

Uganda

Do's and Don'ts

Dealing with the culture and people of Uganda

Here are some suggestions for how to deal with the cultural differences you will find in Uganda.

- Due to the long lasting connection with Britain, everyone will speak English. You will have to get used to a few phrases which are used differently. (“You are welcome” is a greeting, not just a statement you make after someone says, “thank you”). The further north you go, the more likely you will find *Luo* spoken. If you interact with the villages around Otino-Waa, Luo could be predominant. Services at the church are done in both languages. (see the attached sheet for some common terms)
- Dress code- See the attached sheet for the PATH dress code. The dress requirements are clear and must be adhered to at all times. It is a matter of being sensitive to the culture, the ministry and the work being done.
- Do not, under any circumstances, give out your address or phone number to anyone. This includes the staff at the orphanage and the church. It includes the children. It includes anyone that you meet while traveling, at the hotel or in town. You will be asked, and you need to be firm in your response.
- Do not make any “I wish you could...” statements. If you said, “I wish you could come for a visit.” That would be taken to mean that you are going to pay for them to visit you. If you said, “I wish you had a better house.”. That would be taken as a promise to build them a house.
- If a child or a staff member asks you for something, it is always a good idea to tell them that you, “Need to ask Bob or Carol”. It is a matter of fairness and proper behavior on their part. If you have any concerns about this sort of thing, then ask Bob or Carol.
- Once you leave Kampala, the nations capital, the color of your skin will be a novelty to the people you meet. You are a “Muzungo”- white. As you walk through town, all eyes will be on you. People might be afraid to touch you because they think that your white skin is sensitive.

- You will be safe- but, be smart. Never travel alone and try never to be out after dark. At some point, as you travel, you will have contact with law enforcement and/or government officials. Always let the PATH staff deal with these contacts. Corruption is a way of life in Uganda. The staff knows best, how to deal with these issues and are prepared to do so.
- During the course of your stay you will have the opportunity to visit the homes of some of the staff at Otino-Waa. It would be proper for the ladies on the team to give the lady of the house a small gift- perfume, powder, etc. as a token of appreciation.
- Be careful about giving gifts to the children. There is a huge emphasis on fairness. You will develop special relationships with specific kids, but do not single them out with special gifts. A good rule of thumb in this regard is simply to ask Carol.
- The food is good, but different. You will eat breakfast each morning at the hotel. Lunch will be eaten with the children at their home at the orphanage- Posho (a white corn meal) and beans. You will be treated as an honored guest. You probably have to guide the conversation because the house mother and children will want to be quiet and respectful. Dinners will be eaten either at the hotel or at the home of a staff member. You are encouraged to try new stuff.
- Be very respectful of Bob and Carol's time. Their time is quite limited. They are responsible for the day to day operation of the orphanage the schools, the church and a variety of other ministries. They are loving, gracious people, but they have a job to do. You want to be help to them. Be self motivated. Keep busy. Watch and learn.
- Be respectful of the ministry. Bob and Carol run a tight ship. They have to. Sometimes, the things they do may seem harsh. Understand that they are confronting a culture that is much different from our own. They have lived in the country for over 10 years and know how best to deal with the difficult issues that may arise as they go about their day.
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