

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Hope and Kindness is a Christian Organisation and Kosele Christian Community is built on Christian principals. The majority of the staff and the visitors to the project that you meet share our Christian faith. We believe that the God we serve is still active in the world changing people's lives and performing miracles. Kosele Christian Community includes an active church that meets for a worship service on Sunday morning. In addition to this very familiar aspect of Christian worship you will observe that prayer meetings, Bible study and Evangelical meetings are also part of the work of Hope and Kindness. If, for whatever reason, you think that you would find attending the church service or being involved in any of the church activities difficult, please be sensitive to the needs of the church members, particularly on a Sunday morning, and find a discrete place inside the home to quietly spend this time. All visitors to Kosele are very welcome and always highly appreciated irrespective of their faith. The core value of all of the work that we are involved in is summed up in Jesus' command to "love your neighbour as yourself." We hope that you will find your visit to Kosele a rewarding and life changing experience. We believe that you will find that it is a miraculous place.

Arriving in Nairobi:

Depending on the arrival time of your flight to Nairobi you may need to spend a night there before travelling onto Kisumu the next day. We have a very dependable friend (Sam) who owns a small Guest House 20 minutes drive from the airport. We can arrange for him to meet you at the airport and to return you there the next day for your onward flight to Kisumu. Always try and travel as early in the day as possible, it's cooler then and if there are any delays you still have a chance to arrive in Kisumu in plenty of time to make the 2 hour drive to Kosele. Please remember, you are almost on the equator so it will be dark by 7:00pm. The conditions of the road and other drivers make it unsafe for our staff or visitors to be out on the roads after dark. If you are unable to leave Kisumu before 4:30 pm we would strongly recommend that you prepare for an overnight stay in Kisumu. There are a couple of hotels or Guest houses that cost approx £25/night for a twin room plus breakfast.

Arrival at Kisumu airport:

You will be met in Kisumu by one of our managers. If there are teams of female only visitors arriving then we will also send one of our senior female staff. We recommend that you use the airport toilets before you embark on the rest of your journey. Your first stop in Kisumu will probably be a place called Lake Travel where you will meet a lady called Neelam, and pay her for the tickets for your internal flights (she usually books and pays for these for us over the internet). Neelam can also exchange money for you. She usually obtains a good exchange rate for us. If you prefer you can go to the bank to do this. If you want to eat lunch before you travel there is a very good and very reasonable Chinese restaurant in the centre of Kisumu.

You may then wish to travel on to the large Nakumatt supermarket (on the main road leading out of Kisumu) where you can stock up on just about everything you need (but don't forget that there is no refrigerator in Kosele and fresh fruit and vegetables are better quality and value when bought locally i.e. Oyugis or Kosele.)

This supermarket centre also has very good toilets so make the most of them while you can! Make sure you are on the road, heading to Kosele by 4:30pm. Do not stop to pick up any passengers. When you are out and about in the vehicle during your stay, it is O.K. to pick up passengers on the road between Kosele and Oyugis as most of these are our neighbours on the way to market. In all other places do not be tempted to stop and pick up strangers unless it is very obviously a serious medical need that needs urgent transport.

Useful Phone Numbers

Once you get to Kenya it is expensive to use your normal phone network, (though it will probably work).

We have a mobile phone out in Kenya for visitors to use so when you are at Kosele you will be able to phone using it and send texts.

The phone contact in Kenya is: 0737 528244 This is Mary's number, (one of the managers). If you want to call her using your own mobile when you land, (or from England), you will need to dial the international version of his number which is: 00254 737 528244.

Terry and Judi's UK phone number is 01527 453672. From Kenya you will have to dial 00044 1527 453672, (whichever phone you use).

Kosele

For legal reasons (being a children's home) the home is kept secure with locked gates, fencing, one daytime security guard and two night time security guards. Please don't feel anxious, most of our neighbours are very friendly and very supportive of the work we are trying to do and our security arrangements are the "norm" in Kenya. When you first arrive the children may seem a little shy it doesn't last so make the most of those moments of peace, they may not happen again.

The house you will be staying in is a two bed roomed, single storey house. You walk through the front door into the sitting room/office/T.V. room.

To the left are two bedrooms (with single wooden beds, bedding and towels are provided), please use the mosquito nets otherwise you will get badly bitten.

To the right is a small kitchen with a four ring gas burner and all the basic cooking tools and equipment you should need. There is a sink with a tap but no running water!

The sitting room will also be used as an office and Mary may have to come in most evenings to write up the day's accounts.

Latrines (Toilets!)

Be prepared! Our latrines are the best in Kenya! Seriously the Ecosan design of our latrines makes them much more pleasant to use than they were in the past.

Money:

There are facilities for using your "cash point" card or exchanging traveller's cheques in both Kisumu (a 2 hour drive) and Kisii (a 1 hour drive). Because the home runs on a very tight budget in a place where the needs of our neighbours always exceeds our capacity to help, we try and keep travelling/use of the Landrover to essential trips only. Try and get all the cash you need before you leave Kisumu. Mary usually travels to the bank in Kisii once a fortnight and goes shopping in Oyugis for fresh produce every Tuesday. Try and avoid Kisii on a Thursday or the last and first day of the month when you could find yourself standing in a queue for more than 4 hours!

We recommend that you keep cash and passports, and any other valuables, locked in the metal box in one of the "visitors" bedrooms. There are also keys for each room. We have great faith and trust in all our staff but at the same time feel it is unfair to put temptation in anyone's path.

Visitor's Basic budget:

Bottled water £4.50 per week

Laundry costs £1.50 per week

Food costs will vary depending on your choice of diet: imported processed or local fresh? (decent coffee is surprisingly expensive because it has to leave the country to be processed, so you may choose to bring your own. Tea is reasonably priced and can be bought in bags just like the ones we buy here.)

Transport costs will depend on where you are travelling to and how frequently. It costs us about £50 for each return trip in the Landrover to Kisumu from Kosele. You will be expected to make a contribution to this cost on a pro rata basis. A return flight from Nairobi to Kisumu costs approximately £100. Depending on flight times you may have to stay in Nairobi or Kisumu overnight. Each overnight stay costs approximately £20-£30. (The Nairobi accommodation is more expensive than Kisumu and includes the cost of transport to and from Nairobi airport). Depending on the times of your arrival and return flights it may be necessary for our manager and driver to stay overnight in Kisumu. As much as we are blessed and encouraged by our visitors and volunteers we will need to ask for contributions to cover these expenses. We are a very small organisation with a very tight budget. At present we are challenged by a very fluctuating exchange rate that means some months we need to find up to £150 on top of our normal budget just to meet our basic monthly commitments. All our funds come from sponsors and fund raisers who believe their money is being spent on the needs of the orphans in our care. We cannot therefore subsidise the costs of visitors/volunteers from these funds.

Restrictions:

Please cover any tattoos (these could be offensive to the culture of our community)
Smoking and drinking are not permitted
Do not go off-site unaccompanied.

A day in Kosele can be a very long day. Most of the children are “up with the sun rise,” approx 6:00am. For most of our staff and neighbours this is the start of their “working day.” Members of staff who are not at work in the home at this time will still be up and busy, for e.g. fetching water for their own homes. For this reason we ask all visitors and volunteers to be sensitive to the need for “everyone” to have good nights sleep. The team in Kenya enjoy the opportunity to talk and share about their lives with our visitors and they enjoy hearing about your experiences too. However, if these conversations are held late into the night or early morning hours then it does not take long before there is a negative impact on the care of the children and the well-being of everyone. For this reason we ask that all visitors/volunteers are inside their own accommodation by 10:00pm at the latest. Please remember that our Night Guards are on duty and are responsible for protecting the children and our property. When you see the strange shape and layout of the home you will see why it is so important for them to be very vigilant and constantly on the move. Mary may need to use the sitting room/office during the evening to complete the day’s accounts. Please let her get this work completed first before you engage her in conversation. For Child Protection reasons, the children’s dormitories are a restricted area for visitors. The children may want to show you their rooms but please ensure that there is a member of the “care staff” with you if you are invited. At all times please avoid being “on your own” with an individual child.

We hope that during your stay you will want to venture out and see for yourselves the challenges of daily life that face many of our neighbours. You may wish to visit their homes or to go shopping in local markets. There is very little danger but you need to be wise and to take sensible precautions. At all times please consult with Mary about your planned visits and make sure that a member of staff accompanies you. Take one of the project’s mobile phones with you. Remember to take sun protection and your water too! Though not present in great numbers, there are snakes around and they are very venomous. This alone is a good reason for not walking around in very overgrown areas or at dusk when light is poor.

Dress Code:

It is important to be sensitive to the culture and traditions of our local community. In Nairobi and, to a slightly lesser extent in Kisumu you will find a whole range of dress common to almost every city on the planet. However, once you leave the cities and travel into the rural areas like Kosele, dress is much more modest and people will be offended by inappropriate clothing. The following should help you to prepare and to pack.

Please note that the following is a list of things **not** to pack.

Do NOT bring:

Tight clothing (All clothing should be loose-fitting allowing for movement and working)

Cropped tops or midriff baring tops

Shorts (bare legs are taboo for women, if men choose to wear shorts be prepared for wry smiles Kenyan boys cannot wait to wear long trousers as a sign that they have left "boyhood" behind!)

Short skirts (walking down the street with bare legs really would cause as much offence as bare breasts would in your local shopping centre in England)

Expensive clothing (facilities for washing consist of large tubs of cold water, lots of Omo and a scrubbing brush....do not risk the heart ache!)

Jewellery or expensive watches

Body Piercings (except for earrings on women- anything other than this is offensive to the local culture)

Toe ring

Clothing etc that you may find useful:

Durable walking shoes / trainers / sandals (the ground and the roads are rough, there are no footpaths, you may want to walk out in the local area to visit our friends and neighbours - please note the advice about precautions for going off-site)

Waterproof flip-flops (for showering)

Long skirts (a wrap around skirt can be easy and comfortable)

Sun Hat

Sunglasses

Appropriate sleeping clothes (please remember you may be sharing accommodation with members of the opposite sex, old and young, and you may need to use the latrines in the middle of the night!)

One light fleece or sweatshirt (at certain times of year it can become quite cool in the evenings)

Torch plus spare batteries

Travel alarm (if your watch does not have an alarm)

Travel sewing kit (i.e. needle & thread, safety pins, buttons)

Antibacterial wet wipe packets or waterless antibacterial hand cleaner

Personal toiletries (flannel, soap, deodorant etc can be bought in Kisumu but are very expensive...bath/shower towels will be provided)

Pocket sized tissues (useful for toilet trips when you're out and about...)

Sunscreen

Eye drops (the Kosele road can be very dusty)

Minor wound/blister care (plasters, antibiotic cream)

Pain reliever (aspirin, paracetamol etc)

Diarrhoea medication (for minor tummy upset)
Allergy medications
Malaria medication
Other personal prescriptions

Water

It will come as no surprise to discover that water is a very precious commodity. We used to rely on having our water delivered to us. We now have a borehole which provides all the water that we need for cooking, drinking and washing. **We advise visitors to drink bottled water. It is not worth having an upset tummy while you adjust to our water from the borehole.** Even though we have a borehole we still all need to play our part in conserving as much as we can!

Keeping yourself clean!

There are seven showers built on the end of one of the buildings. The water supply for these is the “rain” or borehole – depending on the season. If you’ve never done it before, get into the habit of praying for rain as it conserves water! When you do use the showers make sure you’re standing in a large tub/bowl so that when you have finished washing your top half you can turn the shower off and use the water collected in the bowl for scrubbing off your feet and lower legs. If the showers are dry for any reason and you have to take water from the large tank for washing, then please be prepared to wash in a bowl filled with no more than approx 6” of water. You may find Wet wipes/baby wipes, brought from England, to be a real necessity in the event of drought or delayed delivery of water.

If you want to heat the water, before using it for washing, then choose and mark one of the large aluminium pans and use it only for heating water for washing yourselves or for washing up dirty dishes etc. (do not use the kettle for this water and again, please be very careful about the amount of water used for washing up)

Washing clothes

We are really blessed with wonderful laundry ladies who work very hard for us (look at the children’s clothes at the end of each day and at the beginning of each morning talk about the “Daz” or in this case the “Omo” challenge!). If you take your dirty laundry to them before 9:00 a.m. each morning they will return it to you by the following afternoon, both washed and ironed. They have never asked anything for the extra work we create when we are visiting but, as more visitors are going out on a more regular basis, we feel it would be fair to ask each visitor to make a token gesture of their thanks, just before they leave.

Monday to Friday there are three ladies doing laundry, so for each week you are visiting could each visitor give each lady 50/- (that is approx 40 pence)

Saturday and Sunday there are two other laundry ladies, so payment of 25/- (20 pence) to each lady would be appropriate.

So for each full week that you are staying in Kosele you will each need to budget 200/- (approx £1.60) for washing.

The Laundry ladies speak very little English so Mary will help you with these arrangements.

Keeping yourself hydrated and fed!

You need to drink a lot. If your visit is for less than 3 months then we recommend that you stick with bottled water. Always check that you have a good supply before you leave Kisumu (the city/airport where you will be met by Mary).

Bear in mind that you should be drinking at least 2 litres a day.

5 litre bottles cost approx 250/- £2.00 - so budget for at least 15 litres a week for each person, cost approx £6.00

Make sure you use only bottled water for cleaning your teeth. This also applies to any time spent in Nairobi or Kisumu where there will be tap water but not guaranteed to be as safe as the water you are used to in England.

Use the bottled water for hot drinks like tea and coffee and also for cooking foods like rice or pasta. Remember, do not use the kettle or cooking pans for heating up water from the big tank.

Do not allow anybody to put ice in your drinks for you. You cannot be sure where the water for the ice came from. This is particularly important in cities/towns and while travelling on internal plane flights. Visitors have become very ill as a result of ice used in drinks.

If you leave the home to visit neighbours, to go shopping or to just go for a walk, **always** make sure you take bottled drinks with you. You may be out longer than you had planned don't ever think that you can just "pop out" or "get back in a hurry" that just isn't the way things work in Africa. So far nobody has got sick from drinking bottles of soda or coke that seem to be available almost anywhere. These usually cost between 25 and 35/- but REMEMBER this price is dependent on you returning the heavy-duty recyclable glass bottle. As a general rule you buy your soda, sit and drink it, then hand the bottle back to the vendor as soon as you have finished. If you start to walk away with the bottle expect somebody to "come after you!"

Food!

You may find the heat suppresses your normal appetite but it is important to eat well and to keep yourself fit, just in case you should have a few days when you do have a "funny tummy" (though this is NOT inevitable, most of us have managed to avoid any upsets.) You need to remember that there are no refrigeration facilities in the home. Fresh meat (which, in any case cannot be bought locally) has to be eaten on the day it is bought. There is a huge supermarket in Kisumu and a smaller one in Kisii where you can buy almost anything that you would find in Tesco's (but, because almost all it's products are imported, expect to pay at least double the English price.) And remember, Kisumu is a 2hour drive from Kosele and Kisii is a 2 hour round trip so there's no popping back for anything you've forgotten! Fresh food that can be bought locally includes blue band margarine, vegetable oil, eggs, rice, bread, bananas, pineapples, avocados, paw paw, mangoes, oranges and limes, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, carrots, cabbages, sikuma-wiki (like spinach) and beans (but make sure you ask our staff for advice on how to cook and prepare the dried beans or ask them to cook them for you.) Remember to keep all opened food in sealed plastic containers. (There are plenty of these in the visitors' kitchen.)

Markets

Up in Kosele there is a very small local market and places where you can buy most dried foods and fresh bread. The best place and day for buying fresh fruit and vegetables is Oyugis market on a Tuesday. Do not plan to go early as many people have to travel on foot to get their goods there. Wait until the afternoon when there will be more to choose from. It's a great experience but if you want to shop in Oyugis please make sure you give Mary at least a days notice so that she can sort out a driver etc.

As a rough guide expect to pay approx:

40/- (35 pence) for pineapples

30/- (17 pence) for 4 tomatoes

35/- for a loaf of bread

7/- for one egg

Obviously prices vary slightly depending on the time of year. The exchange rate will also affect the real price you pay. You can trust Mary to get you a fair price!

If you take a trip to Kendu Bay it is possible to buy fresh Tilapia fish (a really nice chunky white fish) fresh from the boat.

Background to the causes and problems of poverty around Kosele:

Below is a very brief outline of the conditions and issues that face our staff and our neighbours on a daily basis. These are not problems that happen once in a while or for a few months before things get better again. These are the problems they face daily and which have become worse year on year over the last 20 years.

Some of you may already have heard the widely held African proverb that says “it takes a village to raise a child.” Unfortunately the impact of AIDS, and the number of orphans it has created has exceeded the capacity of this traditional “support system.” When someone becomes HIV positive in Africa they are not simply receiving a premature death sentence. First there will be many years of sickness and increasing poverty for the whole family. Whatever you may have read about donations of medicines or the existence of state hospitals and clinics, health treatment is NOT free in Kenya. For example, getting treatment for malaria, a sickness that seems to affect the general population as often as we catch the common cold and which has symptoms like our very worst flu (but with the added threat of being fatal) costs the individual the equivalent of a day’s wages. Similarly, any significant infection usually requires between 3 and 5 days of antibiotic injections, which cost anything between 2 and 3 days wages. For most people the nearest place to receive this treatment will involve a walk that would take between one or two hours even when you’re feeling fit!

We’ve quoted the cost in terms of a day’s wages but very few of our neighbours have the luxury of regular employment with regular income. Most are dependent on what they can grow for themselves on land long depleted of its natural goodness and in an area that is officially semi- arid. Local people know how to make this land work. But, unfortunately the drain on their resources to meet increasing medical fees, funeral costs not to mention the costs involved in sending their children to school, mean that very few have the basic resources they need to make the land truly productive again.

There are a number of local ladies groups who try and work their land together, often digging by hand and carrying water in buckets to physically put on the ground during the days and weeks when there is no rain. They are always trying to find ways of making extra income often making ropes and baskets out of local sisal plants. However this is very labour intensive and the efforts from a full day’s rope making generates less than 20 pence. We never fail to be amazed at their resilience and ability to endure the tremendous daily challenge of simply keeping themselves and their families fed.

In this harsh environment it is not difficult to imagine the plight of many young Kenyan girls, orphaned at a young age and farmed out to families barely able to keep their own children clothed and fed. Very few of them will have had any education and are easily tempted by promises of money or marriage by young or older men. Young men disappear into the cities in search of chances for a future (that no longer exists) and the older men often take disease and sickness into their own homes. This level of poverty and lack of opportunities to change produces vicious circles that are hard to break.

Dealing with requests for assistance from members of staff or the community:

It may sound harsh but we have had to instruct all members of staff not to approach visitors with requests for money or “things.” We pay all our staff a fair wage in line with local wages but this is not a lot of money and does not mean that they no longer have to struggle or worry about meeting all of their families needs. For many of them they will be the only person in their family bringing in a regular income. Consequently their immediate and their extended family will be looking to them for assistance with their needs. Most of the ladies who work with us are widows caring for their own children plus the orphaned children of their dead brothers and sisters. It is important that staff should be able to talk about their lives, share their experiences and their problems with the people who have chosen to visit Kosele to see and hear for themselves, but there is a fine line between sharing their problems and directly asking for help. If you feel at all pressured by any individual staff members then please speak to Mary or inform Terry and Judi who will sensitively but firmly deal with the situation.

The situation with Church members or neighbours from the community is less straightforward. The number of people who come to us, looking for assistance, constantly overwhelms us. All their requests are fair and reasonable. They come with “needs” and not “desires.” They may be sick and unable to afford treatment, they may have relatives stuck in hospitals (they cannot pay the bill so the hospital refuses to release them and everyday the bill increases as the cost of occupying the bed is added on a daily rate). They may be orphans who were having their education paid for by an uncle who has just died and left them with no source of support. They may be a grandparent caring for four or more grandchildren, unable to feed them or without a simple blanket to cover them at night. They may be a widow with dependent children and a home that is falling into disrepair, with leaking roofs etc (because she is too sick or unable to find work.)

You may find that there are individuals that you would like to help, even in a small way for example, by buying them a blanket, a pair of shoes or a sack of maize. Many of our visitors have been so overwhelmed by the level of needs that, on their last day, they have given away almost all the clothes they brought with them!

You may feel completely overwhelmed (just as we ourselves have in the past) by the whole experience. If you find these situations difficult to handle then politely withdraw into the visitors’ house at the end of church services or meetings. But remember many people would simply be encouraged by your presence, by your willingness to listen and by your standing with them and praying for their situation. Many are very desperate so you will need to be careful that you don’t allow them to put words into your mouth and lead you into making promises that you cannot keep.

If there are particular individuals you feel you want to help then ask Mary or Terry and Judi to advise you. It is usually (though not necessarily always) better to purchase the items for the person concerned than to give them the cash.

Do not tell anybody your own address, telephone number or email address. Many people may wish to keep in contact with you as a result of your visit. Most of the time there is no ulterior motive for asking you for these details. However, as you will see, there is so

much poverty in Kenya that your details could end up being used by somebody other than the person who asked you for them and you could receive unwanted letters or communications requesting your assistance. It is wise to protect yourself from this situation. If you do feel that you want to keep in touch with anybody that you meet during your visit it would be easier for you to find out their PO Box number, (or if they do not have one send your letter care of Mary Aduda, PO Box 441, Oyugis, Kenya), and write to them, suggesting that they give their reply to Mary who will forward it to us. If, as a result of keeping in touch with anybody you find that you are being put under pressure to meet requests for assistance please let us know and we will deal with the problem for you.

Learning the local Luo language:

Everyone will want you to learn “the Luo.” Our children, staff and many of the young men from church will be lining up to become your teachers. It’s great fun, a great way of making friends and they are very, very patient. Don’t be put off, you’ll all have a good laugh and can’t possibly be any worse than their first set of pupils!

Some useful Luo phrases to get you started!

Remember
letters dh are usually pronounced as th
letter d sounds like t
letter i sounds like ee
letter u sounds like oo

Words in brackets are the closest way of spelling the words phonetically to help you with pronunciation

Oyawore

Oi / yow /er /ee GOOD MORNING

Oimore

Oi /ee / more / ee GOOD EVENING

Inidmaber

In/ it / ma / bear GOODNIGHT

Oriti

Ore/ ee / tee GOODBYE

Erokamano ahinya

Aero / ker / marno a/ heen / yer THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Nysaye ogwedhi

Nyee sigh o gweth ee GOD BLESS YOU

Opak routh

O pack rorth PRAISE THE LORD

Eh

Aye YES

O o yo NO

In nade

In thi nar day HOW ARE YOU?

Athe ma bear

I AM FINE

In to in nade?

AND HOW ARE YOU?

Nyingi ng a

Nyeen gee na WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

Nyinga en

MY NAME IS....

Atimo mos

A tee mo morse I'M SORRY

Aol

A oll I'M TIRED

Adich

A deech I'M BUSY

Olewo

O lair woe IT'S LATE

lairwo

ee lair woe YOU ARE LATE

Idhi kanye

Ith ee karn yeh WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

Bika

Bee ca COME HERE

Piyo

Pee yoh QUICKLY

Dhioko

Dee o co GO OUTSIDE

Dhikucha

Dee coo cher GO AWAY

Rit matin

Reet mateen WAIT A MOMENT

Pesa adi

Pess/a a dee HOW MUCH (money)

Mano ngeny

Man o nyeng THAT'S TOO MUCH