

# Volunteering

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## Volunteers Information, Recommendations & Guidelines.

More and more supporters are wishing to volunteer their time & skills and travel to a mission to help the poor in various countries such as Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and other countries.

For the purpose of this document we have chosen to illustrate Sierra Leone. However, the same recommendations, guidelines, Indemnities etc apply to all missions in all countries.

P4K have put together some details, recommendations & guidelines for you to understand. Please remember these are Christian Charity Mission in some of the poorest countries on the planet. It should not be mistaken for a Holiday. Nothing can prepare you for an experience like this; so why are you going? What can you contribute?

### 1. TRAVEL RISKS

First, you should check your countries governmental Department of Foreign Travel Board and satisfy yourself of any safety issues.

In general West Africa is not without risk; because of criminal activity, overcrowding, poor maintenance lack of basic safety equipment and immense poverty, petty crimes such as pick-pocketing and bag snatching are common throughout these countries and residential burglaries continue to be on the increase. Security risks are heightened at night. Women should never travel alone.

## 2. KNOW WHERE & WHEN YO'UR GOING

During the Months of July to October are heavy rains, school holidays and Fr Themis fundraising trip back to Australia.

No volunteers or visitors should be planned for these months. Research Sierra Leone at <http://www.visitsierraleone.org/>, <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/sierra-leone> and any other country you may be visiting.

## 3. TRAVEL BOOKINGS & VISA (5-20 Day Visa application time)

For Sierra Leone, you must apply and gain a Travel Visa; below is a link to the Sierra Leonean Governments web-page where you can apply online for a

**VISA. – <https://www.visitsierraleone.org/online-visa/>**

You must forward a high quality color copy of a valid Visa and Passport to pk4a@pk4a.com before you leave your home city,

Note - airlines will not allow you to board the plane to Freetown without a valid Visa, so it is imperative you apply and receive your Visa before you leave your home city. And SL customs will not allow you in unless you have a copy of your Visa and Visa payment receipt, so keep them with your passport.

### **Booking your Tickets**

When traveling to 3rd world countries, the cheapest airfare is not always the best.

Cheap tickets can sometimes equal cheap airlines and bad ticket class. It is wise to remember, if your in the mission field and you need to come home in a hurry that most cheap tickets have hefty penalties.

Before you book any tickets with any airline you must first have them approved by Fr Themis by emailing a detailed proposed Itinerary to pk4a@pk4a.com

DO NOT book your TICKETS without approval !

## **4. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS**

### **Sierra Leone International Airport – Lungi International Freetown, SL (FNA)**

Travelling from and to the airport to the P4K Mission House can take up to 10 hours

We recommend that you request that one of our Mission Staff meet you at Lungi Airport and help you to the mission.

(Refer to Transfer Costs section below)

On arrival prepare yourself for chaos at the airport.

The noise is mostly caused by porters falling over themselves to provide some sort of assistance that will land them a tip. You will be guided to pick up your bags and then go through customs, where you may be asked to open all your baggage. As you leave the airport our mission staff will be on the footpath waiting for you.

If you have chosen not to have one of our mission staff meet and assist you, then our advice would be to choose one porter and make sure he sticks with you throughout.

Make sure you are good with faces because you are probably going to be approached by someone else claiming to have assisted you. If you do not require any assistance, smiling and replying sternly “I’m fine”, should work. Make sure you have your small dollar US dollar bills for tips in hand to avoid revealing cash and personal effects that you may be carrying. (Refer Money & Tipping Section below)

The Lungi Airport and Freetown are separated by the Sierra Leone Bay (the 2nd largest in the world). In recent times, this journey across has been an adventure in itself and on very few occasions, with fatal consequences.

It is your decision which mode of transfer you choose but the main considerations to evaluate are speed, safety and reliability – all of which are available to various degrees. Regardless of which mode you decide, it is an all-day affair. Always allow the full day for travelling.

# Visitor Rules Regulations, Suggestions & VISA

## **Helicopter**

Helicopters and Sierra Leone have a bit of a notorious past, with a couple of crashes widely reported. However, the company that used to run these old Russian crafts are no longer in operation. The helicopter service (at this time of print) is now operated by Intercity Air, who so far have proven to be far more reliable than their predecessors and have recently just launched their 'new' helicopter fleet. Price is USD \$80 and journey time is around 10 minutes. If you choose this service we require you to pay both ways for the PK4A Staff to greet you. Approx Cost USD \$240.00 subject to change.

## **Water Taxi**

The water taxis are slightly bigger than your average speedboat and run on dual engines. The company, (at this time of print) Pelican Water Taxi are relatively new in the game but have so far carried out their operations professionally. The ride is sometimes bumpy & hazardous so you must prepare yourself for that. Approx cost is \$80 with journey time around 30 minute subject to change

## **Ferry-RECOMMENDED**

The Mission recommended option is the Ferry but it is certainly not the quickest option. The Mission vehicle and driver will meet you at Lungi and bring you to PK4A House. There are two ferries operating at scheduled times of 8am, 11am, 2pm and 6pm. There is a later ferry which runs with the schedule of the last flight, but there is no fixed time and schedules are often changed without notice. If you choose this service we require you to pay both ways for the PK4A Staff to greet you. Cost approx USD \$160.00 subject to change.

## **By Road**

HAZARDOUS It is possible to drive to Freetown from Lungi (6+ hours) depending on weather and a myriad of other conditions.

### 5. WEATHER

The climate of Freetown is of the typical tropical kind, basically meaning hot and humid (80% humidity) the whole year. The hottest time is from February to May when temperatures (especially in April) are generally well over 30 °C during the day.

The wet season lasts from June to October and the total amount of rainfall is significant. It is one of the wettest places in this part of the world and during the months of July to September there is around 2000 mm of rain in total! That time of year is cooler though, with temperatures between 26 °C and 28 °C. Night temperatures are just slightly cooler with temperatures year round around 25 °C.

### 6. Baggage, CLOTHING & TOILETRIES

Travel Light – One carry on only if possible –

Any Baggage in cargo will more than likely be subject to pilferage West Africa is both high in humidity and either HOT & DRY or HOT & WET.

Sierra Leone is fairly conservative, so while shorts and flip-flops are fine at the beach, it's best to wear trousers or skirts in the city and upcountry. To put it in perspective, you will be staying at the Church Mission House, treat it as if you are staying at a Monastery.

For Males – Light Jeans, Shorts, Light T-shirts, Short sleeve shirts and Singlets Good Comfortable running shoes or sneakers are recommended

For Females – Light Jeans, Shorts to the knees, Light Skirts, Socks, Comfortable Shoes or sneakers General Toiletries such as toothbrush, toothpaste, disinfectant soap, roll on deodorants (no aerosols), shaver, hair products etc all in small travel size.

## 7. MONEY & TIPPING

There are a few ATM's in Sierra Leone and no one has Credit / Debit Card facilities. You can withdraw money from your Credit / Debit Card from these ATM or the banks, Banks are difficult and time-consuming and problematic. Local Currency is Sierra Leonean Leone – US dollars are recommended.

When arriving to Sierra Leone it is advisable to have USD\$20 in USD\$1 notes for tipping. Tip \$1 to \$2 dollars only, from your pocket. Do not show your purse or wallet. If you wish to exchange Dollars to local Leones Fr Themí will organise it for you.

If you become friendly with any staff, mission helpers or persons and you wish to give them some money as a gift, DON'T Just take note of who they are and then clear it with Rev Themí. Give the money to Rev Themí, and he will make the gift. This will be a test in itself. DO NOT FLASH CASH!!

## 8. SHOPPING Sierra Leone

There is no such thing as shopping as we westerners know it. There are no recognisable supermarkets, snack bars, fast food restaurants, clothing shops etc They are all 3rd world standard and anything you purchase will be expensive.



### 9. GETTING THERE

There are several ways of getting to Freetown. International services are limited but airlines like Brussels Airlines (recommended), Kenya Airways (Nairobi) and Royal Air Maroc (Casablanca), Turkish Air have services.

The cheapest is via Kenya, the dearest & the safest is via London.

Shop around, but before you book, contact PK4A for last-minute advice. All travel must be liaised and approved by Rev Themis in writing.

### 10. ACCOMMODATION & COST OF STAYING AT THE Orthodox Mission Houses

Accommodation in Freetown is expensive and the Mission House's expenses are paid entirely by P4K Donations. So staying at the Mission House is NOT Free, .....so your visit and stay costs the mission precious resources and so there are some costs to visitors. Please understand that everything at the mission costs money.

All money that runs the mission has been donated and everything costs money, Electricity is "pay as you" go and when there is none, it's by "generator", Water is specially bought in, Food is expensive, Petrol is expensive & most times scarce; the cost of living for a westerner is expensive.

Therefore a fee must be paid to the Orthodox Mission either directly when you arrive or via P4K before you leave your country of origin..

As a gift for staying at the Mission House, we suggest up to \$50 USD a day per person to help cover & minimize expenses during your stay at the mission.

**Not applicable to Long-Term Volunteers.**

### **11. Share Accommodation**

It is a possibility that you will be billeted in mission houses with other volunteers and mission workers. In Africa, the PK4A house has (at this time of print) 6 self-contained 2 bedroom units, each unit has its own – separate bathroom with toilet and shower – 2 with lounge area – each bedroom has a Queen or Single Bed – air conditioning unit – Each unit can house a configuration of up to 2 (husband and wives) plus 1 single = 3 persons

### **12. Mission Accommodation Etiquette**

Water and Power are rare commodities and should be used sparingly. Lighting, electrical power and Air-conditioning should be used carefully and switched off at 11pm nightly. Water is expensive, showers should be kept to 1-2 per day per person.

### **13. Etiquette for Mission Visitors Men and Women**

Both men and women must take care and be mindful that as foreigners, you will stand out. The following is recommended for your safety. Women must take extra care. You will be a minority at the mission house and you must take great care. Dress codes: Hot & Humid.

It would be best to wear loose fitting cotton clothing. As visitors to the missions, modesty in dress is expected of all visitors. Interactions with others; A simple greeting with a kiss can be interpreted differently, so when you interact with anyone be as formal as possible. Never kiss or hug anyone in a adult situation, just shake their hand and if you want to show your Christian love and compassion shake their hand with both hands.

This applies to everyone, males and females. Mission visitors are forbidden to casually leave the missions alone at any time. Make sure that you have informed mission staff of your intentions.

## Visitor Rules Regulations, Suggestions & VISA

Again this is for your safety. Appearances are everything, and we spent many years gaining the respect & trust of the people. As foreigners, you will stand out. Be mindful also that all visitors automatically are seen as representatives of the mission and your presence and actions will be seen as a reflection of the mission.

### **14. Alcohol**

The Mission is Alcohol Free, Alcohol is not permitted within the confines of the Mission. Intoxication will not be tolerated. If you visit the mission as a worker or a guest, you will be seen as a representative of the mission.

### **15. Food**

In the major cities like Freetown, anything you can wish for can be bought at newly opened western Style supermarkets, from Heinz Baked Beans to some of the nicest bread you'll taste. However, in the provinces you will be subject to basic living conditions.

### **16. Payments of Transport & Accommodation**

Fees should be paid for before leaving your country of origin by Direct Deposit, Telegraphic Transfer or Paypal. This is not mandatory but is recommended to save time and effort. The less cash you carry with you the safer it is. Email [pk4a@pk4a.com](mailto:pk4a@pk4a.com) for details.

### **17. LOCAL TRANSPORTATION**

The mission has several vehicles at its disposal. Where possible, Fr Themis will issue you or your group a Vehicle, Driver / Guide on your free days – Driver and Fuel costs are part of your accommodation costs.

## 18. LOCAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mobile / Cell phone communication improves every day. The mission house has decent Wifi Internet ...when it works! Taking a cheap smartphone will allow the volunteer to keep in communication with home and loved ones via SMS & 3&4 g Mobile Internet.

Volunteers can purchase Prepaid Sim Cards, calling to international numbers is expensive. Internet is available by the local 3&4 g network but slow, but good enough for light face booking and surfing.

The use of Skype, Viber and the like work reasonably well .... at times. You will be able to share this where possible at the cost of pre-paid top up cards.

## 19. MEDICAL ADVICE & INSURANCE

Be aware that when you arrive in certain countries you could be refused entry if you do not have their required vaccination certificates and on your return to your country of origin you may be put into quarantine if you have not taken the proper precautions.

Every Volunteer must have their own comprehensive Medical Insurance and inoculations. Copies of all insurances and vaccination certificates must be scanned and emailed to Rev Themis at [rev.themis@gmail.com](mailto:rev.themis@gmail.com)

### **Immunizations and Malaria Prevention**

You must consult your primary doctor or travel clinic regarding your specific needs.

### **Mandatory Vaccinations**

Yellow Fever: A Yellow Fever vaccination certificate is required for all travelers arriving from all countries in to Sierra Leone. Immigration will request a valid yellow fever vaccination certificate upon entry and they may deny entry without it.

## Visitor Rules Regulations, Suggestions & VISA

Some countries, such as Australia, will also request a valid vaccination certificate when you return from Sierra Leone and may refuse your entry or place you in quarantine without it. Australians can look at:

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/health-pubhlth-strateg-communic-factsheets-yellow.htm> which is the Australian government's requirements with regard to the Yellow Fever vaccine.

### **Highly Recommended Immunizations**

Travel Immunizations:

Meningitis (ACWY) Typhoid Cholera Hepatitis A – Series of 2 Hepatitis B – Series of 3 (for any volunteers whose work will involve health care or plumbing) Rabies (discuss with your Doctor) Full course of the following (including childhood series and adult booster as required): Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus Polio HIB (Haemophilus Influenzae type B) MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella – 2 doses) Meningitis C BCG (TB immunization) – only in countries where available

### **Malaria Prevention**

Malaria is a common cause of illness and a potential cause of death in travelers to mission fields. Prophylaxis medication should be taken to help in the prevention of Malaria. There are several options available and this should be discussed with your Doctor. Also, efforts must be taken to prevent mosquito bites: These include using a mosquito net for sleep

### **Covid -19**

Check online for the Latest Covid -19 requirements.

## 20. Travel & Volunteering Insurance

Travel insurance is Highly Recommended for all volunteers participating in mission programs abroad. To help Paradise 4 Kids volunteers source the right kind of insurance, we recommend World Nomads and Good Missionary Insurance, the leaders in insurance for independent travelers.

World Nomads offers a range of policies that are suitable for volunteering abroad and can be easily extended to cover travel before or after a volunteering experience. They are also very competitively priced, recommended by Lonely Planet, and underwritten by the likes of Bupa, Lloyd's and Millstream.

At Good Missionary Insurance know about tight budgets, so you won't see lots of frills and extras in our health plans – in order to keep your costs low. We also know that you want and need good missionary insurance, so we have carefully selected the best budget-friendly plans.

For those looking for more features and an additional level of protection, we have “Platinum” plans available just for you. Most of our short-term plans are around \$1-2 a day (or less!) depending on age. Long term plans will depend on your health, age, and location. Let us help you locate the most affordable plan that fits you best. We know which are good for young families, for singles, for hazardous locations or those far from western-style medical facilities.

## Disclaimer:

Paradise 4 Kids has made every effort to ensure that every volunteer both short and long term, takes out their own appropriate insurance. However, as the information is a general recommendation and not enforceable, but only to serve as advice, no warranty is given in the safety of volunteers.

Paradise 4 Kids disclaims all and any liability to any person in respect to any consequence of actions or otherwise based on information contained herein.

## Statement:

I Have read the Visitor/Volunteer Commitment Agreement and fully understand my responsibilities as a volunteer both short and long term with the mission, I have read the Visitor / Request Information Page and the Visitors Rules Regulations & Suggestion Page and understand the recommendations and have taken steps to prepare myself for what has been described in the pages.

I agree to fulfill my commitment to the best of my ability, and to notify the omission when I am no longer able to do so.

Visitor / Volunteer Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Vistor / Volunteer Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by:

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Acknowledgement:

1. I acknowledge that participating as a Visitor or Volunteer both short and long term with missions is inherently a dangerous activity by way of been isolated in a 'Third World Country'

2. I acknowledge that participating as a Visitor or Volunteer both short and long term in a "Third World Country" involves the risks of physical injury and/or death and therefore I voluntarily assume all risks associated with being a Volunteer with the Mission and its agents, including, but not limited to, my own actions or inactions, the actions or inactions of others including falls, illness, infection, contact with others (including other visitors /volunteers and or staff), completing any and all mission work, defective equipment, the effects of weather (including high heat and/or humidity), health risks (including but not limited to overexertion, dehydration, fatigue, lack of fitness or conditioning).

3. I agree to comply with all posted or implied rules and warnings during the stay and follow any instructions or directions given by any employees, representatives or agents of the mission.

4. I acknowledge, agree and accept that some of the obstacles I may encounter may be water that has not been tested for chemicals, disease or contamination and that the area the mission works in may contain wild animals, insects and plants.

5. I certify that I am physically fit and have no medical condition that would make participation as a visitor / volunteer more hazardous. If I am pregnant, disabled in any way or have recently suffered an illness, injury or impairment, I should have or did consult a physician before participating in the mission.

6. I agree not to consume alcohol at any time whilst in the country or use any medicines or substances that will inhibit my mental or physical ability to safely and effectively participate in the Mission.



## Visitor Rules Regulations, Suggestions & VISA

7. I consent to medical care and transportation in order to obtain treatment of injury to me during my stay, as volunteers or medical professionals may deem appropriate.

8. I acknowledge that this document extends to any liability arising out of or in any way connected with the medical treatment and transportation provided in the event of an emergency and/or injury to me.

9. I acknowledge and agree that I am expected to exhibit appropriate behavior at all times and to obey all local, state and federal civil and criminal laws at all times while in the country of the mission.

10. I acknowledge that the mission, including its employees and agents can dismiss me, without refund, should my behavior endanger the safety of or negatively affect the mission, another person, facility or property of any kind. I also agree to indemnify the mission, its past and present employees and agents, from any and all third party claims caused in whole or in part by my negligent or intentional acts or omissions.

11. I acknowledge that mission, its past and present employees and agents, are not responsible for any personal items or property that is lost, damaged or stolen, on the way to, during and, on the way out of the mission.

12. I consent to the use of my image in photographs, motion pictures, or recordings taken at the Event for use in the advertising, marketing or promotion of the mission or any other event being conducted by its past and present employees and agents. I also assign all rights, title, and interest in any and all photographs, motion pictures, recordings or other records of me during my stay at the mission to its past and present employees and agents.

14. I agree that its past and present employees and agents, reserves the right to cancel my trip, in the event of extreme weather or for any reason that will protect the safety and security of the its past and present employees and agents including yourself.

## Visitor Rules Regulations, Suggestions & VISA

15. I am at least 18 years old OR my Parent/Guardian has reviewed this waiver and consented to its terms.

16. I have taken out my own TRAVEL Health insurance and enclose a copy.

17. I enclose a copy of my PASSPORT / VISA / and VACCINATIONS.

21. Contact information for someone in your country of origin.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Visitor / Volunteer Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Visitor / Volunteer Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by:

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Waiver and Indemnity:

1. I understand that the mission, its past and present employees and agents are committed to conducting itself and themselves in a safe manner and holds the safety of Visitors / Volunteers in the highest regard and that the mission, its past and present employees and agents attempt to reduce such risks and insists that all visitors / volunteer follow safety rules and instructions that are designed to protect their and all involved safety.

2. I am solely responsible for determining if I am (or my minor child is) physically fit and/or sufficiently skilled for the Mission.

3. I recognise and acknowledge that there are risks of physical, mental and spiritual injury and or fatigue in visiting or volunteering in a “Third World Country”, and I freely and voluntarily agree to assume the full risk of any and all injuries and or fatigue that I (or my child) may sustain as a result of visiting / volunteering in the mission.

4. I assume all risks and hazards incidental to such participation in the mission, and I waive and indemnify the mission, its officers, employees, agents and representatives, for any claim (of any nature) arising out of an injury to me (or my child) and from any and all claims arising out of or connected with my (or my child's) participation in the mission.

5. I agree to release, and not make any claim (of any nature) against the mission, its past and present employees and agents arising as a result of, or in connection with, my participation in the mission. I acknowledge that I have read and fully understood the important information above, including the Visitor / Request Information Page and the Visitors Rules Regulations & Suggestion Page and agree to the terms of this document.

### **6. Consent of Parent or Guardian for participant under the Age of 18**

6.1. I am the parent or guardian of the below named participant (Minor).

6.2. I acknowledge that I have read and fully understood the information above, and agree to the terms of this document.

6.3. I give my approval for the Minor's participation in the mission.

6.4. In doing so, I agree to assume all risks and hazards incidental to the Minor's participation in the mission and I release and indemnify the mission, its officers, employees, agents, and representatives for any claim arising out of an injury to the Minor and from any and all claims arising out of or connected with the Minor's participation in the mission. I also, on behalf of the Minor and myself, release the mission its past and present employees and agents and will not make any claim (of any nature) against the mission its past and present employees and agents arising as a result of, or in connection with, the mission.

6.5. I acknowledge I have carefully read, understood, accepted and agreed to the terms of this document.

Visitor / Volunteer Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Visitor / Volunteer Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Witnessed by:

Name : \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please initial every page  
acknowledging you have read  
each page**

**Fill in all details**

**then print all pages and email  
to [rev.themi@gmail.com](mailto:rev.themi@gmail.com)**