



INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER'S INFORMATION PACK



COMPILED BY HILLCREST AIDS CENTRE TRUST (HACT)

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1. General information about our organisation

Welcome to the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust! Whether you have your stay with us already confirmed, or are still thinking about joining our team, we're excited by your interest in our work, so thanks for being in touch.

Name of Organisation:	Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (HACT)	
Type of Organisation:	Registered Non-Profit Organisation and Trust	
Physical Address:	26 Old Main Road, Hillcrest, 3650, KwaZulu Natal	
Postal Address:	P.O. Box 2474, Hillcrest, 3650, South Africa	
Telephone:	031 765 5866	
Email:	info@hillaims.org.za	
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Auditors:	Marwick and company	
NPO Number: 005-800 NPO	PBO Number: 18/11/13/1231	Trust Deed Number: IT2182/99
Board of Trustees:	Dr Stephen Carpenter; Julie A Hornby; Linda M Knox; Michael W Mkhize; Sbusisiwe Myeni, Olivia Myeza (CEO); David J Neville-Smyly (Chairman); Dr Mackie Nyamazana; Revd Andrew Robinson; Revd Gary A Thompson; Mark N van den Berg; Bishop Mike Vorster.	

The Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust (HACT) is a non-profit, faith-based organisation that responds to the HIV/AIDS pandemic from several different angles, including prevention, care, community outreach and income generation.

Our mission is to serve all those impacted by HIV/AIDS by providing unconditional love and hope in a practical, sustainable way. We dream of a world that is free from AIDS and it is our prayer that we might see that day in our lifetime.

HACT was founded in 1990 as a ministry of the Hillcrest Methodist Church. The organisation has evolved over the past 24 years in response to the changing HIV/AIDS pandemic, with projects starting,

adapting or completing as the needs on the ground change.

Our projects are delivered by a team of 68 staff members, 34 community field officers and home based carers, and 30 loyal volunteers. Collectively, alongside our donors and partners, we respond to the crisis that is HIV/AIDS – a crisis that has led to nearly one in three people in KwaZulu Natal being HIV positive, and every family being impacted in one way or another.

Situated in the accessible and central town of Hillcrest, roughly half way between Durban and Pietermaritzburg in KwaZulu-Natal, HACT serves several impoverished communities in the Valley of 1,000 Hills region – one of the epicentres of the world's HIV pandemic with estimated HIV-infection rates of up to 40-50% of the population in some communities.

2. South African Visa

Please ensure you have the correct visa before entering South Africa. There are many different types of visa. Recent changes in the immigration law mean that regulations have been tightened up; if you come in on the wrong visa, or overstay your visa, you are liable to be blacklisted and therefore unable to return to South Africa in future. Please research this carefully and well ahead of time, and visas can take a number of weeks to be processed. For more information, please go to our Department of Home Affairs website (<http://www.home-affairs.gov.za/>) or contact your local embassy.

3. Vaccinations

For all vaccination enquiries, please consult your doctor first before traveling. We can only advise you on vaccinations/medications required for visiting Durban and the Valley of 1,000 Hills. If you are travelling to other regions of South Africa/Africa before or after being with us in Hillcrest, you will need to seek this information from a travel doctor. For our area, you do not need to take malaria medication (though some doctors will try to give it to you because they don't know the area you're coming to). We have no Malaria here. However, if you're travelling to northern parts of South Africa or into neighbouring countries, you WILL need malaria medication. Only eat it with meals otherwise it can make you feel very ill. Whenever you do international travel it's good to ensure you're up to date with common vaccines like tetanus, Hepatitis A, B and C etc.

4. Accommodation Options

We unfortunately do not have accommodation on site at HACT, so volunteers and visitors need to source their own accommodation locally. If you are only here for a few days, you can either stay in a local guest house such as 10 on Tunzini <http://www.stayin1000hills.co.za/accommodation/hillcrest/ten-on-tunzini>, Valley Lodge <http://www.valleylodge.net/index1.html> or Eagle Wind Manor <http://www.eaglewindmanor.co.za/>, or we can see if any of our staff are in a position to host you.

For medium-length stays, you can investigate staying at one of our local NGOs that offer accommodation – Koinonia and The Valley Trust (<http://www.thevalleytrust.org.za/>). They will rent you a simple room with shared eating and cleaning facilities. Please let us know if

you are interested in this option, and we will find out current rental prices. This is some distance from Hillcrest so a car will be required if you stay at either of these venues.

If you are here for a longer period, we can try and find out if anyone local has a room or garden flat they can rent out. The price range for these is R2,500 – R4,500 per month unfurnished, or R3,500 upwards for somewhere furnished (though these are hard to find). You can buy cheap basic furniture locally at Mr Price home (new), or second hand on www.gumtree.co.za. You should be able to sell it all again when you leave.

5. Cars

It is necessary for our visitors to hire or purchase and re-sell cars as unfortunately there is no safe form of public transport in South Africa. However, if you are fit and enjoy exercise, and if you stay locally in Hillcrest, it is possible for you to walk, run or cycle to the Hillcrest AIDS Centre Trust. Hillcrest is quite a small town! You could then hire a car for weekend trips away if you want to go and explore our beautiful country.

Lots of hire car companies have offices at the airport, and you'll need to ensure you've booked online ahead of your arrival (go to the Durban airport website and get to the hire car section from there).

Directions from airport to Hillcrest

1. Exit the airport and follow the signs to the N2 Freeway South-bound
2. You will pass through a toll-gate where you'll need to pay R4, so it's a good idea to withdraw some money at the airport ATMS for this
3. Get onto the N2 South Bound and follow it for about 20 minutes
4. Take the N3 Pietermaritzburg off-ramp and stay on the N3 for about 10 minutes
5. Take the M13 off-ramp and stay on the M13 for about 15 minutes
6. Take the Hillcrest Old Main Road exit
7. Turn right at the top of the off-ramp into Old Main Road

Driving in South Africa

Please check regulations relating to your country of origin while you are planning your trip. Americans will need to secure an international driver's licence and bring that with you, along with your normal driver's licence. Here we drive on the left side of the road.

South Africa is known for its high number of road accidents and road fatalities, unfortunately. The reasons are combination of the facts that it's not the norm to wear seatbelts even though it is a legal requirement (the mini-bus taxis that transport the majority of the population don't even have seatbelts), there are a lot of unlicensed drivers on the road, and there is a lot of drunk driving. We appeal to you to drive really carefully whilst here, not speed, and always be prepared for drunk and unlicensed drivers in unroadworthy cars. The biggest menace on the roads are the mini-bus taxis, which is how the majority of South Africans get around (most people cannot afford their own car and they rely on the mini-bus taxis to get around). You'll also notice that there's a lot of beeping in South Africa – the mini-bus taxis are constantly beeping because this is how they let passengers know that they have a seat available. You get used to it, but at first you are always jumping because you think they're beeping YOU!



6. Packing

Here's a list of a few things you might want to bring when coming to South Africa:

- A power adaptor (USA/UK etc. to South Africa). South Africa's voltage is 220v. Do not bring appliances that are solely 110v. Modern travel equipment and laptops have AC adapters, which will cover a voltage range from 100v-240v.
- Your camera
- Your laptop and power adaptor
- A cell phone that is not locked to your local country network so that once you arrive at JHB airport you can purchase a South African sim card and air time (phone credit is called 'air time' over here)

Everything else you can purchase here, including sunscreens, insect repellents, and all commonly used medications.

While you are working with HACT, please ensure you bring a selection of clothes that are not thigh-revealing, as this is culturally inappropriate within Zulu culture. Clothing that sits on or just above the knee is preferred. This only applies when you're doing community work or are at HACT.

7. Flights

Flights come in at the King Shaka International Airport at Durban. Most flights from USA and other continents will stop at Johannesburg and from there you will get a domestic one hour flight from Johannesburg to Durban. Durban airport is located about 30 minutes north of Durban city (and about a one hour drive from Hillcrest). You can find ATMs to withdraw cash, restaurants and shops at the airport. You can also purchase a South African sim card at the airport to put into your phone. At the airport you may find people asking if they can help you with your luggage. They will expect a tip for this, so only say yes if you're prepared to pay!

8. KwaZulu Natal Province

We are located in the province of KwaZulu Natal. The capital city in our province is Durban, and the city is by the beach on the east coast. Hillcrest is about 40 minutes' drive inland from Durban. Hillcrest was a 'white area' during Apartheid, and as such it looks and feels very similar to an upper/middle class area of the USA/Australia. Until about six years ago Hillcrest was a sleepy country town, however since then the area has developed dramatically and whilst it still has it's 'country feel' overlooking the Valley of 1000 Hills, it now has all the comforts we are used to in the west, including big shopping malls and supermarkets, a McDonalds, KFC etc. These suburbs are still largely 'white', although a growing black middle class population has started to move in and slowly, integration is happening.

We overlook the beautiful sprawling Valley of 1000 Hills, which is, literally, a region of thousands of stunning green hills and valley, home to tens of thousands of Zulu people. During Apartheid these valley regions were 'black areas'. The Apartheid Government allocated the areas very strategically – placing the white areas on flat, high lands that were good for building and growing crops, and placing the black areas below them, in valley/hill

regions where building and growing crops is difficult. The areas even served a psychological purpose – reinforcing the idea that white people were somehow higher/better than black people. Almost all the people living in these communities are black – mostly Zulu but also Zimbabwean and other refugees and people from other South African black tribal groups (such as Xhosa and Sotho people).

This white/suburb and black/valley areas really are like two completely different worlds, despite being just five minutes from each other. We need to remember that, until relatively recently, it was illegal for a white person to be seen in a black area, or for a black person to be seen in a white area unless they had a 'pass' for work-purposes. History cannot be erased, and as such, integration has been slow.

The Town of Hillcrest

Here you will find:

- Hillcrest Corner Shopping Centre: contains Checkers (a large supermarket open 9am – 8pm every day), clothing shops, beauty salons, an internet cafe and restaurants.
- McDonalds and KFC for fast food
- The Hillcrest Police Station
- Mrs Price Home, a cheap place to buy things for the home
- The Pick n Pay Centre: a shopping centre that's home to Pick n Pay (another supermarket only open until 6pm), Photo World (where you can get your photos processed etc) and Mugg and Bean – a café/restaurant that's always a favourite with the visiting volunteers (and boasts wireless internet access!)
- Service stations for petrol
- The Hillcrest AIDS Centre (at 26 Old Main Road)

We don't have to tell you that South Africa has higher crime rates than Australia or America does. When you consider the fact that we have 50 million people, many of whom live in poverty, squashed into a space much, much smaller than the size of Australia, it's no wonder really, and we shouldn't be surprised by it. Poverty, a violent history of war, combined with the South African set-up of the 'haves' living literally right beside the 'have nots', contributes to the crime rates. However, it's important to use your common sense and take precautions. We suggest the following:

When in the car:

- When driving in your car, make a habit of locking the doors when you first get in. Most hire cars will do this automatically anyway. There are some car hijackings that happen, so lock your door and avoid driving at night in dodgy areas.
- Try to avoid putting your handbag, phone, or other valuables on the car seats or dash display areas. Either put them under your seats, or in the boot.
- Always lock your car and try to leave it somewhere secure, well-lit and well-populated.
- Never stop to help anyone who tries to flag you down on the side of the road (even if it's a woman or child). This sounds terrible, but unfortunately people can be working in groups and hijackings can occur when do-gooder drivers stop to offer assistance. If there's any kind of disturbance, or a break-down etc, drive past and contact the local Police or Ambulance if you think someone needs help. The numbers are:
Emergencies - 10111

Ambulance - 10177

Difficulty with emergency services - 1022

Police - 1011

- Don't pick up any hitchhikers and don't hitchhike

In your accommodation

- In South Africa we are all in the habit of locking our doors and windows when we go out, and locking our doors when we're inside too. However, you will judge for yourselves based on your accommodation.
- If there's a safe, you may wish to put your valuables in it.
- When driving in and out of your accommodation, be aware of anyone lurking around the gate and alert security/the land lord if you notice anything. If you're coming in to your accommodation and you see someone lurking by the gate, rather do a circle and come back when they're gone.

Out and about

- Don't wave cash, your cell phone, camera, or other valuables around (as with any travel)
- Carry as few credit cards etc with you as possible (just take what you need with you and leave the rest at your accommodation)
- If you're in very crowded environments like in a market in Durban city or in a crowded street in the city, be aware of your handbag and pockets
- If you're wanting some exercise, go for walks during the day-light hours preferably with at least one other person. Don't walk alone, and especially not at night (walking around at night even in a group is not advised).
- Don't leave your handbags lying on the floor, on a chair, or anywhere other than with you.

Using ATMS

Your normal Aussie/USA bank cards will work here in South Africa (check with your bank to confirm) and you will withdraw cash from any South African ATM as per normal. When using an ATM, try to do it during the day, not at night, and when you type in your pin, cover it with your other hand (in case there's a camera capturing your pin). Put the cash straight into your wallet before leaving the ATM, and put your wallet inside your bag or pocket before leaving.

Drinking Water

South Africans almost all drink tap water, which is considered to be safe to drink. If you have any concerns, you can purchase bottled water at any shop. We would suggest you avoid drinking water from rain tanks at schools in the community.

Food

You can access all kinds of delicious food here. From Thai to Mexican to Italian, to traditional Zulu food, to Afrikans food, to the traditional South African braai (like a bbq) etc. There are many restaurants all around Hillcrest and in Durban city.

Tipping

You will notice that we have car guards (usually dressed in a uniform or a brightly coloured vest) who escort you into a free car park when you arrive, and help you to reverse out when

you're leaving. It is good manners to tip them if you've been parked for more than about 10 minutes. They serve a good purpose – ensuring your car is safe whilst you're shopping, and helping you to back out easily! A usual tip is between R1 and R5.

In restaurants it's the norm to leave a 10% tip for the waiters.

You can choose whether or not you'd like to tip the petrol station attendants. In South Africa we don't put our own petrol in our cars – the attendants do it for us, as well as checking the oil and water and washing our windows (it's very nice!). If you'd like to tip, R2 – R5 is the norm.

Beggars

Durban and Hillcrest are home to many homeless people (including many children), drug addicts and other destitute people. You will come across people begging for money or food on street corners and at traffic lights (especially when you're in a car – they wait at the traffic lights). The situation is very sad and heart-wrenching, but there are many non-profit organisations tackling the issues head-on. We would advise you to refrain from giving money to these beggars. Sadly, money will be used in most cases to fund a drug habit (many of the street kids are addicted to sniffing glue and you will see them with bags of glue – this causes disabilities and distortions to their limbs). If you feel moved by the beggar/street-kid issue, please let us know and we will direct you to one of the great non-profit organisations dealing with these issues so you can make a donation to them and know that your money is really making a difference, rather than actually making the situation worse by feeding a drug habit and encouraging the beggar mentality.

Zulu language

Here's a few phrases you might find useful!

Sawubona: Hello

Yebo: means yes and is the reply when someone says 'Hello'

Unjani: How are you?

Ngiyaphila: I'm fine.

Ngiyathanda South Africa: I love South Africa