

**GLOBAL OUTREACH MISSION  
REPUBLIC OF CONGO  
PIONEER CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL  
VISITORS' INFORMATION PACKET (VIP)**

*Updated October 2009*

We're glad you're interested in coming to Republic of Congo, and are excited about the possibility of you coming to help us. We designed this packet of information to assist you in preparing for an adventure in service. Please read it carefully, and refer to it often. It contains important information on:

- Global Outreach Mission
- Republic of Congo
- Pioneer Christian Hospital
- Short-term missionary service
- Making travel arrangements
- Accommodations
- Raising support
- Estimated costs
- Obtaining visas
- Staying healthy
- Travel Immunizations
- What to pack
- Contact Information

**GLOBAL OUTREACH MISSION**

[Global Outreach Mission](#) (GOM) is an interdenominational mission organization with headquarters in Buffalo, New York and St. Catharines, Ontario. There are over 500 missionaries serving with GOM in over 40 countries around the globe. GOM seeks to empower missionaries to share the Gospel as determined by their convictions and the Holy Spirit's leading in their lives. GOM serves as an umbrella organization, providing administrative services, training and networking opportunities, and representation for our missionaries.

**REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

The [Republic of the Congo](#) is a nation about the size of New York State, located in the heart of Africa, right on the Equator. Congo is home to approximately 4 million people. The capital, [Brazzaville](#), is located on the Congo River, right across from Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo. [Note: To distinguish between the two Congos, we often refer to Republic of Congo as "Congo-Brazzaville", and Democratic Republic of Congo as "DRC" or "Congo-Kinshasa". In this packet, "Congo" refers to Congo-Brazzaville, but when you hear about Congo in the news, they are usually referring to DRC.]

The official language of Congo is French, while Lingala and Munukutuba are the most widely spoken of 67 national languages. The major religions are Christianity, Animism, and Islam.

Congo is divided into ten regions, and one commune. The Likouala Region is the Northern-most region, and is covered with dense tropical inundated rain forest.

## **PIONEER CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL**

Since the early 1980's, Global Outreach Mission has been partnering with local churches and other mission organizations to provide healthcare services in Congo as part of our larger expression of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

In 2001, the President of Congo authorized Global Outreach Mission to take possession of a former Communist youth camp and transform it into the country's Pioneer Christian Hospital. After years of hard work and determination, with lots of help from volunteers and local personnel, Congo's Pioneer Christian Hospital (PCH) opened in January 2006.

The Pioneer Christian Hospital is a 50-bed general mission hospital located in Impfondo (pop. 20,000), capital of the Likouala Region (pop. 91,000). The hospital's 30 buildings are situated on a 17-acre campus, on the northern edge of town. Services include: Laboratory, X-ray, Ultrasound, EKG, Pharmacy, Chaplaincy, Emergency, Maternity, Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, Surgery, and Outpatient Consultation.

Today, because of God's faithfulness, the cabins of this former youth camp are now patient wards; the mess hall is now a well-equipped surgical suite; and the amphitheater once built to show propaganda films is now a chapel where prayer services are held daily and the Good News of Jesus Christ is freely proclaimed.

Immediate plans include the development of a nurses' training program, a life-changing HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment program, and a local Christian radio station. We hope that primary and secondary Christian schools, community health networks, family practice and surgical residencies, and missionary aviation services will be added in the future.

## **SHORT-TERM MISSIONARY SERVICE**

Jesus Christ commands His disciples to "[Go and make disciples of all nations...](#)" It should be the exception if we stay. Often the first step in obeying this command is going on a short-term mission trip. Whether you are interested in coming short-term (2 weeks to 2 years) or long-term, Global Outreach Mission and Pioneer Christian Hospital want to help make your experience a profitable one that will deepen your walk with Christ, advance the Kingdom of God, and confirm His calling on your life.

All volunteers seeking to serve at Congo's Pioneer Christian Hospital are humbly requested to fill out the [Congo Candidate Questionnaire](#) and return it to [Mrs. Crystal](#)

[van Achterberg](#), who helps us keep in touch with potential and confirmed visitors. If appropriate, you will then be invited to apply for short-term missionary service with [Global Outreach Mission](#) unless you are already affiliated with one of our partner missions ([HCJB global](#), [Samaritan's Purse/World Medical Mission](#), [World Wide Lab Improvement](#), Christian & Missionary Alliance, Evangelical Free Church of Canada Mission, Wycliffe Canada, International Fellowship of Alliance Professionals, and others).

## TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Currently the simplest way to get to Impfondo from North America or Europe is to fly Air France or [Royal Air Maroc](#) to Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of Congo. Once you arrive in Brazzaville, you will need to take another flight to Impfondo on a local airline. Tickets for flights to/from Impfondo can only be bought locally, so our team in Congo will arrange that for you. Airfare prices vary significantly depending on when you are traveling and what agency you use. In the past, the best deals have been found with [Menno Travel Service](#), [SIAMA World Mission Travel](#), and [MTS Travel](#). If you prefer, Global Outreach Mission can help make your travel arrangements.

**IMPORTANT: Before purchasing your airline tickets, please check to see if your proposed travel dates are OK with the team in Congo.** Please also make sure that you have been accepted for service with GOM, or one of our partner missions. Also, we need the full name (as it appears on the passport), sex, birth date, birthplace, and nationality of each person coming. Once we receive this information and your proposed itinerary, we will send you an official letter of invitation which you need to get your visa.

Our team in Congo will arrange for someone to meet you at the airport in Brazzaville, guide you through baggage claim and customs, and take you to where you will be staying, until you catch a flight to Impfondo. They will also take care of your guest house reservations.

Sometime before you depart for Congo we recommend that you register your trip with the US Embassy in Congo at their website: [US State Department](#).

## ACCOMODATIONS

While in Brazzaville, we will make reservations for you to stay at "Hotel Bravo" Global Outreach Mission's Ministry Center in Brazzaville. Hotel Bravo is not deluxe, but we find it a quiet and comfortable place to rest from long journeys. You will likely be invited to eat some of your meals with our missionary partners, but a simple kitchen is available, and there are many excellent restaurants in town.

In Impfondo, you will be staying either at the mission, or at the hospital site. At both places we have running water, solar powered lights, screens, mosquito nets, and filtered drinking water. Sheets and towels are provided. We generally eat a main meal at midday, and take a short siesta in the early afternoon. Breakfast and a light supper

can be arranged, or you can take care of that on your own. We eat a mixture of African and American cuisine. You will eat well, but likely still lose weight!

Laundry services will be arranged depending on your needs.

E-mail is available on a limited basis, and costs \$2/day. Don't plan on sending or receiving a lot of photos, or large attachments. There are internet cafes in Brazzaville, but their connections go down frequently.

### **RAISING SUPPORT**

Global Outreach Mission is a faith mission. As representatives of the mission to Congo, we expect you to raise your own financial and prayer support, in faith, trusting God to provide. Even if you are coming with another group, we encourage you to make sure that you are fully supported by faithful prayer & financial partners before you come, so as not become a burden to the missionary team and those we seek to serve.

Very often your home church, and your own circle of family and friends will be happy to help with your expenses, if you let them know what you are doing and why. Most often this is done by sharing from your heart in formal and informal presentations, a prayer letter, and e-mail prayer updates.

If you are accepted for service with Global Outreach Mission, contributions can be sent to: Global Outreach Mission OR Global Outreach Mission  
PO Box 2010 Box 1210  
Buffalo, NY 14231-2010 St. Catharines, ON L2R 7A7  
USA CANADA

with a memo indicating that the gift is for your trip. The mission will issue a tax-deductible receipt, deposit the money in your account, send out your prayer letter, and help you with other administrative functions. An administrative fee (15% of receipts) will be retained to cover the mission's expenses.

Perhaps you can afford to pay your own way completely. Even then, we encourage you to afford others the opportunity to participate in your ministry in a tangible way. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34).

### **ESTIMATED COSTS**

- \$2,000. Round-trip airfare from North America
- 250. Round-trip airfare Brazzaville=Impfondo
- 200. Food/lodging in Impfondo (based on a 2-week stay)
- 150. Visa + postage
- 475. Global Outreach Mission Service Support
- =====
- \$2,990. Total estimated cost / person

Money for your flight to Impfondo, food/lodging expenses, and spending money should be brought in new US \$100 bills. Travelers' checks and credit cards are useless in Congo (though credit cards may be useful during your layover in Europe, at duty free shops, and for purchasing tickets for international flights in case of an emergency).

## VISAS

In order to enter Republic of Congo, foreigners need to have to have a valid visa in their passport. Relax. If you follow these detailed step-by-step instructions, you shouldn't have any trouble. Here's how to do it:

1) Make sure you have a valid, signed, passport with at least 4 empty pages & 6 months of validity. Official application forms & instructions are available at your local post office or online at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

2) Get a set of identical passport-type photographs for each traveler.

3) Contact us @ [JHarvey@UUPlus.com](mailto:JHarvey@UUPlus.com) with your proposed travel plans (complete itinerary please).

4) Once you are sure that your proposed itinerary is OK with us, buy your tickets and send a text copy of your final itinerary to [JHarvey@UUPlus.com](mailto:JHarvey@UUPlus.com), and [GOM](#).

5) Dr. Harvey will then send you an official letter of invitation.

6) Obtain a copy of the visa application for each traveler from the Harvey's website's [Visitor Info page](#), or by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to the embassy (address below).

7) Fill out the visa application form, making the following entries where requested: Type of visa and period of stay: *ordinaire (and how long you are planning to stay)*

Purpose of journey, in detail: *To serve as a missionary volunteer at l'Hôpital Evangélique «Le Pionnier» à Impfondo.*

Place of entry & exit: *Brazzaville.*

Address during your stay in the country: *Hôpital Evangélique «Le Pionnier», Avenue Dennis Sassou Nguesso, BP 10, Impfondo.*

8) Once your tickets are ordered & you have our letter of invitation, mail your passport, two copies of the completed application, two identical photos, your letter of invitation, a printout of your travel itinerary, a money order for \$120 for each person in your party, and a self-addressed prepaid return envelope to:

Embassy of the Republic of Congo

4891 Colorado Ave., N.W.

Washington, DC 20011

Phone (202) 726-5500

Fax (202) 726-1860

The embassy recommends that you have your passports sent and returned by [FedEx](#). If everything is in order, normal embassy processing time is 2 weeks. When your passport is returned, keep your yellow International Certificates of Vaccination booklet and letter of invitation with it.

## STAYING HEALTHY

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." This advice has a good practical application to traveling, because if you follow it, you can travel lighter.

**Please consider seriously and heed the following advice:**

1) BUCKLE UP! Wear your seatbelt. Always. Every time. Use proper safety restraints for children. Exercise caution when driving, riding as a passenger, or as a pedestrian. The biggest threat to your life as you travel is from accidents. Every year more overseas travelers die from motor vehicle accidents than any other cause. In Republic of Congo, substandard roadways and vehicles are the norm.

2) DON'T DRINK THE WATER! The tap water, that is (not even in Europe during your layover). Even when there are no dangerous bugs in the water, your body will take some time to get used to a new set of friendly ones. Bottled water is usually safe, in original packaging. Once you reach your destination, you can safely drink the filtered water we use. Even so, 1-2 days of loose bowel movements on arrival & your return can be expected. Traveler's diarrhea is the most common ailment of all travelers worldwide. You can help prevent it by eating only peeled or well-cooked foods, and avoiding ice or other drinks and treats made with unfiltered tap water. Feel free to bring your favorite diarrhea remedies and a roll of toilet paper or a packet of tissues in your carry-on. While traveling in Africa (even on the flight from Paris), if you find a working restroom, there usually is no toilet paper, soap, or towels. It's also a good idea to have a fluoroquinolone antibiotic (like ciprofloxacin) on hand in case you develop diarrhea with fever.

3) GET IMMUNIZED! (See the section below on vaccinations)

4) DON'T LET THE BED BUGS BITE! Malaria and filaria are very common problems here. You can avoid getting these illnesses by not being bit by the mosquitoes and biting flies that transmit them. With all diseases, primary prevention is best, so do your best to avoid being bit by mosquitoes & flies (wear repellent, long sleeves, sleep under permethrin-treated mosquito nets, try to be indoors at dusk & dawn, etc.). Sexual immorality is common in central Africa. As a result, sexually transmitted diseases are rampant. Don't place yourself at risk for temptation or assault. Do wear very conservative & modest clothing. Avoid physical or prolonged eye contact with strangers. Avoid public displays of affection. Be aware that your actions and words may be misinterpreted.

5) TAKE YOUR MEDICINE! We strongly recommend that you take Lariam (mefloquine) or doxycycline or Malarone (atovaquone and proguanil hydrochloride) for malaria prophylaxis. These medications are the only methods that have proven effective in preventing malaria in our area. Mefloquine is taken as one 250 mg tablet per week and needs to be started one week before departure, and continued for 4 weeks after your return. Doxycycline is taken 100 mg, once a day with supper while you are in the country. Malarone is also taken once a day, every day while you are in the country and for 1 week after your return. Fourth best would be 300 mg of chloroquine weekly AND 100 mg of paludrine daily (chloroquine alone is not adequate).

6) **STAY OUT OF THE SUN!** Impfondo is located 1.6 degrees north of the Equator, so the sun's rays hit hard all year long. It is hot in Impfondo. The average Caucasian will start to get sunburn here after just 20 minutes of exposure, so if you're melanin impaired, bring suntan lotion with a SPF of 20 or greater, and apply it liberally to all exposed areas whenever you will be outside for more than 15 minutes (even on cloudy days). Wear hats. Heat stroke and exhaustion can be avoided by drinking lots of water, staying in the shade, and taking frequent breaks to cool off.

## **TRAVEL IMMUNIZATIONS**

The following vaccinations are recommended for Congo:

- 1) Yellow Fever. Documentation of vaccination within the last 10 years at the time of entry, or a letter of medical waiver is required for entry into Congo.
- 2) Hepatitis A. The vaccine is preferred if you can get more than one dose before coming. If you don't have enough time to get at least two doses of the vaccine, Hepatitis A Immune Globulin will protect you for several months.
- 3) Hepatitis B (a series of 3 shots).
- 4) Oral Typhoid Vaccine.
- 5) Injectable Polio booster (if you haven't already had four doses of polio vaccine).
- 6) Make sure your routine Measles/Mumps/Rubella & Tetanus immunizations are up to date.
- 7) Flu shot if you will be traveling between November and April.
- 8) H1N1 Flu shot.

The following vaccinations are optional:

- 1) Meningococcal Vaccine (more relevant during dry season, which is January-April).
- 2) Rabies Vaccine (not recommended).
- 3) Varicella Vaccine (if you have never had chicken pox or shingles).
- 4) It would be prudent to have a PPD test (for tuberculosis) done before & after your trip IF you plan to be involved in direct patient care.
- 5) Cholera vaccine is NOT recommended because it is not very effective, has many side effects, and the disease is easily prevented by not drinking contaminated water.
- 6) Smallpox vaccination may be a good idea for those involved in direct patient care, but is no longer available.

All vaccinations and prophylactic medications should be recorded in your yellow International Certificates of Vaccination booklet, which you can obtain from your county health department, or wherever travel vaccines are administered. For more information on health issues and vaccines visit: [www.cdc.gov/travel/cafica.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/cafica.htm)

## **PACKING TIPS**

When out around town, men should wear long pants, button down or polo shirts, and shoes, sneakers, or sandals. During manual labor, t-shirts & jeans are acceptable. Wearing shorts and a tank top around town in Impfondo can get you arrested!

Women should wear dresses or jumpers, skirts, or split skirts (below the knee), loose-fitting pants, or Capri pants. Congolese women usually wear skirts and dresses. Modest sleeveless tops are acceptable, but spaghetti straps, tight clothes & halter tops are not.

In general, Congolese are sharp dressers, and take pride in their appearance. Adults don't usually wear shorts in public, but kids do (fingertip and below). For both men & women, modesty & conservative styles are preferred, so as to avoid unwanted and inappropriate attention. Loose fitting, light colored, breathable cotton or linen clothing is generally more comfortable than clothes made from other materials.

It is hot most of the time, but it's still a good idea to bring a long sleeve shirt for protection against the sun and mosquitoes, and occasional cool evenings. Hats and sunglasses are helpful. A raincoat, umbrella, and rain boots will come in handy, especially June-Nov. Bathing suits can be used in Brazzaville, but in Impfondo, women will need to wear shorts over their suit for swims in the river.

Photos are a great way to share your experience with those back home, but please keep in mind that your camera and memory cards may be confiscated and heavy fines levied if people see your camera out of its case at or near the airport or government buildings, in vehicles, or while riding a bike. Be careful never to point your camera at uniformed or plainclothes police & military personnel, or people that you don't know.

You will most likely be asked to bring needed supplies & equipment, mail, and gifts from family and friends for members of the missionary team. Please joyfully consider that this is often the only practical way of getting essential items into the country. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Health workers should bring a notarized copy of their professional license or diploma.

To get the most out of your luggage allowance, each piece of checked luggage should weigh as close to (but not over) 50 pounds as possible. In the US, airlines charge a set fee (about \$135) per piece of excess luggage up to 50 pounds. Sometimes the airline may waive excess baggage fees if they know that you are on a humanitarian mission, and you are courteous & check in early.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Your first and most vital contact should be with Jesus Christ. Put Jesus first in your life. Let Him handle all your cares and concerns. "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalm 37:5).

**Please note: Congo Time is 6 hours ahead of EST**

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MISSION G.O. CONGO

HOPITAL EVANGELIQUE «LE PIONNIER»

AVENUE DENNIS SASSOU-NGUESSO

BP 10, IMPFONDO

REPUBLIC OF CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE)

**Brazzaville Guest House Address:**

Global Outreach Mission

BP 24

15 Avenue de la Libération de Paris

Quartier Blanche Gomez

Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

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Host: Mr. Robert MBOSSA

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