

Volunteer report

My name is Inka Fleischer, I am 25 years old and I study German and English to become a teacher. I was in Africa as a volunteer from January until April of 2008. Now, I help SKI by administrating their homepage. Here is my report on my time in Tanzania:



It has always been my personal wish to help in third world country. I have a good life and I wanted to share this. As a college student, I am not able to donate any money; this is the reason why I decided to donate my time. Looking back, I am convinced that I received at least as much as I could give.

Already during the interview, Daniel briefs all of his volunteers concerning the country and its culture, but you cannot really be prepared for all of the new impressions, which you will have, you just have to see and discover it yourself! It is hard to describe the expectations, fears and emotions which accompany you on your way to and in Africa. This trip is not like a vacation in a hotel at a touristy area...

It is best not to have any expectations so that you can be open for all the new, strange, and unknown with an interest and excitement.

You should get rid of your fears, which you naturally have when undertaking such an adventure. It is best to change them into a healthy skepticism as fast as possible. Fears block you, but a particular carefulness helps and saves you, especially in a poor and corrupt country like Tanzania.

Every volunteer, to whom I have talked, describes a chaos of emotions in the beginning of their stay. It takes some time until you get used to the African way of life and until you have made yourself comfortable. But this is no surprise. When I try to describe Africa, the way I have experienced it, I always call it "the land of contrary and extremes" ...

There is this huge poverty of the people, who are still happy and smiling; or the corruption on the one hand and the great hospitality on the other hand; all the dirt and garbage everywhere in the streets of the city and at the same time the wonderful landscape, nature and world of animals; on the one side the believe in ghosts, spirits and witches and on the other side the deep hope and believe that everything will be alright. Furthermore, the unbelievable lack of education contrasting the knowledge and know-how to built things (out of nothing) that you need to simplify the daily life.

As contrasting and extreme the country is, are the emotions and feelings, that volunteers have in the beginning of their stay; on the one hand strange and on the other hand wonderful... I have never been thinking, enjoying, being amazed, wondering and admiring this much before.

In the beginning of my time in Africa I was overwhelmed by new impressions. This is why it was even more important to me to care good for myself, so that I would feel comfortable ? in my new environment as soon as possible. At the same time, I wanted to give myself some time to get used to and adopt the unknown culture and

the daily life. Only if I feel good, I can care well for the children and this is the reason why I went there.

There is no duty for volunteers because the children are very self-sufficient (concerning the house duties...) which is good and the goal of SKI.

This is why I took it as my duty to teach the kids as much English as possible, to help them with their homework for school and to brighten up their lives by playing with them, having fun with them and give them a lot of warmth.

All the children became very close to me. I am excited to find out what these little, strong personalities will do later in their life. It is for sure that they have the best changes through SKI. They know and appreciate this. We can only learn from their thankfulness and believe...!

In the beginning the Tanzanian culture was strange, but in a special kind of way it became more and more familiar to me. But still, there is always something new to learn and discover.

I had a great time in Africa and I don't want to miss one day of my time there.

Asante sana!