



# **TEACH**

## **A MAN TO FISH**

*Education that pays for itself*

# **UGANDA**

# **ST DENIS MAKONDO**



# **VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**

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## **1. The Self-Sufficiency School Project.**

St Denis is a private academic secondary school for students aged around 12-16. There are around 180 students split between 4 class groups, giving between 30 and 50 in each class. Around half of the students are borders and almost all of them come from families relying on agricultural subsistence. At this stage, most of the students do not continue to further education after finishing at St Denis, and those that do rely on sponsorship.

The self-sufficiency project has been running for around 1 ½ years of it's 5 year implementation period and St Denis currently has 5 businesses in the form of

- A banana plantation
- A dairy
- A school shop
- An Internet business
- A posho mill

The aim of the project is to generate income for the school in order to reduce its dependency on funding from the USA and also to teach the students about running businesses. Practical business experience provides the students with a relevant and useful education they can put into practice at the end of secondary school, giving student's realistic ambitions and opportunities without relying on sponsorship for further study.

To see the latest project updates, look at the field officer blog:  
<http://teachamantofish.org.uk/drupal/tamtf-blogs/uganda>

## **2. Volunteer opportunities.**

St Denis is a well-established secondary school with qualified and dedicated teaching staff. As a volunteer you should focus on learning about and interacting with the community here, as much as passing on any skills or knowledge which might be useful. Just being here and talking to the students and teachers about your country and customs is an extremely valuable experience for both parties in term of cultural exchanges and understanding.

### **Computer Training**

Both students and staff are extremely keen to improve their IT skills, particularly regarding email and Internet, and Word and Excel. Some have used computers a bit, some not at all, and due to Uganda's continued development, computer skills are increasingly being seen as a vital skill for employability. There is a well-equipped computer lab at the school, so private or small group lessons would be possible.

### ***Sports***

The Ministry of Education dictates that schools must have 2 double periods of sport per week. The whole school takes these at the same time, so not all the students have the chance to be involved as much as they would like. Usually it is only football that is played, and usually only the older boys play. If you are interested in football or other types of sport, then the less serious players and the excluded girls could benefit from some more personal training. You would need to bring the sports equipment with you, although they do have footballs.

### ***Farming***

The school has several agricultural projects, including a banana plantation, small vegetable gardens and a dairy. There is always need for extra pairs of hands in maintaining the projects and this is a valuable opportunity to learn about Ugandan farming. Nearly all the families in the area rely on farming for their sustenance and income, so this experience will be valuable in learning about the community.

### ***Workshops***

If you have a particular interest or are trained in a particular specialty, then you can liaise with Teach A Man To Fish about the possibility of offering workshops to students, teachers, or parents. This might include knowledge of organic farming, solar or water technologies, micro enterprise/finance, nutrition, or health.

### ***Entrepreneurship Club***

A new experiment initiated by TAMTF at St Denis, you might consider getting involved with either teaching/facilitating the club or assisting students with activities related to the club such as marketing, finance planning or business plan writing.

### ***Teaching***

Volunteers have taught before at St Denis and depending on your experience and interests, it would be possible for you to assist or cover particular teachers.

## ***3. Accommodation options.***

### ***St. John the Baptist Parish House:***

This is currently where the Project Officer stays and is basic but comfortable. You would have your own bedroom (or perhaps shared if coming with another volunteer) with lock and all 3 meals at the Parish. Currently there are 2 priests, Fr. Leonard Ssetaba (Father in Charge of Schools) and Fr. Pascal Kavuma (Parish Priest), 2 cooks, secretary, grounds person, and the Project Officer staying at the parish. We generally share all meals together, and have a good time. Currently the parish is facing a water shortage due to the failure of its water catchment system, so facilities are a bit basic. We do have electricity, though are subject to the power outages that sometimes frequent the village. Bring a good torch or rechargeable lantern! There is a western style toilet and cold shower.

### ***Medical Missionaries of Mary Guest House:***

The MMM sisters have a few rooms they let out for travelers. This is perhaps the most comfortable of all the accommodation options. MMM is located just down a short hill from the Parish and down the road from St. Denis. MMM has solar power and a solar hot water system, so power, indoor plumbing, and hot water for showers are guaranteed. The rooms are 2 bedrooms, self-contained and breakfast is included. If you'd like, they also have 2 apartments completed with kitchen, though it may be difficult to cook (the closest grocery stores are in Masaka, and the village shops are very limited) during your time here.

### ***Lugave Guest House:***

Lugave Guest House is further down the hill from MMM and is a local guesthouse. Rooms are basic and meals can be arranged at additional cost.

### ***Home stay:***

If given enough advance notice, we can probably arrange a home stay for all or part of your visit to St. Denis, either with the headmaster, or possibly a student's family. Facilities would vary depending on the home stay, but would be the best option if you were interested in experiencing daily rural Ugandan life.

## ***4. The Costs Involved.***

Please note that due to the fluctuation of prices and exchange rates, the figures below are estimates and the volunteer co-ordinator should be contacted before departure to confirm costs.

### ***Volunteer Fees:***

- Up to One Month: £100 per week
- Up to Three Months: £350 per month
- Three Months or More: £300 per month

### ***Included in Volunteer Fees:***

- Accommodation
- Food Costs
- Project induction and supervision
- Donation to the school
- Programme Administration Fee

### ***Not Included in Volunteer Fees:***

- Flights
- Visa
- Transfers to St Denis (please see the next section for guidance)
- Spending Money
- Independent Travel

- Activities additional to the programme

### **5. Transport and getting here.**

Flight options from the UK include amongst others: British Airways, Kenyan Airways and KLM. BA flies direct, Kenyan Airways has a stopover in Nairobi and KLM has a stopover in Amsterdam. Just be sure to check that your stopover isn't too long, 6 hours in Nairobi airport feels like it could be better spent elsewhere (!)

When you first arrive in Uganda, I recommend booking a private hire taxi to take you directly from the airport to your accommodation in Makondo. The current cost of this is about 250,000 UGX (£75) since the journey is 3-4 hours. The best way of organizing this is to contact the Teach A Man To Fish Project Officer in Uganda, who will send a driver from the village to pick you up. (This way the driver knows the local village area and won't get lost.)

Another option is to take public transport, which will take much longer and cost a lot less (Around 40,000 UGX in total.). This involves taking a private taxi to the taxi park in Entebbe, a shared matatu from Entebbe to Kampala, another shared matatu from Kampala to Masaka, and then a shared taxi to Makondo. You could combine these two options and get a private taxi all the way to Kampala Taxi Park and then a matatu to Masaka. The Project Officer will meet you in Masaka if you take public transport.

### **6. Trip preparation.**

#### **Visa**

There is no need to organize a visa before you arrive since most people purchase theirs on arrival at Entebbe airport. The cost is US\$50, which you should bring with you in cash. If you forget, it is possible to use the cash point at the airport and pay in shillings.

#### **Vaccinations**

There are several recommended vaccinations for South Western Uganda, and you should consult a travel health clinic before coming to ensure you are protected. Your local doctor surgery can also advise you on these and direct you to the nearest travel clinic for any vaccinations they cannot provide. One to note is the yellow fever vaccination – you may be asked to present a certificate proving that you have had it upon arrival at the airport.

#### **Anti-Malarials**

There are several anti-malarial options so we recommend speaking to a travel doctor or nurse for the best option. Doxycyclin is very cheap and just as effective as other

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medications, and as an antibiotic can help protect against other minor infections as well. For female volunteers, if you're on doxy, stock up on medication against yeast infections (common side effect of most antibiotics). Doxycyclin can have side effects such as making you more sun sensitive and causing nausea if not taken with a full stomach Malorone and Larium are both effective but much more expensive. Also if you have a family or personal history of anxiety, it's best to avoid Larium.

### ***What to bring:***

You can get almost everything in Uganda, although some things are harder to find and it is better to bring them to save yourself trouble when here. For information on clothing see the local culture information further down.

### *Toiletries and Medication:*

- Malaria medication
- Mosquito net & Insect repellent (although most places will provide nets)
- Hand sanitizer.
- Sun cream
- Basic First Aid Kit
- Regular Medications
- Imodium and rehydration salts.
- Paracetamol and ibuprofen (always handy).
- Antihistamine cream (to stop mosquito bites itching).
- Yeast infection cream (if on doxycyclin).
- Hairbrush (afro combs are more common here).
- Conditioner and Shampoo (Afro hair products are not kind to Western hair!)

### *Clothing*

- Hat or umbrella and sunglasses.
- Socks (for stopping mosquitoes)
- Comfortable leisure shoes.
- Sandals/smarter shoes.
- Walking shoes.
- Flip-flops.
- Clothing for work. Light, casual and presentable is best.
- Skirts and trousers
- Shirts and t shirts
- A jacket or jumper – it can get chilly in the evenings
- Lots of underwear if you don't want to hand wash too often!
- Waterproof jacket, umbrella, and/or rain boots – if you come during the rainy season (September – November), Makondo is all about mud!

### *Other:*

- Camera
- Torch
- Relevant plug adaptors (Uganda has UK plug sockets)
- A small backpack for day to day use

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- Copies of important documents – passport, insurance documents, evidence of visas, flight tickets, placement description and this handbook
- Financial information - credit and debit cards and internet banking information
- Photos of your friends, family, hometown, school, and country – for you and also for showing to people in Makondo.
- Playing cards/books/DVDs etc to keep you amused during quiet times
- Note pad and pens.
- Memory stick.
- If you are bringing a laptop, it is perhaps best to bring a surge breaker. (If you are coming for over 1 month, I would recommend bringing a laptop since they are good for writing emails, listening to music and watching films.)
- Perhaps some small gifts for the people you are staying with such as biscuits, chocolate, stationary, jam or sweets. This is not essential but can act as a nice gesture.

### **7. Places of interest.**

#### ***Michunda/Makondo.***

Makondo is a small village about one hour away from Masaka town, Uganda's 5<sup>th</sup> largest city. The project is situated not in the actual Makondo village, but about 2km away, on top of a little hill in an area called Michunda. In the area closest to St. Denis there is St. Agatha's Primary School, St. Kizito's Nursery School and feeding program (also known as Shanahan Hall), and the Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM) compound which hosts a clinic. MMM is run by a group of 5 nuns (2 Irish, 1 Ugandan, 1 Brazilian and 1 Nigerian) and a team of local staff. They run about 20 different programs in the area, including the nursery school and feeding program, community-based health care, pastoral work in local prisons, and support to women and children with HIV. I have never felt threatened walking around alone during daytime. Although we are not aware of anything unpleasant having happened at night, it is best not to walk around alone, just to be on the safe side.

St. Denis is located a little further down the hill about ten minutes walk away. You can either chose to take a shortcut through the primary school or the quieter option is to walk down the main road past the village shop.

The shop (referred to 'Mikes shop' – Mike is the owner) is open at irregular times depending when the owner is around. There you can buy water, sodas, airtime and various other small things.

Life is rather inexpensive in Makondo Parish – the most you'd spend money on are snacks, airtime, and water/drinks.

- 1 liter bottled water – UGX 1,000
  - 500ml bottled water – UGX 500

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- 300ml soda (Pepsi, Coke, Fanta, etc) – UGX 800
- Chapatti - UGX 100
- Banana Pancakes – small 4 for UGX 100; large 2 for UGX 100
- Rolex (a chapatti with an omelet and vegetables rolled up inside) – UGX 700
- Mandazi (doughnuts) – UGX 100
- Fruit (bananas, pineapple, papaya, watermelon, etc) – UGX 200-1500

### ***Kamucama***

The nearest village, interestingly enough, is not Makondo village but Kyamucama (1km away). As it is quite hilly the walk can be really exhausting especially in the heat so its better to go in the morning or to invest in a 'Boda Boda' (Motorbike taxi) – from the school to Kyamucama it should be no more than 1000 Shillings. Be warned, the boda boda drivers are notorious for ripping off foreigners and would rather loose the fare than give you the correct price. There is a shortcut you can take to avoid the massive hill, ask someone from the school to show you. There is also a little bar, several private primary schools, and a few small shops but not much else of interest.

### ***Kiwangala***

The next village of interest is Kiwangala, which is the nearest trading centre (about 4km away). This is where you can get taxis to Masaka from and you have a slightly wider selection of goods. Kiwangala is also the base of a group of volunteers who teach at the secondary school there (Sure House). As for other volunteers in the area, near Makondo village (the actual village) is Kiyumbakimu – a village for orphans where another group of volunteers currently works.

### ***Masaka***

Masaka is the largest city outside of Makondo and best place to pick up snacks (biscuits, fruit, etc) and toiletries outside of the village. There are several grocery stores near the taxi park, a decent Internet cafe, and several inexpensive cafes serving a mixture of Ugandan and “city” food (chicken and chips, matoke – mashed plantains, groundnut sauce, rice, peas, etc). Meals in these cafes generally are between UGX 2,000-8000 including drink.

There are also 2 cafes in Masaka run by international NGOs whose profits go towards supporting their projects.

Ten Tables is located right near the taxi stand and serves a regular 3 or 4 course dinner at UGX 20,000. They also serve food ala Carte and have a nice balcony to watch the sunset and have a drink.

Uganda Child Care/Cafe Frikadelen is a bit harder to find, though most *boda boda* drivers know it. It is located behind the Tropic Inn. This cafe offers a range of mostly Western food (sandwiches, soup, pizza, hamburgers, chips, burritos, desserts, coffee, etc) and caters mostly to the long-term expat volunteers and aid workers in the area. It also has free wireless Internet and the fastest Internet service around, so it is a nice place to get a drink and work if you have your own computer. Meals ranges from UGX 4,000-UGX 12,000 not including drinks.

If you have extra time or are looking for something to do on the weekend, you can also swim at the pool in the Tropic Inn Hotel, UGX 5,000. The pool is usually crowded on weekends with other aid workers, Ugandan families, and volunteers, but a nice treat to escape the heat.

### **8. Local information and culture.**

#### **Food**

Food in Uganda is varied and often unique to the area. In Kampala, you can get just about any type of cuisine you can think of. There are particularly good Indian (including Indian bakeries) and a few good Chinese restaurants in Kampala. Typical East African cuisine (with variations available in Tanzania, Kenya, and Rwanda) include: chapatti (pan-fried flat bread), mandazi (doughnuts), halfcaki (denser cakelike doughnut), sukuma wiki (kale or other type of greens), ugali/posho (stiff cornmeal cake), rice and beans, and roasted meat.

Makondo is located in the heart of the Buganda Kingdom and that means *matoke*! Matoke – or mashed savory banana – is the staple food here in the St. Denis area. Though it can take some getting used to, it is not bad. Food here in general is quite bland, so if you're used to spicy food, bring along some chili sauce! Generally a meal consists of “food” and “sauce”. Food is defined as matoke, posho, rice, spaghetti, cassava, sweet potato, Irish potato, etc – your basic starch. Sauce is generally anything that you would eat with food – often this includes groundnut sauce, fish, pork, beans, peas, greens (most often pumpkin leaves or spinach), cabbage, eggplants, etc. There is generally little variation in the foods for lunch or dinner.

Breakfast is generally bread (or toast), tea/coffee, corn or millet porridge, eggs, or some type of dish, often unmashed matoke with tomatoes and seasoning. Fruit availability varies in the village depending on the season, though we get very good pineapple, bananas, papaya, mangoes, and jack fruit.

Vegetarians should manage fine since meat is not eaten at every meal and whoever is cooking for you could easily prepare an extra vegetable based sauce to go with the starched foods. Vegans should also be OK since the main dairy products consumed are milk and eggs and these are usually reserved for breakfast, where hot water and porridge is also usually available. Please ensure that you inform your food provider upon arrival of what you do and do not eat.

Unless you're staying with a Muslim or perhaps an evangelical family, you are able to drink in the village. You can get a variety of Ugandan and import beers (the priests love Guinness!) and inexpensive spirits in Makondo, and some decent wine in Masaka town.

#### **Culture**

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The tribal area is called 'Buganda' and it also covers Kampala. The people are called 'Baganda', the culture is 'Kiganda' and the language is 'Luganda'. The Baganda are extremely proud of their culture and heritage and are upset by Museveni's attempt to reduce the power and influence of their king.

The most important aspect of African culture to grasp for visitors is that of greeting passers by and acquaintances. All meetings begin with asking how each other are and thanking each other for the days work. If you are getting rude stares or grumpy looks, a simple greeting in luganda or a hand wave will usually result in people breaking into a smile and warmly greeting and welcoming you.

It is important not to get frustrated by confusing or annoying situations since they are mostly outside of your control and cultural understanding and will only result in your own anger and alienation.

### **Dress**

Ugandans tend to take a lot of pride in their appearance with men sticking to long trousers and usually shirts and jackets and women almost always wearing pretty long skirts (below the knee) with sophisticated hairstyles and decorative sandals. It is important to take note of your dress when working in a rural African village, particularly when working in a school setting, – teachers dress well to teach.

Women – pack a few looser skirts that at least hit the knee if not cover. You can also buy local material in Masaka and have skirts made very inexpensively in Makondo (though it helps to bring a sample skirt you'd like them to follow). T-shirts are fine, as are sleeveless tops for leisure, though it is best not to wear anything too low cut or revealing. While it may go against a lot of what you believe in, revealing dress does invite more unwanted attention. Shorts or capris are fine in town or while playing sports.

Men – please pack a few pairs of nice khaki or smart trousers if you will be working or teaching at St. Denis. If you are teaching, it is also best to bring a polo or collared shirt as well. Casual pants and longer shorts are ok, as are t-shirts for other work.

Shoes – as the terrain in the village is quite hilly, it is perhaps best to bring a pair of walking sandals or hiking boots. Flip flops are generally worn only in the house and for the shower, it is not appropriate to teach or come to work at St. Denis only in flip flops (although smart flip flops or beaded ones are fine).

### **Transport**

Most locals use *boda-bodas* (motorcycle taxis) or shared taxi's to get around in Uganda. Be careful on *boda-bodas* (unlike Rwanda, Ugandan drivers are not required to have a helmet for the passenger) and always always fix the price before you get on. If you're unsure about the price, it is best to ask a Ugandan (perhaps someone working at the hotel or in a shop) how much it should be to get to your destination. Shared taxi's are a good way to meet people, especially as there tend to be anywhere between 6 and 13 of you in one. They are uncomfortable and dirty but

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cheap and fun. You can hire private taxis but you just end up paying the fares of the people who aren't there. Be sure to fix the price before you get in a special hire.

Most *boda-boda* and taxi drivers will try to charge what is known as *mzungu* price – sometimes as much as 3-5 times the normal price. You should expect this especially from industries that deal mostly with tourists (including boda-boda drivers, taxi drivers, and in the craft markets). You should feel free to bargain and call people out on charging you additional money because you are foreign. While it may feel awkward to argue with a perfect stranger, it is also quite draining (emotionally and on the wallet!) to pay additional money because of your skin color.

### **Money**

The currency is shillings (only available in Uganda) and the exchange rate is currently 3900 UGX = £1 although this tends to fluctuate a fair amount. Everything is very cheap, although as a foreigner expect to be ripped off. Watch out for 'the price is now higher because fuel costs have increased!' People are very open to haggling and an aggressive argument over transport prices can be quickly followed by a friendly and open conversation about something different.

Bottle of water = 500  
Pineapple = 1000  
10 passion fruits = 1000  
Chapatti = 100/200  
1 hour shared taxi = 6000  
10 bananas = 200  
Beer = 2000  
Soda = 800  
1 hour on Internet = 1500  
Local meal = 3000  
Western meal = 8000 – 20,000  
10 minute boda boda drive = 2000  
Phone credit = 1000

You will be able to exchange money easily at the Entebbe Airport and in Kampala. You can also withdraw money from ATMs (including Barclays) throughout Kampala and at the airport.

You should inform your bank that you will be travelling overseas and will be withdrawing money from a foreign ATM. Many banks will put a hold on your account when they spot unusual transactions, so it is always best to inform them ahead of time!

There are several banks and ATMs, including Barclays, available in Masaka town as well. Though you won't need much money in the village (beyond paying for accommodation), it is good to be prepared.

Also note, if you are planning on going on safari, rafting, etc, there is a daily limit that you can withdraw (Usually between UGX 300,000 – 800,000). Please plan accordingly if you need to withdraw money to pay the tour operator – you may need to withdraw money over a period of a few days.

### ***Weather and environment***

The weather is fabulous with a great combination of cool sunny mornings, overcast mild days and very hot ones. It rains quite regularly meaning everything is very green and tropical most of the time. The sun is very hot in the afternoon although it remains pleasant in the shade. Life tends to be slow when it is very hot and also when it rains. The torrential rain causes such havoc on the unmade roads and muddy paths that people can't do a lot.

### ***Life as a 'muzungu' (white person)***

Most of the people I have come into contact with have been extremely welcoming and open with me, often joking around and laughing. You will constantly be referred to as 'Muzungu' and it is up to you how much you let this annoy you (!)

Throughout your time in Uganda, you will be asked for money, sweets, pens, visas, etc from many people and children, both in Kampala and in the village. It is a personal decision whether or not you give money or other gifts to beggars, street children, or the children in the village. However it is important to think critically about the ramifications of that "gift," particularly in relation to the Teach A Man To Fish self-sufficient philosophy. While giving out sweets may seem harmless, it can reinforce the cycle of dependency that is so deeply entrenched in the communities we are working in. Children throughout Makondo regularly call out "Mzungu give me money!" whenever they see a white person – what does this imply about the community? What is the child learning if you indeed give out sweets or money in response? You should feel free to bring this up with adults and older children who may ask you for items or money – it can open up a very interesting discussion for you and the other people involved! If you feel the desire to leave something behind, there is an excellent NGO in the village, which organises sponsorship at St Denis (although there are also debates as to whether child sponsorship is a 'healthy' form of relationship.)

### **Language:**

English is widely spoken in Uganda, and most of the staff at St. Denis have quite good English. The local language in Makondo is Luganda. Swahili is not used in the village and often detested because of its association with the Amin years and, currently, the police and military. Below are some useful phrases in Luganda to get you started:

#### **English**

Hello

#### **Luganda**

Oli Otya?

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How are you?	Oli Otya?
I am good	Bulungi
I am fine	Jen di
How are you? (Many)	Moli Motya?
We are fine	Je toli
Thank You (very much)	Webale (Nyo)
Goodbye	Welaba
I am happy to see you	Insanuse kuku la ba
See you later	Tu la bagane
Where are you going?	O la ga wa?
I am going ....	Ngenda....
What are you doing?	O ko la chi?
How is life?	O gamba chi?
Good Morning	Wasuze otya?
Good Afternoon	O Sibi otya?
Good Night	Sula Bulungi
Gentleman	Ssebo
Lady	Nyabo

### **9. Communication.**

#### **Mobile phones**

It is best to purchase a Ugandan sim card during your first day or two in Uganda. While you may be able to use your mobile here, the roaming charges can be quite high. You can either bring an unlocked phone with you from home, or purchase a cheap one once you are out here. They are readily available in Masaka and Kampala.

There are a number of cellular networks in Uganda, including MTN, Orange, Airtel, Warid, and Uganda Telecom. Most places that sell airtime also sell sim cards; you can also look for a service center of the network provider – these are available in Kampala and Masaka town. MTN has the best network country wide in Uganda, however the signal is patchy in Makondo. Some say Airtel and Warid are usually quite reliable, Orange has mixed results. I tend to stick with MTN but it is the most expensive.

Unlike in the UK or US, virtually all cellular service is prepaid. You can purchase airtime at most small shops and grocery stores in town and in the village. You simply tell them the amount you wish to buy (from UGX 500 on up) and you'll receive a

scratch card. The cards will have instructions on how to reload your phone. How and how often you use your phone will determine how often you'll need to reload. You can text or call overseas from your phone and all incoming calls/text messages are free. Orange has some of the best rates to call overseas with your phone – at roughly UGX 9/second.

### **Internet**

The best (and basically only) place for Internet in Makondo is the St Denis computer business in Kamucama. The cost is currently 1500 UGX for 1 hour. Internet is also available in the school computer room, although finding the key is another matter and being dial up, it is not reliable.

For longer email sessions and Skype/downloading, there are some fast connections in Masaka, the best I've found is Masaka Internet services near Banana Chick or Café Frikadel, the muzungu hangout, although frikadel does not have computers so you need to take a laptop there.

## **10. Health and safety.**

**Uganda** is generally a fairly safe place though it is always best to take precautions. Kampala is far safer than other East African capital cities, however it is best not to be out alone after dark (particularly for women). Be aware of your surroundings in the city, and use your common sense. At the taxi park, be aware of where your wallet and phone are, and it is always best not to flash cash around, even when you're trying to pay for something. It is always best to tuck a few smaller bills or the amount needed for a ticket in an easily accessible place (e.g. front pocket with zipper) than to have to open up your whole bag to look for your wallet.

**The village** is incredibly safe and people will be looking out for your safety and welfare. It will be an embarrassment to the community should anything happen to you, so have no fear!

What you'll largely have to worry about are the risk of malaria, sun exposure, diarrheal disease, and the fact that it gets very dark with few lights (please watch where you're going or carry a torch!).

**Transport** can be more risky than in other countries due to the poor condition of vehicles and roads. I tend to avoid using boda boda's as far as possible in Kampala, especially at night, and always note the drivers level of sobriety before getting on. I don't tend to worry about using boda bodas in the countryside since the roads are poor and most drivers cannot go very fast. 'pola un pola' means 'slowly slowly' if you feel a driver is going too fast. I try to use coaster busses between Masaka and Kampala rather than the smaller matatu's which are more uncomfortable and apparently more dangerous. I also dislike using the big coaches who I feel go too

fast. The safest way to travel is to find a special hire private taxi that has seatbelts, but this of course is the most expensive option.

**Malaria** is a fact of life here in Uganda and in the village; we generally see an increase at certain times during the year (just after the rainy season in particular). It is recommended that you get anti-malarial prophylaxis and carry a mosquito net to sleep under. Anti-malarials are not a 100% guarantee you will not get malaria, but it greatly reduces your risk and the severity of the disease. It is also best to try to keep covered in the early evening when mosquitoes come out (watch your ankles and feet if you wear sandals!). If you start to feel ill within your first week of arriving, it is NOT malaria – malaria has an incubation period of 7-9 days. Most likely you are feeling ill due to unusual foods, jet lag, and a variety of other reasons. If you develop a sudden fever, chills, pounding headache, joint pain, fatigue and malaise, diarrhea and/or vomiting, or any combination, be sure to get to a clinic immediately. Malaria is 100% treatable, and the earlier you receive treatment the better. The MMM clinic has malaria medication available should you get ill in the village at around UGX 3,000.

**Sun Exposure:** Makondo Parish is located only 60 km or so from the equator so the sun is bright and hot! Be sure to bring a hat and plenty of sun cream to protect yourself. A water bottle to keep water in is also recommended for those who tend to dehydrate quickly – Kampala is very humid. Makondo is lucky enough to have a rather temperate climate and pleasant breeze, but the sun can still be very hot!

**Tap water** and water from wells are NOT drinking water, it is important to drink bottled water or boiled water.

**Diarrheal Disease:** While not 100% avoidable, you can take steps to prevent stomach upsets. These include being sure you have safe drinking water not eating fresh vegetables with a peel, and being sure your food is hot when it arrives. Meals taken at the parish are well prepared. Be careful when tempted by street food – remember you're only in Uganda a short time, so who wants to spend it sick?

### **Local health centre:**

MMM runs an outpatients department at their health centre. A doctor calls about once a month or so, and it's a bit hit or miss with the nurses. They do have a lab that is open in the mornings and a very competent lab technician, who can run tests for malaria. They also have a pharmacy where you can buy the drugs at a much cheaper price than in Masaka. Doxycyclin for example only costs 1000UGX for a month's supply! It is probably best to bring a supply of malaria medication along. The sisters also have 2 ambulance vehicles and therefore can take patients to the next hospital in Masaka in emergencies. The private hospital in Masaka is called 'Kitovu' and is about a 10 minutes boda boda ride away from the taxi station in Masaka.

## **11. Contacts**

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