

Join Us on The Journey of a Lifetime!

# REACH for Uganda Volunteer Manual



Volunteer Guide  
TRIPS TO UGANDA

# Table of Contents

- 3: Overview of trips
- 4: Meet REACH for Uganda
- 5: History & Languages of Uganda
- 6: Currency and Climate of Uganda
- 7: REACH's Locations in Uganda
- 8: The Volunteer Experience
- 9: Extracurriculars and Safari
- 10: Accommodations
- 11: Food and Drinks
- 12: Typical Day in Uganda
- 13: Trip Costs
- 14: Passports and Visas
- 15: Airport Arrival and Formalities
- 16: Vaccinations, Self Care, and Travel Illness
- 17: Health Insurance and General Safety
- 18: Communications and Photography
- 19: Internet, Electricity, and Shopping
- 20: Ugandan Customs and Manners
- 21: Ugandan Customs and Manners (continued)
- 22: Cultural Adaptations and Free Time
- 23: Suggested Packing List - Overview
- 24: Suggested Packing List - Clothing
- 25: Suggested Packing List - Other
- 26: REACH Programs: Primary Education
- 27: REACH Programs: Health and Nutrition, Secondary School
- 28: REACH Programs: Outreach and Development
- 29: Closing page

# OVERVIEW OF TRIPS

**REACH For Uganda**, previously called Arlington Academy of Hope, hosts four trips to Uganda each year. Below is a brief overview of each trip.

## **Teacher Trip in partnership with Marymount University Dr. Nicci Dowd**

- Join us on a unique Spring Break trip to Uganda, where you can experience the beauty and diversity of this beautiful country, visit Ugandan schools, collaborate with local teachers, and make a meaningful, lasting impact on Ugandan education. Open to teachers of all experience levels and subjects.

## **Adult & Family Trip with Board President Dick Burk and his wife Carole Burk**

- Experience volunteering, exploration, and cultural immersion in Uganda, from visiting Sipi Falls to safaris and connecting with sponsored students' families while gaining an understanding of REACH's work in rural communities.

## **Teen Service Trip with Abigail Willard**

- Gain a global perspective by immersing yourself in Ugandan culture and engaging in daily activities with locals. Volunteer in health clinics and elementary schools, spend time in local communities, and see Uganda's beauty on safari.

## **Summer Teacher Trip with Jennifer Leach**

- Embark on a transformative journey in Uganda, where you can engage in meaningful volunteer work supporting education, healthcare, and economic development, engross yourself in Uganda's rich culture, explore stunning landscapes and wildlife, and experience personal growth through cultural immersion and new perspectives.

**REACH can't wait to host you in Uganda. Volunteers are at the heart of our organization, and we only find success with partnership!**

Learn more and secure your spot today at:  
<https://reachforuganda.org/getinvolved/trips/>

Please reach out with any questions or concerns, or to learn more about our trip offerings, via email to [info@reachforuganda.org](mailto:info@reachforuganda.org)

# MEET REACH FOR UGANDA

Mulembe! Welcome!

**REACH for Uganda** is a U.S. 501(c)3 non-profit organization with education and health programs in rural Uganda, including two primary schools, a secondary School, two health clinics, a secondary school scholarship program, university students, and women's micro-finance. These programs have been saving and changing lives since 2004, and we invite you to become a part of our team!

Our vision is to give children in rural Uganda a bright future by providing a quality, well-rounded education in the villages. By engaging a community of caring volunteers and committed professionals, both in the US and Uganda, our healthcare and vocational programs are transforming impoverished villages into vibrant, self-sustaining communities.

REACH's schools are model schools and are setting new standards of sustainable academic excellence to prepare children for adult lives. We aim to foster greater cultural understanding on local, national and international levels through shared learning experiences. By setting high standards, our model schools provide students with a rigorous curriculum, extracurriculars, quality teachers, materials and meals. Access to proper health and nutritional care alleviates stress for students and their families, paving a path to success. REACH supports our students as they progress through higher levels of learning and professional careers, and even employs many of program graduates in our schools and clinics!

It is important for REACH to support the communities that host and neighbor our schools. Our healthcare clinics are open and accessible to the wider communities, and we partner with over 40 government schools to provide ideas, funding and support. This encourages our outreach and other nearby schools to improve their performance. We are proud to provide tens of thousands of communities members with access to modern healthcare, medicines, and medical support.

# LET'S VISIT UGANDA

## **Brief history of Uganda:**

Indigenous kingdoms popped up in Uganda in the 14th century. Among them were the Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole and Busoga. Over the centuries, the Buganda people created the dominant kingdom. After the Treaty of Berlin in 1890 defined the various European countries' spheres of influence in Africa, Uganda became a British protectorate. The colonial administrators introduced coffee and cotton as cash crops and adopted indirect rule, which gave traditional kingdoms considerable autonomy, but favored the recruitment of Buganda for civil service. Uganda became independent in 1962. After years of civil war and unrest, Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1986. Uganda became a democratic nation in 1996 with a non-party system and the election of Museveni as president. He has been re-elected several times and is currently the country's longest serving leader.

## **Language:**

Educated Ugandans speak English, the official language. Over 30 indigenous languages are spoken in Uganda; the dominant Baganda tribe speaks Luganda. The REACH program located in the village of Bumwalukani, Bududa is home to the Bagisu tribe, who speak Lugisu. In Lugisu, every vowel is pronounced.

### ***Here are some helpful words to be familiar with:***

Word	Meaning	Pronunciation
Mulembe	hello	mu-lem-bay
Muriena	how are you (plural)	mor-e-a-nah
Bulayi	fine	boo-li-e
Wanyala (nabi)	thank you (very much)	wan-yella-nob-e
Mai	*respect elder woman	my-e
Mzei	*respect elder man	m-za-e
Mzungu	white person	mu-zun-gu

# LET'S VISIT UGANDA

## **Currency:**

The unit of currency is the Uganda shilling (UGX). The exchange rate varies and can be found at <https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en>. Local currency can be drawn against Visa and major ATM cards at select ATMs located in banks in Kampala, Entebbe International Airport, and Mbale. U.S. dollars can be changed at the airport upon arrival, or at any bank or Forex Bureau. U.S. dollars must be dated 2004 or newer and must be in good condition, not folded, torn, etc. Ask your bank for new, larger bills that are from 2004 or later. *U.S. banks will be confused by the request, but insist.* Bills of \$50 and \$100 command a better rate than \$20 bills. Banks in Uganda can be sensitive about the bills they will accept. For this reason, we recommend ATMs for obtaining Uganda Shillings. If you are planning to use a credit card or ATM card, call your company and let them know where you will be, so the card can be used overseas.

- Please note, most of our trips include all food, accommodations, tours, and tips (with the exemption of travel days). Travelers should bring money/cards for airport food purchases, and may also want spending money for souvenirs.

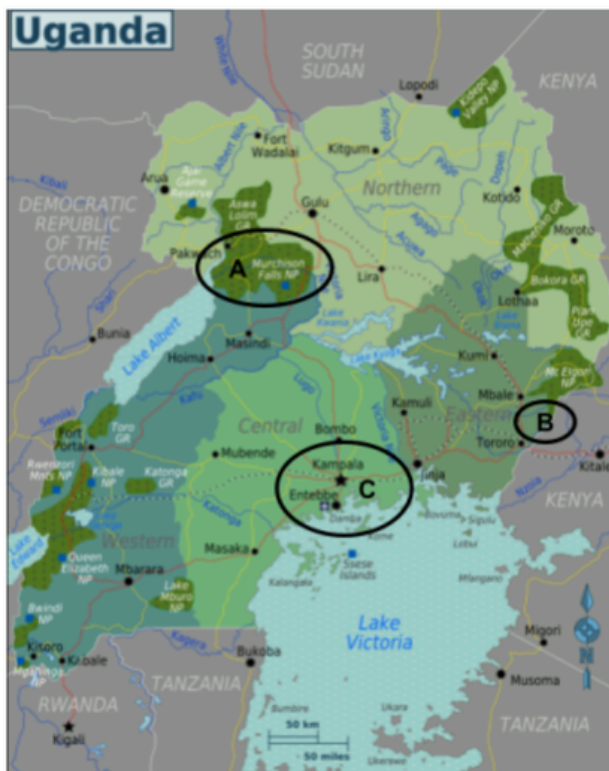
## **Climate:**

It is very pleasant in Uganda. The sun rises around 7:00 a.m. and sets around 7:00 p.m. year round, as Uganda is located on the equator. At REACH's locations, temperatures are generally cool, averaging 75°F during the day and 65°F at night during the rainy season (April through October.) During the dry season, it is about 10 degrees hotter. Don't let the rainy season deter you from visiting. Rain usually occurs in the afternoon during a very short period of time. The altitude varies from 3,000 ft to 7,200 feet above sea level.

# REACH'S LOCATIONS IN UGANDA

**REACH locations** in Uganda are breathtaking. Our first model school, Arlington Junior School (AJS); Hawthorne-Scribner High school, health clinic, and guest house are located in **Bumwalukani village**. This area is in rural, mountainous, eastern Uganda. It is about 200 miles northeast of Kampala and 30 miles south of Mbale (the nearest town). Our travelers will travel everyone in country via **private shuttle**.

Our second model school, Matuwa Junior School (MJS); health clinic, and guest house are located in **Butinduyi Village, Bupoto Namisindwa District**. MJS is about 30 miles from AJS, just under the extinct shield volcano, Mount Elgon. The mountain's highest point, Wagagai, is located in Uganda, while the mountain itself spans into Kenya. Uganda's natural beauty is unparalleled.



**A: Murchison Falls National Park**

**B: REACH's schools and health clinics**

**C: Entebbe International Airport and Kampala, the capital city**

# THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

A trip to Uganda with REACH is an opportunity to travel and stay in Africa at relatively low cost and to meaningfully contribute to a program. Our service trips enable visitors to appreciate the challenges that young children in Uganda face as they strive to get an education in poor rural environments. A visit by foreign volunteers brings honor and dignity to communities, enables students to interact with donors face-to-face, and offers the chance for children and their parents to learn new things.

We recommend volunteers become familiar with our organization in the US, by meeting REACH folks and volunteering at/attending fundraising or other events. We invite you to contribute time and energy before and after your visit by becoming an Ambassador for REACH and part of the REACH family. This involvement will enable you to understand the program more fully so you can explain to others what our organization is all about.

**Service opportunities on our trips are plentiful. Volunteers can expect to engage in the following, noting that activities vary between trips:**

- Spend time at the primary schools and interact (teach, play, read, mentor, support, tutor) with students, teachers, and staff
  - We encourage volunteers to come up with activities, lessons or games to share with students
- Volunteer at the health clinics by helping with medical and administrative tasks, participate in health outreach, and more
- Visit some of our outreach schools and health clinics/hospitals and help assess their conditions
- Write success stories, take pictures and videos of students, health clinic patients, and micro-finance beneficiaries to document the real impact of our program
- Mentor female students
- Participate in festivities at the school, local churches and in the village
- Meet and spend time with, if applicable, the student(s) supported by your family
- Conduct projects of your choice

# THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

**Extracurriculars** for our volunteers include various activities, such as hiking Mount Nusu, going on a cave hike to Namisindwa hills, visiting the Sipi, Buraba and Larso waterfalls, and other local places of interest. Visitors will see scenic places whilst traveling to/between our schools and clinics, including a stop in Jinja town to visit the source of the Nile River in Lake Victoria.

A **safari** should be on everyone's bucket list! Most of REACH's trips (excluding the teacher trip) include a safari. Typically, we will enjoy a 3 day, 2 night land and water safari through Murchison Falls National Park. Visitors can expect to see elephants, giraffes, hippos, lions, buffaloes, crocodiles, warthogs, waterbucks, oribis and more!



# ACCOMMODATIONS IN UGANDA

Visitors will stay at hotels when away from REACH properties. This includes hotel stays in Kampala or Jinja town on the night of arrival, the night before departure, and (for trips including safari) within Murchison Falls National Park.

REACH has Four guest houses for the visitors to stay in as we travel between our schools and clinics. The Wanda Villa and Wanda home guest houses are about a 15-minute walk from our first model school, Arlington Junior School. The first house is a concrete and brick house with a common eating/sitting area and four bedrooms. Each bedroom has 4 beds and volunteers should anticipate sharing their room with 1 - 3 other volunteers. The house has access to mainline electricity and solar, but service is unreliable and volunteers should be prepared to be without power most of the time. There is a generator and battery operated lights are available. Electronic devices such as cell phones may be charged from the solar panels at the school. There are flush toilets and showers available in a separate building behind the house. The second house is the home of the Wandas and used if needed. It has 5 bedrooms with WiFi and hot running water. The guest houses are about an 8-minute walk apart. The JJW - Wanda Villas are a set of rooms on the Wanda Business Center with modern accommodations within the town of Kikholo, near HSHS.

Our third guest house in Namisindwa is about 30 miles from Arlington Junior School. This house is just across the road from our second model school, Matuwa Junior School and next door to our second health clinic. The bathrooms and showers are in separate rooms within the guest house. There are 5 dorm style bedrooms. Electricity and solar are available.

Safe drinking water is provided at the guest house. In the guest houses, water is heated on a gas stove and given to volunteers in buckets to have warm water for showers/personal care. We promise “bucket baths” are easier than they sound!

Due to the inconsistent power at both guest houses, refrigeration is not available in house. However, it is available at our health clinics, both located on school grounds. Those with medicines requiring refrigeration should contact REACH to make arrangements to store such medicines properly.

# ACCOMMODATIONS IN UGANDA

## Food and drinks:

Volunteers are provided three Ugandan meals each day, excluding at the airport. Breakfast is available around 7:00 a.m. and typically includes tea, coffee, porridge or oatmeal, and some type of egg. The mid-morning snack at school may include nuts, cassava, or mandaze, a large piece of fried dough. Lunch is typically served at school around 1:00 p.m. and consists of traditional Ugandan food: Posho (cornmeal), rice, beef, greens, beans, cabbage and tea. Dinner is served at the Guest House around 7:00 p.m. and varies each evening. **All meals on safari are also included.**

The menu of Ugandan meals is plain. You may wish to bring or buy snacks from the grocery stores in Kampala or Mbale when you arrive. We recommend you carry a personal selection of granola bars, power bars, peanut butter/cheese crackers, instant soup mix, hot chocolate mix, tuna, etc. with you from the U.S. Another suggestion is powdered drink packets to add flavor to your bottled water. Always drink bottled water, juice boxes or bottled soft drinks. Safe drinking water will be provided throughout the trip. In Uganda, do not drink tap water, use ice, or eat raw foods including vegetables and salads, unless served to you at the REACH guest houses or from reputable restaurants.



# A TYPICAL DAY IN UGANDA

## **Weekday Morning**

Breakfast at the guest house is cooked for and provided to travelers. We'll fill up water bottles and pack necessary items before taking a short walk to the school or clinic. Depending on the trip, volunteers will work with REACH or outreach school students on a meaningful special service project or games. This may involve mentoring, tutoring, doing special art or handcraft work, reading to and with students, or working as a teacher's assistant in the classroom. Volunteers may also be implementing their own projects or attending beneficial meetings. At the medical clinics, visitors work alongside the medical personnel and have the opportunity to rotate in stations which may include: registration, treatment, lab, maternity or pharmacy.

## **Weekday Afternoon**

Lunch is provided at the school or guesthouse. Visitors will participate in a variety of activities and hands-on learning about the social history and cultural context of Uganda. Activities might include learning a bit of the local Lugisu language, playing games with students and going on a home visit with your sponsored student alongside REACH staff.

## **Weekday Evening**

Dinner is provided at the guest house. At night, we will unwind after an action-packed day. Journal entries are encouraged, stories are swapped, and bonding over this shared experience is enjoyed by all.

## **Weekend Activities**

Visitors will have the option to go on a longer excursions to discover more of the beautiful country of Uganda. This typically includes Hiking Mount Nusu, visiting the Sipi, Buraba and Larso waterfalls, going on cave hikes in Namisindwa and Bududa. The walks and hikes in the countryside allow everyone an opportunity to connect with one another and REACH students/staff.

# VOLUNTEER TRIP COSTS

## Volunteer fee:

Each trip has its own volunteer fee. A \$500 deposit is due by January or March 31st, depending on the trip, and the balance is due by May 31st. All fees are nonrefundable, unless REACH must cancel or postpone the trip. Deposits and payments may be made on our website.

Teacher Trip: \$1,500.

Teen Trip: \$3,800.

Adult/Family Trip: \$5,000.

Teacher Summer Trip: \$4,200

The volunteer fee covers a full-time trip chaperone/trip leader, 24/7 volunteer support, in-country program administration costs, in-country transportation in privately hired vehicles, program supervision, all accommodations (including hotel and guest house stays), all meals, laundry service during the volunteer period, and (for most trips) a 3-day safari. **REACH can share fundraising ideas that have been very successful with previous volunteers.**

## Personal costs:

The volunteer fee (ranges from \$1,500 - \$8,000 depending on the trip), the costs of a roundtrip flight, getting a passport, purchasing souvenirs, travel visa, travel health insurance, and any necessary immunizations (yellow fever vaccination is required to enter Uganda) are personal costs, and **not included** in the volunteer fee.

- Flights typically range between \$1,200 and \$2,000 roundtrip
  - Flights may be arranged with REACH's travel agent. Teen trip flights are arranged through the agent to ensure volunteers are seated together on the same roundtrip flights from IAD to EBB.
- Visas are typically around \$50.
- Malaria pills (**required**), depending on your health insurance, start around \$75 for 2+ week supply
- Vaccinations (**required**), depending on your health insurance and doctor recommendations, typically range between \$100 - \$800.
- Health/travel insurance (**required**) with medical evacuation coverage starts around \$50
- Souvenirs and personal expenses, depending on preference, start around \$100 (all transport and meals in Uganda for the duration of the trip are provided - food at the airports is not included)

## To sign up & secure your spot:

1. **Secure your spot** with a **\$500 nonrefundable deposit**
  - a. *This is your commitment to joining the service trip*
  - b. <https://reachforuganda.org/getinvolved/trips/>
2. Email [info@reachforuganda.org](mailto:info@reachforuganda.org) to introduce yourself

# PASSPORTS AND VISAS

## **Passport:**

Americans need a US passport, valid for at least six months from the date of departure from Uganda, containing at least two blank pages. Visitors from any country must hold tickets and other documents for onward or return journeys. Immigration officers can be strict on this regulation.

It is advisable to make copies of your passport, license, and credit/debit cards (front and back). Leave one copy at home with a loved one and keep another copy with you, stored in a safe location. That will make things much easier to replace if anything is lost or stolen.

As REACH cannot be responsible for loss or damage to luggage and personal belongings, you should report any loss or damage immediately at the time of the incident and obtain a written report from the local authority for submission to your travel insurance provider. If your luggage is lost or damaged by the airlines, a baggage claim form should be filed with the carrier before leaving the airport.

## **Visa:**

You need to get your visa ahead of time in your home country. Here is the link to apply for the visa through the Uganda E-immigration system: <https://visas.immigration.go.ug/#/apply>.

You will need to prepare the following items before applying:

- Vaccination of yellow fever certificate
- Copy of return ticket
- Recent passport-size photo
- Passport info page
- \$50 fee paid by credit card

# AIRPORT ARRIVAL AND FORMALITIES

## Overview:

The trip chaperone will meet travelers at the airport in the US (typically IAD), travel with them to Uganda, remain with them for the entire trip (volunteer period and safari), and fly home with them. For the teen trip, the chaperone will leave the airport only after all teens have been picked up by their families.

Several airways serve Uganda from the US. REACH usually flies with Emirates, as their schedule is convenient with the time difference. There is a minimum of 1 layover stop from the US (we typically depart from IAD), to Uganda's main airport, Entebbe (EBB). We choose our flights based on convenience and pricing. Flights are determined early in the year. *Uganda is 8 hours ahead of EST time in the US.*

An AAH representative or travel agent will meet the group after they pass through customs and are at baggage claim. The trip chaperone will locate the representative, who will have a welcoming REACH sign. Travelers will keep their luggage with them at all times and not allow anyone (other than AAH/REACH staff) to help with luggage.



# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## **Vaccinations:**

A certificate of yellow fever vaccination is required to enter Uganda. All visitors should take malaria prophylactic drugs. It is advised that all travelers be vaccinated against meningitis, Typhoid and Hepatitis A & B. For further information, please contact your physician, local or state health department, or the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) International Traveler's Hotline at (404) 332-4559 or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

## **Self care:**

Plan to bring and use mosquito/bug repellent. Mosquito nets are provided at the guest houses. Plan to bring and use a high SPF sunscreen. Bring a sun aftercare product if your skin tends to burn easily. Travelers should bring an adequate supply of medicines and first aid accessories, as supplies are limited in Uganda. Travel can take a toll on the body and mind. Be sure to vocalize concerns and reach out for the help if needed. **Rest will be built into our itinerary, as well as down time provided for the all to decompress and socialize without worrying about volunteer duties.**

## **Travel related illness:**

Approximately one-third of travelers to less developed countries become ill from contaminated food or water if they are not careful. REACH provides all meals to teen volunteers and only works with reputable hotels and safari travel agencies to ensure access to high quality food. While volunteering, you should monitor your health so that you can see the doctor right away if you show signs of illness. In the case of malaria, it is much easier to treat when you detect it early. Most of the time though, if you get sick, it will be because of something simple like not washing your hands, something you ate, or drinking local, untreated water. Should you feel ill, please let REACH personnel and the head nurse at the clinic know as soon as possible. Do not drink tap water. Drink bottled water only. A supply is always available at the guest houses. Fruit juice can have unsterilized water in it so watch out for this, unless bought bottled from a shop. Hot drinks such as coffee and tea are usually fine, as the water is generally boiled.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## **Health Insurance:**

We **require** travel insurance that includes medical evacuation coverage by all volunteers. This is for your protection. Availability of health care in Uganda is usually restricted to major cities and can be expensive. There are health clinics at the REACH schools which volunteers can use.

Recommended options for travel insurance include Travel Safe, Atlas Travel Insurance and World Nomads. Insurance is a must for health reasons, in the case of cancellation or interruption of travel plans, lost or damaged luggage and travel delays. Keep boarding passes, ticket copies and receipts for expenses paid during your trip if it later becomes necessary to file a claim. It is also helpful to have a list of the contents of each piece of luggage.

## **General Safety:**

The U.S. State Department urges U.S. citizens to be responsible for their security overseas. For the latest information, check their website at <http://travel.state.gov> where Travel Warnings and Public Announcements can be found. You can register your travel and stay dates on this website. Safety and security information can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747, or outside the U.S. and Canada, 1- 202-501-4444. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. ET, M-F (except U.S. federal holidays).

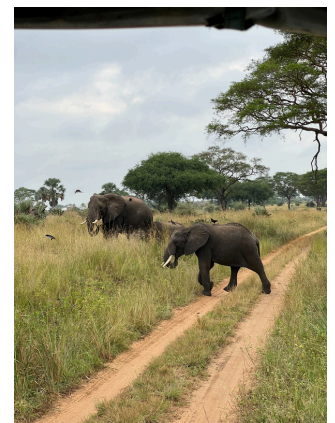
Use common sense when overseas. Leave your jewelry at home. Guard your purse and wallet. Be vigilant when carrying anything of value. Do not change money on the streets. Take only indispensable items in your backpack or fanny pack. Do not take your passport, airline tickets, or all your money on day trips. Always leave these and other valuables in a safe place. Carry identification with you at all times. Never leave luggage or cameras unattended. For the most part, Ugandans are very friendly and helpful, and the villages are very safe. A safe is available at the Bududa guest house for passports and cash.

# COMMUNICATIONS

The Country code for Uganda is 256. Service for local calls is unreliable. There are cell phones at REACH that volunteers can use to contact relatives in the US in case of emergencies. Our coordinators have smartphones. It is suggested that relatives use calling cards or services such as Skype to contact the trip chaperone or REACH coordinators in Uganda. We will provide you with the best number(s) to call to reach travelers in case of emergency. Depending on internet availability, some updates may be brief while others may contain photographs.

# PHOTOGRAPHY

Uganda has excellent opportunities for photography, from panoramic scenery, exotic wildlife and birds to wonderful people and vibrant ceremonies. Rich color and good low-lighting conditions abound. It is considered rude to take pictures of people without asking permission. No photos should be taken of or at the airport, strategic buildings or military installations. Bring memory cards, batteries, and chargers, as these items are not widely available and are expensive.



# INTERNET

There is wifi available on REACH grounds. The chaperone will keep in touch with families with general updates. You will find numerous Internet cafes in Mbale, as well as in all major cities. Volunteers may purchase data to use the internet at the guest houses, but the signal is weak and unreliable. This is a great time to technologically disconnect and immerse yourself in the wonderful culture Uganda has to offer.

REACH discourages constant use of internet. We want travelers to immerse themselves in the experience and be present on this service trip.

# ELECTRICITY

Electrical current in Uganda is 240 volts, so a converter may be needed for your devices. Plugs are square peg three pin (UK adapter). Power in the village is unpredictable. The school uses solar panels, and a generator when essential. Most nights are lantern lit. Devices can be charged at the school.

# SHOPPING

There are small markets around Mbale and larger ones in Jinja and Kampala. You can purchase some local art, drums, wood carvings, or brightly colored paintings. Locally made baskets are available for purchase in the village. Some baskets are made by women participating in our microfinance program! Bargaining is a must with street vendors or at the markets. Counter the sellers' bid by half and then work back and forth to an agreeable price. Have small bills available to ease the purchasing process. There is a Wanda supermarket in Bududa where you will be staying and you can buy basics in the village.



# UGANDAN CUSTOMS & MANNERS

Ugandan people are tolerant of foreign behavior and not easily offended. They tend to be conservative and visitors should mind their behavior, language and attire out of respect.

## **What to expect:**

- If you are going anywhere in and around the village, you must go with someone from REACH, such as a coordinator or chaperone
- Stay in after dark as streets are not lit and there can be vehicles or animals in the road
- Ask permission of anyone you would like to photograph. If offering to give them a copy of the photo, make sure you follow through. REACH does not recommend offering a copy unless you have already exchanged emails or have a photo printing device with you (polaroid camera, Print Prynt Pocket, HP Sprocket, etc)
- Avoid taking photos of anything "strategic," such as airports or military operations
- Use a greeting when possible. A soft handshake is used along with 'hello' or asking how they are. Starting conversation without a greeting is impolite. Some people will shake hands with you when you leave them. Displays of affection in public are rare (kissing, holding hands, etc). Be polite with all people
- Shoes are generally taken off before entering sacred places
- Volunteers may notice that women and children are more subservient than we are used to in the US. Teachers, doctors, ministers and other professionals are held in high regard, as are older men. Always be respectful
- Use your right hand when passing or receiving food, or when eating with your fingers.
- When bargaining in the market, try to be fair. A good deal is one when both parties are happy. If you can afford to pay the \$5, do not try to bargain down to \$2
- If you have light skin, you will draw attention in many forms. Ugandans are friendly and want to greet you. Foreigners are thought to be rich and people may ask you for money or possessions. A simple and polite refusal will not offend anyone. The children will especially be curious and may ask to touch your hair, especially if you have blonde hair
- Patience and understanding are needed. People take their time to do things in Uganda, and the U.S. standards of time and urgency may not apply the same way

# UGANDAN CUSTOMS & MANNERS

## What to expect (continued):

- Hugs are a normal way of greeting, but you don't have to engage. Many people (especially women) kneel or sit down when greeting visitors. Also, many local people avoid eye contact with visitors. Please do not find this to be rude. There's a lot of handshaking too!
- When visiting homes you may be greeted with song and prayer
- Although many people speak and understand English, it is spoken with a strong accent, and words sometimes carry different meanings. For example, the word "sorry" means, "excuse me", "nice" means good, "smart" means well-dressed, etc.
- When eating, Ugandans will often first bring a basin and soap to you. They will pour water over your hands as you wash them. You will probably be given utensils, but if not, just use your right hand
- Guests eat in the sitting room; hosts usually wait in the kitchen and greet you again after you are done. Do not be offended by this common practice. You are most welcomed
- Gifts in the village often include live chickens and goats. If you are given one of these, you should accept it (it is rude not to do so) and take it back to the guest house
- Dressing appropriately (conservative and modest) and looking nice is highly valued
- Drinking and/or smoking in public is inappropriate. REACH is smoke-free and teens are not, under any circumstances, permitted to drink any type of alcoholic beverage or engage in smoking of any sort
- Running water is not available (the villages use rain water); electricity is often not available
- Long boots for rain/mud are available at the guest houses
- Beds, bedding and large towels are available at the guest houses
- Ugandans don't snack as we do. You may want to take bars, dried fruit, nuts, crackers, etc.
- Take a handkerchief for wiping sweat - They are common and needed
- Be prepared for late meals if you are not on the school/guest house schedule
- Do not make any promises to anyone you meet for material goods, school enrollment or sponsorships

# CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS

You are immersed in another culture when you are volunteering internationally. The way you would approach a particular situation in your home country may differ from how you would handle it in Uganda. Your time and commitment to the program is valued, but please remember you are a guest of the country and will be looked at as a representative of your homeland. Your actions will be watched (and discussed) by curious village residents.

In Uganda, follow the local laws and regulations. If there is any doubt, please consult the school/clinic staff. Failure to abide by the program rules may result in termination of your visit.

## FREE TIME

Volunteers have free time after duties are done for the day. At night, activities tend to slow down. We have books and games, but you may want to bring music, cards, reading, pre downloaded movies/shows, puzzles or journaling materials for the evenings. Explore nearby villages on weekends or hike to the top of the local summit, Mount Nusu. Local churches welcome your visit for Sunday services if you so desire.

When you are not working on your specific volunteer activities, we encourage you to interact with members of the community, students, teachers and family members. We know that your observations will be valuable feedback upon your return. We hope you will become an Ambassador for REACH when you return. You will forever be a part of the REACH family after volunteering with us!



# SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Traveling light with your personal items is always the first and best rule! Each traveler is expected to take at least one full weight (50 pound) suitcase of materials for REACH each way with you on your flight. Restrict your personal luggage to one (50 pound) suitcase plus one backpack or carry-on item.

The villages that REACH serves are culturally conservative. Pack **modest outfits** that cover shoulders and go to the knees. Low cut tops, short shorts, ripped clothing, short skirts and other such clothes should not be worn. Loose cotton clothing is recommended for protection against the sun and mosquitoes. Clothing for your trip should accommodate both your work and possible touring. Lightweight casual clothes can be worn year round, with a jacket or sweatshirt for early mornings and evenings. Take rainwear with a hood. A sun hat, sunglasses, sunscreen and insect repellent are necessary. Your best bet for clothing is sweat-proof athletic wear and/or loose cotton clothing.

Pack anything you cannot live without in your carry-on bag, including a change of clothes and essential allowable toiletries in case of baggage delay. To avoid problems at customs, keep medications in original, labeled containers. Make sure you have luggage tags on each suitcase inclusive of your name and your destination address inside. Make sure your personal documents (passports, visas) are in order and that you have enough prescription medications to last through the trip.

# SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

## Clothing:

- **Please plan to dress conservatively** to be respectful of Ugandan culture, especially during our volunteer time. We recommend clothing that is lightweight (such as cotton) and modest. **Sweat proof athletic wear** is highly encouraged and comfortable, as summer days grow hot and humid. **Note that laundry service will be provided** during our volunteer time, so plan to rewear and mix/match your clothes. (However, undergarments will **not** be washed, so please pack enough, or plan to bring detergent to hand wash items yourself)
- Take clothes to wear that you don't mind getting dusty. Even when washed, white won't stay white! Some people choose to pack clothes they don't mind leaving in Uganda. Don't pack any delicates
- Top suggestions: Loose athletic tops. Polo-like cotton shirts, short-sleeved and long-sleeved options for protection from sun and insects. Dresses are easy to pack and appropriate to wear, as Ugandans tend to dress up
  - Please avoid wearing bandeau, cropped and halter tops
- Bottom suggestions: Light-weight, long skirts, slacks and pants. Appropriate shorts and gym shorts, keeping in mind to dress conservatively. Hiking pants or other athletic long pants
- Pajamas/lounge clothes for sleeping/lounging at the guest houses
- Shoe suggestions: Comfortable sneakers or hiking shoes and socks (something that can get muddy). Sturdy sandals such as Texas or Chacos, or trainers/sneakers for everyday wear (barefoot is not advised for health and social reasons)
- One sweatshirt, fleece or jacket (multi-function is best; mornings and evenings can be cool, especially on safari)
- Shower shoes
- Hat, cap, kerchief, sunglasses for sun protection
- Raincoat with hood (highly recommended!) and a small umbrella if you have room in your luggage
- **One outfit that is more dressed up**
- During safari, avoid dressing in blue, black, or white clothing, as they may attract tsetse flies. Stick with greens and browns

# SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

## Other:

- Small flashlight (take batteries) and/or a headlamp. There are no lights in the village at night.
- Personal cosmetic items and feminine hygiene products
- Sunscreen with high SPF (and aloe if you tend to sunburn easily)
- Insect repellent
- Camera and chargers
- Backpack/day pack with small lock (for carrying your phone, camera, water bottle, etc. during volunteer hours)
- "Fanny-pack" or travel wallet (we discourage carrying a purse; buy a pouch that tucks into your pants–this is generally the safest method)
- Prescription glasses, contacts and solution
- Small, lightweight towel and washcloth (large towels will be provided at hotels/guesthouses)
- Antibacterial soap, hand gel and/or wipes (small size for backpack, etc.)
- Something like Oral-B Brush-Ups to freshen teeth without water in between brushings
- Tissues for using the bathroom away from the guest house
- Plastic bags for wet/dirty laundry
- 2-3 extra Ziploc type bags (for items that can't get wet on hikes, etc.)
- Journal, pens (highly recommended)
- Driver's License or School ID as a secondary ID
- Paper copy of your passport and visa



# SUGGESTED GIFTS TO SPONSOR FAMILIES

The gift of a child's education sponsorship is a meaningful, life changing gift for a family in Uganda. It allows a Ugandan child to attend one of the best possible programs in the country, breaking away from a life of hardship in the village. When you visit Uganda, you will have the opportunity to meet your sponsored student and visit with their family.

A visiting volunteer does not have to bring a gift when visiting their sponsored family. A gift is always appreciated, and as such, here are some recommendations for those wishing to make another gesture.

- Inflatable solar lanterns: These typically cost around \$20 each. They are popular gifts as they are easy to carry, relatively inexpensive, and very useful.
- School supplies: Stickers, colored pens, colored pencils, pencil sharpeners, markers, notebooks, coloring books, practice workbooks, and/or other miscellaneous school supplies. These are hard to come by in the villages and thus extremely appreciated.
- Clothing such as dresses, scarfs, hats, t-shirts, etc. are nice if you have a sense of the size and likes of your student.
- Cash: \$20 - \$50 so families are able to purchase wants or needs. Nothing beats a \$50 bill in a country like Uganda. For many families, \$50 is equivalent to a month's income.
- Solar cooking stove (arrange with REACH). These environmentally friendly solar stoves made specifically for communities that are off-grid. The stoves are made by a company called AFRICAN CLEAN ENERGY, based in Lesotho, and backed by US and European companies. A stove sells for \$100 and has built in functions for charging phones and providing lighting.
- Build a concrete floor (arrange with REACH). Many families live in houses with dirt floors. Starting in 2018, AAH (Uganda's branch of REACH) started helping families to cement their floors. AAH provides cement and skilled labor, while families collect sand, gravel, and water. A cement floor helps eliminate parasites like fleas, jiggers, and worms, and allows families to live a healthier lifestyle. The project includes provision of a solar lamp to improve indoor lighting. The AAH cost to cement a house and provide lighting is \$400. Many Ugandan families cannot afford this and will appreciate help from a sponsor.



# REACH FOR UGANDA PROGRAMS

## Primary Education:

Child Sponsors: Child sponsors are the surest way of providing support to a child at REACH for Uganda. A child sponsorship costs \$50 per month, or \$600 per year per child. You can choose to sponsor a child at Arlington Junior School or Matuwa Junior School. A sponsorship assures the child of their place at the school for a year, and enables them to have a friend in the US who makes them feel supported. Our challenge is to ensure every student at REACH is sponsored. Approximately 50 new students needing sponsors enroll each year. Sponsorship funds help to provide some of the following for the school:

- Great Teachers - our teachers work long hours and do far more than an average teacher in Uganda. They report to school early, leave late, work on weekends, provide one-on-one student support, and do monthly assessment tests, etc. In addition, they support teachers from neighboring schools and conduct seminars for them.
- Food and Nutrition - REACH provides a mid-morning snack and lunch. For many students, this is their best meal of the day, and for some, their only meal. Research shows that children who receive breakfast and lunch learn better and are more connected to their education. Attendance at nearby public schools is about 50% in the morning, dropping to less than 25% in the afternoons. At REACH schools, attendance is over 95% all day.
- School Supplies and textbooks - REACH provides scholastic materials to its students and teachers. Our goal is to acquire enough textbooks in all major subjects to maintain a 2:1 ratio between students and books. We also provide school supplies for teachers and students, teaching aides, basic games and equipment in the classrooms, and field trips so students can see visit areas and things they learn about at school.
- Uniforms - We provide uniforms to students, which is a norm in Uganda that builds self-esteem and confidence. It also lessens the burden on families to provide clothes.
- Extracurricular Activities - REACH's music program captures the rich heritage of the Bagisu people and music from around Uganda, and introduces basic concepts of western music. Students perform for visiting dignitaries and schools. The school participates in athletic and music and drama competitions at the local, district, regional and national levels. Our students have recently won the district music competition and were thrilled! Students also participate in handicrafts, gardening, arts and crafts, poetry, debating and public speaking, news reading, physical education, etc. to develop into well-rounded and creative students.

# REACH FOR UGANDA PROGRAMS

## **Health and Nutrition:**

Real learning cannot begin unless a child is nourished and healthy. REACH provides midmorning porridge and a hot lunch to students and staff members. For many, school lunch of posho or rice, and beans is their main meal of the day. We teach about balanced diets, encourage healthy food choices and safe drinking water. Extracurricular activities include dental and hygiene training and physical education.

There were no healthcare facilities in Bumwalukani before REACH opened the school clinic. The nearest hospital is 7 miles away - a good distance in an area with scarce modern transportation and poor roads. Although there are government-run clinics nearby, they often have outdated medicines or do not have medicines or nurses on duty. Local schools do not have first aid supplies or basic healthcare. To address this, REACH built a health clinic at AJS. In 2008, REACH added a clinic in Bupoto village, near MJS. This clinic was built in memory of co-founder Joyce Wanda's four sisters: Kanah, Besi, Sarah and Juliet who passed away from preventable causes. The clinic provides quality care to low cost, and services for pregnant mothers, babies, and young children, including a maternity ward. REACH students and staff, as well as community members, have free or low cost medical care available to them. Through partnerships with local health centers and coordination with the District, our goal is to deliver basic healthcare, preventative services and immunizations to the wider community.

## **Secondary School:**

Secondary school in Uganda is based on the British system of O levels and A levels - equivalent to US High School and junior college. REACH supports over 300 graduates - from REACH as well as the top boy and girl students from nearby public primary schools - at secondary boarding schools around Uganda. Starting in 2025, REACH's own secondary school, Hawthorne-Scribner High School, will enroll students from our primary schools, as well as high-scoring students from other schools and districts across Uganda. This will allow students to remain closer to home and boost the local economy.

Children qualify for scholarships based on grades on the Primary Leaving Exam, which Ugandan students take at the end of primary school. Until this year, students have had to travel far from their home villages. In addition, REACH staff runs a holiday program each term break for secondary students to return to the school to get tutored and mentored, and to perform community service. Tuition and room and board for each student averages \$1,000 per year. Parents in Uganda contribute as well.

# REACH FOR UGANDA PROGRAMS

## **Outreach Program:**

One of the purposes of outreach is to encourage other schools to lift their standards. We provide soccer balls and other play equipment; and school supplies, including notebooks, pens, pencils, books, crayons, and erasers. Outreach teachers and students participate in REACH school events such as the Science Fair, joint music and drama programs, REACH performances, movie viewings, and teacher-training workshops. We donate equipment to the district to print tests and exams, and hold districtwide workshops for teachers and other education professionals. We invite local teachers on our school field trips, and on our professional development trips to Kampala. We help build teacher capacity in the district through partnerships with Marymount University and Lasell College, who bring professors and students to hold teacher training workshops and seminars. Many local schools have formed PTAs based on REACH's model started at AJS. The local government encourages other schools to emulate our model and uses REACH facilities for district meetings and other functions.

## **Infrastructure, Facilities and Development Programs:**

REACH's Arlington Junior School has a library, music room, computer room and multipurpose room (for teacher workshops, student performances and meetings); a school farm, teacher housing, kitchen, and a basic playing field.

REACH's Matuwa Junior School, which was started in 2019, is developing nicely. Currently it boasts a library, kitchen, teacher housing, and basic playing field.

## **Community Development:**

REACH works with local community members to promote the growth of self-sustaining and vibrant communities. We seek opportunities to develop and reinvest the skills and expertise of REACH graduates, staff, and community members back into the local communities. In addition to REACH's positive impact on the local economy, we support local women's micro-finance programs. We plan to expand our community development to sustainable agriculture programs and to small and micro-enterprises.

**REACH can't wait to host you in Uganda.  
Volunteers are at the heart of our  
organization, and we only find success  
with partnership!**

Learn more and secure your spot today at:  
<https://reachforuganda.org/getinvolved/trips/>

Please reach out with any questions or concerns.  
[info@reachforuganda.org](mailto:info@reachforuganda.org)

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