

ShowerPower Facilities on Lesbos

Information for those considering joining ShowerPower as a volunteer

We highly appreciate your interest in our project, and, moreover, that you consider joining us a volunteer! In this note, we provide you with practical details about your stay on Lesbos and the chores that have to be done at the bathhouse.

ShowerPower provides safe, clean, hot showers to women and children from refugee camp Moria and the adjacent makeshift camp the Olive Groove. The shower facilities in the camp are insufficient: they are few, they do not feel safe and a more significant part of the day there is no water available, let alone hot water. Therefore, we drive, depending on the situation and adapting to the case, several times a day, six days a week - from Tuesday till Monday - to the camp to collect groups of women and children.

Our facilities are in a cosy traditional Greek house, 8 km from Moria and 18 km from Mytilini. Maybe the showers are outdated, but they are a far cry from the facilities provided in the camp. Two showers are situated on the ground floor, and the third is on the first floor. This is only a beginning on a small scale, but it already provides the women and children we can help with some reprieve: they feel safe and welcome. Since we started in the second week of February 2018, the hammam has already been visited by more than 14.000 women and children. A team in the Netherlands is seeking to provide this service at more locations in the nearby future. Our first priority in realising this expansion is to be able to guarantee the same warm intimacy and safety that our current facility provides. So, we are working towards several small-scale locations.

Volunteering is a tough job

Of course, your offer to volunteer with ShowerPower is your free choice. However, volunteering is, at the same time, a firm commitment towards the NGO and its guests: these people need us. The ShowerPower crew consists of not more than a team leader and a maximum of four volunteers. Your share will be 25 to 30 per cent of the total. We do firmly count on you for the agreed period!

The workload is not to be underestimated. It takes a lot of energy to keep the hammam a quiet and safe environment. You should bring along a lot of strength and resilience to act tactfully to safeguard the ambience. Furthermore, it takes psychological skills and awareness to deal with vulnerable people (women as well as children). Volunteers should be physically and mentally in superb condition. We do not recommend applying when you recently had personal problems or when you are looking to make a change in your life after burnout or had a lot of stress in the last few months. Consider your situation thoroughly.

SHOWER POWER

*A common working day**

At ShowerPower we work six out of seven days: Tuesday to Sunday.

A working day starts at 07.30 with a breakfast briefing.

08.00 The driver leaves for the camp to pick up the first group of women and children. It will usually be the team leader that drives, but she could decide to ask an experienced volunteer to do it.

The volunteers that stay at home check the bathrooms for toilet paper, shampoo etc. And, weather permitting, we make a nice place to stay for our guests in the garden or as an alternative: in the house.

Some tea and soup are brewed, and a welcoming table is laid out with cups, sugar, cookies etc.



You'll receive a WhatsApp message from the driver mentioning the exact number of guests. When they arrive you bid them welcome, show them the facilities, offer them towels and ask if they need help with bathing the children. While the women take a shower, you take care of the children.

You pour tea, play with the children and 'talk' with the women as best you can. Usually, a significant part of the conversation will be in a natural sign language.

Assume that all are traumatized and so never ever ask about their experiences during the flight, lost family members or the reason for their flight. If they want to talk about it, they do so at the time that they are ready for it. Then listen to them but do not ask for details.

Sympathize. Let them complain but don't give confirmation, it will only increase the trauma.

After they have all taken a shower, the guests will be returned to the camp. The team members who remain in the house clean the bathrooms and prepare the home for the next group.

In this way, we have several rounds of visitors every day.

At the end of the day - around 18.00 - we do a final cleaning of the bathrooms and put the laundries in the washing machine. During the summer season we respect the Greek siesta after the second shift. The third shift will start at approx. 16.45 and leaves at 18.45, the subsequent cleaning will take 30 – 40 minutes.

You will find detailed instructions in the ShowerPower House.

How does it feel?

Not one day is alike: everyday people that turn up will surprise you. The women, the children, the babies, take their stories along. You will smile, you will laugh, and you will share their tears. You will be surprised by the spontaneous joy of a child, or a shy hug from someone else. You will share a multitude of experiences that will leave you feeling very much alive.

minimum length of your stay

We feel that a useful stay starts with **ten** days. Seven days of this will be working at the bathhouse, one day is your day off and two days will be reserved for arrival and departure. You can, of course, prolong this stay for one or more weeks. The exact timing of your visit will be planned with our volunteer's coordinator. We will try to find a time frame that will best suit your availability and our needs.

Registration

The majority of the volunteers appreciate a swift application procedure. Here is what we can offer:

After submitting her application form, the applicant will receive a confirmation of receipt. Within 36 hours our volunteer coordinator will assess the application and inform the applicant about the placement options. We expect the applicant, in turn, to report within 7 days what the situation is.

After an agreement has been reached on the exact dates, ShowerPower invites the volunteer to make a deposit of € 100 before a specified date, the amount involved will of course be deducted from the accommodation and food costs due. ShowerPower confirms the booking definitively upon receipt of the deposit.

Volunteers' Counsellor

For issues that cause a volunteer's concern Marlies, an external and independent counsellor, is available.

(trust@showerpowers.eu or call +31 6 53 34 57 17)

As a standard procedure, a few days after a volunteer left Lesvos for home, she will be contacted to check a possible need to be debriefed.



Room and board

The team leader resides at the hammam. For € 10 a night, you can stay there too. It is a cosy traditional Greek house with a garden and a terrace. For volunteers we have two double bedrooms and usually no more than three to four volunteers. The maximum time you pay for lodging is one month, for the remaining you will have free accommodation. For payment instructions see 'Meals'.

Towels as well as are available

Another option is that you arrange other sleeping accommodation by yourself. In that case, you have to organise your transportations from and to the airport as well as between the bathhouse and your shelter. Remember there is no reliable bus connection.

For those who have issues with allergies: we have a cat in and around the house!

Meals

The house has a kitchen and a fridge, it is possible, when sharing the shopping, to prepare meals.



Usually, we do this together and share cooking as well. Because the vast majority of our volunteers is a vegetarian, all meals are veggie.

Volunteers donate € 5 per day to cover store expenses. We kindly ask you to pay all amounts due at least a week before your arrival. Preference is given to bank transfers to the ShowerPower bank account

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Communication

A smartphone with a Facebook account and WhatsApp is essential for any internal communication between group members.

You will enjoy free WIFI in ShowerPower House.

Video and picture taking

Like many other NGOs, ShowerPower chooses to be extremely careful not to jeopardize our mission. As a direct result, we maintain a strict photo policy and do not publish photos in which refugees are recognizable. This is for good reason: once published on the internet, photos remain endlessly findable. We want to prevent people from being stigmatized by us, now or later in their lives.

We also demand this restraint from our volunteers. Even if you had requested permission in advance because then dependency relationship plays a role. In gratitude for what the photographer does or represents, women could (too) easily permit themselves or their children to be photographed.

Let it be clear that anyone can write what they want on their FB timeline, however, the publication of ShowerPower-related images of recognizable refugees is not allowed at any time.

Making images is strictly forbidden in Moria and the Olive Grove as well as in an area within a radius of 2 kilometres from the camps. Police and soldiers pay close attention to this. You will not recognize them as civilians. When caught they may instruct you to remove photos from cameras and cell phones or confiscate the device, in the worst case you will be arrested.

What clothes to wear?

Out of respect for our guests and to avoid unnecessary commotion at the Camp we urge you to refrain from see-through clothing, shorts, miniskirts and low necklines etc if you work in your capacity as a volunteer. Your clothes should be decent and respectful, as you would dress for work anywhere.

Remember this when putting together your wardrobe.

Winters (November - February) have lots of rainy days – it will be chill in the house, and you will like the warm clothes you brought along!

Summers (May - September) can be sweltering!

Car

The ShowerPower House is situated in a remote area from Mytilini. You may want to rent a car; however, this is not necessary, unless you want an opportunity to visit Mytilini in the evening and discover Lesbos in your spare time.

The ShowerPower minivan is exclusively available to transportation visiting women and children from the camp.

Arranging transportation

You travel at your own expense and organise your individual bookings.

Given the fact that circumstances can rapidly change, we advise you to have the risk that we have to cancel your upcoming stay well covered in your insurance policy. It is essential to wait for the final booking arrangements until our coordinator gives you the go-ahead. When done, please provide the coordinator with your flight numbers and the arrival and departure times.

Travelling to Lesbos

You fly to Athens or Thessaloniki, then transfer to a local flight with SkyExpress or Olympus airways that takes you in 30 minutes to Mytilini. If you choose this option: the easiest way, but not necessarily the cheapest, is to book for Athens with AEGEAN airways: Olympus is their daughter company, and thus your luggage will be labelled through to Mytilini.

Another option is to check whether tour operators sell tickets on their direct flights to Mytilini. Flying inbound with one, and outbound with another airline or tour operator can be less expensive.

You may also take a ferry from Athens (Piraeus) to Mytilini. Most boats leave at 20.00, to arrive at daybreak in Mytilini (07.00). The shipping companies who provide this service are BLUE STAR and HELLENIC SEAWAYS.



Transportation from Mytilini (MJT) airport

There is no reliable or frequent bus service from the airport to the bathhouse.

On the day of your arrival, we will arrange a pick-up at Mytilini airport. This could be after our shift ends. If you arrive before, it is, subject to other arrangements made by your team leader, best to take the local bus to Mytilini. We will take you from there. Your team leader will contact you well before your planned departure for the inbound flight.

Insurance

Be advised that, from a legal point of view, volunteering is different from travelling like a tourist. We, therefore, recommend checking your travel, legal assistance and liability insurance policies as well as your healthcare insurance to avoid any disappointments in case of an event that invokes any of these risks. Your insurance agent should be able to inform you to which extend your risks are covered. Dutch citizens are advised to read the attachment.

Donations

The ShowerPower volunteers, like volunteers from other NGOs, are not allowed to distribute any goods that they brought along.

Fellow NGO's are in charge of distributing donated goods, they have a sound distribution system and know where and what the needs are. ShowerPower takes donations like clothes, shoes, toys and foods directly to Attika Warehouse. From there it will quickly find its way to the beneficiaries: the refugees. Medical goods will be handed over to MSF.

Providing people with stuff (clothes/toys/ sweets etc.) is not our objective nor part of our mission. We stock only a few items for direct needs. See this stock as our 'first aid kit'.

We do have a variety of decent toys to play with. Blowing bubbles, for instance, looks great fun but it attracts kids for only a few minutes. If you, for a moment, realise that, during their young life, these kids already saw many certainties and promises bursting like bubbles, you want them to encounter better experiences.

Sweets, we offer our visitors lots of fruits and vegetable snacks as they lack vitamins and fresh vegetables more than sugar!

So, when you want to bring goods to share, contact us well before and please honour our agreement.

We are well aware that friends and family like to support you with donations on your private mission rather than money. You probably can convince them to the contrary: by bringing money you save the costs of extra luggage. Your money, together with that savings, buys a lot more goods in Greece than abroad. Finally, by spending money on Lesvos, you support the Greek retailers as well!

Our mission

The refugees in camp Moria have to survive in great uncertainty amidst the noise, the dirt, the dust and the damp of an overcrowded Camp. This is why ShowerPower wants to provide them not only with a hot shower but also with a quiet, spotless and dry environment. A place where they will be treated with dignity as the priceless individuals they are. This is more than just a bath – it is an experience.

To conclude

ShowerPower is an organisation that seeks to return a sense of basic humanity to our guests. We have no political or religious ambitions; we ask our volunteers to observe strict neutrality in that respect!



CHILDREN IN THE HAMMAM – TIPS

*By Liesbeth Bloemendal,
co-founder of ShowerPower
field coordinator in the bathhouse
people-person with many years of experience in child education*

THE HEART OF SHOWERPOWER

The children in Moria are crushed under impressions. Back home, during their journey and now in Moria again. This is why they show little to no concentration and why they do not know what relaxation feels like. They will benefit from peace and focus. And of course, from love and attention. ShowerPower wants to give them the experience of losing themselves in play. To become completely timeless, to be absorbed in what they do, to forget everything around them. Gifts and too much choice cause unrest. Which is the opposite of what ShowerPower wants to achieve!

LESS IS MORE

The more toys you offer, the less the children will play. They stay with everything for one or two minutes and then want to go to the next. Moreover, as a volunteer, you lose overview because the place is filled with items. It does not benefit safety either. What happens, over and over, is that volunteers offer a bunch of toys presuming that there will be at least one item that the children will like. This does not work at all!

MAKE A CHOICE

Make a choice after you have noticed what children like to play with. For example:

the motorway. I had three cars in it. If more than three children play at the same time, take another car from the cupboard in the storage room. They need some help to start. So, have someone help with the first minutes of building up.

If you see that someone is playing nicely, you are inclined to sit with him, say something or join in. Rather stay quiet and at distance and do not disturb the child in its game. Even comments how beautiful it is what they do get them out. As they realise that an adult is watching, they are no longer totally committed to the game. If children do not play at all, then you choose an item that you think is suitable and you simply start playing in the child's vicinity. If the child is not too shy, ask it whether it likes to participate. If the child is shy, then eventually, it automatically gets attracted to your game. So from time to time, you may try to involve the child in the game.

The Blokus game gets rarely chosen by volunteers, whereas children from about five years on really like it. But here too they need someone to help them to start. One can play it alone but also with others. You can simply make your field as large as possible like a puzzle or divide it into two or four lots per color.

The **basket with blocks** seems minimal but it is something that both younger and older children play with.

Memory, naming and searching English words. All tickets open or closed.

Rummikub I played several times together with children of about ten years.

INDIVIDUAL TOYS VERSUS PLAYING TOGETHER

Individual toys (think of the big bus or a doll) are problematic, my advice is to keep them in the storage room. Whenever there is a very small group, you may offer them. Children in the camps have virtually nothing, so they want everything. This will end up not playing at all. This applies to children in general. Individual toys drive them just to want to possess it! And then they have to defend it because other children want to have it too. So here is my advice: put it in the storage room and take it out if you think it will work. It is important to remain in control and be able to oversee the scene at all time. The more toys around the more difficult your task will be.

SHOWER POWER

Henna tattoos are great fun for children, remember, it only works when you have a small group and you are not needed to assist your colleagues in any other way. It is, like nail painting, a one-to-one activity and you can't move elsewhere until you're done.

If you are gifted with **drawing talents** you can get them to work in a different way, even if it is busy. You draw shapes on drawing paper with several children (possibly also with their mums). They then continue completing the figures with their drawing. The different sheets can be placed next to each other so that patterns continue from one sheet to another. After that, they can start to color the sheets. For example, a large carpet or painting can be created on the wall containing all kinds of drawings that go together.

REVERSE

Mandalas, blank paper and loose color pages. I think the bucket with colored pencils actually was too full. About fifteen pencils will do. See to it that the pencils are sharpened at all time. Again, if you offer too many sheets, the youngest ones will put only one line on each sheet and will never ever complete what they started. The same applies to coloring books and plates. You just copy a few then let them choose one and have the remaining items out of sight. Having one sheet only the children will focus on it and have more fun than when there are twenty sheets around.

Music instruments will add value provided that you play them well, so you can coach your pupils. Remember they will be initially for individuals. We saw a little girl play the djembe and that was beautiful!

If there are many children, it is quite a challenge to avoid not just having a lot of noise while others are chatting. It brings unrest which means that other children can not get into their game. I would for that reason, keep the instruments in the storage room. Take the instruments out when you consider it a beautiful moment and when the time and attention is available to make something beautiful out of it.

The ball: playing volleyball and playing soccer is fun for children. It can go wild with elder boys. Instead of forbidding them, you turn it into something else. For example, I placed blocks that they could try to knock down by kicking the ball. It brought fun back into the game, where it was only tossed before. You can also use hula-hoop to throw or kick through.

PLAYING WITH 'NOTHING'

You can also play with 'nothing' - if there is virtually nothing else, the cap of a lemonade pack already invites to play. Starting from there the best games were created.

Once coming back from driving I saw a girl who did not play at all before. She ran back and forth, touched everything and picked up everything. She was corrected by everyone because the mother was afraid she would do things that could go wrong. The kid, of course, became more frustrated. When I returned, the same girl was playing quietly and got completely lost in what she did. She was bathing the blue dolls of the Pisa tower in the dog's trough. She went to fetch fresh water in a bucket. Oh, how wonderful she was playing, and nothing could go wrong any more. Until a volunteer saw what she did. Fears like dog's bowl, water ballet, dolls in it; triggered her shouting 'That is absolutely not allowed, this is no normal game!' I was shocked because immediately she took all stuff, dried it and the restlessness in the child re-appeared.

Lesson: Every game is a game if there is no danger involved. And it is exactly this kind of games that a child can surrender to completely. Today's World with these plastic toys is not the child's world. So: offer cubes, shells, water, bamboo sticks and cloths and you will see that they play. Being a volunteer, you have to bring a great deal of fantasy yourself to discover what is in it. Many people do not have that anymore, but you probably do!

GOLDEN TIP

Use your fantasy and imagination in everything you do, and do not worry about how exactly things should be done. The only issue you worry about is safety. Again: keep the toy cabinet as empty as possible. Look and feel what you want to offer and choose consciously. The best thing is offering the kids something you really like yourself and to what you can surrender too.

Have fun, good luck!

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'Liesbeth', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Vrijwilligerswerk bij ShowerPower

Verzekering informatie

Met deze informatie doen wij een poging om onze vrijwilligers te wijzen op een mogelijk hiaat in de dekking die een gewone reisverzekering biedt. Wij zijn geen assurantie experts en verwijzen voor nadere hulp en expertise naar de verschillende assuratiekantoren en maatschappijen. Het is echt niet de bedoeling je te verontrusten, maar naar aanleiding van vragen van vrijwilligers vinden wij dat we jou op een aantal aspecten gewezen moeten hebben.

- a. **Aansprakelijkheid:** kijk na of op de particuliere aansprakelijkheidsverzekering ook vrijwilligers werk (binnen Europa) is meeverzekerd. ShowerPower heeft zelf een zogenaamde bedrijfs-aansprakelijkheidsverzekering afgesloten via Amlin.
- b. **Ziektekostenverzekering:** Griekenland valt binnen de EU, dus onder de basisverzekering en eventuele aanvullende verzekeringen is in principe dekking. Het is niet onverstandig in dit geval om op een reisverzekering ook medische kosten toch nog mee te verzekeren, omdat er soms toch onvoorziene kosten kunnen zijn.
- c. **Reisverzekering:** deze wordt normaal gesproken gesloten als particulier/toerist, het is verstandig om vooraf na te gaan of de (lichte) werkzaamheden als vrijwilliger voor ShowerPower ook onder de dekking vallen.

De belangrijkste rubrieken op de reisverzekering zijn:

1. **Basisdekking** waaronder veelal vallen zowel hulpverlening als repatriëring.
2. **Medische** kosten (voor zover niet gedekt onder de eigen ziektekostenverzekering).
3. Uiteraard kunnen ook andere rubrieken verzekerd worden zoals een **bagage**-dekking en eventuele (extra) **ongevallen** dekking. Inzake dit laatste (i.v.m. onverhoopte arbeidsongeschiktheid): het is verstandig om na te gaan of men onder de Nederlandse WIA-wetgeving verzekerd is voor arbeidsongeschiktheid c.q. (bv. als ondernemer) een eigen arbeidsongeschiktheidsverzekering heeft.

Er zijn enkele aanbieders in Nederland die specifiek reisverzekeringen voeren voor bv. (langere) werkvakanties waarop o.a. ook het aansprakelijkheidsrisico mee verzekerd kan worden. Dit betreft bijvoorbeeld de Goudse en Allianz. Zie

hiervoor:

<https://www.goudse.nl/ondernemer/mijnpersoneel/reizen/expat-pakket-individueel>

<https://www.allianz-assistance.nl/reisverzekering/globetrotter-reisverzekering>

d. **Voor Nederlandse vrijwilligers & ingezetenen:**

in geval een onverhoopte schade is er mogelijk ook nog dekking in sommige gevallen onder de zogeheten VNG-vrijwilligersverzekering waaraan vrijwel alle gemeentes in Nederland deelnemen. Deze kent nl. een dekkinggebied Europa en vervolgens verschillende dekkingrubrieken waaronder aansprakelijkheid en ongevallen. Het gaat om een zogeheten secundaire dekking voor beperkte verzekerde bedragen.