

A Day in the Life of a BYFC Volunteer

Life as a BYFC volunteer in Burundi varies greatly depending on your job and where you live. Some days are exciting ‘highs’, incredible breakthroughs of God working through the projects. Some days are frustrating ‘lows’, where all you want to do is lock yourself away in your room and wonder why you came!

But most days are somewhere in between, a routine of work and life, community and friendship, serving and receiving, a potentially life changing experience in an amazing culture with beautiful people.

But to give you some idea of what life might be like here, one of our volunteers, Haylee, a teacher at Gitega International Academy has written out a timetable of a day in her life here in Burundi

My daily routine:

Wake up at about 5:30am, crawl out of my mosquito net

Have some quiet time on my porch and bask in the coolness of the fog. If it’s early enough, the air is so crisp that if I close my eyes, it’s like winter back home.

Then I have some breakfast. Usually warm coffee (never hot because it is made one day or days before and kept in a thermos,) bread with honey and fresh avocado on most days. I should mention that we have our own bakery at the orphanage, so the bread is amazing!

7am I get a ride to school from one of our drivers, and travel for about 10 minutes on our bumpy, rocky, red dirt road. As we bounce along the bumpy dirt road I hear the little ones shout, “Mzungu! Mzungu!”

7:20am we have “family circle” with the GIA students and share in devotion and prayer before classes.

I don’t teach the first two periods, so I grade and lesson plan until 9am.



Me and my 7th graders in the computer lab



My room!

I teach 6 classes a day, all in the computer lab, and finish by 3:30 pm.

Mondays and Wednesdays I have a girls’ sports club which goes until 5pm.

Fridays I tutor English until 5pm and sometimes stay late to show the students a movie.

Most evenings I work out for about an hour. I either go running in the hills surrounding my compound - where locals shout and laugh, and kids run after me, or I exercise on my front porch, where the mamas also laugh at me and the kids imitate what I'm doing. Either way, I am a spectacle

I take an ice-cold shower, sometimes with a bucket of rainwater if the city water is turned off.

At about 7pm I have dinner, prepared by Mama J, with my housemates and other volunteers, Jana and Jacque.

Mama J is good to us and cooks only food that we like. So we typically have a carb like rice, noodles, or our favorite, chapati (African fried bread), with a protein of either beans or meat, and cooked veggies or salad. Food is cooked over a small charcoal stove.



We use solar panels for our electricity, so we have power from about 6pm to 9pm each night. Everybody rushes to plug in laptops, kindles and other electrical equipment.

I spend most evenings grading and preparing lessons. Once a week we have a bible study with some of the other volunteers, and on weekends we usually have a movie night using our friends' projector.



Saturdays are a wonderful day. I do nothing on Saturday, or rather, I plan nothing on Saturday. Typically my friend Jacque and I will wake up early and go for a long "adventure run" through the bush, which is always beautiful and fun. Saturdays are also our laundry day, so we grab a couple of buckets, fill them up with rain water, and wash everything by hand! Laundry has become one of my new favorite things; it's somehow relaxing to sit out in the sun and wash, then

hang up my clothes so they can be dried in the wind. I feel so accomplished when I get to finally take them off the line, fold them and put them away.

I spend Sunday mornings at G.I.A. to help with our school chapel. I leave at about 7:30 in the morning, arrive at the school and help set up, and worship with the kids from about 9am until 11am. The rest of the day is usually free!

When my day is done, I crawl back into my mosquito net, and fall asleep to the sound of the crickets outside.