



## MEDICAL VOLUNTEERING AT N/A'AN KU SÊ

*Our aim is to provide volunteers with a wonderful opportunity to contribute to the medical welfare of the San community and experience unspoiled African wilderness. Our volunteers are key to the success of this special place. All the money raised through our volunteering programme goes directly back into the project which provides employment, healthcare, education and accommodation to the local Bushman community and to ensure the rescue, survival and rehabilitation of orphaned and injured African wildlife.*

*Namibia truly is a wonderful country to experience, the scenery is spectacular and you will work with our friendly and dedicated team. If you come prepared to learn and to give your best you will be rewarded with a fantastic experience and wonderful memories to take home.*

***We do hope you will come and join us!***

**DR RUDIE AND MARLICE VAN VUUREN  
DIRECTORS AND FOUNDERS, N/A'AN KU SÊ FOUNDATION**



### Medical Volunteer

During the project you will spend your time at our remote clinic in east Namibia. This is located in Omawewozonyanda (Pos 3), a rural village within the Epukiro Constituency of the Omaheke Region in which around 500 San and Herero people live.

From here you will help provide primary healthcare to the local community and surrounding areas by assisting our Doctor and Nurse. The Lifeline Clinic treats around 3,500 patients each year. Approximately 80% of our patients are San, and the remainder are mostly Herero and Damara speaking Namibians. You will have the opportunity to provide hands-on support at the clinic, checking measurements such as blood pressure, haemoglobin levels and mid arm upper circumference; helping run reception; and helping in the dispensary. You will deal closely with patients from the local San community, learn more about their way of life and give care to patients living in extreme poverty at the clinic's remote location.

Your arrival and departure base will be our N/a'an ku sê Wildlife Sanctuary, near Windhoek Airport, so if you wish you can also have the unique opportunity to work with the animals here for a few days. The Lifeline Clinic is approximately a 4 hour drive from the sanctuary and we will arrange all your transfers.



Our aim is to provide volunteers with the wonderful opportunity to experience African wilderness in the knowledge that you are contributing to improving the lives of the people of Namibia.

### The story of our clinic

One cold August morning in 2003, a San lady brought her ill baby to the back door of a farmhouse in Eastern Namibia. She was desperate and Marlice van Vuuren, a well-known Namibian conservationist

and trusted friend of the Bushmen called her husband Dr. Rudie van Vuuren. The child had severe respiratory distress, was severely malnourished and in a critical state.

The nearest hospital was 120km away in Gobabis so Rudie quickly phoned the hospital and demanded an ambulance collect the child immediately. It was a public holiday in Namibia and Rudie could hear that the ambulance driver was not very keen to come and pick up the child. Two hours after the call Rudie realised that they would have to take the child themselves.

Rudie swiftly modified an animal IV set they had available and put up an IV line in their car, and drove the long journey to Gobabis. As they walked into the hospital the child went into cardio-respiratory arrest. Marlice ran to the nursing station the nurses did not even get off their chairs as she explained the situation to them. Marlice and Rudie found the theatre and tried to resuscitate the child. The child died that day.



In retrospect it became evident that there was severe medical negligence, mainly because the child was Bushman. Marlice and Rudie knew that they had to do something about the health needs of this poorly treated community. They joined together with their long time pharmacist friend Chris Heunis and decided to act. Chris donated medicine while Rudie started carrying out informal clinics. It soon became clear that the need was far greater and they needed a permanent facility to run their clinics.

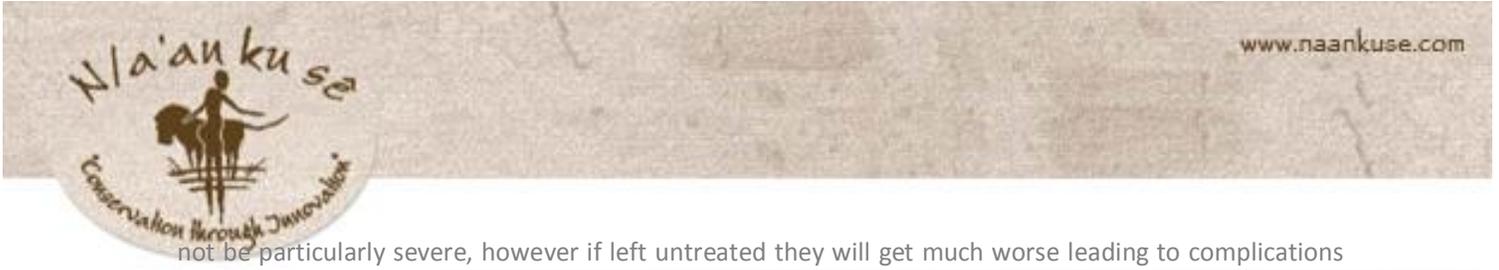
Through a series of sponsorships and donations, they were able to get the funds together to buy a building and start up the **Lifeline Clinic in Epukiro**.

## Lifeline Medical Clinic

The clinic is dedicated to the health and welfare of the San Bushman community. The San are considered to be the oldest culture in the world and are traditionally hunter gatherers. They have been forced from their original lands, which are increasingly being used for grazing cattle, leaving the San unable to survive in their traditional lifestyle. Bushman are treated as third class citizens and live in extreme poverty. N/a'an ku se is committed to improving the lives of the San community through education, healthcare and better living conditions. Our aim is to give the next generation of this poverty stricken community the education, healthcare and help they need to survive and build a brighter, healthier future.



Our Doctor and Nurse, with the support of San translators, treat around 3,500 patients every year. Approximately 40% are children and 70% of these are under 5 years old. TB and HIV are prevalent in the community as is alcoholism. We also see a lot of patients with aches and pains, and everyday problems. Common diseases amongst our child patients include fungal infections, intestinal worms, diarrhea, dehydration, malnutrition and mouth infections (e.g. oral thrush). By themselves, these infections and illnesses may



not be particularly severe, however if left untreated they will get much worse leading to complications and in severe cases even death.

In addition to working at the Lifeline clinic, our Doctor also carries out regular outreach clinics at local schools, resettlement villages and farms. We also run a Community Health Worker scheme which focusses on teaching members of the community the basics of first aid and general health care in order for them to impart this to their communities.

In December 2010, our Lifeline Clinic received recognition at the International Health Promotion Awards. At the ceremony in Rome, Italy, we were awarded first place in the prestigious Community Health Awards. We are also privileged to have the Honourable Minister of Health, Dr Richard Kamwi, as patron of the clinic.

## Activities and Work



At our rural clinic in the remote area of Epukiro you will work alongside the clinic's Doctor and Nurse to learn about the common diseases affecting the local population and how to treat them. You will deal closely with patients from the local San community, learn more about their way of life and give care to patients living in extreme poverty at the clinic's remote location. The teaching will be tailored to your skill level, background and knowledge.

Prospective medical students can expect teaching on basic clinical skills, history taking and examinations of patients. Trained professionals will be asked to run consultations with patients and assist during the outreach work. This will provide a great opportunity for trained professionals to have a greater impact on the people who are at most in need of help.

Depending on the length of your stay and medical knowledge, you may be asked to undertake a research project/assignment. This should be something that you are interested in, as well as be something that is useful to the clinic and of benefit to our patients. Examples of projects include mapping distances patients travel to the clinic and local patterns of disease, rates of TB amongst our patients and compliance with medication, and our patients' knowledge of HIV transmission and disease.

Whatever your background or experience, you shall assist with the daily duties which may include:

- Primary Healthcare: observations, reassurance to patients, treatments and emergency referrals
- Observations: pregnancy tests, and urine tests for patients and recording findings
- Weighing babies and recording growth charts
- Blood pressure recordings
- Glucose testing and recording
- Wound dressings and cleaning of wounds
- Help in the pharmacy: stock control, packing medicines and new orders
- Family planning





- Substance abuse counselling
- Data capture input
- Accompanying the nurse into the community to carry out procedures
- General maintenance and cleaning of the clinic
- Helping with projects around the clinic such as the vegetable garden

Volunteers often have special skills that are invaluable to the clinic and we encourage you to use them and suggest new activities that you feel the project will benefit from.

*Please note: Itineraries and activities are subject to change.*

### **WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

Depending on your length of stay with us, you may also get the opportunity to spend some of your time participating in the Wildlife Volunteer project at our sanctuary near Windhoek. This project offers the rare and exciting opportunity to help care for orphaned and injured African wildlife.

The sanctuary currently provides a safe refuge for orphaned and injured wildlife including a number of lions, leopards, cheetahs, wild dogs, caracals and baboons. Our Wildlife Volunteers provide an important resource in caring for and feeding the animals on a daily basis, helping to maintain and develop the sanctuary and becoming surrogate parents to our orphaned baby baboons, bottle feeding and sleeping overnight with them.

Please be flexible as the time spent at the sanctuary and the clinic will depend on resources and timetables of other volunteers and activities. Please advise if you are interested in working at the sanctuary as part of your time with us.

## Food and Accommodation

### **LIFELINE CLINIC**

While volunteering at the Lifeline Clinic you will stay in a bungalow house along with the resident Doctor and Nurse. Depending on volunteer numbers, you will have a room to yourself or share with one other of the same gender. The house has a kitchen, bathroom and living room (with TV). Electricity and hot water are freely available.



You will receive three meals each day which you shall prepare yourself together with your housemates. The evenings are yours to relax from approximately 5pm, as well as weekends. Free time can be spent visiting the local San Bushman village, playing with the local children or walking in the local area.

### **WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

We have two options of accommodation; communal volunteer houses with up to three people (same gender) sharing each room, or large tents with a living and bedroom area for 1 or 2 people. Shower and

toilet facilities are communal and electricity and hot water are run by solar and usually freely available. Three meals a day are cooked for you and typically include meat, vegetables, potatoes or rice.

During your time based at the Sanctuary, you may enjoy activities such as a nature walk across the farm, swimming in our pool, playing football against the Bushman or paintball, followed by a sundowner and braai (barbeque)! You will also have the opportunity to go into Windhoek on Sundays or go for lunch/dinner or even an overnight stay at our luxury lodge.

#### OPTIONAL EXTRA ACTIVITIES AT THE SANCTUARY

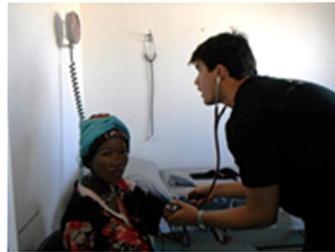
**Sunday town trip** – we offer a transfer into Windhoek for N\$150pp, where you can visit the mall to pick up supplies and have a leisurely lunch at the famous Joe's Beerhouse (cost of lunch and drinks not included in the transfer cost). We always need some volunteers to help out with feeding the animals on a Sunday and there are a limited number of places so please note you will not be able to go every week.

**Stay at our luxury Guest Lodge** – why not treat yourself to a bit of luxury during your time with us. You can book an overnight stay or a Sunday lunch at our Lodge at a special volunteer rate. Here you can sleep in luxury, relax with a drink, take a swim in the pool and enjoy the tranquil and stunning surroundings. You can organise your stay once you reach the project or email [lodge@naankuse.com](mailto:lodge@naankuse.com) in advance.



*"After countless years of constantly dreaming about visiting Africa I was finally able to volunteer in a medical capacity. I find it COMPLETELY IMPOSSIBLE to even try to put the significance of this experience in words. This was without a doubt the apex of my adventures in preparation for medical school, mainly because of the insight I obtained into the lack of a health care system in places of extreme poverty and the opportunity of meeting people like my amazing mentor Dr. Sarah France and all the San and Herero People living at Epukiro.."*

**Miguel Ernesto Velez, Puerto Rico –  
Medical Volunteer, June 2011**



Book now!

To make a booking or enquiry please email [volunteer@naankuse.com](mailto:volunteer@naankuse.com) .