



## VOLUNTEER AND VISITOR Q&AS

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### GENERAL QUESTIONS

**How can I volunteer with One Home Many Hopes?** Our organization depends on volunteers and we have a number of ways for you to get involved. Most importantly, we need people to actively engage with our local chapters. Please [contact your local chapter lead](#) to learn more about specific opportunities. We are also in the process of building a home, a fish farm, a school, and a school curriculum for Mudzini Kwetu. If you can lend your expertise in any of these areas, please speak with your local chapter lead to learn more about the specific needs we have at the moment and who to contact. Lastly, OHMH organizes two annual trips to visit the girls in Mtwapa, Kenya. [Click here](#) if you are interested in applying to join one of our trips.

**Does One Home Many Hopes accept in-kind donations like clothes and books?** OHMH works closely with the Mudzini Kwetu staff on the ground to keep a list of items that are needed. School-related items, such as pencils, notebooks and books, are always appreciated. Clothes are also useful but we ask that any donated items are in good condition so that our limited storage space does not become a recycling/dumping center instead. Additionally, the Kenyan postal system is unreliable so all items need to be taken by hand with our visitors' trips so please exercise judgment in deciding the quantity and choice of items to donate. Please contact our volunteer coordinator [Lydia Bradley](#) if you have items that can be donated and we will arrange for them to be taken with the next visitors' trip.

**Where is Mudzini Kwetu?** Mudzini Kwetu is in the village of Kikambala, Kenya. The nearest town is Mtwapa, located 10 miles (16km) northeast of Mombasa and about 440km east of Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. Depending on traffic, it takes approximately 30 minutes to get to Mtwapa along the Mombasa-Malindi Road (B8) and a further 30 minutes to get to Mudzini Kwetu.

### VISITOR TRIP QUESTIONS

**Why do I have to apply to join a visitors' trip?** OHMH receives many requests every year from people who want to meet the girls and see the good work being done on the ground. Unfortunately, resources at Mudzini Kwetu and OHMH cannot stretch to accommodate all of the requests we receive to visit the home. Our application process exists not just to conserve resources but also for the protection of the girls. Visitors will be entering the home and lives of girls who have experienced enough abandonment already, so we ask that our visitors view this trip as the start of their involvement with One Home Many Hopes, not the peak. We are in the healing business, not the orphan tourism business, so visitors are expected to commit to at least one year of monthly financial support and service in their local OHMH chapter.

**How long are the visitor trips?** Each of the two annual trips is 10 days, including traveling to and from Kenya. The length of the trip allows visitors to acclimate to the home and spend quality

time with the girls to get to know them, their names, and their personalities. OHMH is unable to accommodate requests for longer or shorter trips, nor for trips conducted outside of the set dates in April and December.

**How much does a visitor trip cost?** The cost per visitor is \$3000 and covers the cost of a round-trip flight, transport to and from the airport in Mombasa, full room and board, and administrative costs such as a background check.

**Will I feel safe at Mudzini Kwetu?** Yes. Mudzini Kwetu's three-acre campus is surrounded by a tall cement wall completely enclosing the home, keeping everyone safe. Within those walls, Mudzini Kwetu is home to friendly (in daytime) watch dogs patrolling the grounds during the evening hours. The surrounding villagers view Mudzini Kwetu as an integral part of the Kikambala community and we have worked very hard to build this relationship. It is important that we maintain this healthy relationship, so you are asked to be respectful and courteous to our neighbors at all times.

**How will we travel to/from Mudzini Kwetu?** The closest airport to Mudzini Kwetu is in Mombasa. Our visitors generally connect in Nairobi to Mombasa, roughly an hour-long flight.

**What do I need to bring?** A comprehensive packing list will be sent to volunteer visitors after they are selected. Generally speaking, you'll need to pack lightweight clothing since the coast region it is hot in both April and December. Other essentials to bring include a mosquito net capable of hanging over a double bed, a towel, hand sanitizer, bug repellent (at least 20% DEET), 30 SPF or higher sunscreen and other personal toiletries/medications. Very generous guests will plan to leave their mosquito net and towels behind for future volunteers to use. Keep in mind that you will need to collect your luggage when connecting through Nairobi and re-check them in the domestic terminal across the street for your flight to Mombasa, so it is best to pack lightly to make the transfer easier and quicker.

**What are the lodging facilities like?** All volunteer visitors are required to stay at the basic but comfortable MKC compound during their stay. Lodging is dormitory style, typically two or three people to a room with an en suite bathroom and small kitchen area that is shared with other volunteers. The bathrooms are equipped with a sink, shower and flushing latrine-style toilet. Most rooms have either ceiling or standing fans. There is no hot water (but the weather will make you love cold showers anyway).

**What do I need to know about vaccinations and health facilities in Mtwapa?** Speak to your physician about your vaccination history. We recommend that you have your Hepatitis A and B shots, typhoid vaccination, and keep your routine vaccinations up to date (e.g. tetanus, yellow fever). As some of these vaccinations are given in a series over time, we ask that you check with your doctor or travel health clinic as soon as possible to get your shots and anti-malarial drugs. Some of the anti-malarials are started a week before traveling, so please plan accordingly.

Mudzini Kwetu is fortunate to have a very close relationship with Mtwapa's doctor, Dr. AA Said. He is respected internationally and is a good friend to the home, providing comprehensive health services to the girls and to our visitors when needed. There is also a reliable 24-hour clinic nearby that is run by a German NGO.

**Do I need health insurance or medical coverage to join a trip?** Yes. All visitors must provide proof of health insurance or medical coverage that is valid for the duration of the trip. Visitors

who need travel insurance can look into affordable, short-term travel insurance with companies like Travel Insurance Services (<http://www.travelinsure.com>). The cost of such programs can range from \$3-\$20 per day while traveling. Many colleges and universities offer discounts to their alumni for travel and short-term medical insurance. Please check with your alma mater's alumni department.

**What kinds of activities will I be involved with while volunteering at Mudzini Kwetu?** Because Mudzini Kwetu is a home for so many girls, you can imagine things get quite hectic at times. The needs of the home and the children cannot always be anticipated. It is our hope that each volunteer enter into the experience with an openness to meet any need presented to them. Though some construction/home improvement projects might be planned during your time there, most likely you will spend your time interacting with the children and giving them the attention they so desire from our volunteers, their friends. A planned story time, music lesson, or games in the yard mean more to the children than a painted fence. We trust that our volunteers see the value in building a relationship with the girls and resist defining their volunteer time by how much "work" they do while there.

**What will I eat while at Mudzini Kwetu?** Three times a day, you'll enjoy some of the best traditional Kenyan food. Our housemothers graciously prepare meals for volunteers. Breakfasts typically include hot ginger tea, coffee, and something to eat like pancakes and jam or fried dough balls. Traditional Kenyan dinners often include a maize meal dish called '*ugali*', seasoned beef/chicken, rice, spinach, chapati bread, and beans. And if you're fast enough, you can beat the girls to the mouth-watering mangos and passion fruit that fall from the trees during the day! Please let us know if you have any special dietary needs and although resources are limited, we will do our best to accommodate them.

**How much money should I have exchanged into shillings?** Although lodging and meals are provided at Mudzini Kwetu, OHMH suggests that you exchange some money for incidental expenses while in Kenya. How much you decide to exchange is up to you, but please consider some of the costs that will incur at Mudzini Kwetu during your time there. For example, it is appropriate for volunteers to help pay for gasoline during treks into Mtwapa or Mombasa.

**Can I drink the water at Mudzini Kwetu?** Yes! The kitchen at Mudzini Kwetu is set up with a "So-Safe" filter, one of the best filtration and purification systems. As Anthony will tell you, "It's cleaner than well water!" Volunteers from the US and UK drink the treated water without issue but please be advised, the water straight out of the bathroom taps and showers is not potable.

**Will there be time to see some of Mombasa's tourist attractions?** The focus of our visitor trips is for volunteers to get acquainted the girls, so the trips are planned to maximize time spent with them. There will likely be an afternoon with the girls spent at the beach, about 2km or a 30-minute walk away. There may be time for a day in Mombasa to go to the market or Fort Jesus, but we ask that visitors plan on spending the 10 days with the girls. If you'd like to stay longer to enjoy a holiday in Kenya, you are welcome to make your own transportation and accommodation arrangements to get to know the country better.

**Do I need a visa to travel to Kenya?** All US and UK citizens need visas to travel. We strongly encourage our visitors to arrange for a visa ahead of time. However, visas can be purchased upon arrival in Nairobi. It is much more efficient and easier if you pay in exact change. Visas for US citizens are \$25 and it is best if you can pay with US dollars in exact change. Visas for UK

citizens are £20 and can be paid in British pounds sterling. For visitors from other countries, please check with your embassy for Kenya visa information.

**What is the cancellation policy?** On occasion OHMH visitors may find it necessary to cancel from their intended visit. OHMH understands these unforeseen circumstances and our cancellation policy is as follows: More than 21 days before departure – full refund (\$3000-any cancellation fee imposed by the airline if tickets purchased). 14-20 days before departure – 1/3 of the fee is refunded (\$1000). Less than 14 days before departure – \$500 is refunded.

**What happens after the trip?** These trips are designed to equip you for service with OHMH, not the peak of that service. As such, visitors selected for the trips are expected to become monthly financial supporters (at least \$30 per month), to create a fundraising page and participate in the Breaking Ground campaign in the fall following their visit, and to actively engage with their local OHMH chapter for at least a year (e.g. join the leadership or a committee team, speak at OHMH events about your experience, recruit additional supporters, speak at your local church, school, or community organization). As someone with the valuable experience of having been and seen, you are uniquely equipped to inspire others in your region who have not or cannot go about the impact of OHMH's mission.