

# VOLUNTEER TRAILS



VOLUNTEERING  
OPPORTUNITIES  
IN 2023

*Volunteer Trails*  
The Gambia



## ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

# VOLUNTEER TRAILS



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With the heritage of making a change in The Gambia for the past 12 years, Volunteer Trails is the creation of a new vision that will improve the quality of lives of Gambians in a sustainable and self-sufficient way.

We are the voice for responsible volunteering and eco-, rural- and community-based travel in The Gambia.

Everyone involved in our projects is fairly paid and encouraged. Hand in hand with communities, we create job opportunities as we don't believe that (just) giving is beneficial to the people and their future. Our mission is to minimize or completely remove dependency on instant cash donations. Instead, we believe there must be an exchange of services and/or products for earnings.

Education, exchange, sharing, accepting and making an impact is our mission. And we invite like-minded people to join us.





## ABOUT ORGANISATION

# OUR STORY

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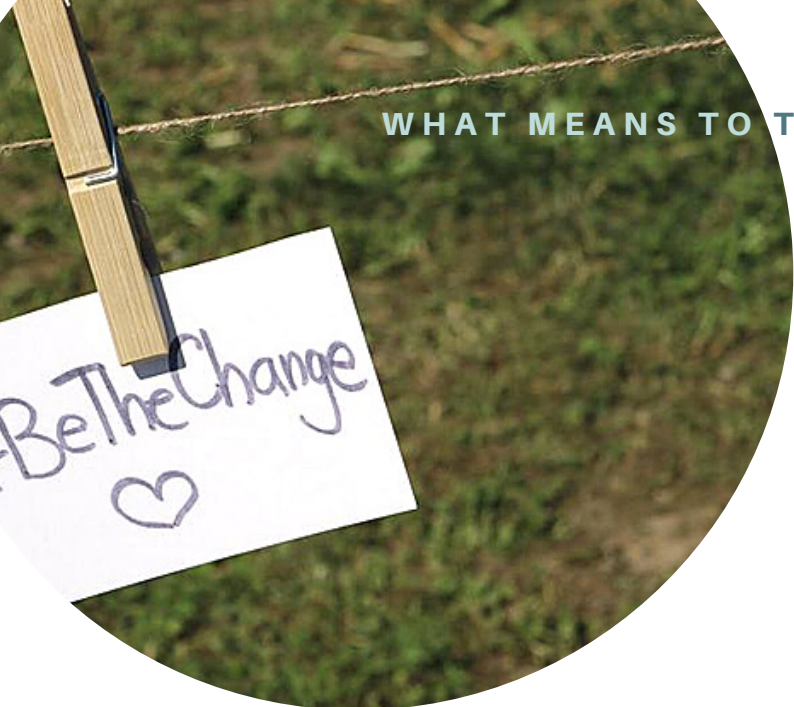
It all began with the wish to help. In 2011, we first became volunteers with one of the humanitarian organisations. Nevertheless, it was The Gambia which inspired us. Local people shared the same idea of the future. We saw we could do more and better if we worked together. In August 2012, we finally became a humanitarian organisation. Our first act was finding sponsors for the most deprived children. Later on, more and more volunteers started to join us on our mission. In 2014, we organised our first summer camp with a group of volunteers. In 2016, we bought land with the donated money. In 2017, we started our biggest project until now – building an educational and career centre. In 2019, we enrolled the first 68 children in Kids are the World Nursery School and started providing free education. Today, sponsorship is enabling free schooling to more than 550 children in The Gambia.

Volunteer Trails engages international volunteers in various fields of work in The Gambia as we believe the exchange of knowledge brings a higher level of understanding and acceptance.

We engage in projects that support further development and reduce dependence. We promote responsible travel as it brings benefits for both sides.

We are different because we enable sponsors to have a personal connection with the children whom they sponsor. We are different because of the unique environment that we work in – still undeveloped yet pure. We are different because we live and work with local people in The Gambia. We are different because we are searching for our solutions based on knowing the needs of local people and knowing the place we work in.

## WHAT MEANS TO TRAVEL WITH A PURPOSE?

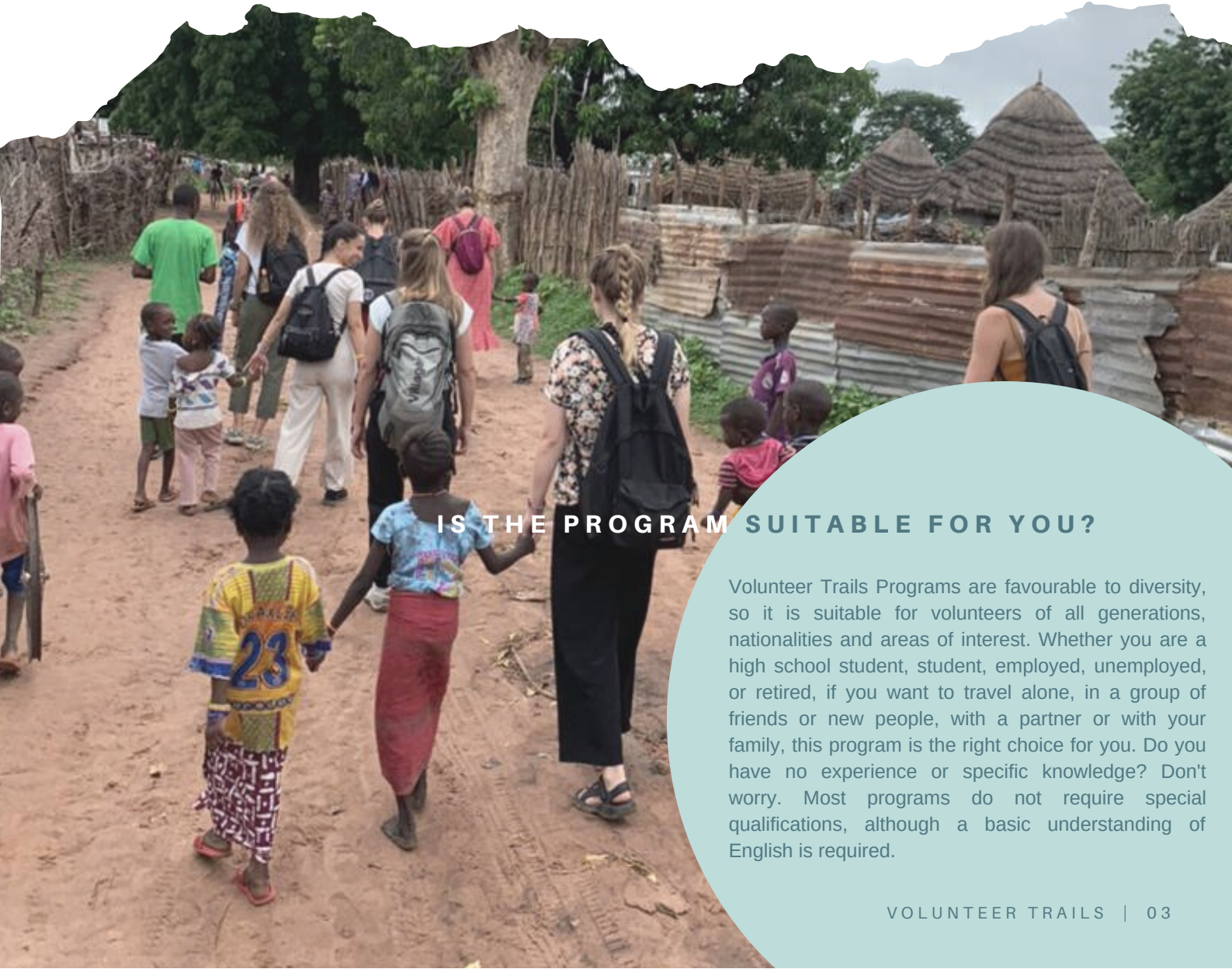


Travelling with a purpose is a different way of travelling. It is a combination of volunteering or study and responsible tourism. It is an exchange of knowledge, broadening of horizons and a marvellous experience.

The program offers you the opportunity to get to know a new culture up close and being involved in the local environment. It allows you to gain a lot of new knowledge, to be reminded about forgotten values and to get the feeling that you are part of a movement that aims at changing people's lives for the better.

## WHY "VOLUNTEER TRAILS"?

"Travel and help" is not a new trend in tourism, but a different way of combining travelling and volunteering, which combines valuable work and entertainment. You are not expected to dedicate all your time to volunteering. Due to the situations in the world, this way of travelling is becoming more and more popular, as it rewards us with the feeling that we have done something good. This feeling is invigorating and opens our eyes to the fact that many people in the world live in poor environments and that a single kind word or action has the power to change the lives of the people you meet.



## IS THE PROGRAM SUITABLE FOR YOU?

Volunteer Trails Programs are favourable to diversity, so it is suitable for volunteers of all generations, nationalities and areas of interest. Whether you are a high school student, student, employed, unemployed, or retired, if you want to travel alone, in a group of friends or new people, with a partner or with your family, this program is the right choice for you. Do you have no experience or specific knowledge? Don't worry. Most programs do not require special qualifications, although a basic understanding of English is required.



# WHAT WILL YOU GAIN BY VOLUNTEERING IN THE GAMBIA?

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Travelling with a purpose benefits both sides. Be sure, by the end of this journey, you might even feel you got more than you gave back.

You will be:

- Learning about, adapting to, getting to know a new country and a new culture.
- Visit towns and villages where tourist agencies do not reach.
- Living and socializing with locals, making new friendships.
- Trying local food, experience local habits.
- Saving money by travelling without the help of travel agency providers.
- Gaining independence in a foreign country.
- Providing help to yourself and others.
- Exchanging intercultural knowledge.
- Gaining a higher level of social awareness and responsibility.
- Gaining international volunteering and study experience.
- Improving English skills and learning basic phrases in some of the local languages.





# VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMS 2023

Our charity organization is hosting volunteer group expeditions throughout the year. The volunteering program should last at least two weeks, but the longer you stay, the better and more efficient your impact will be. If you want to join only for a day, you are also welcome to do so. When travelling solo, it is up to you how long you want to stay.

The programs are designed so that you can join us almost any time throughout the year, except during Ramadan and summer camp, which remain a regular feature and are appropriate for anyone who likes working in a group.

High school and university students can perform a study visit in pedagogy, photography, media production, journalism, informatics, environment and animal conservation, laboratory, physiotherapy, dental medicine, psychology, veterinary and hospital work.

Even if not a student anymore, you are welcome to join any of above-mentioned fields of work. This year, we are also starting with the volunteering in remote villages, which offer even more authentic experience.



## NURSERY SCHOOL ASSISTANT

This program is intended for anyone who likes working with younger children and passing on their knowledge. As teachers' assistant you will focus on children who face challenges with studying.



## SUMMER CAMP

This program is intended for anyone who likes working with children and wants to work in a lively atmosphere, that doesn't lack ideas for educational, yet fun activities.

Activities you will carry out with the help of school teacher are reading hours, sports and outdoor games, playing on instruments, singing, learning about letters, numbers and basics of the English language with kids aged from 4 to 8 years.



## INDIVIDUAL TEACHING AID

This program is intended for anyone who can provide teaching aid to kids of different levels, especially with Maths and English. You will work one on one.

# EDUCATION

@Brufut

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**PHOTOGRAPHY  
VIDEOGRAPHY**

This program is intended for anyone who knows basic photography and/or videography and loves a flexible work schedule.

@various locations



**JOURNALISM**

This program is intended for passionate writers and journalists who enjoy portraying their experiences through wording.

**GREEN TURTLES  
PRESERVATION**

This is a time-limited program which takes place in Gunjur, from June to the middle of December. You are helping with taking care of green turtle eggs, hatchlings and releasing it to the ocean.



**ENVIRONMENTAL  
PRESERVATION  
ACTIVITIES**

This program is suitable for the environment lovers. You can get involved in different environmental activities such as tree planting, listing the animals in the forest, raising awareness in the local community about the importance of the environment, beach cleaning actions and many more.



@Gunjur

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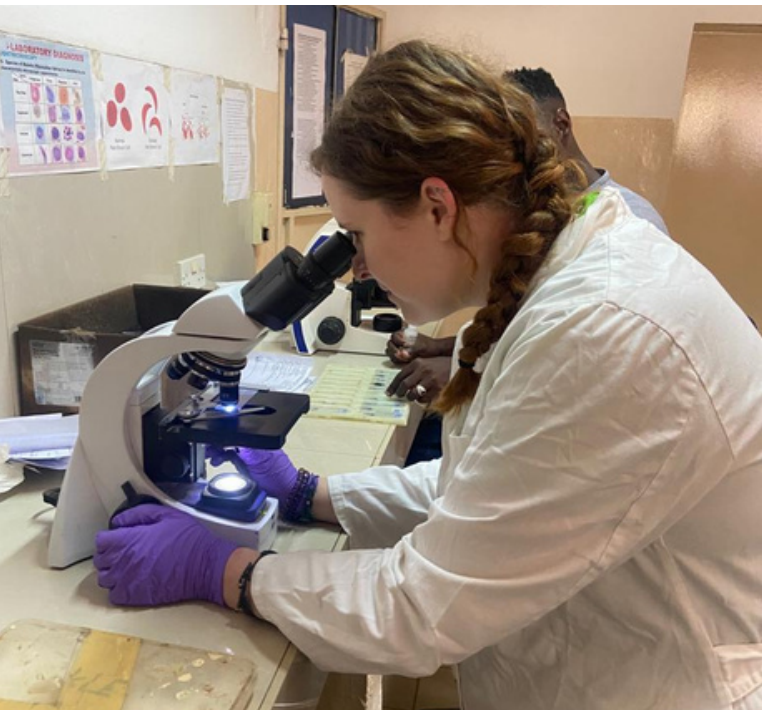




## HOSPITAL

This program is intended for medicine and health care students (doctors, nurses), who wish to acquire additional knowledge in a new environment, and for all practicing doctors and nurses who would like to work in a hospital, where lack of trained staff is one of the biggest issues standing in the way of quality patient care.

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## LABORATORY

This program is intended for students of biochemistry and lab biomedicine, who would like to improve their knowledge in Western Africa and help in the busiest hospital in Serekunda.



## PHYSIOTHERAPY

This program is intended for students and professionals in the field of physiotherapy. You will assist in physio clinic - if possible also provide therapy in remote areas where are otherwise not available.

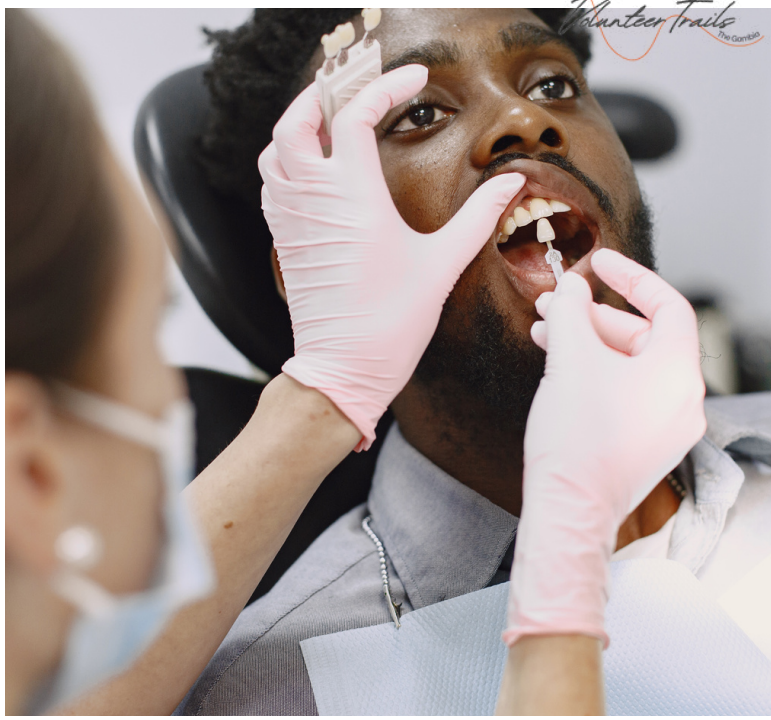
# MEDICINE

@Kanifing

# M E D I C I N E

## DENTAL MEDICINE

Join a lovely team at the private clinic and get extra experience in working in the unknown environment.



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## PSYCHOLOGY

Working as a therapist or consultant in the psychiatric hospital will make a great contribution towards acceptance of the mental struggles and recognition of it as a medical problem.



## VETERINARY MEDICINE

Work as assistant or vet at a private clinic and sensitize about the importance of care for our furry friends.



@Serekunda area



# WHEN TO COME

The Gambia is a destination you can visit practically all year round. Less pleasant weather conditions for travel are the summer months due to the heat, high humidity in the air and occasional rain, but this time also has unique charms. During the rainy season, various fruits ripen, and the whole country suddenly turns green. The place is less crowded, and many things are more affordable. From October to the end of May, temperatures are more enjoyable, and the percentage of humidity in the air is lower.

We carry out our activities all year round except in the time of the holy month of Ramadan (22.3.2023 to 20.4.2023).

If you don't want to travel alone, you can join a group. Summer camps are our tradition.



# GROUP EXPEDITIONS 2023

## **SUMMER CAMPS 2023**

- from 24.6. to 15.7.2021 - PRESUMMER CAMP
- from 15.7. to 5.8.2021 - SUMMER CAMP 1
- from 5.8. to 26.8.2021 - SUMMER CAMP 2
- from 26.8. to 16.9.2021 - SUMMER CAMP 3
- from 16.9. to 7.10.2021 - SEPTEMBER CAMP

## **PLANNED GROUP EXPEDITIONS 2023**

- from 21.1. to 11.2.2023 (or longer) - WINTER CAMP
- from 22.4. to 13.5.2023 (or longer) - SPRING CAMP
- from 21.10. to 11.11.2023 (or longer) - AUTUMN CAMP

FOR VACANCIES, SEND AN EMAIL TO  
[INFO@VOLUNTEERTRAILS.COM](mailto:INFO@VOLUNTEERTRAILS.COM)



# CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

**Volunteer Trails is a programme, which is encouraging everybody with a passion for making a positive change to join. As a volunteer taking part in our organisation, you will be asked to sign a volunteer work agreement upon applying and to go through some basic online educational volunteer trainings. Each field of work has its own set of requirements.**

**TO APPLY FOR VOLUNTEERING, YOU MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:**

- coming of age or accompanying an adult;
- basic knowledge of English;
- collecting minimum of 250,00 € of donations for the implementation of volunteer work programs, current projects of organisation or donations for affiliated institutions where volunteer work programs are implemented;
- paying confirmation fee of 150,00 € to secure your space;
- participation in volunteer training activities before arrival;
- meeting conditions applying to individual fields of work;
- complying with the rules of the organisation;
- covering your own travel, accommodation, transport and food expenses;
- willingness to work for long-term change;
- passion for work in the selected programme field.

# WHERE TO START?

The most common questions we get from volunteers are how to prepare for volunteer work and how does the volunteer work in The Gambia look like, when you can volunteer, how long it takes, why you have to cover your own travel expenses, what can you do in your free time, which vaccinations are mandatory, do you need a visa and health insurance, etc.

Travel as a volunteer programme is not an all-inclusive travel agency package. It is a volunteer programme in partnership with a Gambian humanitarian organisation and local providers. Therefore, you mostly need to prepare for your trip yourself. Our volunteers and coordinators are always available for additional help and guidance. For all of your questions, we are always available at [info@volunteertrails.com](mailto:info@volunteertrails.com).

So, where to start?



*application*



*preparing for a journey*

*unforgettable voyage*



# APPLICATION

After you have decided, which field of work is favouring you and determined preferred dates for your voyage, checked all conditions and got the feeling, this is the experience you have been waiting for, it is time to send us your application.

To get to know you better, we have prepared some questions to see if your intention for volunteering is close to ours. When we approve your application, we will send you further information on needed documentation and conditions for your field of work, together with a volunteer work agreement. You will receive an invitation to the FB group of volunteers and get a chance for a consultation meeting with one of our coordinators. We will provide you with a volunteer manual, where you will find much helpful information to prepare for your journey.

This is a perfect time to start with fundraising. Next on the schedule is online training together with the rest of the volunteers to prepare better for your new role in the yet unknown environment.





There are many things to take into consideration when it comes to preparing for a journey like this. Apart from gaining new knowledge about your next destination, you also have to plan your travel to the point when you reach The Gambia. From there on, our coordinators will guide you until you are courageous enough to explore a piece of the Smiling Coast by yourself.

**We take care of:**

- Online preparatory activities and educational training
- Documentation (acceptance letter, certificates, confirmation letters)
- Mandatory volunteer uniform (two shirts which you will get upon arrival)
- Counselling and help in arranging travel
- Transport from and to Gambian airport
- Accommodation reservation with regular cleaning, security, electricity, water
- Coordination and guidance in The Gambia
- Introductory walk around the area
- Option of daily lunch (combination of European and Gambian cuisine, adapted to European habits)
- Assistance in organising leisure activities and field trips by local partners and members of the organisation
- Possibility to involve in current local activities (ceremonies, wrestling, Sunday mass, holiday celebration...)
- Possibility of arranging transport in The Gambia
- Certificate of completed work

**You have to take care of:**

- Obtaining passport
- Plane ticket
- Recommended yellow fever vaccination and additional recommended vaccinations
- Transport to and from the airport in your country
- Travel and Health Insurance
- Recommended anti-malarial drugs
- Meals in The Gambia
- Fundraising target
- Travel documentation
- Following safety and health measurements determined by departure and transit countries, airport and flight provider.

# PREPARATION FOR A JOURNEY

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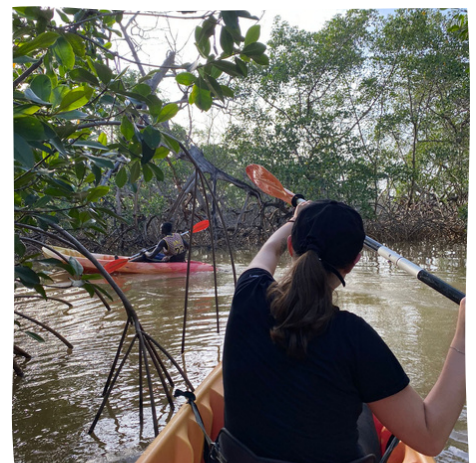


# UNFORGETTABLE VOYAGE

It is finally time to begin your trip. Members of our team will be waiting for you at the airport no matter what time your flight arrives. Since the journey would be long and tiring, we will give you enough time to rest and start a new day refreshed and ready for new challenges. One of the coordinators will show you around (exchange office, local and international shop, SIM card arrangement, closest beach and more) and give you some basic information on organising transport, lunch, leisure activities and trips. You would settle your accommodation costs and let us know your decisions regarding lunch, transportation and other activities.

You will be accompanied for the first day of volunteer work. The working hours of most of the volunteer programs are in the morning, from Monday to Friday, which means afternoons and weekends are free for you to decide whether you want to attend any suggested activities or excursions or just plan your free time yourself.

There are many things to do and see in The Gambia; braiding your hair, visiting a local market, taking drumming or dancing classes, kayaking, swimming, fishing, going to church, and visiting the craft market being just a few of them. Weekends are perfect for exploring the country. With our selection of responsible trips and tours, you will discover the southern, northern or inner parts of The Gambia. And could even travel to Senegal.



# WHAT ABOUT THE COSTS?

How much you will pay depends on the county of your origin. To get a basic understanding of the expenses in The Gambia, these are estimated costs:

- Volunteer pass: 150 €.
- Additional T-shirts: 10 € per T-shirt.
- Accommodation is approximately 20 € per day, depending on the type of room and location of the stay.
- Transport to work and back is approximately 200 GMD per day, depending on the number of volunteers in the group and place of work.
- Organized lunch (not mandatory) is 250 GMD per day.
- Breakfast and dinner: depending on the selection of the meal; for a simple local meal (bread with butter), you would pay 12 GMD; for dinner in a local restaurant, you would pay 150 GMD on average; for dinner in an international restaurant you would pay 800 GMD in average.
- Airport transfer in the Gambia is 20 to 30 € in one direction.
- Leisure activities (not mandatory): costs vary from 1000 GMD to 4.000 GMD, depending on the activity (visiting the local market, visiting the tailor, drumming on the beach, cooking classes, dancing classes...).
- Trips and tours (not mandatory): for one day trip approximate cost is 100 €, depending on the trip and the number of passengers. A three-day trip usually costs about 350 €, depending on the number of passengers.
- SIM card and mobile data: depending on the provider, for 1GB of mobile data, you would pay approximately 270 GMD.
- Make sure to put some money aside for souvenirs, braids, and locally tailored dresses.
- Each volunteer is encouraged to raise at least 250 € of funds which will be handed over to the NGO in charge of the selected program for the execution of their active charity projects.

Apart from the cost of passport making, return plane ticket, recommended vaccinations, abroad insurance, anti-malarial drugs, risk of cancellation insurance, and transport to the airport of departure, you have to cover the expenses of volunteer pass, accommodation, transport and food in The Gambia.





*Share. Accept. Impact.*

*Volunteer Trails*  
The Gambia

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