

SALEM-UGANDA

Information on Volunteering

1. SALEM-Uganda

SALEM-Uganda is a health, social welfare and environmental project in the Mbale District of rural East Uganda. It was established in 1981 by Gottfried Müller, founder of SALEM. The area is densely populated with very high levels of poverty. The SALEM village is situated close to Mount Elgon, the fourth highest mountain in Africa which offers beautiful views from SALEM.

2. Activities at SALEM

SALEM serves the local population through the provision of health and social welfare activities. There is a health centre with 69 beds and there are community health services. At any one time there are up to 40 children and 10 babies are cared for in the Children and Babies Home. Our social workers work tirelessly to resettle children and, in addition, a number of families in the surrounding areas are supported by SALEM.

Project activities that protect the environment and enable people to support themselves have a high priority. There are forestry and horticulture activities that promote good practice in an environmentally friendly way. With over 40 acres (16 ha) of land and over 70 assorted buildings both traditional and modern, there is considerable work and expertise required in both maintaining and developing the project.

There is no shortage of labour in Uganda and jobs are hard to find for many young people. To help young people to establish a living for themselves, SALEM offers training in tailoring and health care.

3. Volunteering at SALEM

Volunteering opportunities at SALEM are limited and we generally do not accept more than two volunteers at a time. We prefer skilled people to undertake specific tasks. We may require people to support the development of a new project, or to bring expert advice to a specific department or area of work. The kind of person we are looking for will usually have experience in volunteer or charity work, personal qualification and certain key qualifications like communication skills, social competence, tolerance and understanding of differences in culture and society.

SALEM-Uganda does not accept school leavers.

Volunteers have a unique opportunity to learn about life in a culture of the developing world and how government and charitable organisations such as SALEM work. The word SALEM means peace, well-being and respect for life. SALEM is a Christian, non denominational, vegetarian organisation. Smoking is not allowed on SALEM property.

Volunteers must demonstrate that they understand and support the SALEM philosophy of compassion for others and respect for all life.

It is important to inform yourself in advance of your stay on the subject of development issues in Africa and the cultural differences. You must be aware that relationships between men and women and between members of the same sex are very different to Europe and the USA. For women, the mode of dress is different too and volunteers must be prepared to adopt this.

An Agreement setting out the basis for your service including the hours of work and leave will be drawn up and signed by both SALEM-Uganda and yourself before you leave your home country.

4. Accommodation

SALEM undertakes to provide you with good basic accommodation. You will have a room for yourself with a shared shower and flush toilets. Basic self catering facilities are provided including a refrigerator and a calor gas burner. Alternatively, vegetarian meals may be purchased from the SALEM Guest House at a reasonable cost. The price of food is low in comparison to Europe and you will be able to feed yourself well on approximately 10 euro per week. Electricity is provided at no cost to volunteers.

5. Language

There are over 40 local languages (plus dialects) in Uganda with Luganda the most widely spoken. English, however, is the official language used in schools, business and government. You will therefore need to have good spoken and written English language skills and will need to demonstrate your language competency in an interview.

6. Health

You should be medically fit and you are required to notify us in advance of any illness or disability that may affect your work. Malaria is endemic in Uganda and you are advised to research this disease and its prevention in advance. It is essential to be aware of the signs and symptoms. Physicians in Europe and the USA will advise taking anti-malarial drugs. Please consult your doctor or a specialist tropical institute near you. Laboratory tests for malaria and all necessary treatment is available at SALEM and our staff are expert in treating it. We recommend you consider vaccination against Hepatitis (A/B) and, if you are considering travelling to other African countries, Yellow Fever.

7. Travel and health insurance

Volunteers will be required to meet all costs related to travel, health insurance, visa and work permits. It is important to say that all volunteers who take part in SALEM work do so at their own risk.

8. Length of placement

Lengths of stay may vary, but most placements will be for a minimum of 6 months and may extend to one year or more.

9. Pick up from airport

SALEM-Uganda is 4 to 5 hours' drive away from Uganda's international airport at Entebbe. SALEM undertakes to meet volunteers at Entebbe Airport on arrival if volunteers so wish and are ready to meet the costs of this and to take them back there when they return home. Costs may include the cost of one night in a hotel depending on the time of arrival. The maximum you will be charged is 140 Euros according to current fuel prices. This figure may rise from time to time in accordance with inflation in Uganda.

10. What can you expect from SALEM-Uganda?

You will be warmly welcomed into the big SALEM family. There will be much memorable experiences and you will enjoy a time full of challenges and new impressions. There is the opportunity to get insights into the Ugandan culture and, importantly, the opportunity to work as part of a team. During your stay you will be assigned a 'counterpart' - a Ugandan staff member who you will work alongside in carrying out your assignment. This person will be your first point of contact for any matters relating to your programme.

11. What you CANNOT expect of us

A luxurious and relaxing holiday and a salary!

12. More information

Further information on SALEM can be found at www.saleminternational.org. For Uganda, there are several websites giving information. These include: www.monitor.co.ug and <http://liportal.inwent.org/uganda> (in German). In addition there are various travel guides available from bookshops and libraries.

13. Specific questions and application

To ask further questions about SALEM-Uganda and to apply, write to: volunteers@salem-mail.net. Written applications are to be sent to SALEM International in Germany, for the attention of Helga Machulla, by post or e-mail and must include a curriculum vitae and a cover letter in English.

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