N/a’an ku sê Volunteer Projects

About N/a’an ku sê

Marlice van Vuuren, one of Namibia’s most well-known conservationists, and her husband Dr. Rudie van Vuuren, with the support of long-term friends Chris Heunis and Jan Verburg, started N/a’an ku sê Foundation in 2006. The aim of the foundation is to protect and conserve the vulnerable land, cultures and wildlife of Namibia and rescue species threatened by an ever-shrinking habitat. N/a’an ku sê, meaning “God will protect us” in the beautiful clicking language of the San, carries out the vital work of improving the lives of African wildlife as well as those of the marginalized San Bushman community.

The N/a’an ku sê Foundation continues to grow and thrive with several projects taking place for volunteers to participate in while making a real difference. These projects include wildlife conservation, rehabilitation and research as well as work with the San community at our school and medical clinic.

Importance of our Volunteers

As a charity, we do not receive any government funding and are solely reliant on generous donations and the time of volunteers to continue our vital work. Our Wildlife Sanctuary, Carnivore Conservation Research Projects, Clever Cubs School and Lifeline Clinic could not function without the hard work, dedication, support and time of our volunteers. Our volunteers have come from all walks of life, are aged from 18 years upward and come from all over the world. Here at N/a’an ku sê volunteers create a new home in the heart of Africa where they stay any length of time from 2 weeks to 3 months. All funds from our volunteer programmes are ploughed back into our projects, enabling the N/a’an ku sê Foundation to grow and become even more successful in achieving our vision.
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With no previous experience or qualifications necessary to participate in our program, our projects offer people the opportunity to make a lasting and tangible difference to the lives of the vulnerable San community and Namibia’s wildlife. In return, our volunteers are provided with a once in a lifetime experience of living and working in the real Africa, meeting a variety of people from different backgrounds as well as gaining a unique opportunity to take a hands on role in conservation, rehabilitation and humanitarian work. Our volunteers come for various reasons and from all walks of life. Whether they are wildlife and nature enthusiasts, pre-veterinary or medical doctors, teachers, conservationists, gap year students or simply those with a taste for adventure and a desire to make an impact in Africa, volunteers will find that while at N/a’an ku sê they will grow as a person in mind, heart and soul.

*We never forget our volunteers and our volunteers never forget their time at N/a’an ku sê.*

**N/a’an ku sê Projects & Locations**

With the help of our dedicated volunteers and staff, the N/a’an ku sê Foundation continues to work toward an improved Namibia through the implementation of various projects that operate in 4 different sites around the country. These projects include wildlife work such as conservation and rehabilitation at the N/a’an ku sê Wildlife Sanctuary as well as Carnivore Conservation Research at Neuras and Kanaan, our two sites operating in the South of Namibia. Other projects and activities focus on aiding the San community and include our Lifeline Medical Clinic in the east of Namibia as well as voluntary participation at our Clever Cubs School for San children at the Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Volunteer Projects**

- **Wildlife Conservation**: The N/a’an ku sê Wildlife Sanctuary (Clever Cubs School available here as an activity or project) near Windhoek
- **Carnivore Conservation Research**: Neuras Wine and Wildlife Estate in the South
- **Carnivore Conservation Research**: Kanaan N/a’an ku sê Desert Retreat in the South
- **Medical**: Lifeline Clinic at Epukiro in the East
Volunteers may choose to combine various projects and activities and rotate amongst the different sites or may choose to focus on only one project or area of interest for the duration of their stay—the experience can be tailored to suit the needs and desires of each volunteer. The pre-booking of project itineraries in advance is advised but can also be adjusted upon arrival subject to project availability.

Wildlife Conservation Volunteer

Conveniently located just 45 km from Namibia’s capital of Windhoek and 35 km from the airport, yet nestled in the African bush surrounded by the sights, sounds and smells of nature, N/a’an ku sê’s main site is home to the Wildlife Sanctuary and Clever Cubs School. Wildlife Conservation Volunteers may choose to spend their time solely working on the Wildlife Sanctuary or alternatively may choose to volunteer some or all of their time working with San children at our school.

The N/a’an ku sê Wildlife Sanctuary

On this project, volunteers will have the rare and exciting opportunity to actively participate in the conservation, rehabilitation and research of African wildlife. The sanctuary, which is the heart of N/a’an ku sê operations, currently provides a safe refuge for orphaned, injured or ‘problem’ wildlife including a number of lions, leopards, cheetahs, wild dogs, caracals, warthogs, antelope and baboons as well as a host of birds, smaller African mammals and farmyard animals.

Our Wildlife Conservation Volunteers provide an important resource in the daily care and feeding of the N/a’an ku sê animals, as well as helping to maintain and develop the sanctuary. This is an exceptional opportunity to get hands on with African wildlife and many aspects of their care. Additionally, although our focus is on animal welfare, there will also be educational and recreational activities for volunteers to take part in. All routine aspects of the programme are carried out in a rotational group system to ensure that everybody gets exposed to the variety of experiences available.

Possible tasks as a Wildlife Conservation Volunteer include:

- Preparing food and feeding the wildlife and farm animals
- Cleaning and maintaining enclosures
- Providing enrichment to the animals (in the form of interaction, walks in the bush or implementation of special activities for them)
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- Providing intensive care for juvenile wildlife including overnight care for some animals such as baboons
- Physical labour such as building new facilities
- Research which entails the monitoring of free-ranging carnivores in the area and surrounding farms to aid in N/a’an ku sê’s role of conserving threatened carnivores by reducing human-wildlife conflict through research, relationship-building, improved livestock protection and cooperation with local farmers to reduce the motivation for persecution of predators
- Time in the environment such as tracking & monitoring carnivores (and snakes!) on or near property, horseback riding and game counts in the bush
- Assisting with the various projects that arise at the sanctuary

For more information please see the Wildlife Conservation PDF document in the Volunteer Packet.

The Clever Cubs School at the N/a’an ku sê Sanctuary

The Wildlife Conservation project may also entail volunteering with the San children and assisting the teacher at our Clever Cubs School, located on premises at the N/a’an ku sê Sanctuary. This Pre-School provides vital free education to the San Bushman children whose parents work on site and who would otherwise not have access to education.

The school, opened in November 2009, provides a full curriculum including English, Mathematics, Arts & Crafts, Sports and Environmental Studies to our children and toddlers. As well as learning how to read and write, the children enjoy dancing, singing and playing. We are also working to enroll as many of the older children as possible into mainstream schools in Windhoek to continue their education. The children are extremely friendly and love meeting new people – their enthusiasm and smiles are infectious to all!
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Wildlife Conservation Volunteers may choose to spend as little or as much time as they please assisting our teacher and spending time with the children as the school is located on the Sanctuary's property. If you would like the opportunity to help at the Clever Cubs School please let us know in advance where possible although requests to participate in this activity are also taken upon arrival and throughout the duration of your project stay. If you would like to focus solely on volunteering at the school throughout part or all of your stay, please indicate this to the bookings office at the time of your reservation.

Carnivore Conservation Research Volunteer

N/a’an ku sê provides volunteers with the unique opportunity to visit one or both of our research sites in Southern Namibia: Neuras Wine & Wildlife Estate and Kanaan N/a’an ku sê Desert Retreat. At both of these projects, you will have the chance to monitor large carnivores and other animals in the area, contributing to invaluable research that will help mitigate human-wildlife conflict in Africa.

Both Neuras and Kanaan run on a seven-night schedule with transportation to and from the Sanctuary on Saturdays. Volunteers have the option of spending 1 or more weeks at both or either site as part of their trip. Due to space limitations, it is recommended to reserve a spot at Neuras and Kanaan in advance of arrival preferably at the time of booking although it may be possible to add this to your itinerary upon arrival at the Sanctuary pending availability.

Alternatively, volunteers can choose to partake solely in the Research Program(s) as a Research Volunteer and spend all of their time at one or both research sites. If you are interested in only doing the research part of our volunteering program, please notify us at the time of your booking.

Please Note: For both Neuras and Kanaan, small surcharges apply to cover transportation to the sites.

Neuras Wine and Wildlife Estate

Set amongst the stunning scenery of the Southern mountains, ancient canyons and caves, fascinating geological formations and five natural fountains, Neuras is truly a unique research site and is home to one of N/a’an ku sê’s carnivore research programs - in addition to being one of only three wineries in Namibia.

At Neuras, volunteers will get ample field experience and be involved first hand with all aspects of our research programme which includes monitoring wild carnivores such as leopard, cheetah and hyena. Activities here also include data collection and processing, checking camera
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traps, game counts, mapping and exploring the terrain and environment. You may also get the opportunity to visit our collared cheetahs at Solitaire or to visit the world famous red sand dunes at Sossusvlei. Daily activities usually entail hiking in the vast outdoors of this semi-desert landscape of Neuras, which extends southwards from the top of the majestic Naukluft Mountains, forming an unbelievable oasis on the edge of the Namib desert. You should not miss this fantastic environment.

For more information please see the Neuras Wine and Wildlife Estate PDF document in the Volunteer Packet.

**Kanaan N/a’an ku sê Desert Retreat**

Approximately 2 hours south of Neuras and bordering the Namib Naukluft Park lies N/a’an ku sê’s newest research project site, Kanaan Desert Retreat. Red sand dunes, vast open grass plains and imposing mountain ranges make up the serene surroundings of Kanaan. Home to cheetah, brown hyena, spotted hyena, leopard and an array of other desert-adapted wildlife, Kanaan encompasses 352 km² of desert scenery in which volunteers will perform vital research.

Research volunteers at Kanaan may be involved with mapping the terrain, assisting with capture and releases, tracking, game counts, camera traps, maintenance and security on the reserve as well as night drives and sleep-outs. During free-time, volunteers may choose to enjoy sundowners in the beautiful Namib desert while taking in the breath-taking scenery of Kanaan.

For more information please see the Kanaan Desert Retreat PDF document in the Volunteer Packet.
Medical Volunteer

Our clinic provides primary healthcare to around 4,200 people each year, the majority of whom are San. We examine and treat patients at the clinic and transport those who need further medical treatment to the hospital, over 120km away. Our patients live in Epukiro (or Pos 3 as it’s commonly known) and come from the surrounding villages and settlements, often travelling 50-100km to attend our clinic. At our primary healthcare clinic we consult with each patient, examine and assess their ailments, establish a diagnosis and treat accordingly. Around 40% of all our patients are children.

The San are considered to be the oldest culture in the world and are traditionally hunter-gatherers. Nowadays many San live in extreme poverty and suffer from diseases such as TB, HIV and malnutrition. N/a’an ku sê is committed to improving the lives of the San community through education, healthcare and better living conditions. Providing accessible primary healthcare to this community really is a lifeline to many.

Our medical staff carries out monthly outreach work including Pos 10 Goeie Hoop Primary School (Good Hope). We also run a Community Health Worker project which assists or encourages people to take responsibility for their own lives and teaches remote communities how to improve their own health by looking out for basic symptoms of illnesses and treating them accordingly. Here we are able to treat other people without accessible medical care thereby expanding our health provision to those who need it most.

Whether you have no medical experience or you have worked in the field for 40 years - the activities of our Medical Volunteer program vary and will be tailored to each person depending on prior experience. Volunteers will participate in and assist our doctor and nurse with the running of the Lifeline Clinic and help provide primary healthcare to the local community.

You will provide hands on support at the clinic, participating in observations, running 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. If you are very experienced you could perhaps take on a project of your own.

The project at the clinic runs on a 12 night schedule with transfers to the clinic departing every second Sunday and arriving back on the farm on the Friday of the following week. Depending on the day you arrive, you may also have the opportunity to work with the animals if you choose to combine your time with our Wildlife Volunteer program.

For more information please see The Lifeline Clinic PDF document in the Volunteer Packet.

Accommodation and Facilities

Accommodation and Food for the Wildlife Conservation & Carnivore Research Programs

We have two options of accommodation at the Wildlife Sanctuary; volunteer rooms with up to three people (same gender) sharing each room, or large tents with a living and bedroom area to be shared by up to two people (same gender or a couple). The rooms are basic but our single beds are comfortable with bedding provided (duvets and pillows). Showers and toilet facilities are communal and hot water is supplied by solar energy and therefore sometimes restricted. Power sockets for electrical items are available in communal areas.

Three balanced meals are provided per day on a self-serve basis. On weekends we often have a braai (barbecue). Vegetarian options are available upon request. Please advise us of any special dietary requirements prior to arrival at the project.

The facilities at our research sites are very similar to the ones provided at the sanctuary, with accommodation being either in guesthouse rooms or in large tents. We will provide you with three meals per day.

Accommodation and Food for the Medical Volunteer Program

Whilst volunteering at the Lifeline Clinic in Epukiro you will stay in the volunteer house along with the resident Doctor and Nurse. The modern bungalow has a kitchen, two bathrooms, living room and bedrooms with single beds and bedding provided. Depending on volunteer numbers,
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you may be in a room to yourself or with one other person of the same gender. You will receive three meals each day which are prepared between everyone living at the house - volunteers and doctors. The clinic can only accommodate a maximum number of four volunteers at any given time so the living situation is more like a house share or family environment.

Fun activities and free time

During your time at the Wildlife Sanctuary, you may enjoy activities such as a nature walk across the farm, swimming in our pool, playing football or paintball, followed by a sunset downer and braai (barbeque). Saturday afternoons are comprised of a fun activity, and on Sundays you may have the opportunity to go into Windhoek or go for lunch or even an overnight stay at our luxury lodge. You may also have the opportunity to visit the Ancient San Skills Academy to learn about signs and tracks of the veldt, fire making with traditional San fire sticks, making bows and arrows, jewellery and craft making, and hunting in the traditional San way.

Another option as an add-on to your stay at the Wildlife Sanctuary is to book a tour to see more of the country. In Namibia, a beautiful country of changing landscapes, there is much to see and experience. Optional tours include a safari to Etosha National Park, a visit to the coastal town of Swakopmund, a chance to sandboard on the iconic red dunes of Sossusvlei and many more options, with which we can assist you.

At Neuras and Kanaan you may enjoy nature walks, swimming in the nearby water pools, sundowners and a braai.

At the Lifeline Clinic you may spend some of your free time visiting the local San Bushman village, playing football with the local children or visiting nearby villages to learn more about the San community.
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**Flights**

With exception to the medical project we advise all volunteers to arrive on either Monday or Thursday as we have set induction/orientation days on Tuesdays and Fridays only. If you cannot arrive on one of those set days then we recommend you stay at the luxurious Utopia Boutique [www.utopiamedispa.org](http://www.utopiamedispa.org) for a reduced rate of N$820 per room DBB, or Chameleon Backpackers [www.chameleonbackpackers.com](http://www.chameleonbackpackers.com) where a range of rooms are available. Transfers which occur outside of Monday and Thursday will be charged an additional N$500 per person (with the exception of the medical volunteers who may arrive on an off-transfer day). Medical volunteers start their project on Sundays (with transfers departing every second Sunday). Medical volunteers should arrive no later than the Saturday prior to their Sunday departure and will be based at the wildlife sanctuary until the transfer to the clinic.

It is important that once you have booked your flights you email us at bookings@naankuse.com with the following information:

- Flight number
- Carrier (who you are flying with)
- Where you are flying from
- Arrival date and time in Windhoek
- Departure details from Windhoek

**Vaccinations**

Vaccinations are sometimes required to enter Namibia. For the project we recommend you to have both rabies and tetanus vaccinations. In addition please also contact your doctor or travel clinic to discuss and arrange the appropriate vaccinations - and please remember to carry the vaccination certificate with your passport.

None of our sites are located in Malaria risk areas with the exception of our Lifeline Clinic, which is in a low risk area. Please contact the bookings manager for further information. Please note it may be necessary to take malaria tablets should you decide to travel to other parts of Namibia during your stay or after the project. Please consult your doctor for advice.

**Emergency contact**

Please carry these contact details with you on your travel to the Wildlife Sanctuary:

*In country contact:* +264 81 2612709 or +264 61 307338

If an emergency at home necessitates a message being passed to you urgently please use the following contact details:

*Emergency number:* +264 81 2612709 or +264 61 307338
What To Pack

- Volunteer work at the sanctuary involves hands-on work with the animals, project work and walking with baboons so you are likely to get very dirty! Old and dispensable clothes marked with your name are advisable for daily activities as well as closed-toed shoes. This type of clothing is also advised for our research sites.

- As the sanctuary on N/a’an ku sê uses recycled water for our sprinkling system as part of our environmental awareness, we ask that volunteers please bring biodegradable products (i.e. shampoo, soap) for use from overseas to prevent our sprinkler system from malfunctioning.

- The Lifeline Clinic is based in a dusty and remote area of Namibia. You will be provided with scrubs to wear when helping at the clinic, but will need suitable footwear and casual old clothes for evenings and weekends.

- While we do not sell any toiletries, cosmetics, sunscreen or other items apart from snacks and drinks, Sunday trips to Windhoek are available but it is advisable to bring enough of what you need.

What Our Volunteers Say:

*For me N/a’an ku sê is my second home, I've been there three times now and every time it just gets better. The baboons are the main reason I love it so much, the interaction you get with them is incredible! The experiences I've had have been unforgettable, watching Caitlin the leopard run free will stay with me forever. It has been an absolute privilege to spend so much time working somewhere that cares so greatly about the lives of these amazing animals and working with some brilliant people."

Caroline Walkley, England – volunteer

"My experience at N/a’an ku sê was one of a life time. Both the Lifeline Clinic and the wildlife experience is something I will talk about forever. I think it is important for volunteers to share with the rest of the world, to raise awareness of our beautiful planet and the beautiful people who devote their lives to humanity and ecology."

Kathryn Reid, Canada - volunteer
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Book your trip now!

N/a’an ku sê is one of those places where some people just find themselves. They find their family, their friends, their home and their future here. Many staff members were once volunteers who couldn’t quite bring themselves to leave. Many volunteers come back again and again to be together with the animals and people they fell in love with.

Visit our Facebook page and talk to past and future volunteers: www.facebook.com/naankuse

Watch videos of our work on our You Tube page: www.youtube.com/naankuse

Book your trip of a lifetime or find out more information: e-mail bookings@naankuse.com

We look forward to welcoming you and working with you to make a difference to African conservation and people. Thank you!