

ProjectsAbroad™

KARIBU SANA



The Official Newsletter of Projects Abroad Tanzania

March 2013



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In this issue:

- Care/Teaching
- New Film Project
- Medical
- Sports
- Building
- Microfinance
- Alumni

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Care/Teaching/Building: Valentin & Jenny (Belgium)

Valentin Leyssen (55) and Jenny Driesen (54) arrived in Arusha, Tanzania in early January. Both work as psychiatric nurses at a hospital in Belgium but decided to take two months of unpaid leave to volunteer with Projects Abroad.

"I was in South Africa as a tourist late 2011 and wanted to go back to Africa, only this time not as a tourist but being able to get to know the culture of Tanzania. I wanted to contribute to the project and give the children a better future and really add something worthwhile to a local community," says Valentin.

Valentin enjoys working with his hands so he spent one month at a Building Project for a local primary school and one month doing light maintenance work for an orphanage. Jenny spent both months as a care volunteer at the orphanage.

"I've always loved working with my hands. I rebuilt my son's apartment", explains Valentin. "We both work in psychiatry and we wanted to do something completely different." During the Building Project, Valentin assisted the local workers with constructing a toilet facility for the students. He describes the work as being very intense yet fulfilling.

"Everything is all manual. We don't have the luxury of electricity or power tools, but it's rewarding to know that I helped build these toilets and that the children will be able to use this facility for a long time."

Jenny and Valentin took advantage of local safaris, volunteer social events and other tourism activities, but found life at their new home equally valuable.

"We learned a lot from the children at the host family. We ate with them and they explained things to us about the culture. The youngest one couldn't walk when we first got here and now he's walking. It's great to see something like that."

Valentin recommends that other working professionals take advantage of volunteering. "Everyone who has a chance should take a trip like this. You will be much richer than when you arrived just by experiencing everything. These children are so happy if you do something for them. We in the West have too much and it doesn't mean anything...the money that it cost me to come here is not that important because I can see how it is coming back to me."

Tanzania Adds New Film Project



FILM PRODUCTION: New partnership with local film school

If you are studying media, journalism or a related subject, and have a passion for film production then we have the perfect project for you in Tanzania. Enthusiastic and motivated volunteers with some experience are needed to help lead film production workshops, participate in training sessions, and expose local young people to the opportunities involved in film production in Africa. This is a unique opportunity for you to work closely with young people from challenging backgrounds in Arusha.

Volunteers work with a local youth organisation, founded in 2007, which is dedicated to training local Tanzanians who come from underprivileged backgrounds. The organisation is keen to receive volunteers from all over the world so that they can generate new ideas and learn from other filmmakers on the creative and technical aspects of film production.

Whether you have just graduated, are on a summer holiday or gap year, or are taking a career break you can share your knowledge and learn about film production abroad.

Kilimanjaro Film Institute

The youth training institute, where volunteers work, focuses on empowering and training young people in all aspects of filmmaking, including editing, sound, design for audio-visual products, creative storytelling, film and television production and television journalism. As a volunteer, you will assist in all of these areas, helping the students to produce their own films and TV channels concerning different topics that have inspired them.

Every year approximately 45 students, aged from about 18 – 25 years old, are selected to take part in a three-year training course. Volunteers play a fundamental role when it comes to interacting with and helping to train these young people. Volunteers and local staff teach the students technical skills and knowledge about film, as well as social skills, life skills and creative skills.

Incorporating creativity, presentation skills and general life skills into the curriculum allows the students to reflect on their own situation and culture making them better equipped to embrace the opportunities they have in front of them. Volunteers are also encouraged to spend time with small groups of students and exchange ideas, skills and cultural differences with both the local staff and students.

Experience and a very keen interest in film production are essential when it comes to getting involved in this project. Volunteers accepted on this project are required to have completed at least one year of studies in film production, media or a closely related topic. This is a fun and worthwhile placement. Bring energy, creativity and an open mind; you will learn vast amounts and your help will be greatly appreciated!



MEDICAL: Outreach and Education

Medical Volunteers in Arusha returned to Kilimanjaro Film Institute to present a second First Aid Workshop to a new group of students. This time around, the workshop was led by 23-year-old, Remy van der Heiden (Netherlands), a medical student in his final year at Erasmus University.

Remy is a certified First Aid Instructor in his home country so his experience was insightful to both the young students and his fellow volunteers. Remy presented hands-on instruction and techniques for CPR as well as treating severe injuries resulting in blood loss and broken bones. The KFI students were eager to assist the volunteers and practice the techniques on one another.

The volunteers also traveled to a new outreach site in February. Mikono Hospital is located in the Terati District just outside of Arusha town. The group took basic vital stats as well as dispersed medicine to those who were in need.

The Medical Outreach is funded by Projects Abroad and offers pre-medical and professional volunteers the chance to observe and provide medical counseling to hundreds of people who otherwise would not have access or be able to afford medical care. Each month Projects Abroad Tanzania gives out a generous supply of prescription and non-prescription drugs.

BUILDING

Maasai Primary School is a teaching project sponsored by Projects Abroad. We partnered with the school approximately 2 years ago and have been sending a steady stream of volunteers to teach the small population of children ranging in age from 2-10. The school currently has one teacher for about 35 students so the presence of volunteers is much needed.

The school is located inside a local church building with basic furniture such as desks and blackboards. Projects Abroad provides financial support to cover expenses for the local teacher, lunch meals and the driver who brings the volunteers to the school five days week.

The condition of the church was in decline so the Tanzania Team decided to pay for renovations to the school which was in need of plastering to the walls in addition to a building a better kitchen facility for cooking meals.

SPORTS

The Tanzania Team is very excited to bring two new Sports placements to the destination this month. USA River Primary School and Fikiria Kwanza Academy are both located in USA River. Both schools are Kiswahili language institutions funded by the government.

“More and more volunteers are interested in coming to Tanzania to teach sports and more organizations are finding out about Projects Abroad and asking for volunteers, so we needed to expand the project,” says Regan, the Coordinator for the Building & Sports Projects.

In December, Tanzania added a Sports placement to Dar Es Salaam for the first time. The responsibilities for sport volunteers typically include teaching football to the boys and netball to the girls as well as conditioning exercises and introducing students to new activities.



MICROFINANCE: More loans dispersed to local women

In the month of February, the microfinance team at Projects Abroad has begun to move into Phase Two of the project. Three groups have been paying loan installments every week, and now have finished paying for over half of their loans. This has enabled Projects Abroad to give loans to other women in the groups, outside of the initial five. Four additional women in Riverside have been approved for loans of 100,000 shillings each, therefore nine members of the group have been funded.

In addition to focusing on loan collections this week, Projects Abroad has deepened its work with three other women's groups – Tupendane, Ikusura Patandi, and Mshikamano – which have not yet received loans. All of these groups have now completed group and individual interviews as well as the first session of business training, including marketing strategies and bookkeeping. Tupendane has completed the entire process; receiving both sessions of training (business planning and feasibility study in addition to the previously mentioned training) and have completed their loan applications. They will not be funded until more money is available to provide loans. The other groups have been put on hold in their training for the same reason – otherwise, we have accumulated several loan applications and women who are eager to receive loans, but no money to give.

Volunteers have been working to improve training for the women. Business trainings can easily become dry and boring, so we have been trying to develop more engaging ways to teach the women. The new ideas for the bookkeeping trainings are still being developed. A worksheet has been created to enable the women to write their own bookkeeping table, and the instructor of the training is therefore able to engage the women by asking them to respond to questions about how they would record their income and expenses in each of the tables. These worksheets help the women stay focused and gain a better understanding of the training. Volunteers are also trying to find new pictures and examples to use throughout the other trainings, and the execution of the training itself is starting to turn more into a conversation-discussion rather than a lecture. Trainings are also now available in both English and Swahili translations.

“I worked in a microfinance project in Tanzania, Arusha. Microcredit is intended for poorer people to create their own initiatives, their own businesses, and create a life for themselves. Every day, I went to a women's group to collect their loans and visit their own businesses. Sometimes I gave them business training to improve their business. Working in a foreign country is very tough, because they have quite a different culture from us. However, when I can understand their culture and cooperate with them, I feel really happy :) I love and respect my colleagues there, my host family, and everyone I met in Tanzania ! Thank you very much,” says Kyoko Nakano (Japan).

STAFF CORNER: New Coordinators



Janusz Drag

Volunteer Manager in Dar Es Salaam. Former Two-Week-Special Coordinator in Nepal. Loves to travel. Great with people. Love making friends around the world. Originally from Poland. Have lived in Scotland for seven years. Speaks Russian and Ukrainian and also bird language. Studied at University of Survival. Loves cinema and ice cream but doesn't like Coca-Cola. Hates the rain loves the sun. Sun gives him energy he needs to survive



Ciaran Finn

Care and teaching Coordinator in Arusha. From Dublin, Ireland. Loves helping people and has a passion for human rights. Former Projects Abroad volunteer! Love movies, football, punctuality and music. Hates the cold and when I drop my phone. My pass times include football and I am apparently very fond of sleep walking. I once won a silver medal in a wellington boot throwing competition.

ALUMNI CORNER

We have many volunteers who enjoy their experience so much that they later return to the destination to start new projects or return to old ones. The Alumni Corner is a place to recognize the ongoing contribution of former volunteers.

Mia Andersen (Denmark) – Jamaica/Bolivia/Tanzania Water Project 2013

"My time in Endulen was an amazing experience. I have great respect for the people who live there and despite significant challenges with lack of clean water; they are doing their best every day to earn a living. I'm very glad that I participated in the water project with BirdgIT Water Foundation and Projects Abroad. Everyone in Endulen was very friendly and expressed their gratitude to us for being there. Working with the other volunteers, both older and younger, was also a good experience, and we were like a family. It was very meaningful for me to help the population in Endulen, and I will gladly come back."

We invite all volunteers to participate in part-time paid work as an Alumni Representative after leaving our destination. Alumni Representatives attend promotional events and fairs in their home country and share their experience living and volunteering with Projects Abroad. If you are interested in becoming an Alumni Representative, email alumni@projects-abroad.co.uk.

Supporting Your Project

We often get requests from previous volunteers who would like to financially support their former project. If you would like to make a general donation to support our international work or if you want to donate to your previous placement please visit the Reconstruction Project website and earmark your donation for a specific charitable purpose. It will always reach your intended target!

<http://www.justgiving.com/reconstructionproject> . You may also send a cheque to The Reconstruction Project, c/o Projects Abroad, Aldsworth Parade, Goring, Sussex, Great Britain, BN124TX.