

Frequently Asked Questions

Dekpor Outreach Volunteers

(Updated February 2018)

What are the living arrangements like?

- While in Dekpor, you stay in a private home with 2 people to a room. (3/room can be accommodated)
- Each person will be provided with a key to their room.
- There is NO running water. There is a standpipe that provides clean drinking water.
- There is electricity but it is occasionally out.
- Bedding and pillows are supplied, but DO bring a towel to use in Dekpor.
- The house in Dekpor has 3 outdoor outhouse-type toilets called aqua-privies.
- There are 4 shower stalls – you bring the water in a bucket to pour on yourself.
- Should you choose to go on tours, the hotels are basic, clean, and double occupancy.

Do I need a mosquito net?

- No. Windows and doors are screened at all places you will be staying.
- Mosquito nets ARE available if desired.
- Mosquito repellent is a MUST! Malaria is a constant threat. Long sleeves and pants are a good idea in the evenings.
- Malaria medication is strongly recommended. See your travel doctor before leaving home.

Will I be able to keep in contact with family and friends in Canada?

- You can use a cell phone, but it must be an unlocked phone able to run on a GSM network.
- You can buy a local SIM card and you will be able to text home.
- Using What's App and Facebook chat or iMessenger are all fairly reliable.
- International texts are reasonable.
- There is no local internet in Dekpor, but some hotels have it. There are internet cafes in Accra.
- Sometimes we get a signal and can email on phones.

Should I bring my laptop?

- Sure!

Tell me about the food.

- A lot of food is vegetarian due to lack of refrigeration.
- Lots of varied dumpling-type food is served with a slightly spicy stew.
- Rice is served often as Dekpor is a rice-growing community.
- There is fresh tropical fruit.
- Local food provides less meat protein than the typical North American diet.
- Desserts are rarely served in Ghana – you may want to bring your favourite sweets.
- Coffee is instant; again, feel free to bring some of your own.
- Very severe allergies could be difficult to manage in Ghana since medical care is not the same as North American standards and when eating at restaurants it's hard to control the ingredients.

What about the water?

- You will be provided with purified water in Dekpor.
- Shower water is harvested rain water.
- The local people often drink from pond/river water which is NEVER recommended.

What sort of clothes should I bring?

- Very light-weight cotton is best – it can be hot (35 degrees).
- People in the village are conservative. No belly tops, but tank tops are fine. No short shorts.
- Long sleeves and pants are a good idea in the evenings to help deter mosquitoes.
- Most people wear sandals or flip flops. You need flip flops for the shower.
- If you choose to tour the animal preserve tour in Mole Park, closed-toe shoes are REQUIRED to walk in the park.

How do I make the best use of the weight/luggage going there?

- DSDO has a lot of health equipment, soccer clothes, teaching supplies and other materials just waiting for someone to take to Ghana!
- It is highly unlikely you would need your full suitcase allotment for your travel in Ghana, so please let us know how much extra space/weight you have and we will arrange to make the most of your allotted luggage.
- British Air waives the fees of extra baggage for charity use-- we really like to take advantage of this if possible.

I want to help. Can I collect things that are needed at the school?

- Gently used laptops
- Gently used cell phones (the kind with SIM cards)
- Sporting goods (especially volleyballs)
- Kindergarten toys (sturdy plastic)
- Gently used running shoes, any size
- Contact us for current needs.

What about health care? What do I need before leaving and what is available in Ghana?

- Yellow Fever inoculation is required before entering Ghana.
- Malaria meds are **STRONGLY** recommended.
- We also **STRONGLY** suggest you see a Travel Doctor to get the latest advice. Ask your own physician for a referral or check the Yellow Pages to find one near you.
- The clinic in Dekpor is now finished and operational. It is staffed by 3 nurses.
- The next nearest hospital/clinic is about 30 minutes away.

Do I need a visa?

- Yes, a visa is required for Ghana.
- The application is available online from the Ghana High Commission.
- You will need 2 references from within Ghana (our coordinators will give you that information).

What will I do while I'm there?

-DSDO expects all volunteers to show respect to the people, culture and environment in Dekpor.

A volunteering day includes:

- Classes run from 8:00a.m. – 12:30 p.m., Monday - Friday
- You work with one class alongside a local teacher.
- Afternoon tutoring of individuals makes an incredible impact.
- Afternoon visits to shrines/ markets/ local area tour, drumming lesson, or cultural discussions, or down time.
- Dinner, then free time.

Am I expected to prepare lessons?

Yes – your host teacher and you will decide where your skills can best be used in the class. Materials and teaching ideas will be supplied, but basically you will be working on English literacy, critical thinking skills, and math. Your suggestions and input are welcome.

Do I run extra-curricular activities?

-It's not required, but if you want to take something on, it is most appreciated!

What do I do in my spare time?

- Extra drumming, dance, or song lessons can be arranged at a nominal cost.
- Interacting/talking to local people is a highly recommended method of learning more about the culture or teaching others about your own.
- Tutoring small groups or individuals is most welcomed!

How much money do I need to take?

- You need money for food outside the village. Most meals are \$5 - \$10 and some are less than that.
- You will also need to buy beverages, other than water, in the village.
- Outside the village about \$25 - \$30 a day will be more than enough.
- Souvenirs are reasonably priced. If you have something specific in mind, we may be able to give you an idea of cost beforehand.

Are there bank machines?

- There are in Accra, Kumasi, and few other towns, but NOT in Dekpor!
 - You can take local currency out through ATMs that use the Plus System/Visa. If your bank card or Visa card has the Plus System logo on the back, it's likely (but not definite) that it will work.
 - There are two global banks, Standard Chartered and Barclays, which are your best bets.
 - It's best to bring US cash in large bills (\$50 or \$100). Small bills get a lower rate of exchange.
- ***Canadian currency can NOT be changed in the banks.

Are there any cultural protocols that I need to know?

The elders are highly respected and treated with reverence.

If eating with your hands, use only the right.

There are many customs that will be introduced, as necessary, by your coordinators.

Everything will take longer than you think! Ghana-time is laid back!