



2022



# VOLUNTEER MANUAL

## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM INFORMATION GUIDE

# SHIFOGA

## SHIMBA HILLS FOREST GUIDES

KENYA – SOUTH COAST

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## **Introductory**

We are delighted that you have chosen to volunteer with SHIFOGA. We depend on volunteers like you to ensure the voice of those living and working in SHIFOGA can be heard. People's experiences are at the heart of all we do, and it is people like you who choose to volunteer that make such a difference and help us achieve the biggest impact in our work.

This handbook is a useful reference tool, so please take the time to read it and keep it in a safe place so you can refer to it in future. It gives you background to who we are and what we do, an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of our volunteers and a summary of our policies and procedures that we have in place to support and protect you.

Before your visit, it is essential that you carefully read your briefing material and complete the Volunteer Participation Forms. This briefing includes important logistical information such as instructions for reaching SHIFOGA, what to pack, what immunizations you need, how to physically prepare for your expedition, and more.

Well-prepared volunteers/interns are better able to enjoy the unique and exciting experiences that the SHIFOGA has to offer. Open-mindedness, the ability to work in a team, and a desire to learn are key to a successful and enjoyable experience. We hope your experience with SHIFOGA will inspire you, and encourage you to apply what you discover here into your everyday life. By thinking globally and acting locally; in your workplace, in your community and at home, you can make a real and lasting difference to the wildlife and people that share this planet. If you have questions as you prepare for your placement on SHIFOGA, contact us at [shifoga@yahoo.com](mailto:shifoga@yahoo.com)

We welcome you and are looking forward to work with you. Thank you.

Kind regards,



Adil Abdallah Mwatondo

Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Who We Are**

The Shimba Hills National Reserve, located in the Kwale District of Coast Province of Kenya in East Africa, is one of the last few remaining coastal rainforests in the world. The paradise of the Sable Antelope in Kenya (*Hippo tragus niger roosevelt*).

Shimba Hills Forest Guides (SHIFOGA) is a local based Organization registered in August 2004, with the purpose of enhancing Community sustainable conservation within the Shimba Hills ecosystem.

The Organization with the help of Kenya Forest Services (KFS) and Kenya Wildlife services (KWS) has since expanded its scope in conservation, which includes Afforestation, tree nursery Propagation, Wildlife Conservation, Community and schools sensitizations programs, and has gone further to initiate a 200 Hectare nature trail through the forest, at the outskirts of the Shimba Hills National Reserve, with the aim of creating awareness of conservation agendas important to and within the community.

## **What Do We Want to Impact?**

To witness the community is benefiting from environmental/conservation endeavours within Shimba hills eco- system.

## **How To Reach the Goal (objectives)**

- ❖ To create awareness and sensitize the community on conservation issues surrounding forestry and wildlife, as well as those of the local culture and tradition.
- ❖ To create an opportunity of self-sufficiency for the unemployed within the Shimba Hills Ecosystem
- ❖ To overcome its challenges and establish a reputable Organization in providing its members with a source of Sustainability

## **Programs,**

### **1. Volunteers/Internship program**

The organization hosts both domestic and international volunteers as well as trainees who are involved in all or some of the organization's activities.

### **2. School education program**

The program plays a huge role in seeing that young students understand issues on conservation from an early age and be great players in environmental conservation

### **3. Human-wildlife conflict mitigation**

Together with relevant parties i.e. the **Kenya wildlife Services** (Kwale), **Kenya Forest Services** (Kwale) amongst others, **SHIFOGA** is engaged in finding possible measures and implementing them to reduce the pressure of wild animals invading community farms.

### **4. Community Awareness & sensitization on environmental conservation**

The organization, through constant meetings and training, spreads the word on conservation to the communities living adjacent/around and benefiting from the resource (the Shimba hills forest), on how best and sustainably way they can utilize the resources and at the same time benefiting from them.

### **5. Research & primates monitoring**

Constant monitoring and data recording of primates' species movements, mating, and feeding grounds helping in information research and reliable tour packages.

### **6. Ecotourism**

The program is aimed at promoting responsible tourism by conserving nature while benefiting the local community through offering excursions to the villages involving the local community's traditions and cultural practices.

### **7. Butterfly farming**

Butterfly farming around the Shimba Hills ecosystem has proven to be an important source of livelihood to some community members, through the trade of butterfly products and as a potential tourist attraction aspect hence encouraging sustainable conservation.

### **8. Sanitation project.**

The organization is involved in frequent clean-up activities, maintenance, and management of the public toilets with Kwale town in collaboration with the County Government of Kwale.

## **Location**

We are located in Matuga Sub-County of Kwale County at the Kwale town approximately 34KM from the Mombasa Airport. Our main office is located at the heart of Kwale Town – and the volunteer cottages are found at the outskirts of the Shimba Hills National Reserve along the Kwale-Kinango highway, a 5 minutes' walk from the Kwale Town.

## **Our Assurance to Volunteers,**

We have a dedicated team led by the Volunteer Coordinator which will support and guide you in your volunteering role with us.

We want to make sure that you enjoy your role and get the most out of it, and we make a commitment to our volunteers.

We will:

- Always treat you with respect, consideration and appreciation.
- Ensure you have a clear idea of your responsibilities whilst volunteering. You will be properly inducted into your role.
- Give you information about the training and support available to help you carry out your role. We will never expect you to complete a task you are not comfortable with.
- Provide you with support through regular meetings or discussions, appropriate to your individual needs, abilities and skills.
- Offer you fair, honest and timely feedback on your contribution and update you on how your contribution has made a difference.

## **Volunteer Role**

- Act with respect for the cause, community, organization and its work
- Act responsibly and with integrity
- Fulfil the duties of the role as defined in the position description, efficiently and effectively
- Respect all policies in place
- Notify their supervisor if they are unable to fulfil their duties or miss a shift
- Recommend suggestions and changes if they determine any

## **Volunteers have the right to;**

- ✓ Work in a safe & healthy workplace, to know about unsafe work and to refuse unsafe work
- ✓ A supportive environment in which to work and contribute
- ✓ Effective and meaningful volunteer involvement practices
- ✓ Have their say about their work and ideas regarding their role or program
- ✓ Provide feedback and receive feedback when requested and at regular intervals
- ✓ Ask for and receive support from their supervisor when required
- ✓ Be accommodated for any ability needs in order to complete non-essential tasks of the role

## **How We Will Support You**

### ***Induction***

The Volunteer Coordinator will introduce you to the SHIFOGA staff and volunteers you will be volunteering with. They will also provide more detail about the sections in this handbook. Please use this opportunity to ask any questions and highlight any areas where you would like further training and support.

If you will be volunteering with us over a significant period of time, you will undergo a trial period which gives us both a chance to assess how things are working out.

### **Training**

We want to ensure that you feel happy and confident to carry out your role. As an eco- volunteer you will be offered training and your Volunteer Coordinator will try to source specific training you have identified, that will help you do this.

### **Support**

As part of your development, please make a note of how each task you carried out went, what you did, what you enjoyed and if there were any issues that arose.

Each volunteer will have a review meeting and the frequency of these will vary depending on the nature of your role and your time commitment. The 1-2-1 meeting, in person or by phone, will focus on how the role is going, what support you need and update you on what's happening at SHIFOGA. It is an opportunity for volunteers and staff to raise issues and for you to talk constructively about your involvement with us.

### **What we expect from you;**

SHIFOGA expects high standards from all our volunteers. To ensure you get the most out of your role, volunteers will:

- Always treat volunteers, staff and supporters with respect, consideration and appreciation.
- Act in a professional way whenever you represent SHIFOGA in public.
- Act in a way that doesn't discriminate against or exclude anyone.
- Provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to fulfil your volunteering commitment, or if you no longer wish to volunteer.
- Ask your Volunteer Manager if you don't fully understand your role and
- Responsibilities or need any other guidance.

## **Application Guideline;**

SHIFOGA collects and uses personal information from volunteers to support program delivery and for the following specific reasons:

- Application and recruitment process of volunteers
- Maintaining contact with volunteers to ensure coverage of shifts and responsibilities and letting volunteers know of opportunities
- Satisfying statistical reporting requirements (such as locations of volunteers) detached from personal identifiers
- Accommodating volunteers with disabilities, illnesses and/or injuries
- Supporting ongoing training and development It is the responsibility of the organization and volunteer supervisors to request consent for a new use of personal information.

The organization is expected to only disclose specific information as dictated by funding requirements and where applicable by provincial and federal law. No information will be disclosed without prior consent from volunteers with the exception of information made anonymous. It is the responsibility of volunteers to provide consent for the collection of their personal information. It is the responsibility of volunteer supervisors to determine how long they will retain volunteer information after the volunteer has ceased their engagement with the organization.

## **VISA;**

When travelling to Kenya, you will need to get a tourist visa for your entry in to the country. Although you will be a volunteer of Colobus Conservation, you will in effect be on holiday. Entry visas are for a maximum three-month period, however, once in country it is fairly straight forward to extend this to a six-month visa, for an additional Ksh. 4,000. Visas can be obtained on arrival at the airport (please check with your embassy that this option is still available) or you can apply online (<http://evisa.go.ke/evisa.html>).

## **Vaccination;**

Routine Immunizations Medical decisions are the responsibility of each volunteer and the following are recommendations only. While SHIFOGA cannot provide details regarding suggested inoculations, we are not a medical organization and decisions about which inoculations you should receive should be made between you and your doctor. Health conditions around the world are constantly changing, so keep informed and consult your physician, a local travel health clinic, or the World Health Organization ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)) and International SOS for the latest health information for travellers. Please consult your physician for guidance on inoculations if you intend to travel to other parts of the country. Required for Entry/ Recommended for Health Reasons A Certificate of Vaccination against yellow fever is required for all travellers to Kenya. Yellow fever is present in Kenya. Always be suspicious of a fever and inform a staff member immediately and get checked by a medical professional if you feel ill. There are health facilities in the areas which volunteers can get medical attention.



## **Contributions;**

The volunteer donation we request covers all your accommodation requirements including a bed in a single sex 2 bed cottage, three meals a day prepared by members and volunteers together, drinking water, security, training for your role and a much-needed financial contribution for the organizational operations. The minimum stay requirement is two weeks and is charged at €100 per week.

A non-refundable deposit of €50 is required 4 weeks before the arrival date when the application is approved and dates confirmed. Should a deposit payment not be received within this timeframe then your volunteer placement is automatically cancelled. Payment of a deposit allows us to block dates for your placement and accommodation, and is non-refundable.

*Note; Airport transfers are ONLY covered from Ukunda Airstrip. If you land at Moi International Airport, we are happy to assist in arranging the pick up on your behalf, which will cost you extra KES 4,000 one-way.*

Volunteers who opt to stay outside our cottages, and come for work every day, they are required to pay a deposit of 50% of the total fee of KES 1000 per every work day contribution within four weeks before the arrival date when the application is approved and dates confirmed. If payment is not received within this timeframe this will result in an automatic cancellation.

Local interns are charged KES 3,000 per month to cover accommodation, water, security, and electricity. Food is not included; the intern has the options to contribute for the meals or eat outside. International interns pay the same rate as eco-volunteers.

## **Getting to the Project,**

Volunteers have a choice of two airports they can travel to;

- Moi International Airport in Mombasa (connections available from Nairobi and many worldwide cities).
- Ukunda Airstrip in Diani (connections from Nairobi only)

Upon your arrival at either of these airports a taxi will be waiting to transfer you to **Shifoga Cottages**. We use the same firm for all our volunteer airport transfers and the company is tried, tested and trusted. You will identify the taxi driver by the sign they will be holding with your name written on it.

*Please note airport transfers are NOT included in the volunteer donation for Eco-volunteers staying less than 4 weeks. We are willing to assist in arranging for the taxi but you will be responsible to cover the cost of this transfer at an extra cost of Ksh 4,000 each way from Mombasa or approximately Ksh 2000 from Ukunda.*

## **Dressing code;**

Volunteer dress codes vary and are dependent on the requirements of individual roles. Volunteers implements a casual dress code and makes no distinctions or preferences based on gendered clothing. As a volunteer for SHIFOGA, you're also an ambassador for the organisation. You're responsible for presenting a positive image to visitors, clients and the community.

Please use your judgement to dress appropriately for the activities you're asked to carry out. You may at times be required to wear a Volunteer SHIFOGA t-shirt, which will be provided.

If you're ever unsure about what to wear, just ask your Volunteer Supporter.

## **Accommodation & Food**

The volunteer cottages are clean but simple which fit two people with separate beds. Independent, easy-going, sociable and neat people are highly desirable and welcome

Facilities include:

- We provide three basic meals a day that volunteers and members can cook together – Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner with slight change of meat/fish and are a mixture of Kenyan and international dishes.
- Electricity, though not always reliable especially during the rains, SHIFOGA will provide alternative light or you can bring your own spotlight to use when its dark.
- A basically equipped kitchen including gas cooker and drinking water,
- Overhead showers in the rooms - though sometimes you may be required to carry water from the outside tank at times of water shortages
- Each bedroom has bedding including mosquito nets.
- 

In order to guarantee security, we give you the room keys and you will handover it the last day of your leaving.

The cottages are in a secure area, located at the Kenya Forest Service - Kwale station and are close to the Forest rangers' residential cottages assuring you a maximum.

### ***Declaration;***

*I have read the handbook and I have understood all information provided herein.*

**Name;** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Packing List**

- Photocopies of your passport, flight itinerary and credit cards in case the originals are lost or stolen; the copies should be packed separately from the original documents
- Passport and/or visa (if necessary)
- Certification of inoculation (if necessary) Optional Items
- Clothing/Footwear for Fieldwork
- Two pairs of field trousers (not jeans), preferably with lots of pockets
- Two lightweight long-sleeved shirts
- Two t-shirts
- Well worn-in and comfortable walking boots that cover the ankles
- Cotton cap or wide-brimmed hat for sun protection
- Fleece jacket or warm sweater/jumper or sweatshirt for cold mornings and evenings
- Lightweight waterproof jacket for possible midday showers
- Warm knit hat and gloves for early morning and evening game drives
- Clothing/Footwear for Leisure
- One set of clothing for recreational time, travel, etc.
- Warm pyjamas for cold nights
- Flip-flop sandals to wear in the shower
- Casual shoes (e.g. sneakers or sandals)
- Field Supplies
- Water bottle(s) able to hold at least two litters
- Rucksack/daypack in appropriate earth-toned colours to carry water, camera, jacket, sunscreen, etc.
- Drybag or plastic sealable baggies (e.g. Ziploc) for protecting equipment such as camera from dust, humidity and water
- Insect repellent (at least 20% DEET recommended)
- Sunglasses with UV protection
- Pocket knife (e.g. Swiss Army brand) packed in your checked luggage
- Field notebook (e.g. small spiral notebook or journal)
- Work gloves
- Personal toiletries (biodegradable soaps and shampoos are encouraged)

- Antibacterial wipes or lotion
- Personal First Aid kit (e.g. anti-diarrhoea pills, antibiotics, antiseptic, itch-relief, antihistamines, pain reliever, bandages, blister covers, etc.) and personal medications
- Sunscreen lotion
- Cash and a money belt
- Camera, extra camera battery, charging and data transfer cables
- Flashlight or headlamp with an extra bulb
- Batteries for flashlight, camera, alarm, etc. (batteries can be bought at the nearby shops or when visit supermarket in Ukunda.
- Travel guide
- Books, games, journal, art supplies, etc. for recreational/rest time and travel
- Swahili pocket dictionary/phrasebook
- Binoculars (8x40 are fine for most mammal and bird watching purposes and are not too heavy)
- Plenty of reading material, cards, small games, etc. for down time
- Blank CD or DVD for sharing digital photographs at the end of the expedition

### **Social Activities**

Volunteers can experience the beauty of the areas by touring different places of their choose during off days - weekends, which we are happy to assist in organizing for you. Below are some of the popular places you can visit;

- ❖ Snorkelling or diving at Wasini Island
- ❖ Mombasa City Day tour and Haller Park
- ❖ Shimba Hills Game Viewing/Hiking
- ❖ Tsavo East and West for 2, 3 or 4 nights
- ❖ Amboseli National Park
- ❖ And the world famous Masai Mara

WELCOME AND FEEL PART OF THE  
CHANGE.