

Information for potential PCO volunteers

Description of Organization:

Population Caring Organization	<p>Population Caring Organization is a non-governmental organization operating in the Liberian Refugee Camp named Buduburam, in the Central Region of Ghana, one hour from the capital Accra. Population Caring Organization (PCO) is a humanitarian organization that addresses the social needs of vulnerable West Africans, especially Liberians and Ghanaian. PCO is legally registered and accredited in Liberia and in Ghana as a Non Governmental Organization (NGO). Our mandate is to improve both day-to-day conditions and long-term prospects for suffering West Africans who have been displaced or affected by poverty and civil war.</p>
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Description of projects and volunteer opportunities:

Refugee School	<p>Many Liberian refugee children in Buduburam are not going to school due to the economic hardships on the camp. They roam the streets with nothing being done to prepare them for their future. To help improve the situation, the PCO Refugee School was established for children who are not in school because their parents or guardians cannot afford to support them in school. The school is tuition-free and the teachers follow the standard Ghanaian syllabus. However, there is room for the diversity of the volunteers' backgrounds and education to further enrich the students' experiences. At the school, you will assist the teaching staff in providing academic lessons to students between K-6.</p>
Volunteer Opportunities	<p>Volunteers will be working as assistant teachers. It is important that you have a good stock of ideas and activities. Due to the lack of teaching and learning materials, it would be helpful for the volunteer to bring their required teaching and learning materials with them.</p>
Mother Skill Training Center	<p>At the PCO Mother Skill Training Center Center refugee mothers are trained to sew and to improve their overall education. Currently the Center is producing beautiful African quilts and bedspreads. We are establishing transport and distribution systems in Europe and America for these products. Money derived from the sales will be used to run and expand the skill training program and will also be given to the refugee mothers working at the center to support their family. A percentage of income from the sale of items produced by the mothers at the center will be used to run the PCO Refugee School. PCO is also hoping to include other vocational skills such as tie dying, beauty care, soap making, typing and 'grass root' industrial technologies. The aim is to provide women with vocational, employable skills and an income with which they can support their families and provide a more stable and healthy environment for their children.</p> <p>There are currently 4 levels of Adult Literacy classes. Peace Education focuses on understanding conflict, and learning how to achieve peace</p>

	for the world, community and the home. Health Education is mainly about reproductive health and AIDS/HIV, but also includes sanitation and hygiene awareness.
Volunteer Opportunities	<p>According to experience the international volunteer will assist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •in providing counseling, improve the capacity of the teaching staff and teaching basic life skills, to the women attending the center's program. In training refugee mothers in child rearing skills •in training refugee mother basic adult literacy skills, raising awareness on health and peace related issues •in training Refugee mothers in micro business management skills
West Africa Peace Village	<p>The purpose of the Peace Village is to help strengthen trust and friendship within and between local communities. In this project, volunteers are called to work with vulnerable people in underprivileged communities in six villages. Our long-term is to establish a school and community action center which will include a health clinic, vocational skills-training center, a volunteer guesthouse, and community meeting space for peace and conflict resolution training. Initial funding has been secured and work is in its first phase with teaching and peace establishes, and construction starting in the school.</p> <p>PCO has began the construction of a six classroom school building at the site of the proposed West Africa Peace Village in order to provide better learning facilities for school children in Aboansan and other surrounding villages. At the moment, with the help of Aboansan villagers, PCO local staff and international volunteers, the contractors are in the process of constructing school building.</p> <p>International volunteers are urgently needed to help with their expertise in construction engineering or labor to build the school. Moreover according to experience, volunteers may help with planing and fundraising.</p>
Volunteer Opportunities	Volunteers have the opportunity to work in the areas of community peace cells, school construction, and grassroots organization development. As none of the projects are full-time volunteers take part in a flexible schedule which includes some or all activities offered by the program.
Peace Cells	Peace education cells encourage non-violent conflict-resolution training, and facilitate dialog and reconciliation between competing priorities within and between the family group, neighborhoods and communities. Cell discussions are based on topics that villagers feel are affecting them, such as domestic violence, tolerance and intolerance, and women's empowerment. The conflict-resolution training includes anger management strategies, cause of and solution to tribal prejudice and hatred, practical pathways to forgiveness and reconciliation, basic mediation and negotiation strategies to use in relationships and neighborhoods, and causes and solutions to domestic violence.
Volunteer Opportunities	Volunteer opportunities include assisting in mobilizing and organizing villagers into peace cell groups, helping to facilitate community cell discussions by training local volunteers to lead discussions, contributing to topics discussed, and helping to taken and prepare

	reports from discussions to track the success of talks. This role is suitable for a mature, caring, motivated and self-directed person who has professional training in conflict resolution, relationship counseling and/or related work and life experience.
Elders Council	<p>In Collaboration with the Liberian refugee Welfare council, PCO runs the Liberian Tribal Leaders Reconciliation Forum. The Forum is an interface between high level and grass root peace building initiatives and seeks to fill the 'reconciliation gap' that exists for the large part of Liberians who are currently in exile and who will therefore not be touched directly by the peace and reconciliation activities mainly focusing on top political actors in Liberia.</p> <p>The forum brings together tribal leaders, county association leaders and religious representatives in the Buduburam Refugee Settlement. The overall aim of the forum is to develop an action plan for reconciliation that can be implemented at the community and national levels.</p>
Volunteer Opportunities	Volunteer with experience in conflict-resolution may assist in facilitating discussions and reconciliation workshops. This is a self-designed volunteer opportunity for people interested in the Liberian Civil War and reconciliation and peace process.

Additional information for international volunteers:

Room and Accommodation	<p>In the PCO guesthouse, there are 10 bedrooms. You are likely to be sharing a room with another volunteer. Additionally, there is a large living and dining room where all volunteers meet to have meals, entertain themselves, or interact with each other. All rooms are provided with beds and bedding. Drinking water (sachet water)m washing water, and electricity are available in the guesthouse. There are bath and toilet facilities as well.</p> <p>Volunteers will receive meals at the guesthouse throughout the day. After the food is set out midday, it is replenished later in the evening. Because the guesthouse is not situated in the camp where you will spend much of your time working, we suggest that you take some breakfast with you when going to work.</p>
Transportation	Volunteers are received and escorted to the airport by PCO staff in a private taxi. Daily transportation to and from the camp happens via tro-tro (public van transportation system) and is covered by volunteer costs.
Weekend Trips & Activities	Weekend trips can be arranged to popular beach destinations, historic sites, national parks, or Accra. In addition cultural activities such as drum or dancing lessons as well as outings to the dancing clubs can be arranged. These trips & activities are not included in volunteer costs

	and can range from \$10-30/day.
Safety	Ghana is often referred to as Africa for beginners. Ghana is politically stable with no recent history of war. Infrastructure is solid and all major commodity items can be found. There is a police station on the camp and peace has prevailed amongst the refugee population. Liberians are hospitable and friendly towards strangers. I
Immunization & Health	<p>All visitors who enter Ghana must take the YELLOW FEVER vaccine. Please see your local doctor or you visit: www.cdc.gov/travel/warfica.ntm for more information. The vaccine must be taken at least 10 days before the journey.</p> <p>In addition, we recommend volunteers to take antimalaria drugs such as malarone or doxycycline. Please visit your nearest travel clinic when planning you visit to Ghana.</p> <p>We advise volunteers to keep their immune system strong by drinking a lot of water and taking vitamins.</p> <p>Sanitation is a problem on the camp. There are available public toilets but no running water. We advise volunteers to bring sanitizing hand wipes and toilet paper.</p> <p>There is a UN operated hospital on the camp. In is the major Kole-Bu hospital with modern equipment and technology.</p>
Electricity	Electrical power is available at the guesthouse and on the camp with occasional power outages. We advise volunteers bring headlamps. Sockets are Standard British sockets, hence bring an adapter.
Time	Local Time is GMT+0
Visa/Debit Card	<p>Visa is accessible in the main cities in Ghana. MasterCard is far less accessible, and it is far safer to carry a VISA card.</p> <p>It is a hassle sometimes to cash travelers checks. We advise against them. ATM cash removal is more convenient and accessible.</p>
Exchange Rate	Currency used in Ghana is New Ghana Cedi. One American dollar is worth approximately 1.43 Ghana Cedi
Gifts	It is not necessary to bring any gifts. PCO does appreciate any donations in form of teaching materials, clothing, toys, medical supplies, and office supplies.
Packing list and other suggestions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -you don' need more than one warm sweater -bring a rain jacket, especially when you intend to come during the rainy season -many items such as batteries, candles, drinks, soap etc can be purchased in the settlement itself, as there are many little stores, or in more specialized stores in Accra. -there is a post office in Awutu (village where the Guesthouse is located)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -bring an IPod/MP3 Player and a good book -Bring a mobile phone with you if you have one! Sim cards are easily available on the camp and do not cost much. Phones can usually be decoded, if needed. Your friends and family will be able to call you and you can communicate with people on the camp, as a lot of people here do have mobile phones - Bring a headlight so that you can see at night when you walk around. It happens that we have power outages -you will be able to have internet access -Camera -Mosquito net & repellents -sun-block -toiletries -towel -first aid kit -Electricity adapter/converter -bring also long sleeved, light-weight shirts and trousers to protect yourself against mosquitoes and the sun
Visa	<p>You have to apply for a Ghana visa at your DC embassy. You will need to provide contact names & addresses in Ghana. Please note the following two on your application:</p> <p>Emmanuel G.V. Dolo, Director Population Caring Organization (PCO) Buduburam Refugee Settlement P.O. Box 46 State House Accra, Ghana</p> <p>Tel: 233(0) 243 95 27 63</p> <p>Isaac M.S. Varnie, Chairman Executive Council Population Caring Organization (PCO) Buduburam Refugee Settlement P.O. Box 46 State House Accra, Ghana</p>