



RESCUE WIDOWS, ELDERLY, YOUTH AND ORPHANS WITH AIDS

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION PACK

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Introduction

Welcome to RWEYOWA! Thank you so much for your interest in our organization, and we hope that you are excited to volunteer with us as we are certainly looking forward to working with you!

This pack contains a variety of information that you will find useful in preparing to support us, ranging from practical information about visas and local travel to what you can expect from a day-to-day life with RWEYOWA.

We hope that all your questions will be answered in this pack, but if you have any further queries please don't hesitate to contact us or a previous volunteer using the details at the end.



Cornelius, Sam, Kasamba, Tonny and Wilson posing with Leonard, RWEYOWA's new car

RWEYOWA Background Information



As you'll probably already know RWEYOWA is a certified non-governmental organization (NGO) on the Southern edge of Kampala, Uganda, which exists to curb the further spread of HIV/AIDS and improve the livelihoods of those affected/infected with HIV/AIDS in the community. We envision a community accessing HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support services in the most prosperous and sustainable way possible.

RWEYOWA was established in 2003 by three members of the local community: Kasamba, Tonny and Wilson. It has continued to grow from strength to strength, and remains a grass-roots organization run by the founding members on an entirely voluntary basis.

In May 2006 RWEYOWA officially registered as a community-based organization (CBO), and further to this in October 2009, registered with the National Board of Non-Governmental Organizations as a certified NGO (Reg. No. S.5914/8248), and expanded its geographical area.

RWEYOWA's Operational Principles:

- Practical involvement and participation of beneficiaries in the identification of key areas of operation and possible solutions in tackling issues associated with HIV/AIDS
- Non-political and non-partisan operating environment
- Non-discrimination, confidentiality, adaptation, responsibility and partnership

RWEYOWA was founded on five main objectives:

- To establish care and support activities/projects to improve the lives of those affected/infected with HIV/AIDS
- To prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS and other STDs among people of all ages through the ABC strategy (Abstinence, Being faithful, use a Condom)
- To promote sexual reproductive health among young people in the community
- To advocate for equality, respect, and protection of all those infected/affected by HIV/AIDS
- To improve coordination and cooperation with other partner organizations through mobilization, information sharing, and expertise in the struggle against HIV/AIDS.

Introduction to HIV/AIDS

HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that infects the immune system of its carrier. More specifically, it kills CD4+ cells (also known as 'T helper' cells), a specific type of white blood cell which is essential to a healthy immune system. HIV is transmitted via bodily fluids such as blood, sexual fluids and breast milk.

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is caused by HIV, as an individual's compromised immune system makes them vulnerable to opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis and pneumonia. It is these types of infections that kill a person infected with HIV, not the virus itself.

HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa

AIDS is the biggest killer in sub-Saharan Africa, with an estimated 22.5 million people living with HIV at the end of 2009, including 2.3 million children.

During 2009, an estimated 1.3 million Africans died from AIDS. Almost 90% of the 16.6 million children orphaned by AIDS live in sub-Saharan Africa.

HIV/AIDS in Uganda (at the end of 2009, population 30,700,000)

- 1,200,000 People living with HIV/AIDS
- 610,000 Women with HIV/AIDS
- 150,000 Children with HIV/AIDS
- 64,000 AIDS deaths
- 1,200,000 Orphans due to AIDS

The current HIV prevalence in Uganda is estimated at 6.5% among adults and 0.7% among children. HIV prevalence is higher in urban areas (10%) than rural areas (6%).

Women are disproportionately affected, accounting for 57% of all adults living with HIV. Ugandan women tend to marry and become sexually active at a younger age than their male counterparts, and often have older and more sexually experienced partners. This (plus various biological and social factors) puts young women at greater risk of infection.

In Uganda the number of new infections (an estimated 120,000 in 2009) exceeds the number of annual AIDS deaths (64,000 in 2009), and it is feared HIV prevalence may be rising again.

(Note: all information above taken from www.avert.org)

RWEYOWA's fight against HIV/AIDS

RWEYOWA is dedicated to serving the people of Wakiso and Kampala Districts in Uganda (see map on next page). Most of its core interventions are carried out in Ssabagabo-Makindye, which is the biggest of all the sub-counties of Wakiso district.

With a total population of 150,300 people (according to the Housing and Population census of 2002), 10,500 (7%) are living with HIV/AIDS, explaining why Ssabagabo-Makindye receives the first priority.



Sam, Wilson, Tonny, Kasamba, Lindesay and Moses outside RWEYOWA's office in Namasuba

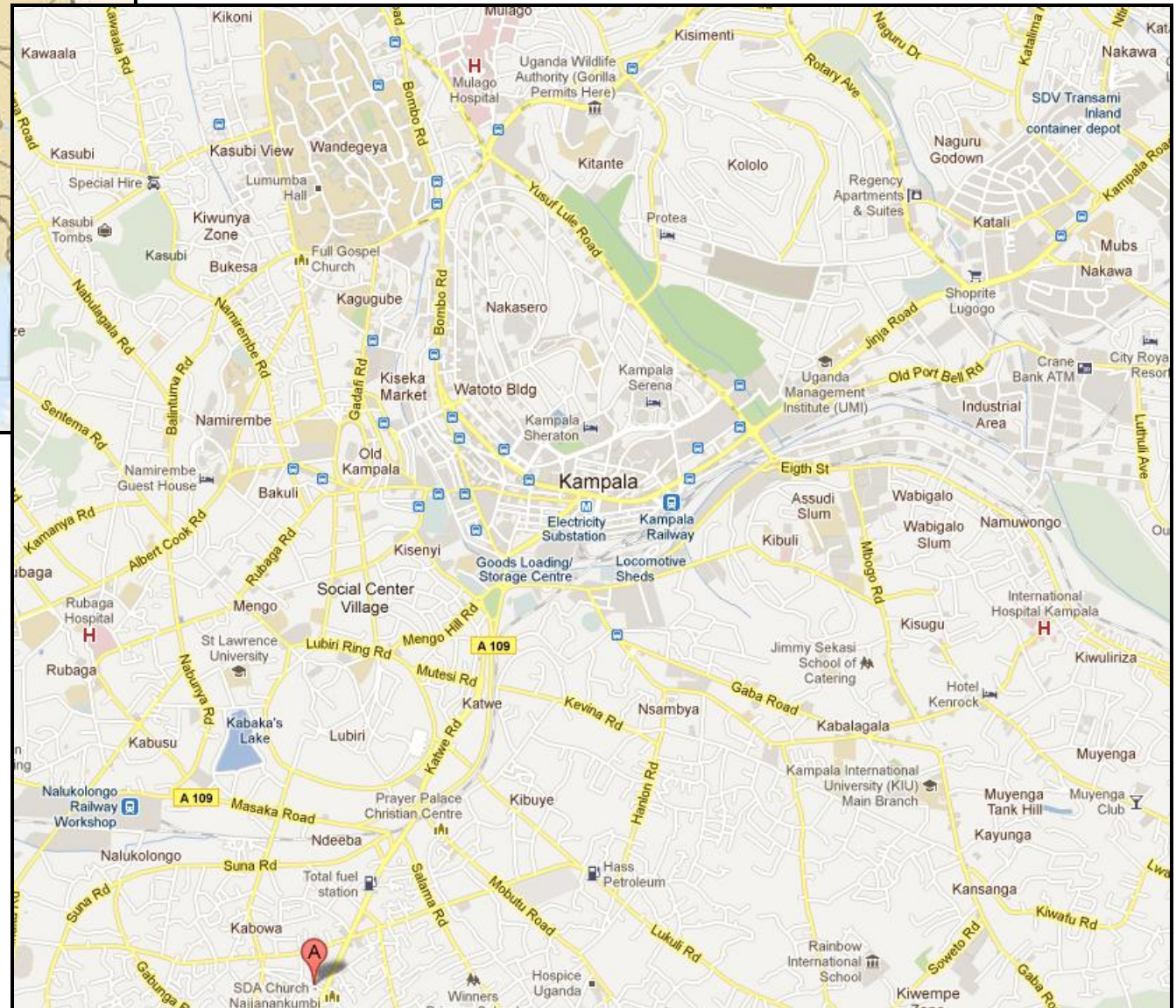
Maps



Wakiso District Kampala District

Uganda is separated into a number of Districts, as shown on the map above. RWEYOWA work in Wakiso and Kampala districts, as indicated by the arrows.

The letter A on the map below indicates Namasuba, the village where RWEYOWA's office is located. Namasuba village is in Masajja Parish, in the sub-county of Ssabagabo-Makindye which is in the District of Wakiso (on the outskirts of Kampala). Just in case you were wondering!



RWEYOWA's Programmes

RWEYOWA runs a variety of programmes, described briefly below as they are at www.rweyowa.org/todo. Volunteers are able to get involved in these programmes in a variety of ways, with opportunities being based largely on the work being carried out each day by the organization.

Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Education/Sensitization

We sensitize people about HIV/AIDS prevention with a primary focus on young people. By means of IEC (information, education and communication) we try to reach as many people as we can through seminars, workshops, drama/video shows, written material and various other means.

Volunteers can get involved by observing such sessions, or if they would like to deliver certain aspects of the topic then this too can be arranged.

Partners include: Straight Talk Foundation, Young Empowered and Health (YEAH), Ugandan Ministry of Health



Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT)

We are committed to carrying out two VCTs a month to enable people to know their HIV/AIDS status, with the aim of reducing the further spread of HIV/AIDS in the community.

Volunteers can involve themselves in VCT by assisting with admin tasks such as the registration of patients, recording the lab test results, and helping to ensure the smooth running and efficiency of the sessions.

Partners include: Uganda Cares, Ndejje Health Centre, Roofings Limited

Community Outreach Programme

We currently support 64 families who are vulnerable as a result of HIV/AIDS. As well as clients infected by HIV/AIDS, this also includes elderly individuals whose children have died of HIV/AIDS and who have no other support. We offer material support in the form of clothes and foodstuffs, while also providing psycho-social support and counseling.

Volunteers are very welcome to join us as we visit and assist these individuals and families.



Orphan Support and Sponsorship Programme

We support a number of orphans who have lost their parents to HIV/AIDS, as well as other vulnerable children who might be infected themselves or whose parents are sick.

International sponsorship and a scholarship/bursary scheme, established by RWEYOWA with local schools within the community, funds primary and secondary education, scholastic materials, and provides clothing and food when necessary.



RWEYOWA Resource Center

We run a Community Library/Resource Centre with a range of fiction and non-fiction books, with the aim of providing people in the community the opportunity to read and learn. We have textbooks for students and updated information on health issues, including HIV/AIDS.

Partners include: Book Aid International, Children International, and National Library of Uganda

Condom Promotion and Supply

People in the community are able to obtain free condoms from the RWEYOWA office at any time during our office hours. We also offer comprehensive sensitization and training in correct condom use.

We target specific groups who are at greater risk of HIV/AIDS infection (and other STDs), such as sex workers, long-distance truckers, urban motorcyclists (boda-bodas), and discordant couples (i.e. couples in which one partner is HIV positive and the other is HIV negative).

Partners include: Ugandan Ministry of Health



HIV/AIDS Counseling Training

RWEYOWA conducts training in HIV/AIDS counseling in the endeavor to ensure efficient and effective delivery of HIV/AIDS care and management. We equip participants with comprehensive knowledge about HIV/AIDS, counseling and communication skills, positive living disclosure methods, facts about prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and the importance of adherence to treatment. This training targets HIV/AIDS care providers such as nurses and community health workers.

Partners include: Mildmay Uganda, Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organizations (UNASO)

Of course, volunteer activities are not restricted to these areas. If you have any other ideas as to how you might be able to assist RWEYOWA's work, make sure you mention them! For example, this booklet was put together by two volunteers who saw an opportunity to improve the experience of future volunteers.

Volunteering with RWEYOWA

As you will have seen from the volunteer testimonies available on RWEYOWA's website it is widely agreed that volunteering with us is a hugely rewarding thing to do. But, of course, there is far more to it than that!

The Volunteer Placement Program that RWEYOWA operates has no set structure or requirements, meaning that you have the opportunity to really shape your time and your experience. As is mentioned briefly above, if you have particular previous experience (for example writing grant applications or teaching) that you would like to utilize then this will be easy to accommodate, but if on the other hand you would like to gain a wide experience of the various programmes that RWEYOWA run then this too will also be possible.

Day-to-day Life

Accommodation is in a house with Wilson, the Programme Director; a mosquito net, bedding and a towel will be provided. Running water (cold only) and electricity are intermittent, though electricity is generally more on than off and there is always water available in jerry cans.

Your placement fee covers:

Airport transfers

Accommodation

Breakfast and dinner during the week (African not Western!)

Full board available at the weekends

Laundry



Practicalities

Phone

It's helpful for volunteers to have a phone that works in Uganda to ensure they can be easily contacted by the rest of the team, and as a safety measure. A Ugandan SIM is easy and cheap to obtain, as is airtime. MTN is the most popular provider in Uganda, but if you plan to travel elsewhere in Africa (without buying a new SIM in each country) it would be advisable to purchase an Airtel SIM. We can help you with this when you arrive.

Internet

Namasuba has several internet cafés, but just one with a decent speed, down on the Kampala-Entebbe Road. Internet capable of coping with Skype is to be found in Kampala. Alternatively, you can top up Wilson's bring an Orange Everywhere dongle that can be topped up with airtime in Namasuba and use Wilson's laptop at the house.

Money

US Dollars are accepted by some hotels and tour companies but otherwise the local currency, Ugandan Shillings, is what you will use on a day-to-day basis. Dollars, Euros or Pound Sterling can be changed at banks and forex bureau in Kampala or at Entebbe Airport; ideally try to find out what exchange rates to expect before changing money to ensure you're not conned! It's also best to check that your notes aren't too dog-eared and you must ensure that your US Dollars were printed in 2006 or later as earlier notes may be rejected. If you have a VISA bank card, money is easy to withdraw at most ATMs in Kampala; MasterCard is less widely accepted.

Tippling (information taken from the Bradt *Uganda* guidebook)

It isn't customary to leave a tip in local bars and restaurants but you may want to, in which case 5% would be very acceptable and 10% generous. Upmarket/tourist places will automatically add a surcharge to the bill, but since there's no telling where it will end up it would still be reasonable to reward good service with a tip.

Travel

Entebbe International Airport is about an hour's drive from Namasuba and you will be collected and given a warm welcome by us all. Alternatively, if you are already in Uganda, we will be happy to collect you from Kampala.

Getting Around

Namasuba is an easy and cheap 30-45 minute mini-bus journey (known as 'taxis' or 'matatus' here) to Kampala, so you can easily visit some of the tourist attractions in our capital city on the weekends. Taxi/matatu prices are usually fixed. You will also probably end up using a boda-boda at some point (a small moped/motorbike type vehicle where you sit behind the driver) but be aware that these do not have particularly good safety records and drivers usually lack any formal training. If you're travelling at night or would prefer to use a private taxi (known as 'special hires') then these are also easy to find. Prices for boda-boda and special hire journeys are negotiable.

Before You Arrive

An onward ticket from Uganda is technically an entry requirement. Assuming that you have this, visas are very easy to obtain at Entebbe Airport and in fact, the queue is usually shorter than if you already have one. If however, you are planning to travel further in Africa afterwards and do not have proof of onward travel from Uganda (e.g. a booked flight or official overland tour) it might be advisable to get your visa in advance as you may be forced to buy a refundable flight out of Uganda, either by your airline at the time of check-in (e.g. Ethiopian Airlines) or at Entebbe.

Visa Information

Up-to-date visa information, including prices, can be found on the official Uganda High Commission or Embassy website of your resident country such as www.ugandahighcommission.co.uk in the UK or www.ugandaembassy.com in the US.

At the time of writing, you do not need to obtain a Work Permit (listed as 'Class G 1 - volunteers, NGO workers, Missionaries' on the website), a tourist visa will suffice. Despite this it is fine for you to write NGO Volunteer as the purpose of your trip on your visa form. Tourist visas are generally issued for 90 days and, if necessary, it is easy to obtain a 6 month extension once in the country, at an extra cost.

Please ensure you also check any other requirements such as passport validity, which is currently 6 months.

Guidebooks

Bradt Uganda

Pros: lots of detailed and specific information, history and background, with numerous town/city maps.

Cons: a bit of doorstep if you're traveling for a long time, no numbered map keys like in Lonely Planet, less detailed overview maps, travel information not always targeted at travelers relying on public transport.

Lonely Planet East Africa (or just the Uganda section, available to buy online as a PDF)

Pros: numbered map keys, better overview maps, light to carry (especially if printing the PDF option)

Cons: naturally less detailed due to size, including less detailed maps / zoomed in sections.

The Eye Magazine

Pick up a free copy at the information office at Entebbe Airport or, if you are staying in Kampala, at one of the hostels, hotels or selected bookshops. It contains useful, regularly updated listings and a very useful map.



Recommended Background Reading

Your time with us will be greatly enhanced by gaining some knowledge about HIV/AIDS and about Uganda before you come. Previous volunteers can recommend these books / sources:

HIV/AIDS: A Very Short Introduction, by Alan Whiteside

The Invisible Cure: Africa, the West, and the Fight Against AIDS, by Helen Epstein

The Teeth May Smile But The Heart Does Not Forget, by Andrew Rice

www.avert.org

If you're planning to travel further in Africa, take a look at *Dark Star Safari*, by Paul Theroux

Contacting RWEYOWA

Your key contact at RWEYOWA prior to your arrival will be Wilson Ssekibuule, the Programme Director. You can contact him with any questions, either via email (wilson@rweyowa.org) or by telephone (+256 752 876 783).

If you would like to ask one of our previous volunteers any questions about what you can expect from your time with us, or would simply like to hear about their experience of working with RWEYOWA, then please don't hesitate to contact someone using the details below.

Long-term (6 months or more)

Christina Hoffman	christina.hoffman@gmail.com	+1 281 253 9317
Phillip Nelson	phil.nelson0@googlemail.com	+44 7530 827959

Mid-term (3 months)

Alena Mack	travelinlegs@yahoo.com	+1 563 209 8025
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Short-term (1 month)

Sam Weavers	samweavers@yahoo.co.uk	
Lindesay Mace	lindesay_mace@yahoo.co.uk	+44 7967 820168 (from 9th Jan. '12)

Snapshot (1 week)

Rosie Marfleet	rosiemarfleet@hotmail.com	+44 7920 402613
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Thank you so much again for your interest in volunteering with RWEYOWA; we hope the information in this booklet has been helpful, and we really look forward to welcoming you!