



Thembalitsha

THEMBALITSHA FOUNDATION

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www.thembalitsha.org.za

FAQ's for Individual Volunteers

How do I apply?

Please contact us through our website. Under the volunteer link there is a link for our application. After submitting your application we will contact you within 4 to 6 weeks via e-mail. You must have an acceptance letter before you buy your ticket to the country.

What are my options?

Thembalitsha is one large organization with many ministries. These ministries include ThembaCare, Graceland, School of Hope, Hope Village and Bosom Buddies. Please read more information at www.thembalitsha.org.za

Financially, how much should I raise before my arrival?

You are required to cover all of your cost. It is recommended that you budget \$1000.00 - \$1200.00 Dollars or EURO \$700-\$800 a month (the equivalent to 8000-9000 Rand). This covers accommodation, transport and meals. Currently, 1 EURO is \$11.30 Rand; 1 Dollar is \$7.7 Rand. Everything here is on cash basis. Do not bring checks. You have two options:

1. Bring cash and exchange at a foreign exchange agency.
2. Use your debit card at an ATM here to withdraw Rand currency.

By using your debit card you can simply take out money as you have need.

*Note: you should notify your bank to inform them that you will be using your debit card in South Africa and whichever other country you will be visiting along the way.) There are exchange agencies and ATM machines at the airport, the mall, and at the bank.

Do I need a visa?

If your visit is less than 3 months, a volunteer visa is not needed. You will enter the country as a tourist. If your visit is over 3 months, apply for a volunteer visa from the S.A. Embassy in your country. Start this process 6 months in advance. If you will be applying for an international visa, we will provide a letter of invitation upon request.

Will I need health insurance or medicine?

Yes. Contact your health provider and ask if there is any international coverage. If not, it is recommended that you purchase additional international health insurance for the time you will be with us. We (South Africa or Thembalitsha) do not require you to get any vaccinations. Feel free to do so at your own discretion. It is recommended that you bring your own medication. If you should be ill on your visit with us, there are hospitals and pharmacies near by. We also have registered nurses at different locations within Thembalitsha.

What should I do about my accommodations?

Thembalitsha will organize this for you in advance. We have a volunteer guest house. The funds that we recommended you raise covers accommodation, transport and meals. There are 2 cars available; they are used by volunteers at a first come first serve basis. You must inquire about their availability as you plan your trip.

What should I pack?

Check with your airlines on your weight limit, not all airlines have the same requirements. Bring your personal toiletries, towel, tennis shoes, clothes, and camera. If you have forgotten anything, there are stores and malls you will have access to. Note that our winter is in the middle of the year and our summer is at the end/beginning. You will need a cell phone. If you are bringing your own, check that it has a SIM card. Call your provider to unlock your phone. You can purchase phones here for about US \$50-\$100, and must add that to your budget. We use prepaid phone cards. You will need to wait till you arrive to purchase an adaptor and converter for your electronics. Our outlets differ from yours and are 220 volts.

Can I drink the water?

Yes, you can drink the water from the tap but do so at your own discretion. Do not drink the water from the townships. There is bottled water available to purchase.

Should I be concerned with my food options?

There is a variety of types of food here, pizza, pasta, sandwiches, soups, salads, seafood and much more. You can buy your food from the store, restaurant or make your own from home.

Will I be safe?

Always use precaution. We request that you not be out alone after dark and never walk unaccompanied. Do not leave your backpack or laptop in a visible location in your car. Always lock your doors as you would in any country.

Do I meet the requirements?

-An eight week commitment to our organization on a full time basis for 40 hours a week.*

- No volunteers under the age of 21 are permitted. Minors are only allowed to come to Thembalitsha if they are a part of a mission trip (a group of people). The sending organization/church needs all minors (under the age of 18) to fill out a parental consent form prior to their departure. All visitors/volunteers will sign a service agreement/ waiver when they arrive at our organization.

- A valid international driver's license. It is highly recommended that you be able to drive a stick shift. 95% of the cars in South Africa are manual transmissions. The cars we drive at Thembalitsha are stick shifts. It would be a great blessing to help in this area as we are always lacking drivers. Note: We drive on the left side of the road, and on the right side of the car.

- We encourage you to plan for this trip at least six months in advance in order for you to raise the necessary funds to cover your living costs, and for us to plan your time of volunteering with us strategically.

*This is negotiable if you are travelling with a group.

What is HIV/AIDS?

It has been more than 20 years since HIV/AIDS was first diagnosed. Still, thousands of people are infected each year. AIDS is a deadly disease. No cure, nor is there a vaccine to prevent infection. HIV infection however is largely preventable. HIV stands for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus. This is the virus that leads to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV cannot survive outside the body. In order to be infected, the virus must enter your bloodstream.

HIV is transmitted through:

- Pregnancy, delivery and breast feeding (from an HIV-infected mother to her infant)
- Unprotected sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal or oral), semen, pre-ejaculate, vaginal secretions.

- Shared needles or equipment for injecting drugs

- Unsterilized needles for tattooing, skin piercing or acupuncture

- Occupational exposure in health care settings

Over a period of years, HIV weakens the body's immune system to the point where it can no longer fight infection. On average, it takes 10 years to progress (in a 1st world nation) from an initial HIV infection to AIDS. People with HIV can live for a number of years with no external sign or symptom of the disease, and may unknowingly infect others. The only way to know if you have the virus is to have an HIV blood test. When the body can no longer fight infection, the disease is known as AIDS. The infections associated with AIDS are called 'opportunistic' because they take advantage of the body's weakened immune system. It is the opportunistic infection, and not AIDS, that causes death. The bottom line, prevention is the key to being safe.