

AIM Care Policy on Short-termers

Introduction

As AIM Care takes a range of different mental health professionals, it is difficult to be precise in defining our criteria for taking Short Term missionaries. To make the issue yet more complicated, the trainings, qualifications and licensure processes and terminology for mental health professionals vary across different Sending Regions.

Nonetheless, we are keen to be open to this possibility for the following reasons:

- To increase our capacity to meet the needs that come our way, and to balance the skills in the team
- To engender a vision in others about the work we are called to do, and to raise the question about their direction and calling
- And to offer support to STers in developing their skills in the context within which we work.

AIM Care has its main counselling centre in Nairobi, Kenya – known as ‘Tumaini Nairobi’ – but is opening a new centre in Kampala, Uganda, in early 2016, which will be known as ‘Tumaini Kampala’. At the time of writing, any short-term placements would be in Nairobi, but as the Kampala centre becomes established, placements there may also become feasible. In the text below, Kenya is referenced, but most of the same comments would apply to working in Uganda.

General

- Anyone coming short-term who will undertake therapeutic work with clients will need a suitable Kenyan work permit
- Counsellors, psychologists, and psychiatrists will need liability coverage for the work they do while in Africa; this may come through their training institution, licensing body etc., or be arranged through specialist insurers
- Psychiatrists will also need a Medical License to practise in Kenya
- Kenya has recently brought in legislation that will require counsellors and psychologists working in Kenya to be Registered. The implications of this for ex-pats, and the time-scale for implementation are currently unclear.
- Note that terminology varies from one region to another: ‘Licensed’ in the US is approximately equivalent to ‘Registered’ in some contexts and to ‘Accredited’ in the UK.
- Note also that some other professionals – e.g. Psychiatric Nurses, Occupational Therapists – may have a counselling specialism, and so could be considered for ST work at AIM Care.

Applications from Counsellors / Psychotherapists / Marriage & Family Therapists (MFT) / Clinical Social Workers (LCSW)

It takes considerable time for such counsellors / therapists to be inducted into the work of AIM Care, to then gradually build up a clientele, and then to work towards ending counselling with these clients before the end of the placement. Hence, placements of just a few months are not feasible.

Training level	Description	Comments
Masters level Counselling student	Still in training at Masters level	Not suitable for AIM Care, as they have insufficient experience.
Counselling Intern	Have completed their Masters level Counselling course but are not yet Licensed. They can counsel under supervision while working to collect the required hours for Licensure.	May possibly be suitable for ST placement at AIM Care, but ideally for 1 year. Placements shorter than 6 months not usually considered. Their supervision requirements may also constrain whether this is feasible for the STer or for AIM Care.
PhD Intern	Usually have to gain 1 year's experience after completing their PhD course-work to complete their qualification (a post-doctoral internship)	Likely to be suitable for ST application to AIM Care, ideally for 1 year; 6 months minimum might be considered. Placement would depend on the requirements for their internship such as supervisor qualification, whether counselling hours gained in Kenya will be accepted, etc.
Licensed Counsellor	They have completed their professional qualifications	Would be suitable for ST or LT application to AIM Care

Applications from Psychologists / School Psychologists

Psychologists with experience of psychological testing / psycho-educational testing / evaluations can undertake this kind of work relatively briefly, so shorter placements may be considered. Repeated short-term visits could also be feasible, such as coming several times over a year or two. It is helpful if they have experience in working with children.

Training level	Description	Comments
PhD Intern	Usually have to gain 1 year's experience after completing their PhD course-work to complete their qualification (a pre-doctoral internship), or to gain hours post qualification prior to gaining licensure (post-doc internship)	Likely to be suitable for ST application to AIM Care, ideally for 1 year; 6 months minimum might be considered. Placement would depend on the requirements for their internship such as supervisor qualification, whether counselling hours gained in Kenya will be accepted, etc.
Licensed Psychologist	They have completed their professional qualifications	Would be suitable for ST or LT application to AIM Care

Applications from Psychiatrists

Psychiatrists may be able to do shorter-term (1 – 2 month +) placements, particularly if they have experience in cross-cultural / African and/or mission settings. If they lack such experience, then 'longer short-term' (6 months +) placements are more likely to be feasible. Repeated short-term visits could also be feasible, such as coming several times over a year or two.

Training level	Description	Comments
Psychiatric Intern	Psychiatrists in training can request to do an Internship abroad; these are typically for just 2 months	This <i>might</i> be feasible, but very short periods are not feasible due to time required for induction unless they just come to observe our day-to-day work and clinics etc. and are not required to carry a medical registration in Kenya; alternatively, to undertake research or teaching under the auspices of their training institution.
Qualified Psychiatrist	They have completed their professional qualifications	Would be suitable for ST or LT application to AIM Care. If they already have experience in cross-cultural / African and/or mission settings, ST placements could be quite brief – a month or two. Otherwise several months or longer is more feasible.

Short-term placements to undertake a project (rather than do face-to-face therapeutic work with clients)

It *may* be possible to do a ST placement – perhaps a month? – at AIM Care to undertake some project, but not do therapeutic work with clients. Projects might be something like

- Training clinicians at Tumaini and/or the Kenyan counselling community in specialised skills
- To offer intensive counselling retreats if experienced in mission settings
- Research relevant member care topics in order to add resources to our library or website.

During such a visit the STer could also join team meetings if they are clinically trained, or in training, and so get a feel for the work of AIM Care and our context in ABS. This could include visits to other sections within Africa Based Support.

Visits to AIM Care / Tumaini for those considering applying long-term to AIM Care

Mental health professionals (any of the above categories) who are considering making a long-term application to work at AIM Care, and want to visit us before going ahead with their application, might come to visit for a week or so. During this visit, they would meet the team, join team meetings and get a feel for the work of AIM Care and our context in ABS (but not do any work with clients). It may be feasible to combine this with a short-term mission / vision trip in East Africa, e.g. the 'Go' or the 'Catalyst 390' schemes, if this interests them, as this would help them to gain a better understanding of AIM's mission and the life of missionaries working in Africa.