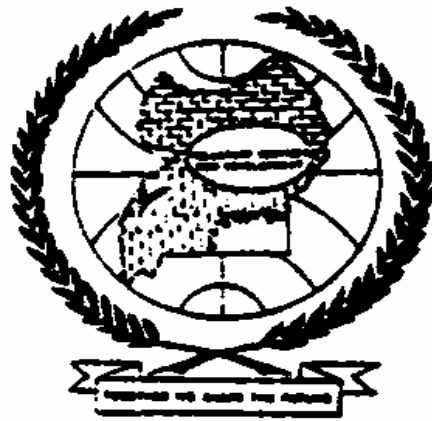


UGANDA PIONEER'S ASSOCIATION (UPA)



A Guide for Volunteers

About Us

Uganda Pioneers' Association (UPA) is a Youth Voluntary Organization working with community projects, work camps and voluntary exchange.

Our Mission is ... Solidarity and contribution to creation of a better living of society.
UPA's Motto goes.... TOGETHER WE CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE.

UPA's vision is that youth will take a leading role in their local communities through initiatives to improve the livelihood of the less privileged rural and grassroots communities.

UPA was founded in 1989 by young Ugandans with the aim of mobilizing youth to contribute to community development through voluntary work.

Arrival

The start of our programs is very flexible, We provide an airport pick-up on the day of your arrival. For this purpose, you should give us your complete travel details (arrival day and time, flight number) in advance.

Orientation Week

The orientation week is held for all volunteers. The orientation involves getting information about Uganda, UPA and the voluntary work one will be doing. A UPA member will then help you visit Kampala and other tourist places. The UPA member will also show you how we move around in Uganda.

In-Between-Meetings

During your stay, meetings with UPA staff and volunteers are held every first Tuesday of the month. The meetings are a form of evaluation about the work you are doing, the accommodation and information sharing. For those not working in Kampala, specific days will be assigned when the meetings can be held

Final Evaluation

The final evaluation will be done at the end of the program term. It includes writing a report showing how programme has been achieved

Projects

The placement and the projects will be organized individually, according to your preferences in your application form. Please be sure of the choices you write in your application sent in advance and try to adapt to the projects once you are directed to it. Changes of placement and hosting can be made only for very special reasons, but not before trying to adjust in the first placement.

Please note that even when we work very hard in trying to confirm you in the project you are interested in, we cannot fulfill everyone's wishes. We always try to provide the best possibilities for our volunteers, but there is no 100% guarantee that you get the project you have applied for.

A-Z about UPA and Uganda (Practical Info)

A

Accommodation

Accommodation at the guest house will be simple, but comfortable. The UPA guest house can accommodate 10 (ten) persons at any given time. Volunteers will cook their own meals using gas. A small fridge is available to keep food but remember that electricity in Uganda is unreliable. The boys' room is separate from that of the girls and there is a caretaker to do the cleaning of the house. The guest house is located out of Kampala, miles Hoima Road.

In case the volunteer is placed outside Kampala, the host is requested to accommodate the volunteer or alternatively to identify appropriate accommodation. UPA volunteers are generally very flexible and adaptable but do require a minimum standard of accommodation.

- A volunteer should have his/hers own room that must be secured with a door lock. Two volunteers can share a room but each volunteer must have his/hers own bed. They can get mattresses from UPA and will bring their own mosquito net.
- Water should be accessible within reasonable distance.
- A volunteer will be provided with a paraffin stove by UPA and is responsible for his/hers own cooking. The host should direct the volunteer to shopping facilities, health facilities and how to use local transport.

Allergies

Please inform us of any allergies you may have, so that your contact person is prepared.

Alcohol

Alcohol can be bought in most shops around the guest house and in Kampala. Please drink in the presence of people you trust such as other volunteers or UPA volunteers so that no one will take advantage of you incase you have too much.

AIDS

This is still a problem in Uganda. Currently 7.1% of the population is infected. If you are to have sexual intercourse use a condom.

B

Business Hours

The UPA office is always open from 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday except public holidays. However if the staff have to travel to projects, attend work shops or attending to UPA projects or branches then it will remain closed

Banks

Banks are usually open 8:30 AM and close 4 PM during week days and 8:30 AM to 12PM on Saturdays. They remain closed on Sundays and Public holidays.

C

Climate

Uganda is so vast that the climate of the country is so varied. However, one could classify the seasons as Hot, Wet & Cold. Temperatures usually range from 20 centigrade to 30 centigrade depending on the part of the country you are.

Cost of Living

Your money goes a long way in Uganda.

Thanks to an extremely advantageous exchange rate costs are considerably lower than in Europe and America. However prices can differ and vary according to the location.

Cultural Shock

Volunteers may experience a cultural shock on arrival in Uganda. Most things and way of life in the country is different from that in the West. However this is only for a few weeks and you will get used to the new way of life. After the projects and going back to their home countries volunteers may experience a reverse cultural shock.

D

Driving

Driving is usually on the left similar to other commonwealth countries.

Drugs

Don't even think about it. All forms of narcotics are illegal in Uganda.

E

Emergency

In case of emergency you can always contact the UPA office: 0772 450 399 OR 0772 388 290, throughout the country, dial 999 or 112 for police and fire,

Expectations

Please don't come with too many expectations. That is the only way you will learn to accept your surroundings. Don't force your culture on others, instead accept our culture and be ready to learn.

Environment

Respect for the environment is expected at all times.

Exchange rates

Money exchange can be done in banks and forex bureaus mainly found in Kampala. There are normally today's rates in newspapers and on signs in front of the shops.

For more and updated exchange rates see <http://www.yahoo.com/exchangerates>.

F

Food

Each region of Uganda has its very own specialties. The common food eaten in the south is bananas while in the north and east of the country wheat and sorghum are the main foods consumed. Other foods include Potatoes, cassava and maize.

G

Geography

Uganda is a land locked country bordered by Sudan in the north, Kenya to the East, Democratic republic of Congo to the west, Tanzania to the South and Rwanda to the southwest. The area covered by the country is 235,796 km squared (32nd in Africa; similar to Great Britain or the state of Oregon in USA). The largest towns in Uganda are Kampala, Jinja, Mbale, Fort Portal, Kabale. The total population of the country is 26.7 million people (2001 census). The official language is English, other languages are Luganda, Swahili and many other local languages.

H

Hotels

You will be able to get a single basic room in most towns in Uganda. In Kampala you can get basic single rooms, Hostels and other accommodation at affordable rates.

History

Uganda "the Pearl of Africa", as one British Officer called it has a long history.

The British came to Uganda in the early 18th Century. They came as traders and established the British East African company. Over the years they established themselves as the undisputed rulers of

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Uganda. In 1896, Uganda came under the British Crown. The Republic of Uganda attained its independence in 1962. Uganda therefore belongs to the commonwealth countries under the British monarch. Uganda has had a chaotic past with governments coming to power through the coups and civil war is just ending in the North of the Country

I

Internet

Internet cafes can be found all across the country in all major towns and cities. The rates for browsing vary according to which part of the country you are.

Insurance

You are required to arrange for your own health insurances before arrival to Uganda. For more details, contact your sending organization.

Ugandan People

Ugandans in general are very informal, helpful and hospitable people and are brought up to respect and treat guests well. Don't feel uncomfortable, but accept it. Ugandans are very warm and talkative people who like to gather a lot. Families and friendships are very important to Ugandans.

Ugandans in general, are very helpful and hospitable. If your hosts go out of their way to make you feel comfortable, DON'T feel awkward, accept it and appreciate it.

J

No items with J

K

Kampala

This is the capital city of the Uganda. It is the home to most big shops, supermarkets, large entertainment centers, Diplomatic missions and other political and economic organs. Like most African Cities, Kampala is crowded with an estimated population of 2 million people during day and less than a million during the night. Regular matatus and buses connect Kampala to other towns and cities in the country. Kampala has both the new and old taxi parks that are terminals to the matatus. The bus terminal is also close to both taxi parks. It would be advisable to get a map of Kampala to help you when traveling around the city.

L

Languages

Uganda has more than 60 different languages spoken by the local people. The national language in Uganda is English. Although not every one can speak it, most people will say a few simple words but if you are to have a conversation you need to say the words slow with clear pronunciation to be understood.

M

Markets

There are markets in all major towns where everything from food to clothes to technology and crafts can be bought. The prices are usually not fixed and only limited by your (and the salesmen's) skill for bargaining. Money can be saved by consulting Ugandans or other volunteers before buying.

Money

The currency in Uganda is the Shilling (Shs.) Notes are available in denominations of 1000, 5000, 10,000, 20,000 and 50,000 Coins in denominations of 50, 100, 200 and 500

Medicines

Medicines are easily got at all medical shops and pharmacies. But bring any special medicines from home if you need.

N

National Parks

There are a number of national parks in the country to visit and see the wild beauty of Uganda. About 2km from city center there is an office to book gorilla viewing permits. You can also get information on national parks and other tourist places in the country.

O

Orientation about the country.

The lonely planet is an excellent guidebook about East Africa including Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Macmillan produces maps of Kampala and Uganda. A city map can also be found in the free tourist magazine "the Eye" available in Uganda. Although you will have an orientation with a staff about the country, it will involve only the basic things. Others can be learnt through experience or talking with the local people.

P

Phone

In cities in Uganda payphones are available on almost every corner. Mobile phones can be bought in many shops, many money can be saved by consulting Ugandans about the prices before shopping.

Passport & Visas

Regular Tourist Visas are given for 3months at the nearest Ugandan embassy. Your purpose of visit should be TOURISTIC.

-The visa is given from the date of issue and not from the dates you mention in the application.

-Extension of this visa in Uganda is possible. This can only be done at the immigration department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

-Please arrange with your organization how to proceed to get the correct visa.

-All visitors must have a return ticket. It is better to buy the visa at the airport or other entry points into the country.

Problems

Any problem that arises is to be discussed at the meetings. Any problem with another volunteer, check first if there's a misunderstanding. If necessary talk with the coordinator.

Realize that Uganda is a different country from places in Europe and life can be comfortable as when there is less available.

Power

Electricity in Uganda is generated from water. However in the last few years this part of Africa has experienced drought and this has led to the reduction of water in the lakes and rivers thus making power generation difficult. This has caused high demand with a low supply. This has led to power rationing. Therefore load shedding is common in Uganda. Power may go off any time.

Post

Post offices can be found at big towns and cities in Uganda. The UPA mail, address is P.O Box 25973, Kampala, Uganda. In Uganda bringing mail out to physical addresses (homes, offices) is not common and most companies have post boxes.

Public Transportation

Uganda mainly uses road as its means of transport. Matatus (rebuilt vans) with license to carry 14 passengers are the major public form of transport in most parts of the country. There are two taxi parks in Kampala, located in down town, but the matatus can be taken from most places following the roads to or from major traffic points. Going from Town to the guesthouse is 1000 shs and the other way 500 shs. Larger buses can be taken for longer distances in Uganda and around East Africa countries.

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Boda bodas: transportation by scooters and motorbikes can be very useful if you're lost in town. Small rides go for 500 shs. Medium (2km to 4 km) 1000 shs and longer rides upwards. From downtown Kampala to guesthouse 2000 to 3000 shs. Rides with more than three people on the motorbikes are no longer legal, but can be done to save money. However it is not admirable.

Q

Questions

You can always ask questions to other local or international volunteers who have been in the country longer than you in case of the latter. You can contact UPA for email addresses for former and present volunteers.

R

Religion

Islam, Christianity, and African tradition are the major religious communities in the country. According to the 2002 census, Christians constitute about 83% of the population followed by Muslims with 11% and other religions with 2%. The population of Uganda is estimated at 26.7million people (2001census).

Most people in Uganda believe in something and therefore have difficulties understanding Atheist. Many humanitarian organizations in Uganda are supported by missionary organizations from USA and other Western countries. Therefore churches from America and the west have a deep impact in the governmental policies concerning Christian deeds. Most clearly seen in the campaign against AIDS (ABC) Abstinence Be faithful Condom use where Abstinence is highly preferred before condoms.

S

Safety

Organizations worldwide are working hard in coordinating the international exchange of volunteers for social projects and in providing opportunities for young people to travel for personal development & interests.

Do not behave in any manner which is going to disturb other volunteers, and the organizations behind the exchange and most of all your personal health & well being, please avoid any high risk factors during your stay.

Smoking

This is not allowed in the sleeping rooms, only outside the house. Smoking is also restricted in most social places in Uganda

Sex

Relationships should always be done with safety in mind. The rate of AIDS/HIV is still high and no risks should be taken. Condoms can be bought in all pharmacies and most local shops.

T

Time-Uganda Standard Time

Ugandan people are very informal, others will call that undisciplined and unreliable. The point is that it works two ways. Sometimes planning is changed without clear reasons and arbitrarily. But then again, nice opportunities open up which are not parts of the schedule either. But that is not often, and volunteers should be a good example and show that time can be held.

So please try to be flexible.

Time Zone

Uganda Standard time is 3.00 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) or London. Volunteers should notice while Europe, Northern America and other places in the world change between wintertime and summertime, Africa is holding the same time all the year.

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Tipping

Generally tipping is not compulsory, except in big hotels and restaurants. However, service providers at hotels and restaurants, taxi drivers, and others who have been exposed to tourism are now expecting tips. The tips are not added in your bills, so the decision to tip or not is yours.

Traveler's Cheques

Traveler's cheques may be cashed at most commercial banks and authorized moneychangers (in the bigger cities only!).

Tourist places

Beside the amazing nature, tourist can go to white water rafting on the Nile, several companies arrange trips to the source of the Nile in Jinja east of Kampala, the national museum is worth a look, and for art there are some galleries, which mostly are located in Kampala. Several craft markets are located around Kampala with African art for sale.

U

Uganda Pioneer's Association (UPA)

Uganda Pioneers' Association is a youth voluntary organization working with community projects, work camps and volunteer exchange.

UPA was founded in 1989 by young Ugandans with the aim of mobilizing youth to contribute to community development through voluntary work.

UPA currently operates with 10 Branches in seven Districts in Uganda. Where it organizes national and international work-camps that contribute voluntary labour and skills to local development projects such as schools, community centers, health units, farmers' centers, etc. UPA also links national and international volunteers to community projects. UPA is registered under the National NGO Board, Ref. S. 5914/114. We are not representing any political, religious or sectarian interests. UPA wants to bridge gaps between different people's way of living and cultural background.

V

No items with V

W

Working Hours

Expected working hours differ from 5-7 hours/day in schools through 8 hours in other projects. In some projects there may be more than one volunteer but this cannot be guaranteed because you can be the only one to sign up for a certain project at that time.

Normally, the volunteers can work in the project they applied for. There is, however, its not a 100% guarantee because it may be that projects are full or don't need a volunteer for the specific time.

Water

Drinking water should always be boiled and filtered. Drinking straight off the tap is not safe, when traveling shops have a wide range of mineral water that costs about Ug Shs. 500-1000 per bottle.

What to bring

Clothes, both casual and formal

Working shoes (trekking/sports shoes) in case of physical work

A personal first aid kit (bandage, disinfectant, diarrhea tablets, etc) and medication you may require (allergies, asthma, diabetes...), but almost all medicines can be purchased in Uganda.

A sleeping Bag

Camera, films for the camera

Sun Glasses, Sun Screen Lotion

Torchlight

Traditional Music,

Photos from your home

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AND DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR ENERGY, SMILE, AND SENSE OF HUMOUR ALONG TOO!

Uganda Pioneers' Association is a young and flexible organization. We expand our activities rapidly and are open for all suggestions. We, however, see this as a good thing to learn about different points of view, to promote understanding and to come up with creative solutions in an international group. To promote community based development, intercultural cooperation and youth participation through voluntary work.

People who do voluntary work are really motivated and want to make a difference in the world by showing solidarity and a sense of responsibility to our world, and we at UPA will always support this. Finally, have an open mind & willingness to learn. Be ready to adjust to new situations and challenges. Uganda is an experience, be prepared to live it. We are looking forward to meet you!!!!

UPA warmly welcomes you to Uganda!!!

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