

# Village Care Team Trip Overview



The purpose of this overview is to provide you with an introductory look at what being a Village Care team member means, and what a typical trip entails. It is information at the basic level and does not include any specific trip information or extended detail on most subjects. Although we touch on what our vision, mission and purpose are for our team members, this document does not elaborate on our philosophy or our training programs.

## The Vision, Mission, Purpose and Method of the Village Care Team Training Program

**Vision:** Team members will be equipped to have a fulfilling, insightful, and transformational trip as well as enhance and promote VCI's vision to see every community become self sufficient and better able to care for their most vulnerable members

**Mission:** To engage team members in an in-depth pre-trip training program with focus on understanding VCI philosophy, the issues in our communities, and the impact of relationship building on teams and those we serve

**Purpose:** Produce team members who are effective, efficient, and knowledgeable to serve communities with love and compassion

**Method:** Utilization of open discussion, telephone conference calls and supporting documents

## Team Member Goals

- Become fluent in Village Care philosophy and ideology
- Complete necessary steps for travel to Africa including pre-trip paperwork, immunizations and international documentation
- Become an efficient, compassionate and effective team member

## The Role of a VCI Team Member

A. **SLOPE** - **Serve** **Learn** **Observe** **Pray** **Encourage**

- **Serve** – come alongside community members in whatever way is needed
- **Learn** – make a specific effort to understand and know the community and their issues
- **Observe** – watch to insure VCI philosophy is being used within the trained communities
- **Pray** - can be defined as: contemplate, think about, meditate on, consider with impact...or it can simply mean “pray”
- **Encourage** – offer strong words to encourage community members in their projects, changes to long-standing tradition or cultural issues, and allow them the opportunity to show off and take pride in their accomplishments, congratulating them on their efforts

## **Team tasks may include the following:**

- B. Inspect VC Initiatives work:
- 1) Determine number of registered children in the community visited
  - 2) Inspect, photograph and assess children in groups or in homes (minimum number should be a fair representation of the community)  
Assessment to include physical weight, height, and hair and skin quality and color, general health
  - 3) Train community members to do assessments
  - 4) Inspect organization records and photos for children provided by the community

- 5) Compare current situations to records from previous team visit or to files on the children
- C. Determine how many businesses were started from/after VCI training
- D. Determine if business is profitable through discussion and inspection of records
- E. Determine how many people are employed by or participating in VCI businesses
- F. Investigate how the business is helping vulnerable widows and orphans in the program and community
- G. Obtain sample essays or recorded interviews from communities on “How has Village Care International benefited me and my community?”
- H. Determine how many people in the community are involved with VCI through discussion and records
- I. View and participate in one day of OPOS training, when possible

**1. Pre-trip preparation and training**

In addition to your VCI Trip Checklist and Preparation Guide, team members will also have at least seven team conference calls in the weeks prior to the team’s departure from the US. These calls are briefly outlined below.

Call #1:

- 1. Initial Discussion questions
- 2. VCI Trip Checklist and Preparation Guide, and Team Member Training Guide Overview
- 3. Additional Reading Materials to help prepare:
  - a. **Required:** “The Insanity of Africa” by David Glenwinkel (VCI founder)
- 4. Questions and concerns

Call #2:

- 1. Introduce and discuss personality questions
- 2. Discussion Questions

Call #3:

- 1. Open Discussion on Team Training Guide (cont’d) and VCI philosophies
- 2. Discussion Questions

Call #4:

- 1. VCI Philosophies (cont’d)
- 2. Discussion Questions

Call #5:

- 1. OPOS (Outcomes, Practices and Open Space)
- 2. Profile of VCI communities
- 3. Discussion Questions

Call #6:

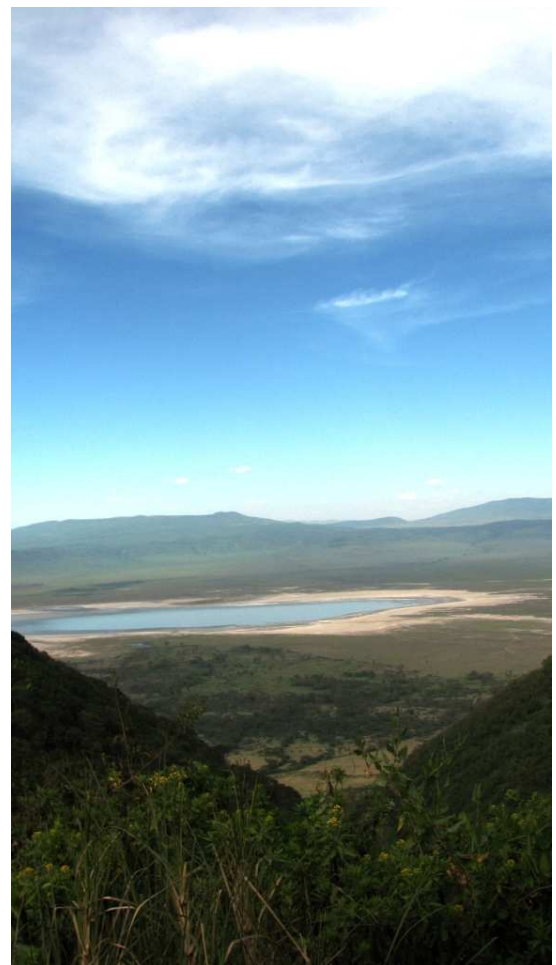
- 1. Walk through process on the ground in Africa
- 2. Discussion Questions

Call #7:

- 1. Meet your African hosts
- 2. Team Calendar
- A. Discussion Questions

**There are five main areas that will be discussed in our calls.**

- A. Trip Preparation Guide
- B. VCI Philosophy
- C. OPOS
- D. The Team Trip
- E. African staff



Though each call does not deal exclusively with each concept, these are the main areas to be addressed in order to equip each team member to best represent Village Care. Each conference call will be accompanied by a series of discussion questions that should be read, answered (often in writing via email), and ready to discuss (see Team Member Training Guide Worksheets). Because we believe dialogue around a subject is a much more effective learning tool than listening to someone talk, our aim is to have each call be a conversation as opposed to a lecture. Please be ready to share your thoughts on each and every call.

## 2. General trip and travel information for team members

### Air travel

You will receive your e-tickets from VCI approximately six weeks prior to departure. We will purchase your tickets for you.

You will meet your fellow team members at the connection destination designated by VCI (usually Washington DC). From there, you will fly together through Europe and into Africa.

Should you have a long layover in Europe, you may choose to leave the airport to see the city, but you do this at your own risk as this is not VCI sanctioned or approved.

You may instead choose to use the layover time to get to know your team mates.

### Arrival in Africa

Upon arrival at your African destination airport, you will travel through customs and immigration, and then be met by your driver and/or VCI Host waiting for you outside immigration.

If your flight arrived at night, you will proceed directly to your hotel or guest house and check in there (see below). If it is morning, it is likely you will begin your travels immediately. Your first stop will be for breakfast, where VCI will purchase the team breakfast at a local eatery. You will then visit the nearby currency exchange where you can exchange money, and finish off by visiting a store where you can purchase anything you forgot to bring, or snacks for your road trip.

Travel may be by public transit or by private van with an experienced driver at the wheel. Trips to outlying areas often can take up to six hours and are over roads that are smooth in some areas and rough in others, so be prepared for adventure.

### Checking in to your hotel or guest house

If your initial arrival is at night you will be taken directly from the airport to your hotel or guest house when you leave the airport. Otherwise, you will arrive at your hotel after your road travel to the field location. At the guest house, hotel or home, you will be sharing a room with a team mate in most cases and your team leader will assign rooms. When there is an odd number of men or women, it's *possible* one may get a single room. If triple rooms are available, three may share a room instead of one having a single room, however. Requests for single rooms will not be accommodated unless medically necessary and pre-arranged prior to departure from the USA. Additional costs will apply for single-room requests.

### Road travel

Roads can be rough, especially in Kenya, so be prepared to get jostled around. Bring a neck pillow or other comfort device for long trips. You may also want to have your i-pod or music player to keep you company during some of the drive.



You can bring snacks to share while traveling in the car. As mentioned, at the beginning of your Africa stay the team will make a stop at a store where you can buy food if you didn't bring snacks from home. It is common to go several hours without a meal so be sure you have something with you when you travel. If you prefer something other than water to drink, you may purchase it at the same time.

### **Security**

**Don't bring anything you can't afford to lose.** Leave all your favorites at home if you can't bear to part with them.

### **Daily Life in the Village for Team Members**



Please dress appropriately – women should wear modest clothing with shoulders and knees covered. Look at your reflection in the mirror – if there is more than five inches of skin between the base of your neck and the top of your shirt, your shirt is too revealing. You will need to change into more modest attire. Men should wear long pants (jeans or “Dockers” are fine) and short or long sleeved shirts (no tank tops or shorts for men or women in the villages).

Food can be different but throughout Africa the basic staples are rice, corn, noodles, small amounts of meat, and fresh fruits and vegetables, so it's actually very similar to fresh food in the US. Food can be mild or spicy. If you have special dietary needs just let your team leader know prior to departure from the US. We have traveled with hundreds of team members around Africa and food sickness is rare, most commonly occurring from restaurant food.

You will be provided bottled water for the duration of your time in Africa. Your team will always carry an ample supply. Always drink plenty of water throughout your trip.

You have been vaccinated and will be taking anti-malarial medication on the trip. We recommend you speak with your physician about carrying a course of prescription anti-biotic medication (such as Cipro) just in case you do get sick and are in an area where medications are not readily available.

### **Photography**

You are encouraged to bring your camera on your trip. Please understand, however, that **IT IS ILLEGAL TO TAKE A SINGLE PICTURE IN AFRICA WHERE A HUMAN IS IN THE PICTURE UNLESS YOU FIRST ASK.** In fact, you can be fined! Please feel free to take pictures of all the beautiful scenery. However, do not take pictures of any businesses or people without asking permission first. If you can't ask the business owner, ask your African host or your driver if you can take the picture. He can guide you on all your photography requests.

### **What to expect in the field**

Every trip and every team is different. There is no way to predict exactly what will happen on your team, but here is what a typical day in the field might bring your way:

The team would rise and be ready for breakfast by about 8am. On most mornings, typically just before breakfast, teams will have a morning “share” time. Team members are required to attend this discussion time.

After a small breakfast, a briefing of the day will come from the African team host or your team leader. He or she will review the plan for the day, what time things will happen, and who is doing what. Also at this time they will advise you on whether you can expect to have lunch prepared for you or whether team members should bring something to eat. Many days the team does not have an opportunity to stop for a lunch break. If you are someone who **must** eat, please be sure to let your team leader know this ahead of time and plan accordingly. Each team member should bring extra funds to buy food for these few occasions or bring food from home.

While visiting an orphanage or school that is partnered with VCI, your team may spend the day supporting staff members by doing *Quick Assessments* of the children, photographing them for the organization's files, and helping the staff complete their documentation of the children in the program. You will also train the staff or local leadership to do the assessments. Sometimes there are over three hundred children to document so this can be a very intense day with little time for rest or food. Time permitting, you will also

spend time playing with the kids, or in many cases, meeting for discussions with youth on subjects such as HIV/AIDS, becoming a woman or a man (men with the boys and women with the girls), life in Africa and the US, or any number of other topics. These are a great time to get to know the children and learn about their desires and their issues in life. If you are comfortable doing so, allow the local people time and space to share how God has worked in their lives, or ask about what their beliefs are. Share with them about your own challenges and weaknesses, and God's work in your own life. A big part of your responsibility as a team member is to take time to get to know the people you are serving.



When it's time to go, the team will return to the guest house or home in late afternoon or early evening. The team will debrief just before, during or after dinner each day and discuss any critical issues they saw or were made aware of, as well as share many heartwarming stories. It is a good way to unwind and to prepare for the following day, too. The team will draft an email to send to friends and family at home each evening. The team will be led by the African host and/or team leader throughout their stay. When the field work is complete and your time in the community is through, you will depart, traveling by air or car (depending on team itinerary).

### **Safari Time**

Village Care International includes safari time in each of their trips in East Africa.

Your team will leave your field work behind when you visit the game park for two nights, taking in all the wonderful animals of East Africa and sharing a time to unwind with your team mates. This time is meant for you to debrief, share, and process all you have seen, heard, smelled and tasted during your field time. Many team members have a difficult time (emotionally) returning to the states after their trip, and we hope this time of relaxation will help make for a smoother transition time for you.

You will be asked to complete a trip survey while at the park. Please be sure to turn this survey in to your team leader prior to departure from the game park. You will depart the park and return to Nairobi the day before your team leaves for the US, to spend the night.

Although Nigerian teams will not have safari at a game park, you will have recreational and debrief

opportunities at the end of your time in Nigeria.

### **Departure day**

On your last day in Africa, if time permits, your team may have an opportunity to visit a local orphanage that partners with VCI. Here, you will see the difference between orphans living in the city and those living in the outlying areas. You will also have an opportunity to visit some local sights, do some last minute souvenir shopping and get your bags packed for your trip home that evening.

In the early evening (typically) you and the team will depart for the airport and proceed with your trip home.

### **Post-trip Commitment**

At Village Care International, we hope you will continue your commitment to the people of Africa long after you return home. Your trip may change your life, and we hope it will make you a long-term volunteer member of the Village Care Network. We are always excited at the prospect of our team members becoming “infected” with the VCI bug!

