

UGANDA AND COUNTY AREA OF MASAKA INFORMATION SHEET

INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Landlocked Uganda astride the equator in East Africa is 235,580 square kilometres of beautiful serene green plateau situated between the eastern and western branches of the Great Rift Valley. It has the second largest freshwater lake, Lake Victoria, and the legendary River Nile. Because of these and good rainfalls this land is ever-fertile.

In Uganda you will find the facilities of modern living almost everywhere in the urban areas. However, we will be travelling to the county area of Masaka which is 160Km from Kampala, (about 3- 4 hours journey) which is very basic and still much in need.

Cost

Volunteers will be required to fund the cost of their trip. **Approximate** costs include:

- 1) Travel Immunisations: €220
- 2) Return flight from Dublin to Entebbe, Uganda,
Transport to and from the airport,
15 nights food and accomodation
2 day safari trip

Total €1350 per person (between €700 and €800 needs to be paid upfront at time of booking flights)

NB If you are a PAYE tax payer and have paid €400 in tax this tax year you will only have to pay €1000 and UgaIrish can claim the balance from the taxman.

- 3) Travel & Health Insurance
- 4) Visa: not a requirement for Irish passport holders
- 5) Personal spending money

The Projects

Volunteers are expected to help with one of the many projects to improve the standards of education, health care and farming skills of the destitute and impoverished communities in the Masaka county and districts. These might include helping with a building or renovation programme, nursing in the dispensary, teaching Hygiene skills/ English/Arts/Crafts etc, or helping on the Farming Project. There is something for everybody!

HEALTH

Malaria

Malaria is the biggest significant health problem in Uganda and is caused by mosquitoes.

- 1) Volunteers are strongly advised to sleep under a **mosquito net** which has been tucked under the mattress – nets are provided at the Guest House.
- 2) Anti-malaria medication should be commenced *as prescribed* prior to arriving in Uganda and continued for the *prescribed period* after leaving.
- 3) Insect repellent minimises the risk of being bitten; this should be applied to exposed (and adjoining) skin especially in the early evening, when malaria-bearing mosquitoes are hungriest. It is also advisable to apply repellent in the morning before leaving the Guest House to avoid other ‘biters’. Repellents containing 50% D.E.E.T are very effective and easy to use.

Immunisations

Volunteers are expected to have had appropriate ‘shots’/immunisations/vaccinations 4 to 6 weeks

prior to leaving for Uganda; these include hepatitis A, typhoid, polio, tetanus, yellow fever. It is important to stress that proof of Yellow Fever immunisation is required by Ugandan authorities – denial of entry to Uganda is the consequence of not possessing the official document; see http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1051.html. Rabies and hepatitis B vaccinations are optional and should be discussed with your doctor.

Health Insurance

Health insurance is essential in the event of becoming ill or having an accident. The E111 card is not viable in Uganda. Please consider insurance which would cover the cost of repatriation if this were necessary. Irish private healthcare insurance companies (VHI, Quinn, and AvivaHealth/Hibernian) provide cover to differing extents for international travel – please check with your provider if you have a policy with one of these companies.

Illness/accident

In the event of becoming ill or having an accident it is imperative to report this to the UgaIrish group leader so that immediate action can be taken to resolve these health issues.

Sunburn

Sunburn (the most common example of first-degree burns) is uncomfortable, contributes to dehydration and sun-stroke, and renders a volunteer virtually useless for the work at hand.

- 1) Appropriate clothing is the most important means of preventing this avoidable misery.
- 2) Using the lush vegetation as shade is recommended when possible.
- 3) Please use sun creams with a protective factor in excess of 30, with application before starting work and at lunch-time a minimum.

Medical fitness

High temperatures, significant unfamiliar Ugandan health hazards, hilly landscape, relative novelty of working in these conditions, and a typically steeper decline for those who become ill; these factors make it essential for every volunteer to be medically assessed and certified fit to travel and undertake the type of work programme that is proposed. Each volunteer must present their GP with the specific UgaIrish Project 'Fitness to Travel and Participate' form for assessment and certification; these should be returned before flights are booked.

Climate.

Although situated on the equator, Uganda's relatively high altitude tempers the heat and humidity is generally low. Throughout the year the sunshine averages about 6 – 10 hours a day. In June there is very little rainfall and temperatures during the day should be around 20 – 25 degrees, but in early morning and evening it can get chilly. Due to the height of the area there is usually a fresh breeze blowing. In the capital of Kampala it is warmer and more humid.

Currency:

The currency in Uganda is Ugandan shillings. €1 = 3300 Ugandan shillings. Euros can be exchanged in the local bank in Masaka. Traveller's cheques are not accepted in Uganda. There are ATM machines in Masaka.

Fundraising:

Volunteers may wish to raise funds for UgaIrish Project. It is the policy of UgaIrish for volunteers to only fundraise for our projects. Fundraising for your air fare can be done privately but not in the name of the UgaIrish Project.

Language:

English is the official language and is the medium of education in Uganda's education system from

primary to university level. It is good to learn some of the local language (Lugandan) as many of the adults have never been educated and cannot speak English. There is also a sign language used in Uganda, which you will soon learn e.g. Clapping hands is a way of showing thanks.

Time:

Uganda in October is 2 hours ahead of Ireland. Being on the equator Uganda has an almost constant 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness.

Sightseeing:

There will be an opportunity for some sightseeing during the visit.