

Frequently Asked Questions for Volunteers Coming to the Oponganda Pre-Primary & DayCare (OPP&DC) in Windhoek, Namibia

During any year we have many people wanting to come and visit us to help provide support and teaching skills for the children attending our daily after-school programme. To help you understand the commitment this assistance involves, we have prepared this list of Frequently Asked Questions which we hope will enable you to prepare for your visit. If there are any other questions you have, do feel free to email us.

1. What are the arrival procedures in Windhoek?

All international flights arrive at Hosea Kutako International Airport which is about 45 kilometres northeast of Windhoek. All flights are met by safe public transport which will cost approx. N\$ 300 for the trip to the city. The OPP&DC has no transport, so we are not able to meet flights. The shuttle from the airport will be able to drop you off at your accommodation. Some accommodation venues offer airport pick up services so you should also check with them.

Important Note: Please ensure that when you arrive that you only ask for a **tourist / visitor's Visa**. Special and long-term advance application is required for any other visa type including that for volunteering. The maximum Tourist Visa stay is 3 months. You will also require details of your accommodation to enter on your immigration arrival form.

2. Can I exchange Overseas Currency in Namibia?

Most international currencies can be changed at the airport and at any of the banks around Namibia. You will need your passport for identification. At the end of your stay, you can exchange notes back to a major international currency. South African coins and notes are also legal tender in Namibia alongside Namibian currency. The Namibian Dollar is pegged to the South African Rand so N\$1=R1. There are ATMs throughout the city, and these take most major credit / debit cards and link to main international banks. Please check with your bank before arriving in Namibia to ensure that your card will be accepted by a Namibian ATM.

3. What accommodation is available in Windhoek?

Accommodation standards are similar to those in any world capital and range from N\$1500 per night to N\$85 per night. At the lower end of this range (where most of our visitors want to be) there are a couple of very convenient, clean, and safe backpack hostels which we can recommend and their standard rack rate ranges from N\$85 to N\$200 per night depending on the length of stay and the time of year. If you email your preferred dates to us, we are happy to recommend accommodation for your stay here.

4. What languages will I need to speak?

English is Namibia's official language. Most of the children at the OPP&DC also speak Afrikaans and their own home language.

5. Can I buy the food I want and what about water?

In Windhoek, there are several large supermarkets with wide ranges of food. Most of the items you would expect to buy in your home supermarket are available here - although in many cases the brands are different.

While bottled water is readily available, the normal water supply is very safe - it just takes a few days to get used to the slightly different taste.

There is a good selection of local fast-food outlets and inexpensive restaurants serving good meal selections. Namibians are great meat eaters so if that is your preference you will love it here. For those who are vegetarian, most restaurants have good selections for you and supermarkets have a good range of options as well.

6. What might I be able to do at the OPP&DC and what are the commitments there?

Teaching!! The educational focus of our program means that you will be expected to teach either a class or remedial teaching with slower learners. Volunteers who have fitted in best with us have prior teaching experience and are usually flexible and committed to helping the children. Volunteers are needed at the OPP&DC from 1.30 am until 5.00 pm (we usually don't get away until closer to 5.30 pm) five days a week. The after-school program begins with lunch at 2.00pm and you will be asked to teach from 2.30pm to 4.30pm. Volunteers might also be needed on Saturdays to help with the morning tutoring or the reading program.

To maintain continuity for our children we usually require that volunteers spend a minimum of two weeks with us. Allocations of classes and a daily roster of "who does what" depends greatly on who is with us and what blend of experience and skills we have at the time.

7. Can I get away to see some of Namibia?

Of course! Most of the volunteers who come here want to get out of Windhoek to see the wonderful scenery and wildlife Namibia has to offer. We can guide you to travel agencies and tour guides others have used and enjoyed. It helps our resource planning at the OPP&DC if you give us some idea of your travel plans before you arrive.

Please make your travel at weekends or at the beginning or end of your stay so we can provide continuity of tuition for the children.

8. What transport is available in Windhoek to get to and from the OPP&DC and around town?

Windhoek is not a large metropolitan city and for some of the things like shopping you may be able to walk comfortably to and from your accommodation.

There are numerous taxis in Windhoek which take you to most parts of town for N\$ 12,50. We strongly recommend that taxis are only used when you are travelling with another person you know and trust and that you avoid using them at night. They are usually fine for two or three of you to catch when going home from the OPP&DC in the evening. Some accommodation places will also provide help with transport. Local accommodation is available if you would like to stay in Katutura and walk to the OPP&DC.

9. Is Windhoek and Namibia a safe place?

While you need to take care and be aware of your surroundings and those people around you, Namibia is generally a safe country. Petty theft is not uncommon and thus special care of money, cell phones and travel documents is recommended. As an added precaution, it is also recommended that you only carry sufficient money needed for that day.

10. Can I use my mobile phone in Namibia?

If you have some international roaming arrangement with your current provider, please check that they have a reciprocal arrangement for Namibia - most do. Our recommendation is you bring your phone with you and for about N\$25 buy a local SIM card and as you require it, a prepaid card to meet phone use while you are here. Some phone systems (especially those in the USA) do not enable you to change the SIM card.

11. Are internet access cafes and other email connections available?

Yes! If you have wireless arrangements in your home country, check before you leave that your provider has reciprocal arrangements in Namibia. If you are using ADSL broadband or other modem connections, there are cafes in Windhoek and other major Centres. Internet connections are often available at your accommodation.

12. What is the power supply in Namibia?

Namibia operates with 220 volts so unless you have dual voltage appliances, those of you from the EU and most of North America will not be able to use your equipment here without a transformer which reduces the voltage to your 110 volt systems.

The power outlets here use a three circular pin arrangement and a small two circular pin plug (the latter is for appliances like cameras and computers). Again, from the USA and EC you will need to bring adaptors and voltage converters or buy them once you get here (just note that most "adaptors for the whole world" do not work here, you will need some for South Africa.)

13. Do I need to make any special medical arrangements before I come?

Medical facilities in Namibia are good but not as well developed as in EU, USA or Canada. You are recommended to have normal travel insurance for medical and property requirements. If you have special medical needs and conditions, we recommend you carry a note from your normal medical practitioner (in English) and bring your medication with you. The **OPP&DC** does not cover any medical expenses.

A standard (and small) first aid kit you will also find useful.

Visitors are reminded that in the north of Namibia malaria is common in the wet months (November to March) and medication is strongly recommended if you intend travelling in that area. This can also be obtained here if you need it. Medication for malaria is not required in Windhoek.

HIV/Aids is also prevalent in Namibia. Normal precautions and preventative measures for this should be observed at all times throughout Namibia

14. Can I use my Driving License in Namibia - and which side of the road do they drive on?

Yes - you can use most driving licences for driving on Namibian roads and when renting a motor vehicle. You need to carry your licence with you at all times. Some rental car companies now require an International Driving Permit - especially if your licence is not in English. International Permits are issued by Automobile Association affiliates and must be obtained in the country which issued your driving licence - you cannot obtain one in Namibia unless you have a Namibian driving licence.

Namibians follow the British system and drive on the left-hand side of the road.

15. Which organizations can help me to plan my volunteer-adventure?

The **OPP&DC** is listed with the organizations "[Weltwärts](#)" and "[Volunteerworld](#)". Both organizations can assist you.

We hope this answers your questions about joining us in Windhoek. Working with the children at the **OPP&DC** is a challenging but very rewarding experience and we are sure your contribution will help us provide a better education for them.

We hope this answers your questions and look forward to meeting you.