



# Omni Med Program Orientation Guide

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### **Uganda Program Welcome Letter**

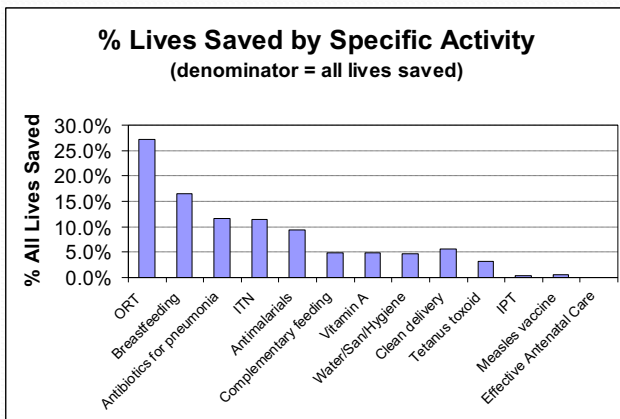
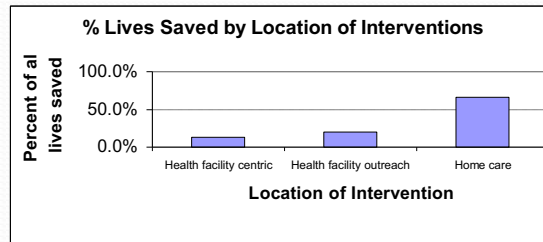
Welcome to your upcoming experience with Omni Med in Uganda. We hope you have a rich experience while making a measurable and sustainable impact in rural East Africa. This program began as part of an initiative at the Brookings Institution called the International Volunteering and Service Initiative. In May 2007, the Brookings' David



Caprara asked me to chair a task force on health service in SSA, with the explicit goal of developing a cooperative service initiative that could demonstrate impact, something decidedly lacking in the service space. Here's a Brookings link featuring David: [http://www.brookings.edu/multimedia/video/2010/1015\\_at\\_brookings\\_podcast.aspx](http://www.brookings.edu/multimedia/video/2010/1015_at_brookings_podcast.aspx) This program is the direct result of these efforts. From May 2008 onward, Omni Med has partnered with the Uganda Ministry of Health, the US Peace Corps, St Elizabeth's Medical Center in Boston, George Washington University, the University of Mississippi, Georgetown University, and several other medical schools to send US health volunteers to Uganda to work with local Ugandans to train and maintain community health workers. Our goal was never to create a new "American" initiative in Uganda. Rather, we see ourselves as "facilitators" in a Ugandan initiative, coordinated and executed primarily by Ugandans. We call the effort "Community Empowerment in Health," which is exactly what we seek to achieve. During our years in Uganda, we have all been impressed by the intelligence, drive and passion these rural Ugandans show in taking control over the illnesses that dominate their lives. Please always remember that we are guests in Uganda, and that our primary objective is to help these wonderful people save their own lives and those of their families and friends by sharing the most valuable of all resources—knowledge.

## Where & how are lives saved?

**ORT use, breastfeeding, and antibiotics for pneumonia (often given in community settings) are the 3 most highly effective interventions....accounting for over ½ the estimated impact.**



**About 2/3 of estimated impact is through community-level interventions....**

One may ask why a physician, nurse, public health professional, or student would spend time training rural community health workers when their time could be spent working in a hospital or classroom. The above chart comes from a 2008 USAID study of 22 programs looking at which programs are the most cost-effective at saving young lives. The most valuable use of human capital comes through some of the most basic measures: oral rehydration solution for diarrheal illness, breastfeeding, prompt referral and treatment for pneumonia and malaria, ITN's to prevent malaria, clean water and sanitation initiatives, etc. It should be clear from this and other similar studies that the most life saving measures one can initiate in sub-Saharan Africa are not overly complex, nor overly difficult to understand and master.



The real challenge is getting this knowledge out to rural communities where it can make the greatest impact. That's where you come in. Our challenge is to train these community health workers (called VHTs or Village Health Teams in Uganda) on these concepts and then help them bring this knowledge out into their villages. Our volunteers help facilitate the initial VHT trainings, and then help to maintain these volunteer VHTs through regular focus groups, quarterly meetings, village outreach talks, and home visits. It is a huge amount of work, but work that is rewarding, effective, and measurable. We think this program works, and are willing to put it to a test. Our randomized, prospective trial, completed in 2013, showed that our efforts are actually saving lives.

While working in Uganda, we ask that you recognize our role as facilitators. We are not there to “save” anyone, nor do we have all the answers. Our orientation is not one of charity, but of social justice. We ask that you adopt the attitude of humility, practice a healthy inquisitiveness, and recognize that these VHTs understand the local problems far better than we do; the program benefits greatly the more they are involved in decisions and planning. In fact, Mwebe Edward, who runs the program, was one of the first VHTs we trained, and remains a driving force in this program's design and success. Elizabeth Nalweyiso, our CFO, and John Lubanga, our Projects Director, along with Prossy Namba, will all help you in your work. DR Ken Kabali will serve as preceptor and will advise on all aspects of the research and programming. To prepare you for your experience, we ask that you read the orientation guide and hybrid manual thoroughly, as well as to read some of *Awakening Hippocrates*. I wrote this book to foster a broad understanding of why things are as they are in our world, why people in certain world areas are and remain poor, and how our attitudes and perspectives shape our interactions while abroad. The more you understand about these issues before you depart, the richer your experience and the more effective you will be while there. There will be a reading list that we ask you to complete prior to your work's end. We will also ask that you incorporate the readings into a brief paper so that we can understand the impact this program is having on you.

Everyone can fundraise, and many of our volunteers have fully funded their program/ training and travel costs by requesting moderate sized contributions from many people. We have a form letter that many have adapted and sent out. See the Omni Med website for details: <http://www.omnimed.org/clients/omnimed/programs/uganda/logistics/> For those students coming to us through CFHI, please note that there is an even better fund-raising page on the CFHI website with support tools offered there.

A quick word on why we charge volunteers for the opportunity to serve through this program. For many years, Omni Med did not charge its volunteers for service through our programs in Belize, Guyana, and Kenya. Yet Uganda is different. In year one of this program, we spent close to \$35,000 training and maintaining over 400 VHTs. During that year we spent at least \$60 per VHT trained, with additional funds needed to cover local staff, housing, office, supplies, and basic office expenses in the US. It became very clear that this program would not last unless we asked volunteers to cover some of the costs. By encouraging volunteers to seek broad-based support, we have been able to hire more personnel in Uganda, and expand to other areas. Your program/ training fees will help sustain this work long after you depart the program.

In addition to this document, we make use of a Dropbox, an on-line storage entity in which you will find troves of program documents that you are free to peruse. Included in this Orientation Guide is a brief introduction to Dropbox and how to use it. We have also developed an on-line training guide that you should review, particularly if you have no health background, prior to your departure. However, it is worth re-emphasizing here that we are not covering detailed medical information during these trainings. Most of what we cover is easily understood by anyone willing to read through the program guides, but of great value to a local people who little health education. You will quickly see that



these people are very smart, but haven't had the same learning opportunities as those of us with more privileged backgrounds. We will send you access for both Dropbox and the on-line training guide once we have agreed on your travel dates. Please note that, starting in 2015, that not every volunteer will be involved with training new VHTs. As of February, 2016, we have trained close to 1200 VHTs and our focus has shifted to how we can better maintain the VHTs that we have trained already. We will resume additional trainings once we have that system perfected.

We ask volunteers to draft one to two documents for us. The first is a **Praxis Paper** based on your experiences and the assigned readings. Everyone should do this! Please see details in the Dropbox for this as well as on page 28 of this report. Basically, this paper is designed to encourage you to reflect broadly on your experience. Work in Uganda can inspire deeper forces that can redirect one's path, providing there is ample material to power the experience. You will get that in real time in Uganda, but the readings should enhance it and greatly expand your understanding of the context. The typical praxis paper is 3-5 pages, but more or less is sufficient. The point is the praxis, a Freirean term meaning reflection plus action. How has this experience affected your world view and how might it change you? We also ask those who work on specific projects to summarize them briefly for us in a **Project Specific Trip Report**. (Again, please see page 28 of this report) Just 1-2 pages, but highlight the specifics, contact information, names, villages, things done, etc. Think of this as a concise summary of what you did, so that the next person coming along working on the same project/ study, can know where to start and come up to speed quickly. Not everyone will do this since not everyone will work on a specific project while there. We don't need a travel itinerary or reports on specific trainings or home visits (unless there is something important to share). Rather, focus on specific aspects of the program in which you are involved. This report will then be filed in Dropbox in the appropriate section. Please add in the title line of the Project Specific Trip Report the Project, Date, and your name. Example:

"3\_16\_Protected\_Water\_Sources\_Trip\_Report\_Chowdhary" Please start with the date so that this can be tracked sequentially. Remember, be concise, and focus on what was done, add in contact information, places, dates, and outline challenges ahead. Neither of these papers are meant to be burdensome, they are meant to cause you to reflect (praxis paper) and allow the work to continue. When there are volunteers there during the same time frame working on the same project, one report will suffice, though everyone should write their own praxis papers.

This orientation package is now entirely on-line, and contains the following items, all of which you will obtain through Dropbox folders:

- (This) Orientation Guide, which fully covers, specific program items, trip preparation suggestions, logistics, with a country orientation, section on local dangers/ how to remain safe
- Program Facilitation Guide (the implementation side of the program, including three phases)
- Hybrid Training Manual (developed by Omni Med volunteers Dr Jenny Thompson and Zachary Tabb by combining the Ministry of Health's old and new training manual, along with several innovations contributed by our volunteers through time.) Note that this will only be used by those conducting new VHT trainings. However, it is worth reading through, since this is the basic training that all VHTs receive. You will better understand their orientation, what they should know, and what their capacity is after reviewing the Hybrid manual.
- Uganda Wiki, which contains an updated list of contacts, and which every volunteer contributes to and updates
- Training certificates, to be individualized and laminated for each VHT (Not all will transport these over.)
- Legal Waiver (sorry, but everyone must return this prior to departure, unless coming through CFHI)



- VHT Guide to Health Homes in English and Luganda (the “prompts” summarizing the most important preventative and curative health measures on a one page, laminated sheet. These prompts are very much the focus of this program at the household level.)
- Awakening Hippocrates: A Primer on Health, Poverty, and Global Service, by me. There are several copies in the house in Kisoga and we will mail copies to some of you as well.
- CFHI students: please note that you have specific forms and training documents that must be completed through your CFHI account, including emergency contact information, a waiver, etc.

Note that the Uganda Wiki contains all of the contact information you will need. The VHT Guide to Healthy Homes (the prompts) traditionally has been a focus of our program; we hand out copies during home visits and some of you will be asked to transport over laminated copies. There is a direct correlation between the hybrid manual, the above chart, and this VHT Guide. We summarized the most life-saving measures available and encourage our VHTs to go to every household sharing this information, leaving copies of these Guides in the local Lugandan language. This program is about getting knowledge into local households. We feel this is a very effective way of doing so, and all of you will conduct home visits during which you focus on the topics included in this Guide. Please be sure that those you visit understand what is in the VHT Guide; they are of little use if those who receive them don't understand how to use the information provided.

Please let us know if you have any questions about these documents or would like us to send you more informational materials. Someone from Omni Med will be available to answer questions as your departure time approaches. We will also review a rough work itinerary for your time in Uganda. Please feel free to call or email us with any questions.

I hope you enjoy your experience with us in Uganda. Our ultimate goals are really two-fold. We seek to empower these wonderful people to improve their own lives in a measurable and sustainable manner, while simultaneously providing a powerful, impact-oriented learning experience to all who serve in this program. I hope you take full advantage of the opportunities this program presents. Read broadly, ask lots of questions, and prepare well. The more you learn and prepare beforehand, the richer and more meaningful your experience will be, and the more you will be able to contribute. While in Uganda, spend time talking with everyone; try to understand the local culture, and how people live day to day. Since all of you will be out in the rural areas conducting home visits, you will have a unique window into rural African culture, and how people struggling with such backbreaking poverty can rise above it with such grace. My hope is that, for most of you, this will be the beginning of a lifelong involvement in global health service. Let me close with a quote from Albert Schweitzer that hangs over my desk. I hope it speaks to you the same way it has to me through the years.

*“Just as the wave cannot exist for itself, but is ever a part of the heaving surface of the ocean, so must I never live my life for life itself, but always in the experience which is going on around me. It is an uncomfortable doctrine which the true ethics (of Reverence for Life) whisper in my ear. You are happy, they say, therefore you are called upon to give much.” - Albert Schweitzer*

Good luck,

Edward O’Neil Jr., M.D./ Founder & CEO/ Omni Med



## Specific Program Items

**Costs:** The program fee depends on how you come through this program, though they are all roughly comparable. Those who come through Child Family Health International can refer to their website for the fee structure, which is clearly spelled out there. Please see <https://www.cfhi.org/omni-med-community-health-workers-and-global-health>. 4 weeks at Omni Med through CFHI costs \$2,600 as of 1/16.

For those coming through those universities that have had long-standing relationships with Omni Med, specifically, George Washington University, Georgetown University, and the University of Mississippi, please contact Omni Med for specific rates per duration of time spent. As I explain in more detail elsewhere, this covers the training, maintenance costs and keeps this all going. (Thank you!) Newly included in this fee is an airport pick-up, Internet use in Kisoga, and a significant upgrade to our facilities there. Please add up your program/ room & board fees and send them to Omni Med before you depart.

Many medical schools offer scholarship opportunities. Please let me know what documentation requirements you have well ahead of time when possible. For those with no outside support, please consider a “Family and Friends” outreach campaign. We have a sample letter up on our website that people can use to send to raise funds. We have had several volunteers raise a considerable amount of money by getting \$100, \$250 or more. People often will support you when they better understand what we do. I would point anyone to the Omni Med website ([www.omnimed.org](http://www.omnimed.org)) News/ Events, and then go to Newsletters. The most recent newsletter is from 2015. Please note that we are in the process of updating our website and there are a few corrections you should note. The Volunteers for Prosperity Program is no longer in existence. We had 9 volunteers receive support through this program and we know the program’s founders well. But, such is the nature of outside program support—it remains difficult to find for this work. Secondly, we now use a program called Razzoo for any donors to conduct their campaigns. Please see [www.razoo.com](http://www.razoo.com) Be sure you type in Omni Med with two words. Once you find Omni Med there, it will help you to conduct your fund-raising campaign. You will be surprised at how willing people are to support you; and the seemingly small donations do add up. Please note that Razoo keeps 5% of the proceeds, so you will have to add that into your fund-raising calculations. For years, I had volunteers simply send checks directly to Omni Med, where I would tabulate them, send thank you and tax letters, etc. However, after one volunteer had 15 people send donations and then backed out at the last minute (requiring 30 hand-written notes from me), I decided that I would not do this again! I hope you understand. Razoo is well designed and will send out the tax letters allowing tax deductible donations from anyone who supports you. Our good friend Steve Rosenthal runs Cross Cultural Solutions. Please look here for the suggestions they make to their volunteers: <http://www.crossculturalsolutions.org/funding-tool>

**More on Money:** Please keep in mind that when you go out to rural areas you will cover your transportation and food costs. Edward, John, and all of our Omni Med personnel understand that Omni Med, not the volunteers, covers their transportation and meals. You will often share transport and pay the rural boda drivers together. With your room and board now covered in advance, there should be no time other than





transport/ meals on the road when you hand over funds. We also strongly discourage solicitation. If VHTs or others ask you for money to pay for hospital tests, support a child in school, or anything else, our answer is always no. Sorry, but just be clear that this is not what we do. We are there to help them save lives by sharing knowledge. Anything else sets bad precedents, and creates an expectation for those who will follow you. This has happened many times in the past and I strongly encourage you to not support a particular child's school fees. When volunteers do this, it creates an expectation and ensures that future volunteers will battle numerous, unending solicitations.

**Transportation:** Robert Titus Kiyimba is our driver in Uganda. His e-mail is: [kiyimba\\_robert2@yahoo.com](mailto:kiyimba_robert2@yahoo.com) His cell phone is 256-772-439-870. When calling within Uganda, just dial 0772-439-870. Robert is very responsible and an excellent driver. E-mail him with your flight arrival information and he will be standing at the airport awaiting you as you come out of baggage claim. He will hold a sign with your name on it. If you arrive at night, he will take you to the New City Annex hotel in Kampala. He will then arrange to pick you up the next morning and drive you out to our site in Ntenjeru. Please note that several have noted that Robert's rates are higher when transporting people around the country. As such, we have another driver, Kabali Meddi 0772-555-262 who is very good and cheaper. It is very reasonable to compare rates before departure. Shop around and ask people.

If coming into Entebbe at night, please e-mail the New city Annex Hotel before you depart. Their e-mail is: [ncahotel@gmail.com](mailto:ncahotel@gmail.com) Their phone is: [256 41 4254132](tel:256414254132) When staying there, I would suggest a double bed room on the South Wing (Newer Wing) of the hotel. It is quieter than the street side and it is easier to sleep off your long travel after arrival. The food there is very good and the prices are all very reasonable. Please do be careful about leaving valuables behind in your room. Computers and money has been stolen there by people with keys to all of the rooms. No Omni Med volunteer has ever lost anything there, but Peace Corps Volunteers stay there frequently and have reported this.

If you arrive during the day, our driver will drive you straight out to Ntenjeru. Omni Med will cover the costs of your initial transportation to Ntenjeru. However, you will be on your own in getting back to the airport. We do it this way because it costs roughly \$5 US to take the public taxis back to the airport, and most people feel very comfortable in the public taxis by the time they are ready to leave Uganda (I ride them everywhere and find them very safe around Kampala.) You certainly have the option of hiring Robert, Kabali, or another driver to take you back to the airport, but you will have to cover this cost, roughly \$60-70 US from Ntenjeru to Entebbe. If you do take the public taxi back, you can take it to Nakawa, and change there to the Entebbe taxi. Just tell the conductor. I suggest you stop off at the Entebbe Flight Motel on the way, rent a room for US \$10 for a few hours, take a shower, re-pack, and have dinner before a late night flight home. You'll feel better.

In the unusual case that Robert or one of his colleagues is not there to greet you, (has not happened yet!) take a cab to the Entebbe Flight Motel and plan further travel from there. Keep in mind that for the first two years of this program, we had no driver. All of our volunteers went via public taxi to Kampala, and then on to Mukono.





As of January 2013, we have our own car. This has made our work considerably easier. Omni Med covers gas and transport costs. On occasion, you may have a project that will involve using boda (motorcycle) transportation. We would ask that you cover these costs as our volunteers have for the first five years of this program; these costs are minimal, and far less than you would pay on a weekend traveling about Uganda. There are helmets in the office; please use them if riding bodas. We have used the bodas in this program for years. However, please keep in mind that no one is ever to ride the bodas in Kampala. The aggressive, reckless boda drivers in Kampala die along with their passengers every day in Kampala. Medical students (though not from this program) have died in the past riding them. When in Kampala, walk, ride the matatus, or hire a taxi. Do not ride the bodas there! Keep in mind that the matatus are very cheap and the preferred mode of local transportation. When traveling back and forth from Mukono HC IV, or to Kampala, you will ride the matatus. Again they are very cheap, and will get you anywhere in the country. I would suggest always having reading material with you. They make frequent stops, and the notorious traffic "jam" is never far away.

**Running/jogging:** There are places to run in and around Kisoga town. We're still exploring the best routes ourselves, and hopefully Nick (our Peace Corps volunteer) will be able to show you the best routes. So far, some of the nice areas to run through can be a little secluded at points. It is a safe area in general, but for women especially, you might consider running with a partner depending on the route you take. We've never had major issues with female volunteers being harassed, etc., but most Americans are quite conspicuous and it's good to be aware of that and take a little extra caution. There are many great places to run in Mukono. Please be careful of the trucks when running and plan to run against traffic, not with it coming at your back. Thus far, we have heard no complaints about harassment or threats. You may well have children chase after you yelling "mzungu" or "How are you?" (The reply: "I am fine." Of course, standard Ugandan primary school English education). However, we do not advise that anyone run at night, particularly women.

**Your (New) Home in Kisoga:** In January 2015, we moved into a new location in Kisoga, Mukono District, roughly 15 minutes north, by car, of our old office in Ntnejeru. This is an enormous upgrade that I hope is not lost on any volunteers coming in 2015 onward. This new home is spacious, comfortable, with power far more consistently, access to a larger trading center, yet with a comfortable, slightly rural feel to it. We have a large front lawn for sitting with a book or laptop, a converted garage with desks for working, and secure pit latrines and several wash rooms. I will include pictures of our old office in Ntnejeru and the new home for comparison.



Above is the old office in Ntenjeru, the left side of the building above, shared with a small store. To the right are three of our staff: John, Edward, and Elizabeth. Below is the new house. A bit different...



I'd recommend bringing a small, fast-drying towel for bathing, books for reading/exchanging, flashlight, and earplugs if you're a light sleeper (roosters, puppies, children, etc). It is also a good idea to bring a small roll of toilet paper in a plastic bag with you—there are many facilities in Kampala and the Districts where there is no toilet paper, including the Ministry of Health. Plus, you never know when a GI bug will hit you and it is always smart to be prepared. There's great fruit in the market just one block away in Kisoga, which is itself a large trading center. There is also a supermarket (Ugandan style) where you can purchase bread, peanut butter, eggs, water, noodles, soda, etc) very close by. For everything else you will need to trek to Mukono.

You will find this home very comfortable. It has three bedrooms and can sleep six comfortably. We have constructed an additional building out back that was the home of our prior Peace Corps Volunteers, though now will house staff and the occasional volunteer, the Global Peace Women office and an additional room that serves as storage. There are three area for bucket showers (two inside), and two ventilated pit latrines.



Sorry, no running water, no showers, and no sit down toilets, (though this may well change in 2016!) but keep in mind that these facilities are very nice for the region. You can purchase soap, shampoo, toilet paper in Kisoga, though there is usually enough toilet paper available. Prossy cooks a wonderful lunches and dinners. Breakfast is less formal, though there are fruits, bread, tea and coffee available locally. Since this is rural Uganda, please be prepared to see various bugs and rodents, though we have seen no rodents at the house. If there are any issues with this, please let Edward, Elizabeth or John know and they can help out.

**WiFi:** We are thrilled to be able to offer WiFi to all Omni Med volunteers. As of 1/16, the password is: edwardoneil (not my idea, really) This is a big improvement for us. The internet comes through a 3G network (like iPhones a few years ago). The speed is not quite fast enough to stream videos or Skype (and if you tried, it would seriously jam up the network for everyone else), but using email, sending and receiving attachments, doing online research, basic social media, etc. all work fine. The speed isn't amazing, but it's reasonable for where we are. During the summer (mid-May to early-August) when there are multiple volunteers here at a time, we will have unlimited data, which means you can use the internet as much as you like. But remember to be considerate of others who might need to use the network as well. Multiple users can connect at once, but the more users online, the slower the speed for everyone. Please keep that in mind. Occasionally we have one or two volunteers during months throughout the academic year, and in those months we will have 2-3 GB/month shared between volunteers and staff (that's a typical data plan for a smartphone). If you've come during a time when we have that arrangement of limited data, the staff will inform you and we request that you limited your internet usage to essential activities only. Of course you are free to purchase your own modem from the Orange store in Mukono or Kampala (see below).

Here is the log-in information for the WiFi:

Network Name: Omni Med House

Password: plasmodium [one word, all lower case, nothing else] (password may also be edwardoneil)

The Orange Mobile Internet USB Drive is a convenient way to access internet in most locations in Uganda, either rural or urban. It works on either Mac or PC computers and plugs into any USB port and will load the program automatically. Since May, 2011, Omni Med has been providing monthly e-mail capacity. Keep in mind though, that in the months outside of May through July, this is for e-mail only, not for downloading movies, music, photos, etc. If people want additional capacity, there is always the option of purchasing an additional modem from the Orange store in Mukono. We have tried both MTN and Orange and believe the Orange is much better, and faster.

Once the program is installed on your computer, you can connect anytime to the internet by inserting the Orange USB Drive, allowing the program dialogue box to open, and then clicking on the "Connect" button. The Mobile Internet will connect to the internet and depending on where you are located (i.e., rural or urban area), the connection speed will vary based on the Orange communication tower nearest your location. When you are connected to the internet, the "Connect" button you click will now display "Disconnect". To access the internet and begin surfing, open the internet browser of your choice (e.g., Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari,





etc.) and you will now be connected. To disconnect, click on the “Disconnect” button in the Orange Mobile Internet program window (if you minimized it, you may need to reopen the program) and then close the program and eject the USB Drive from your computer (remembering to return the USB cover).

For those who wish to purchase their own modem, you first need to visit the Orange store in Mukono or Kampala and purchase a payment plan. The payment plans allow you to purchase a designated quantity of internet usage measured in kilobytes, called “bundles”. The bundle increments are measured in 500 megabyte (MB) units. Every time you visit a webpage or make a download (e.g., documents, music, movies, etc.) your bundle depletes based upon the kilobytes of the webpage or download. In addition, the bundle automatically discontinues 1 month after the day of purchase. The “bundle” system is similar to buying airtime with phones; the more you call and text (the more you surf and download), the sooner the airtime (bundle) runs out. However, a sufficient amount of “bundle” capacity is 1 GB which costs (at the time of this writing) 49,000 Ush (less than \$25). With this 1 GB “bundle” amount, common surfing, emailing, and other internet browsing is more than accommodated for. But of course, you are free to purchase the amount of internet usage you wish to have.

**Phones:** We have a supply of phones in the garage. Please take one and inform us of what your phone number is while in country. However, many people choose to keep their own phones and it is easy to simply change the SIM card in your phone. You can then easily purchase a SIM card anywhere in country. Then purchase MTN (or whichever carrier you choose) minutes. People sell minutes everywhere. People also will sell you time on their cell phones so you can make calls anywhere. If you do not have a phone when you arrive, you will still be fine. Robert or another driver will meet you at the airport and drive you to Kisoga or to Kampala. You can make calls cheaply using other people’s phones.

**Contacting home:** One phone will be available for Omni Med volunteers. This is the phone that Dr. O’Neil may call you on. If you want to call home, the mobile network provider Orange offers some good deals on international calling. For about \$2.50 you get 45 minutes of calls to the US. Note, dial 0001 followed by the area code and number in the US. Omni Med staff can show you how to set this up. This is the best way to call home since the Omni Med House WiFi usually isn’t strong enough even to do a voice-only Skype call (it’s close, but it’s so broken up that having a good conversation is tough).

**Beverages:** As of 1/15, we will no longer supply soda, beer, other beverages other than water in the home or office. This got a little out of control in past years. As such, we will provide clean drinking water in the home. Any beverages you choose to purchase can be bought cheaply just a block away in Kisoga town. While we won’t supply alcohol, you are welcome to purchase your own, but advised to do so judiciously. Remember always that you are far from home and very much on your own while in Kisoga at night. While we have not heard reports of crime, you should always be careful and exercise extreme caution, particularly for young women walking. We would advise against venturing outside the compound in the evenings.

**Food:** Omni Med will supply lunch and dinner daily. There is typically bread, peanut butter, tea, and fruit for breakfast, which should also be provided. When supplies run low, I would ask volunteers to consider



purchasing some bananas, bread, etc. These are low cost items. Ask Prossy or whoever is doing the cooking to replenish supplies first, and it is Omni Med's responsibility. However, I would ask that each of you recognize just how much work there is cooking, cleaning and doing laundry for several volunteers simultaneously. Historically, volunteers have traveled during weekends. Jinja is nearby, and Uganda has many destinations that others have been to. Some details are available in the Wiki. Please inform Prossy or whoever is cooking if you will be there on a weekend; someone will be available to provide lunch and dinner unless all of the visiting volunteers plan to be away at the time. The Mukono Resort Hotel has great inexpensive food, and the Colline Hotel [0414290240](tel:0414290240) (which also has a pool and work out room for cheap daily rates) in Mukono is also very good. As we get to know Kisoga, we will add to the Wiki places to eat there. However, the market is one block away, with plenty of fruit and there are stores there as well.

**Library:** I will ask each of you to bring books out there with you. We have shelves in the office. I'd like to build a solid library there of books that enhance the experience. Somewhat immodestly including my own *Awakening Hippocrates*, there are many books that make ideal reading while you are living in Uganda. We will send relevant books out to many of you in the coming months. For those traveling to Kampala, there is a bookstore called Aristoc's, located on Kampala Road, with another branch in the Garden City Mall, not far from the New City Hotel in Kampala. I encourage each of you to browse the books there and add any interesting Uganda oriented books to this growing library. You will all have downtime while working with us in Ntenjeru. We'd like to build a functional library as much as possible while you are there. Please be sure that books remain behind in Ntenjeru. You are welcome to read anything while there, but please leave the books behind for others.

## Preparing for your trip

You should start looking at flights as soon as we have agreed on your trip dates. Consider the Fly for Good Network for cheaper flights at <http://www.flyforgood.com/> Once you have booked your flight, please send it to me directly so we can forward your dates along to our colleagues in Uganda.

Once you read over the material contained in this manual, you will have a good idea of what to expect from your trip, which will allow you to better prepare. In addition to all the basics involved in planning for a trip overseas (flight, visas, and vaccinations), you should also consider bringing the following:

- fast-drying towel for bathing
- books for reading, and hopefully, leaving behind in Ntenjeru
- flashlight and battery powered night reading light
- earplugs if you're a light sleeper (roosters, puppies, children, etc)
- sunscreen
- bug-repellant
- comfortable, dress clothing for training VHTs and rotating in hospitals/ clinics
- N95 masks: if you are planning to go to Mukono Health Center IV, you should bring a supply (5-6) masks with you.



## VISA

You will need a VISA to enter Uganda and have three options of acquiring one. You can send your passport to the Ugandan Embassy in Washington DC. Or you can use one of the many companies that will secure (at great cost) a visa for you. The third option is the one I have used in many trips to Uganda. I simply purchase one when I arrive. You will need US \$100 (price increased on 7/1/15) with you when you arrive in Entebbe. (Please note that if you bring cash, they will only accept US dollars printed after 2003!) You will see two lines at the arrival gate when you arrive; one for those with visas, and one for those without. Both lines are usually the same size. I recall the time and energy spent getting my visa for Tanzania at the Embassy in Washington DC when I was a GWU medical student. It is so much easier to simply get one when you arrive. Even if I lived in DC now, I'd still get it upon arrival in Entebbe. Please be sure that you have your passport in a safe place. You should also make copies of your passport and place copies in several places, like your backpack, long term pack, and laptop. Losing your passport while abroad is a real problem. Having a copy will make it much easier to get home.

## Money

The currency in Uganda is the shilling. Exchange rates with the US dollar have fluctuated from 1600: 1 to a recent high of 3500:1. (i.e. \$1US=3500 USh). The best place to exchange currency is in the FOREX offices throughout the country. Banks also offer decent rates. Worst rates come through hotels or tourist sites. Many volunteers have simply used the many ATM machines around the country. If you bring cash with you, you should be aware that banks will not exchange currency that dates before 2003, due to older counterfeit bills. I suggest you bring currency after 2003 in \$50 or \$100 bills. You will spend little money while in Ntenjeru, but there is much you can do on weekends that will require cash. When I travel, I wear a neck pouch with my US and Uganda currency split between the two. I used to carry a waste pouch, but it kept slipping down as it aged. A good friend found his on the floor of a bus after it has fallen through one of his pant legs. I prefer the neck pouch only now. I also carry a wallet that has my functional currency, that which I will need for the day or days. While Kampala is a very safe city by African standards, it is a very poor city and home to many desperate souls. If you walk around displaying cash, or not properly securing your laptop and other belongings, you will make yourself an attractive target. Be smart and keep your belongings close to you, and your money securely hidden. You might also consider a "decoy wallet" which I always carry when in Nairobi. Put some old library and throw away cards with some loose US and Ugandan currency. In the unlikely event of a robbery, you can hand this over.

## Dress

When you are in Uganda, you will represent your country, your school, and Omni Med. We ask that you wear appropriate "business attire" during trainings and interactions with VHTs. People in East Africa do not wear shorts; it is considered appropriate for children only. You can certainly wear shorts and dress casually around the office and housing area. But a typical training attire would include pants and button down shirt for men, and a sundress or long, comfortable dress for women. Your clothing should breathe, preferably be cotton, and be comfortable. Prossy, and other housekeepers do laundry regularly, so you will not need to bring a lot of clothing with you. Please consider the following sound recommendations from our Peace Corps Volunteer Arwen Wolfe, who was with us for nearly two years:

"Dear Omni Med volunteers,

Please find below some fashion tips for your upcoming trip to the tropical paradise known as Ntenjeru, Uganda. [note; the same applies for Kisoga now]



Bring white clothes, and any other light colored clothing, at your own risk. Prossy will be able to remove almost any stains/dust, but why make her job more difficult than it has to be? Also, you'll have to walk around looking like a dirtbag until you can change into different clothes. You're going to get dirty, there's no way around that, but darker clothes hide it better, and you'll make a better impression on people when it's not as easy for them to see how dirty you really are.

Ladies first! How you dress sends signals to those around you, especially in Uganda. If you dress "smart" you are showing respect to the people you're meeting with, and they'll notice and appreciate that. If you wear clothing that is not appropriate, they'll notice that too, and it's an unspoken way of saying "I don't care much about who I am meeting." **Knees, midribs and cleavage are absolute no-no's**, as well as sleeveless items for work. Another reason not to wear these more risqué items: the more skin you show, the more harassment/cat-calls/attention you will attract.

Here in Uganda, women don't wear pants (the exception is Kampala and some other larger cities) so I advise against it in Ntenjeru. Again, it's an "attention" issue as well as a respect issue- you look great in your jeans and the men will surely notice. For their part, the women will notice that you're not respecting the local dress code.

I suggest skirts that cover your knees, even when sitting down, the longer the better. If you don't have any, try visiting Goodwill and pick up a few items. You probably won't win the fashion show, but you'll be respected by the community for your modesty, and you'll have some things to give away to your new friends when you leave.

Button down shirts and polos are always a good idea, especially for trainings, which I think of as more formal (we want to make a good impression on our fledgling VHTs!) For everyday work, Focus Groups, Home Visits etc t-shirts are okay, but make sure chests, stomachs and shoulders are covered.

For relaxing pants are okay, tank tops are okay (but I don't feel comfortable in them unless I am in my house) but abide by the no knees, midribs, chests rule. Exercise shorts that are just above your knees are okay, but if you have shorter shorts, wear stretch-pants underneath. Same with skirts above the knee... legs covered in stretch-pants are better than bare legs but not as good as legs covered by shorts/pants/skirts.

Any shoes go with any outfit here in Ntenjeru, so don't worry about style. Bring anything you think will be comfortable enough to walk long distances in. Rubber flip flops should not be worn when working.

Now for you Gentlemen. You should wear pants for work, but shorts are okay around Ntenjeru when you are not working, and the house. Slacks aren't strictly necessary, but the pants should look nice, and jeans are not formal enough for work, but are okay if you can bear the heat (jeans don't breathe) for relaxing.

You should bring button-downs (short-sleeves are acceptable and recommended because of the heat) and polos for the training, and they're a great idea for Home Visits and other work. T-shirts are okay, especially if they are not worn/faded, but again, it's a respect issue, so if you want to make a good impression, limit t-shirts on work days. I don't think a tie will ever be in order but you are most welcome to wear one if you wish. [note: the lone exception could be for Ministry meetings should they arise, though not at all necessary] Bring comfortable shoes that you can walk in. Rubber flip-flops should not be worn during work.

I look forward to inheriting any clothes you don't need after your stay here!

Your friendly fashion consultant, PCV Arwen Wolfe"





## Health considerations:

It is important that you go to a travel clinic about one to three months before your departure date to obtain the necessary immunizations. Otherwise you may find that you do not have time or you cannot find a clinic with an opening at the last minute. Everyone needs some form of malaria prophylaxis, and should have all vaccinations updated per CDC protocols that all travel clinics follow. They can write you prescriptions for malaria prophylaxis. For short-term volunteers without specific drug allergies, I recommend Malarone. Many people use Mefloquin (Lariam) which is also fine, though there have been neuro-psychiatric side effects for some. If you find yourself having bad nightmares while taking Lariam, consider changing to either Doxycycline or Malarone. Keep in mind that this is only a suggestion from me; your decision should be based on the recommendations of a professional from a Travel Clinic.

You should bring bug spray or wipes with you, as well as long-sleeved shirts for evenings and nights. All of our beds have mosquito nets on them, and when camping, you will be in a tent with netting. You may also consider bringing a 3-5 day course of Cipro with you. The most common nuisance ailment of travelers to SSA is diarrhea. Cipro may help, though if you develop severe abdominal pain, fever, or bloody stools, you should get to the health center.

For flying, consider wearing Flight Socks. They can be purchased on-line or at the airport and have been shown to considerably reduce the risk of DVT while flying. I have worn them for years and like them.

## Daily Activities

It is only fair to ask what a typical day is like for our volunteers while in Uganda. Let's start by laying out what a typical month is like. Most volunteers come for one to two months. If there is a typical month, it would go something like the following. After arrival in Ntenjeru, volunteers take some time to get acclimated.

**Training:** When we conduct new VHT trainings, we spend part of the first week preparing for the training. On the Sunday before training we all load up supplies and get on the truck to get to the training site (or boat if on the islands). The training week is spent camping at the site, usually a church, school, or civic center. Training goes all day, starting with greeting the VHT learners and wrapping up with dinner each night. It is an intense week, but one that gives a good understanding as to how the program works. During the last day of training, we wrap up, give out certificates, and then head back to Ntenjeru. When there are multiple volunteers present at a training, we often try to schedule other activities locally. For example, while one or two are involved in the day's teaching, others go out with John, Elizabeth or Edward to conduct a focus group or quarterly meeting. Still others may go out to work on a research project, an upcoming protected water source construction, etc. Everyone should participate in a training while in Uganda. However, as you will see, there is much sitting while others teach, particularly given our emphasis on Ugandans doing most of the training, as they should. Try to plan activities ahead of time to get as much done as possible during training weeks. While out on the islands, there are fewer options, but there is still a need for quarterly meetings, focus groups and research.

For many volunteers, there will be no new VHT training. Over the course of 2014-015, it became clear to us that we need to concentrate on the VHTs we have trained already and to decide how best to keep them engaged and active. As such, much of the emphasis will be on VHT teachings, new study roll-outs, and our ongoing projects with cookstove and protected water source constructions, the new ITN roll out, and a new Ministry-assisted VHT maintenance program.



Most weeks for volunteers will look like the following: Most VHTs work as subsistence farmers and they are almost all out working on their farms in the early part of the day. As such, we conduct our focus groups, quarterly meetings, and many other activities after lunch. Please recognize that activities will be coordinated by the Omni Med staff in Kisoga, so the following are merely guidelines to help orient you. Mornings are the ideal time to work on research activities, coordinate Prompt distributions during home visits, or spend time at the Koja Health Center or other local clinics to better understand how the health systems work locally. The work week is typically Monday through Friday, with some work occasionally done on Saturdays. The weeks are best thought of as morning and afternoon activities. Many volunteers will spend 1-2 days per week on the wards of Koja Health Center IV, coordinated by Dr Anthony Kkonde. Another day may well be spent helping to facilitate VHT based health education in local schools. One or two mornings will be spent working out details of research related activities. I would also suggest that volunteers spend one morning per week reading. There is a reading list for volunteers to get through during the course of their experience and it is reasonable to use some of the morning time for this. There is no set pattern for how mornings are spent, but this will be worked out during the rotation. Some may well spend more time in a particular program such as teaching in schools, while others will focus more on one aspect of the research or another program. That is fine. We strive to expose all volunteers to all aspects of the programs we are involved in. No one "owns" any particular program. Please recognize that we are all serving for brief periods of time, helping the local Ugandans improve their health.

Afternoons are all spent interacting with the VHTs. One afternoon is typically spent doing home visits. At least 2, possibly 3 afternoons will be spent conducting quarterly meetings with the ICCM and other training materials. Another afternoon will be spent constructing cookstoves. You may well be involved in other coordinated activities as per Edward, Elizabeth and John. Prossy or another person cooks lunch and dinner every week day and Saturdays, and you will find time in the evenings to read, socialize, or watch DVDs rented locally. Weekends are typically off. Please be extremely careful when planning activities outside Omni Med work. The biggest risk you face in Uganda is road travel. Be sure to check with Edward, John and Elizabeth about getting around the country. And let someone know where you will be at all times.

Mukono Health Center IV: Last summer, several students spent time in the clinics at Mukono. Dr Anthony Kkonde serves as the coordinator of this program and has been willing to meet with students and plan their time there. He is a wonderful resource and someone we all like and respect very much. Medical personnel, including students, should contact Dr Kkonde and arrange a time one morning to meet with him. This is best done with all the students there at any given time so we don't overload him. He will meet with students in his office at Mukono HC IV and arrange times that students can spend in the clinics. Mukono is a regional health center and there is much going on. It has only a small number of inpatient beds, but there are plenty of clinics to shadow physicians or medical officers. Students and residents should be able to see cases of malaria, HIV/ AIDS, TB, and common outpatient illnesses endemic to the region. There are also opportunities to spend time seeing plasmodia and other local pathogens under the microscope in the lab, witness childbirth, circumcisions, and other procedures. Dr Kkonde's contact information is as follows: E-mail: [akkigayi@yahoo.com](mailto:akkigayi@yahoo.com) Phone: 0772 402784. His office is across the road from the main buildings at Mukono HC IV. It is not so easy to find, so be sure to bring a phone with you.

## **Expectations**

People from the US, and particularly those in the health professions, are typically driven, accomplished individuals not used to failing. They come from settings where things work well, on time, and are expected to do so. One of the most important adjustments one makes when coming to rural Uganda is to lower expectations. It is often said that Africans



are so much better at living in the moment than Americans and other foreigners are. That is no doubt true, and fueled in part by the very common experience locally of things not working. The power goes out- often. Shops run out of certain commodities. Government runs out of drugs, called stock-outs-often. Ministries run out of funds. Donor programs, particularly large ones, abandon promises made. Locals become used to these facts of life and develop a form of immunity. It is not that they don't care. They do; in fact, their lives are dramatically shaped by failings on so many levels. However, they do have a more realistic sense of how things work-and don't work- locally. It is important that US visitors adjust their expectations downward. You will likely be amazed at just how efficient much of our work is, particularly when compared to many functions around them. However, much of your experience may not live up to expectations. People will show up late or not at all after you've spent time preparing for a training. The printer will die or the power will go out just at the wrong time, prompting you to figure out an alternative that requires 5 times the time and energy as your first approach. You may well set out to accomplish a specific task that fails outright. However, please remember that you are part of a much larger process going on here. This program works in part because it has deep roots in the community and that we are content to move ahead incrementally. Please try to adopt this mentality while you are in Kisoga. Not that you should expect to fail—we have demonstrated success in many areas thus far—but you should not be angry, frustrated, or feel you have wasted time when you do not reach your expectations. Please always try to remember that you will soon get on a plane and return home to a life of luxury and wealth that is unimaginable to most of those around you. They will remain in Uganda and suffer the same frustrations every day of their lives. There is a book in the office called ***A Survival Guide to Overseas Living by Robert Kohls***. It covers the importance of culture, expectations, and offers an important window into the areas where most people encounter difficulties while abroad. The more you read about and seek to understand those around you , the richer and better your experience will be. The more realistic you are about your own expectations, the less chance there will be that you leave frustrated and disappointed. Mr Kohls offers four suggestions that you should all try to follow. During your time in Uganda, please try to be ***flexible, adaptable, maintain your sense of humor, and lower your expectations***. This traits will serve you well.

## **About Getting Along**

We have run this program and others like it long enough to recognize that not all individuals who travel to Mukono together will necessarily get along well. When living in tight quarters, sharing all meals together, and feeling the stresses of a foreign culture, language and terrain, it is inevitable that conflicts arise. There is a tendency to form cliques, to exclude or two from group outings, or even to gang up on one individual or other who does not fit in as well as others do. I recall a luncheon conversation with Jim Kim many years ago where he mentioned that 90% of his time was going to resolving conflicts among the various staffers at PIH in Cambridge. There is no doubt that this work generates stress, and even moreso when out in the field.

Let me make a personal plea to all who get involved in this program. None of us are perfect. We all have our idiosyncracies, and blemishes. We all have personality quirks that others may not like. But I ask you to all do your best to get along. When conflict arises, as it inevitably will, discuss it openly. Instead of talking about someone to others in the group, go directly to that person and discuss the issue directly. Do not let things fester and grow. Take things on openly, with compassion and candor. Try not to judge others. Seek first to understand motivations and reasons for behaviors. Many seemingly difficult situations can be resolved with a heartfelt conversation. If things reach an impasse, bring them to Edward, Elizabeth, John, or the current Peace Corps Volunteer. If that fails still, I can be reached by e-mail or phone. In the end, try to recognize the conflict and resultant tension as a learning opportunity. These are the issues that define leaders and no leadership position is without them. The best leaders figure out ways to compromise and bring at least a



modicum of satisfaction to the parties involved. Everyone coming to this program has already proven his/ her intelligence, compassion, and interest in improving the health of those in Uganda. Please do your best to work together to realize this goal. Infighting and unresolved conflict becomes cancerous and will undermine even the best efforts at improving health locally.

## Safety and Dangers in Uganda

First of all Uganda is widely regarded as one of the safest countries in East Africa. Unlike Nairobi and other large African cities, Kampala is remarkably safe. Many Omni Med volunteers have walked the streets day and night with no incidents to date. We have also ridden the public transportation throughout the country with no problems thus far. That said, there are inherent dangers working in any country in sub-Saharan Africa, including Uganda. There are several things you can do to make your trip safer.

First of all, Omni Med volunteers are **strictly forbidden** to ride the boda-bodas (motorcycles) in Kampala. A third-year medical student from another program was killed on a boda in October 2010. His needless death was one of the five deaths that occur each day on bodas. The Peace Corps has a policy of sending any of its volunteers directly home if they are found riding on a boda anywhere. We do ride the bodas in the rural areas of Mukono—not in Mukono Town—where there are dirt roads, and the travel is slower with much less traffic. Always remember that as the passenger, you are paying and have considerable power in negotiating with your driver. Always say up front that you are most concerned with safety; tell the driver to drive slowly and safely, and to take no chances on the road. It is better to walk than to take chances with a driver that seems reckless.

In addition to practicing *bodaboda* safety, you should avoid traveling at night, in any form of transport. Not only does the driver have reduced visibility, but also you increase your likelihood of finding yourself in a situation that puts your safety and security in jeopardy. For example, your transport might breakdown or get a flat tire along your journey before you've reached your destination, or you might arrive late and your accommodation has already closed. Therefore, it is best to leave during daylight hours, allowing yourself plenty of time to accommodate possible (and not uncommon) transport delays as well as reduce safety and security risks. Further, most buses and taxis do not leave until they have filled with passengers (with some exceptions; see below), despite what any departure-time postings might display. Please plan accordingly.

Moreover, not all bus companies in Uganda are created equal. One bus line in particular, Gateway, you should never ride because of an extremely high accident frequency. However, others like Horizon, Link, Elgon Flyers, and Gaaga lines are reliable, and in the case of Link and Gaaga, leave on time, regardless if full. In addition to these reliable bus companies, Uganda's Postal Service is perhaps the most reliable, safe, and efficient bus system in Uganda. The routes are limited and buses only leave 8am (from Kampala), but you can be sure you are in good hands with these drivers (they also give a pre-transit prayer for a safe journey before every departure).

All Omni Med volunteers must purchase health, evacuation, and trip insurance. Those coming through CHFI will have this covered through CFHI so will not need additional coverage. The most effective and cheapest way to do this is by going to [www.volunteercard.com](http://www.volunteercard.com). They have inexpensive plans (for \$25 or \$45) that cover all of the above plus offer you discounts in many travel stores, on flights, etc. This is one of the best programs anywhere, and well worth obtaining early on in the process of preparing for your trip. Plus, the fee covers you for one full year. All volunteers must have some form of coverage either through a university, workplace, or through us and our volunteer card relationship. Please



also remember that health insurance is not the same as trip insurance. You know your personal situations better than anyone else could. For roughly \$70-100, you can purchase trip insurance that will cover the cost of your trip should you have to cancel. We have had volunteers cancel in the past for legitimate reasons, family illnesses, or other unforeseen circumstances. Please keep in mind that cancellation is very disruptive to the planning out of our activities. So, please, cancel only for true emergencies. Travel insurance (also available through the volunteer card.com), allows you to get your airfare and other expenses largely refunded.

## Legal Waiver

All Omni Med volunteers must sign our legal waiver and return it to us before you leave for your trip. Those volunteers going through CFHI will have a separate waiver so will be exempt. This should be done very early on in the process, around the time of purchasing insurance and airline tickets. It is an unfortunate, but a necessary part of this work.

## Uganda: Forms of Transportation



Public Transport: Taxi (aka matatu) Sometimes compact cars resembling “special hires” (below) are also used as taxis. The difference between a compact car taxi and a special hire is that you pay for the special hire as a private vehicle. So, if you see other passengers waiting for the same taxi, it is not a special hire.



Public Transport: Bus (“Post Bus”, left; Link Bus among other buses in the Bus Park, right)



Private Transport: “Special Hire” Taxi (any compact or mid-range car. Usually the driver will not be far from the car, conversing with other special hire drivers, and will approach you to offer a ride for a price. All prices are negotiable.)



Public Transport: boda-boda (motorcycle taxi) Do Not ride these in Kampala!



Public Transport: Bicycle taxi (bicycle with padded seat)





Public or Private Transport: water taxi

## Getting to Know Kampala and Mukono

### Kampala/ Mukono Logistics

Greetings and Welcome to Uganda. Here is a brief overview of the logistics involved in getting to Kampala, Mukono and the contacts within each. Much of this comes directly from the Wiki, which has a lot of useful information. Good idea to bring the Lonely Planet or Rough Guide Uganda section only with you. I ripped out the Uganda section and duct taped it together, lighter with all the info I need. The Bradt Guide is also very good.

#### Transfer from Entebbe to Kampala:

Since May, 2011, Robert Kiyimba has served as our driver. His contact information is [kiyimba\\_robert2@yahoo.com](mailto:kiyimba_robert2@yahoo.com) and his phone is 0772-439-870. Please be sure to e-mail Robert with your flight information well in advance. We usually send flight information as well, but you should be sure to make contact before you leave the US. To call Robert from the US, dial as follows: 011-256- 772-439-870. If you are not signed up for Skype, you should do so. Just go to [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com). A 30 minute call to Uganda is roughly \$3 as of 5/12. Your friends and family will be able to call you easily. Should Robert prove unavailable, or there is a mix-up in making arrangements with Robert (which, again, has not happened yet,) you can call Kabali Meddi 0772555 262 or 0704 510 586. He is a good and reliable driver. No e-mail address for him, but feel free to call. Should neither driver work out (again, extremely unlikely), you can hire one of the local taxis from the airport. The standard rate for a taxi from Entebbe to Kampala is \$80,000 Shillings (roughly \$25-30 US given the exchange rate of 3000 USh/ dollar in 2/16). This may involve some negotiation on your part. I would suggest changing a small amount at the airport if you do not have arrangements with Robert or Kabali. Remember that Omni Med covers the cost of your transportation to the site. We have a prepaid deal with Robert. If any other arrangements, please contact us afterward and we can reimburse you.

If you arrive during daylight hours and don't have much luggage, you can take a "special hire" taxi (different than a public taxi, aka *matatu*) to the nearest taxi stand, or "stage", (roughly \$3-4 US) and then catch a taxi into City Center. If tired upon arrival or with lots of baggage in tow, you can just find a special hire to take you directly to a hotel (if you plan to take a taxi, see below). There are many special hire taxis available at the airport upon arrival once you leave the baggage collection area. The following is an alternative driver to Robert who is very reliable and safe.

- Frank Airport Taxi [Frankkyegombe@yahoo.com](mailto:Frankkyegombe@yahoo.com) 0788282366 US \$25 from airport to hotel or visa versa. You can e-mail ahead with your flight information and he or one of his colleagues can be there to meet him. Be sure to negotiate the rate via e-mail ahead of time.

If you arrive during the night time, it is recommended that you stay in the New City Annex hotel in Kampala. We generally advise against traveling on the roads at night in Uganda. The lone exception to this is traveling with Robert, our



driver, or one of his colleagues. Robert has transported several volunteers directly into Kampala late at night from the airport. Given Robert's and his groups' exceptional driving record and very cautious style of driving, we feel this is the lone exception for night travel.

In the days before our relationship with Robert Kiyimba, our driver, volunteers used to arrive by matatu and make their way out to Mukono via the public taxi park. The following is information from those days. We keep this here only in the highly unusual case that Robert or one of his colleagues is not there to greet you.

(From program early days!): Although taking a special hire is suggested for its convenience on your first day in Uganda as well as due to the challenge of navigating the taxi parks with all of your luggage, you might decide to take a taxi. Again, you must first get a special hire to the taxi stage in Entebbe for taxis traveling to Kampala. Once there your special hire driver can help direct you to the correct taxi. Because you will have luggage, you will likely need to negotiate a price with the taxi Conductor (the man who collects money from passengers as they depart the taxi). The price from Entebbe to Kampala is roughly 4,000Ush, but with your luggage will likely need to pay more (depending on how much you have). Try paying no more than twice as much as the standard fare, so around 8,000 perhaps 10,000 for you and the luggage. Since you will be sitting with at least some of your luggage, the price will not be that high. This taxi will go directly to the Old Taxi Park, at which point you can disembark. From here you can decide to ease your transition into Uganda by staying a night or two in Kampala or proceed to Mukono. Below are recommend hotels within Kampala.

- **New City Annex Hotel** Plot 7, Dewinton Road (opposite the national theater). PO Box 3583, Kampala, Uganda email: [ncahotel@gmail.com](mailto:ncahotel@gmail.com) Phone: 256-414-254-132 or 256-775-958867. (EON) This is my favorite hotel in Kampala, in fact the only place I stay. It is a convenient location, inexpensive, and has a great restaurant. You need to book rooms ahead of time. Best to stay in the South Wing at the back of the hotel where it is quieter. Ideal is a room with two twin beds for 45,000 (roughly US \$20) per night, though rates continually rise. They also have single beds for 15,000 (US \$6.50) per night. For a cheap but good breakfast, walk outside to the nearby supermarket, purchase a yogurt, muffin and then grab coffee or tea somewhere, great breakfast for just a couple of dollars.
- **Holiday Express Hotel** Luwum Street, PO Box 9923, Kampala next to the Tourist Hotel, Phone: 256-262858/9; e-mail: [holiday@utlonline.co.ug](mailto:holiday@utlonline.co.ug); website: [www.holidayexpresshotel.com](http://www.holidayexpresshotel.com); Great location just south of Kampala Street, busy area, easy to catch a matatu or taxi to the MOH from Lumumba Ave. Decent food, many internet cafes around; Rates \$60.night for a single but talked down to \$55. It's cheaper to pay in Uganda currency; they kill you with the conversion. First day there not a bad idea to get a room with AC; very noisy outside and it is nice to be able to close the drapes, turn on the AC and catch up on sleep after the long plane ride from the US. Do not use laundry service in the hotel – it is VERY expensive. Either use the laundry on the street, or ask the girls or neighbors in Mukono when you are there. This way you will help nice people and save a lot of money. A plus of the Holiday Express hotel is the many phone stores nearby. You can purchase a new battery if needed, and can purchase MTN minutes anywhere. The busy Nakasero Market is just down the street, as is the Old Taxi Park, from where you can get a taxi to Kyetume or Ntenjeru.

**Food in Kampala:** See the Wiki for suggestions. Also keep in mind that you can purchase delicious yogurt, muffins, tea, coffee etc at supermarkets and local shops throughout Kampala and Mukono. A very inexpensive but filling breakfast to get your day started. For many days out and about in Kampala, I (EON) usually purchase a few bread products (rolls, banana bread, muffins, etc) and a banana or two and have that with a bottle of water for a quick, on-the-go lunch. An added benefit is the very low risk of acquiring any GI bugs from breads or fruit that must be peeled. You can do the same out in many districts, which have much of the same fare.

Once in the Old Taxi Park, if you plan to stay at the Holiday Express Hotel, you only have to walk up the hill, along the road that runs parallel to the Taxi Park (should be on your left if you have entered the Park's lower entrance). The hotel is along this parallel road on the right hand side. If you decide to stay at New City Annex, you will need to take another





transport vehicle (another reason why taking a special hire directly from Entebbe is the most convenient method upon arrival). Ask your Conductor to help you find a special hire driver to take you (which might be around 10,000 Ush), or you can ask where to find a taxi that travels along Jinja road (the prices will vary but should be posted for these taxis). Be sure to tell the Conductor, and don't let him forget, that you are going to the National Theatre (which is across the street from the New City Annex). He should drop you along Jinja road, below the side street you would take to reach the National Theatre. You can then reach the New City Annex.

#### **Kampala to Mukono:**

. As of January 2015, all volunteers stay in our beautiful new house in Kisoga. The following are directions. Before you leave, be sure to communicate with Edward to coordinate your arrival because this whole process can take anywhere from 2.5-4 hours, depending on the traffic (aka "the Jam"). Try not to leave Kampala on Friday afternoons (gridlock) or go into Kampala during morning rush hour. Ask the locals; they'll tell you the times to avoid.

#### **New City Annex Directions to Ntenjeru (if Robert is not driving you):**

If you are staying at New City Annex, you do not need to go to the Old Taxi Park. Exit New City Annex and walk left up the road, take another left and walk down to the main road. Stand along the main road to your left and wait for taxis going East. All taxi Conductors in Uganda have hand signals that indicate their routes. The taxis that you want are the ones in which the Conductor is pointing up to the sky, indicating that they are leaving the boundaries of the city and going farther East. If you see a Conductor leaning out the window making this signal, flag him down by extending your arm outward. As they pull up, clarify that you are going to Mukono (some taxis are going far East and will not want to take a passenger only to Mukono which is considered near East). The standard price is 1,500Ush to Mukono but with your luggage you will likely be charged more, perhaps 1,000 – 2,000Ush more depending on how much you have. If they want to charge you too high a fee, do not fret. Let him go, there are plenty of taxis that run this route (he may even agree to let you board at a lower price because it will seem as though you know about fair pricing).

After boarding, explain to the Conductor that you need to reach the Mukono Taxi Park. The common drop point in Mukono for eastern-bound taxis is a supermarket called Sombe, which will be on your left hand side. If you are dropped here, simply walk along the road in the same direction as you have been traveling, cross the street, and enter into the walled-off complex. Inside here is the Taxi Park. As described above, locate either the Bukasa or Ntenjeru (Katosi) taxi. Tell the conductor you want to get off at Kisoga. Call Edward in advance and call him once you arrive. Someone will come and pick you up.

#### **Holiday Express Hotel Directions to Ntenjeru (again, if Robert is not driving you):**

When it is time to travel to Mukono, you have different options depending on where you are staying in Kampala. If you are staying at the Holiday Express Hotel, you can either discuss with Hotel staff to arrange a special hire to Mukono or walk down the road to the Old Taxi Park and get a taxi. If you decide on a special hire, the driver can take you to the Mukono Taxi Park where you can then get a taxi going to Ntenjeru or Bukasa. Here, you will ask the men standing around the taxis where to find taxis for Bukasa or for the Katosi taxi (Katosi is the last stop along the route that passes Ntenjeru) depending on where you will be staying. The prices are posted on the front of the taxi, but with your luggage you will need to pay a little extra, maybe 1,000 – 2,000Ush depending on how much you are carrying. Be sure to tell the Conductor as you depart the Mukono Taxi Park that you need to get out at Bukasa or Ntenjeru. Feel free to ask the passengers sitting next to you if you are unsure. Ugandans are very helpful. Alternatively, you can negotiate with your special hire driver to take you all the way to Ntenjeru (be sure he knows or can get directions first).



If you wish to take a taxi from Holiday Express Hotel, walk down the road to the Old Taxi Park and ask any of the men standing around taxis where you can get a taxi to Katosi (this taxi passes both Bukasa and Ntenjeru). The prices will be posted, but again you will likely need to pay a bit extra for your luggage. Remember, tell the Conductor you want to get out at Ntenjeru.

VHTs: As of 2/15, there are nearly 1200 VHTs we have trained and actively maintain through focus groups, quarterly meetings, home visits, and prompts distribution. Please keep in mind always that most of these people live on less than \$2 per day and are giving time and energy to this idea. Service work is often challenging, but feel free to be inspired by the commitment of those you will meet.

**A few Random Suggestions about getting around Kampala and Mukono:** First, as in any developing country, travel during the day whenever possible, not at night. Never ride the bodas (motorcycle taxis) in Kampala. You can walk all over the city, and the public taxis are excellent and very cheap. People are very helpful throughout Kampala and will always direct you. Be careful handing out money to the many beggars in town. Remember that your work in Uganda will help many people help themselves for long after you leave. That is a much more valuable contribution, though we each have to wrestle with the challenges of how we handle the desperate poor directly in front of us in Kampala.

### **Departing to Entebbe**

When departing Kisoga, you can get a taxi directly to Entebbe from the mini taxi park in Nakawa (on the outer boundaries of Kampala city), although these taxis will take much longer to fill than those taxis found in the Old Taxi Park within Kampala. Taking either taxi, Nakawa or Old Taxi Park, is much cheaper than a special hire, roughly \$3 vs. \$25 for a special hire. However, if you have a good amount of luggage, it might be worth paying the extra amount for the convenience of a special hire. Unless you meet a special hire driver, a convenient location to find and discuss prices will be in the Mukono Taxi Park. The price from Mukono to Entebbe should be around 70,000 but no more than 80,000Ush. However, if you need to transit from Ntenjeru to Entebbe, the price will be higher, perhaps around 100,000, but no more than 120,000, although that is a steep price to pay. Shop around, everything is negotiable. I usually like to shower before a long flight, so I suggest the following. Instead of going directly to Entebbe Airport, get off at the **Entebbe Flight Motel**, which the public taxi driver will know. Once there, say you just want to rent a room for one hour to take a shower and re-pack for your flight; you won't use the bed or otherwise mess up the room. I've done this for \$10 US, which was well worth the price. Much better than getting sweaty and covered in dust (inevitable in the public taxis) and then boarding a plane for 17 hours. The hotel staff can later assist you with find a driver into the airport.

## **Project Specific Trip Report**

There are several purposes for creating a trip report related to the specific aspects of the program you work on during your service in Uganda. Since many volunteers traveling to Uganda receives a specific set of objectives, the trip report helps to organize these objectives so you can document the progress made during your stay. Secondly, they help create a record of the work you have done so that future volunteers will not recreate that work. In addition, trip reports help us to keep up-to-date on what has and has not been accomplished, so that we can then provide future volunteers with relevant, continuous work to do when they arrive. Please note that it is fine for several volunteers to work together to write one trip report. We are interested in sharing information with future volunteers, so if 5 volunteers are there during the same time, it is fine for all to contribute to one trip report, as in:

"6\_15\_Protected\_Water\_Source\_Trip\_Report\_Your\_Name(s)."



## Format

Please keep in mind that this particular report is an exercise in concise writing/ reporting. Try to use words efficiently and cleanly. Someone following you in 6, 12 or 36 months won't want to read 5 pages of free association. Organize your thoughts and try to condense what you say down to 1-2 pages on average, longer if there is much to report, but rarely more than 3-4 pages.

### Trip Report Sections: (This is a suggestion for organization, you can use whatever format works best for you)

#### A. Objectives

Use this section to list your broad objectives you start with regarding the specifics of the project you are working on. This may only be one specific objective, which is fine. Remember that this is a continuum, and the work of many combined with the work of the VHTs and our staff is what makes this all work. Initial objectives may well change during your stay. Simply reflect the change in writing up your report..

#### B. Timeline

This does not have to be detailed. We are mainly looking for which areas you worked on and when. This can help us sort through progress months or years later, particularly when writing up research.

#### C. Contacts/ Logistics/ Objectives Progress

In this section, please be sure to list any contacts with contact information and locations. If you went into Mukono or Kampala and met with someone, please record their name, contact information and the highlights of the meeting. Same if you worked with a particular VHT in one village. Please cover the specifics of the work you have done so that others can follow it up later on. Each time you contribute to the overall progress of an objective, describe the activities you performed or the steps you took. This section provides you an opportunity to write a narrative about what you are doing to accomplish your objectives as well as the obstacles that arise in the process (which may create additional objectives that splinter off from your original one).

#### D. Conclusions/ Next Steps

Please try to give a current state of the project as you understand it as you are finishing up. Have we made progress? (the answer may well be no, which is common). What are the barriers and what steps do we need to take next? Please be as specific as you can. We all know that this is a small NGO with little financial resources, so point that out if you must, but try to be creative and innovative in helping us find other ways to accomplish our objectives. Try to think of this entire report as something you would like to read as you begin your experience. More broad-based reflections should be recorded in the praxis paper; specific thoughts about the project, including larger macro or policy considerations, should be included here.

## Reading List/ Praxis Paper:

Please note that since 2015, volunteers have a required reading list while working with us in Uganda. This will not be overly taxing, but is designed to get you thinking critically about many of the issues that you will encounter while there. All of the readings are in a folder in Dropbox which we will send you upon your acceptance. We will ask each volunteer to write a brief paper about their experience, incorporating some of the reading material. Our goal is to encourage you to read while there, and incorporate what various authors have to say about the developing world, poverty, inequity, and social justice. The most powerful experiences in life stimulate critical thinking at a far deeper level. Your experience will be enhanced by listening to other voices while you are there. Agree or disagree with them, but at least give them a listen. The paper can be as long or short as you like; I am mainly looking for evidence that you open your mind while there, and considered other viewpoints. I encourage each of you to keep your own journals, which is yours alone. You



will find that the power of this experience fades with time. Your journal notes now may well revive passions that are within you somewhere down the road. That was certainly true for me when I traveled to Tanzania in 1987.

As you move through your time in Uganda take a few moments to reflect on each of the actions and decisions you are making. How will this contribute to the community? What are the day to day challenges for Ugandans? In what ways is this experience different than in America? In what ways is it similar? How has your perspective changed after this activity? How did you enjoy or dislike any aspect of the trip? Use this section to process the affect of the trip's events. Lastly, please be sure when you send me your paper whether or not you are willing to share your thoughts with others. We will only share on Dropbox those papers who have given this permission. I would encourage you to share, since others may well benefit from your experience. However, given the personal nature, this is up to each person individually.