



Global Health Fellows

NORTHERN PACIFIC GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH
FELLOWS TRAINING CONSORTIUM

Cameroon Handbook

Global Health Fellows Program

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NPGH CONSORTIUM IN CAMEROON



Consortium Universities

- University of Hawai'i
- University of Washington

Partner Institutions

- University of Yaoundé

University of Yaoundé Biotechnology Center: The Biotechnology Center (BTC) is located in Nkolbisson, a 30 minute drive from the University of Yaoundé. There are two two-story buildings, one for research and the other for administration, that house faculty offices, a small library, and a conference room. The first floor and lower level of the research building are dedicated to malaria research.

The immunology section has ~2,000 sq. ft. with four rooms dedicated to tissue culture, molecular studies, human blood products, and a central laboratory for serology and hematology. The drug development section has another ~2,000 sq. ft. divided into five large rooms for tissue culture, molecular biology, biochemistry, and parasitology. The Vector Biology section has about ~1,000 sq. ft. and is equipped for mosquito dissection, molecular typing, and immuno-assays. Currently, an addition to the second floor is being added to increase research space, and a small clinic is being renovated near the center where out-patient malaria services will be provided.

Major equipment in the Malaria Laboratory includes: laminar flow hoods (2), water-jacked CO2 incubators, centrifuges, refrigerated micro-centrifuge, thermocyclers, DNA and protein electrophoresis equipment, ELISA plate washer and reader, TomTech cell harvester, Wallace beta-plate scintillation counter, balance, water distiller, small autoclave, seven microscopes, one microscope with digital camera, stereo-microscopy, five refrigerators, three -20°C freezers, one low temperature freezer, and two project vehicles. The center is also equipped with an automatic generator (in case of power

failures) that is adequate to support the low temperature freezer, -20°C freezers, and the CO₂ incubator.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW



Health Statistics

Total population: 23,837,000

Gross national income per capita (PPP international \$): 1,320

Life expectancy at birth m/f (years): 57/64

Probability of dying under five (per 1 000 live births): 69

Probability of dying between 15 and 60 years m/f (per 1 000 population): 402/253

Total expenditure on health per capita (Intl \$, 2009): 122

Total expenditure on health as % of GDP (2009): 8.1

Healthcare

Most health care is provided by the government and largely administered by the Ministry of Health and Ghana Health Services. The healthcare system has five levels of providers: health posts (which are first-level primary care for rural areas), health centers and clinics, district hospitals, regional hospitals, and tertiary hospitals. These programs are funded by the government of Ghana, financial credits, Internally Generated Fund (IGF), and Donors-pooled Health Fund. Hospitals and clinics run by religious groups also play an important role. There are 172 hospitals in Ghana. Hospitals run by religious groups make up 35% of Ghana's health service provision. Collectively, they are known as the Christian Health Association of Ghana. Some for-profit clinics exist, but they provide less than 2% of health services.

PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

Financial

Please notify your credit card and banking institutions that you will be abroad for 11 months to prevent problems accessing funds while you are abroad.

Entry/Exit Requirements

Visa

A passport and a visa are required, as is evidence of a yellow fever vaccination. Travelers should obtain the latest information and details from the Embassy of Cameroon:

http://www.cameroonembassyusa.org/embassy_am.aspx

Once in Cameroon, all visitors planning to stay in Cameroon for more than three months need to obtain a residence permit from the Délégation Générale de la Sureté Nationale (DGSN). The minimum payment for a residence permit is 250,000 CFA (\$500 USD).

Vaccines and Travel-related Health Concerns

Check the CDC's web page for up-to-date information on recommended vaccines for traveling to Cameroon:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/cameroon>

Note: You will need to show evidence of a yellow fever vaccination upon entry to Cameroon.

Other Documentation

Whenever traveling, it is important for you to be prepared in case your passport and other important documents are lost or stolen. Therefore, we recommend that all travelers have a Xerox copy of their important documents as well as an electronic copy.

You may also email or mail a copy of these documents to the Support Center (hobbsn@uw.edu) for safe keeping in your personnel file.

Traveler Security Registration & Emergency Contacts

Emergency Contacts

All trainees should provide emergency contact information to the Support Center at the start of their training experience. This information will be kept private but is important to have on file in case of an emergency that requires our assistance.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

Sign up for the State Department's free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (formerly known as "Travel Registration" or "Registration with Embassies") to receive the latest travel updates and information. When you sign up, you will automatically receive the most current information they compile about the country where you will be traveling or living. You will also receive updates, including Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts (where appropriate). Register on the STEP website:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html

Packing for your Trip

General Supplies

- Electrical converter. Cameroon runs on 220/240 volts, while the US runs on 110/120 volts. Check the labels on your devices to see if you'll need a converter.
- Plug adapters will also be needed for American electronics, as Cameroonian outlets accept European-style round pins. Adapters are readily available in the markets, as are extension cords and surge protectors, though the latter are of variable quality
- Surge protector: when possible, keep your electronics plugged into a surge protector. Unexpected power fluctuations can do a lot of damage.
- Toiletries such as toothpaste are available in country. Shampoo & conditioner and other hair products of quality similar to that in the U.S. are generally very hard to come by. Contact lens solution has also been notoriously difficult to come by. It is recommended that you bring your own.
- Camping supplies (small tent, mat, sleeping bag) if you plan on doing any trekking, though certainly not necessary as most of the major tourist sites will have guest houses and hotel accommodations available
- Small pillow and at least one set of sheets and one pillow case: these are often not provided at guest houses or in the clinical student hostel, and it can be difficult to find sheets of good quality in stores.
- Small tokens from your hometown/home institution to give out as gifts
- Laptop for work and to connect with friends and family back home

- Don't bring iPhones or iPads unless you plan to use them without internet. Wifi is not readily available, and if it is, it may be very slow.
- External hard drive with movies and TV shows
- Bring your own electronics—they are very expensive in Ghana and often of questionable quality
- Small flash light (there are no street lights or sidewalks in many places and you will want drivers to see you!). Also, this is highly recommended given frequent power outages.
- A headlamp is also useful so that you can have both hands free while working
- Research supplies: you can find stationary/pens/office supplies fairly readily, so perhaps bring a few items that you enjoy using and leave the rest at home.
- Styling tools like straighteners and curling irons are available but the quality is variable. Blow dryers can be found everywhere.
- Comfort foods like granola bars, chocolate, trail mix, and coffee (though you will also need to bring a coffee maker as these may be hard to find)
- Sanitary napkins are available in Cameroon; tampons are also available but harder to find. If you prefer tampons, bring your own. The quality of the products may be different than what you would obtain in the United States so you may want to pack a box just in case.

Medications

- You should plan to bring the medications that you take daily since the quality of medications abroad may not be the same as in the U.S.
- Keep medications in the original prescription bottles and always place them in your carry-on luggage.
- Note: some medications that are prescriptions in the U.S. are illegal in other countries. You should check the U.S. Department of State Consular Sheets for Ghana to determine if your medication is allowable. If your medication is not allowed in the country you will be visiting, ask your health-care provider to write a letter on office stationery stating the medication has been prescribed for you.
- Many doctors recommend bringing anti-diarrhea medication such as Immodium, ciprofloxacin, and oral rehydration salts to prevent traveler's diarrhea
- Iodine tablets and portable water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available.
- Malaria Prophylaxis: Popular forms of prophylaxis are doxycycline and malarone.
- Insect repellent with 30-40% DEET as this is NOT readily available in Cameroon. Treated and un-treated nets are available in Cameroon but it is suggested that you bring your own to bridge you over for the first few days.
- Antibacterial wipes for cleaning surfaces

- Sun block and mosquito repellent are available in Cameroon, although they can be expensive and the quality may be different than in the U.S.

Clothes

- There are no restrictions on what men and women may wear – but Cameroon is a fairly conservative country. For women, it is advisable to be thoughtful with regard to how revealing one's clothes might be, and opt for longer skirts and modest shirts and blouses (or wraps for the occasional over-air conditioned office). Slacks and shorts for both sexes are permissible, however most locals do not wear shorts.
- For individuals who will be working in a clinical setting, it is advisable that you bring your own white laboratory coat and professional attire similar to what you would wear in the U.S.
 - For men, this means slacks, shirts and ties
 - For women, this means skirts or professional dresses that hit below the knee or nice trousers. Open-toed shoes can be worn in the hospital but it is recommended that you wear close-toed shoes for your own safety.
 - For those who will be working in the OR or Emergency Department, you may want to bring your 2-3 sets of scrubs
 - Do not wear flip flops to work

IN-COUNTRY

Housing

The Bastos neighborhood is home to foreign embassies and the expatriate European and American communities. The neighborhood is secure, as police patrols are frequent. The cost of rent is high compared to other parts of Yaoundé, at around 100,000-200,000 CFA (\$200-400 USD) per month for a one-bedroom apartment.

Shopping

Most neighborhoods have open markets, that get very crowded with shoppers and vendors. Bargaining is expected, but keep your personal belongings close and watch out for pickpockets. Groceries from the market cost around 50,000-100,000 CFA (\$100-200 USD) per month. European branded foods are more expensive but can be found at some of the supermarkets: Casino in the city center, Niki in Mfoundi, and Dovv in Bastos.

Food Safety

- We want you to enjoy the delicious Cameroonian cuisine, but please remember these guidelines by the CDC:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol).
 - Don't eat anything without a peel (e.g.-apple, grapes, lettuce, etc.). Stick to banana, papaya, watermelon, orange, etc.
 - Unless confident of the source, don't eat salad.
 - Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.
 - Avoid dairy products, unless you know they have been pasteurized.
 - Wash fruit and vegetables well. Consider soaking in a pesticide removing detergent.
 - If eating from a roadside stall, check the food is fresh and well cooked.
 - Drink boiled or bottled water when you first arrive. Although tap water is safe when it leaves the treatment plant, it can become contaminated by leaks in the pipes. Bottled water can be easily delivered to your home.
 - Diseases from food and water often cause vomiting and diarrhea. Make sure to bring diarrhea medicine with you so that you can treat mild cases yourself
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Health & Safety

- One of the best ways to understand the safety of situations is to talk to locals.

- It is advisable for visitors to use bottled water which is available for sale in supermarkets or on the street. Contamination is a concern and it's best to boil your water or stick to bottles.
- Watch for pickpockets. Taxi cabs and ATMs are the most common sites for crime. Use only secure taxi services. Remember, there is safety in numbers.
- Consider purchasing travel insurance with theft insurance for electronics or other valuables.
- A money belt is especially nice for traveling long distances.
- Contact the U.S. Embassy: <http://yaounde.usembassy.gov/>

Local Customs

- Cameroonians do not expect visitors to their country to be aware of local traditions and customs, so don't worry about getting it all right when you first arrive.
- Formal attire—suits, shirts, trousers, gowns, etc.—is expected when visiting public buildings or going to public receptions or activities.

Guide to Yaoundé

Sight-Seeing

- Mvog Betsi Zoo: primates and lions!
- Mont Febe
- National Museum: located in the former presidential palace
- National Library
- Palais des sports de Warda
- National Archives
- Afhemi Museum
- Cathédrale Notre Dame des Victoires
- Mary Queen of the Apostles Basilica (Basilique Marie-Reine-des-Apôtres)

Restaurants

Yaoundé has a plethora of street stalls, restaurants, and bars. The Bastos neighborhood has a good number of street stalls. Meals generally cost around 2000-5000 CFA (\$4-10).

- Saint Tropez: European food
- Istanbul: Turkish restaurant in Bastos. Good food, does not serve alcohol.
- Masion de Coree: Korean food near Churchill Avenue
- Café Yaoundé: African food near the hippodrome
- Burnea Vista: European food, very quiet.
- Salsa: European food
- Chez Whou: Chinese food
- St. Anastasie: at Carrefour Ohada

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