

The Bethany Project

Volunteer Handbook

In 1989 Paul Morley and Dave Shore (visiting evangelists and founding members) visited Mwanza, Tanzania and saw the poverty of the people and children. They believed God was calling for a practical demonstration of His love. The following year (1990) Paul and Dave visited once more, and this time undertook what seemed an impossible task - the building of a Children's Home. Later in 1991 twelve 'strange white men' arrived in Yitwimila village on the shores of Lake Victoria and started digging the foundations. They were helped by the local villagers who had also made the land available. Since then, many short term volunteers have been over to help out with some aspect of the work.

Each has come back with a story to tell - the one thing about visiting Bethany is that it is 'unforgettable'. From those very early days to today much has been accomplished and many tears have been shed. As well as short term volunteers some have stayed for up to two years and a community - family feel has grown under girded by a Christian understanding of sharing, caring, loving relationships between our Tanzanian co-workers and our visiting volunteers.

**Bethany's aim is to help the most underprivileged,
deprived and vulnerable members of society,
especially orphaned children,
providing education where possible.
It will carry out this work with love,
commitment and compassion.**

When new children are accepted at Bethany, everyone warmly welcomes them but we remind them that all those who join us must work hard and behave well. This applies to everyone from the oversight team, the Tanzanian management team, the staff, and all the children.

When we say '**Hard Work**' we mean we must work to the best of our ability, consistently, not only with school work but with all the chores around Bethany such as cleaning, cooking, washing etc.

When we say '**Good Behaviour**' we base this on New Testament revelation of God's love for us and our response by loving Him and one another. Therefore, any behaviour that does not show love, care and concern for all others is unacceptable. This of course includes truthfulness, honesty, openness, transparency and integrity.

The UK Team

Trustees: Graham Pountain, David Borland, Heather Jeffrey, Isabel Jones and Paul Pountain

UK Team: Rebecca Pountain, Jemma Holdsworth, Karen Ross, David Shaw, Joan McIvor, Peter Rawlinson, Kim Rawlinson, Sarah Heck and Rebecca Fryer

Child Protection Policy

The Bethany project exists to care for the most vulnerable members of Tanzanian society especially orphaned children and as such endeavours to provide a safe environment for the children in its care. The following guidelines are therefore necessary in order to protect the children from being at risk of abuse.

- All children should be treated equally according to their needs and provided with a basic level of care to include clothing, food, accommodation and where possible appropriate education.
- All children's workers in Tanzania should be aware of the discipline policy at Bethany which does not include beating as a punishment.
- Workers should not encourage or permit children of any age into their own personal living space on site/offsite at any time unless as an organised outing.
- Children's personal space and privacy must be respected; individual children should not be left alone with a carer out of view of other members of the family.

- Where children are seeking specific advice counselling should be undertaken according to gender e.g. Lady speaking with a girl. This should take place within view of the rest of the family e.g. under the Kibanda (outdoor shelter).
- Where a carer has a serious issue to discuss with a child at least two adults should be present, and notes made of the content of the meeting.
- If an allegation is made against another child or adult, then the procedure for reporting allegations should be followed.
- Visiting people to site should not be allowed in the children's dormitories unless accompanied by a senior Tanzanian Team member and should abide by the guidelines outlined above as well as the other policies in force on site.
- Video and photographs should not be taken of the children without prior permission of the senior leadership team.

Procedure for dealing with allegations.

- If an allegation is made against another child or adult this information should be passed to the named Bethany Tanzanian child protection officer.
- The Bethany Tanzanian child protection officer will speak independently with both the child and adult involved (ensuring leading questions are not asked) and will inform the named Bethany UK child protection officer of the situation.
- A course of action will then be agreed. If necessary, the matter will be referred to the trustees.
- If either of the child protection officers are involved in the allegation, then the matter should be referred to their deputies.

Teams from the UK visiting Bethany

All members of the UK team should hold a current DBS check.

- "Visitors should ensure that they do not place themselves in a situation which could lead to allegations of inappropriate behaviour".

- Members of working parties from the UK should not be working with /leading groups of children unless under the supervision of a childcare worker or teacher.
- Visitors given a specific role (e.g one to one teaching) with the children should have a current DBS check, a copy of which should have been given to the Bethany UK child protection officer.
- Visiting Groups should adhere to their own child protection policy particularly in respect of persons under the age of 18

Gifts Policy

Everyone who has contact with Bethany is requested not to offer gifts - inducements - rewards - (benefits in kind) to any persons, children, staff, workers, volunteers etc. (The reason for this is that gifts offered to individuals show favouritism and may in certain circumstances be considered a bribe or expecting special treatment or as a reward for such gift etc.). Such gifts may be seen as setting an unfortunate precedent.

However, we are happy to receive gifts of money, goods or labour, which will further the aims and objectives of Bethany which can be used for the benefit of the whole Bethany community. Such gifts should be handed or offered to the management team members. The gift will then be receipted for by the Tanz. team with a copy passed to the UK team who have overall responsibility with regards to finance etc. The gift will then be acknowledged and made available for the work in Tanzania.

Applicable to children, staff, workers and volunteers etc.

It is a fundamental principle of the Bethany community that no one should ask for anything from any visitors, guests, supporters, suppliers or government officials. Anyone asking for a gift should be reported to the Management team immediately. If an unsolicited gift is proffered, then it must be politely refused and likewise reported to the Management team immediately. Accepting such gifts will be judged as a case for instant dismissal.

N.B. Any person proffering gifts should be reminded that Bethany requests people not to offer gifts and for this reason they would not be able to accept. Secondly the person/child has agreed not to accept any gifts, and this should also have been explained to those offering such gifts.

Exceptions - Where the gift is deemed appropriate for use by the Bethany community the donor will receive confirmation. Both the Tanzanian management team and the UK team will be made aware of this situation and signify their acceptance.

Sometimes, People from outside of Bethany (visitors, government officials, children's relatives) and from inside Bethany (care-workers, teachers, children etc) will ask for help (usually financial). You must decline such requests and advise that they speak to the co-ordinator or head teacher who will consider if their request is in line with the Bethany vision. If individual visitors were allowed to make undisclosed gifts for whatever purpose (often towards education/health) then this would undermine Bethany policies of fairness and equity.

Visitors to Bethany are asked not to take photographs or video without permission. This rule forms part of our child protection policy.

Please remember that we are happy for supporters to use any photographs or video to promote Bethany (*i.e. those downloaded from the website*) but would object to our photographs or video being used elsewhere without our permission and without acknowledgement.

The Bethany Site

New Buildings

The school is constantly being maintained and expanded. The Primary school is now finished, with a brand new Chapel, which serves as a daily assembly room at the start of the school day, and as an extra classroom as well as a place of worship on Sundays. Also, the children's dormitories are constantly being maintained, improved and refurbished.

Education

In January 2010 we began to educate our children at Bethany on site instead of in the local primary school as the level of education offered in government educational institutions within Tanzania is extremely poor.

At present our schooling is overseen by the headmistress Mrs Emmakulata together with her team of teaching staff. The oversight of the orphanage at Bethany is managed by Miss Jescca Paulo who manages the site with the help of senior care-workers. Both have been educated in England

The role of volunteers in education at Bethany is changing now from developing listening, reading, writing and speaking skills in English outside of the classroom to a more formal approach as part of a team within a school environment. This is to ensure we integrate volunteers into the education at Bethany appropriately and effectively so that we can deliver the highest level of consistency in the children's education. We feel this is important to continue to develop the speaking of the English language, as all business and higher education (secondary education upwards) in Tanzania is conducted in English.

Volunteers must be prepared to work to a current timetable involving daily teaching and observation where they will become an active part of the ongoing education programme on site at Bethany. Outside the school day there is opportunity for taking a particular class on a particular subject and/or teaching on a one to one basis having identified children who are finding English difficult.

Volunteers who enjoy activities such as music and sport will also have the opportunity to develop the children's skills in these areas during weekend periods. Volunteers who have a skill in one of these areas or who simply enjoy such activities are actively encouraged to plan for activities in these areas for their trip to Bethany so that they can undertake these with the children on site in Tanzania. For volunteers who may particularly enjoy sport or music there are also additional opportunities to support the children in writing replies to the letters they receive during weekend periods too.

All planning and preparation-necessary to help you teach effectively at Bethany must be completed before you leave the UK as this maximises the impact you will be able to have on the children's learning and development. Prior planning and preparation also ensure that you will be able to collect and pack all the resources you will need to deliver quality learning opportunities whilst in Tanzania. The availability of resources is very limited in Tanzania and therefore, we aim to make best use of those we have at Bethany. Resources such as pens and books are all very precious and it is recommended that you use these with careful consideration. Any other resources must be taken to Tanzania to support your teaching whilst on site at Bethany.

A Bethany Volunteer

Daily routine:

7.00am Breakfast

7.30am Prayers and worship

8.00am Work starts

1.00 - 2.00pm Lunch

6.00pm Evening meal

7.30pm Evening worship with the children followed by discussion of the day's events.

9.00pm Bedtime

Volunteers are asked to:

- 1) Be self disciplined.
- 2) Be able to accept the leadership of those in charge.
- 3) Work well with other volunteers and be prepared to put differences aside.
- 4) Use the resources thoughtfully. Pens, paper and books are very precious!

- 5) Put aside western values, uphold the Christian values of Bethany, and see things from a new perspective.
- 6) Overcome any phobias they may have.
- 7) Be able to accept that the food prepared for them may not be to their liking but to appreciate it anyway!
- 8) Keep relationships with other volunteers professional whilst on site

Dress Code:

Male

- Trousers or shorts (when working)
- T shirts whilst working and
- Proper shirts and smart long trousers for going out or for Sunday services on site.

Female

- Long skirts or Kangas' (wrap round piece of material)
- No trousers or shorts unless worn under Kangas.
- Short sleeve t-shirts

N.B. Do not take excessive clothing as items can be washed in the evening and are dry the following morning. Lots of clothing also denotes 'wealth' which does not help in building relationships with those who have so little. **Take only those things you can afford to lose** as there is no insurance (of any kind) at Bethany.

Injections:

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis B

Meningitis

Polio

Tetanus

Typhoid

Rabies

Diphtheria

Yellow fever

A precondition of visiting Bethany is that you are following a medically prescribed course of anti-malarial tablets and that you are fully immunised against a range of diseases. Your family doctor will determine the specific anti-malaria tablets and vaccines that you require.

If you are accepted as a Bethany visitor or volunteer for either a short or long term period, we ask that you accept our advice on all matters which may affect further mission in Tanzania.

- **Alcohol:** Is not allowed on site and persons visiting or found on site who have obviously been drinking will not be allowed to stay (this is a children's home)
- **Smoking:** If you must smoke, please do so in private by arrangement with the team.
- **Communication:** Please use your best English (obviously no bad language or slang). Our spoken English will be copied by the children and staff so correct pronunciation and the proper use of grammar is essential. The children and staff may be reluctant to speak English, but they understand English much more than you may imagine. Please be aware of this and be careful what you say.

Seasons: Bethany is situated very close to the equator and so they don't have seasons as we do in the UK (no winter or summer). It is always hot but fortunately there is usually a breeze from the lake day and night. However, they do have two rainy seasons (March to May and November to January). This is the time to plant Maize and other plants. The vast majority of the population eat what they grow, and Maize mixed with water is their staple diet (Ugali).

□ **Communication with the UK.**

E-mail: Only possible using mobile networks.

Mobile Phones: These work well at Bethany using a router (provided by Bethany) via a data connection (wifi). However, this cost is very expensive and is not always reliable. The cost of the internet package should be shared by visiting volunteers.

□ **General Health:** Hospitals are places to be avoided - therefore be extra vigilant with regard to safety - avoid accidents! If you feel unwell at any point you must inform Jessca immediately, do not leave it a couple of days. They will take you to a local clinic and test for Malaria and give you the appropriate meds. (This is very rare for short visits).

□ **Road Safety:** Does not exist in Tanzania - be extra vigilant when anywhere near the road. Bus drivers have no regard for people and do not slow down!

□ **Personal Safety:** As in other cities but especially in Mwanza - only walk with someone who knows where they are going - be street wise - always look out for pick-pockets etc. Avoid eye contact with street sellers remember the word for 'NO' (hapana). If you are buying goods only have

sufficient money in your pocket for those goods (no bulging purses with lots of notes on show). Keep money in different places - wear a money belt - under your t-shirt!

□ **Money:** It is better to use the correct currency (Tanzanian Shillings) as the use of foreign currency makes us vulnerable to overcharging. Credit cards may be accepted in Nairobi (Kenya) and to a limited extent in Mwanza (for emergencies).

□ **Contribution towards the cost of food, accommodation and transport:**

The project runs on a very strict budget (and we sometimes run out of money for food!) and we ask visitors to contribute towards the cost of the food and to pay for additional food if required or bring/purchase their own (i.e. Tea bags, powdered milk, margarine, jam, etc) food not usually used at Bethany (too expensive). Food and accommodation costs about 20,000 Tsh per day (about £6). Also, a donation towards diesel for extra yet essential trips (i.e. to and from the airport) will be made. Sadly, our vehicles are not allowed off road or private use. (no trips to the Serengeti etc).

□ **Corruption and lack of integrity:** As in the UK this is even rife in Tanzania - from the peasant to the politician. Sometimes it is those who are in the least need who are most likely to ask for things (beg). Those with the greatest need Bethany is taking care of. Don't be led by sentiment or make emotional responses.

□ **Relationships:** Volunteers must not 'flirt' with the older children or staff. 'Courting' in Tanzanian culture is a prolonged and complicated process and casual boy girl relationships are seen as inappropriate.

□ **Marriage:** Bethany upholds the Christian principle that only married couples should be 'living/sleeping together'. Therefore, Bethany is unable to support applications by non married couples who are living as man and wife or within same sex relationships. To do so would bring into question our values of integrity and honesty in respect of appropriate relationships and be at odds within the Tanzanian culture.

△ **Groups.** We don't usually send people out on their own, especially if they are new to the African culture. Larger teams usually go in the summer during the school holidays.

△ **Usefulness.** Everyday activities are best planned by you before you go. What are your strengths? What do you enjoy doing? Support in the classroom is good. There is a great need to improve English, spelling and grammar, through all age groups. With the older ones it's good to set logic problems and help them work it out. They can't do this on their own; they need a lot of help. The traditional Tanzanian way of teaching is through copying off the board. They struggle with their times tables. There is often a shortage of board markers and chalk. They have books and A4. They also like to listen to stories being read to them, especially Sunday afternoons.

△ **Tips** If you are keen at sport - every Friday is sports day, so take trainers and socks with you. Some find it cold in the evenings take a jumper or a lightweight fleece. It's also very dark - no street lamps etc. A torch is essential as there are frequent power cuts. This is because the

government cannot produce enough electricity to support the growing population. You must use your mosquito net every night and leave it in situ during the day. Laundry of underwear must be done in your room - no pegging out.

△ **Flights:** It usually takes at least 18hours, sometimes longer if it involves an overnight stay. Sometimes the Police put road blocks in place from 9.00pm to discourage traveling and to discourage crime. (NB sunset is at 18.00 hours and sunrise at 06.00 hours).

△ **Visa:** Your visa will cost \$50 (about £45) available online.

△ **Currency.** Tanzania have their own shillings and you will be unable to buy Tanzanian Shillings in the UK. You can take English pounds or American dollars (Good to have a mix of both) Graham or David can supply a modest amount of Tanz. Shillings for meals in Mwanza if you need them- with the proviso you just replace them when you return. At Bethany you pay Jesca, our manager and she will give you a fair rate of exchange. At the end of your stay, you will be given a bill for your costs. It is expected for you to pay the costs (£) before you leave (as anywhere else in the world). If you drink bottled water there is a charge, but the coordinator will buy it in for you. You can drink water on site but you need to boil it first.

Bethany Vehicles: Volunteers are not allowed to drive any of our vehicles (unless in an emergency). The reasons for this are obvious – you won't hold a Tanzanian driving licence or insurance; you are not familiar with the driving regulations in Tanzania or the behaviour of other motorists or pedestrians. If you had an accident, you would be held responsible and the Tanzanian police are enthusiastic about prosecuting foreigners. Jail sentences are available for driving offences.

Meetings with Officials or visitors to Bethany for any reason.

Please do not try and hold conversations with visitors/strangers who come on the Bethany site but point them to the reception office. If the coordinator feels it is appropriate, then she/he will introduce them to you and guide the conversation. Also do not ask to attend any meeting which are intended for those who are running Bethany (Members of the management team). Your presence at such meetings might indicate that you are representing Bethany, and you may be asked for your input which might not be helpful as you would not be aware of the history or circumstances of the issue. Also, most of these meetings are in Swahili and so you will not understand what is being discussed.

Greetings – hugging and kissing – terms of endearment:

Men/boys are not allowed to hug or kiss females – a handshake is the only acceptable greetings. Men should be aware that terms of endearment should not be used such as: love, flower, sweetheart etc. as this indicates an intimate relationship.

The term 'boyfriend' / 'girlfriend' in Tanzania often means a 'full on sexual' relationship so the use should be avoided.

Invitations to places/homes outside Bethany

(walks/celebrations/church services/weddings/funerals/ meals etc.)

Often volunteers/visitors are invited to the homes or events of care-workers, government officials or teachers etc as a way of building up a relationship which may end with a request for funds etc. Please remember that you have very little in common with people in Tanzania and your friendship will be for the most part a very one-sided affair. Bethany requests that you politely turn down any such invitations as any excursions may compromise your commitment to Bethany. Please let the coordinator or headteacher know of such invitations

Other trips excursions from the Bethany site:

If possible and time allowing you may be invited to accompany a care-worker to go on a shopping expedition (perhaps to the market) in the local town (Magu) or maybe a sightseeing trip to the outskirts of the Serengeti (with some of the children).

Our vehicles are only used for Bethany business and are never allowed as private vehicles.

Communications made directly with the management team:

If there is a need to communicate with members of the Bethany team in Tanzania, we ask that you send copies of all correspondence to the coordinator in the UK. It is important that all information is shared and transparent. The culture in Tanzania is one which tries to agree even though they feel it may not serve the vision. Oversight of any plans you have will need to be discussed to see if they are appropriate.

Finally

Whilst Bethany welcomes volunteers/visitors they are required to comply with the advice and/or instructions within this Handbook. Should an incident arise where the volunteer/visitor(s) has disregarded the advice and/or instructions the UK Trustees will consult with the coordinator and/or head teacher concerning what further action should be taken which might result in the withdrawal of any further invitation to visit.

Updated: 1st December 2024

