

FACILITATORS HANDBOOK

FRONT OFFICE



London



New York



Kampala



**AMBASSADE
DE FRANCE
EN OUGANDA**

*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



What is the purpose of this module?

This training module serves as guidance to train young people in Uganda in Front office skills in the tourism & hospitality sector. The module is based on principles of Active Learning.

The training is developed for beginner level trainings but can also serve as a refresher course for people with some experience in tourism & hospitality.

The module can be used in a stand alone training, or combined with other Ukarimu modules that are all freely accessible at www.ukarimuacademy.org.

What does this training module consist of?

THE MODULE CONSISTS OF:

- 1) Pages that guide the trainer on how to implement the different training activities.
- 2) Pages that will be displayed as a presentation during the training. These pages can be edited as you like via PowerPoint or Google Slides.

PREPARATIONS

Training participants

This training is developed for anyone with an interest in Front office skills in the tourism & hospitality. Commitment to the training should be among the recruitment criteria. As this training is written in English, basic literacy and understanding of English are important (although it can also be translated into other languages).

Trainers

The trainers are preferably tourism & hospitality professionals with particular interest in Front office training and that have gone through a training of trainers (ToT). Ideally, the lead trainer is supported by a sidekick who helps in coordinating the training.

Training venue

This training can be hosted at a range of training venues. To support active learning, choose a spacious venue where people can move around and work in small groups. Ideally your venue also has some outdoor space to host energizers and/or exercises.

Training materials

- Flipcharts, sticky notes, writing equipment
- Projector and slides
- Various documents that go alongside this module
- Certificates of participation (to be developed by the trainer)



TRAINING OUTLINE: DAY 1

AGENDA



Introduction of training and participants, expectation setting, etc.



Exploring the roles of the front office at various moments: before, during and after someone's stay



Good check-in and Bad check-in



Check-in procedures and Types of check-in situations



Guest registration & regulations



Professionalism, body language and first appearance



Open quiz and role plays



Wrapping Up





Introduction game (20 min)

STEPS

1. In a note book, each participant writes down details about them selves e.g.
 - Time of arrival in the hall
 - Gender, age range, any two personal details.
 - Best preferred type of accommodation arrangement
 - Any special other arrangement- Meals/hotel amenities that you would like.
- 2) Drop papers in a glass bowl to be picked randomly by each participant and introduce each other.



Learning goals

1. Participants will be more familiar with each other.
2. The exercise also introduces participants to this front office training.
3. Participants exercise their audibility, presentation skills, body language etc.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Participants can sit in a U-shape, so that each participant faces the group.

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 2



Expectation setting (20 min)

STEPS

1. Place the participants in an open circle, in front of a flipchart. Provide everyone with 3 sticky notes.
2. Let them reflect for 3 minutes on what they aim to learn during the training and what they can teach others.
3. Let them write down their learning goals on the sticky notes and invite them to place the sticky notes on the flipchart. (1 note = 1 learning goal)
4. Go through their answers and explain whether each expectation is realistic and reflect on what they can offer each other.
5. Emphasize that they should also take their own responsibility in ensuring that they actually learn what they have mentioned. Also emphasize that peer-to-peer learning can be very effective.
6. Also share your own expectations on the training and provide an overview of how the training will look like.



Learning goals

1. Participants are clear on what they aim to learn and take ownership of their learning goals.
2. Participants realise what they can offer to others and are willing to help each other.





TIP FOR THE FACILITATOR:

when sharing the learning goals, start with one goal of a participant, read it out loud and ask other participants if they have the same or a similar goal. Harvest and cluster similar answers so you create an overview of different learning themes emerging from the group.

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 2

Deciding on rules (20 min)



STEPS

1. Invite the participants to brainstorm on the rules for the training.
2. Let the participants split up in pairs and discuss with each other for 5 minutes what they consider to be proper rules on timekeeping, how to interact with each other, etc.
3. Ask each pair to mention one of the rules they have come up with. If the group agrees with the rule it will be written on a big sheet of paper. Allow people to come up with alternative suggestions.
4. Make sure people only suggest rules that cover new topics.
5. Also agree on what to do when someone doesn't respect the rule. Suggest something playful, such as singing a song or telling a joke.
6. When everyone (or at least the majority of the group) agrees with the rules, invite one person to sign the paper on behalf of the rest.
7. From now on the rules are in place!



Learning goals

1. The participants agree on the rules of the training and feel ownership over them.

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 2

The role of the front office (30 min)



STEPS

1. Introduce that today, we will understand the role of the front office. In a brainstorm, ask participants what they think is the role of the front office.
2. Harvest the answers of the participants on flip charts
3. When the participants have exhausted their contributions, crown the session up with a brief presentation on the role of the front office using the slides.



Learning goals

1. Participants understand the role of a front office personnel.





ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
Flip chart and stand
Markers

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 2

Good check-in and Bad check-in (60 min)



STEPS

1. In groups of 4-6, participants reflect on the following questions
 - What makes a good check-in experience?
 - What makes a bad check-in experience?
2. Each group will then present its reflections to the rest of the class in 3 minutes. Encourage participants to avoid repetition.
3. After the groups have shared, show a video showing good and bad examples of checking in a guest. Participants make notes and share their personal reflections of the video. Facilitators ensure participation of every individual.



Learning goals

1. Participants understand the elements of a good check-in and learn to be cautious of bad check-in elements.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
Video
Sound gadget
Projector/screen

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 3 to 5



Check-in procedures and situations

(90 min)



STEPS PART 1

1. Explain that, “every hotel/lodge has a process that it goes through when guests arrive at the premises. These are the check-in procedures.”
2. Invite participants to share some of the check-in processes that they go through in their hotel/lodge.
3. In groups of 4-6, assign participants one of 5 guest types/scenarios i.e., Group arrivals, Individual reserved guest, Walk-in guest, Overbooked guest, or VIP guest. Ask the participants to answer the following questions;
 - What are the specific check-in procedures needed for this type of guest?
 - How does this type of booking differ from others, and what unique challenges or considerations are important?
 - What steps can the front desk take to ensure the guest has a smooth and positive experience in this scenario?
4. Participants summarize their answers and key points. Each group will have 3 minutes to present their reflections to the rest of the class.
5. Energize the group with a game and close the session with some slides on check-in procedures and check-in situations, depending on how shallow or deep the presentations were.



Learning goals

1. Participants understand the check-in procedures and different check-in situations.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
Flipcharts
Markers

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 5 to 7



Guest registration & regulations

(30 min)



STEPS

1. Tell participants that, “most if not all hotels/lodges will use a registration form for checking in guests.” share examples of registration forms with participants and ask them to complete a form as though they were a guest.
2. In a brainstorm, participants share their experiences while filling the registration form and identify similarities/differences with their own hotel/lodge registration forms.
3. Open Quiz: What is the importance of the registration card details to the hotel and to the customer?
4. If needed, share the slide on guest registration, details and the importance of collecting guest details.



Learning goals

1. Participants understand the importance of guest registration and the regulations surrounding guest registration.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

None

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 7

Professionalism at the Front Desk

(45 min)



STEPS

1. Explain that “we will watch a video that shows how a professional front desk employee should behave or appear.
2. While watching the video, participants take notes of what they see as professional or unprofessional behavior and appearance.
3. In groups of 4-6, participants share and discuss their notes in line with;
 - First appearance
 - Personal presentation
 - Verbal practices
 - Body language



4. Participants present their discussion points and how they can be professional in their different work environment i.e. Hotel, lodge, restaurant etc.



Learning goals

1. Participants are reminded about the importance of always acting professionally in their work.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
Flipcharts
Markers

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 8

Open Quiz (60 min)



STEPS

1. Explain that, “Today, we have learnt about the role of the front office. We also learnt about guest check-in procedures, registration, regulations and professionalism as front office employees.
2. We are going to do an open quiz in which we will answer some questions about the importance of empathy, efficiency, and attention to detail as front office employees.
3. We will use the popcorn method, but everyone must provide an answer to any of the questions, as there are numerous answers.
4. The facilitator can give rewards to the most accurate answers as per the training given for the day
5. Close the quiz with 2 role plays to check if participants understood the check-in SOPs, also considering the guest profile. (Use role plays in the slides. Select 5 volunteers, 2 for the first one and 3 for the second one.)
6. The other participants listen and watch the actors and give feedback on what was well done and what can be improved.



Learning goals

1. Participants relate the knowledge acquired in the training to their work settings and understand further how to apply those skills



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
Question slide will be displayed during the quiz
Create a reception area for the role plays and put some documents on the table e.g. a pen, registration form etc.

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 8



Wrapping up (30 min)



STEPS

1. Hand out three sticky notes in different colors to each participant.
2. Let them write down on one sticky note with a specific color what they appreciated about the day.
3. Let them write down one thing they learned today on another sticky note.
4. Let them write down one thing that could be improved in the training at the last sticky note.
5. Ask them to place the sticky notes on a flipchart, grouped per color.
6. Invite everyone to walk up to the flipcharts and read the sticky notes.
7. Harvest a few answers in the plenary, 1-3 for each flipchart.



Learning goals

1. The participants learn to reflect on the training and their own learning process.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

None

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 9

TRAINING OUTLINE: DAY 2

AGENDA



Recap of day 1



What is customer service?



Communication with other departments - Collaboration, Preparation, Communication, Safety procedures, Administration



Billing and payment procedures



Tracking missing reservations and Handling non-guaranteed reservations



Dealing with disappointed guests



Wrapping Up



Customer service at the Front office

(60 min)



STEPS

1. Introduce the topic of customer service at the front office, with the help of the two reviews (to be found in the slides). Ask volunteers to read them out.
2. Write down the following question on a flipchart:
 - What is perfect customer service at the front office?
3. Harvest answers in a brainstorm session and write responses on a flip chart.
4. Depending on how exhaustive the brainstorm was, present the elements of PERFECT customer service at the front office. (To be found in the slides)



Learning goals

1. Participants get an understanding of how to improve their customer service at the front office.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Flip charts and markers

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 9 to 11

Communication at the front desk

(60 min)



STEPS

1. Interdepartmental communication
2. External communication with guests. Also focus on phone etiquette.
3. Other stakeholders e.g. Board members
4. In groups of 4-6, participants discuss the importance of inter-departmental communication. How can this practically ease;
 - Collaboration
 - Preparation
 - Safety procedures
 - Administration
5. Groups present the results of their discussion
6. Present the slide on inter-departmental communication to the participants
7. Using slides, go over the phone and email etiquette. organize role plays for practicing the phone etiquette and groups of 3-4, to write out professional emails on flip charts. The rest watch and provide feedback!





Learning goals

1. Participants get an understanding on how to communicate with all the other departments and why it's important to do so.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Flip charts , Markers, Videos for examples

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 12

Billing and payment procedures (90 min)



STEPS

1. This session is best done as a practical session at the front desk.
2. Participants are exposed to various payment modes and their respective procedures i.e. cash, credit cards, company billing and cheques/electronic transfers.
3. Each participant is given a chance to process a payment using the various gadgets used for different payment modes.
4. In a plenary, the facilitator moderates a discussion where participants share their learnings from this session and any questions that they may still have.



Learning goals

1. Participants learn how to process various billing and payment modes while following the right procedures.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Sample cheques
Cash (both local and foreign currency)
Sample L.P.Os
Sample credit card
Sample debit card
Payment terminals e.g. point of sale, credit etc.
Fake money detector
Money counting machine

(The facilitator is free to add other materials that may not be listed but are relevant)

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 13



Tracking missing reservations

(45 min)



STEPS

1. After an interactive energizer, the facilitator says, “In this session, we will learn about tracking missing reservations and how to handle non-guaranteed reservations.
2. In a brainstorm session, ask participants to share how to track a missing reservation (harvest answers on a flip chart)
3. When the facilitator is sure that participants have exhausted their contributions, ask, “How would you handle a non-guaranteed reservation?” (harvest answers on a flip chart)
4. Depending on the quality of participants contributions, the facilitator can present the slides on the procedures for tracking missing reservations and how to handle non-guaranteed reservations. A video showing the same can also come in handy.



Learning goals

1. Participants learn how to track missing reservations and how to handle non-guaranteed reservations.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Flip chart

Markers

Video of a receptionist practicing the skills (You can download from YouTube)

Clear sound/image is a must

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 14

Dealing with disappointed guests

(90 min)



STEPS

1. Using the slides, introduce the topic of dealing with disappointed guests.
2. Go through the 6 steps that generally help to satisfy disappointed guests.
3. Organize a role play in which 3 volunteers have to play out a scenario in front of the group.
4. Participant 1 and 2 will pick 2 cards randomly, 1 for who the clients are, and 1 for why they are disappointed. They will act as if they are those clients and are disappointed because of that reason.
5. Person 3 will represent a tourism company that is trying to deal with the disappointed clients. He/she will have to apply all the 6 steps as mentioned before. The group uses 5 minutes to prepare and 3 to present their role play.



6. The audience will give constructive feedback on whether the situation was handled correctly.
7. After the role play, ask participants to share a scenario/situation in their work, that they now realize could have been handled better.



Learning goals

1. Participants practice the skills of handling disappointed guests in front of the group, thus boosting their confidence as well.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Role play scenario cards must be printed earlier.

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 14 to 15

Wrapping up (30 min)



STEPS

1. In a plenary setting (semi-circle shape) participants share their main highlight of the day and explain why it was their main highlight.
2. In their explanation, participants can share what challenge/s they have been facing in their work, for which their highlight provides a solution.



Learning goals

1. The participants reflect on the days experiences and how they can help them improve their performance at work.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

None

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 15



TRAINING OUTLINE: DAY 3

AGENDA



Q&A session (Any questions from the past 2 days?)



Environmental sustainability and Green jobs (Definitions and elements)



Decent work (Definitions and elements)



Development of action points for environmental sustainability practices



Preventing/dealing with sexual harassment



Marshmallow game (About teamwork and resourcefulness)



Closure and Graduation



Q&A session (60 min)



STEPS

1. Say, “Over the past 2 days, we have discussed various topics including the role of the front office, check-in procedures, professionalism, customer service, billing/payment procedures and dealing with disappointed customers.”
2. Welcome participants to ask for clarity on any of the topics covered, where they still need it, in a question and answer session, “Ask the facilitator”.



Learning goals

1. The participants get an opportunity to ask the facilitators for more explanation on topics where they still have questions.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS None

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 15

Environmental sustainability and Green jobs (105 min)



STEPS

1. Introduce the topic of environmental sustainability and ask openly, “What is environmental sustainability?”
2. In 4 groups, ask participants to discuss the following questions in relation to their work environment and present to the group.
 - a. How can we save energy/power? How can we communicate it to our guests?
 - b. How can we save water? How can we communicate it to our guests?
 - c. How can we practically protect our environment in terms of air quality, soil, vegetation etc.? How can we communicate it to our guests?
 - d. What are the bottlenecks to environmental sustainability in the tourism and hospitality sector?
3. Once the groups have shared, the facilitator presents the sustainability and green jobs criteria as a round up of the session and participants can share if and how they practice the elements of the criteria.





Learning goals

1. The participants learn about environmental sustainability and how it can be achieved in their places of work.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Markers and flipcharts

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 16 to 17

Decent work and safety (60 min)



STEPS

1. Begin this session by saying that we are going to talk about decent work. Then ask,
 - a. “What does the term decent work mean?”
 - b. Ask a few people, “If you were to give marks, out of 100, to what extent is your job decent?” “Why?”
2. Then the facilitator will present the elements of decent work using the slides and ask the participants to re-assess how decent their job is after seeing the elements shared?
3. As a close to the presentation, participants can be asked on how they intend to professionally push their employers to offer them decent jobs.



Learning goals

1. Participants will learn about and appreciate decent work. Facilitator to ensure that participants understand their rights VS their responsibilities, so that there is a knowledge balance



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Flipchart and markers

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 17 to 19



Development of action points for environmental sustainability practices (30 min)



STEPS

1. Participants sit down in pairs or teams from the same work place and discuss the elements of environmental sustainability that can be practiced at their work establishment.
2. Facilitators encourage participants to think creatively and out of the box as there are many ways to practice environmental sustainability, which are not capital intensive.
3. Participants present their list to the rest of the group in 2 minutes and the rest can contribute to their list.



Learning goals

1. Participants create action points geared towards environmental sustainability practices and get inspiration to push the sustainability agenda at their workplace.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
None

No reference page, it is a creative session

Preventing sexual harassment! (30 min)



STEPS

1. The facilitator asks participants to define sexual harassment according to their personal understanding, in a brainstorm.
2. The slides on safety and sexual harassment will be presented and participants are welcome to share their personal experiences especially on how to avoid sexual harassment and the course of action to take in the face of sexual harassment.



Learning goals

1. Participants will learn how to prevent/deal with sexual harassment.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS
None

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 20



Teamwork and resourcefulness

(30 min)



STEPS

1. Group Activity: Marshmallow Challenge
2. In groups of 4-5, participants are given a task with the same amount of materials i.e. 20 Spaghetti sticks, 1 meter Thread, 1 meter masking tape and 1 Marshmallow
3. The task is to build the tallest freestanding structure in 15 minutes, with the marshmallow on top, using the materials provided.
4. Participants can use as much or as little of the materials but can't have more.
5. Participants can break up the spaghetti, thread and tape. Not the marshmallow!
6. At the end of 15 minutes, every one should stop building and the facilitator/s will measure the tallest freestanding structure to determine the winner.
7. Participants will then share their learnings from the game, which the facilitator will prompt using the content in the slides



Learning goals

1. Participants learn how to work as a team, with the given resources in the workplace.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Bring a few contracts and job descriptions that can serve as example.

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 20 to 21



Closure & graduation (90 min)



STEPS

1. Encourage the participants to think on what they will do with their learning. Let them come up with a plan that has tangible goals.
2. Invite all participants to have some closing remarks in which they elaborate on what they learned and on their next steps.
3. Hand out certificates and have fun.



Learning goals

1. Participants will have thought about the next steps after the training and have enjoyed the closure of the training.



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Certificates of participation, to be developed before the training.

Reference Training content Front Office, page: 21



THIS MODULE IS DEVELOPED BY...

Lead partner



Ukarimu is an initiative that develops open-source training material for the tourism & hospitality industry.

www.ukarimuacademy.org

Funding partner



Implementing partners

