

CHIMFUNSHI

VOLUNTEER GUIDE 2026

CHIMFUNSHI WILDLIFE ORPHANAGE TRUST, ZAMBIA

"The Most Wonderful Place on Earth" - Jane Goodall

ABOUT CHIMFUNSHI

FOR OVER 40 YEARS, CHIMFUNSHI HAS BEEN PROVIDING A SAFE HAVEN FOR CHIMPANZEES AND OTHER ANIMALS IN NEED.

Chimfunshi is home to over 150 rescued chimpanzees from across the world. Many arrived after being saved from the illegal trade or from years of captivity.

Through its organic farm, community school, and community programmes, Chimfunshi supports sustainable livelihoods, education, and opportunities for local families.

By protecting forests and wildlife habitats, Chimfunshi contributes to long-term conservation.

At Chimfunshi, you will join a meaningful mission to support rescued chimpanzees, protect wildlife habitats, and support local communities.







CHIMFUNSHI IN NUMBERS:

- **10,000** Acres Miombo Forest and Wetlands
- **150+** Chimpanzees living in **8** forested enclosures
- **350+** Bird Species and recognised as an Important Bird Area (IBA)
- **80** Staff Members
- **400** Community Members

WHERE WE ARE: ZAMBIA

Zambia's name derives from the Zambezi River, the fourth longest river in Africa

Zambia Borders 7 countries: Zimbabwe, Malawi, DRC, Angola, Namibia, Botswana and Tanzania

Home to 73 tribes across 10 provinces. Main languages: English, Bemba, Nyanja, Tonga and Lozi

Zambia's motto is "One Zambia, One Nation'. It is also known as the "Real Africa"

Safety
Zambia is a safe and friendly country, renowned for its warm and hospitable people, making it a popular travel destination.

Climate
Zambia is in the southern hemisphere and enjoys beautiful weather all year round. It has a cool, dry winter (May–August), a hot, dry season (September–November), and a warm, wet rainy season (November–April).

Currency
Local currency: Zambian Kwacha (ZMW). Major currencies (USD, EUR, GBP, ZAR) can be exchanged in banks and ATMs are available in major towns.



VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Animal Care & Protection**: Work alongside dedicated caregivers to prepare and distribute food, maintain enclosures, and monitor animal health and behaviour. Contribute to enrichment programs that keep animals stimulated.

- **Community Development**: Support our school by taking part in extracurricular activities, feeding programmes, and sports such as football and hockey. Contribute to our sustainable farming that build environmental resilience.

- **Monitoring Nature**: Participate in wildlife and habitat monitoring, including camera trapping, bird surveys, and biodiversity assessments, while learning practical conservation skills.

- **Maintenance**: Help maintain paths, fences, shade structures, and surrounding vegetation. Volunteers with specialist skills may assist in more advanced construction projects.



SPECIFIC PLACEMENT:
If you have some skills (human health, animal health, construction, …) you would like to practice, let us know! We're always looking for people to help on any project, as a volunteer, your missions can be tailored to your wishes. We also welcome interns and professionals seeking practical or academic experience.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A VOLUNTEER

As every day is different at Chimfunshi, depending on the ongoing projects, it is difficult to give a typical day here for volunteers.

Your first week is about settling in and getting a real feel for how everything works.

Your first 3 days are a quarantine period to protect our chimps, so you'll be starting with our farm and education projects, where you'll work alongside the team to understand the bigger picture: how conservation, community, and daily operations all connect.

You'll then be able to help at the sanctuary, preparing the food, helping the keepers with their daily tasks, building enrichments, and observing the chimps and other wildlife.

Through this week in different areas, you'll have a well-rounded view of Chimfunshi and an understanding of where you'd like to focus and we'll adapt your schedule accordingly.





A DAY IN THE LIFE AT THE ANIMAL CARE DEPARTMENT

07:00	**WAKE UP** Start the day with a hot drink and breakfast, prepare a packed-lunch and get ready for the day ahead.
08:00	**DEPART FOR THE ENCLOSURES** Take the forest path to the enclosures.
08:30	**FOOD PREPARATION AND KEEPER DUTIES** Assist the keepers with preparing meals for the chimpanzees, while also helping with daily enclosure and cleaning tasks.
11:30	**CHIMPANZEE FEEDING OBSERVATION** Watch the chimpanzees during feeding time and observe their personalities, social dynamics and behaviours up close.
12:00	**LUNCH BREAK WITH THE KEEPER TEAM** Relax over lunch and enjoy an informal chat with the experienced keepers to learn about sanctuary life, animal care and Zambian culture.
13:00	**CREATE ANIMAL ENRICHMENT** Design and prepare enrichment activities that encourage natural behaviours, problem-solving and play for the animals.
14:30	**AFTERNOON FEEDING OBSERVATION** Observe another feeding session and gain further insight into chimpanzee interactions and welfare management.
15:00	**BIRD FEEDING AND ENRICHMENT DISTRIBUTION OBSERVATION** Join the keepers in feeding our rescued birds and distributing enrichment items throughout the sanctuary.
16:00	**RETURN TO THE EDUCATION CENTRE** Head back to the education centre to unwind, reflect on the day and prepare for tomorrow's experiences.

LIVING AT CHIMFUNSHI

Live at the heart of it all
Stay alongside volunteers, students, and researchers from around the world, while living and working with local Zambian staff.

Simple, comfortable living
Enjoy a basic yet comfortable stay with your own bed in a shared room. Private rooms are available on demand. Bathrooms are located nearby with running water from our borehole. Hot showers are offered in the mornings and evenings.

Kitchen & Food
Our shared kitchen is the social hub. Filtered well water is safe to drink, you'll have your own food storage space and all the pots and pans you will need. Cold drinks are available at our on-site shop.

Electricity
Powered by solar energy.







ADVENTURE AND RELAXATION





YOUR TIME AT CHIMFUNSHI IS DEFINITELY NOT ALL WORK AND NO PLAY!

While your work is incredibly rewarding, you'll also have plenty of opportunities to relax, explore, and create lasting memories. Living and volunteering here connects you with like-minded people from all around the world, creating a truly international family sharing stories, laughter, and unforgettable experiences - all in a location like no other.

- Wander through the ancient forest on foot or by bike, spotting vibrant birds, butterflies, and insects.
- Paddle along the Kafue River in one of our canoes
- Relax on the riverbank with a picnic.
- Enjoy communal BBQs with staff and volunteers
- Take advantage of dark skies and camp under the stars
- Go out to town to wander through a local market or spend a day at the swimming pool
- Book a weekend in a local Game Reserve

WORKING AROUND WILDLIFE

CHIMFUNSHI IS BOTH A WORKPLACE AND A COMMUNITY, SO A FEW SIMPLE GUIDELINES HELP EVERYTHING RUN SMOOTHLY. MOST COME DOWN TO COMMON SENSE AND RESPECT.

For the safety of both you and the animals, there is **no direct contact with chimpanzees**. This protects:

- Their health (we can pass illnesses to each other)
- Their behaviour (they need to stay wild, not human-dependent)
- Your safety: Chimpanzees are wild animals and can be dangerous

You'll still get incredibly close insight, just in the right way of observing their behaviours.

When working with any wildlife PPE must be worn at all times.

Dress for the environment: covered shoulders and legs help protect you from sun, insects, and the bush.

Abide by our **child and vulnerable adult policies** at all times.



COSTS AT A GLANCE

VOLUNTEER AT CHIMFUNSHI FROM JUST $280 PER WEEK

✅ WHAT'S INCLUDED

🟩 🏡 **ACCOMMODATION**
Stay at our education centre in a welcoming, community setting

🟩 ⚡ **FACILITIES COVERED**
Water, solar electricity, gas, linens, kitchen tools & mosquito nets

🟩 🚐 **WEEKLY TOWN TRIPS**
Transport to Chingola for shopping

🟩 🚲 **DAILY PROJECT TRANSPORT**
Travel to and from your placement by vehicle or bicycle

🟩 👩‍🏫 **TRAINING & SUPPORT**
Guidance from experienced, on-site team members

🟩 📡 **INTERNET/PHONE ACCESS**
Starlink wifi available at the education centre, Airtel coverage

❌ WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

🟥 ✈️ **TRAVEL COSTS**
Flights and visa fees, transfer from Ndola airport

🟥 💉 **HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**
Vaccinations, medicine

🟥 🛡️ **INSURANCE**
Personal travel insurance

🟥 🍽️ **FOOD & DRINKS**
Meals, snacks, and beverages

🟥 🧳 **PERSONAL EXPENSES**
Clothing, souvenirs, and personal items

🟥 🧼 **LAUNDRY & CATERING**
Other services can be provided

🟥 🚖 **EXCURSIONS & ACTIVITIES**

ℹ️ GOOD TO KNOW

🟦 🍳 **SELF-CATERING LIVING**
Cook your own meals in a fully equipped communal kitchen

🟦 🧺 **LAUNDRY MADE EASY**
Hand-washing facilities are available on-site

🟦 📱 **STAY CONNECTED**
Wifi available at the centre; local SIM recommended for wider coverage

WHAT TO BRING

✅ ESSENTIALS

- 🛂 PASSPORT (+ COPY) VALID FOR AT LEAST 6 MONTHS
- 💉 VACCINATIONS PROOF
- 👕 BUSH WEAR (LONG SLEEVES, DURABLE CLOTHING)
- 🥾 HIKING BOOTS
- 🧦 SOCKS & BASIC UNDERWEAR
- 🧥 JUMPER / FLEECE (SEASONAL)
- 🌧️ RAINCOAT & BOOTS (SEASONAL)
- 👚 CASUAL CLOTHES
- 🛁 TOWEL
- 🧢 HAT / CAP / SUNSCREEN / SUNGLASSES
- 🦟 REPELLENT
- 🔦 HEADLAMP / TORCH
- 🧼 LAUNDRY POWDER (ECO)
- 💧 REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE
- 🎒 SMALL BACKPACK
- 😷 PPE MASKS
- 💊 PERSONAL MEDICATION
- 😊 POSITIVE ATTITUDE

⭐ RECOMMENDED

- 🧴 TOILETRIES (YOUR PREFERRED BRANDS)
- 🩴 FLIP-FLOPS / SANDALS
- 🔋 SOLAR POWER BANK
- 🔌 PLUG ADAPTOR
- 🔪 POCKET KNIFE
- 🧃 ZIPLOC BAGS
- 📚 BOOKS
- 🎲 GAMES
- 🎧 MUSIC / EARPHONES
- 📷 CAMERA + MEMORY CARD
- 📓 NOTEBOOK & PEN
- 🔋 RECHARGEABLE BATTERIES
- 🔭 BINOCULARS
- 🎧 EARPLUGS
- 🧵 SEWING KIT
- 👓 GLASSES REPAIR KIT
- 💍 LEAVE VALUABLES AT HOME

GOT QUESTIONS? WANT TO BOOK?

Start Your Adventure Today. Contact us at: volunteer@chimfunshiwildlife.org



WE CAN'T WAIT TO MEET YOU AND SHOW YOU THIS INCREDIBLE PLACE

WHERE PEOPLE, ANIMALS, AND LANDSCAPES COME TOGETHER!

WWW.CHIMFUNSHIWILDLIFE.ORG