



# HEALTH-AID ONLUS

## IGP-SABOBA

### Italian-Ghanaian Project for the Rural-deprived in Saboba-Chereponi District

[www.health-aid.org](http://www.health-aid.org)  
Email: [info@health-aid.org](mailto:info@health-aid.org)

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following information might be helpful to anybody interested in the Project, either for having an idea of the activities undertaken or for a direct participation of the Project, as a *foreign volunteer* working together with the local staff in Saboba, or as a *visitor* experiencing life in a rural community in Africa.

Please read through the whole description accurately and feel free to contact us for further information or more details.

### **AIM OF THE PROJECT**

The aim of the Project is to provide better health services to the local population and villagers of Saboba and Chereponi Districts, in the Northern Region of Ghana.

Activities will be carried out both in Saboba Town and in the faraway District and Sub-district villages.

Together with the local staff the volunteers will be involved in all the activities promoted twice a year (in June-July and November-December) when visiting the faraway villages of the District (Outreach Services).

Volunteers are required to take part actively in the activities, health care and education, suggesting ideas and bringing their own innovations in whatever field of education and health care.

### **Foreign Volunteers**

Volunteers (either health workers or not) will be involved in caring for people during Outreach Services to the villages.

This, depending on the individual's experience, may involve:

1. Consultation (Patient-Health worker).
2. Distribution of drugs and materials.
3. Counselling especially on family planning, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS.
4. Translations.
5. Giving talks on tropical disease conditions, nutrition or public health in general.
6. Join the DHMT on National Immunisation Days, to help in vaccination of children against the six-child killer diseases.
7. Other roles according to actual needs

## DAILY ACTIVITIES

Volunteers work six days per week. Each morning wake up is between 6:00 and 7:00am. Breakfast is prepared on rotation by the volunteers themselves. The team organize the supplies, fuel the pick-up truck, and split up into groups. Each group travels to a different village either on the pick-up truck or on one of the three motorbikes or bikes. The drive takes anywhere from 15 minutes to 2.5 hours, depending on the distance of the day's villages. Upon arrival in each village, volunteers and medical staff greet the chief and elders of the village and introduce themselves to the villagers.

The day is divided into two parts. The first part is education. Volunteers take turns talking about hygiene & sanitation, nutrition, and HIV/AIDS. The talks are translated by a member of the local staff and are directed toward the entire village. The villages range in size anywhere from 30 to 1,000 people. The talks can last from 15 minutes up to 2 hours, depending on the amount of information the volunteer feels is important to present, the size of the group, the number of questions asked, the co-operation of the audience, etc. Sometimes the villagers are very outspoken and enjoy participating in the discussion; at other times they are quiet, and listen patiently without asking many questions.

When the education is finished, the translator organizes the community into a queue behind the doctors. The doctors screen and treat patients one at a time, usually giving priority to sick children. While the doctors are treating patients, volunteers can be doing a number of different things. Most of the time, volunteers listen to the screening and diagnosis, learning about the different medical conditions, then count and dispense the drugs according to the doctors' instructions. Other times, volunteers can be more active participants by partaking in the screening of patients, listening to the signs and symptoms of illnesses, leading the doctor/patient dialogues, assisting with diagnoses, or recording the patients' information for statistical analysis.

If the volunteer is capable of simple nursing duties and the supplies are available, they can set up a nursing station to clean and dress wounds. Many of the villagers have cuts and sores on their legs, feet, or arms that have not been properly cared for and have become dirty and infected. Several hours can be spent washing, disinfecting and bandaging these wounds.

Sometimes it is fun just to relax and play with the children. Unfortunately, the language barrier makes it difficult to interact with them at times. It is therefore useful to bring certain tools to facilitate interaction. Some good examples are: colouring books or paper with crayons or markers, children's picture books, simple games or toys suitable for groups.

The workday can last from 4 to 5 hours, depending on the size of the villages and the distance to the villages. At the end of the day, the chief usually thanks the visitors with a gift of yams, groundnuts (peanuts), chicken, guinea fowl, or a goat before the group sets off for home. Upon arrival at the guesthouse, (anywhere between 12 and 1pm) lunch is prepared by the cook.

In the afternoon indoor activities at the guesthouse are organised for students, children and other sick people.

Dinner is served at 7pm. At 8pm a general meeting is held for briefing and discussion. The rest of the evening is free time.

In addition to working in the field, other activities and events are planned throughout the duration of the program. We sometimes visit primary and secondary schools to give educational talks, show educational videos, or distribute toys. Occasionally HEALTH-AID is invited to attend and participate in celebrations and ceremonies (i.e. World AIDS Day, Disaster Day). A small amount of time is spent in the office or at the hospital, observing or performing whatever duties are required at the time.

Every Sunday is a day off. It is a very relaxing day that can be spent as you wish. It is possible to travel to Yendi (1.5 hours) or Tamale (3 hours) to buy food, water, or use Internet. Sometimes private transport is available, but often public transport is the only option (tro-tros).

## **PROGRAMME FOR VISITORS**

Visitors are welcome in Saboba where they can experience life in a rural and deprived community. According to one's special needs and requirement we can organise different activities and programmes. Visitor can also take part in the activities of Health Workers, depending on their own capabilities.

## **PERIOD OF ROTATION**

Each rotation lasts 4 to 8 weeks, during the chosen period of our medical actions, but we can accept also shorter or longer periods depending on the volunteer availability. The best period to visit Ghana is during the dry season (when almost no mosquitoes are around). Working during the rainy season may be tough but challenging.

Efforts will be made to ensure an international atmosphere allowing different countries to be present at the same time.

## **ARRIVAL AND TRANSPORTATION**

Arrival is by plane at KOTOKA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (ACC) - Accra.

Someone from the HEALTH-AID staff will be there to welcome you and find you a place to lodge for the day/night (SIESTA LODGE is quite convenient and recommended, approx €6-10 per night tel. +233 21 310893).

The next day you will leave by STC Bus to TAMALE (Northern Regional Capital). This usually takes 11-12 hours. The bus ride is long and arduous: it is hot, cramped and over twelve hours in duration. There is, however, an air-conditioned bus that is more comfortable and approximately twice as expensive (approx €10). If you take a daytime bus, bring a lot of reading material, and if you take a nighttime bus, be prepared to meditate. The bus stops three times in areas with food and toilets. A flight is also available for booking in the internet through [www.amtrakair.com](http://www.amtrakair.com).

In Tamale we drive by pick-up, minibus or tro-tro to Yendi (2-3 hours) and then to Saboba (2-3 hours). Car troubles are common, so be prepared. Good Luck!

## **LODGING AND MEALS**

All the volunteers and medical staff will be hosted at the HEALTH-AID CENTRE in Saboba, where 4 multiple bedrooms with toilets plus a kitchen and a living room are available throughout the period. The office is just next to the guest house. Electricity and running water is available but sometimes we are cut off because of shortage. Be prepared to face also these shortages.

The day will be spent in a community style, working in teams and sharing both duties and leisure time. Breakfast will be prepared by the volunteers themselves, while lunch and dinner will be served by a dedicated cook. Agreements on specific diets or preferred meals will be made by the group upon arrival.

## **FOOD AND WATER**

There is a very limited variety of food available in Saboba. It is, therefore, advisable to bring any additional products that you might enjoy having (within reason). There is a fridge to store things

once they have been opened, but non-perishables are recommended. Canned fruits and vegetables are good to bring since there are no vegetables and only certain fruits. It is wise to bring food that would make a suitable packed lunch i.e. peanut butter & jam. Most items are available in Accra and Tamale and it is possible to buy them on the way to Saboba.

There are a few small shops in town, and market day is every six days. You can buy canned tuna, sardines and beans, bread, eggs, spaghetti, tomatoes, onions, oranges, watermelon, bananas and popo (papaya) on a regular basis. Otherwise, almost nothing else is available.

Bottled water is not available in Saboba. There is a limited supply of sachet water. It is imperative to stock up on drinking water before arriving in Saboba.

## **CLOTHING**

During the dry season Saboba is extremely dry and dusty. While travelling to and from villages each day, it is helpful to have certain articles of clothing to protect yourself from the dust and dirt. Specifically, light coloured clothing gets filthy, a scarf or bandana is useful to cover your head and hair, and sunglasses are good for protecting your eyes. For women, pants or shorts are more appropriate for riding on the pick-up truck and the motorbikes than skirts. It is useful to bring baby wipes, wet napkins, and/or antibacterial lotion to clean hands and face when in the field. The temperature during the day is very hot. However, at night it gets cold enough to need long sleeves and long pants (which are also useful to protect from mosquitoes.)

People are very liberal in Saboba, and women can feel relatively free to dress how they like. The breast is not as sexualized as the thigh and buttocks. Wearing short-shorts or short-skirts is not advisable. It is nice to wear some of the local clothing. Be advised that Tamale is a predominately Muslim area, and while stopping over in this city, it may be wise to dress accordingly.

## GLOSSARY OF WORDS

<u>WORD</u>	<u>USAGE</u>	<u>MEANING</u>
KONKOMBA		The name of the people in the Saboba/Chereponi district
LIKPALKPALN		The name of the language that Konkomba people speak
LAFEBE	Used as a greeting or as a response to any of the following greetings	I'm well/good health
NNAH	Also used as a greeting or as a response to any of the following greetings, including LAFEBE	Same meaning as LAFEBE but more casual, quick
DOPWAH	Greeting to one person	How are you?
NDOPWAH	Greeting to a group of people	How are you?
APWAH	Greeting used for the first time you are seeing that person that day. (Not to be said to anyone older or in a more senior position than you.)	Good morning, good afternoon, good evening...
ANOOWEE	Greeting	Good afternoon
KUJOPWAH (KUJO)	Greeting	Good evening
SEFWHEN		Goodnight
ANELETULN	To one person	Thank you
NNELETULN	To a group of people	Thank you
BEYISEKENYEH	Question	What is your name?
BEYIMI	Answer	My name is...
NIMO(R)		That is sweet/nice
NIMO(R)MI		I am happy
OKANJA/OKAMPI		White man/woman
UNIBON		Black person

## **MEDICAL SUGGESTIONS**

- Always eat cooked food (avoid to eat fresh vegetables and not peeled fruits).
- Drink mineral water or soft drinks only.
- Avoid drinks not made with mineral water or shaken with ice like fresh fruit juice or milkshake.
- Wear shirts with long sleeves, trouser and socks, especially after sunset when mosquitoes appear.
- Use mosquito-nets during the night.
- Bring anti-diarrhoea drugs, intestinal disinfectants, antibiotic drugs (large spectrum) ORS (oral rehydration salt), needles for injections, gloves, bandages, anti-micotic lotions, shampoo against lice, medical equipment.

## **PARTECIPATION FEE**

*Visitors* are requested to pay a daily fee of €12 to cover food and lodging, travel costs is at their own expense. We require no participation fee for all *Health Workers* and *volunteers*.

## **LANGUAGE**

The official language is English but LIKPAKPALM is the local dialect in Saboba. Translators will help you when needed.

## **CURRENCY** (as per 16<sup>th</sup> Feb 2008 rate of exchange)

1 € = 14.000 GHC

1 \$ = 9.500 GHC

## **TIME ZONE**

Ghanaian time = GMT + 0

## *Your further steps after selection are:*

- book your ticket to Accra, as soon as possible.
- get an entry Visa to Ghana, which is compulsory to enter this Country.
- get your own HEALTH INSURANCE, because no insurance is provided by HEALTH-AID.
- vaccinations - suggested ones are against YELLOW FEVER, TETANUS, HEPATITIS A and B, MENINGITIS as well as profilaxis against MALARIA, THIPHUS and PARATHIPHUS.

## **EVALUATION**

Once back in your country, we would like you to send us a detailed report about your experience in Saboba and Ghana, since we support the idea that you should visit the country as well while there. This would be highly appreciated and it would help us improve more and more.

## **CONTACTS**

For any further information you may contact:

Dr. DIEGO MANZONI  
Director of HEALTH-AID in Italy  
Via Roma, 5  
24060 Bagnatica (BG)  
Italy  
Tel. +39 338 2905699  
E-fax +39 36 338 2905699  
e-mail: [diego@health-aid.org](mailto:diego@health-aid.org)