



foundation for **sustainable** development



fsd: uganda

Jinja Pre-Departure Program Guide

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letter from the fsd staff

Congratulations again on your choice to work abroad on sustainable development projects in conjunction with the Foundation for Sustainable Development and Northwestern University's Global Engagement Summer Institute. For many of you this experience will be an event that sparks a lifelong interest in development. For others, it will be a chance to gain insight to other cultures that can only be obtained through direct experience. For all of you it will be a chance to make a lasting impact on people and communities in your host country and an opportunity that will make a lasting impression in your life.

There are many challenges that await you. It is likely that the most difficult obstacles you face will not be the ones that put your technical skills or knowledge to the test. More often it will be the difficulty of gaining the cultural competencies necessary to do successful work in a community. It will be learning to see the problems facing a region from the eyes of a community member rather than through the eyes of an outsider. Try and remember throughout your experience that the information about culture, community and language you learn should guide your work as much as your other knowledge.

It is important to remember that during your program you will represent both yourself, Northwestern University and FSD in your community. Many people in the region that you will work in have had very little experience with people from outside their country. As such they will develop opinions of you and the work of FSD through their interactions with you or what they hear about you. We ask that you take your visibility into consideration when you make decisions about your actions in your host country.

It is the intention of FSD to provide you with a broad support network to best position you for success, but at the end of the day, it is your effort that will most influence the success of your experience with FSD. You will need to take initiative and put yourself in situations that stretch your comfort levels. You will have to work within cultural contexts that can cause extreme frustration. Many other challenges await. At the same time you face these challenges you also have an incredible set of opportunities. Go into the experience with the willingness to listen and learn. You will find that through this willingness you will increase your ability to give to your community.

This guide has been developed to help make clear what FSD expects of our interns and volunteers and what you can expect of us. We look at your internship or volunteer program as a partnership. It is our hope and belief that clear expectations are the foundation for a solid working relationship. Please read this guide thoroughly as it contains information that is crucial to the success of your experience and our partnership.

Above all, be aware that you should feel comfortable contacting FSD in the San Francisco office if you need additional support or questions answered.

Good luck!

fsd's mission, values and vision

At the center of the internship experience are the core values, vision, and mission that make FSD the organization that it is. We ask that our interns understand and remember these tenets of FSD throughout their time abroad, in order to make their internships meaningful experiences for both you and the communities in which you serve.

Vision

To enhance our partners' abilities to support sustainable community-based development work that is participatory and shaped by community-defined opportunities and needs.

Core Values

Transparency

Accountability

Participation

Community

Responsiveness

Sustainability



FSD interns with a partner organization in Jinja

FSD's Mission

FSD supports the efforts of grassroots development organizations in the developing world that are working to better their communities, environments, and the economic opportunities around them. We believe economic development begins with community development and is only sustainable if it comes from and is supported by the members of these communities. Also, through our programs, we aim to raise international awareness of the economic challenges in developing countries and support cross-cultural communities in finding more effective solutions to development issues.

web of support

FSD is a key partner in your experience. Below are the three main players on FSD's team, with a description of exactly how they will support you.

San Francisco Office: Headquarters

- **Program Arrangements:** FSD San Francisco communicates and confirms your program location, host organization and host family with our international Site Team. The San Francisco staff collaborates with GESI faculty and staff on the program curriculum and participants in the pre-departure seminar and final summit in Chicago.
- **Pre-Departure Materials:** We provide support materials prior to your departure. This includes information about host organization and country-specific pre-departure packets,.
- **Emergencies:** In the case of emergency, at home or abroad, FSD San Francisco is available at all times to support you and your family, and to ensure your safety, security, and well-being.
- **Re-Integration Support:** Upon your return, the San Francisco Office will connect you to a network of other alumni and offer opportunities and incentives to share your experience with others.

FSD San Francisco International Programs Staff

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San Francisco Office:

415-283-4873

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Emergency Cell Phone:

415-828-8414

Site Team Abroad

a. Program Director: Resident Expert and Advisor - Your Program Director is a development professional from your host country and has extensive community contacts and local knowledge. They manage and develop FSD's relationship with our Host Organizations in addition to fulfilling the following roles:

- **Local Expert:** to your host country and community, current events, local culture and customs, food, language.
- **Placement Counselor:** Your Program Director mediates your relationship with your host organization and host family. They will check in with you, your host organization, and family and do everything within their power to ensure that you and your host are comfortable with the match.
- **Project Advisor and Guardian:** Your Program Director will draw upon their extensive community development experience to help you design and implement a successful project. In addition, your Program Director will hold you and your host organization accountable for reporting on your project and the funds used to complete it. After you leave, your Program Director will continue to follow up on your project.
- **In-Country Emergency Contact:** If you fall ill, are robbed, or find yourself in any other type of emergency, the Program Director is available to support you and to move forward with securing medical attention for you, seeking legal support, and otherwise ensuring your safety, security, comfort, and well being.

b. Program Coordinators: Resident Expert and Cultural Liaison - Your Program Coordinator provides the necessary support to you, FSD's host families and our partner organizations.

- **Bridge:** Your PC is there to bridge the communication gaps that often times open up between different cultures and languages.
- **Culture Shock Lifeline:** Your PC has experience dealing with culture shock, and can help you to move through it as smoothly as possible – she is there to listen to your frustrations, to help you work through challenges, indulge you in some comforts from home, and to offer some perspective and guidance.
- **Project Development Advisor:** As you plan, implement, and develop a project, your PCs will offer feedback and advice on how to carry out a successful and sustainable development project.
- **Local Expert and Cultural Bridge:** Your PC is a key resource for understanding your host country and community, current events, local culture and customs, food, language. He is there to bridge the communication gaps that frequently arise between different cultures and languages.
- **Placement Advisor:** Your PCs help mediate your relationship with your host organization and host family. They will check in with you, your host organization, and family and do everything within their power to ensure that you and your host are comfortable with the match.

jinja: letter from site team

Hello and congratulations on being selected to participate with FSD in Uganda! We are all excited to be receiving you and are working hard here in preparation for your arrival.

We have been in consult with your host organization over the past several months and have attempted to match you with one that was most inline with your beliefs, goals and work preferences. We have told them all about you and they are looking forward to your arrival!

Living and working in Uganda is bound to be an unforgettable experience for yourself, your colleagues, your host family as well as the communities you will work with. This is a unique opportunity to learn about and immerse yourself in a different culture that will surely change your view of the world. Keep an open mind and take every opportunity to learn from those around you.

We have created this pre-departure packet as a tool to provide you with practical information that will hopefully be useful to you in settling into life in Uganda. This pack includes information about Ugandan culture, lifestyle and practical information about Jinja.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions that you may have. We are here to help you and make sure that you feel comfortable with your overseas experience.

We can't wait to meet you!

Jinja Site Team

Margaret Nassozi Amanyire
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Jonan Nandolo
Program Coordinator
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*Foundation for Sustainable Development
FSD Jinja
PO Box 1722
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FSD Jinja



Program Director: Margaret Nassozi Amanyire

Margaret is a development worker with more than a decade's experience working with communities to cause social development. She began her career as a Government Civil Servant with Ministry of Gender and Community Development in Uganda, where she worked on issues of Culture, Women and gender plus Youth and development. She later worked as District Community Development Officer in Western Uganda, before joining the Civil Society fraternity in 1998. She has since been working as Coordinator for a Civil Society networks, and has done consultancy work with European Union and CARE International. She has facilitated the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development, strategic and action plans for organizations. Margaret holds a Bachelors of Development Studies, the Commonwealth Diploma in Youth and Development and a Diploma in Performing Art. She has passion for children and young adults.



Program Coordinator: Jonan Nandolo

Jonan Nandolo has a Bachelors degree in social sciences and a major in Public Administration and Management from Nkumba University Uganda. He worked with APAS consultancy Firm as a research Assistant, working on health insurance policies and youth and education. Prior to his work at APAS, Jonan joined Plan International as a volunteer in human resource management. Plan International gave him the opportunity to develop close relationships and meet kids from different backgrounds in the local communities. Jonan also worked with VEDCO (Volunteer Effort for Development Concerns) as a research assistant in sustainable agriculture farming and produce, giving him exposure in the local communities and experience in the technical support with the organization. Jonan loves entrepreneurship, meeting people from different lifestyles and cooking.

Jinja overview

Fast Facts:

- Area: 236,040 sq km (slightly smaller than the state of Oregon)
- Population: 32,369,558
- Government type: Republic
- Industries: sugar, brewing, tobacco, cotton textiles; cement, paper, steel production
- Population below poverty line: 35%
- Literacy rate: 69.9% (age 15 and over can read and write)
- Religions: Roman Catholic 33%, Protestant 33%, Muslim 16%, indigenous beliefs 18%



Uganda

Uganda is a diverse country containing upwards of 56 tribes, whom until recently lived in relative peace and harmony. In 1894, Uganda officially became a British protectorate, in 1900 an agreement between the British and Buganda kingdom established the autonomous constitutional monarchy of Uganda. British rule was more gentle and benevolent than most colonial relationships because Uganda was a protectorate rather than a colony; however the colonization laid the seed for considerable ethnic strife. Amazingly, Uganda became independent from British rule without any bloodshed; this state of peace however was not to last long. Through two reigns of Milton Obote (1962 – 1971 and 1980 – 1986) and one reign of Idi Amin (1971 – 1979) Uganda suffered incredible human rights abuses, brutality, corruption, and severe mismanagement. In 1986 president Yoweri Museveni seized power from Obote and remains president to this day. Museveni’s government (NRM) has provided relative peace and security to Uganda, as well as an improved economy.

Jinja Town

Jinja is a major tourist destination in Uganda. It was established in 1907 and lies in the south east of the country, 87km north east of Kampala. It is located on the shores of Lake Victoria near the source of the White River Nile. Jinja town, also popular for its fishing, is the capital of Jinja District as well as being considered the capital of the Kingdom of Busoga¹.

Jinja is very laid back community but is close to several major tourist attractions including: the source of the Nile, Bujagali Falls, quad bike safaris, world class kayaking, Mt. Elgon, golf courses and several other outdoor activities. There are also several small bars and restaurants in the city centre and numerous internet café’s. Jinja is relatively small making most places accessible by foot or by bicycle. The majority of FSD Jinja host organizations are located with 10 minutes of the city centre.



Views of Jinja Town.

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jinja%2C_Uganda

safety and security

FSD will do our utmost to provide a safe environment and provide a support system to you throughout your experience. To ensure a safe and successful experience for everyone involved we depend upon the following:

- **our site team:** to assess our (FSD's) ability to ensure that your environment is safe and secure.
- **our local community networks:** to serve as a barometer of the local political, social, and economic climate.
- **you:** to adhere to instructions and tips regarding your safety and security, and to act prudently.

a. fsd's responsibilities

- **Ensure a safe and secure host community.**

Our host organizations and programs are run by FSD staff and trusted colleagues who live locally and often have years of experience with FSD. While the political climate varies by location and timing, we feel that our extensive local networks of host families and partner organizations provide us with a good barometer of the climate in relation to the safety of foreign volunteers. We would never place you in a highly dangerous location.

FSD monitors the political, economic, and social climate in each of our host communities. In the event that FSD determines it cannot ensure your safety or security in a given location, we will either place you with another FSD program in the region, or offer a refund for the program.

- **Inform you about safety and security in your host community.**

Through literature and resources disbursed to you prior to your arrival, and presentations during your program orientation, we equip you with the information and tools to be aware of the realities of your host community, to avoid situations that would put you at risk, and to manage uncomfortable or risky situations in the event that they arise.

- **Direct you to a preferred medical facility in the case of an emergency**

During orientation, your Program Director and Program Coordinator will identify a preferred medical facility in your host community.

- **Support you logistically and emotionally through any medical or emergency situation.**

FSD will support you in addressing your needs during any medical or emergency situation, whether it is securing medical attention and medications, filing a police report, or re-scheduling your flight.

- **Contact your emergency contacts in the case of a major emergency.**

FSD will only contact your emergency contacts upon request or in the case of a major emergency when you are not able to contact them.

b. your responsibilities

- **Inform yourself.**

Research the history and current events of your host country and community prior to your arrival. Talk to your Site Team and host family about safety in your host community and follow their tips.

- **Register your living/traveling abroad status with the US Department of State**

FSD highly recommends that all program participants register with the US Department of State prior to embarking on their journey. More information can be obtained on <http://travel.state.gov/>.

- **Minimize risk:**

- Secure all recommended vaccinations, and take precautions to remain safe and healthy.
- Avoid volatile or risky events, locations, and situations.
- Carry as little money and valuables as possible.

- Hold your bag close to you or in front of you, and never leave it unattended.
 - Travel with someone you know at all times, and avoid being out alone after dark.
 - Know where you are going, or at least look like you know where you are going. If you are unsure, ask someone for directions. If you need to pull out a map, do so somewhere sheltered and discreet.
 - Avoid dressing in a manner that gives an appearance of wealth
- **Be aware of your surroundings:**
 - Observe your environment with great care and attention, and adapt your behavior accordingly.
 - **Be prepared - Carry with you:**
 - A copy of your Proof of Insurance card - you will need the card as proof of insurance in case of an emergency.
 - Any pertinent prescriptions
 - A card that lists all of your local and emergency contact numbers and addresses. We suggest that you keep this card apart from your wallet.
- Keep apart:**
- Keep emergency contact information, and any other important documents, in your email account.
 - Keep a copy of your passport and credit cards apart from your wallet and passport.
- **Notify FSD.**
In the unlikely, but always possible, event that you are mugged, are involved in an accident, fall seriously ill, or run into any other type of "incident" please notify your Site Team immediately. The Site Team will help you to resolve the situation to the best of their ability.

visa and health preparations

visa

As an FSD Participant, it is your full responsibility for securing the appropriate visa and ensuring the full legality of your stay in the host country during the Program. To do so requires consultation of resources above and beyond the information provided by FSD.

Resources:

US State Department: Information for U.S travelers to Uganda

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1051.html

Embassy of Uganda

5911 16th Street NW
Washington DC 20011

telephone: 202-726-7100

fax: 202-726-1727

email: info@ugandaembassy.com

website: www.ugandaembassy.com

FSD Recommendation:

Please note: the recommendation provided here is subject to change at any time. Please check with a Ugandan Consulate or Embassy for the most updated information.

United States Citizens can get a visa upon arrival at Entebbe International Airport for \$50.00. A 90 day visa can be secured initially then renewed during your stay.

health preparation and FAQ

As an FSD Participant, it is your full responsibility to identify and take all necessary health precautions prior to, during, and following the Program. Please start your health preparations early, as some vaccinations must be taken as far as 8 weeks or more before departure. Providing detailed medical advice is beyond the expertise of FSD so it is very important to consult the resources below as well as medical professionals such as your doctor or local travel health clinic.

Resources:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Recorded information about health risks and precautions for international travelers:

1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747)

MD Travel Health: Uganda Page

<http://www.mdtravelhealth.com/destinations/africa/uganda.html>

Malaria Hotline: 404-332-4555.

FSD recommendations

- Bring anti-malarial medication and mosquito repellent. In addition to any recommended vaccines, please be sure to secure a supply of anti-malarial medication for your trip. Note that there are several different types of anti-malarial medications available. Please see your doctor to choose a medication that will work in your host country and with your medical history. For those who will be in Uganda for an extended period of time, anti-malarial pills may be purchased in-country. Please note, however, that most anti-malarial medication must be taken before entry into the country and there is greater risk of purchasing expired or placebo medications in Uganda. Also be aware that anti-malarial medications are not 100% effective and there are often other very serious diseases which can be contracted through mosquitoes so it is very important to protect yourself against mosquito bites.
- Make sure your food and drinking water are safe. Food and waterborne diseases are the primary cause of illness in travelers. Participants should be careful to eat in places that have been recommended to them, and to drink only treated water.
- Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of the most common illnesses contracted by travelers, and the appropriate treatment.
- Bring medicines and supplies for preventing and treating common illnesses and maladies (diarrhea, dehydration, sunburn, food poisoning).
- Bring a stainless-steel water bottle to ensure that you have a safe supply of water at all times and can remain hydrated.

What shots do I need before I go?

You should visit either a travel health clinic or your personal physician **4-8 weeks before leaving to Uganda**. Your doctor can best advise you on what shots are required and recommended.

What happens if I get sick?

For serious illness that may occur during the trip, there are public and private clinics and hospitals available in Jinja and Kampala. If you should become sick and need to see a doctor, please alert your supervisor, your host family and the FSD Site Team immediately.

Where should I go?
The Surgery

Who should I talk to?
Dr. Debra Singh

Where is it?
Plot 12 Clive Rd.

weather and packing FAQ

What kind of luggage should I bring?

Pack lightly so you can travel more easily and store your bag in small places. Think in terms of a backpack, duffel bag, or moderate-sized suitcase and a daypack. Bags with shoulder straps are preferable to suitcases because they're easier to carry.

What should I bring in my carry-on luggage?

We recommend that you carry ALL valuables (money, credit card, passport, identification, immunization booklet, insurance card, etc) and a complete set of clothes (change of shirt, pants/skirt, underwear) in your carry-on luggage in case your checked bag is temporarily lost or delayed.

What kinds of weather should I expect?

Uganda has two rainy seasons and two dry seasons. Rainy seasons are April – June and October-December (generally, but this varies).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Ave max (°C)	32	32	31	29	28	28	27	28	28	29	30	31
Ave min (°C)	16	17	17	17	17	16	16	15	15	16	16	16
Rainfall (mm)	25	60	90	160	175	130	110	135	105	80	65	40

The temperature during the wet seasons in Uganda is generally warm during the day and cool at night. Rains will come every couple of days and will last anywhere from 1-5 hours. The rains make the cities and especially the villages quite muddy. Expect to get dirty! Do not bring anything white that you like because it will not remain white for long. It is best to bring darker or patterned clothing that will hide dirt. Remember as well that it will get quite cool at night so bring long sleeved shirts or a hooded sweatshirt.

The dry seasons are named accordingly as they are dry with rain not being seen for months. The weather is generally much hotter than during the wet season and it is quite dry and dusty. The dust fills the air and will turn you orange. Again, it is not recommended to bring white clothing. Looser clothing is also better than tight fitting shirts or pants to allow for airflow.

What documents should I bring?

You should bring your passport, vaccination booklet, insurance card and list of FSD contacts in Uganda and **bring 2 copies of each**. During the program, keep the originals and one copy safe in your suitcase and keep the other copy on you at all times.

How are clothes washed?

Your host family will wash your clothes (except your underwear and socks). Washing machines will not be available – your clothes will be hand washed and line dried. You will wash your personal items by first soaking them in powdered detergent and then washing them by hand.

Please note that hand washing is much rougher on clothing than the “normal” cycle on a washing machine therefore, your clothes will endure a lot more wear and tear. Also, there is a common stigma surrounding ladies underwear being aired outside. After you wash your underwear (girls) you can hang them to dry inside your room (preferably in a closet or behind a door out of sight).

What should I wear?

The rule of thumb (for men and women) is to dress conservatively.

- **At work**

Women should plan on wearing skirts most days at the office and every time you go to a village. Pants may also be worn, but skirts are much cooler. Ugandans have little qualms about women showing skin above the waist but showing legs is considered inappropriate. Skirts should be knee-length or below. Women may also consider Capri or ¾ length pants. Shirts should not be risqué, but sleeveless shirts are fine providing they are not spaghetti strapped and low cut. It is also a



good idea to bring blouses, decent looking t-shirts and polo shirts. If you are to wear pants to work, make sure they are of a dress material and not casual slacks or jeans.

Men should plan on wearing pants or slacks and short-sleeve shirts during the day. It is uncommon for Ugandan men to wear jeans as they are quite hot to wear. If you are working in town then you should bring a decent looking pair of brown/black shoes. Ugandan's will polish their shoes every morning before work so make sure that you are wearing something that suits. You should bring polo, collared, or button-up shirts (especially if you are working in town), and some nice t-shirts.

- **Around town after work or on the weekend**

In Jinja, and especially in Kampala, Ugandan's dress is typically similar to ours at home. Girls and boys alike wear jeans, t-shirts, shorts, dresses, and skirts. You can wear casual clothes but must make sure that you are clean and your clothes are free of wrinkles or holes. Ugandan's are impeccable dressers and are always seen wearing freshly ironed clean clothing.

- **At home**

This is very dependent upon where you are living. If you are living in a village with a traditional family then it is best to remain conservative and neat however, if you are in town pants and even shorts may be okay. The best thing to do is to observe those around you and see what your family wears and try to match them.

Both men and women should bring one nicer outfit in case you are invited to events such as weddings or burials, or in the case that you give a presentation as part of your work. A pair of sturdy sandals that you can walk in is also essential, and a pair of close-toed shoes for cooler evenings during rainy seasons. You may wish to bring a bathing suit to use if you travel or at the pool in Jinja. You should also bring a raincoat or umbrella, as well as a hat for the sun and sunglasses.

Packing List for Uganda

Good idea to bring these items

Health & Hygiene

- Contact Lens Solution / Saline Solution
- Sunscreen – available at pharmacies, but expensive – Nivea \$19 vs. local brand \$6
- Insect Repellent
- Tampons – OB variety available in some supermarkets in Jinja and Kampala
- Pepto-Bismol
- Vitamins
- Dental floss – available, but expensive
- Hand sanitizer / hand wipes
- Ibuprofen / Aspirin / Anti-diarrhea pills
- Malaria pills (also available here, not Malarone though)
- Your own medications and a copy of your prescriptions

Practical supplies

- Water bottle
- Smaller backpack for weekend / day trips
- Headlamp or flashlight with extra batteries – for common power outages
- Small lock for luggage
- Camera, extra memory cards & batteries, cord for uploading
- Swiss Army Knife or Leatherman
- Ear plugs
- Small gifts for host family e.g. pens, candies, notebooks, tiny toys, lip balm, lotions

Documents and money

- Passport
- Airline ticket – copy of itinerary
- Vaccination booklet

- Insurance Card
- ATM Card with VISA (must have PLUS sign on the back, Mastercard is not accepted)
- Photocopies of all documents
- US Dollars (50's or 100's in good condition from 2003 onward)

Clothes

Bring lightweight and durable clothing for layering; it can get cool during rainy season and at higher altitudes. Clothes will be washed by hand. Consider clothing that will breathe in the heat and dry quickly. Avoid tight-fitting items. Pack lightly!

- Lightweight waterproof or water resistant jacket
- Warm jacket, sweater or sweatshirt
- For men, 2-3 pairs of pants or jeans; for women, 1-3 pairs of pants or jeans
- For men – dress pants or khakis for the office
- Capri or $\frac{3}{4}$ length pants
- Skirts – bring 3-6; most women wear skirts at work, although pants can be worn as well. Skirts are also cooler in the heat. Should be knee length or longer. A few casual dresses could be comfortable and useful
- Dress shirts for work
- Short sleeve tops / blouses / t-shirts / tank tops
- Long-sleeve shirts for layering
- Dress or nicer outfit for special occasions
- Underwear, socks, modest sleepwear
- Bathing suit
- Flip-flops / sandals / dressy sandals for work
- Comfortable sturdy shoes / sneakers
- Close-toe dress shoes for work, flats are better than heels
- Sun hat
- Scarf

Second-hand clothing is very popular here. Pants, shirts, shoes, dresses and skirts can all be purchased inexpensively in the markets and shops around Jinja.

What can you buy here in Uganda?

You can find most items in Jinja or Kampala. The rule here is that imported brands will be much more expensive, so if you have a strong brand preference it's better to bring it from home.

- Body lotion - Nivea \$3-6, local brand \$1.50
- Face wash - \$3-5
- Shampoo/Conditioner - Garnier/Pantene \$6-10, local brand \$2-3
- Toothpaste - Colgate/Aquafresh \$1-3, Sensodyne \$3.50, local brand \$0.50
- Soap - \$0.50-0.80
- Umbrella - \$1.50-3
- Sunglasses - \$2-5
- Bath Towel - \$6-12
- Pens box of 50 - \$5
- Snacks – Pringles \$2-5, Nutella \$4, cookies/biscuits \$1-2
- Mosquito Net – cheaper here than US \$7-15
- Malaria Pills – Malarone is not found here, most others are and are less expensive than in US
- Sandals / flip-flops /rain boots

If you have space and/or interest:

- Tent/sleeping bag – there are many good and inexpensive campsites within Uganda's parks and recreational areas
- Yoga mat – good for sitting on hard floors and for stretching. Yoga is non-existent in Uganda outside of Kampala. There is a good gym in Jinja with decent equipment. Running is uncommon but the Jinja area is mostly flat and conducive to exercise.

How should I approach photography?

In general, taking photos is fine. However, it is always polite to ask permission if you are taking a picture of someone or someone's property. Also, if you take someone's picture they will probably ask you for a copy. If it's possible, go for it! Pictures are wonderful gifts here as most people (especially in the villages) do not have cameras.

***Remember that it is prohibited to take photos of military or security zones (i.e. airports, dams, borders)** Do not even get out your camera in these places.

Should I bring my laptop?

Personal computers are not common in Uganda. Access to computers at your host organization will be limited and it is highly unlikely that your host family will have one.

The advantage of bringing a laptop is the ability to work on documents at home without paying for computer time. You can then save your work to a USB drive and email/print it at an internet café. You can also use your laptop to access wireless internet, which is becoming more and more common in cafes and social areas in towns and cities. If you do decide to bring your laptop, please take the necessary precautions! It should be in your carry-on bag to take on the plane and you should keep it at your host family's home. **Please understand that taking a laptop entails the risk that it could be lost, stolen or damaged – FSD is not responsible in these scenarios.**

If you do decide to bring your laptop or other American electronic devices you will need a voltage converter that converts to 240V with a "G" plug. Converters can be bought in Uganda, however to be safe you may consider purchasing one before departure.



Type "G" Plug

Should I bring my iPod?

iPods are very rare here. You should generally not walk around listening to it as it will draw attention to yourself and could put you at risk for theft. Keeping it at home and listening to it with your family is perfectly fine. You will not have a television or a radio so it is nice to bring something that you can listen to your music on. You can use an iPod on a bus or taxi, but be aware of the attention it may draw.



View of the Nile River from Bujagali Falls

Should I bring donations?

Donations are welcome, but totally optional. If you choose to bring donations, please think about the practicality, sustainability and durability of those items.

food and water

Can I drink the water?

NO. Do not drink the water. You are only to drink water that is bottled, has been treated or is boiled.

Where can I get safe water?

It is hot in Uganda, so please pay close attention to your hydration at all times and be sure you're getting plenty of **safe** water.

Your host family will make purified water available to you. When visiting other families or communities; bring your own bottled water with you at all times, and when in doubt, drink a bottled beverage.

Passion-fruit juice is quite common in Uganda and it will look tempting on a hot afternoon. Do not drink the juice unless you are positive that the water added to the juice has been boiled first. Never buy passion-fruit juice from a store or stall (no matter what the shopkeeper tells you).

The most sustainable way to ensure that you always have a supply of purified water available is to bring a stainless steel water bottle and re-fill it each morning from your host family's supply. You may also consider bringing water treatment tablets or a small, portable water filter for backup (available at many outdoor stores). Bottled water is available in any small shop or supermarket.

What is typical food?

The main staples in Uganda are rice, matooke (mashed banana), sweet potatoes, irish potatoes, cassava, ground nuts, fish and maize. The Ugandan diet is not very healthy, even though it is based on fresh local produce. Most foods found in the country, especially in the restaurants, are soaked heavily in oil and are high in carbohydrates.

Ugandan meals (lunch and dinner) generally consist of one or more foods and one or more sauces. Foods are matooke (steamed, smashed bananas), rice, posho (maize meal cooked with water until it is thick enough to eat with your hands), Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, or cassava. These foods are eaten with a sauce such as peanut (groundnut, or g-nut) sauce, beans, or occasionally fish or a small amount of meat (goat, chicken, or beef) in a large amount of stock.



Typical Ugandan food featuring matooke, rice, sweet potato, vegetables and fish sauce

Fresh fruits and vegetables, such as pineapple, mango, papaya (paw paw), bananas, passion fruit, jackfruit, tomatoes, beans, carrots, cabbage, etc. are readily available. Calcium is conspicuously missing from the Ugandan diet; if you are concerned about this you may bring calcium supplements or other multivitamins.

What do most people drink?

Most families drink either water or passion fruit juice, or occasionally a soda to honor a visitor in the home.

How vegetarian friendly is the local cuisine?

Meat is not served often in most households and is reserved for big celebrations or parties so, it should be easy for families to accommodate a vegetarian. Please be

specific as to your preferences (i.e. whether you eat chicken but no red meat, or no animals, no dairy whatsoever) and let the FSD staff know beforehand so they can alert the family.

Fresh fruit such as pineapples, mangos, sour oranges, sweet bananas and jackfruits are readily found and cheap!

What foods should I avoid?

- Avoid uncooked food, street vendors and restaurants that have not been recommended by FSD Site Team. If you do eat street food, make sure it is fresh, hot, and you consume it immediately.
- Do not eat fruits or vegetables that have been washed with water unless they are peeled or the water was treated beforehand.
- Other foods likely to be offered that you should avoid unless they are prepared properly by your host family are Mchomo (barbecued goat, generally served on a stick), passion fruit juice (other freshly squeezed drinks), milk or other dairy products (there is no refrigeration)
- Do not eat pork to avoid the risk of acquiring schistosomiasis.
- To prevent parasites and diarrhea, you will want to eat lightly upon arrival and stay away from milk and cheese that has not been pasteurized.

Can I eat fresh fruit from street stands, and trees?

In Uganda, you are likely to encounter an abundance of fresh fruit. As a rule, if you can peel it, you can eat it! Avoid peeled fruit served on the street unless you watch the vendor peel it.

How should I express my preferences, or turn down unsafe food that is offered to me?

In many places food is an important form of hospitality and it is cultural practice to offer food and drink as a welcoming, friendly gesture. Never put yourself at risk, but please be diplomatic in expressing your needs. Take care not to offend your hosts with negative comments or facial expressions.

Your host family will be notified of what you can and cannot eat or drink, but you should also be sure to tell your family what you do and do not like to eat. You should feel comfortable politely asking your family for food to be less oily or salty, to mention that you like fruits and vegetables, or to be given more or less food.



Typical vegetable market in Uganda

Are there any US-style restaurants?

Yes. There are many within Kampala (including Pizza Hot, Nando's, and various other Mexican, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, hamburger joints etc). You can even find chocolate croissants and nice coffee!

Most small restaurants in Jinja serve fish & chips and chicken & chips (French fries). Omelettes and yogurt are available for breakfast in a couple of spots. There is an abundance of great Indian restaurants and some western restaurants even have pizza ovens. In general, western cuisine will be more expensive than African food.

communication

What is the best way for friends and family at home to reach me?

Email is probably the most reliable way to be in touch with your friends and family at home. We also suggest that you call your friends and family from an internet café or from a phone station found in most villages and on all major streets.

It is recommended that your parents purchase a calling card or phone plan that will allow them to phone you. It is very expensive to call from your cellphone and landlines are rare. An effective way to communicate with your parents is through Skype, which is much cheaper than direct international phone calls.

Please notify your friends and family that reception is often quite poor on international calls and there will be a few moments delay when talking. Also, service may cut off at any time or you may lose your network so that your friends/family cannot contact you. Please ensure that your friends and families are aware of this with the understanding that it is best not to schedule international calls at exact times.

In case of an emergency, your family can call the FSD Site Team and leave a message for you or (in case of a serious emergency) they may call the US Emergency Cell Phone.

Is there access to Internet and email?

Yes. There are several internet café's in and around Jinja. At the time of writing, Fast Net at the Caltex station on Main Street is by far the fastest in terms of speed, customer service, power (electricity) and server availability. Flavours, Source Café, and Indulge have wireless connections at various speeds. Customers with their own laptops are allowed to use this wireless as long as they are also making purchases in the restaurant. Cafes and restaurants with wireless generally close at about 9pm or 10pm and are cheap at about \$1-\$2 dollars an hour.

Can I make and receive phone calls at my host family's home?

No. Unfortunately, none of our host families have landline telephones. In fact, landlines are rare altogether in Uganda and are generally only found at places of business. That said, almost everybody has a cell phone. Cell phone airtime is expensive so it is not appropriate to ask to use someone's phone unless you will pay them for the time used.

Your cell phone from the US will not work here unless it is unlocked prior to arrival. It can be very expensive to use the international calling plan from a US service provider, though, so we work with interns to arrange cell-phone use while in-country.

How do I call the U.S.?

Calling the U.S on a mobile phone is expensive. If you need to call someone it is recommended that you call them and tell them to ring you back.

When people are calling you they will dial: +256 (plus your number)

Are cell phones available?

Yes. Cell phones are everywhere. Uganda (and most of Africa for that matter) has skipped the landline technology and has gone straight to mobiles.

Cell phones can be purchased for about \$30-40 and SIM cards are an additional \$2. FSD will provide a cell phone if you do not want to purchase your own. You will be required to pay a security deposit for the return of the phone at the end of your program. After that, airtime cards can be purchased. Calling people can be quite pricey so most people use texts which are much cheaper.

Cell phones are recommended for all interns for easier and faster communication and safety.

money

How much cash should I bring with me?

You should plan on bringing \$200 cash with you and a credit card in case of emergency. You can exchange money when you arrive at the airport in Kampala. U.S dollars are best--please bring bills of \$20, \$50 or \$100, printed in the year 2004 or later. Small bills, old bills, and torn/weathered bills are not accepted here.

How much money should I plan on spending in country?

FSD covers all of your necessary expenses, including room and board, in-country transportation, orientation and debriefing sessions, etc. You may want additional money, however, for entertainment, snacks, books, gifts, newspapers, weekend excursions, additional transportation and health emergencies. You should budget for about \$7 a day and about \$50 for a weekend trip.

Monetary Unit:
Uganda Shillings

Exchange Rate:
The current exchange rate is approximately 2,200- 2,400 shillings to 1 U.S dollar
<http://www.xe.com/ucc/full.php>

There is quite a bit of activity in and around Jinja. It is best to look up the costs of activities that you would like to do in Uganda on the internet and budget accordingly.

Never carry a large sum of cash or your passport on public transportation; if you must, please do so with caution. Bring only what you need for the day and use a nondescript bag to carry books or papers.

How can I get cash?

There are multiple bank machines in Jinja that will accept international ATM or VISA cards. Please remember that **Mastercard and other credit cards are NOT accepted in Uganda!**

There are several Forex Bureaus in Jinja to exchange money. Traveler's checks are **not recommended** as they do not get a good exchange rate and are not widely accepted.

What is the local attitude towards bargaining?

Bargaining is definitely part of the culture here and is expected at the local market. There is also "Mzungu" price (foreigner price) that most taxi drivers and dealers will try and give you. In the beginning it will be difficult to know if you are getting cheated but we will try to give you a breakdown of costs during orientation, and you will soon catch on.

transportation

Jinja is a relatively small town and most things are accessible by foot, bike, or local transport.

Flight Information

Flight Guidelines FAQ

Is international airfare and travel to the program site included in the program fee?

The GESI and FSD Program fee does not include the cost of international airfare nor in-country airfare to the program site. GESI will organize group tickets for which the student will be financially responsible.

The Program fee does cover transportation to and from the airport. The program fee also covers any other group transportation required for group activities (with other FSD interns and staff).

Will I be picked up at the airport?

On the start date of the program, a **group pickup time** at the airport will be arranged for participants.

FSD arranges a group pickup for the entire group's convenience and safety as well as for financial reasons. When the entire group arrives at the same time, we can efficiently collect you and your luggage and travel directly to the orientation site. In addition, it is costly and inefficient to make multiple trips to the airport or wait for someone's late arrival, particularly in locations such as Uganda and Kenya where the program site is hours away from the airport and travel is only possible during daylight hours.

How will I find FSD when I arrive at the airport for the group pickup?

The representative from FSD will be waiting for you at the greeting area of the airport upon your arrival. They will have a sign with the letters "FSD" on it. Photos of your Program Coordinator and Director may be viewed on the FSD website on each country's page. They will escort you to your lodgings (either a hostel or your host family) for orientation.

What if my flight is cancelled or delayed?

If you will not arrive at the date and time that you have sent us, due to delay, cancellation, or illness, please take the following steps:

Email AND call your Program Director and/or Program Coordinator to let them know that you will not arrive at the scheduled date and time, and supply them with the updated date and time of your arrival. Your Program Director and Program Coordinator's telephone numbers and email addresses are listed on the "Site Team Contact Information" sheet.

If you cannot contact your Program Director or Program Coordinator, call the US Emergency Cell Phone and we will assist you in relaying your updated arrival information to your FSD Site Team.

How will I get back to the airport for departure?

FSD will provide you with transportation to the airport for your group departure.

In-Country Transportation

Buses

Buses going to other towns and regions in Uganda leave from the bus park in Jinja, which is next to the taxi park. Buses are usually packed beyond their capacity and drive incredibly fast. They are the quickest way to travel to other areas of Uganda but are certainly not the most comfortable and definitely not the safest as accidents are common.

The Post Bus

The Post Bus takes all the mail from the post office in Kampala to other towns in Uganda and it also takes passengers. The advantages of the post buses are that they are more comfortable, not over filled, road worthy and usually driven safely. They are also slightly cheaper than other bus companies. The disadvantage is that they usually take considerably longer than the other buses, partly because they don't drive like maniacs and because they stop at small towns and villages to drop off mail to the post offices. They are usually friendly and can be an interesting way of seeing the country.

Taxis

Matatus

Matatus are small mini buses that carry 14 passengers (though frequently the driver will try to squeeze in 20), and travel in and out of central Jinja along the same routes. They are usually white with a blue stripe around them and are very distinctive. There is always a driver and a conductor who will hang out of the window calling for passengers or calling out where the taxi is traveling to if it is going out of Jinja.



Kampala Taxi Park

Boda bodas

Boda bodas, known as 'piki pikis' in some parts of the country, are bicycles or small mopeds or motorbikes with seats on the back to take 1 passenger (or 2 or 3 or 4), and Jinja is packed with them. They are probably the least safe form of transport, at least in the city, but are very quick for going short distances. The fares are definitely negotiable and the drivers will sometimes start quite high if they think you are new in town. Please know that riding on the moped or motorbike *bodas* is strictly prohibited while participating with FSD. Bicycle *bodas* are allowed but can also offer considerable risk.

Special Hires

Special hires are the same as taxis in the US, and are usually white saloon cars. They drive around town and will call out to potential customers although they are also found in groups at taxi ranks, called a *stage*. You can also book one by phone if you happen to know a drivers phone number. Fares are negotiable but are generally expensive.

FAQ:

Can I travel after dark?

You should plan ahead, be cautious and do not travel after dark. If you are in town at night make sure you are with people (preferably someone from your host family or another local) and call a *Special Hire* to take you home. You SHOULD NOT use *Matatus*, buses or *Boda's* at night.

Is it safe to go out at night?

Do not walk around at night after 9pm. If you must, **do not go alone** and try to take a *Special Hire*. It is best to travel with a local who knows which places to avoid.



Pedestrian traffic in Jinja – most destinations in Jinja are accessible by foot.

family homestay

One of the most rewarding, challenging, and meaningful experiences during your time in Uganda is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. Host families offer the rare opportunity to truly integrate oneself into the local culture and build meaningful relationships that will last long past your stay. The families who host FSD Participants are carefully selected and offer their homes out of a genuine sense of generosity and the wish to learn about another culture. Your host family will view you as a member of the family and treat you as such. We hope that you will feel equally at home with your family but we ask that you never forget you are a guest in their home. Please always be respectful of their rules and help out the best you can. Here are some answers to common questions that will help prepare you for your homestay:

A typical FSD host family in Jinja, Uganda

The most common host families have tend to live in 3 to 4 bedroom houses, with electricity, running water and indoor plumbing. However most homes do not have showers and usually take bucket baths. It is important to note though that Uganda's electricity supply is not very stable, which means that most of the families routinely experience blackouts which can be anywhere from 10 minutes to 8 hours long.

Another host family arrangement is located in the village. These households have no electricity, running water or indoor plumbing. The homes are usually located on a small farm and are surrounded by gardens and occasionally animal sheds. These families are usually walking distance from the host organization.

The most common pets are cats and dogs. Pets are mostly kept for security safety purposes rather than for company. Many homes tend to have chickens and goats running freely in the backyard. Some of our host families have both parents and 3 - 5 children living with in the home. However, we do have a few large families that have up to 15 members. All the families are required to provide the intern their own room and a steady supply of boiled or bottled water.



Examples of the various types of houses found in Jinja

What will my host family provide?

Your family is required to provide you with a private room, three meals a day, purified water and weekly hand-washing of your clothes. Toiletries and a towel are not provided; you must bring your own.

What are the living accommodations like?

Living accommodations are basic by U.S. standards. Water and electricity often aren't available for short periods of time. In certain parts of Jinja a lack of water pressure makes bucket showers the norm.

Ants, mosquitoes, geckos, and spiders, cockroaches and small rodents can creep into the house! Your family can help prevent these unfortunate visitors, so let them know if you see something! Keeping the house clean and storing food in its place will make a big difference.

You will become accustomed to a fair amount of night sound, including traffic, animals, rattling of metal roofs in the wind, and radios. Ear plugs can help.

Your house in general will be cement walled (don't worry, no mud huts) and potentially inside of a family "compound". The host family conditions vary considerably within Jinja.

Will a mosquito net be provided?

A mosquito net will not be provided in most cases. These are readily available in the local market if you would like to purchase one upon arrival.

How are families structured in Uganda?

Many Ugandan families consist of single mothers and their children, and it is not uncommon for several generations to live in the same house together. Children in Uganda, like children anywhere, can be both adorable and annoying, but try to maintain your patience with them in order to integrate smoothly in the household. Polygamy is also common where the husband may have different wives in different villages or both wives living in the same "compound" but in different apartments.



An FSD intern with his Jinja host family.

Do I need to help out with chores?

We ask families to treat you as another member of the family, which means you will pick up after yourself, keep your area neat, and help out with the cooking and cleaning as appropriate.

Is it safe to bring and store valuables at my host family's house?

There is no need to bring many valuables. **We require that you keep items of value locked in your luggage at all times.** This is extremely important because friends and relatives are often in and out of the house. However, there have been incidents when a student thought something was stolen only to find that s/he had misplaced it. This kind of incident is hard on the host family who take great care to protect you and your things. If something unusual of this nature does happen, please speak with your host mother and/or the FSD Site Team immediately.

What are standard meal times?

Meal times are scattered and irregular in Uganda. Most families tend to eat in "shifts" with the males eating first then the wives and children. Therefore, there is not usually a set meal time. Your family will probably provide you meals separately either in your room or by yourself at first. Do not take offense at this, because this is them showing their respect for you. If you feel uncomfortable eating alone, you may ask your host mother to eat when she does, or make it clear that you would to be treated as one of the family, and eat with everyone else.

Generally, Ugandan's take tea at about 10am, lunch between 1-3pm and dinner anywhere between 8-11pm. (Please note that you will be given your breakfast before leaving for work in the morning, whatever time that may be, as it varies at each organization, and will likely take tea with your colleagues at work.) If you feel that meal times are too late and you are feeling hungry, you may request to eat your meals earlier or buy some snacks or fruit to tide you over.

How should I tell my family that I'd like less food, or different kinds of food?

Don't be shy about asking your family for particular foods or the amount of food you want to eat. You should tell your family what you do and do not like to eat. Vegetarian food is always available.

How much time should I spend with my host family? What should we talk about?

One of the most rewarding, challenging, and meaningful experiences during your time in Uganda is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. You will learn a great deal about Uganda through the people who live there, so cultivate a habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.

Ask questions and share your perspective. Be sensitive to the feelings of others and embrace the different viewpoints, lifestyles, experiences and company your family provides. Host families are eager to get to know you and learn about your American life so be ready to talk about your interests, culture, family and plans. We encourage you to share pictures and stories from your life at home.

How often should I check in with my family?

You are entrusted in the family's care and just like your own family they will worry about you if you don't check in. Please advise your family in advance if you do not plan to be home for a meal. Likewise, be sure to notify your family in advance of any weekend excursions you take other than those in the scheduled program.

Can I have visitors come over to the house?

Please advise your family before you invite anyone to the house, especially someone of the opposite sex. Overnight guests are **NOT** appropriate and are unacceptable during the program. Protect your family's safety and privacy. Do not give out their home number. Remember: Even though you will be treated as part of the family, you are still a guest in their home and must be respectful of their rules.

Will I receive my own set of keys?

You should receive your own set of keys to the house so that you are free to come and go as needed.

How do people spend their free time?

Families generally sit around at night talking and listening to the radio. This is a great time to get to know your family as you will find that during the day women are quite busy cooking, cleaning, washing, taking care of children, etc.

Can I go out at night?

If you do make plans to go out at night, please advise your family of your transportation, who will be accompanying you, your return time, and arrangements for getting home and into the house. Exercise good judgment: As anywhere, it is best to go out with family members, co-workers or friends that you meet. Simply being an American makes you more of a target for theft, harassment, etc. You should never be out alone at night past 8 p.m.

How should I handle requests for money?

FSD program fees subsidize all of your room and board expenses so there is no need for you to discuss money with your family. They should not ask you to borrow money and if this happens, tell them it is against your program rules to lend money. If children ask for money, gently remind them that it is against the rules, and let your Site Team know about the incident.

What types of gifts are appropriate to bring for my host family?

We suggest that you bring small and modest gifts for your host family as a token of goodwill and gratitude for their hospitality. Ideas: souvenirs of your hometown, state or sports team, chocolates/candies, inexpensive solar calculators or watches, inexpensive jewelry, scarves or clothing or school/art supplies for the children, etc. It is possible to purchase small gifts in Uganda too, but regional gifts are special. Use your imagination, try to find gifts with stories behind them, and remember that your family will love whatever you bring!

personal account: an intern's reflection on Uganda

Will Perreault, Intern



Improved Feed/Seed being allocated to farmers in Bufuta Village must be paired not only with the tangible output of improved feed, but resources in capacity building to train clients in the creation of their own feed.

When one considers the challenges associated with managing a micro-credit program in a widely dispersed rural community, it is apparent that resources are often strained. Boniface Kawiiso, a long-time employee of the Jinja Diocesan Development Coordinating Organization (JIDDECO), was serving the role of the deputy director of the Promic Program, the administrative assistant, the loan officer, credit officer, the trainer, and the primary consultant for an outside Savings and Credit Cooperative. The JIDDECO Promic Program serves groups of women in Uganda with microcredit loans. When Boniface was the sole employee for Promic, it was unrealistic to facilitate a micro-credit lending program across 19 diverse communities. As a result, many savings groups lacked proper contact information, the assistance that they needed to successfully manage and repay their loans, and the guidance to properly allocate group loans.

FSD Intern Will Perreault worked with JIDDECO during his internship in Jinja, Uganda. His first experience in Uganda was to situate himself in new surroundings. His second experience was working in a new community with an NGO, where he recalls learning about microcredit on the ground: "Graciously, I was welcomed into the 19 Promic women's groups' hollowed out brick churches, open air community centers, and dirt-floored homes. I had asked how Promic could better serve their needs.

Unfortunately, many of the groups seemed to be voicing the same frustrations with Promic as well as their own businesses. Continually, clients failed to repay their loans, were given additional loans (by predatory lenders and well-intentioned groups alike) and subsequently grow more and more in debt. To avoid giving those who are unable to repay loans future loans is not simply a matter of tough love. Like so many of poverty's symptoms, the majority of the reasons why people are unable to repay their loans are so preventable (if not curable). It was very discouraging to hear the stories of increasing debt, failed businesses, and the minimal contact they had had with my host organization and their peers – whether in the form of monitoring, assistance or encouragement."



Will Perreault pictured in middle with Promic Women's Savings group.

After gaining familiarity with both his surroundings and his host organization, Will's work with JIDDECO led him to help develop a database to track the microcredit loans of the Promic Micro-Credit Program. Together, Will and JIDDECO created and implemented a Project Monitoring System and Evaluation Database. With the database, JIDDECO is able to better equip their clients to repay their loans, ensure that program resources are utilized efficiently, and measure the performance of their loan allocation program to truly target marginalized populations in immense need. Through Will's creation of client loan portfolios, a centralized collection database and a regular monitoring and assistance program, JIDDECO reaped a higher rate of return on their loans. With the generous financial support provided by over 50 friends and supporters, Will was able to train staff members in utilizing the database system, gather data on the allocation of over 500 previous loans in 19 different communities, and meet with community members to hear about their challenges and successes. Will was able to measurably improve incomes for women in rural communities through these partnerships, as well as help equip them to build their micro-businesses and self-confidence. In the words of Boniface, "[By] facilitating the establishment of a database, JIDDECO now knows all its clients' characteristics by name, type of enterprise, the loans applied for and amount, repayment schedules, the interest charged and their saving culture. Through the loan portfolio ledger, JIDDECO has strengthened its group lending scheme using group consent forms, individual loan tracking/monitoring, and is simplified for better loan management and client's business growth." Thanks to Will, the microcredit effort in Uganda can continue to grow.

race, sexuality and gender

How you interact with others (and they with you) will initially have a lot to do with preconceptions. You'll feel more comfortable once the inevitable "getting to know you" period is over, but keep some cultural norms in mind:

race and ethnicity

In Uganda, you may not encounter the same level and/or kind of awareness and sensitivity surrounding race relations and conceptualizations of heritage as you may be accustomed to finding in the U.S. If you have features associated with an Asian heritage, you may be referred to as "Chinese." If you have fair skin, kids and adults will shout out, call or greet you as "Muzungu" (Lit. "White"). Even persons with dark skin and an African heritage will sometimes be referred to as "Muzungu", in this case meaning any westerner or, often, any person showing the appearance of wealth associated with western nations. If you have features associated with an Indian or South Asian heritage, you may be referred to simply as "Indian." In most cases, these names are not necessarily derogatory terms; many people use them simply because your skin color or features are unusual or intriguing within that context. Please be patient and try to remember that, especially in more rural areas, your appearance is most likely very unusual and provokes curiosity in locals. In some cases, it may be valuable to engage the people you meet in a conversation about the specificity of your heritage.



Ugandan woman cooking on sigiri cooking device



Woman and child working in maize fields (top); Men working bagging maize (below)

sexuality

Sexual orientation or preference is not a topic that is openly discussed in Uganda. Please realize that any affiliation or experiences you have at home (especially in the LGBT community) may not be regarded with the same understanding or sensitivity here, especially in more Christian settings. Please do your best to take this into consideration when discussing such issues with your host family or other members of the community. Also take note that homosexuality is illegal in Uganda.

gender

Expect to get a lot of unwanted attention. If you are a woman, it is likely that men will talk to you in the street and attempt to engage you in conversation. Use your common sense. The best thing to do is to ignore them. Do not give out your phone number to people you don't know. You can explain that you are living in someone else's house and are not allowed to receive calls or visitors.

common cultural practices and beliefs

The following are designed to be a few notes on some of the issues that foreigners are most struck by when living in Uganda. Being aware of some of these issues before your arrival in Uganda should help you during your transition into Ugandan culture.

- Extended greetings are very important to Ugandans, and you should at least learn the greetings and some other basic vocabulary (such as “thank you” -- webale) in Lusoga in order to appropriately converse with non-English speaking Ugandans.
- You will notice in Ugandan culture that when two people greet, a woman or child will often kneel down to men/elders. However, as a foreigner you are not expected to do so, but do not be surprised if children and women pay you such respect.
- Hospitality is also very important to Ugandans, which they will often demonstrate through offering food or drink. It is polite to accept whatever they offer and thank the person who has cooked the meal. It is rude to decline food or drink – if you are not hungry or are concerned about the safety of the food, try to eat a few bites and make a compliment about the food.
- Religion plays a major role in the lives of many Ugandans. 85% of Ugandans are Christian (roughly evenly divided between Protestants and Catholics), 11% are Muslim, and the remaining 4% are Hindu, Jewish, or animist. Many Ugandan Christians are very vocal about their faith, and may press you about your beliefs or ask you if you are “saved” or “born again.” Religion, generally Christianity, also plays a major role in many community organizations and families, and prayers to begin gatherings or before eating are common.
- As a foreigner, you will inevitably come across individuals who wish to gain something from you – whether it be money, sponsorship for their education or children, or a visa back to your home country. Be polite but firm in communicating that you are unable to do so. Please note that rejecting such a request is not rude and when you do give in (unless you know and trust the individual asking) it only serves to confirm stereotypes of whites in Uganda and leads to promises which cannot be kept.
- Polygamy is common in Uganda. In polygamous families, each wife lives separately with her own children and each family cooks their own food. The co-wives may live in different parts of the same “compound.” Families, both polygamous and monogamous, also usually have many more children than in western countries. Many households include many more members than the nuclear family – they may also include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, half-siblings, a “girl” that the family “keeps” (who cooks and cleans in exchange for room, board, and sometimes a very low monthly wage), and orphaned or vulnerable children (either related or unrelated) that the family has taken in.
- Gender roles are very different from most western societies, and are usually more rigid. For example, only women cook, take care of the house, and gather firewood. Women tend to be significantly less educated than men.
- The concept of time is very flexible in Uganda. Many people in the villages do not use or own any time-keeping device. Some Ugandans will be significantly late by western standards, and often there is no way to communicate when someone is running late or is unable to come.
- Privacy is not a value in Ugandan culture. You will often be surrounded by people or children, particularly if you live in a village. Many Ugandans are not shy about asking questions once they know you. There may also be many more people in a small house than you are accustomed to, but you should always be allowed privacy within your room.
- Many Ugandans will be intimidated by foreigners, and many will give you great amounts of respect simply for being a foreigner. The intimidation will abate as you build a relationship. It is helpful if you are politely open with your family about your likes and dislikes and how you do things – they may be nervous because they are unsure of these things. Ugandans may also assume that you have far more knowledge, skills, connections, abilities, etc than you actually possess simply because you are a “muzungu”.

in the workplace . . .

Working in Uganda will be a very rewarding and, at times, very frustrating experience. You will get the most out of your program if you are able to balance patience, open-mindedness, to take advantages of unique learning situations, and enthusiasm for your work. Your first week may seem like it takes a month and you may feel unclear about many things, but by the time you leave you will have learned more than you thought possible, and will have made a contribution that will continue to improve the effectiveness of your organization.

FAQ

What is the general perception of work in Uganda?

Work is valued in Uganda and you will always hear stories from people about their successful sons or siblings. In the villages, work is generally divided according to your gender. Women's work is cleaning, washing of clothes, cooking, raising the children and maintaining the gardens and rice fields. Men's work is handling of the finances, controlling his household and doing the larger more strenuous jobs in the fields.

In the city, work is also generally divided by gender. Directors, field workers, trainers, drivers and upper management are dominated by males whereas secretarial and maid services are dominated by women.

What is a typical work day like?

The day-to-day work culture of Uganda is very different from most western countries. Work schedules are generally very flexible – it is more acceptable for work to be interrupted by issues such as lack of transportation, weather, family commitments, burials, planting or harvesting, etc, than in most western workplaces. Most organizations work 5 days a week, about 8 hours, and sometimes on Saturdays. Adherence to work schedules and work conditions varies considerably, and is different in rural areas and in Jinja Town. Some organizations have an office in Jinja Town, which may or may not mean access to electricity, computers, and other such amenities. Meanwhile, more rural locations will often have an "office" housed in an unoccupied building in the community or in church building, and usually do not include access to amenities such as electricity.

How do people in Uganda view time and/or punctuality in the workplace?

Time and punctuality are generally not respected in Ugandan culture. Don't be surprised if you try to hold a meeting at 2pm and you are the only one sitting there at 3pm. It is called "Africa Time" and it is something that you will have to adjust to. However, there are some people that do respect punctuality it is best, that you always keep time (to avoid the situation that you are late for something and to set a good example). Just bring a good book along with you to read while you are waiting!



Group of children in Jinja; in Uganda, reactions to foreigners vary

language guide

As a former British Colony, many Ugandan's speak English. English is the primary language used in schools and therefore most people within and around the cities speak fluent English. There are numerous local languages spoken throughout Uganda. In Jinja district, the local language is Lusoga. It is very useful to know some vernacular when dealing with local taxi drivers and in the market to avoid being cheated and to show that you are not a tourist.

At work

All communication, both written and oral, will be in English. Staff may occasionally talk with each other in their local language. Do not take offense at this and know that it is just sometimes easier to use vernacular. If you feel that it is becoming a problem though (i.e. you don't know what's happening at meetings, etc) then talk with your supervisor or to your FSD Program Coordinators.

In the community

In Jinja district, the main languages used are Lusoga (which is the local language) and Luganda which is mostly a business language and is widely spoken around the country. Someone in your host family will know how to speak English but it will be very much appreciated by the community and your family if you learn some of the local language.

Kiswahili

Kiswahili is spoken throughout East Africa however, in Uganda it is reminiscent of dirty politics and war. Most Ugandan's associate Swahili with soldiers and thieves (which in the past were often one and the same). Because of this, even though it is used in most neighboring countries, most Ugandan's have been hesitant to learn it. This is slowly changing thanks to many popular Kiswahili music videos played on East African TV but it is recommended that you refrain from using Swahili and opt for using Lusoga or Luganda.

Here are some useful Lusogan phrases to get you started:

English	Lusoga	Luganda	Pronunciation
Hello (casual)	Jambo (actually Swahili)	Ki kati (chee-katee)	jam-bo
How are you (to a man, formal)	Osibiotia sebo	Osiibye otya, ssebo?	o-sib-ee-o-tee-a say-bo
How are you (to a woman, formal)	Osibiotia nyabo	Osiibye otya, nnyabo?	o-sib-ee-o-tee-a nee-ah-bo
I am fine	Bulunji	Bulungi	boo-loon-jee
How are you (casual)	kodheo	Oli otya?	koh-day-o
I am fine	Tulio	Bulungi	too-lee-o
Thank you	Webale	Weebale	way-ba-lay
May I have	Mpaku	Mwattu/mpaayo	em-paa-koo
How much is this?	Sente imekka	Ssente mmeka	sente-ee-mekka
Okay	Kale	Kale	ka-lay
I understand	Kale	Kale	
1	Ndala	Emu (ey-moo)	en-da-la
2	Ibirri	Bbiri (bee-lee)	ee-beer-ri
3	isatu	Ssatu (sat-too)	ee-sa-too
4	Inna	Nnya (nya)	ee-naa
5	Itanu	Ttaano (tan-oh)	ee-tan-oo

6	Mukaaga	Mukaaga	moo-kaa-gaa
7	Musanvu	Musanvu	moo-san-voov
8	Munaana	Munaana	moo-naa-naa
9	Mwenda	Mwenda	moo-wen-da
10	Ikumi	Kumi (koo-me)	ee-koo-me

tutoring

If you are interested in tutoring in addition to your language training during orientation, please let your Site Team know. They will help you set up sessions.

recommended reading

If you would like to read up more on Uganda, we recommend the following books and sites.

See the BBC's time line of key events in Uganda:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1069181.stm

Stay up to date on current events by reading local articles featuring Uganda:

[Http://allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com)

Find archived articles from The Economist.com

<http://www.economist.com/search/search.cfm?q=uganda&area=5&keywords=1&frommonth=01&fromyear=1997&tomonth=04&toyear=2006&rv=2>

Find archived articles from The New York Times

<http://query.nytimes.com/search/query?query=Uganda&srchst=nyt>

Check out our website www.fsdinternational.org for useful links to obtaining more background information. Also try our "Further Reading" link to find books about Uganda.