

OMWABINI



RESTORING HOPE AND DIGNITY IN WESTERN KENYA



PSALM 68:5

“A father to the fatherless , a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.”

OMWABINI INFORMATION PACKET

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WELCOME TO OMWABINI!

Thank you for your interest in learning more about our Organization or Volunteering! We are excited to share with you about the work we are doing in Western Kenya. If, after reading through this packet, you have any questions, please feel free to email us at info@omwabini.org.



ABOUT OMWABINI:

This program is run under the guidance of a Kenyan family, led by Mary Bunyasi and her son James. The name Omwabini comes from one of the local tribal languages (Luya) and means “The Rescuer”. Omwabini is a registered Kenyan Community Based Organization (CBO). Since 2003, through the support of its partners, a dedicated team of employees, and volunteers like you, Omwabini has grown its ability, scope, vision and resources considerably. We are now working in many communities and supporting a large number of orphans, widows, and vulnerable children through our programs and projects.

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OUR ORGANIZATION:

The mission of our organization is to work with widows, vulnerable children orphans, and orphan headed families in Western Kenya.

We accomplish our work through a variety of programs and projects within local communities and at our center, the largest of which is currently a boarding school/day school for orphans and vulnerable children.



Our Vision

Our vision for these orphans, families and communities is that each may have the ability to sustain healthy living conditions, provide for their own needs, increase their own opportunities, and to continue sustainable progress and change.

What We Do

The number of child-headed households is increasing dramatically in western Kenya, due to HIV/AIDS. Children aged from 0-16 are left without parents to take care of them or their families, which may consist of as many as eight siblings. These children are often ostracized and excluded from the local community, due to the stigma associated poverty and HIV and AIDS. This results in deterioration in living conditions and their health, leaving behind malnourished and neglected children with no support or chance of a future. We target these families in eight project areas in Western Kenya, providing vital assistance, and aim to meet their immediate nutritional requirements and improve living conditions for them.

The key aims of our program include:

- To provide shelter and food for families
- To provide clothing and tools for basic living
- To provide the skills, tools and resources to enable a sustainable, healthy and hopeful future
- To provide emotional support
- To enable families to become economically supported

PROGRAMS TO GET INVOLVED IN:

Economic Empowerment

Through income generation programs, Omwabini helps people to care for their own needs by providing materials and small loans for things such as sewing, farming, bee-keeping, fish ponds, chicken projects, bike taxis and equipment repairs as well as community training. Omwabini also assists with committee formation and project management training within these communities to continue supporting those individuals in need.

Where can you fit in?:

- **Agricultural Training:** With their basic needs met, orphans will be able and more prepared to embrace new projects. They are trained in sustainable agricultural techniques, including basic land preparation, planting, crop care and harvesting of traditional crops. Other skills will also be taught, such as crop rotation, water conservation and the use of organic fertilisers. Any help in this area is vital and much appreciated. This work creates income for the families, who are then encouraged to donate some of their seeds to the next widow in need or group of orphans. This really strengthens the bonds in the community and drives a self-sustainable programme.



- **Economic Empowerment:** This project has established many economic empowerment schemes, which enable orphans to generate their own incomes to support themselves and their family, creating a greater sense of self-respect and effective self-sufficiency. Examples of these schemes include bee-keeping, fishponds, chickens for meat and egg sales, and a 'bike taxi' business. One bike costs approximately USD \$100.

Children's Home

In 2009, Omwabini opened a children's home where we care for around 500 orphans or children whose extremely poor families could not provide them with the necessities of life. Those living in the children's home not only receive an education, but we also minister to their emotional and spiritual needs.

Where can you fit in?:

- Emotional Support and Counselling: Staff at this project provide counselling to the orphans, in order to help them come to terms with the loss of their parents and the fears for their future. They also encourage mentoring between families who have been successful. You will



be expected to help in these areas and provide a lot of support to the children.

- Sexual Health Education: This class is made up of project staff, foreign volunteers, pupils or students from local schools and teachers from the schools, discussing body development, sexual health and HIV/AIDS. Each of the participants is required to give his/her views about different issues that are discussed. The same programme is

also undertaken in the local communities with the aim of raising awareness to the HIV and AIDS pandemic, while also reducing the stigmas associated with this illness.

Food Security

Through Omwabini's Food security programs, orphan families are trained to provide themselves with food. They learn how to prepare the land, and to plant, care for and harvest their crop. Omwabini has farmland that it makes available to those in need. And, we help orphan families to organize their surplus crop and bring it to market, to provide much-needed family income.

Where can you fit in?:

- Food Provision: Help with feeding schemes for families, improving their nutrition and health. You will provide basic food items to children, through donations and any outside funds.



Education Support

Education is the foundation for a better future, and for impoverished or orphaned children to one day be able to provide for themselves and to support a family. Omwabini operates a primary school and a vocational training centre, and just started a high school currently supporting more than 160 students.

Where can you fit in?:

- **School Education:** This project has built its own school and vocational training centre. There are more than 400 orphans or vulnerable children attending the school from 3-years old through High School. Your help is needed to assist teaching the children their classes and offer extra support to the teachers. The school is aimed at helping orphans and poorer children who are excluded from the regular institutions.



- **Vocational Training:** You may be helpful in imparting additional computer skills to the IT teachers and possibly providing computer lessons for the orphans and youths in the local vocational centres, developed through this programme. Tailoring and dressmaking is also taught at the centre, so any skills in this area are greatly appreciated.

Community Development

Omwabini also seeks to improve health and living conditions in nearby villages through the construction of communal wells and efforts to protect precious water supplies from being contaminated. Omwabini works with the community to help build or repair a home so that orphans or impoverished families can have adequate shelter.

Where can you fit in?:



- **Providing Shelter:** Help build or repair homes, so that families have adequate and safe shelter. This provides children with a healthy place in which to live and begin their rehabilitation. The materials required to build one home cost approximately USD \$600, so this is dependent on funding.

- **Water Sanitation:** This programme involves the protection of water springs to bring clean drinking water to the communities. You can help identify areas that need safer drinking water and assist in building the new water springs, which the whole community can benefit from.



- **Community Training:** We are involved in many communities in Western Kenya who are in need of information and training in anything from Community Health, First Aid, Business, Agriculture, and Family Planning, HIV/AIDS, and many other areas. If you have a specific skill-set or knowledge of a topic and would like to share that knowledge with community groups and individuals here, we would love to set something up!

OUR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:

Upon arrival, your co-ordinators will guide you through the project and help to answer any questions you may have during your orientation. During the first few days or week you will spend a lot of your time visiting the various villages and programme areas, settling in and working out which areas you would most like to assist in and dedicate your time to. James are your programme coordinator, and will be on hand to help you with any queries and with your projects. However, with over 2,000 people to care for, they are often very busy and so you need to be motivated and undertake this programme with a degree of your own initiative and independence.

Accommodations and Meals

During your stay, you will be accommodated in houses that you will share with the other volunteers on the programme. The houses are comfortable, and very basic and are enclosed in a walled and gated



compound. The volunteer accommodation is therefore safe and there are night watchmen onsite. There are shared showers, flush toilets and also some traditional long drops, which are clean. There is electricity, but power cuts are fairly frequent. You may also experience water shortages from time to time.



You will receive three meals each day at the project, prepared for you by the cook who lives within the same compound as you. Breakfast will consist of toast, juices, pancakes, ndazi's or chapati's. Lunches will comprise of sandwiches or noodles and juice or soda. Dinners will be prepared for you by the house cook, although we ask you to offer as much assistance as possible. This meal will use traditional African ingredients, such as meats, rice and breads and some vegetables. Please budget for any additional snacks you may want during the day.

We can make allowances for most dietary requirements including vegetarians, vegans and common food allergies.

Please advise the co-ordinators and cook on arrival if you have specific requirements. However, you must take responsibility for your own allergies and carefully monitor the food that you consume. It is important that you let us know of any dietary requirements that you may have at the time of booking.



Daily Activities and Schedule

As there are many project activities in different areas the transportation times may vary. Some are just ten minutes away from the volunteer accommodation, but the more remote communities are up to an hour's journey by car. Your programme leaders will ensure that you are taken and picked up from your project each day.

Working in and Training in a Different Culture

In order for community aid and development to be successful, communities cannot be pressurized into accepting new ways of working and therefore objectives may take a while to be accepted and achieved. Do not be disheartened if you cannot see the immediate results of what you are doing. Rather look at the achievements of the project in the longer term and what it is that you are contributing towards.

You should also expect to work on your own initiative to an extent. It is not the norm in Kenyan culture to tell you what you must do each day, but be proactive in working with Mary, James and the other project staff if there is something you wish to focus on. It is important to remain flexible in your attitude and work ethic and be prepared to help in any of the areas requested for the benefit of the local community and project. Please remember to be respectful and considerate if you have any suggestions as to how you feel the programme could develop further. Many times, an idea that works well in the western (European and North American) society will not necessarily work as well in an African society. Please also be patient, as African time can be a lot more relaxed than the way of life in Western society. You should always feel free to ask if you can carry out new activities that you may feel will benefit the project. The project co-

ordinators are always willing to help you if you have any new ideas or issues that you would like to address. The project is extremely excited to have volunteers there to assist in achieving the community development objectives. Your input and ideas are welcomed and we look forward to discussing any new ideas or insight you could bring to community development in Western Kenya.

