



Concept

The AAPU Emergency Medical Service Centre

AUGUST 2025



32 killed on Kampala-Gulu highway in three months

Saturday, March 23, 2019 – updated on September 26, 2020



Residents of Lukomera village look at the wreckage of a taxi involved in an accident that claimed six lives at Lukomera village on Kampala-Gulu highway on March 22, 2019. PHOTO BY DAN WANDERA

Govt must urgently address the rampant road accidents

Thursday, January 12, 2023



The wreckage of the bus that rammed into a stationary trailer along Kampala-Gulu highway, killing 16 people on January 6, 2023. PHOTO | COURTESY



Summary & Background

This proposal seeks to mobilize resources for the establishment of an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Centre of excellence along the Gulu Highway in Uganda. The project aims to strengthen pre-hospital emergency care and response, including trauma stabilization, through professional training in emergency medical care. The EMS Centre will serve as a critical intervention to reduce preventable deaths caused by road traffic accidents, trauma, and medical emergencies in a region with limited emergency care infrastructure.

Our catchment area of Luweero – Nakasongola belongs to Savannah Region in Uganda and has a population of over 653.000 people (2021, Ghana Statistical Services). The hospital and health care situation in particular this region is very poor and inadequate. Up to today, there has not been one facility in a radius of 100km around Nakasongola, which is focusing on trauma and acute emergency care. The next higher level medical care can be received in Kiryandongo Hospital or in the capital city Kampala.

The Crash Severity Index measures the likelihood of having fatality/fatalities in any event of a crash happening. It is defined as a number of people killed per 100 crashes.

In Savannah Region, an average of 20 people died in every 100 road traffic crashes in the year 2024.¹

Outcomes of hospital management of emergencies are dependent on the pre-hospital care and thus the condition of the patient on arrival at the emergency department. The transportation and rescue services at crash scenes are inadequate and inappropriate. Many injured victims arrive at health facilities by any means of transport possible such as the motorcycle taxi (boda boda), police trucks and private cars. Fewer than 5% of the victims arrive by ambulance.

The overall goal of the national EMS is improvement to reduce mortality and morbidity by ensuring high quality, safe and patient-centred pre-hospital and in-hospital emergency care that meets the needs of the population and is accessible to all.

Given the strategic significance of the Gulu Highway as a major transport and trade route, there is an urgent need for a robust emergency care system. The proposed EMS Centre of excellence will address this gap by establishing an integrated service that includes ambulance stations, a trauma stabilization centre and a professional training centre for EMS personnel.



¹ Annual Crime Report 2024, Uganda Police Force



Introduction AAPU

The Association of Ambulance Professionals Uganda (AAPU) Ltd. was founded in June 2017 with the vision of becoming the leading organization in the development and networking of professional emergency medical service (EMS) providers in Uganda.

AAPU represents and supports EMS providers across Uganda through advocacy, educational programs, training, and capacity building initiatives.

The board of AAPU consists of emergency physicians, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), critical care nurses, general practitioners, and other professionals from the EMS sector, bringing together a diverse range of expertise and experience.

With over 400 paid-up members, AAPU collaborates closely with the Ministry of Health Uganda (MoH), particularly with the Department of Emergency Medical Services, to help advance the development of emergency care services nationwide.

AAPU has been actively involved in training healthcare workers across Uganda in both pre-hospital and in-hospital settings, covering critical areas such as cardiac arrest management, trauma care, first aid, and pericardial arrest management. This has fostered strong connections with major healthcare institutions throughout the country, contributing to the improvement of patient care through education.

AAPU's achievements reflect a strong commitment to transforming Uganda's emergency medical services through sustained efforts in advocacy, training, system development, and community empowerment. The organization continues to set the benchmark for EMS excellence in Uganda and the region.

Challenge

However, AAPU currently faces significant financial challenges due to high expenses related to rent, security, and operational costs at its Training Centre.

Monthly expenses are estimated to exceed 5,000,000 UGX (approximately 1,250 EUR). As a result, the association heavily relies on funding from international NGOs. In light of global challenges and shifting geopolitical dynamics, this reliance on external funding has become increasingly unpredictable and difficult to manage.

Additionally, due to the rising demand for training opportunities, the current AAPU Training Centre has become too small to accommodate all activities. These factors highlight the urgent need for expansion, including the construction of a new facility to house all components of the AAPU EMS Centre. Such a development would help alleviate the financial burden of rent and provide a larger, more efficient space for the association's growing operations.

Solution

Establishment of a fully equipped Emergency Medical Services Centre of excellence along Gulu Highway.

The establishment of a comprehensive Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Centre of excellence along Gulu Highway in Uganda enhances pre-hospital care, strengthens trauma response, and builds local capacity through training, ambulance deployment, and the establishment of a trauma stabilization centre, thereby reducing preventable deaths and improving emergency care access for rural and peri-urban communities.

Short-term (< 5 Years)

To operationalize a fully equipped AAPU EMS Centre, including:

- Strengthening Emergency care capacity of the existing health facilities along the Gulu highway corridor through:
 - Equipping Emergency Care units with direly needed emergency equipment for acute stabilisation of emergency patients before transferral for continued definitive care
 - Enhancing knowledge and skills of the existing health care workers in emergence care p
 - Improving communication and coordination at all stages of the Rescue Chain
- Establishing a minimum of three strategically located ambulance stations along the Gulu highway. This will not only ensure high quality and timely emergency care services for the population of the entire region but also create job opportunities for the large cohorts of newly produced EMTs in Uganda and East Africa.
- Up scaling the existing certified AAPU EMS Training Centre to train over 400 pre- & in-hospital medical personnel in internationally certified courses annually, while reducing pre-hospital response times by over 60% and strengthening regional emergency coordination mechanisms through:
 - On-job training for all existing national pre-hospital training programs including the paramedic and emergency physician training programs
 - Standardized, internationally certified training programs of the European Resuscitation Council (ERC) such as Advanced Life Support (ALS), European Paediatric Advanced Life Support (EPALS), Neonatal Life Support (NLS) & Basic Life Support (BLS), as well as International Trauma Life Support (ITLS) courses such as ITLS Provider course, Duty to Respond (DTR) and Access courses.
- Building a stronger Emergency Medical Service cooperation with the regional EMS stakeholders, Ministry of Health, Local Government, Uganda Police Force and the Community.
- Establishing a Medical Technology Hub at AAPU EMS Centre, to open the Ugandan market for German companies, which produce emergency medical equipment. This high-quality equipment will not only lead to better diagnostic and treatment

during emergency care in Uganda but also support AAPU with regular income due to the given support.

- Giving an office to the Ugandan National Resuscitation Committee (UNRC) will host and bring together all medical and non-medical association involved in emergency care, to support the vision of empowering and equipping of medical and non-medical people with standardised high quality resuscitation skills.
- Giving an office to the African Federation of Emergency Medicine (AFEM) will build an African Hub for south-south cooperations in the future.

Long-term (> 5-10 Years)

To evolve the AAPU EMS Centre into a national model for Emergency Medical Service delivery and training through:

- Establishing the first of its kind, state of the art Ambulance Training College producing at least 100 emergency medical responders annually in Uganda and East Africa. The development of a strong pre-hospital work force will provide timely and high-quality emergency response, thereby reducing preventable deaths in acute and emergency situations in Uganda and East Africa.
- Incorporating Mental Health Services as a fundamental part of the EMS Centre to improve the mental well-being among EMS personnel through offering counselling and psychological support services. This will reduce Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Depression rates and Burn-out of medical and pre-hospital personnel.
- Expanding pre-hospital care coverage to reach 70% of the highway population and the entire region. This ensures timely Emergency intervention leading to a 60% reduction in acute emergency-related mortality along the Gulu Highway region.
- Becoming a recognized EMS Centre of excellence for research and technological innovation in East Africa. This includes the establishment and coordination of an East-African-EMS-Hub which will stand for innovation, exchange and south-south collaboration among the East African countries.
- Building Cottages with a small Coffee-Shop for international visitors, which can be rented to any EMS enthusiasts and therefore strengthens AAPU capacity.

Partners



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