

TIKOLOGO

Permaculture project by Tara Rokpa Centre
Rhenosterfontein JP 313, Groot Marico
P.O. Box 1115, Zeerust, 2865
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www.tikologo.co.za



VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

Dear interested volunteer,

You are kindly requested to carefully read the following volunteer information before completing your online volunteer application. On application please forward a signed copy of this document together with your CV and photo to growingtikologo@gmail.com. Please do not hesitate to contact us should any of the information below be unclear.

Thank you for expressing an interest in volunteering at TIKOLOGO.

Tikologo offers permaculture enthusiasts the opportunity to gain some valuable practical experience while spending time in a beautiful natural setting. Tikologo is seTswana for environment and the project was started in 2015 as part of the Tara Rokpa Centre's (TRC) environmental wing. Tikologo aspires to create a thriving permaculture demonstration and education centre which will help to preserve and extend the natural environment while being very productive.

We welcome people of any or no faith wanting to give generously of their time to help with the growth and development of Tikologo and the Tara Rokpa Centre. The late Akong Rinpoche's vision was for this to be a centre of great healing in the broadest sense.

To assist in any capacity with the development of this vision is very beneficial. Generosity in any form is considered very helpful to both oneself and others.

THE ON-SITE PERMACULTURE TEAM



Coen Meintjes
Director



Megan Bisschoff
Manager



Thabo Motobi
Apprentice



Wellen Segomelo
Groundsman

REQUIREMENTS

Volunteers should be aware that the Tikologo Permaculture site is developing towards being a working farm and as such volunteers will be required to be able-bodied and endure laborious tasks such as digging, carting heavy wheelbarrows and building. If you do have any physical drawbacks, such as back problems, then please state so in the questionnaire, under medical conditions, so that we can try to accommodate you.

Volunteers are encouraged to brief themselves with a basic understanding of permaculture principles and systems before arriving. We do however still happily welcome volunteers with no prior knowledge or experience but who have a sincere wish and open-mindedness to learn about permaculture, get their hands dirty and create positive change.

TASKS

Volunteers will be integrated into the running and development of the permaculture site as a team member experiencing and working on whatever processes or projects are running at the time. Volunteers will be instructed, by permaculture director or managing assistant, with tasks and are expected to carry them through independently and competently. Longer term volunteers, depending on skills, will be given more autonomy and greater responsibility.

Current, ongoing and future projects include:

- Zone 1 food garden
- Zone 2 medicinal herb garden
- Food Forest establishment
- Composting
- Ferrous cement tank construction
- Plant propagation
- Animal systems integration and management
- Nursery operations
- Apiary implementation
- Eco-pool construction and implementation
- Rain water harvesting implementation
- Grey water systems implementation
- Swale and berm cultivation
- Harvesting and processing of fruit and herbs
- Building renovation and housekeeping

WORKING HOURS

Volunteers are required to work a minimum of, but not limited to, 5 hours a day (8am – 1pm) Monday to Friday with a tea break from 10:30 -11am. Afternoons, weekends and public holidays are free.

Please note that should we be busy with a task, for example building a ferrous cement water tank, volunteers will be required to put in extra hours of work as the nature of these tasks are dependent on timeous completion. Extra time off will be agreed upon once such projects are completed.

When possible, we do our best to structure activities appropriate to the time of day temperatures but please understand that given our climatic context, you will require an ability to operate outdoors for long periods and often in hot weather. When summer temperatures become extreme, we do offer flexible working hours so that volunteers can rest during the heat of the day and continue activities in the late afternoon when temperatures are cooler.

COSTS AND COMMITMENTS

Volunteers are required to pay a monthly fee to help cover food and accommodation costs. Participation in the project is voluntary and as such volunteers will not receive any monetary remuneration for their work.

Tikologo only accepts 2 volunteers at a time and the minimum volunteer time commitment is 1 month. (Exceptions may be made at busy times.)

Please see volunteer costs in table below.

SOUTHERN AFRICAN VOLUNTEERS	INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEERS
R 2500 per month	R3500 per month

Please note that South African long term volunteers who commit to staying for more than 3 months, may negotiate for a reduced monthly cost contribution, in return for a full working (8hrs). The reduced costs will only be applied after 3 months. We, by no means, intend to insult or exploit International volunteers with higher monthly costs but instead wish to enable and support local volunteers with reduced costs due to the struggling South African economy.

NB. At times contribution costs may be waived for volunteers who can offer a 'master skill' which may be required at a certain time or for a specific project

FOOD

Volunteers are provided with 3 vegetarian meals a day.

- Breakfast

Breakfast is self-catered in the volunteer house. The kitchen is stocked with basic breakfast goods such as cereals, yogurt, fruit, bread and preserves. Eggs (from the on-site chicken coop) are available depending on egg production. The kitchen is also stocked with basic guest amenities such a tea, coffee, sugar, milk and biscuits for tea time breaks.

- Lunch

Lunch is our main meal of the day and will be made up of seasonal vegetables, varied starches, protein and a fresh salad. Lunch is communal and is catered for on the main site at Tara Rokpa Centre dining hall with all on-site staff and volunteers.

- Supper

Supper is self-catered in the volunteer house. Volunteers will be provided with a fresh or premade supply of vegetable soup. Alternatively volunteers can take leftovers from lunch depending on availability.

- TRC Pantry

Volunteers may also help themselves to basic staple foods (such as seasonal veg and fruit, pulses, grains, starches, condiments, milk, bread etc.) from the TRC kitchen pantry and cold-room. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to stock up on food items needed for breakfast and supper.

- Special diets

Please note that we do not cater for special diets unless such diet is for medical reasons upon which we will require a doctor's note and try to accommodate within reason. Neither do we cater for luxury food goods such as ground coffee, confectionary's, special breads, dried fruit, nuts etc. There are regular trips to town where volunteers can purchase these items. TRC provides vegetarian meals only but volunteers are able to prepare meat and other special dishes in the Training Centre kitchen at their own expense.

ACCOMMODATION

Volunteers are accommodated in the Training Centre on the Tikologo Permaculture site.

The Training Centre houses a fully equipped self-catering kitchen, a large living/lounge area, 3 shared bathrooms and 4 shared bedrooms.

The house has a stretch of lawn with planters and an eco-pool to the north. The permaculture director's house as well as the care takers house is situated to the east within close proximity. There is a woodwork shop to the west with the permaculture market garden and forest belt to the south.



The house has 2 twin bedrooms and 2 dorm rooms with three single beds. As far as possible we will accommodate volunteers with their own private room, however if there are more volunteers, guest visitors or training participants then volunteers will be requested, with prior notice, to share accommodation with others.

The lounge area is furnished with comfortable seating as well as a study desk and an environmental library. When Tikologo hosts training courses then the communal lounge area is rearranged into a classroom for the duration of the course.

As the Training Centre is a communal space and shared with others, volunteers are expected to keep the kitchen, lounge and shared bathrooms neat and tidy at all times. A housekeeping staff member is brought in once a month to clean communal areas. It is the volunteers' responsibility to clean their bedroom and wash bed linen. A washing machine and laundry powder is provided for in the kitchen, along with household cleaning equipment and detergents.

The Training Centre is advertised as self-catering farm house accommodation. Volunteers should be aware that the house will be shared with visitors on occasion.

LOCATION AND CLIMATE

Tikologo is situated in the rural area of Kuilfontein within the Groot Marico district of the North West province in South Africa. We are in a valley surrounded by beautiful rolling hills and many small streams. The hills are covered by grasslands and indigenous forest strips can be found in the valleys along the streams.

With regard to temperatures the property is classified as USDA zone 7b or 8a and is subject fairly extreme temperature variations. The temperature extremes range from -15°C in winter and 40°C in summer but averages are much more moderate.

TRANSPORT

The nearest town, Groot Marico, is a 25km drive on a dusty, and sometimes very rocky, gravel road. The nearest city, Zeerust, is a 42km drive on a tar road. Shopping trips to Zeerust happen once a week and volunteers are welcome to catch a lift for personal shopping.

Travel route options for International visitors:

- Fly to OR Tambo International airport
- Take the Gautrain (inner city train) from the Airport Station to Park Station in Johannesburg
- Take the InterCape bus from Park station @ 12pm to Groot Marico Platinum Filling Station
- A Tikologo team member will collect you from the bus stop @ 4pm

Please take note that this is a basic travel format and that it is the volunteers duty to thoroughly plan and time their itinerary.

For local volunteers who have their own vehicles for transport, please follow the directions on Google maps for Tara Rokpa Centre.

WHAT TO BRING

- A positive attitude and desire to help where help is needed
- Work gloves
- Hat and sun cream
- Old working clothes or overalls (women are encouraged not to wear any revealing clothing items)
- Good working shoes and hiking shoes
- Warm clothes for winter
- Rain protection for summer
- Laptop (if you wish to access internet)
- Swimming gear and swimming towel

We are happy to provide meditation/yoga practitioners with a meditation mat, yoga mat and cushion.

SAFETY AND INSURANCE

TRC does have public liability insurance cover, but cannot be held responsible for any personal loss or damage incurred while staying at the centre. All volunteers are required to sign an indemnity form as part of their application.

Volunteers are recommended to arrange for their own travel and medical insurance or to have sufficient means to cover any costs which may be incurred during their stay. The nearest health services are all in Zeerust. If volunteers become ill every effort will be made to get them to a doctor or hospital, but they will be entirely responsible for all costs incurred.

A first aid box is kept stocked with basic medication and bandages. If you suffer from common ailments such as hay fever, please bring your own supply of medication.

In summer there are mosquitoes, but these are not Malaria carrying. Ticks are common and care must be taken to remove them when walking around. There is a healthy snake population on site and care should be taken to be mindful especially in summer months when snakes are most active. On site staff have been trained to deal with snakes and will remove and relocate them.

With regard to crime in South Africa, the Tikologo site is generally very safe. There are several residences within close proximity and we are also connected to a local neighbourhood safety group. Tikologo has never experienced any criminal issues but especially international volunteers and visitors are to be conscious about the realities of South Africa. We do recommend that houses/rooms and cars are locked when not in use and personal valuables are put away when not in use.

COMMUNICATION

There is very little to no cellular reception on the farm. We have identified some signal 'hotspots' in and around the Training Centre and permaculture site but it is very temperamental and cannot be depended upon. On one of the nearby hills, about 2 minutes' walk, volunteers can pick up 3G signal and make phone calls.

A Wi-Fi router, with data sim card, is installed in the Training Centre which volunteers can use to access the internet. Volunteers are fully responsible for the maintenance and managing of internet usage and costs thereof. Vodacom is the service provider and data bundles cost R149 for 1GB or R249 for 2GB. Volunteers may also connect their cell phones to the Wi-Fi service to enable data calls.

VISITORS AND GETAWAYS

Volunteers are welcome to have family and friends visit the farm for short stays with prior arrangement. Visitor costs are R250 per person per day including food or R50 per person per day self-catering.

Long term volunteers are, with prior arrangement, welcome and encouraged to take holidays for trekking South Africa during their stay.

TRAINING COURSES AND RETREATS

Volunteers are encouraged, but not obligated, to take advantage of any Permaculture training courses that take place during their stay, at no additional costs.

Volunteers who are spiritual practitioners may, by prior arrangement with Tikologo and TRC, take the opportunity to attend Buddhist, mindfulness or yoga retreats held at the main site. There are also opportunities to do personal practice retreats at the Tara Rokpa Retreat House. Any TRC retreats must be arranged and costs discussed with TRC management at the time of application.

ACTIVITIES AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Tikologo permaculture farm is situated in a very remote yet very peaceful location. Volunteering here tends to suit individuals who like the quiet life and seek some solace from the busy city life. Volunteers should be self-sufficient and need little external stimulation or public entertainment.

There is no television but volunteers are welcome to bring their laptops and connect to the communal hard drive loaded with movies, documentaries and sitcoms. After hour's permaculture research, reading and multi-media learning is encouraged and applauded.

There are many opportunities for outdoor activities and exploration. TRC has several marked hiking trails including a beautiful hike to a pristine waterfall and natural pool. Volunteers are welcome to bring bicycles along to explore the surrounding hills. The Marico Eye, a natural dolomitic spring filled with water lilies, is situated 8km from Tikologo and is definitely worth a visit and swim. The valley is a birdwatchers paradise in the summer.

SITE ETIQUETTE

Be Mindful: Tikologo is a part of the Tara Rokpa Centre which is a retreat centre with Buddhist roots. Many of the volunteers who donate their time to Tikologo are spiritual practitioners who observe various yoga or meditation practices. Hence we request that an atmosphere of quite peacefulness be maintained outside of work hours.

We also ask that volunteers respect contextual sensitivities with regard to clothing and are hence required to wear shorts no shorter than just above the knee. Please also wear closed toe shoes whenever accessing any part of the site outside of the building and common areas.

Be Kind: Tikologo will not tolerate any form of racism, sexism, prejudice, violence, aggression or overly arrogant behaviour. We request that all visitors, students and volunteers conduct themselves in a cooperative manner and respect each other. Any form of sexual harassment will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behaviour will result in warning or removal from the site in extreme cases

No Intoxication: Tikologo is a space where people can come to be removed from the trappings of habitual patterns and reliance on common crutches. No illegal substances are permitted on the property and drunk or disorderly behaviour will not be tolerated. Smoking is not permitted within the buildings or common areas and smokers are required to use the designated smoking area.

Stay Safe: For student and volunteer safety appropriate protective or safety clothing must be worn when requested to do so. At no stage are guests, volunteers or students allowed to operate any equipment on site unless directed by a member of staff.

Kindly print out and initial each page followed by your signature below, in agreement of the information presented, and forward to growingtikologo@gmail.com.

DATE _____

FULL NAME _____

SIGNATURE _____