

Visitors to Kagando - Information for Volunteers

INTRODUCTION

Kagando Hospital lies in the beautiful foothills of the Rwenzori mountains, in a rural area 30kms from the Congo border.

The Hospital is a part of Kagando Rural Development Centre (KARUDEC), a Christian project under the umbrella of the Church of Uganda. The vision is for holistic care, and its services reach far into the community. The motto at Kagando is '*We care, God heals*'.



Friends of Kagando are the UK based charity which assists the hospital both financially and by supporting clinical and management staff. You can see the details at <https://friendsofkagando.co.uk/>

Trustees and other supporters visit regularly to support the work and help with various projects there.

You will probably find that life in rural Uganda is very different to your home country. Don't expect things to be done in the same way as you would at home. Prepare for the unexpected and don't be disappointed if things don't go exactly as you had planned!

You'll receive a very warm welcome here in the hospital and in the local community as together we seek to serve the sick and needy in this resource-limited setting. We trust that you will find that during your time here you will receive much more than just professional experience and that you will get involved with people and the life in and around Kagando.

Visiting with a friend is ideal as this way you can share both costs and company. Many people do go on their own however and manage fine. It depends on your experience and preference.

THE HOSPITAL

There are about 250 beds and the wards include – Male and Female Medical, Surgical, Paediatrics, Neonatal Intensive Care, Maternity, Isolation/Leprosy, Intensive Care, and a small private ward.

Other Departments include: Radiology, Theatres, Physiotherapy and Occupational therapy, Outpatients, Pharmacy, Laboratory, Dental Clinic, Eye Clinic, Palliative Care, Maternal Child Health Clinic, HIV Clinic and Histopathology service. There are visits from time to time for Cataract surgery, plastic surgery and for Fistula camps.



Outreach clinics operate in the community and include palliative care, HIV/TB, wheelchair service, community health, maternal child health, mental health, epilepsy and the Ruwenzori Women for Health programme.

The normal day starts at 8am in the chapel with a short service for staff, students and visitors. This is not compulsory, but we would encourage you to attend - it includes introductions, notices and information about the programme for the day as well as forthcoming events in the hospital and local community.

Chapel ends around 8.30, and people chat by the entrance - this is a good time to meet people. Don't be shy to introduce yourself – people will be very welcoming and interested to meet you. Everyone has mobile phones, and the junior doctors are very happy to communicate via WhatsApp and let you know what is going on.

Ward rounds start at about 8.30 – 9.00 and go on till they are finished – this might be 11.30 or 1.30..... then people tend to take time off for lunch as most of the work is done in the morning.

Don't feel guilty about taking time out over lunch – you need to take it easy in the heat.

The afternoon is often a good time to explore other departments such as OPD, Mental Health, HIV clinics; just ask and sit in.



CONTACTS

Canon Uzziah (ukiriaghe20@gmail.com) is the Executive Director (ED) and will know about your elective – he is very approachable and you can see him at the office in the admin block. It's a good idea to find him on the first day you are there to introduce yourself

Dr Baluku Asanairi (asanairib@gmail.com) M +256 782 769820 is a senior Doctor at the hospital and will be your clinical supervisor. Email him a week before you arrive and then WhatsApp him once you are there. He will help you decide which wards and clinics to attend.

You will find that you are given a pretty free hand to determine your own programme. This is a great opportunity to visit all the different wards and departments. Ask the staff to show you interesting things. You may also find that they are used to giving their young junior doctors a level of responsibility you would not expect at home at a similar level. Be careful about taking on something you are not confident of or familiar with – you need to say “no” if you don't have the experience – you are there to learn and not to experiment and it's important not to put yourself in a position where you are outside your comfort zone.

Rev Nason Mugisa (Mugisanason@gmail.com) will be fixing up your accommodation. Email him when you know your flight details and remind him of your dates of stay.

Drs Oliver and Rachel Penney, are happy to give advice. Email them on doktaoli@gmail.com or WhatsApp or ring Oli on +44 7891114481 or

Dr Chris Harris who can be reached on email at Christopher.harris@nhs.net or on +447738220798 at any time via WhatsApp or over the phone.

Nurses or Nursing students considering a visit can contact **Rita Miller** for similar information on ritamariamiller@gmail.com Rita has worked as the Deputy Principal Nursing Officer at Kagando and has spent several years there.

LOCAL INTEREST

Kagando is blessed to be situated in an especially beautiful part of Uganda. There are many interesting and lovely places to visit nearby, with great wildlife and scenery. These include:



Queen Elizabeth National Park – only 45 minutes away - a superb game park with many species of birds and animals. There is a **'not to be missed'** boat trip along the Kazinga Channel from which you will see an incredible number of birds as well as Crocodiles, Hippopotamus and Elephant. You now have to pay a park entrance fee (\$40).

We can recommend a guide with the unlikely name of Adlof (!Innocent (00256754876416) who does a 3 hour boat trip for \$100 between 4. He has a young assistant called Bwambale (00256700223646) who is one of the very best guides we have met. Another option is Fazil Safari (00256706248799) who does a two hour boat trip at \$25 each from the same place. After you finish there is a place you can get fish and chips.

One good option for staying in Queen Elizabeth Park is **Bush Lodge**, just the other side of the channel. No park fee as it is outside the park. There are double cabins, but also the very comfortable low budget option of tents at about \$35 . The staff are particularly welcoming to Kagando people. It's a great place to experience game – at night you normally have hippos wandering around the bandas, as well as Hyena and a friendly elephant called John. Don't worry - it feels safe! Highly recommended.

You can also do game drives or chimp tracking. Recent costs for a day's drive round QE seem to be about \$100 (US) for the drive there, \$40 per person for park entry, \$20 for the driver, and a guide who is about 20,000 UGX (about £5). Obviously the best way is to split the costs for transport etc between a few of you.



Lake Bunyoni – a very beautiful lake near Kabale. You can pay 650,000 UGX (about £140) for the drive there with one of the drivers (see list below).

Crater Lakes and Kibale Forest near Fort Portal – home to monkeys, chimps and great birds

Rwenzori mountains – trekking, and mountaineering accessible from the trekking centre (RTS) near Kilembe.

Gorilla trekking – Bwindi, about 5 hours from Kagando. Permits are needed in advance for this activity, and we would recommend going with a reputable company. Although gorilla trekking is offered by some companies in Congo, this is highly unsafe and a guide recently died trying to protect two students who decided to take this option.



ACCOMMODATION AND LIFESTYLE

Accommodation – Rev Nason Mugisa will organise this for you. Depending on the pressure on housing needs at the time you may stay at Clay House along with interns, where rooms and washing facilities are shared, or in the Guest house where they are ensuite. Staff will be happy to do laundry at a small charge per item. Tap water should be boiled before being drinking. You might not have hot water for showers depending on where you are. Power supply may be variable and recently there have been a lot of power cuts. Take insect repellent.

Dress – You are expected to wear fairly smart clothes in the hospital. Ironing can be paid for at the guest house. For women, knee or below knee dresses/skirts; shoulders, midribs and thighs should be covered and tight trousers/leggings should be avoided. Away from the wards, loose trousers and knee length shorts are acceptable. Men may wear shorts during leisure times but long trousers should be worn while working. Please wear closed toed shoes on the wards rather than flip flops – this is also sensible in case you get any spills on your feet.

Entertainment – There is usually football or volleyball on the sports field in the afternoon and you are welcome to join the staff and students. There are also choirs which you could join in and plenty of opportunities for interacting with groups of children.

General Information - Kagando is a Christian institution, and in sympathy with this, in the context of local custom and culture, it is not permitted to smoke, drink alcohol, use illicit drugs or engage in sexual relations between unmarried couples. Failure to abide by these guidelines can lead to the people involved being asked to leave Kagando. We ask that you respect the Christian values of the hospital. Remember that expatriates are guests in this African culture and it is important not to cause offence.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Phone – Ideally, take an unlocked mobile with you to Uganda. When you pick up your bags in Entebbe airport you will find several mobile phone kiosks in the baggage reclaim area. You will need your passport to get a local SIM card and you can then choose to use the new or your old number for WhatsApp calls. Local SIM cards (MTN probably best) are readily available and cheap. There is no reliable Hospital WIFI but the mobile network is good and you can use this to hotspot to your laptop. It's very easy and cheap to top up data and airtime at a kiosk near the hospital gate.

Another option is to get a dongle or mobile WIFI – you can buy in the UK and put a Ugandan SIM card in. You can buy them in Kampala but it takes a long time to find somewhere to get them.

Electrics - They use the same plugs (type G) as in the UK. Ideally bring a surge protector for laptops. A battery pack is useful.

Money – The airport is a good place to withdraw cash. You will see ATMs as you exit the customs area before you leave the airport. £200 will get you approximately 1,000,000 Ugandan shillings and its worth getting 1-2 million UGX on arrival in the airport. There is no ATM in Kagando, and the closest is a 40-minute drive away in Kasese. Bank cards are fine at most park lodges but not at shops near Kagando.

It is worth keeping US \$100 with a photocopy of your passport for emergency use and another \$200 as this is useful for national parks visits.

When you are travelling to and from Kampala, or if you go on a trip to Bunyoni for instance, there are ATMs the driver can take you to if you find you are running out of cash.

Asking for money is much more acceptable in Uganda than in the West. Whilst at Kagando it is likely you will be asked for money. Do not feel under pressure to give handouts. It is wise to seek advice from a reliable member of staff before you commit to making gifts to individuals or organisations. Money given through Friends of Kagando has the added benefit of attracting Gift Aid if you are a UK taxpayer.

Security – Being out after dark, or travelling by any mode of transport at night is relatively high risk. You are advised to be accompanied by a member of staff during any trip into the community until you are familiar with the environment, and it is advisable that you ask the administration staff to help when hiring private vehicles. If you are going away for more than one day, please let a member of the administration team know beforehand what your plans are. We would strongly advise against travelling during hours of darkness.

The **Local language** spoken here is called Lhukonzo and staff will be really happy to teach you a few words – it makes interaction with the patients and locals much more fun.

What to bring

Head torch, insect repellent, suncream, first aid kit and a stethoscope.

Stethoscopes, BP machines, thermometers, oximeters, up to date BNF, disposable gloves, and quick reference books are all good things to bring and leave on the ward if you want to do so.

Other useful things to consider – decommissioned phones or laptops are highly valued and better used second hand in Kagando than thrown away at home.

Please do not bring drugs for hospital use – supplies are pretty good and out of date drugs are destroyed so bring only your personal prescription drugs.

COSTS

The cost for the elective will be £85 a week which will include teaching, accommodation and food as well as a one-off payment of £100 to pay into the compassionate fund for patients. Please pay this all one month before your trip.

This cost will be reviewed from time to time so if it is a long time before you go it is possible it could be increased .

Please pay by BACS, account number 70126942, sort code 401165. Write your name in the transfer details. If you're from outside the UK please add £6 to cover the transfer fees – you may need these codes.

IBAN - GB74HBUK40116570126942

SWIFT code - HBUKGB4194V

The account is called "Friends of Kagando" (the UK charity that supports Kagando)

HSBC Bank plc

40 South Road

Haywards Heath

West Sussex, UK

RH16 4LA

For more information about how to pay this please contact Anna Kingdom at accounts@friendsofkagando.co.uk. She is the Treasurer for Friends of Kagando. If you are a UK taxpayer then this can be gift aided and Anna can advise you how to do this.

TRAVEL

Most people find a hotel in Entebbe near the airport which is a short taxi ride. The best way to get to and from Kagando is probably to pay for a taxi both ways – you can be picked up direct from the hotel near the airport (most people stay in Entebbe) to the hospital and dropped back at the hotel. Some people have used buses in the past and although we are not aware of any problems with our visitors there was a recent accident on a LINK bus with about 20 people killed, so we advise you now not to use that particular company and to seek advice before taking any other bus. The cost would obviously be much less than a taxi perhaps about UGX 50,000.

Reliable Taxi Drivers based in Kagando - Sabuni Mobile +256 772 657343
Entebbe to Kagando takes about 8 hours, and costs around UGX 700,000 - 800,000 (£150 – 170) per taxi – clearly this could be shared if there is more than one passenger.

It is also possible to fly from Kampala to Kasese via Aerolink – they do two flights a day between EBB and Kasese, currently costing US\$283 single and \$472 return.

VISA APPLICATION

At the moment you can only get these online. A 3-month **visitor's visa** is appropriate for most students. You do NOT need a work visa for short visits

HEALTH, VACCINATIONS AND INSURANCE

Kagando is in an area where Malaria, HIV, Typhoid, Tetanus and Hepatitis are common. Rabies is also seen from time to time. It is important to protect yourself adequately.

It is very important that you look at the official UK government health advice as this will update you on recent outbreaks <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/uganda>

Vaccinations – ensure you attend a travel or GP clinic and receive the relevant travel immunisations before you come. It is also worth looking at the following links: https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/country/231/uganda#Vaccine_recommendations (this gives general advice about which vaccines are needed in which country), and the following link gives more detailed advice about specific infectious diseases <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immunisation-against-infectious-disease-the-green-book>

Particular points to note:

- **Yellow fever** vaccination is compulsory - **you will need to show the certificate at the airport.**
- **Covid vaccination** – you currently need to show proof of vaccination to board a flight to Uganda, but this may change
- Tetanus boosters are needed if your last dose was more than 10 years ago.
- Polio boosters are advised if you have not had a dose in the last 10 years
- Typhoid – boosters are needed every 3 years.
- Rabies booster – consider a booster if you have received your primary course over a year ago.
- You will also need Hep A, B and Men ACWY

Antimalarials - It is very important that you are taking antimalarials.

PEP (Post Exposure Prophylaxis for HIV) - You can get this easily in the hospital and the drug combination they use is Acriptega (TDF, FTC and Lamivudine). No need to bring it with you unless your University Health Department provides it, in which case accept as it is very hard to source it otherwise in the UK.

You will need **Travel insurance** and check that the University will cover Medical Indemnity. Keep a paper copy of your passport and a copy on your email.

RESEARCH / AUDITS

Let us know if you would like to do some research, an audit or what your interests are and what you hope to be involved in during your time at Kagando. Don't feel obliged to do research though – sometimes you can learn a lot by being on the wards and seeing a wide variety of conditions rather than reading and studying too much!

ACCOUNTABILITY WHILE AT KAGANDO

- 1) We all visit as guests of the hospital management. Any visit must be agreed and sanctioned by the Executive Director of Kagando hospital, Canon Uzziah.
- 2) Advice can be given about travel, accommodation, work and activities whilst visiting Uganda, but **visitors must take full responsibility for their own choices and decisions on these matters**. We strongly advise consulting Foreign Office guidelines for the most up to date information and advice about travelling to and within Uganda because conditions can sometimes change in a way we cannot predict.
- 3) We would encourage you all to read our Purpose, Mission and Vision statement on the Friends of Kagando website (www.friendsofkagando.org.uk) to help you understand our vision for the work there.
4. If you are given donations to fund equipment or other projects, please direct this through Friends of Kagando. This ensures secure and traceable transfer of funds,. Contact Anna Kingdom (Friends of Kagando) at accounts@friendsofkagando.co.uk

PREPARATION FOR KAGANDO

If you decide you want to visit Kagando we would be delighted to hear from you.

- 1) Please send an email request with Curriculum Vitae, official recommendation from your university including a certificate of good standing and details of your next of kin to me (doktaoli@gmail.com) with a copy to Canon Uzziah (ukiriaghe20@gmail.com).
- 2) One month before you come, please send the money outlined above to the Friends of Kagando, and send an email to Rev Nason Mugisa (mugisanason@gmail.com) about accommodation.
- 3) One week before you come, please send an email to Canon Uzziah, Dr Baluku (asanairib@gmail.com) and Rev Nason to remind them you will soon be there. current visitors which can be a good source of information.
- 4) If you have any questions contact me by email or WhatsApp. There is also a WhatsApp group of past and present visitors.

Finally, you will find Kagando is a very special place.

The warm welcome you will receive is from the heart and wherever you go – on the wards and in the local area - people will be very happy to see you. They really value the effort you are showing to come and visit them.

Allow yourself to be inspired and perhaps it will be the start of a journey.



Drs Oliver and Rachel Penney August 2023