Volunteer-Interns-Guide



During the phase of preparation for your stay abroad certainly a lot of thoughts are running through your head. This guide will help you with the preparations! It aims to make your stay as volunteer or interns at "Maison Shalom" more pleasant, facilitate your rapid integration into the scoreboard, maximize your contribution to the work of Maison Shalom and allow the most positive experience possible. In addition, you, of course, always have the possibility, to contact us directly. We will be glad to help you and are looking forward to welcome you here in Kigali!



1. Preamble

Welcome, Bienvenue, Kaze, Willkommen!



Your stay abroad at Maison Shalom in Rwanda will be a very special time in your life. You'll get to know Rwanda not only as a tourist, but go deeper into the culture and the normal life on site. You'll discover a lot of new things, meet like-minded people, improve your professional skills and learn more about the Burundian and Rwandan culture. With your own initiative and richness of ideas, you can reach a lot at Maison Shalom for the Organization and for your own personality. Cosmopolitanism, curiosity, team spirit and independent engagement are the most important requirements for your work at Maison Shalom.

Your future work environment and the mentality of Rwandan and Burundians are different from what you used to know from west European countries or North America. Immerse yourself! We are offering a lot of possibilities, to engage yourself, to contribute with your knowledge and skills and to become acquainted with places, people and Burundian and Rwandan culture in a better way. I wish you impressive experiences and inspiring encounters that touch the soul and never go away!

Marguerite BARANKITSE

Founder and Legal Representative

2. Values and Guiding Principles

Maison Shalom was created to say no to the fratricidal hatred based on political, ethnical and regional divisions. For this purpose, it is apolitical and non-confessional; Maison Shalom promotes respect for all human beings and is against all forms of discrimination or exclusion. Maison Shalom's philosophy is based on five principles that support the daily work and services for people in need of assistance. These values are:



Dignity

We believe that every human being has an inherent worth, regardless of his or her social status, socio-economic situation, ethnicity, or of their political or religious affiliation

Compassion

We share the suffering of our neighbors, but do not pity them. Instead, we help them get back on their feet.





Harmony

We welcome our differences as a source of strength and inspiration. We live together as members of the same family by respecting the liberties, convictions and opinions of one another.

Humility

We recognize our limits and are open to any constructive contribution by our partners, so that we may improve our services.





Integrity

We use all goods and donations towards the common good, and are fully transparent with all our partners as to the use of these goods.

3. Fields of activity at Maison Shalom

At Maison Shalom you can support numerous programs. We are not just strongly positioned in the social sector, but provide you a lot of other options according to your individual interests and ideas.

Sector	Programs
Education	Preschool education, secondary education, vocational training, post-secondary education, English skills, basic computer skills, e-learning
Community development	Training on small business management, grants and microloans to small entrepreneurs, farming activities
Psychosocial work	Counseling, trauma healing, social support
Oasis of Peace Community Centre	Hotel and Restoration services, trainings in culinary arts and catering, food and beverage services, culture (modern and traditional dance), sport, cinema, trainings on basic computer skills
Mahama Elite Centre	Trainings in tailoring, basic computer skills, shoe making, library, traditional dance.

Generally: You must first be aware of your fields of intervention or interest, as well as the various activities. If necessary, the information is available at the website of Maison Shalom (www.maisonshalom.org) and may be supplemented by direct responses of authorized persons of Maison Shalom's team on your specific questions (see also point 6: contact). The areas of intervention, activities to be implemented must be defined and validated by agreement between you and the coordination of Maison Shalom. Your service should be adapted to the current needs of Maison Shalom. In case of no match between the services offered by the volunteer and the needs of Maison Shalom, the latter reserves the right to refuse services.

4. Aspects of Volunteer Service

4.1 Volunteer Agreement Form

To document that you have read, understood, and agreed to follow the Maison Shalom volunteer practices and procedures and feel comfortable with the responsibilities of your specific volunteer work, we require you to sign a Volunteer Agreement Form when beginning service (Appendix 1).

4.2 Confidentiality Policy

Maison Shalom recognizes confidentiality as a living principle based on the dignity of all humans. Therefore, Maison Shalom will respect the privacy of personal information of those it serves or employs. You are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of all information to which you are exposed while serving as a volunteer or intern, whether this information involves staff members, volunteers, clients, or other people or involves overall program. Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of your volunteer work or other corrective actions.

4.3 Orientation and Integration

4.3.1 Initial Orientation

All new and ongoing volunteers or interns will be required to complete an orientation session prior to their volunteer work. Topics to be covered during the initial orientation will vary depending on whether the volunteer is serving in a direct service or non-direct service capacity, long term or occasional volunteer.

Welcoming the new volunteer begins with the first contact with the person welcoming him/ her. From the first day, the person responsible for welcoming the volunteer makes sure to:

- Assign a person responsible for welcoming the new volunteer;
- Greet the volunteer with warmth, offer a coffee, tea or water and demonstrate that the volunteer is expected;
- Receive the volunteer in a suitable environment;
- Set up the Maison Shalom facility tour and introduce the people present (employees and volunteers);
- Inform the volunteer about Maison Shalom as an organization, its vision, mission and values
- Talk to the volunteer to learn more about their experiences, interests and expectations in order to better supervise or guide them;
- Provide relevant information so that he/she feels competent and provides adequate information on the tasks to be performed;
- Assign tasks according to the needs of the service/program;
- Give a volunteer identification card to wear at all times, as applicable;

- Show available films on the history and activities of Maison Shalom to better understand its roots and its activities since 1993 (e.g. A light in the darkness, Japanese Film, Chirac Foundation, A conversation with Marguerite Barankitse, Maggy mère de orphelins etc.)
- Provide the opportunity to ask questions.
- Organize other sites visit (e.g. Mahama, Nyamata), as applicable.

For occasional volunteers, their welcome and orientation can be simplified:

- Maison Shalom responsible person will be present to welcome the volunteer at the agreed place and time;
- Explain the rules to follow and give a list of tasks to be done as well as the schedule for the day;
- Tour the site (sanitary block, place for breaks, etc.);
- Ensure that their involvement is facilitated and the occasional volunteers understand the term of services:
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- Ensure that their involvement is facilitated and the occasional volunteers understand the term of services.

4.3.2 Program Orientation & Training

As a new volunteer / intern, the person responsible of the service/program (e.g. Director, Manager, and Supervisor) will provide you with appropriate orientation and the necessary training required for your specific volunteer / intern position.

4.3.3 Supervision

You will have a clearly identified supervisor who will directly oversee your role within the program. This supervisor will be available to you for consultation and assistance. One-time volunteers will also be informed of their supervisor in case questions or challenges arise. The supervisor is also the focal point throughout the application and orientation process and to support volunteers throughout their service.

4.3.4 Record Maintenance & Volunteer Time Reports

Keeping track of the time given by our volunteers is very important to us. Each program is required to record hours for each individual volunteer and report them to the program manager on a monthly basis. Some volunteer positions are more independent and require volunteers to keep track of their own hours which they must then report back to their supervisor.

4.3.5 Evaluation and Volunteer report

If you are a volunteer with ongoing responsibilities, you may be given an evaluation in accordance with Maison Shalom standards and policies. Occasional or "casual" volunteers will receive evaluations only upon request of the volunteer. A volunteer report or a summary of the accomplished activities during the volunteer work is recommended and may be requested by the supervisor.



Note: At Maison Shalom, our goal is to make sure volunteers perceive that they are part of the organization and the team, that they have an important role to play and that their involvement is considered. Thus, they will better share the mission and feel a sense of belonging to Maison Shalom.

5. Preparation

5.1 Applying for a Visa

To enter Rwanda, you need a Visa depending on the Country of Residence. You can also get a visa upon arrival. For more information, please visit the official site of the Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration Rwanda (DGIE) at https://www.migration.gov.rw/ home/ some embassies need, in addition to your application, an invitation of Maison Shalom, as applicable. In this we confirm you the Internship or voluntary service. If you need it, please write а short email to our coordination team, (coordination@maisonshalom.org) and they will send you the invitation.

5.2. Foreign health insurance and Travel Insurance

Essential for your stay abroad is a foreign health insurance. We suggest, comparing different offers in advance. Important criteria are, amongst others:

- Period of validity: Foreign health insurances are often charged on a daily basis. Please
 make sure, that all days you stay in Rwanda (East Africa) are included, also the day of
 your entry and departure.
- **Insurance benefits:** Essential is for example the free return transportation in your foreign country in case of a medical emergency. Please check before conclusion of the insurance for important benefits, depending on your individual needs.
- Criteria for the insured person: If you, for example organize your stay at Maison Shalom by yourself (and e.g. not with your university), sometimes different insurance policies apply to you compared to volunteers. Make sure, that your insurance knows before and check again before conclusion of the insurance, if you meet all the requirements of the insurance, to ensure the insurance coverage.
- Territory: Sometimes it's recommendable, that the insurance is not just limited to Rwanda, because you may also want to travel to neighbor-countries like Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. Therefore you need a policy for the territory «Worldwide without USA/Canada».

5.3 Money

- **Currency:** The Rwandan Currency is Rwandan Franc (RWF).
- Currency ex-change: Please note that in Rwanda for the exchange from US-Dollar to RWF just Banknotes newer than (and including) 2013 are accepted. For the current exchange rate please check at one of the currency converters on the Internet. Locally you can change your money at a Bank or in a Forex Bureau. It is important to know that the exchange rate at the Forex is always the most interesting when you exchange foreign for local currency. In case of the opposite operation, please refer to the nearest bank. Also you have the possibility, to withdraw cash with your Credit-Card in Kigali and other urban area. Accepted is Visa, MasterCard, etc. On the ATM Cash Machine on which there is a Visa Card logo, it normally works.
- **Safe-keeping of the money:** You can keep Money (and also documents like passport etc.) on your own responsibility in your room, which is lockable.

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5.4 Medical references

For flying to Rwanda, we suggest you the consultancy by your family doctor for the immunization and a Health Check. Please note necessarily also the travel advices of the Foreign Office of your country - also with regard to Malaria, HIV/AIDS, diarrhea diseases and other transmissible diseases.

Foreign Office Belgium	http://www.diplomatie.belgium.be/en
Foreign Office France	http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en
Foreign Office Germany	http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de
Foreign Office Luxembourg	See Belgium
Foreign Office Canada	https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories
Foreign Office USA	https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html



6. Travelling

6.1 How to travel to Rwanda?

• Foreign Country to Rwanda:

- By airplane to Kigali International Airport.
- Airlines: Brussels Airlines, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airlines, Qatar Airways, KLM, Rwandair etc., depending on the country of residence.

Airport to Headquarters of Maison Shalom:

- By car.

In certain cases it is possible, to go with a car of Maison Shalom from the Airport to Maison Shalom. Please talk for that to the coordination team, (coordination@ maisonshalom.org) and they will try to organize a transport. It is also safe to take a taxi.

• In Kigali

- Kigali is a safe city, so you can reach many destinations on foot. Sometimes you can also join a car of Maison Shalom, which is in the area.

Generally: Maison Shalom does not provide transport if not for service reasons. If you decide to spend a weekend out of Kigali, any costs occurring will be on your charge. If possible, you can always ask a place in a vehicle of Maison Shalom going to the destination you want to reach. The program schedule can always be consulted at office of Human Resources and Logistics

6.2 Packing-List: What to bring?

Just a few weeks and your stay abroad at Maison Shalom will begin! Now it's time to pack your bags. We suggest you to write a Check-List in good time before your departure. So you'll get the chance, to run important errands and pack your bags a few days before on a trial basis to weight them (please check the baggage policy of your airline in advance). This Packing-List tries to provide useful pointers and is meant for your orientation. But, we don't claim the following information to be complete and what you bring always depends on your individual needs as well. A lot of the following articles can also be purchased onsite, but please note, that especially hygienic articles from European brands are often more expensive and electronic articles are also often not equivalent to European standards.

6.3 Packing-List

	Suitcase	0
	Big Backpack with enough volume for excursions	0
	Little Backpack as Day pack (and for Hand luggage)	0
	Belly pocket for travel-documents and valuable items	0
	Space-saving and foldable Bag (for shopping or excursions)	0
	Waterproof coating for Backpacks (to transport sensitive stuff like electronic in the rain season)	Ο
	Bus/train/flight ticket or booking confirmation	0
	Valid Passport including Visa	0
	Printout of the Visa-Confirmation incl. confirmation of payment	0
	Identity Card	0
	Bank Debit-Card/Credit-Card	0
	Proofs of insurance (foreign health insurance etc.)	0
	Cash Money (incl. US-Dollar from 2013)	0
	Valid vaccination certificate	0
	International drivers-license (to rent a car on-site)	0
Formal	Important addresses and telephone-numbers (Hotel, Maison Shalom, Insurances, emergency calls, Banks to block your Cards etc. The address of Maison Shalom is important, because you have to indicate it by your arrival on the airport of Kigali)	Ο
	Printouts of important Documents of Maison Shalom (Invitation etc.)	0
	Printouts of all personal, important Documents (maybe additional as digital documents on a data-medium)	0
	Stable folder for Document-Copies, Memories etc.	0
	Travel guide (e.g. lonely planet East Africa, Petit Futé etc.)	0
	Rwanda Map	0
	Dictionary (Recommendation: Kirundi-English-French" by A.H. Zemback)	0
	Paper, Notebooks, diaries	0
	Books	0
	USB flash drive / hard drive	0
	Power Adapter (Standard in Rwanda: Schuko)	0
	Laptop + Charger and additions	0
	Mobile (SIM-Lock free for local SIM-Card) + Charger	0
	MP3-Player + Charger + USB-cable	
Electronic	Batteries	0
Electronic	Camera + Camera-Bag + Charger + memory Card + battery +	О
	spare rechargeable battery + USB-cable	
	Hairdryer Alarm-clock (if not included in the mobile)	0
	Multi-outlet power strip (often you have just 1 or 2 power stations in	0
	your room and the power-strips, you can buy here, are often broken	
	after a short time) Partable Speakers (to listen to music outside)	
	Portable Speakers (to listen to music outside) Alarm clock (if not included in the mobile)	0
	Alarm-clock (if not included in the mobile)	0
	Base cap	0

	Trousers, Jeans (Recommendation: thin, but long trousers)	0
	Rain cape (especially while the rain season)	0
	T-Shirts/ Sweatshirts	0
	(Fleece-) Pullovers (it can get cold, especially in the evening)	0
	Comfortable Clothes	0
	Sportswear including Sport shoes	0
Clothing	Festive clothes like Blouses, elegant shirts etc. (for official events)	0
Clothing	2 pairs of shoes (Light footwear and sturdy shoes for excursions)	0
	Sandals/ Flip-Flops	0
	Underwear and Socks	0
	Swimwear (there is a swimming pool at 10 min walk from Maison Shalom)	0
	Towels (for excursions etc.,), Towels for the daily use you'll get from Maison Shalom	0
	Pyjama	0
	Sunglasses + Etui	0
	Leggings	0
	Dresses/Skirts (but knee-length or longer)	0
	Scarf(s)	0
	Wash bag (you'll leave your hygiene-products in your room and just take it in the bathroom for use)	0
	Products for face cleaning	0
	Sun screen lotion (with high sun protection factor)	0
	After-Sun-Lotion	0
	Toothbrush + toothpaste + dental floss	0
	Razor + shaving foam	0
	Deodorant + perfume	0
Hygiene	Richly textured lotion (Body lotion) + Hand lotion	0
75	Lip Care Stick	0
	Shower lotion/soap + Shampoo	0
	Nail scissor + tweezers + nail file	0
	Hand sanitiser gel	0
	Comb, hairbrush, Comb, hairbrush	0
	Hairspray	
	Contact lenses + fluid	
	Cotton pads	
	Tampons/pads	
	Make-up, Mascara etc.	
	Tissues	
	Masks	

	First aid kit Individual Medication that you need to take	0
	Mosquito spray, Ointment against Mosquito-Bites	0
	Malaria prophylaxis + Antibiotics	0
	Painkillers	0
	Wound and Healing Ointment	0
	Band-Aids	0
	Dressing material (elastic bandage / wound pads)	0
	Cold-medicine	0
	Nasal spray	0
First aid kit		
FIISC ald Kit	Inflammation inhibitors/ Disinfection-spray	0
	Hand sanitizer	0
	Antibacterial agents	0
	Tablets for disinfecting water	0
	Medication for treatment of diarrhea	О
	Birth-control pills / condoms	0
	Silicone gels/lotions	0
	Herpes-ointment	0
	Vitamin tablets	0
	Pocket knife (not in the hand luggage!)	0
	Lighters (please check the baggage policy of your airline)	0
	Earplugs	0
	Sleep mask	0
	2-3 little locks to lock the luggage	0
	Pens	0
	Inflatable neck pillow (for the flight)	0
	Hand laundry detergent (can be purchased on site),	0
Other	(no washing-machine available)	0
	Stain remover	0
	Clothespins (wash-line available)	0
	Safety Pins	0
	Sewing kit	
	Umbrella	
	Tape, Rope, Glue	
	Scissors Caraca (a. a. Carda)	
	Games (e.g. Cards)	
	Personal valuables For smokers: portable ashtray	
	Maybe: souvenirs for the children (balloons, sweets, pens, handicraft materials)	

Not necessary to bring Bedcovers, Sheets, Towels for the daily use, Food and Drinks



7. Volunteer Life At Maison Shalom

A. Living

- Where: On the compound of Maison Shalom (Oasis of Peace Community Centre)
- Room facilities: Double-room with bed, bedside table, wardrobe, desk, chair
- Bathroom: Sanitary facilities available per room
- **Electricity:** Exists (temporary power cuts not excluded), standard-socket: Schuko

B. Laundry

• **Washing and Drying:** Manual washing - no washing machine available (you can bring detergent or purchase it on site).

C. Food and Drinks

- Breakfast (incl. Tea and Coffee),
- Lunch (warm) and Dinner (warm). In Addition drinking-water, soft drinks are available for purchase the whole day



ы Eating-Times

Breakfast: around 7 - 8.30 am

Lunch: around 1: 00 pmDinner: around 7.30 pm

ы Where: Oasis of Peace Restaurant

D. Costs

Interns and volunteers pay a contribution to costs of stay depending on the value of the work they accomplish on site for Maison Shalom. Added to that you write a report after your stay, so Maison Shalom can improve our teamwork with volunteers and interns continuously.

ы Included

- Accommodation: Overnight-stays in double-rooms
- Full-board with breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Support and contact persons on site
- If required, certificate for the stay abroad for your university or the like

Living (Alternative): You have the free choice to rent a room outside Maison Shalom's compound. In this case, you will have to negotiate the price on your own depending on your preferences.

Visitors: Your visitors are more than welcome at Maison Shalom. We can offer them good value overnight accommodations - in our lodges at Maison Shalom. Just give us a short sign at an early stage and kindly be prepared to take care of the cost of their stay. You can stay in the same room if you are a married couple only. Otherwise, we ask you to kindly stay in separate rooms.



Weather

 Rain Season: Around September till the End of April (don't forget to bring your rain cape), small rainy season: September till December, great rainy season: January till April.

Note: When it's raining, live stands a bit still in Kigali. So if you have any appointments, while it's raining just call the other person, to make sure, when and if they are coming.

Dry Season : Mai – August

Dress code

We recommend you, to bring a Rain Cape with you - especially during the Rainy Season. Added to that you should take care, to meet the local requirements with clothes. This means, you should wear long (but thin) Trousers and Skirts and Dresses just, when they are knee length or longer. You should also bring official/festive clothes like button-downs, blouses, elegant trousers etc. For the mass in church we suggest you, to wear clothes, which cover your shoulders. Additional you should leave your casual wear in the wardrobe and better go to church with more festive clothes. It can get cold in Rwanda, especially in the evening, so please also bring some warm clothes like (fleece) pullovers etc. The most important things we also added in the packing-list under "clothes".

8. Also good to know

A. Languages

- Kirundi
- Kinyarwanda
- French
- English

B. Telephone and Internet

Telephone and Internet work in Rwanda by prepaid-method. That means, that you need a SIM-Card first, which you have to charge with credit in advance. You get the credit without any problems in one of the many Shops available anywhere in Rwanda. Additional to the internet by SIM Card, of personal Modem, you have the possibility, to use the internet in ICT room at Oasis of Peace or Mahama Elite Centre for free.

C. Shopping

Dukas and market Day -to-day necessities (food, drinks, credit etc.) you can buy Tailor without any problems in shops available everywhere in Kigali Rwanda and Maison Shalom especially, has a lot of beauti-ful, African fabrics to offer. You want to make a dress, trousers, bag or something else out of it? For that just contact your supervisor and she/he will help you get individual clothing items made just for you.

D. Free-time-activities

Kigali is, with around 1.5M inhabitants, not a big city. Nevertheless you can discover a lot of things here in your free time. Your working-times depend on the projects you do. Normally you have the weekends, which you can use for discovering Kigali and Rwanda in general to discover its beautiful sites, getting to know the country and people or even just relaxing.

E. Sport

Should you like to do sport, the main hall at Maison Shalom is available. You can also do jogging or swim in the nearest Hotel (Nobleza at 5 minutes' walk). In the latter case, a session will cost you 4 EUR.

F. Les Tambourinaires

Burundian refugees are very famous for their drummers, «Les Tambourinaires». The beating of the Drums is just amazing and will go directly into your heart. There is group, which is practicing twice a week close in the compound of Maison Shalom. Just join their practicing sessions - you 're more than welcome!

G. Church

in Africa is always an experience. The people sing a lot, which gives every mass a special charm. In the Church of Kigali you can join the mass every Sunday (7.30 - 10 am and 10.30 am - 13 pm). For the mass we suggest you, to wear clothes, which cover your shoulders. Additional you should leave your casual wear in the wardrobe and better go to church with more festive clothes. Maison Shalom has a nice Restaurant in its compound. There you can enjoy your after work-time. There are many other places you can enjoy too. Occasionally it takes some time until the food is served, but you are getting used to «buhoro buhoro» (take your time). Overall Kigali is safe.

The people are very open-minded and will extend a warm welcome to all visitors. You can walk around the city without any problems at day-time. Nevertheless we recommend you, just to go outside with a local person (at best from Maison Shalom) after it's getting dark. Until 10 pm you should be back at the compound of Maison Shalom.

Kindly keep in mind over 10pm, the compound of Maison Shalom is closed and the security guards may not let you in.

You are prepared! We wish you a great time at Maison Shalom - with impressive experiences that touch the soul and never go away! You are most welcome! This Guide was first published in April 2014 and updated in 2019, in 2021 and in 2025. We want to keep this Guide on point. So if you have any suggestions to change or add new information, don't hesitate to contact the coordination team at (coordination@maisonshalom.org). They will update the Volunteer-Guide for the volunteers following your comments. Thank you very much in advance!

And now...

Welcome, Bienvenue, Kaze, Willkommen!