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Information on Return and Reintegration in the Countries of Origin – IRRICO

GUINEA



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Health

The government has created health centres in the urban and rural areas in order to have access to a better medication at the least cost on the largest possible scale. There are still badly covered areas (enclosed areas where access is difficult) in localities deep within the regions, where needs are often felt more intensely.

In spite of certain negotiated grants, the patients are obliged to pay themselves for their medical treatment. It must also be noted that there is no medical insurance system for patients barring taking out one of the private insurances.

Basic generic medicines are frequently available in the health centres.

It must be noted that amongst everything else, the medicines are very expensive, because they are not subsidised in Guinea, due to the fact that the pharmacies and other specialist hospices are obliged to import in currencies, the price of which varies every day on the sale or purchase in the bureaux de change.

The HIV/AIDS action plan in Guinea

In theory, multiple drug therapy is free of charge in Guinea, but it is very difficult to access it. The CNLS (National Committee for the fight against AIDS) is the only entity that receives funds (from the World Bank amongst others) to finance the different public awareness campaigns about the dangers of HIV/AIDS, as well as to finance the hospitals trained in the treatment of patients (public hospital). The Donka¹ hospital, which is one of the largest medical institutions for all general medicine with different specialisations, carries out specific training for the mass marketing, communication and marketing aspect on the subject of the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

There is a national programme to fight against HIV/AIDS, which is led by the CNLS² at the Primature in Conakry. There are also several medical centres in the different communes, of which the most important is the CMC (Communal Medical Centre) of Matam, organised, run and financed by MSF Belgique³. The Donka hospital houses a department in charge of awareness of the disease, with a State employee trained in giving the treatment in a preventative manner at the helm.

Nowadays, a new concept that has been drawn up, called "multisectoral fight", does not only consider the Ministry of Health, but all the ministries which are involved in the common fight to reduce the transmission and the danger of HIV in the population as a whole. It must be added that these agents trained at the DONKA hospital are currently charged with taking various actions:

¹ DONKA Hospital, BP 234 Donka Conakry, Guinée. Tel. : +224 46 10 12

² National Committee for the fight against AIDS (CNLS), Villa n°9-Cité des Nations, B.P. 3185 Conakry, Tel.: (224) 29 46 87, E-Mail: cnlsida02@yahoo.fr

³ <http://www.msf.be/>

- information, education and awareness programmes about HIV/AIDS in all the CRDs (Rural Development Community)
- collaboration with some foreign partners and associations fighting against HIV/AIDS which due to the lack of adequate means, participate voluntarily
- distribution of condoms
- awareness sessions through peer educators, health teachers, posters, timely distribution of leaflets, etc.
- showing of film about HIV/AIDS
- plays, singing, games etc.

The organisation Médecins sans frontières de Belgique (MSF-Belgique) was launched to treat patients affected by the virus free of charge. Since they work using their own funds, they cannot offer this opportunity to the whole population but are based on well-defined medical criteria.

Seroprevalence was 1.5% in 2006 (last national survey carried out in the country, probably an underestimate). In women aged between 15 and 49, the rate is 1.9% higher than the estimated rate in men of the same age (0.9 %). There is therefore a ratio of infection between men and women of 2.1%, which means that women are clearly more vulnerable than men to HIV infection.

Prevalence in urban areas is higher than in a rural environment: 2.4% compared with 1.0%. HIV does not uniformly affect the different administrative regions of Guinea: Conakry 2.1%, Labé 1.8%, N'zérékoré 1.7%, Faranah 1.6%, are the areas where the levels of prevalence are the highest. The regions of Kinda 0.9% and Mamou 0.7% are the regions where the level of prevalence is weakest.

In the last two years there have been many activities with regard to prevention and care of PLWHIV (people living with HIV), among others:

- The training of health workers and NGOs working with PLWHIV in terms of their care
- Communication activities designed to change behaviour (Peer Education) among the population in general;
- The setting up of Centres de Dépistage Volontaire et Anonyme (CDVA) (voluntary and anonymous screening centres) in some of the country's health facilities;
- Medical and alimentary care of certain PLWHIV by PAM, CNLS, DREM, GTZ and MSF Belgique;
- The setting up of a Programme de Transmission Mère et Enfant (PTME) (mother and child transmission programme) by the ministry of health in partnership with UNICEF;
- Elaboration of a National strategic framework for the fight against HIV/AIDS 2003-2007;
- Development of the document: rules and procedures for the fight against HIV/AIDS
- The setting up of 33 HIV sentinel surveillance sites;
- Development of the monitoring and assessment strategy;
- Demographic and health survey 2005;
- Home care for PLWHIV.

Availability of medicines

Multiple drug therapy remains very expensive and is not always available to Guineans. Three years ago the cost of the treatment was approximately one million Guinean francs/month. Today it is 35,000 Guinean francs/month (approximately 10 USD), but even at this price the medicines are not always affordable for the population. The Landreah pharmacy (opposite the stadium) and the Manquepas pharmacy (town centre) are the two best-equipped pharmacies in Conakry.

Access to medical treatment cover:

There are health centres or health stations in the town centres, the CRDs and districts of the country, but the accessibility of the centres locations is difficult for the populations living in the most distant villages. Donka Hospital remains the best option. The only way of obtaining medical insurance in Guinea is to take out private insurance, and it is not guaranteed that the private insurance will cover people who are already ill.

Accommodation

The housing situation

The housing situation remains precarious in Guinea. There are no real estate agencies or moderated room rental agencies as there are in certain countries of the sub-region, which makes looking for a room difficult.

The majority of the population still lives in certain deprived areas, where the houses are still in the ancient colonial style. After the long years of deprivation during the former regime, the democratic launch started in order to improve the living conditions of the Guineans, housing conditions particularly in certain urban areas and in the suburbs of Conakry have clearly improved.

For people returning to Guinea, it is not easy to find an apartment or a house to rent, but these people generally try to live with members of their family in the first place.

The prices of accommodation

The prices of renting a house in Guinea vary greatly, because the owners can set the prices at their convenience.

- An "average" house in town might currently be negotiated at around GNF 350.000, that is 101USD even GNF 400.000 that is 115 USD / more or less.
- In the upper suburbs the prices are more accessible: between GNF 150.000 and GNF 250.000 (310-515 USD).

In order to find a house, the person is obliged to go to brokers, of whom there are a large number in the town. These brokers are not always reliable, and may also lead you to make a bad choice. Personal connections remain the best way of finding accommodation.

The cost of construction

With the increase in the cost of building materials, purchasing a plot of land to build on is becoming more and more difficult for the people of Guinea. While there are more opportunities in remote or rural areas, cities are still housing islands where all socio-professional activities are concentrated.

In principal, people build using their own funds, without borrowing from the bank, because at the moment there is no bank for housing in Guinea. The rate of borrowing from local banks is about 25%.

Education

Education continues to be very archaic, despite the efforts made by the government⁴ in order to improve the entire education system.

Teaching lacks quality resources and the teachers are not in the best working conditions to carry out their mission to educate the population.

Unfortunately not everybody has access to education because living conditions on the socioeconomic plan mean that parents give up their role very early with regard to the education of their children, correctly raising their children with lack of means (the weight of tradition in the different ethnic groups).

The education rate in Guinea remains very low in general, particularly the education of young girls (18%).

Public and private schools

For parents who have slightly greater financial means, private education is very expensive but gives better opportunities for a quality education than public schools.

Per person, including all costs, private schools cost around three hundred thousand Guinean francs (GNF 300,000 / month that is 86 USD) even four hundred thousand Guinean francs (GNF 400,000 / month that is 115 USD) on average in the various private teaching establishments.

Universities

Generally the public universities offer diplomas without employment opportunities.

Currently, Guinea has a large number of private universities (Kofi Annan⁵), which try to give quality teaching at a price that is often very high and difficult to afford for a middle class Guinean citizen (more than GNF 1,000,000 that is USD 289 per month and per person). The students obtain recognised diplomas, which enable them to continue on to other higher studies

⁴ Further information on the official site of the Republic of Guinea: <http://www.guinee.gov.gn/>

⁵ <http://www.univ-kag.org/>

in Conakry or abroad.

Professional training

There are also professional training schools (approximately GNF 450,000, even GNF 500,000 that is USD 144 or more) that lie within the framework of private teaching so that Guineans can acquire quality training and quickly put it into operation in their everyday lives. Even with this assistance, the job market remains very precarious.

Certain establishments that have a good reputation are listed below for your information:

Private colleges:

- Saint-georges:

Tel: 60 25 46 75

PO Box: 866 Commune de Ratoma

- Sainte-Marie

Tel: +224 60 25 75 65

PO Box: 1910 commune de Dixin

- Kofi Annan

Tel: +224 60 55 56 10

PO Box: 1367 commune de Ratoma

- Koumandjan Kéita

Tel: +224 60 54 42 29

PO Box: 4570 Commune de Ratoma

Public colleges:

- Lycée Yimbaya

Tel: (224)60 34 77 19

PO Box: 866 Commune de Matoto

- Lycée 2 Octobre

Tel: (224) 30 45 54 57

PO Box: 198 Commune De Kaloum

Public Professional Institutes:

- Ecole Nationale Des Arts Et Métiers (ENAM)

Tel: (224) 46 25 62

PO Box: 240 Commune de Matam

- Ecole Nationale Du Secrétariat D'administration Et De Commerce (ENSAC)

Tel: (224) 60 29 69

PO Box: 669 Commune de Dixin

- Ecole Des Télécommunications De Kipé

Private Professional Institutes:

- Institut Professionnel Modern (IPM)

Tel: (224) 30 46 31 40

Immeuble Fawaz

Commune de Matam

institutipm@yahoo.fr

- Institut Kofi Annan

PO Box: 1367 Commune de Ratoma

Public Universities:

- Université Gamal Abdel Naser De Conakry

Commune de Dixin

- Institut Polytechnique De foulaya A Kindia

Training of supervisors and superior technicians in several branches of socio-economic activity.

- Université Julius Nyerere De Kankan

Training in all branches of socioeconomic activity

- Institut Valery Giscard Destaind De Faranah

Training of agriculturalists and agriculture and breeding supervisors.

- Institut Supérieur De Geomine De Boké

Training of engineers and superior technicians in geology and mining.

Private Universities:

- Université Kofi Annan De Guinea (UNIKAG)

BP: 1367 Commune de Ratoma

- Université Mercure

Commune De Ratoma

- Université Internationale De Conakry (UNIC)

Commune de Ratoma

The diplomas from the universities above are generally recognised. It is possible to enrol against payment and presentation of equivalent documents or certificates from abroad. The possibilities of bourses or of support from the State are restricted.

Economic situation and employment

The State is currently completely uninvolved, leaving it up to the active population to create private initiatives. The unemployment rate is relatively high. Consequently, a person wishing to create a professional entity is obliged to begin with a private income contribution because the State gives practically no grants for carrying out a professional activity. Institutions like the PNUD (Programme of Nations United for Development⁶) study the files to participate actively in the development of the private sector in the country. They regularly give good grants to private individuals and assist governments to raise the standard of living and of development of the population as a whole by the granting of good credit.

Other banking entities such as the IMF (International Monetary Fund⁷) or the WB (World Bank⁸) also actively participate in the development structures in order to improve the living conditions of the population. Unfortunately, taking account of several factors, notably the rebel attacks against Guinea in 2000 and 2001 and a lack of strength in management, Guinea has, several times, broken the contractual terms of the IMF and the development organisations which have themselves sometimes suspended the bilateral or multilateral aid programmes for healthy, strict management of the allotted credits.

Following the various social movements that took place at the beginning of 2007, a new government in which the population has placed a lot of hope has been put in place. Concrete promises have been made to the population, but these remain to be kept. Currently, the situation is relatively stable, but it is worth noting that that the local authorities have still not been named and the composition of ministerial cabinets has not yet been made.

There are no job agencies in Guinea, and the socio-economic situation has not been particularly favourable for the creation and opening up of the job market, which is precarious in the country. The training poses a large problem for the placement of young people in the professional circuit. Some private companies try to emerge in order to develop the private sector in professional activities.

In its current situation, the State does not give any assistance to the reintegration of the Guineans who have returned to the country and they are all obliged to manage it themselves. The salary curve is very weak in the public sector where the State does not give anything in its budget for employment benefits in comparison with the private sector, which offers the best opportunities for an optimal yield for quality service provision.

A good salary in Guinea is around the equivalent of 100 USD per month.

For the moment there is no effective recognition system of pensions/retirement for people returning from abroad.

⁶ <http://www.undp.org/french/>

⁷ <http://www.imf.org/external/fra/index.asp>

⁸ <http://www.banquemondiale.org/>

Banking systems and investment opportunities

The Guinean banking system as a whole operates very well. Most of the local banks have agreements with financial institutions throughout the world. There are also companies that offer quite fast fund transfer services to Guinea. For further details, consult the *list of fund transfer companies*⁹ to and from Guinea, or the list of banks and financial institutions in Guinea (banks and other financial institutions which make all kinds of bank transactions)¹⁰.

Sometimes the transfers and the other fund transactions between the central bank, the primary banks and the other international financial institutions take place without many problems, other than the fact that the rates and other charges may often be higher due to the fluctuations of the local and foreign currency.

Nevertheless, credit cards (Visa and Mastercard) are used but only some hotels and banks accept them. However it is relatively easy to change the main foreign currencies in the banks and exchange bureaus in the towns. It is also supplied with American dollars and Euros.

With regard to assistance for investors, there are several, and they are available on the *list of Guinean organisations for promotion of investments*¹¹.

The banks operating locally are also development banks that participate actively in the economic development of all the activity sectors in Guinea:

- BICIGUI, Banque Internationale pour le Commerce et l'Industrie en Guinée,
BP 1484 Conakry
www.bicigui.com
E-mail: dg.bicigui@et-bull.net or dg.bicigui@biasy.net
The agencies: Niger, Madina, Dix inn gare, Kamsar, aéroport Gbessia
The BICIGUI is associated with the national bank of Paris, PARIBAS (member of the international Visa group)

- UIBG, Union Internationale de Banque en Guinée,
BP 324 Conakry
Tel.: +224 41 20 96 or +224 41 43 09
Fax: 00 377 979 72630
Swift Code: UIBAGNGN
Names of the correspondents:
 - Natexis Banque Populaire (45, rue St. Dominique, 75007 Paris)
 - Crédit Lyonnais Paris (55, av. Champs-Élysées, 75008 Paris)
 - Banque Bruxelles Lambert (Avenue Marmix 24, 1000 Brussels)

- S.G.B.G., Société Générale de Banques en Guinée
Head office: Cité des chemins de fer, Immeuble Boffa
E-mail: siege.sgbg@socgen.com
Tel.: +224 45 60 00

⁹ http://www.boubah.com/annuaire/Rubrique.asp?R_iD=1

¹⁰ http://www.boubah.com/annuaire/Rubrique.asp?R_iD=1

¹¹ http://www.boubah.com/annuaire/Rubrique.asp?R_iD=5

Fax: +224 41 25 65

- ECOBANK
E-mail: ecobankgn@ecobank.com
Tel.: +224 45 57 77 or +224 45 57 60
Fax: +224 45 42 41

They offer opportunities to open bank accounts that operate as follows:

These openings vary depending on the bank where one is resident, with each bank's specific and individual criteria. They can ensure the domiciliation of several accounts such as savings accounts, for which the following are required:

- A copy of a valid piece of identity
- Presentation of national identity card, valid passport or a legal visa. These documents open a credit line for the setting up of files to open the account, acting as a guarantee for the bank.
- Two identity photos, post box number and telephone number
- Residency certificate
- An initial deposit of GNF 300,000 (approximately USD 90)

The interest rates vary depending on the banks and may reach up to 11% with at least two authorised withdrawals per month.

Currency accounts are also subject to low rate deductions on the amounts withdrawn, with the application of VAT per month on the different financial transactions through the different banking institutions of the place.

Transport

The charter of the Communauté Économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (CEDEAO) (the Economic Community of West African States) makes provision for the free circulation of people and goods within the community's borders. This free circulation must apply to all people who possess documents proving that they belong to this communitarian space. The implementation of this measure has been facilitated by the introduction of a CEDEAO passport, introduced by Guinea in 2006. In practice, numerous problems still subsist in its application, notably due to the existence of roadblocks.

Despite many efforts to relieve the traffic congestion on the main axis linking Conakry with its outskirts and suburbs, the road infrastructure in its entirety is not sufficient to improve the population's living conditions. The road network in the city of Conakry is in a very poor state, while the regional network is markedly better maintained.

There are many international flight routes to Guinea. The most significant international airlines that fly to Conakry are SN/Brussels, Air France, Air Sénégal Internationale, Royale Air Maroc, Slok International (Gambia), Air Ivoire and Bellevue (Nigeria). Recently, the Guinean company UTA has started up its flights again to N'Zérékoré and Freetown.

Guinea is currently in the process of improving its road system. The main road arteries are tarmacked. Nevertheless, they are not yet up to the standards of developed countries. There is also a private interurban bus system that can take people practically anywhere in Guinea.

For some time however, we have been assisting large companies in carrying out large-scale

construction projects with the aim of improving the entire road network from the cities to the country's interior.

The depreciation of Guinea's currency also influences intercity transport and generates price increases, which do not favour travelling.

The railways barely function anymore due to the dilapidated state of the vast network inherited from colonial times and the public transport system such as public buses and other modes of transport are today in the hands of private sector transport companies.

Telecommunications

Since July 1997, Guinea has had a direct Internet connection thanks to the USAID¹² project called the *Leland Initiative*¹³.

The complete list of other Guinean sites can be found on the list of *Internet Service Providers (FSI)*¹⁴.

Nowadays, there is a proliferation and a vast campaign of opening Internet cafés. The connection is of a very good quality and enables Internet surfers to surf and improve the communications system in general.

The expansion of the network remains a challenge in order to enable populations of the interior to benefit from a better quality of communications service.

In 1996, the government decided to liberalize the telecommunications sector, which was until then under a state monopoly. Since then, negotiations took place with the interested partners and the market bid was given to three operators: Sotelgui S.A, Spacetel and Télécel, which later became Intercel. A new operator, Areeba, has recently appeared and has considerably lowered the price of chips and communications. It is now possible to buy a chip for 35,000 GNF (approximately 10 USD). The price of local communication is around 400 GNF (0.82 USD)/minute and the international communication around 2500 GNF (5.15 USD)/minute. Coverage is not widespread through the country, but is constantly being improved.

The price of mobile telephones is relatively high (approximately 100 USD for a basic handset).

Fixed telephone lines are not installed everywhere and are not reliable.

For more information on return and reintegration possibilities visit www.iom.int/irrico

¹³ Further information on: <http://www.usaid.gov/leland/>

¹⁴ On <http://www.boubah.com/>.