

# Medical Project



## Overview

<b>Location</b>	Omaheke Region: Epukiro, eastern Namibia.
<b>Duration</b>	From 2 to 12 weeks.
<b>Dates</b>	All year round from mid-January to mid-December.
<b>Capacity</b>	Max. 8 volunteers at one time
<b>Requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minimum age: 18.</li><li>• You must have an Upper Intermediate level of English.</li><li>• Special skills: You should have an ability to take the initiative as well as a compassionate heart and an interest in community work.</li></ul>
<b>Your impact</b>	❤️❤️❤️❤️❤️
<b>Documents required</b>	Enrolment form, curriculum vitae, letter of motivation, passport copy, proof of medical insurance, (all travellers to Namibia are required to have a valid passport).
<b>Day of arrival</b>	Saturday
<b>Day of departure</b>	Saturday



## Highlights

- Assist the doctors and the clinic nurse with the running of the clinic.
- According to your medical experience, you may be involved in various activities and tasks.
- Assist the teachers at the local primary school and adult education centre.
- Get involved in the agricultural project while helping to plant and harvest seasonal fruits and vegetables. This runs hand in hand with the nutritional support/feeding program providing a nutritious meal to around 120 community members twice a week.
- Work closely with the San community and make a real difference to a marginalised community.
- Visit the local state-run hospitals and clinics.
- Go on rural outreaches and experience how remote and isolated these communities are and how essential the services are to those communities.
- Experience the beauty of the African wilderness.
- Take part in excursions in Namibia: 3-day to 28-day tours are available at an extra cost. Tours may include visits to the amazing sand dunes in Sossusvlei, the coastal resort of Swakopmund and the Etosha National Park.
- Make new friends from all over the world.

## Project information

The clinic is dedicated to the health and welfare of the San Bushman community. The San are considered to be the oldest culture in the world and are traditionally hunter-gatherers. They have been forced from their original lands, which are increasingly being used for grazing cattle, leaving the San unable to carry on their traditional lifestyle. Bushman are treated as third-class citizens and live in extreme poverty.

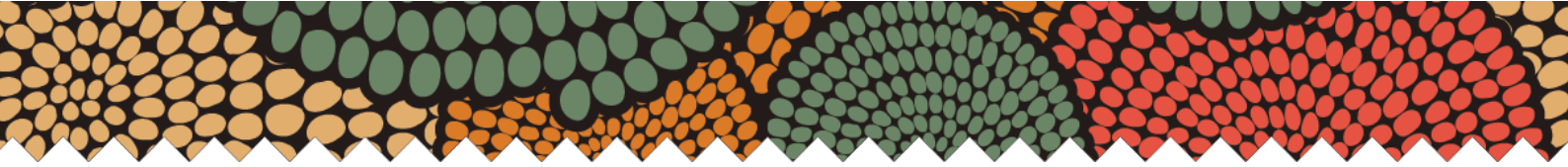
The project is committed to improving the lives of the San community through education, healthcare and improved living conditions. The project aims to give the next generation of this poverty-stricken community the education, healthcare and help they need to survive and to build a brighter, healthier future.

The medical team, with the support of San translators, treat around 3,500 patients every year. Approximately 40% are children and babies and more than 90% are San. As well as examining and treating patients at the clinic and at our outreach sites, we transport and admit patients in urgent need of medical attention to the nearest hospital 120km away. A large focus of the work is to tackle the tuberculosis burden within the San population. The clinic is quite literally a lifeline for thousands of San Bushman.

Common diseases amongst child patients include fungal infections, intestinal worms, diarrhea, dehydration, malnutrition and mouth infections. By themselves, these infections and illnesses may not be particularly severe. However, if left untreated, they will get much worse, leading to complications and in severe cases, even death.

In addition to working at the Clinic, the team also runs regular outreach clinics at local schools, resettlement villages and farms.

A recently added Agricultural Project has started at the Clinic, where the local San community is educated in growing their own vegetables to sell at local markets. It also involves the planting and harvesting of seasonal fruits and vegetables in a bid to make the Lifeline Clinic as self-sustainable as possible.



This also supplements the nutritional support/feeding program, a twice-weekly program that sees up to 120 community members receive a nutritionally rich meal. For so many, this is the only meal they can rely on.

A chapel was opened on clinic grounds in October 2022. This space will also be utilised as a primary school and adult education centre. Volunteers can also be a part of the regular chapel services, mainly taking place on weekends.

A primary school will be established in the chapel on clinic grounds in 2023. This will accommodate local children in Grades 0 to 4. Volunteers will be involved with assisting the teacher.

## Programme details

You will spend your time at this remote San Bushman Clinic in rural east Namibia. Situated in a village of around 500 San and Herero people, the clinic is at the heart of the community. There is a Project Manager onsite who is responsible for looking after you and all staff, as well as ensuring the safety of the whole compound, which consists of the clinic itself, as well as some educational rooms and the accommodation. You will assist the clinic manager and the clinic nurse with the running of the clinic, and will help provide primary healthcare to the local community. The clinic also has a receptionist and four translators. Medical volunteers are the lifeblood of the clinic. You will give hands-on support at the clinic. You observe consultations, help run the reception and help in the dispensary. Dealing with patients from the local San community, you learn about their way of life and give care to patients living in extreme poverty. All volunteers are welcome – from those with no medical experience to persons who have worked in the field for 40 years. The activities vary and will be tailored to each volunteer depending on prior experience.

The project aims to provide volunteers with a wonderful opportunity to experience the African wilderness, in the knowledge that you are helping to improve the lives of the people of Namibia.

## Your role

You work alongside the clinic's doctor and nurse to learn about the common diseases affecting the local population and how to treat them. You work closely with patients from the local San community. Your training will be tailored to your skills, level, background and knowledge. Prospective medical students can expect to be trained in basic clinical skills, such as history-taking and patient examinations. Trained professionals are asked to conduct consultations with patients and to assist with outreach work. Trained professionals therefore have the opportunity to have a real impact on the people who are at most in need of help.

Your tasks depend on your experience and background. **Please note that medical professionals must be registered in Namibia to provide medical treatment.**

Whatever your background/experience, you will assist with the daily duties of the clinic, which may include:

- Recording patient observations: blood pressure, heart rate, oxygen saturations, temperature
- Observations: pregnancy tests and urine tests for patients and recording findings.
- Nutrition program: every second day the elderly, mothers with babies and young children are fed
- Weighing babies and keeping growth charts.
- Recording blood pressure.
- Glucose testing and recording.
- Basic wound cleaning and dressing
- Help in the pharmacy: stock control, packing medicine and new orders.
- Family planning.
- Project data input.
- Sorting donated clothing and other items.

- Playing with the local children who attend the clinic.
- Preparing food packages for patients.
- Recording patient information and survey responses on outreach trips.
- General maintenance work in the clinic.
- Agricultural Project: Cleaning of horticultural area, watering of seedings, pruning of plants, harvesting, packaging.
- IT, DIY, gardening, painting or anything an isolated clinic can use are highly valued.

Volunteers often have special skills that are invaluable to the clinic and we encourage you to use them and suggest new activities that you feel the project will benefit from.

**It is important to note that this description serves as an example only. The daily tasks and challenges depend on the volunteer and the work that needs to be done. The final job description can therefore vary substantially from the above.**

This project can be emotionally draining. It is important that you are aware of this before applying for this project. We will assist you during your stay to make sure that you are coping with the experience, but you need to be mentally prepared to be open to the challenge.

## Project location



The Medical Project is located in Epukiro, an electoral constituency in the Omaheke Region of Namibia.

This project is located in a remote area. In all likelihood, everything will be very different to what you are used to at home. During the first few days, you may find it very difficult to adapt to the new situation; you might even feel homesick. It is important to give yourself time to get used to the new challenges you may face. Within the first week, you will come to find it much easier and will soon be won over by the landscape and the people.

## Getting to and from the project

You need to arrive at Hosea Kutako International Airport in Windhoek, Namibia, where you will be collected by a project member.

### Arrival

Your arrival day should be Saturday. On arrival you will be transferred to the sister project (Wildlife Conservation) approximately 45 minutes outside of Windhoek where you will spend the first night.

On Sunday you will be transferred to the clinic, which is located in Epukiro (eastern Namibia), about a 5-hour drive from the Wildlife Sanctuary. Any transfer for work or during work hours is provided.

You will also receive your orientation once there.

### Departure

When leaving, you will be transferred back to the Wildlife Conservation project first. This takes place every other Friday. You spend one night at the conservation project again and will be transferred to Windhoek airport on a Saturday.

**Fixed dates are to be confirmed at the time of your booking.**

## Accommodation

For your first and final nights, you will stay in one of the twin volunteer cabins at the Wildlife Conservation project, as this is where the scheduled transfers leave/return. Once at the Medical Project, you will stay in a volunteer house next door to the clinic, in a secure compound. Depending on the number of volunteers, you may have your own room or may share with one or two other persons of the same gender. Only a maximum of 8 volunteers can be accommodated at any given time so there is a house-share or family type environment. The house has a kitchen, electricity and hot water are freely available. Volunteers are expected to help with the cleaning and cooking. Beds are provided with bedding and towels.

The onsite Project Manager overseas all volunteers and staff and will be onsite to offer any assistance needed. The Project Manager, doctor and nurse share the communal areas with the volunteers, and are involved with the cooking and cleaning too.

Laundry is available to use as needed.

Free WiFi is available at the clinic where you also find cellular and internet coverage. Please note the remote location may present limited Internet speed.

### Meals

You will receive three meals each day, which are prepared by everyone – volunteers and staff. Please advise of any special dietary requirements on arrival at the project. A vegetarian option is always available. As you join on the shopping trips, you can help choose the food which is purchased for your stay.

## Free time

The evenings from approximately 17:00, as well as weekends, are yours to relax. Free time can be spent visiting the local San village, playing football with the local children or visiting nearby villages to learn more about the San community.

Namibia is a beautiful country with a stunningly diverse array of landscapes. You can make the most of your time in this amazing country by combining your project with a tour. Depending on your time and budget, you can choose from a range of trips from 3 days to two weeks or more.

You could visit the amazing sand dunes and desolate plains of Sossussvlei and the Namib Desert (3-day tour available), the Skeleton Coast and the coastal resort of Swakopmund, or the dense bush and open plains of the Etosha National Park, the third largest in Africa, for spectacular game viewing (3-day tour available).

Usually on a Saturday, volunteers are given the option to visit a Wildlife Sanctuary located about 30 minutes from the clinic. There, volunteers can take part in various activities and enjoy a nice lunch. Transfer to and from the Sanctuary is arranged by the Clinic Manager, any activities and meals are at your own expense.

## Local transport

Transport can be arranged by the project at an extra cost.

## What to bring

Please note that a **compulsory uniform** will need to be worn by all volunteers participating in the project. This consists of a t-shirt and zip-off trousers. The following parts of the uniform need to be brought from home:

- Spare trousers or knee length shorts (khaki, olive green or denim)
- Closed, sturdy footwear

Please find further information regarding the uniform under the "What to wear" headline.

May to September is the winter period and can be **very** cold at night and in the early mornings and daytime temperatures can vary. A sleeping bag is recommended! Please make sure to bring warm cloths, sturdy shoes that will not get wet, gloves and a beanie. All clothes should ideally be in neutral colours for when you'll be visiting the Reserve.

October to April is the summer period and the rainy season is from November to February. At this time, it is generally hot during the day, but it can rain and become chilly in the evenings so do pack a jumper or fleece and a waterproof jacket.

Please note that Namibian culture is somewhat conservative, please bare this in mind when packing. Certain clothing is not permitted, and these items include hot pants and cropped tops.

The Medical Project is based in a dusty and remote area of Namibia. You will need suitable footwear and casual old clothes for evenings and weekends. The project does not sell any toiletries, cosmetics, sunscreen or other items, however on your initial transfer to the Medical Project you will make a stop at the shops, for the Project Manager to purchase the food for the week ahead. This would be the ideal opportunity for you to purchase any last minute personal items you may need for your stay.

## Personal Admin

- Passport including visa, insurance certificates and personal documentation (Photocopies of all these documents should be left in your home country.)
- Spending money (bring Namibian Dollars or SA Rand, you can withdraw cash from the airport on arrival)
- Proof of vaccinations (Please contact us to find out which vaccinations you need.)
- Secure, waterproof bag for documents and money: sealable plastic bags will do.

## General

The project is aiming to 'Go Green' and hopes to reduce the amount of waste, plastic and packaging as much as possible. Please keep this in mind when packing. Please see items below listed as 'Go Green' where we believe you can actively help. Please also keep in mind that we request that any plastic bottles and packaging that you bring with you, should also be taken back with you.

- Toiletries 'Go Green' (biodegradable products, shampoo bars or soap bar).
- Face mask for COVID-19 protection as this might not be available for purchase.
- Sleeping bag: useful for winter months, possible overnight sleep-outs in the field or if you plan to travel outside of the project.
- Silk or cotton liner (optional): Ideal for hot nights or as an extra layer to your sleeping bag.
- Sunglasses (high UV protection).
- Sun cream (high factor needed).
- Torch and batteries (preferably a head torch)
- Alarm clock/watch
- Camera/batteries/film or memory card
- Water bottle – at least 75cl 'Go Green'
- Day pack/rucksack for everyday use
- Cloth Laundry bag 'Go Green' – for when you hand your laundry in for cleaning
- Mobile phone set for roaming (local SIM cards are available at the airport)
- Swimming towel
- Sewing kit and pocket knife for general use (not in hand luggage!)
- Plug adaptor (3 large round pins – readily available in most airports and are the same as for South Africa)
- Padlock (although safes are sometimes provided, the easiest way to store anything of value is to put this in your suitcase and lock this with a padlock)
- The evenings can be quiet so bring books, cards, board games, etc.

## Clothing

- Adequate cover for cool mornings and evenings (e.g. gloves and beanie)
- mornings/evenings
- Sun hat/bandana
- Gardening gloves to protect your hands
- Casual clothes for day trips to Windhoek and for weekend activities
- Flip flops/sandals for the evenings/free time
- Underwear for at least seven days
- Pyjamas/nightwear
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- Warm clothes for winter and early mornings (It gets very cold when the sun goes down)

## Medical Kit

- Hand sanitizer and wet wipes
- Personal First Aid Kit (including plasters and disinfectant)
- Re-hydration salts and Imodium or similar product
- Personal medication e.g. prescription drugs/inhalers
- Contact lenses and solution if necessary
- Lip balm with sun protection
- Sanitary products if necessary
- Mosquito repellent (please bring non-DEET mosquito repellent since DEET is not environmentally friendly)
- Ear plugs – you may be sharing a room with 1 or 2 people
- Eye protection goggles

## Your commitment

Please be aware that in applying for a volunteer project, you are making a firm commitment to the project. Our projects depend on the volunteers. It is necessary that you take this commitment seriously.

Some projects will appoint specific responsibilities to you; others are less structured and require the volunteers to use their initiative. If you prefer the one type over the other, please ask us for the most appropriate project for your preference.

Your daily presence is required and working hours are to be followed strictly. Not fulfilling your obligation can result in your dismissal from the project.

## Cell phone use during working hours

We kindly ask that you refrain from using your cell phone during work hours as this will distract you from doing the work at hand. Due to strict privacy laws, taking photographs of people, particularly children, is in most cases prohibited.

We also ask that you consult with the project team onsite to receive guidance and advice on the taking of photographs while at the project. Please ensure you follow this advice as it is for your own safety as well as the safety of the children whom we support with our social projects.



## What to wear

It is compulsory to wear a volunteer uniform during your working hours. It is expected that all volunteers follow this policy and be accountable for their appearance. A volunteer may be required to change their clothing if found to not meet the required dress code. The uniform consists of the following:

- The mandatory uniform will be provided on the day of arrival. The uniform consists of 1x T-shirt and 1x zip-off trousers
- Additional sets can be purchased on-site
- Spare trousers rousers or knee length shorts – khaki, olive green or denim (to be brought from home)
- Closed, sturdy footwear

Reasons to wear a compulsory uniform:

- **Uniformity of all**  
The supervisors in Namibia would like to ensure that all those working at the project sites, staff and volunteers alike, look professional at all times. It is expected that all volunteers follow this policy and be accountable for their appearance. This new policy is geared to improving security on the new reserve and aims to strengthen the Namibian projects responsibility of providing a safe working environment for volunteers and staff members alike.

Any volunteers found inappropriately dressed will be given a written warning and asked to leave the project if the written warning is ignored.

## Insurance

### Travel insurance

We strongly recommend that you take out full personal insurance cover.

This should include protection against theft and against loss of fees, should the whole or part of a programme or activity or accommodation not be attended.

### Medical insurance

You are required to take out medical insurance before travelling.

You must ensure that you are covered from the day of departure in your home country to the day of arrival back in your home country. The minimum coverage must be US\$ 100.000 and, as part of the enrolment process, you will need to email us a copy of your insurance policy documentation.



## Health

No vaccinations are required for travellers going to Namibia. Clients should consult their doctor for recommendations.

A yellow fever certificate is compulsory for those persons who have travelled from, or intend travelling through, countries in the yellow fever belt:

Africa: Angola, Burundi, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda.

South America: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Surinam, Venezuela, Argentina and Paraguay.

Bring medication just in case you suffer from any travel-related illnesses, e.g. stomach upsets, since your body needs to adjust to the change in food and water during your first few days in Namibia.

It is important to keep in mind at all times that HIV and Aids are widespread diseases in Namibia.

### Malaria

The area of the clinic is considered 'low risk' for malaria, with only a few cases seen at the local state clinic each year (during rainy season). Measures such as using Insect repellent, wearing long sleeves/trousers at dusk, and sleeping under a mosquito net at night time will help to reduce the malaria risk. Occasionally, volunteers have been recommended to take medication from their travel health clinic as an additional precaution, which will confer even more protection. Importantly, the Northern third of Namibia is considered 'high risk' malaria region from November to June, with medication recommended if travelling there during this time (e.g. before or after volunteering at the clinic).

### Tuberculosis

There is a TB project at the clinic, so you will likely encounter patients with TB during your stay. However, the risk of acquiring tuberculosis is extremely low during your stay at the clinic as the infection is usually spread between close contacts who share a bed/house for prolonged periods. The project cannot eliminate the risk completely, but the clinic is well ventilated, any exposure to lung positive TB cases is short, and all known lung positive TB cases will wear an appropriate face mask to minimise the spread of infection risk. No special individual precautions are required (e.g. a BCG (TB) vaccine is not mandatory). Occasionally, individuals will need to complete a chest x-ray on return to their home country/work, which can provide peace of mind to those who are concerned.

## Safety

### HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS is a major public health concern. You should be aware that you are working with people that could be infected.

### Water & Sanitation

The tap water in the village is safe to drink but tastes salty. Therefore, they use a filtration system in the accommodation for the drinking water. No additional water purification is needed, but occasionally volunteers choose to bring a water bottle with a built-in filter or chlorine tablets to add to their water bottles. Volunteers are encouraged to ensure good hand hygiene (e.g. hand washing and use of alcohol gel) to minimise the risk of food and water contamination, incl. traveller's diarrhoea risk.

It is important that all volunteers have a moderate level of English comprehension. All instructions given by our staff will be in English and it is essential that instructions are understood as otherwise we cannot guarantee their safety.

It is also important that any medical conditions which could affect their ability to perform activities be disclosed to the bookings team prior to arrival. This allows us to prepare and ensures the volunteers still get the best experience while with us.

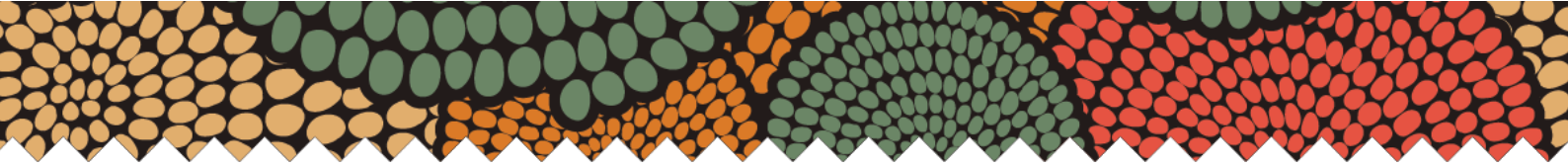
## What's included / not included

### Included:

- Project placement
- Airport transfer on arrival and departure (Windhoek Airport)
- Transfer to and from the Clinic
- The **mandatory uniform** consists of 1x T-shirt and 1x zip-off trousers
- Accommodation (twin room, three self-prepared meals a day)
- Towels
- Laundry
- An orientation at the beginning of your volunteering
- Electronic certificate (printed copy on request)
- Local support including a 24-hour emergency number

### Not included:

- Wi-Fi/Telephone calls – due to the rural locations, signal cannot always be guaranteed
- All items of a personal nature
- Drinks and Snacks
- Local transport
- Excursions



## Visa

From 24 August 2019 onwards, all volunteers joining the Medical Project can enter Namibia on a Tourist Visa, valid for a maximum of 90 days. They will receive the visa at the airport when entering the country. All visitors require a passport for entry into Namibia, which must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the intended stay in the country, and have sufficient pages for entry and exit stamps. All visitors must also have a valid return ticket.

Extensions for a further three months are available from the Ministry of Home Affairs in Windhoek, and the on-site team can assist if a visa needs to be extended.