



# Professional Volunteering Programme

## FAQ Sheet

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## What is the background to Knowledge for Change (K4C)?

Knowledge for Change was established as a charity back in 2014 to formalise the partnership between the University of Salford (UK), Mountains of the Moon University (Uganda) and the Kabarole District Health Authority (Uganda). It merged with the Liverpool-Mulago Partnership (LMP) soon after to streamline both organisation's activities across Central and Western Uganda. Knowledge for Change aims to make improvements to health and education systems across Uganda and other Low- and Middle-Income Countries through training programmes, capacity building exercises, staff exchanges, global health research and infrastructural developments. We have a strong focus on ethics and ensuring the sustainability of all our development activities. All our projects are designed to be mutually beneficial for the UK, Uganda, the hosting organisations, our volunteers and wider communities.

Over the last 12 years, we have placed over 300 professional volunteers in Uganda. The vast majority have completed long-term (6+ month) placements and others have completed short-term placements.

## Which professional disciplines can volunteer?

We accept applications from a variety of backgrounds including (but not limited to): nursing, midwifery, medicine, allied health, laboratory science, social work, teaching and biomedical engineering. If you are interested in completing a placement with us and have skills in relevant areas, please get in touch using the [contact form](#) on our website.

## Are placements only available for volunteers from the UK?

No, our professional volunteering programme is open to professionals from anywhere in the world and we have previously hosted volunteers from across Europe, the USA, Australia and Brazil. However, some of our funding streams (to support part and fully funded placements) may only be available for UK nationals.

## What level of experience do I need to volunteer?

In general, we require all our professional volunteers to have at least 2 full years of relevant, post-qualification experience within their field, prior to undertaking a placement with us. In exceptional circumstances, volunteers with 1 full year of experience may be accepted. Our strong positive relationships with local staff, facilities and other stakeholders helps to ensure that our less experienced and early career volunteers receive sufficient supervision whilst on placement. Additionally, each volunteer receives a bespoke role description which supports them to maximise their impact whilst factoring in their level of experience.

## When can I begin a placement?

Volunteers can begin placements at any time throughout the year. Our projects run all year round and we aim to have at least 3 professional volunteers on placement at all times. Where possible, volunteer travel dates will be coordinated to fit specific project start/end dates, or to coincide with when other members of staff, volunteers or students are travelling. When planning your placement dates, you should consider how they will fit alongside any existing employment, training or personal commitments you have.

## How long should my placement be and can this be flexible?

Placements can be any duration from a minimum of 2 weeks. In order to gain as much as possible out of the placement, and to achieve maximum value for money, we encourage volunteers to be placed for as long as possible. Additionally, the duration of your placement might affect your eligibility or chances of selection for funding, with longer-term placements generally being preferable.

We understand that personal circumstances can change and that some volunteers may wish to extend or shorten their placements. This will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis where applicable. In general, volunteers will be responsible for any additional costs incurred following their decision to end their placement early, aside from in exceptional circumstances.

## Where can I complete a placement?

We are currently placing volunteers in two areas in Uganda; Kampala (central) and Fort Portal (western). Occasionally, specific project activities may require volunteers to be placed in other areas of Uganda. We are looking to expand our activities to other countries in 2022/23. Further information on our available [placement locations](#) can be found on our website and updates will be posted via our social media channels.

## How does the application process work?

Our application process is simple and streamlined. Firstly, we will ask you to complete a short [online application form](#) and we will arrange a brief phone call to discuss opportunities in more detail. All volunteer applications will be assessed by our project management team. Those wishing to apply for funding support will also be assessed by our board of trustees and may be invited for an interview. All applicants can expect to hear back within 2 weeks of submitting their application, although it may take as long as 1 month.

Successful applicants will be asked to submit employer references, along with any other documentation required for securing clinical registrations and work permits (as appropriate). We will remain in regular contact throughout the application process to keep you updated and answer any questions you have.

## How much does it cost to complete a placement?

Placement costs depend on a variety of factors, primarily your travel dates and placement duration, and of course whether your placement is self-funded, part-funded or fully-funded by K4C. The main costs to consider are:

- Flights: From the UK, the cost of a return flight is typically around £600, but can be as low as £350 in low season or as high as £1,000 in high season. Flight costs may be higher or lower if departing from other countries or regional airports.
- Accommodation: If K4C has spare accommodation available, this is charged at £200 per month. Alternatively, we can assist you in booking private accommodation based on your preference and budget.
- Subsistence: Uganda is a very cheap country to live in terms of food, drink and local travel costs. Depending on your preferences, food can cost as little as £2 per day.

Our fully funded placements offer a stipend of £400 per month to cover food and local travel costs.

- Placement setup fee: to help us cover our staffing costs in Uganda, we charge a fixed placement setup fee of £300 per volunteer, however this is waived for part- and fully-funded placements.

### Is there any funding support available and how do I apply for it?

K4C may have funding available to support your placement. This may be tied to a specific project or otherwise ringfenced from our general charity income. Some funding streams are subject to specific eligibility criteria. Let us know if you wish to apply for funding support and we will advise of any available opportunities. We regularly post updates and opportunities on our website and social media channels too.

We are also happy to support volunteers with fundraising or writing applications for other external funding support. There are many grant/bursary awarding bodies that volunteers can apply for outside of K4C. Healthcare volunteers are encouraged to check with their respective council, association or royal college in the first instance.

### What would my role be and how flexible is it?

We will negotiate each volunteers' role with them in advance of their placement beginning, and this will form part of their formal role description. Role descriptions will be based on any existing project requirements, our ongoing needs assessments and our existing capacity in Uganda at the time. As far as possible, role descriptions will remain flexible to account for volunteers' personal and professional preferences. In general, our volunteers' primary roles are to work alongside local staff on a co-present basis to exchange valuable and mutually beneficial knowledge, skills and experience. Volunteers may be asked to run formal teaching and training programmes for local staff and/or students relating to their areas of expertise. Some volunteers may also be asked to play a role in supporting and supervising UK students completing their elective placements through K4C.

### Is my placement ethical and sustainable? Am I substituting for local labour?

Ethics and sustainability are central to all of K4C's objectives and activities. Our research and past experience have shown that professional volunteers can play effective and highly beneficial roles in exchanging valuable knowledge, skills and experience to improve the capacity of local staff (and vice versa). However, for this to happen, it is critically important that volunteers are working alongside local staff rather than substituting for them. This is the basis of our 'Copresence Principle' which all volunteers must adhere to at all times. Our research has proven that long-term co-working and mentoring, as opposed to short-term 'fly-in, fly-out' training programmes, are far more effective in achieving sustainable capacity building and behaviour change.

Other steps we take to maximise sustainability include running comprehensive and ongoing evaluations of our projects, ensuring positive interventions are continued after a volunteer completes their placement and building strong positive relationships with local stakeholders to maximise local support and buy-in.

## What support/supervision do volunteers receive whilst on placement?

We have an experienced and dedicated project management team in Uganda that provide any support needed. Each volunteer is assigned a line manager who serves as a first port of call for any questions or concerns. Our UK based team is also available to provide additional support and guidance.

In terms of supervision whilst on placement, K4C maintains strong positive relationships with local facilities and staff to ensure the roles and expectations of volunteers are agreed and understood. Each volunteer is allocated a mentor, either from within K4C's own clinical staff or one of our partner facilities, to provide supervision and guidance.

## Do volunteers get free time and annual leave?

Yes, volunteers are entitled to 30 days of annual leave per year (pro rata), alongside evenings and weekends. Free time and annual leave can be spent as you please. Regardless of where you are placed, there are plenty of social and tourist activities to suit all budgets and keep you entertained. Our teams in the UK and Uganda are happy to advise and assist in making any arrangements.

## How do placements work on a day-to-day basis?

Our volunteers are generally expected to work from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Placement activities will be guided by a pre-agreed role description, but will remain flexible and dynamic to adapt to the ever evolving local contexts and priorities. Volunteers are expected to attend relevant departmental meetings within their hosting facility, as well as team meetings arranged by K4C which usually take place on Friday afternoons.

## Are there any risks to my health, safety or security?

Overall, Uganda is a very safe country and the risks to volunteers' health, safety and security are very low. We conduct a comprehensive formal risk assessment every year, and this is reviewed on an ongoing basis in light of any changes. The key risks to volunteer health and safety identified include injuries from road traffic accidents, illness from tropical diseases and petty theft of personal belongings. Issues such as health, safety, risk and insurance are discussed with volunteers in detail prior to their placements.

## Do I need to arrange my own insurance?

Insurance cover for volunteers is negotiated on a case-by-case basis through our partnership with the University of Salford. Where applicable, volunteers will receive insurance cover for Travel, Medical, Professional Indemnity and Medical Malpractice insurance.

There are some cases in which we are unable to provide insurance cover for volunteers, for example those not normally resident in the UK and those not placed through applicable projects and funding streams. We will inform you in advance if this applies to you and advise you of other means of securing these insurances (as required).

## How do I arrange my visa, work permit and clinical registration?

All volunteers will require a visa and work permit in order to complete a placement in Uganda. Healthcare volunteers will also be required to apply for clinical registration with their relevant body. We will guide you through each of these processes as necessary. It is important to begin the work permit and clinical registration application processes at least 3 months prior to your placement commencing. The documentation required for each process will depend on your professional discipline.

## Where would I be accommodated?

The majority of our volunteers stay in our K4C accommodation in either Kampala or Fort Portal. Our accommodations are self-contained houses, each with between 2 and 4 single or double bedrooms. They are fully risk assessed and are located within secure, guarded compounds to ensure safety, comfort and security of volunteers. Facilities include hot water, electricity and fully equipped kitchens, living areas and bathrooms. All accommodations are located within walking distance of most placement locations along with essential amenities such as supermarkets, food and drink outlets, banks and local transport.

Although most volunteers prefer to stay in K4C accommodation, this is not mandatory and volunteers are free to stay elsewhere if they wish, providing the selected accommodation passes our risk assessment and that the volunteer meets any additional cost implications.

## Will there be other volunteers on placement at the same time as me?

We try to ensure that we have at least 2 professional volunteers in each placement location at all times throughout the year. The actual numbers will vary depending on which projects and activities we have running at the time and the needs of our partner facilities. Aside from our professional volunteers, we have a number of permanent Ugandan staff in each location that are highly competent (and highly sociable)!

## Am I able to travel with family or friends?

Yes, it is possible to travel with friends and family. Many of our past volunteers have travelled with their partners and/or their children, or have had friends travel out to visit them whilst on placement. We are happy to assist with making arrangements, however we are not responsible for any additional resulting costs.

## Is it possible to undertake a scoping visit before completing a long-term placement?

Yes, some volunteers prefer to undertake a short-term visit to our placement sites in Uganda before committing to a longer-term placement. This can be particularly helpful for volunteers that have not travelled to Africa before and might be nervous or unsure about whether such a placement is right for them. It can also be useful in clarifying a volunteer's role and building networks and relationships in advance.

In general, scoping visits need to be self-funded by the volunteer, however we may be able to offer support in some circumstances.

## Who can I speak to for further advice?

Further information on our professional placement programme, and our charity's activities in general, can be found on our [website](#). If you have any questions or queries at all, just let us know via our [online contact form](#) and our friendly teams in the UK and Uganda are happy to help. We can also answer your queries via email, phone, Teams, Zoom or social media, or otherwise arrange face-to-face meetings where preferable and convenient.

Additionally, many of our current and past volunteers are happy to speak to prospective volunteers about their own experiences of volunteering with K4C. If you would like to speak to a previous volunteer, just let us know and we can introduce you.

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Knowledge for Change (K4C) is a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 1146911). Its registered address is 11 Newmarket Street, Skipton, North Yorkshire, BD23 2HX.



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