

CCU Volunteer Guide

Welcome to Children Care Uganda (CCU)!

We're delighted that you've expressed interest in volunteering with us and becoming part of our mission to make a positive impact on the lives of children, youths and communities in Uganda. As you prepare for your possible volunteering experience, we want to provide you with some essential guidelines to ensure a smooth and meaningful journey.



Period of Volunteering:

We ask volunteers to commit to a minimum of 2 months as your volunteering period. This gives you enough time to adjust to the new environment, learn about CCU, and make a lasting impact.

Shorter visits can be arranged for project visitors; please contact us to discuss further.

Cultural Differences & Diversity:

- At CCU, one of our core values is sustainable volunteering. This means we always strive to have a positive, lasting impact on the communities we work with, as well as the staff and volunteers in our team.
- We encourage you to meet others at eye-level and show respect for all people, different opinions, and new ways of living. Try to approach interactions with openness, listen attentively, and be mindful of cultural sensitivities.
- The Acholi culture is welcoming and rich. Take your time exploring it while you are in-country and research it before coming. For example, as a sign of respect in the office, please adhere to the dress code by wearing long trousers, dresses or skirts. Be ready to get inspired and learn new ways of living, working, and thinking!

Language:

In our team, everyone speaks English, so it is key that volunteers have working knowledge of both verbal and written English.

The local language is called "Acholi". Taking time to learn typical, basic greetings in the Acholi language will enhance your cultural immersion and ability to engage with the community.

Useful resources:

- @learnacholi - Instagram account
- "LEARN ACHOLI IN A MINUTE WITH EUNICE AWARO" - YouTube
- <https://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/acholi.htm> - pdf
- We can connect you to Acholi teachers when on site



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Supervision & Mentorship:

- You will report to a supervisor within the management team and receive guidance from a mentor within your department.
- Before you start volunteering, we will discuss your role and tasks within the organization.
- Every two weeks, we will reflect on how the role is going for you and discuss any adjustments that need to be made.
- Your mentor will also spend an afternoon with you exploring Gulu town and showing you key sites.
- Please always feel free to reach out to your mentor, supervisor or any other team members if you need guidance on culture, prices, transportation, or any other issues.

Work with Community and office related work:

- Depending on your qualifications and interests, your role will be more field- or office-based. We will discuss this during your application process.
- Be aware of the temporary nature of volunteering. Learn strategies for building sustainable relationships with beneficiaries, and feel free to provide CCU with constructive feedback on program activities to enhance our impact.
- Alongside your role in the community, you will also have tasks in the office, like proposal writing, preparations for activities, team meetings and others.
- We will take time to show you our ways of working but we also look forward to learning from you as well!

Child Protection and Photography:

- We will take you through our Child Protection and Data Protection policies in your first week of volunteering. This is key before you start working with the project participants or the community.
- Always adhere to the policies and guidelines regarding child protection and when taking photos and videos, respecting privacy at all times.

Expectations:

- We will set your roles and responsibilities in a placement letter after the interview process.
- Please feel free to provide feedback in the reflection meetings and at any time. Let us know how you are doing and how we can support. We will do the same.
- If you are volunteering through a university program, please provide us with the requirements, evaluation forms, and other necessary documents beforehand.

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Stay & Costs While in Gulu:

Explore affordable accommodation options, such as:

- Palm Garden (10 EUR / 40k UGX per night)
- Laroo Villas (71 EUR / 294k UGX per night). This is a two bedroomed apartment with a master bedroom and well furnished.
- Lovana Apartments and Hotel (29 EUR / 120k UGX Per night). One bedroom, furnished and a 50% discount for someone staying for a month or longer. Can accommodate two people so the cost can be shared.
- Ditch Comfort (21 EUR / 87k per night) Can accommodate two people so the cost can be shared.
- You can find more options on AirBnB or Booking.com

If it is proving difficult to arrange accommodation before arriving in Gulu, volunteers can stay with the CCU founders for the first 2-4 weeks, to get settled while looking for a place to stay. The fee is 5 Euros per night. Please feel free to reach out in case you need help finding accommodation.

Please note that accommodation costs, daily commute expenses, and personal travel are not covered by CCU.

Travel Preparations:

Obtaining your visa:

- All CCU volunteers must apply for a Volunteer Visa. This is a single-entry visa and can be granted for up to 6 months. If you are planning a longer stay, your visa can be extended once in-country.
- Visas must be obtained before travelling, and are only available online via the official website: <https://visas.immigration.go.ug/>. Once you have your visa, ensure you print it out and bring it with you.
- The cost is 50 USD - this is not covered by CCU.
- To obtain a visa, you must already have the following documents:
 1. Return flights (Return flights to Uganda from Europe are between 500-900 EUR, depending on the season. Book far in advance to secure cheaper tickets.)
 2. Mandatory yellow fever vaccination certificate (Inform yourself about other recommended travel vaccinations and get them prior the travel.)
 3. An in-country address (you can use the one of CCU)

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Getting from the airport to Gulu:

- By bus:
 - The cheapest travel option from Kampala to Gulu is by bus, costing around 10 EUR (30-40k UGX)[RJ1] .
 - Buses leave from Namayiba Bus Park in Kampala and the journey takes about 6-7 hours. We recommend the Larem bus company, which leaves at 11am and 3:30pm every day.
 - Tickets can be bought on the day from the bus park.
 - We can also help with organizing a driver from Entebbe Airport to the bus park. This journey takes about one hour and costs around 30 EUR (120k UGX, prices may vary).
- By car:
 - Another option is to hire a private driver from Entebbe Airport directly to Gulu.
 - This journey also takes 6-7 hours, and costs around 200 EUR (800k UGX).
 - We can give you the contact of a driver and help you arranging your travel up to Gulu.

Expenses to consider:

- The currency in Uganda is shillings (UGX). You can check current exchange rates for Euros online to get an idea of expenses.
- While some places in Uganda take card payments, most transactions (especially in Gulu) require cash. It is worth bringing some Euros (or US Dollars are better) in cash to exchange into UGX, or plan to make an ATM withdrawal, once you arrive. We recommend doing this at Entebbe Airport to begin with, but there are many banks and ATMs in Gulu.
- You can get you Ugandan SIM-Card at the airport or at the "Victoria Mall" in Entebbe. We recommend the provider MTN, as it is the most common used one in the North. You can get a Sim Card and basic package with Internet and free Minutes for 10k UGX (around 2,50 Euros). We recommend loading 20k UGX (about 5 Euros) Airtime, so that you can load more minutes and internet any time.
- Plan your daily commute as transportation to and from work (within Gulu Boda costs between 2 and 4k UGX (50Ct - 1 Euro) and accommodation is not organized by CCU.
- While you are volunteering with CCU, we will provide breakfast and lunch at the office. CCU will not cover any other expenses.
- It is essential to arrange your own standard travel insurance coverage for the duration of your stay.



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Exploring Uganda:

While in-country, we encourage volunteers to take the opportunity to explore the beauty and diversity of Uganda. From national parks to cultural landmarks, there's plenty to discover during your stay!

Things to do in and around Gulu:

- Explore Gulu Main Market
- Visit Aruu Falls (hiking and swimming)
- Visit Fort Patiko (historical place + hiking)
- Visit Murchison Falls National Park (safari)
- Relax at the pool at Bomah hotel or Golden Peace hotel
- Nightlife and restaurants in Gulu (we can give you recommendations when in-country)
- Coffee tour with <https://ribbocoffee.com/>
- Bike and walking tours + cultural experiences

Other great places to visit in Uganda:

- Ghaddafi Mosque, Kampala
- National Museum, Kampala
- Source of the Nile, Jinja
- Water rafting, boat tours, bungee jumping, etc. in Jinja
- Lake Bunyonyi, Kabale
- Other national parks (Kidepo, Queen Elizabeth)
- Rwenzori Mountain Trekking / Seeing the Gorillas
- Sipi Falls, Mbale

We can connect you to local travel companies, such as:

- <https://www.loremitours.com/>
- <https://lettucetoursandtravel.com/>

We're excited to welcome you to the CCU family and look forward to embarking on this journey together. Your dedication and contributions will make a real difference in the lives of those we serve. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Thank you for choosing to volunteer with CCU!

Warm regards,

Children Care Uganda