

Do's And Don'ts For Volunteers

Don't

Come thinking you are God's gift to Africa. You have a lot to learn from Africa too.

Come as a reason for getting out of a difficult situation at home, e.g. a broken relationship, recent bereavement, difficulties at work.

Come with the first offer you have. Research where you are going and if possible get references of the area or look at the website

Do not try to get visa in your own country – you can get it very easily in Uganda, at the airport coming in.

Think that acceptable clothing at home is acceptable here. There is a dress code, especially for women here

Wear miniskirts or shorts at formal occasions or in hospice, on home visits

Expose your belly button or the cleavage of your backside

Get drunk unless with someone you trust who can take you home

Travel on long journeys by bus exposing your goods, they are a temptation to those who have less

Leave money, cell phones or valuables where people can see them, again this is a temptation to those who have less

Leave your personal details unless you know and trust the person

Get involved sexually unless in serious relationships. Casual contacts lead to AIDS

Stop if you have a road accident and someone might be hurt. Mob justice still rules! Keep going to the nearest police station

DO

Research your role and plan your days as much as possible

If volunteering try and raise funds for your stay and some for work you may want to do while here with patients or the team

Consider how this stay is going to fit into your life plans

If coming to HAU let us know in good time, send your CV and discuss any questions before you leave home

If going to HAU or another hospice in a developing country, read international volunteering in palliative care: tips to get you started, a book for volunteers recently published by Help the Hospices

Get your jabs and anti-malarial tablets in plenty of time before leaving

Ensure you have enough money for your stay

Take time off to relax and chill out. There are plenty of tourist places in Uganda and it is a beautiful country to explore.

Come out with a friend if possible. It is easier to do things together than singly, although there are often plenty of people around for you to join in with

Remember you have come to give. However, you will receive more than you give in this experience of working with the very ill and assisting at the end of life

If not sure of how to behave or proceed, ask a trustworthy local friend

Be careful on the roads. Try not to drive immediately unless on the quieter side of town. Driving in Kampala is life threatening these days

If you are going to use a boda boda regularly (not recommended) buy your own helmet

Make sure that you know the cost of your fare on the matatu before you get on

Ask the price of the taxi before you get in and bargain if it is too high. Know the local costs

In Uganda use the Eye magazine, the local tourist book which comes free monthly, to guide you and for useful telephone numbers