



Volunteer Handbook

HELLO!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Umoja Tanzania! We hope your experience will be exciting, inspiring, and memorable. We see volunteering as a two-way street – while you contribute to Umoja, we strive to offer you a fulfilling and enriching experience. We look forward to learning from each other. Please come with an open mind, flexibility, and readiness for an exciting challenge!

This Volunteer Handbook is designed to give you basic information before you arrive and when you get to Tanzania. The information provided is advice collected from the knowledge and experience of previous volunteers and Umoja's management. We cannot be responsible for changes in prices, fares, schedules, availability and other changes. We can advise but you are responsible for your own planning, packing, travel, wellbeing, health and welfare. Please have a read through this document and reach out to us if you have any further questions.

COMMITMENT

For most volunteers / interns we ask for a commitment of 3 months. This is to ensure continuity and consistency in our work and for you to get the most out of your experience while having a valuable contribution. For some skilled positions, we can accept volunteers for a shorter time period. Beyond three months, you will need to go through a rigorous process with the Ministry of Labour, which will need to be started at least three months prior. Long term visas are very difficult to obtain, therefore we suggest three months. You can apply for all visas online (details in visa section).

COST

We ask you to raise a donation of at least \$500 USD for Umoja before you depart. By sharing your exciting plans with Umoja while still at home, you are in a unique position to help. You might even exceed the \$500 goal, which would be fantastic, as Umoja faces funding challenges, and this support is invaluable for helping vulnerable Tanzanian youth. Many volunteers have successfully raised funds by setting up a JustGiving page linked to our [JustGiving Umoja](#) page and sharing their

intent to volunteer. There are many ways to fundraise – if you need any assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

PACKING

Here are some suggestions of what to bring:

- First Aid Kit
- Mosquito Repellent
- Torch
- Camera / phone (you can get a local sim card)
- Laptop
- Books / E-reader
- Cool clothes for hot days and a jacket/cardigan/jumper for chilly nights and early mornings
- Swimming things, sunscreen
- Travel adaptors (Plugs are the 3 prong English type)
- Decent walking shoes / trainers – covered, walking sandals.
- Back up batteries for charging phones
- Notebook, pens
- Set of sheets for bed (check which size) and towels to leave behind
- Pillow / duvet / blankets – not essential, but useful if you can fit them in and leave behind
- Kitchen items you can bring and leave behind are always helpful – cutlery, tin opener, grater, mugs, pan set, plates etc.

Many home comforts are available (chocolate, cheese, milo), but others are not and imported goods can be fairly expensive, so if there are things you cannot live without, bring them from home! (By the way, the Umoja staff are also impartial to some treats during our team meetings if you choose to bring something for us!!!)

If you have space in your luggage – then please email us (caroline@umojatanzania.org) to see what we currently need at Umoja. We always need clothes, shoes, white board markers, pens, small back packs (school bags), footballs and laptops (if you have a spare to donate or can gather donations).

Officials in the airport have been known to ask for 'taxes' for donations volunteers are bringing in. Our advice is to not carry too many of the same thing (i.e. 50 school bags), but to bring variety as 'gifts' rather than 'donations'.

Also, you may be asked to run a club or assist with extra tuition – so let us know your other skills and talents. You may like to bring some resources from home. The students will love to do more music, art, sport or just practise speaking English!

Check the weather for when you are travelling – in the rainy seasons – you will need a lot more wet weather gear for example!

NOTE: From June 1st 2019, Tanzania banned plastic bags, which is fantastic news. However, this also affects travellers coming in to Tanzania as plastic bags are not permitted in luggage, so please make sure your luggage is plastic bag free as you enter, or you may be held up at customs. In addition, you may wish to bring reusable shopping bags with you for souvenirs and bags for your

washing. The small clear plastic bags that you use for toiletries for security reasons are permitted as they will remain with you.

GETTING TO ARUSHA

We recommend that you fly directly into Kilimanjaro International Airport (JRO), which is about 1.5 hour's drive from Arusha. We can arrange a trusted taxi to meet you at the airport and transfer you to your accommodation for a fee of \$60 USD. KLM and Qatar are two airlines who fly into Kilimanjaro.

ACCOMMODATION

We can offer basic accommodation at Umoja. The volunteer accommodation is a ten-minute walk from the main site where you will be working. It is secure, walled site with 24-hour security guard / caretaker. There is a one – bed roomed house, with living room, small kitchen and living room. This has an additional bedroom but with outside access only. There are other accommodation blocks with single or dormitory style rooms. These rooms have outside shower blocks and compost toilets outside. There is a communal outside kitchen area with gas cooker, fridge-freezer and sitting area.



Depending on your taste, requirements, length of time and budget, there are a variety of other options available in Arusha. These range from shared housing, apartments, small lodges, hotels and

hostels. We can try to assist at the time, but you would be largely responsible for arranging your accommodation outside of the Umoja Centre.

Please note – you are responsible for your own transport and safety outside of Umoja including your travel to the centre if not living on site.

WATER

Water directly from the tap (inside or out) at Umoja or anywhere in Tanzania is not safe to drink, however all staff, students and most volunteers drink the filtered water provided at Umoja. We cannot guarantee the safety so if you are worried you can buy bottled water that is available all over Arusha. If you do decide to buy bottled water, please consider buying the largest bottles, rather than lots of small ones so that you can save on plastic pollution. If you are here for a while, you may consider buying the large refillable bottles, available at most supermarkets.

Most volunteers however follow these rules:

- Drink the filtered water that is available at Umoja.
- Use straight from the tap for washing and brushing teeth.
- Use straight from the tap for cooking.

The water in Arusha is also high in naturally occurring fluoride which causes fluorosis (brown stained teeth being the obvious sign) if drunk for a long time when young. It is not advised to drink the tap water (filtered or not) if you are pregnant or under the age of 4 (while bones and teeth are developing).

MEDICAL

It is Umoja's policy that you have full medical insurance before arriving in Tanzania. You will need to share these details with Umoja management upon arrival.

See your GP and/or a specialist travel doctor for advice a few months before coming and get the appropriate vaccinations, tablets, and a first aid kit.

Yellow Fever vaccination (and a certificate) is a requirement for travellers who are arriving from, or have transited through [countries with risk](#) of yellow fever transmission.

There are adequate medical facilities in Arusha to deal with all common ailments including malaria. More serious problems will require evacuation to Kenya or beyond. We recommend the following hospitals:

NSK Hospital (day only) – Dr Yassar
ALMC Hospital (24 hrs) (also known as Selian)

INSURANCE

Take advice and get appropriate cover for travel and property insurance.

VISAS

VISA are applied online by the applicants through the website of Tanzania Immigration, you can follow this link <https://visa.immigration.go.tz/>. You can apply for an Online Visa to visit the United Republic of Tanzania (both Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar). You are required to fill in the online form, make payment, and submit your application online. Your form will be internally reviewed and processed.

Applicants will be notified through their e-mails whether their applications have been accepted or rejected. They may also TRACK their application statuses through the online system. Applicants may as well be required to visit the nearest Tanzanian Embassies or Consular Offices for interviews

You can also read the visa guidelines here <https://visa.immigration.go.tz/guidelines>.

TRAVELLING AROUND ARUSHA

The Umoja Centre grounds, local area and volunteer accommodation are uneven, with some steps. Have walking shoes / trainers with you – the roads are rough and dusty (or muddy!) Only the main roads are tarmacked. In the rainy seasons, you may want wellies / gum boots!

The *daladala* (public minibus) costs around TZS 600 per trip, depending on your destination, however it is often uncomfortably crowded and rather a bumpy ride! There can be pickpockets on the dala - so be careful with your possessions and try to avoid being the only passenger. Never use the *daladala* at night.

At night only use Taxis, even if you are going a short journey. All fares are negotiable. You must use trusted taxi's and not take taxis from the street. The following are the drivers that we recommend, (but you will still need to negotiate the price):

Burhani	0754756700
George	0753510498

For longer trips – airport, Nairobi etc - Ibrahim 0759897172 – who has a larger people carrier.

Self-drive car hire is available in Arusha, which you would need to organise yourself upon arrival.

You may be offered a ride by a motorcyclist – the *pikipiki* or *bodaboda* drivers. This is a very cheap way to get around but is not permitted by Umoja as it is not safe. The traffic in Arusha can be chaotic, and there is absolutely no guarantee about the driver's ability. Helmets are often not provided and collisions are common. There are many reports about dangerous drivers and theft (or worse, serious crime like rape).

OUT AND ABOUT IN ARUSHA

The touts on the street are generally harmless. You will have to develop your own method of politely brushing them off. They are only trying to make an honest shilling and eventually they get to recognise you and go in search of fresh targets. Say “*Hapana Asante*” (no thank you) and keep on walking!

As a *Mzungu (foreigner)*, you will get attention when out and about. Most people will be polite and respectful to you and say hello to you in the street. Greetings are important in Tanzania, so learning a few phrases will go a long way! Some people might ask you for more information than you're comfortable giving, such as your mobile number, or where you're staying in Arusha. Do not give this information - you will need to find a way of brushing people off politely that works for you.

MONEY

We suggest a minimum budget of \$500 USD per month if you are living off-site, for housing alone, to be able to afford secure accommodation.

If you are living on-site at Umoja, then we ask that you raise a minimum of \$500 USD prior to arriving at Umoja. You will also need to cover costs for electricity, filtered water, TV subscription and gas and any staff required for washing of clothes or cooking (other than lunch).

We recommend that you bring some cash (USD) and VISA Cards. You must take care using credit cards, there have been incidences of credit card fraud even at the major airports. We recommend that you do not bring Travellers Cheques as they are not accepted widely and can be difficult to change.

There are many ATMs in Arusha where you can withdraw the local currency Tanzanian Shilling (TZS). If possible, let your bank know that you will be using your card abroad. The largest note is 10,000 TZS. The most can withdraw from the ATM in one transaction 400,000 TZS (but you can do multiple withdrawals.) Most major hotels and operators accept both USD and TZS. You can also change USD into TZS in the banks in Arusha or currency exchange bureaus.

NOTE: USD bank notes dated 2001 and before are not accepted in Tanzania. Please ensure you carry newer notes.

FOOD SUPPLIES

Breakfast of *uji* ("porridge" made from flour and water) is provided at around 10am Monday-Friday to students and staff. Lunch is also provided at 12:15pm, and usually consists of *ugali* (maize meal) with beans and vegetables, or *makande* (maize and beans).

There are various supermarkets in Arusha, including the large Shoppers Supermarket. If you are staying in Njiro or nearby, we suggest Village Supermarket and Allmart in Nanenane. Vegies are available everywhere on the streets and in local shops. You also can brave the central market in town - which is an experience and an adventure!

If staying onsite, you will be responsible for your own breakfast and dinner and all meals at weekends and holidays.

ELECTRICITY

Tanzania has historically been dependant on hydro-electric generation. Climate change has made the rainfall unreliable and reduced the capacity available. The result of an expanding population and a shortage of capital to build new generating stations is that energy rationing is a fact of life. In addition to regular power cuts for rationing, power will also be cut without notice to allow maintenance work to be carried out.

We have a generator at Umoja so there will be electricity during power cuts, but it is expensive to run, so will not be on at all times. The generator is not powerful enough for you to use the kettle, toaster, shower or other high-power items. It is fine for computers, lights, fridge etc.

Even when the power is on the voltage will fluctuate more than would be normal in the west. Electronic equipment is best protected by a voltage stabiliser; these are fitted in the office and computer classroom.

Laptop batteries give some protection to the laptop itself but the charger is potentially at risk from surges or low voltage dips.

INTERNET

Umoja has access to the Internet and (slow) Wi-Fi is available if you bring a laptop or tablet. Please be careful with downloading and ask for advice. Please DO NOT download films etc. There are many Internet cafes in town for about 2,000 TZS per hour – but be warned – many viruses come from these places! Plugging USB sticks that have been used in external computers (except those from home that are safe) into Umoja computers is prohibited.

If you want extensive personal internet access, for example for extensive downloading, you will have to investigate this yourself on arrival, to find out latest rates. Local mobile internet services are available, we recommend Airtel or Vodacom. SMILE, TCCL, Vodacom, Airtel and HALOTEL are recommended internet service providers if you wish to have your own internet access, they will provide you with the modem.

PHONES

Bring an unlocked phone and purchase a local SIM card for around 2,000 TZS – pay-as-you-go is the best bet, with Airtel or Vodacom being widely available. Top up vouchers are widely available including from the little shops around Umoja or your accommodation. Everyone is required to register their new mobile number so take a copy of your passport along with you when you purchase your SIM card.

3° SOUTH

You may be 3° south of the Equator, but it does get cool, or perhaps even “cold” (but not by the standards of a European winter) at certain times of the year particularly in the mornings and evenings; so bring at least one long sleeved warm top and a light jacket.

The hours of daylight are consistent through the year - 12 hours of day and 12 hours of night. The transition from night to day and from day to night happens quickly over about 30mins. We often get beautiful sunsets.

As you would expect, it will rain in the rainy seasons! Unsealed roads get muddy. But in the rest of the year – dust dust dust! You ought to bring hiking boots or decent trainers.

If you plan to climb any mountains (e.g. Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Meru) you will need to take advice on what to bring and what to hire locally.

ENTERTAINMENT

- Many of the large hotels have swimming pools which you can use for a day fee (approx 10,000 TZS)
- There are two cinemas in Arusha, (Aim Mall and Njiro Complex)
- Tanzania Mailing List, Arusha News and the Facebook group All About Arusha can let you know of upcoming events
- Monthly farmers markets (Njiro Complex, ISM, organic market)
- Lake Duluti (walking / canoeing)
- Snake Park
- Arusha National Park (day trip)
- Shanga at Arusha Coffee Lodge
- Shopping – Maasai Market (local souvenirs), Aim Mall, Sable Square (shops and restaurants), Njiro Complex, central market (fresh produce) and the town centre for a variety of shops.
- Visit a waterfall – ask local staff

There are many cafes and restaurants in Arusha including, Blue Heron, George’s Tavern, Andrews, Fif’s, Africafe, Bravo Pizza and many more local eateries and bars. At Njiro Complex there are many restaurants serving the main courtyard.

If you are interested in going on safari, climbing a mountain (Meru or Kilimanjaro) or visiting Zanzibar, please email: info@taswiraafricasafaris.com. Taswira Africa Safaris financially support Umoja with a donation given for each booking. They are safe, trusted and will provide you with a fantastic experience! See more here: www.taswiraafricasafaris.com

VOLUNTEER CONTRACT, RULES AND POLICIES

You will be required to sign a Volunteer Contract, Volunteer Policy and read and adhere to our staff policies, including Staff Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy. These are not onerous and are largely common sense.

DRESS CODE

You need to be culturally sensitive when it comes to clothing. What you are used to wearing at home may not be suitable in Tanzania. During the week when you are working at the centre, modest, clean and conservative dress is required.

- Shoulders should be covered (no tank tops / vests)
- No tight clothing (i.e. leggings - unless worn with a skirt / dress)
- No low-cut tops
- No tops that expose the midriff / stomach area
- No short Skirts / Shorts

Please remember that Tanzania is a conservative country in many ways and dressing in an appropriate and modest way will grant you greater respect and cause you less unwanted attention.

SECURITY

Tanzania, like most developing countries has certain security risks, largely due to poverty. Arusha is a fast-growing city, with problems relating to urbanisation, underdevelopment and unemployment. We advise you to exercise caution at all times.

- Do not carry your passports, cards, large amounts of cash etc.
- Do not walk down side streets.
- At night, do not get a *daladala* and do not walk ANYWHERE - even a couple of blocks – get a taxi!
- Be aware of pick-pockets
- When possible, keep your valuables under your clothes in a travellers pouch or in secure pockets, rather than in your bag.

You may wish to check your government's travel advice for up-to-date news regarding security. For example UK visitors can look at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/tanzania>, Australians can find useful and up to date information here: <http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/Tanzania>

The main streets of Arusha are reasonably safe during the day – but be alert as bag snatchers and pickpockets are not uncommon. Backstreets and lanes are to be avoided at all times. When possible, travel with at least one other person.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We politely request that you do not take photos of people / houses / communities without asking for permission.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON ARRIVAL

During your first few days at Umoja we suggest you just get to know us, get to know the staff and students, sit in on some classes, understand more about our programmes. You will meet with management early on to go through the contract and volunteer policy. We suggest that one of our team take you into town on the local bus, show you the shops and help you get a SIM card.

If you have any concerns or worries during your time with Umoja, please do raise them with either Hilda Lema (Director) or Chuki Issa (Social Worker) or Caroline Goody (CEO/Founder). We are here to help you get the most from your experience!

For further information prior to your arrival into Tanzania, please email Caroline Goody: caroline@umojatanzania.org or Hilda Lema: hilda@umojatanzania.org

KARIBU!

YOU ARE WELCOME!