for peace, ecological development dealing with cultural problems and helping children and youth, the elderly, disabled, refugees, etc. Those projects may be run by private associations, churches, local authorities or communities.
- Is active on the basis of a volunteer agreement for an unpaid activity for a limited time with an acknowledged sending or receiving organisation.

## **Who We Are: Volunteer Action for Change Kenya (VACK Jitolee Afrika)**

Volunteer Action for Change Kenya (VACK Jitolee Afrika) is a voluntary service organization. Our aim is to bring people from different cultures to work together towards a common goal. In turn it is hoped this will help break down cultural stereotypes and lead to greater international understanding and peace. We do this by volunteer programme which works on offering services to community projects across Kenya where both local and international volunteers are involved.

Volunteer Action for Change Kenya (VACK Jitolee Afrika) is a non-profit and non-governmental organization that provides services using the voluntarism approach that is aimed at enhancing the development process and service delivery of community development initiatives. Our activities are geared towards the promotion of peace, understanding, justice, development, and information exchange among Kenyans and within the international community.

VACK Jitolee Afrika seeks to promote sustainable community development through:

1. **Voluntary Services:** We offer both short and Long term voluntary placement opportunities for both skilled and non-skilled volunteers within Kenya to different community groups
2. **Capacity Building:** VACK has a team of individuals with vast experience in training individuals, community groups, organizations and institutions on management skills, organizational development, leadership skills, and community development
3. **Enterprise Development:** The team is actively involved in offering trainings to individuals and community groups focusing on business development, micro-finance and enterprise development
4. **Thematic approach:** Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Sustainability; Promotion of peaceful co-existence among different communities; Women aid & empowerment; Teaching and Education development in local community schools; Community and social development activities to support community initiatives; HIV and AIDS awareness programmes; Communication and fundraising to develop community structures
5. **Youth Mobility and Exchange:** We give young people from across the world an opportunity to serve in different community projects that enable them to utilize their skills, gain

experience and contribute towards sustainable community development initiatives' thus being able to gain the confidence and recognition of policy makers as active contributors to community development.

6. **Non-formal education:** The learning activities within this initiative are created to attend to the young people's needs, aspirations and interests, on a voluntary basis and learner-centered. The methods used in NFE are very diverse and are mainly based on creating healthy environments of trust and sharing experiences. This type of education provides added value for young people, for the economy and society in terms of capacity-building of organizations, systems and institutions. This education takes place in a diverse range of environments and address specific target groups and subjects, facilitating the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

We call upon every person of good will to pull their resources and freely work together for international harmony and sustainable development in the spirit of "togetherness".

Volunteer Action for Change Kenya (VACK Jitolee Afrika) was founded in April 2013 with an aim to offer equal opportunities to the youth, women and the vulnerable members of the society a chance to be actively involved in the development process through volunteerism. Since its inception VACK has continuously given opportunities to both skilled and unskilled volunteers in community groups within Kenya.

We hope that through your skills, knowledge and support to the project, the organization will be able to deliver quality services towards the development of our service initiatives aimed at empowering community groups and members. We hope that our services will be able to mobilize human and material resources to enhance active participation of those recipients to development policies to significantly address the challenges that hinder human and environmental friendly development approaches so that we sustain our collective efforts to alleviate poverty.

**Vision:** A society in which everyone has access to opportunities that are fulfilling and engaging, which contributes to the development of community initiatives and the betterment of the society life.

VACK Jitolee Afrika seeks to promote responsible citizenship based on the principles of solidarity, to act effectively to promote change, to sustain dialogue and mutual understanding among peoples for building a more just and united society.

VACK Jitolee Afrika works on a non-profit basis and undertakes its work in a serious manner, looking for ways to carry out effective and innovative actions. VACK Jitolee Afrika recognises the central values of voluntary work in the various expressions of its activities, the spirit of voluntary service and its gratuitousness, as well as the idea of professionalism as a commitment to responsibility, competence and respect in the face of complexities inherent in the situations in which we to operate in.

**Mission:** A society in which the dignity of every person is safeguarded and promoted, in which each individual person may enjoy fundamental liberties, have access to resources and services, have the possibility to live in a healthy environment and improve the quality of life in all aspects; a global society in which every single individual and all communities have the right of self-determination consistent with the cultural rights of other peoples and every man and woman on earth. This is realized by giving a change to the youths, women and community members a chance to be actively involved in the development process in the event realizing self-development through service delivery.

This mission is being carried out through (memorandum and articles of association of the Association):

- *Planning and implementation of direct interventions of international solidarity, cooperation and humanitarian work*
- *The promotion of cooperation between countries and communities*
- *Undertaking to educate, inform and sensitize societies on the themes outlined above*
- *Researching and examining the causes of injustice and its consequences*
- *The promotion, in conjunction with relevant competent authorities and various institutions, of initiatives aimed towards removing situations of injustice and their consequences*
- *The promotion of an open and intercultural society*
- *The participation in networks or collectives whose work and aims are consistent with the objects of the Association*
- *The promotion of every other initiative that is consistent with the values outlined in the memorandum and articles of association of the Association*

**Philosophy:** VACK Jitolee Afrika seeks to promote a just society that provides solutions aimed at realizing Sustainable Community Development initiatives through active utilization of locally available resources. **"Volunteering to Better All"**

## **Strategic objective**

To recognize young people and women as a valuable resource to society development, and upholding their rights to participate in the development of policies affecting them by means of a continuous structured dialogue with young people, women and youth organisations.

## **Objectives**

1. To promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people
2. To develop and promote viable voluntary service opportunities for both local and international volunteers thus actively contributing to the development of the society
3. To develop and support a national volunteering infrastructure that ensures best practice in volunteering
4. Supporting development of experimental projects and programmes to try out new and innovative ideas and to exchange good practices
5. Enhance the mobilization of resources in realizing sustainable community development initiatives
6. To create awareness and sensitize local communities, especially women and youth concerning environment friendly development.
7. To assist community resource centres to overcome their challenges and establish viable activities
8. To promote responsible attitudes for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care by increasing the level of awareness especially among the youth
9. To assist community institutions and organizations to Promote and Deliver sustainable services in education, skills development, health, leadership training, ICT development, entrepreneurship and agriculture

The main fields of action that Voluntary Action for Change Kenya concentrates its activities are:

1. Education and training,
2. Employment and entrepreneurship,
3. Health and well-being,
4. Participation,
5. Voluntary activities,
6. Social inclusion,
7. Youth and the world,
8. Creativity and culture

### **Building a strong Volunteerism infrastructure**

Volunteer exchanges and work camps can be useful in filling the gap of experience between lack of labour experience and actual access to the labour market by enabling youth to participate, gain personal experience, competences and social awareness. At the same time, the volunteer exchange programme and work camps is still an important tool in confronting prejudices as well as strengthening youth identity in the society.

### **Volunteerism – Youth mobility**

Youth who wish to volunteer don't have the opportunity to do so. Identifying and providing youth with greater opportunities to participate, enables both the communities and the youth to benefit from social awareness, community service and youth employment. It is crucial to develop the capacity of youth to create sustainable livelihoods – as skilled and empowered youth will have greater access to information, tools for managing conflicts and access to the labour market. Volunteerism also contributes towards embarking upon the grave problem related to lack of participation, social exclusion and access to labour experience among youth. In other words, volunteerism can be seen as an initial step bridging the gap between youths who do not have proper contacts, skills and experience to enter the labour market – and engagement in building up a civil society. Perceived in this way, volunteerism is also a motivating factor that encourages youths to participate and co-operate in favour of a more inclusive and democratic society.

When suggesting volunteerism we are also proposing programmes that include strategies for training, as well as the technological and economic support needed for promoting them. The mission of volunteerism thus goes beyond promoting "free labour", as its intention is to work in favour of a new type of social management based on co-operation and exchange of successful experiences.



Work camps can facilitate a platform for intercultural co-operation and mutual learning processes between volunteers from different and shared ethnic backgrounds and nationalities. Work camps are treated as a tool for involving youth in their local communities or neighbouring communities to participate in development processes and become active citizens. Active citizenships and awareness of basic human rights, social obligations as well as varying local needs can be well promoted in this way – especially as the participants consist of a mixture of local, regional and international participants.

Another type of activity VACK Jitolee Afrika work rely upon is the placement of long-term regional and international volunteers in community projects across Kenya as help to their everyday work. So far, this has proven to be a very good formula, both for its practical and cultural value. Volunteers have an opportunity to meet societies they knew little about, but at the same time community initiatives find use of volunteers from other countries very useful, but also very inspiring experience. This type of cooperation has brought many benefits to particular projects and individuals, but also to the organization as a whole. Individuals who stay in projects for longer periods of time contribute to deeper understanding of regional problems. In the case of volunteers from outside Kenya, the cultural gap is even bigger, so the efforts of these young people are even more valuable. Volunteer Action for Change Kenya is dedicated to bringing people of all ethnic origins to work together on achieving the same goals. Volunteer exchange program has truly contributed to realization of this ambitious task.

### **Priorities**

The intention is to organize work camps with specific themes locally focusing on the development challenges faced by the local community. Involvement of local communities is crucial in incoming phases. Community driven development supported through volunteerism is expected. The emphasis is on equipping youth with work experience through giving them the chance to volunteer in organizations or participating in specific work camps. Decreasing unemployment among youth is long-term expectation.

The programme ensures – and challenge where it is lacking - the cross-ethnic and cross-border mobility for and contacts between young people in the world through priorities to volunteer exchange and focus on difficult exchanges (conflict area and marginalized groups).

VACK Jitolee Afrika also works on a medium/long-term volunteer exchange programme and training between organizations, combining the experiences with the practice of other similar initiatives in order to strengthen capacities of community projects and initiatives.

### **Our proposal to you as a future volunteer is...**

...to take part in a project that will provide:

- Full-learning experience of voluntary service for local communities, in intercultural framework.
- Leisure activities to enjoy your free time, being in contact with local community.
- Accommodation and food during the project period, a way to live in a host family as well to be independent and to share cultural traditions

### **Expectations... in action!**

We really expect your motivation to take part into the project, so come prepared to:

- Contribute with energy and action, to the daily life of the project.
- Work about 30 hours per week.
- Respect and enjoy cultural and social diversity of locals.
- Bring your own personal insurance that covers you as an individual in case of illness or accident.

### **General Information**

Volunteers who participate in a VACK Jitolee Afrika volunteer project come from a diverse range of backgrounds, nationalities and cultures and have different abilities and experience. It is this diversity that makes the projects such a unique and fun experience. The volunteers need to:

- be over 18 years of age
- be open minded and flexible
- be able to communicate in English without difficulty.
- be highly motivated if applying to work with children or on social projects
- be prepared to participate in all aspects of life on the project including the domestic chores such as shopping, cooking and cleaning
- be physically fit enough to do the heavy work involved in some projects

- be prepared to carry out the work that is expected of them in a responsible manner, with due regard for personal safety and the safety of others

### **What is a workcamp (Short Term Placements)?**

Since 1920, international workcamp represents a unique form of voluntary service: workcamps bring together people from different backgrounds to work for micro projects that benefit to local communities.

Short Term Placements offer an opportunity to individuals, students or groups who have limited time but want to be involved in a worthwhile cause in a local community in Kenya. This is aimed at giving volunteers an opportunity to contribute towards enhancing the capacity of a community structure or initiative, in the process enhancing intercultural exchange and understanding thus promotion of global peace. These projects are organized in rural community settings where volunteers interact and work together with the local people at the same time learn first hand from the local culture. The projects are designed to last between 1-4 weeks depending on its structure of the project activities are agreement with a partner in case of group placements

A group experience

Workcamps provide opportunities to explore the potential of an international group to work together, to act and to have fun. The group experience is a commitment to working out the decisions and challenges together. The work is important and not a mere occupational time: all projects answer real local needs, with strong expectations by the local communities.

Groups of volunteers

Most workcamps host between 5 and 20 volunteers during 2 to 4 weeks. The group gathers various nationalities and backgrounds. Most of the volunteers are between 18 and 28 years old with a majority of female participants.

Food and Accommodation

The group usually shares the tasks of cooking and cleaning on a rotate basis. Accommodation depends on the local possibilities within the hosting community, most of these workcamps are carried out within rural communities in Kenya.

Is it all work?

The other part of the workcamp is how the group organises its social activities: time to play, discuss, sing, write letters, learn local phrases and visit local areas! Activities are decided by the group depending on possibilities. A big input is given to develop local activities with the population.

Workcamp leaders

Workcamp leaders prepare the project, facilitate the life of the group, lead the work and create links with the local community. They are the heart of the project, and have a special attention to the individual integration of any volunteer.

*"International workcamps apart from being an intercultural and citizenship action are as well a valuable learning experience. For many young people as well it offers an avenue to gain confidence and intercultural practice, and offers space for personal inclusion."*

### **Long & Medium Term Volunteer**

Our Long & Medium Term Volunteer Placements offers an opportunity to individual to a specific projects. This program is aimed at giving volunteers an opportunity to develop and promote the development of their skills and services and in the process serving and promoting the development of community structures. This is a living way to share culture, supporting non profit world and developing local communities' traditions, promoting ideals of solidarity and citizenship. These projects offers placements from one month on depending of the time the volunteer has to offer his/her services in the project.

### **Educational tour:**

VACK Jitolee Afrika organizes special Educational Tour to areas of interests at a separate cost for a three days Maasai Mara package and also a one day Nairobi National, the extra cost caters for park entrance fee, accommodation, meals and transport. Educational Tour is optional and motivated to offer unique opportunity for our volunteers, spectacular that what tourism offers. A percentage of what is raised from this tours assist us in developing the two Community centres, to enhance them build their capacity. We arrange the educational tours to meet your schedule hence feel free to talk to us so as we can be able to arrange it for you.

### **Accommodation**

In most of the MLTV projects volunteers will be accommodated in host families while other projects will accommodate volunteers at the project site. The volunteers will stay in a host family which they share with the local family. You will be provided with a room with a bed and beddings, there will be a small bathroom with a toilet. The volunteers will receive a prepared breakfast and dinner in the host family and you can share in meals preparation. In all these scenarios volunteers will be able to have a room with beddings. Volunteers participating in the Short Term Placements are

accommodated in community centres hence they are expected to have a sleeping mat and a sleeping bag.

### **Range of projects**

Our service delivery is focused on the following key areas within community structures in Kenya:

- Community Development
- Environmental Sustainability
- Microenterprise/Microfinance
- Women's aid and Empowerment
- Children, Youth and Education

We believe that is the above areas are critically addressed within our communities; they will be able to realize service delivery hence sustainable development.

VACK Jitolee Afrika is involved in a range of projects that brings a range of satisfaction to the volunteers placed in them. All our projects call for dedication and flexibility from the volunteers to be able to achieve the desired results at the end of every placement. This list offers the most common project lines where volunteers have been placed and the kind of work they usually do while in the projects. We look forward in expanding our activities so as we are able to reach the massive demand for service delivery within community initiatives.

#### 1. Community Development Project Activities

- building schools, orphanages, hospitals, community centers
- educating and helping locals expand upon community sanitation
- craft making
- supporting women's groups
- promoting HIV/AIDS education
- organizing children's programs
- working on community clean-ups
- fundraising

- promotion of community health, disease prevention and personal hygiene
- expanding community goals and planning future projects

- teaching English
- organizing extracurricular activities such as talent shows, singing, dancing, sports art

## 2. Orphanage/children centre

- help tutor children
- help kids stay clean – personal hygiene
- organize games, drawing, singing, other creative education
- help in cleaning, cooking, garden work

- help kids with homework, monitor academic progress
- administration work

## 3. Health project

The assigned duties vary with education, skills, experience and qualification of an individual volunteer

- Measure BP, temperature, height, weight
- Assist doctors and medical staff with health centre tasks
- Help in health camps
- Distribute medicines

- Provide tips to patients on health, nutrition and sanitation and counseling patients
- Treatment for minor injuries or wounds
- Keeping patient records

## 4. HIV/AIDS Projects

The assigned duties vary with education, skills, experience and qualification of an individual volunteer

- Help in counseling
- Feeding (if available)
- Visiting patients and their families
- Participating in public awareness

- Provide tips to patients on health, nutrition and sanitation
- Keeping patient records

#### 5. Cultural & Conservation Project

- Teaching about specific skills
- Engaging yourself into the local culture to understand its history and customs
- Working with locals to preserve and document their traditions
- Planning extracurricular activities
- Teaching locals about your own culture
- Supporting women's groups
- Teaching basic business skills
- Strengthening local marketing strategies
- Creating community pride and inspiration

Pictorial representation of some of our past activities







In all our activities we work together with the local communities ensuring that they get the valuable skills that will eventually enhance the development of community initiatives thus service delivery. We work by example being able to encourage community members to actively take up community activities voluntarily.