

Volunteering in Ethiopia

Information Pack

Thank you for considering volunteering with Together We Learn! This information pack is designed to give you more information about our Volunteer Placements and how they work.

Who are we?

Together We Learn is a small UK registered charity that works in Ethiopia to support children and transform lives through education.

Together We Learn carries out our mission through partnership with school communities to help transform education for thousands of children by providing vital infrastructure, resourcing and training. We support individuals through child sponsorship, provide improved English teaching, and increase cultural awareness between young people in Ethiopia and elsewhere through school linking.

We also work closely with families the North West area of Ethiopia to create an environment which enables children to go to school and improve their opportunities for the future. We support families to send children to school through our child sponsorship programme and establish community projects such as construction of sanitation facilities and setting up small business cooperatives to improve quality of life and wellbeing for the communities where the children live.

What is a Volunteer Placement?

Volunteers are an essential part of the Together We Learn's work. Volunteering your time in Ethiopia to a worthwhile cause can be a thoroughly rewarding experience that will be remembered for a life time.

Volunteer placements can last from two weeks up to three month and are designed to meet our programme needs in Ethiopia and be adaptable to the interest of people who volunteer with us. Volunteers will work with the Kindu Klub helping to teach our supported children after school, and with the



Sponsorship team, accompanying our staff on home visits to sponsored families and assisting to write up reports for their sponsors.

If you have a particular profession or skill set (such as being a trained nurse or doctor, photography skills or business management experience) that you feel would be of value outside of the normal volunteer role please do contact us to tell us. We can consider setting up a bespoke placement to make the most of your skills.

Who will I be working with?

You will be based in our office in Gondar where most of our Ethiopian team works. Gondar is a great town to live in for a month, there's plenty to see, easy access to nearby tourist sights if you want weekend travel, and it's just the right size to get your bearings and feel at home from the start. We have 10 members of staff working in the Gondar office, from the guards to the Regional Manager, we operate as a family and everyone knows that their role is valuable to the overall mission of our charities.



Marta Bekele, our Sponsorship Manager, will be your supervisor for your placement and your primary contact. She will meet you at the airport, show you to the office and explain the work you will be doing. If you have any problems, she will be more than happy to help you. Marta has been working with us for over 20 years, starting as a 'House Mother' in one of the houses where we supported street children in our previous model of sponsorship. She has much experience supporting volunteers and will make sure you feel at home, as will the rest of the team, who are all very friendly and well worth getting a coffee with!

What will I be doing?

Most volunteers will split their time between the Kindu Klub youth group and supporting the sponsorship team. In the Kindu Klub you will do lessons and one-to-one homework support with the kids, assisted by the Youth Worker, mainly in spoken and read English. You will also help the Sponsorship team by accompanying them on home visits to sponsored families and ensuring the correct translation of annual updates and historical reports.

The Kindu Klub

The Kindu Klub is named after the Kindu Trust, one of the two charities that merged to form Together We Learn. The Kindu Klub is a youth group held for our sponsored children and their siblings. The club is overseen by a dedicated Youth Worker, Wubetu, who will also be there to support your lessons and otherwise generally leads lessons, games and provides homework help to support the children's education and provide a safe space to play.

The club runs every week day in morning and afternoon sessions, which enables us to offer flexibility to suit the children's schooling hours (at state school children either attend classes in

the morning or evening). The children attend each week in groups with other children of a similar academic level. On Fridays the children take part in team football at the local field – Mexico.

State school classes in Ethiopia are big (50-60 children per class) so though all children learn English at school, they rarely get a chance to practice speaking or conversing with it. One of the best things you can do as a volunteer is give children the chance to practice and improve their spoken English. Having a visiting teacher from abroad is really exciting for the children, so they will pay extra attention to your lessons to make the most of your knowledge and experience.

You are also very welcome to plan classes on different subjects where you have knowledge or to provide activities the children don't usually get to do in the curriculum like art, drama, poetry and other creative activities. They love a crafting session so bring materials with you if you're able!

Your Role at Kindu Klub

- To work with the children in the Kindu Klub to practice spoken and conversational English
- To assist children with English homework, where necessary
- To organise craft lessons, maths lessons or other interactive classes based on your skills
- To identify areas of English language teaching which are lacking in the current Kindu Klub format and provide recommendations for areas of improvement
- To assist the Kindu Klub Youth Worker with Friday football afternoons

"I will never forget the hospitality, warmth and kindness shown to me during my time spent in Gondar". Volunteer, 2014

The Sponsorship Team

The Child Sponsorship Programme is a cornerstone of our work. **The programme helps children from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome obstacles to education. We want to be sure that all children can go to school – and that they have food in their belly, a roof over their head, and school books to write in while doing so!** We sponsor over 300 children in the Amhara region and each one of them receives an annual home visit.



The Student Sponsorship Programme operates on a one-to-one basis, where a sponsor is linked directly to one child and their family. In this way, many of our supporters have become quite involved with their family and have been able to witness the positive changes that their support has made in the lives of their sponsored child over time.

Different sponsorships take different forms and every sponsor receives an annual pack with a letter or drawing from their sponsored child, photos of them, their latest school report and an update on how they are doing from our team doing the home visits.

Our sponsorship team is made up of 3 members of staff who are all extremely committed to the social care and welfare needs of the children we support. Marta is the Sponsorship Manager who has worked with us for over 20 years ago, she will also be your supervisor throughout your placement. Volunteers are vital in assisting the team to translate the reports into fluent English and to check that any local facts of life are understandable to an international reader.

Your Role with the Sponsorship Team

- To assist the Sponsorship department team to write annual reports, historical reports and welcome packs for sponsors.
- To accompany the sponsorship department team on visits to the sponsored families if necessary, including to other sponsorship areas such as Addis Ababa or Lalibela.
- To scan photos, school records and children's drawings to be sent to international sponsors as part of their annual update

Where will I be spending my time?

Volunteer placements are based in our Gondar office. Gondar is a city and formerly the country's capital. It has both ancient castles to visit and modern amenities for your comfort. Transport, Wi-Fi and restaurants are all easy to find within walking distance of the town-centre.

Accommodation is included in the volunteer package and you will be based an easily walkable distance from the town centre 'piassa' and from the office.



Why volunteer with Together We Learn?

- **We're local** – we are a small charity, both in the UK and Ethiopia are offices are small and our team are made up of people from the communities that our projects support. This means that you'll never end up doing anonymous admin work in the corner of a large office. You will be welcomed into our team, get to know our staff quickly, and be able to see exactly what difference your help is making to our programmes and staff.

- **We're experienced** – we've been hosting volunteers for over 20 years – it's part of our mission to share cultural understanding between countries! So we really appreciate you joining us in achieving this. Our staff are well-versed in the experiences and potential problems of being a volunteer abroad and will be ready to help you with anything!
- **We're friendly** – our office is also the site of our Kindu Klub school group and Playgroup so expect to see children running around! Most of our staff have been involved with us for many years, if not since we started, and all levels of the organisation are considered family. There is a shared understanding that this is so much more than a job – every member of staff makes a difference to our work. So our guard is not just a guard, he's Wagnew and he likes to play the masinko in the courtyard to while away the hours he's watching the gate, and our cleaner is Abebech, she's taking extra classes on the weekend to get a qualification and her son is regularly running around the compound lifting the other children and carrying them into different rooms.
- **We're making a difference** – we help those most in need in the communities we work in, our projects are tested and we know they have an impact – meaning that children can access school and have the materials and support they need to learn there. We support over 500 children in this way and we have worked with over 200 state schools to improve their facilities for all students. You will quickly see how vital our work is and how important the impact of our programmes are.
- **We're non-profit** – all volunteering abroad is valuable as long as it truly meets the needs of the community. However, many volunteer placements are set up through companies that run off profit made from arranging the placement. We set up and run our own placements so you can be sure that all the money that you pay is going towards the actual cost of arranging your placement and to support children in Ethiopia.



What do I get out of it?

Volunteering abroad provides a unique opportunity to experience another country while making a real difference to community in which you are living. It is a chance to make new friends, apply yourself to new and interesting challenges, and to really immerse yourself in a rich culture. It is an experience that will be remembered for a lifetime.

The placement is also an excellent chance to develop your existing skill set and to bolster your CV. It's a great way to show your confidence, commitment, interest in social causes, and a willingness to make a difference through your work to potential employers.

How much does it cost?

Unlike many other volunteer organisations, Together We Learn's volunteer programme is part of our charitable work so it's non-profit.

The cost of a placement runs from £650 for two weeks up to £2,100 for three months.

This cost includes:

- Accommodation at a Guesthouse
- Lunch on working days
- Pick up and drop off at Gondar airport
- Gondar town induction and ongoing staff support throughout your placement
- UK assistance flights, visas, insurance etc.
- Donation to the projects you will be working on



A £100 deposit must be paid to confirm your placement before it is arranged. The full placement cost must be paid at least 2 weeks before your departure date.



Other costs you will need to consider are: international flights, internal flight to Gondar, visa, travel insurance, and personal spending money. In-country costs are low and we recommend that you budget for £15 per day of your stay. However if you are planning to travel to other areas of Ethiopia then travel and accommodation for this would be extra.

The cost of the placement can be paid directly or fundraised, we are happy to support you with any fundraising campaign for your placement and will send along our Guide to Fundraising to help you with this.

What now?

If you are interested in volunteering for us then please fill out some basic information about yourself including when you are interested in volunteering. You can do this either through either via our online contact form or by email to hello@twlethiopia.org

We will then:

- Contact you to confirm what dates you are planning to travel and enquire about any relevant experience for the placement.
- Once we have spoken to our team and are sure that the placement is suitable for you and the Gondar team we will confirm with you and request details for two character references, and a relevant criminal record check for your country. For example, if you are in the UK, a DBS check should be submitted. This is part of our Child Protection Policy and a requirement for all volunteers.

- Once the criminal record check has been received, we will ask you to pay the deposit of £100. The deposit can be paid through bank transfer or PayPal (easier for non-UK accounts).
- Once the deposit is received, we will confirm that your placement is secured, send you an Induction Pack full of information about the team and living in Gondar, and arrange a zoom call to discuss any questions you have.
- We will send through our code of conduct and child protection policy and form for you to fill out with emergency contact and travel insurance information. These will have to be signed/completed before you go out.
- At this stage we can also guide you on booking flights and any other questions you have about the placement.
- The remainder of the placement payment will have to be made 2 weeks prior to your departure date and a member of staff will meet you at Gondar airport when you arrive for the placement to begin!

If you still have questions about volunteering with us, get in touch! We're happy to have a chat or answer any specific concerns. Email hello@twlethiopia.org or call 0208 617 3393.

