

VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE IN UGANDA



For individual travellers (18+), groups and families

Looking for a volunteering experience but having difficulty navigating all of the companies and finding the charges prohibitive?

Volunteering with the Molly and Paul Childcare Foundation (MPCCF) in Uganda could be your answer.

Many areas throughout the UK have had a close relationship with this charity through the UK based charity The Pearl of Africa Child Care Ltd.

For 35 years MPCCF has educated and cared for thousands of vulnerable and destitute children in Uganda. The Foundation is now made up of 6 schools, a farm and farm school, 10 Children's homes and a clinic.

The UK charity Pearl of Africa Child Care (POACC) has helped in fundraising for the Ugandan charity by organising an annual UK choir tour of Ugandan children from the Molly and Paul Schools.

Molly and Paul, Pearl of Africa Children's Choir UK Tour 2017 on YouTube - https://youtu.be/OZhAVV_RpLg

You too could share in this amazing and enriching experience by volunteering for MPCCF .

MPCCF welcomes individual travellers, groups and families. There is accommodation for up to 30 people at one time. Whilst going solo is fine, the experience can be enhanced by sharing it.

While you will be introduced to the schools in Uganda's capital city Kampala, your volunteering experience will be based at what is known by the charity as the 'Children's Village', next to the village of Kanuzinda.

This is a 26 acre site in South Western Uganda where there is situated a Kindergarten, a Primary and Secondary School, Boarding houses each run by a Mama, a farm and a clinic.

It is a 3 hour drive from Kampala. The closest town is Masaka which is 15 kilometres away from Kamuzinda.

How you can help when you are there

There are plenty of varied opportunities for volunteering and lots of people find how they want to become involved when they get there. You don't need to have specialist skills. A recent volunteer John said "don't be put off if you feel you have nothing to offer. Everyone has something! Your accommodation costs are very helpful in themselves."

1. The Schools (Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary) offer opportunities for:
 - Teaching
 - School Infrastructure development e.g. classroom maintenance, small building projects
2. Craft Projects e.g:
 - Basket and mat weaving
 - Bead making
 - Sewing
 - Carpentry
 - Brick Making
3. The Farm and Farm School offer opportunities to help with:
 - Animal husbandry
 - Crop growing
 - Farm infrastructure projects
 - School Infrastructure development e.g. classroom maintenance, small building projects
4. The Clinic which has 8 in-patient beds offers an experience of rural Ugandan medicine and outreach work with
 - Management and treatment of Malaria
 - Diagnostic laboratory facilities
 - HIV diagnosis and counselling
 - Health education and screening of school children
 - Older peoples medication and care

Prices

£25 per night for full board and lodging

This cost will be reduced for larger groups.

You will be met at and returned to the airport by members of MPCCF.

It helps if you are able to fundraise before you go. The experience is then enriched as you can spend it on the project of your choice. (We suggest approximately £300).

You could take some items over which can be given to the children and adults in the Village

Items such as:

- Clothes and shoes.
- Writing Books
- Pens, pencils, crayons ,rubbers, rulers, protractors, solar calculators
- Outdoor games for the children

Included in costs:

- All of your food, bottled water and accommodation (includes bedding and mosquito nets)
- Excellent support and 24 hour back-up from MPCCF
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Not included in costs:

- Your flights approximately £300 - £500
 - Airlines: Brussels, KLM, Emirates, Turkish, Kenyan , Ethiopian
- Travel Insurance
- Visa - 50 American dollars on entry at airport or sorted beforehand.
- Immunisations and Anti-Malarial medication.
- Transport . You will be expected to pay for your transport costs .The car journey from the airport to Kamuzinda costs approximately £30.= 150,000 Ugandan shillings.

Money

The local currency is Ugandan shillings. £1 = approx. 4,800 shillings .

You cannot get the local currency in the UK but can be taken to a cash-point shortly after arrival in Uganda. Be careful with the number of noughts at the cashpoint!!

Overnights and meals at hotels /guesthouses in Entebbe/Kampala can be paid by credit/visa card .

When to go?

To get the most out of your experience it is best to go during the Ugandan Schools term time:

- Mid September - mid December
- Early February - end April/beginning May
- End May - mid/end August

Each year term dates differ slightly so it is best to check with MPCCF before you go.

Please note that their longest break is over Christmas and the whole of January.

During the first 3 weeks of July the accommodation will be fully occupied with UK school students.

Accommodation

Volunteers are accommodated in a choice of 3 boarding houses that have electricity, a communal living room and a variety of bedrooms; doubles, twins and larger dorm-like rooms with bunk beds. All rooms are lockable. All beds have mosquito nets. Bathrooms all have showers (cold), sinks and flushing toilets.

You will have 3 meals cooked for you per day.

A typical Ugandan meal will often include rice, matoke (cooked plantain) , cassava chapatti, sweet potatoes and some type of meat or fish.

Fruit and vegetables are plentiful - pineapples, bananas, mango, passion fruit, avocados.

Bottled water for drinking will be provided. Soda drinks e.g. coke, fanta, ginger beer can be available but will need to be paid for.

You can pay in local currency for the Mamas from the Homes to wash your clothes.

Health and Safety

Uganda is a safe country and is the perfect introduction for first-time volunteers to Africa. (Please refer to Foreign Office website for up to date travel advice.)

With MPCCF you will be assured of attention to Health and Safety at all times with 24/7 support.

Essential considerations:

- Immunisations and Anti-Malarials. Before you travel visit your GP/ travel nurse to ensure you have the necessary vaccinations. You will be required to show your **Yellow Fever vaccinations certificate** on entry at the airport..
- You will need an entry visa which can be purchased online prior to departure or on entry at the airport. It costs 50 American dollars.
- Malaria poses the single biggest health threat to travellers. The 2 anti-malarials of choice are Malarone or Doxycycline (must be taken with food). They will need to be started before you start travelling and continued on your return. Try to avoid being bitten by always using a mosquito net at night and covering as much skin as possible after night fall. A 50% strength of Deet spray is sold in all UK chemists. A sheet/silk sleeping bag is useful, available on Ebay.
- Shoe-wear: it is advisable to cover feet when outside e.g. trainers or a full shoe. Also full foot coverage can prevent bites. Slip on sandals or flip-flops can be taken to wear inside.
- Sun protection is essential and take a hat / scarf with you.

Should you need medical care the MPCCF Health Clinic is a 5 minute walk from your accommodation and the hospital in Masaka is a 30 minute drive away.

Cultural Considerations

It is very important to respect the culture and customs of another country while you are visiting.

Girls should not wear dresses, skirts or shorts above the knee. Nor have bare stomachs showing. Bare arms are OK.

While MPCCF is a Christian Charity, they respect other peoples beliefs and customs and indeed educate and employ people of different faiths and cultures.

They expect the same respect to be practised by their volunteers.

While there are many different languages spoken in Uganda nearly all people speak English and it is the language spoken in all schools.

LGBTQ Rights are severely compromised in Uganda. For more information see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Uganda

Geography and Climate

Uganda is located in East Africa, west of Kenya, South of Sudan and East of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is in the heart of the Great Lakes Region and is surrounded by 3 of them, Lake Edward, Lake Albert and the largest of them Lake Victoria.

Despite being on the Equator, Uganda is more temperate due to its high altitude. Temperatures rarely rise above 30 °C and it is not humid. The 2 rainy seasons in April/May and Sept/October should not deter you from visiting then. The rains are heavy showers when they come but the sun is soon shining again.

It is a diverse and beautiful nation whose abundant wildlife and culture make it a great place to explore.

There is plenty of scope for birdwatching and you don't need to go off site to see an amazing variety of birds.

Winston Churchill described Uganda as the "Pearl of Africa" and that it was "from end to end a beautiful garden".

Tourist Attractions in Uganda

After your volunteering experience you might wish to extend your visit to include some of the wonderful attractions Uganda has to offer:

- Lake Mburo National Park (closest to Masaka)
- Queen Elizabeth National Park
- Sesse Islands on Lake Victoria
- Lake Bunyoni
- Murchison Falls National Park
- Rwenzori Mountains

While the Directors of MPCCF will help you plan to extend your trip they will not be responsible for you after you leave your volunteering experience although would of course respond in a crisis.

The Bradt Travel Guide to Uganda is a very good resource for further research.

Contacts:

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Volunteer Testimonials

“I have been volunteering with my family for the Molly and Paul Childcare Foundation since I was 8 years old. Uganda has been part of my upbringing. It is a beautiful country with beautiful people, many of whom have now become friends. I would recommend anyone at any age to volunteer for MPCCF for an enriching and humbling experience.” Olivia - aged 20 years

“It’s a once in a life-time experience. We particularly enjoyed working with the Ugandans on building projects, involving ourselves in their culture and sharing their passion for football and volleyball” Jamie and George - aged 16 years

“Four years ago, at just under 60 years young, my husband, Dave and I retired from the police force and teaching and became involved with the Pearl of Africa Childcare charity. That was the beginning of a whole new chapter in our lives which has resulted in us travelling to the beautiful country that is Uganda for the last two years. I can honestly say that in our experiences there have been some of the most wonderful, humbling, rewarding and just amazing times of our lives. If you want to do something worthwhile, don’t hesitate, just go for it, there’s so much you can help with - you won’t be disappointed!” Liz and Dave

“Every morning I woke up eager to make a change and every day I could see the difference we had made. I gained a new lease of life myself, while giving others a new lease of life” Joe

“My favourite experience was making bricks. It is immensely satisfying to dig up earth and create bricks from it; knowing that they will be used to build dormitories less than 100m away. I loved working with the Ugandans and getting really mucky was fun too!” Sally - UK Teacher

“The appreciation of people who are less fortunate than us has stayed with me, the endless joy that we had playing with the children is unforgettable and I miss them all so much!” Nesta

