

NeedBe Foundation

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER ODYSSEY HANDBOOK

A Comprehensive Preparation & Field Guide for Placements in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Destination: Volta Region, Ghana

Focus: Menstrual Health, WASH Facility Auditing, Obaa Reusable Pads

Document Version: 2026.1 (Release 1)

1. Welcome to the Odyssey

Thank you for choosing to serve with the NeedBe Foundation. This placement is more than volunteering — it is an active immersion into sustainable, community-led gender equality and public health operations.

Our placements operate primarily across the Volta Region of Ghana, focusing on school-based menstrual health workshops, local manufacturing of Obaa reusable pads, and Water & Sanitation (WASH) infrastructure audits.

Primary Host Communities

Tafi Atome Village	An award-winning eco-tourism sanctuary surrounded by protected rainforest. Volunteers here live with local hosts and focus heavily on community outreach, school education campaigns, and forest conservation projects.
Avatime Highlands	Situated in the mountain clouds with panoramic views. Volunteers in the Avatime region work in high-altitude school clubs, support reusable pad stitching operations at our workshop, and survey local clean water infrastructure.

2. Pre-Departure Requirements

Preparation is key to a meaningful and safe experience. Before departing, ensure all items on this checklist are completed:

- **Passport & Visa:** A valid passport with at least 6 months validity from date of entry is required. Apply for a Ghanaian Volunteer Visa at least 6-8 weeks before your flight.
- **Yellow Fever Vaccination:** Proof of Yellow Fever vaccination is mandatory and will be checked at immigration in Kotoka International Airport (ACC).
- **Malaria Prophylaxis:** Consult a travel clinic or medical provider to get prescription malaria prevention medicine suitable for Ghana.
- **Travel Insurance:** Comprehensive medical and travel insurance covering field placements is required.
- **Background Clearance:** All international volunteers must submit a valid background check or police clearance before arriving in child-facing partner schools.

Packing Essentials

Ghana is warm and tropical year-round. Dress code in partner schools is modest (shoulder-covering shirts, and long trousers or skirts past the knees). Dress light but respect school customs.

Essential items to pack:

- Modest, loose cotton clothing
- Sturdy walking/hiking shoes for outdoor and highland surveys
- Reusable water bottle and high-protection sunscreen
- Insect repellent with DEET
- Personal hygiene supplies and light raincoat

3. In-Country Integration & Culture

Upon arrival in Accra, a NeedBe coordinator will welcome you at the Kotoka International Airport (ACC). You will travel together to the Volta Region.

Vetted Homestay Lodging

Living with local host families allows you to participate in community traditions. Homestays have been vetted for security and cleanliness. Standard meals include healthy options like jollof rice, plantains, beans, and fresh local fruit.

Cultural Guidelines & Local Etiquette

Ghanaian culture is renowned for warm hospitality. Keep these key etiquette points in mind:

Use Your Right Hand: Always wave, accept, or give objects with your right hand. The left hand is traditionally considered impolite for greetings and transactions.

Greetings Matter: Taking time to greet elders, teachers, and hosts when entering a room or village is standard. A handshake is the custom.

Linguistic Immersion: While English is the official language, learning basic greetings in the local language of the Volta Region (Ewe) goes a long way. Try saying *Woezo* (Welcome) and *Akpe* (Thank you).

Emergency Contacts: *Emergency support is available 24/7. Your program director can be reached at +233 (0) 555-NEEDBE. Field office location: Ho, Volta Region.*