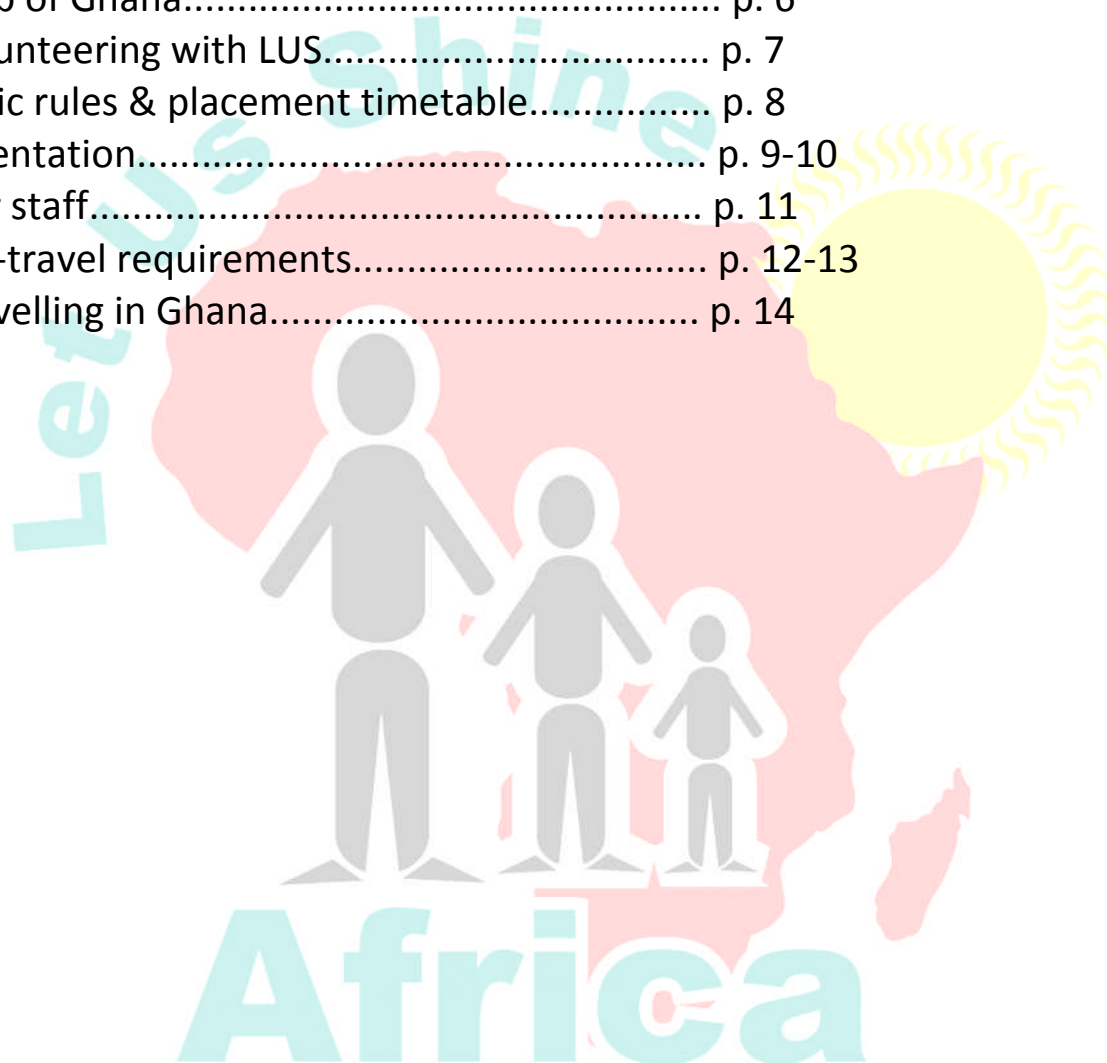




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Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in Let Us Shine. Volunteering in Africa is a life-changing experience and we are thrilled you have chosen to come on a journey with us. We welcome volunteers of all ages and from all walks of life, and whether you are making a quick ten-day visit or staying for three months, your contribution is vital to the continued success of the school.



Africa

About the charity

Let Us Shine is a Scottish Charitable Trust dedicated to providing opportunities in education for some of the poorest children in Africa. Founded in 2006, our main project- the girls academy is based in Kpandai, a rural area in northern Ghana. All of our pupils are girls because most Ghanaian families will send their male children to school if they can afford it. Most of our girls are sponsored (£15 a month) and this provides board at the school, all teaching materials and books as well as three nourishing meals a day, clothing and medical bills. Guest rooms are located in the school accommodation block, allowing volunteers to form a strong bond with the girls.

Our Aims

Through education and training, we aim to increase aspiration and achievement levels; improve the general health and wellbeing of our staff and pupils; ensure food security for their families; and build a sense of community awareness, pride and responsibility. Children at Let Us Shine have the opportunity to excel in their studies and progress to university, or follow a skills-based path and set up their own business. Every child is different and we strive to cater for their individual needs, with the ultimate aim of building a secure and successful future for them and their families, enabling them to flourish in their homeland and directly contribute to the growth of their nation.

Why our project is essential

Throughout Ghana, millions of people reach adulthood without even a basic primary education, and literacy rates tend to be poor, particularly in rural areas. Enrolment in education has been improving in many African nations, but major problems persist. Why?

- Despite the government's commitment to free and universal access to basic education, the additional associated costs (uniform, books, stationary, etc.) are difficult to sustain and the financial commitment needed to send a child to school remains beyond the reach of many families.
- In rural areas where agriculture is the main industry, some families attach low importance to education because children are required to contribute to their family's income often beginning farming at the age of 3. This is particularly true for girls, as evidenced by higher educational enrolment and literacy rates for boys.
- A lack of viable local employment opportunities in poor areas can undermine the benefits of an education.

Introduction to Ghana

Ghana is in West Africa and borders Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east, and the Ivory Coast to the west. Formerly known as the “Gold Coast”, Ghana is widely heralded as the shining beacon for the rest of Africa because of its stable social, economic and political climate. This makes Ghana a particularly safe option for first-time volunteers to Africa.

Ghanaians are amongst the friendliest people in the world. As a foreigner you are a symbol of intrigue and it is not uncommon for Ghanaians to extend an invitation to visit their house, share their meal, or just spend time with them. All of this is done in a very friendly manner and you will soon love the children asking you to take a picture with them.

As proof of the country’s warm and welcoming reputation, Ghana is an increasingly popular destination for tourists as well as volunteers. The delightful white-sand beaches along the southern coastline, the elephants at Mole National Park in the North, and the awesome waterfalls in the east of the country all contribute to its sightseeing appeal. Ghana’s vibrant capital, Accra, has an ever-growing population as many rural dwellers migrate in search of education and employment. The city is full of attractions, and volunteers will have the opportunity to spend a day or two exploring Accra before travelling to Kpandai.

Following Ghana’s independence from British colonial rule in 1957, there has been uneven economic development in the country. While the flourishing south (including cities such as Accra, Tema and Takoradi) has been the focus of foreign investment, the north (where our charity is based) has remained comparatively under-resourced.



Africa

Map of Ghana



Kpandai

Base 803136AI (G00183) 5-07



Volunteering with Let Us Shine

Volunteers are absolutely essential to the running of Let Us Shine. We are always looking for new methods and ideas to improve our school: whether it's different approaches to teaching, afterschool activities such as painting and storytelling, or contribution to building work and farming, your help is invaluable. In return, we strive to make sure you have the best possible volunteer experience. The success of our volunteer programme is evidenced by the fact that many volunteers have made return visits (up to 5!) and have become key fundraisers for the charity in their spare time.

Staff, pupils and volunteers live on our 15 acre plot of land where we have our school, boarding accommodation, kitchen and dining area, sports field and eco-farm. Although the school is a primary school some of our girls are as old as 16 as they have farmed all their lives and never had access to any form of education our youngest pupils are 7. As a volunteer you will get three meals a day consisting of delicious local produce - plus the chance to try some local delicacies if you're brave enough! The girls are very attentive and will make sure you are always comfortable and content - they'll even quarrel over who gets to wash your clothes! The school has something for everyone and our girls will make sure you never forget the experience.

If you come from a medical background or are interested in a medical career, we work hand in hand with the Kpandai clinic where Dr Timothy is always delighted to have visitors or volunteers help out. The clinic is frantically busy, with one doctor juggling male, female, children's and maternity wards, ensuring there is never a dull moment. Rural clinics in Ghana are often understaffed and under-equipped so we make an effort on each visit to bring out what we can to help. In the school itself we have built our own dispensary and keep a good supply of medicines which the girls are likely to need should they become unwell. Our past medical volunteers have helped with healthcare awareness training by teaching our pupils about malaria prevention, treatment of diarrhea (the biggest killer of children in Africa), dental hygiene, hand washing procedures, treatment of insect bites and more.

Please read our volunteer testimonials at www.letusshine.org. We would be happy to put you in touch with past volunteers.

What you need to volunteer

Unlike most other volunteer companies we only ask volunteers cover their costs for the experience. Situated 9 hours north of Accra the main expense for all our visitors is transport as using local transport is unreliable and long (often a 2 day trip). The tarred roads end half way there and the remaining few hours is a bumpy ride. For this reason we hire air conditioned 4 wheel drives for all our volunteers and all trips are accompanied by our staff. Cars also come with drivers. The cars come from Accra and a 2 day hire is required for the drop off journey (to allow car to return to base at Accra) and the same for the return trip. Board is in dorm style same sex rooms in the accommodation block the girls sleep in. Rooms are simple but clean with ceiling and standing fans and electricity. Flights are booked independently by volunteers, but are happy to offer you advice as to who to book with.

Volunteer Costs

<u>Number of Volunteers</u>	<u>Total Cost</u> <i>Covers:</i>	<u>Cost per Additional Week</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on volunteers travelling to/from Kpandai together on same dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private Hire Transport to/from Kpandai 2 weeks accommodation and 3 meals a day We do not charge a 'placement' fee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodation and 3-meals-a-day.
1	£700	£50
2	£400	£50
3	£300	£50
4	£250	£50
Groups of 5 or more	Please enquire	£50

Basic Rules

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be friendly, relax and go with the chilled-out attitude of the locals, who will often be eager to talk to you Expect to barter for purchases (particularly taxi cabs in Accra) Talk to our staff in-country if you have worries or need advice Take precautions - sun cream during the day and insect repellent at night 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry huge amounts of cash on you or flash your Ipod/camera/phone around. Go to places you don't know without confirming/checking with staff first Act inappropriately around the girls (e.g. smoking, drinking, swearing)

Orientation in Accra

When you fly to Ghana you will arrive in Accra, the country's capital. After clearing immigration at the airport and collecting any luggage you will be met at the Arrivals Exit by a member of staff and will stay in our house in Teshie, a neighbourhood in the east of Accra. Teshie is about a 20-30 minute drive from the airport. Normally you will have one or two days in Accra before heading north to Kpandai, and similarly before you fly home. If you choose to volunteer with us, we will give you more detailed information regarding your arrival closer to the time.

Typical Taxi Prices:

Osu	GHC 5.00 – 6.00
Labadi	GHC 4.00 – 5.00
37	GHC 7.00 – 8.00
Airport	GHC 8.00 – 9.00
Tetteh Quarshie	GHC 8.00 – 9.00
Korle Bu	GHC 8.00 – 9.00
Central Accra	GHC 7.00 – 8.00
Kaneshie	GHC 8.00 – 9.00

Contact in Accra: 00233244998505 / 00233208715567 (Jerry Dua, General In-country Manager)

Post:
Let Us Shine
P.O.Box TN383,
Teshie-Nungua Estates,
Accra,
Ghana



Africa

Orientation in Kpandai

Most volunteers come out to spend time teaching or assisting our teachers in the school but we have also had an array of medical volunteers, play leaders, sports coaches and art/music volunteers out so please contact us and we can tailor your placements as much as possible to your interests. We can also organize if interested:

- Village visits (to see where the girls come from and why we do what we do)
- Clinic visits (spend some time with Dr Tim and see his great work at Kpandai clinic)
- High school visits
- Market and town trip
- Church visit

All meals are provided by our wonderful cooks. Diets are fresh, healthy and nutritious making the most of local tropical fruits and vegetables. Drinks supplied are fresh water, coke, fanta or sprite always kept cold in the fridge to cool you down!



6. Let Us Shine Senior staff in Ghana

Jeremiah 'Jerry' Duah

General In-country Manager

Born and raised in Ghana, Jerry holds a Bachelor's degree from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi. He also has Certificates in Hardware and Networking, A+ and a Diploma in System Engineering from IPMC.

Jerry has hugely modernised the business side of our projects in Ghana, implementing new methods of practice and training for staff who are not familiar with computers. He has worked previously with a British Registered NGO in Ghana and has lots of experience in construction, team management and working with volunteers. He has a keen interest in Developmental projects in Ghana and hopes to pursue a Masters in Development Studies in the future. All of our volunteers have remarked on Jerry's friendly and helpful nature.

Hawa Awampah

Child Welfare Officer and Head Cook

Hawa is a native of Kpandai and is 'mother' to all our girls. She lives with them and takes care of their wellbeing, healthcare and developmental needs. She is also our head cook and supervises two other cooks who work to provide three nutritional meals a day for the girls. Hawa holds the keys to the school motorbike and often takes volunteers along with her to the market to help with the weekly shop. She is a trained seamstress and makes and mends all of the girl's school uniforms. She can usually be found leading the singing and dancing long into the night!

Hawa has experience working with International Organisations and has healthcare training allowing her to effectively care for our girls. She manages the school dispensary and oversees all necessary vaccinations.

Hawa's husband Daniel is one of few fully trained teachers in Kpandai and takes a consultancy role within the school whilst teaching at a senior level with the local high school.



Africa

Pre-travel requirements

Medical

We advise all volunteers to speak to their local practice nurse and visit the Fit For Travel website: www.fitfortravel.scot.nhs.uk/destinations/africa/ghana.aspx

Please advise us of any pre-existing medical conditions prior to departure.

Most medication can be acquired locally but it is best to carry sufficient amount to cover your stay in Ghana.

Immunisations before you go:

**N.B. some of these need to be administered over a period of several weeks so should not be left to last minute

- Yellow fever - certificate is required for entry to Ghana
- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Rabies
- Meningitis ACWY

You may have had some of these already. Your practice nurse should have a record of previous vaccinations. Please allow 2 months for vaccines before trip.

Essential points to remember:

- Anti-malaria tablets – enough to cover you for the duration of your stay and the incubation period after you return. There are different types of drugs and your doctor can advise on which is best for you.
- Insect repellent with DEET - when night falls, mosquitoes descend and it is advisable to take precautions to prevent getting bitten.
- Sun cream, hat, sunglasses - the African sun is very hot and it is important to stay protected at all times.
- Drink lots of water and don't miss too many meals. Most Europeans are not used to the African sun and can easily become dehydrated. Most individuals need a higher calorie intake than here so its important to keep up sugar intake and take on enough carbs to keep energy levels high.
- A camera - there are hundreds of photo opportunities in Ghana so don't miss out! Remember, if taking a photo of a stranger, ask first.
- Travel Insurance is essential!

Visas

We will provide you with more details regarding your Ghanaian visa once you have applied to volunteer with us. You can obtain a visa application form by downloading it from www.ghana-com.co.uk (click on 'Visas and passports' on the left hand side menu).

A Ghana Visa (for the purpose of volunteering/tourism) currently costs £40.

Flights

Flight costs vary considerably from £380 - £1,000 depending on the airline and the time of year. We would suggest you fly with British Airways (direct) Virgin Atlantic (direct), KLM (via Amsterdam) or Emirates (via Dubai). KLM and Emirates are recommended for volunteers flying out from Scotland/Northern England/Midlands. Luggage allowances are currently more generous with KLM (46kg) & Emirates (30kg).

If you live in the south of England, any of the above airlines are a good option from London Heathrow or Gatwick. Before booking your flight, please let us know so we can advise you, or have a look at what different booking agencies can offer you on the web: STA Travel/Opodo/Expedia are worth checking. www.kayak.com/ is also particularly useful when comparing flight costs.

If Flying from other European destinations to Ghana: Al Italia, Brussels Airlines and Lufthansa also fly out to Accra's Kotoka Airport. Again, a search using Kayak is helpful.

Travel Insurance

- All Let Us Shine volunteers must get travel insurance. In the past we have often used www.moneysupermarket.com because it usually provides the cheapest options but feel free to look around! It is often cheaper to get 'annual' worldwide travel insurance instead of 'single trip'.
- Please ensure that in the unlikely case of an emergency that your insurance covers repatriation to the UK.

Money

You cannot acquire Ghanaian Cedis outside of Ghana (and therefore are not supposed to leave with them either). It is however easy to change money (Sterling/Dollars/Euros) and travelers cheques during your first few days in Accra. Please note that when you are staying with us in Kpandai you will not need a lot of spending money.

Exchange rate is roughly: 1 GBP = 2 GHC although rates are not always as high with traveler's cheques.

Please note Scottish notes are not recognized as Sterling.

Phones

Most volunteers buy a local sim card when in Ghana to reduce the cost of calling or texting home. Sim cards are very cheap (~2 cedis) and credit can be bought for a similar price. It is worth checking before travelling that your phone will accept a sim card from a different network.

Travelling around Ghana

We encourage our volunteers to spend as much time as possible in Kpandai, but Ghana is a beautiful country and you may want to explore other parts. Any travel instructions are assuming Accra as the starting point. We are not a travel organization so while it is important to keep in touch and ask staff about places you are visiting; it is not normally possible to accommodate requests to be escorted around the country. Therefore it is recommended you arrange to travel with a friend or fellow volunteer who is also interested in visiting the same attractions. Please contact us if you wish to travel and we will certainly advise on routes and where possible point you in the right direction.

