

East Africa: Community Development and Education in Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zanzibar

Week 1: Arrival/Program Orientation in Jinja and Kampala visit, Uganda

Meet up with your group and Overseas Educators at the Amsterdam International Airport to board your flight to Entebbe, just outside the Ugandan capital of Kampala. We'll stay here for the night, transferring to the town of Jinja on the shores of Lake Victoria on the next day. Jinja is situated along the headwaters of the Nile River, and is a great place to get your bearings, adapt to Ugandan life, and walk to nearby local markets. The group will stay here for the next 4 days, building bonds, setting intentions, and establishing a strong foundation for the upcoming journey,

Once we have some of the basics of the program under our belt, it's time to dive in. We'll return to Kampala: a great first city to experience, as it's small enough to feel manageable yet packed with art, culture, and history. We spend just a few nights here, continuing to learn about Ugandan culture and society, and preparing for our transfer to the highlands of the southwest.

Week 2-3: Community development and canoe trekking in the highlands, Kabale region, Uganda

We leave the hustle and bustle of the capital city behind us and head to the southwestern part of the country. Our destination is the sleepy town of Kabale, nestled among green rolling hills. Here, the group will prepare for our stay at the Special Needs Education Center (SNEC) by heading to the local market and dividing up into teams to buy food for our meals. Once all of our provisions have been purchased, we are ready to head to SNEC. SNEC is one of the only schools in the country offering education to students with special needs. Our time here is powerful and we are able to be involved on multiple fronts. We may find ourselves helping to create new portions of the classrooms, we might organize a workshop on computer usage, or we may assist in some of the classrooms and gain a first-hand understanding of what it takes to be a teacher in this part of the world. We stay in volunteer housing provided by the school, and we cook all our own food. Bearing witness to the lives transformed by SNEC is moving, and new friendships are bound to be made!

Saying goodbye to our friends at SNEC, we head back towards Kabale town, this time finding ourselves on the shores of Lake Bunyonyi. It's time to get outside and see some of the truly beautiful landscapes this country has to offer. We join our local guides and paddle hand dug canoes across the lake. The journey will be a mixture of walking over the beautiful rolling green hills and paddling in the waters of Bunyonyi. We stay at a local families' home and on Tom's Island where Tom, a lifelong resident, tells us what the lake was like when he was younger, and gives us perspective on how things have changed. After 4 nights on Bunyonyi, it's time to head back to Kabale, and prepare to travel to Rwanda.

Week 4: Kigali and Huye, Rwanda

We board a bus and head out west. On the way we cross into the country of Rwanda; welcome to the land of one thousand hills! Kigali is a sleek and modern capital which challenges many people's notion of what constitutes an East African city. After settling in, we make our way to the Kigali Genocide Memorial and Museum. In 1994, between 800,000 – 1,000,000 people were killed in a tragic civil war and ethnic violence during a 100-day period. We come here to bear witness to a terrible history and learn from the past, but also to see how this one event does not define a nation. While Rwanda still remembers it's past, it is moving forward at a rapid rate, and is one of the most technologically advanced regions in East Africa with some very progressive environmental laws: plastic bags are totally outlawed, and single use plastics are soon to follow!

We take the opportunity to get out of the city for a few days and head south to the coffee growing region of Huye. Here we meet up with our friend and local guide, Aloys. Aloys takes us around his home region for a few days, visiting a coffee plantation producing some of the highest quality beans from the African continent, and one of the best museums in the nation. After our time in the south, we head back to Kigali to catch our flight to Tanzania.

Weeks 5: Dar es Salaam and Kiswahili study in Morogoro, Tanzania

Karibuni Tanzania (Welcome!). We spend 2 nights in Dar es Salaam getting our feet under us before we travel by bus to the interior town of Morogoro. Arriving in Morogoro, we make our way to our new home at a local language school. We'll engage in homestays with local families, attending Swahili classes in the day time, and having time in the afternoon to engage in cultural activities, hikes, a football match with the local soccer team, or catching up on language study. The town of Morogoro is a great entry way into Tanzanian culture and staying with local families allows us to gain deeper insight into Tanzanian culture and society.

Week 6: Community development and education for rural farmers and Safari in Iringa, Tanzania

We head further west to the town of Iringa. Iringa sits on the edge of Tanzania's largest national park, Ruaha. The main economic activity in Iringa is agriculture, but what do you do when elephants from the national park trample your crops, putting your family's livelihoods in question? In the past, one of the only options to local farmers was to shoot the animals, but in the more recent past, a small NGO called Wildlife Connection has been seeking to change this. It turns out that elephants have a natural aversion to bees and won't go near a bee hive. Wildlife Connections seeks to utilize this knowledge in order to benefit both elephants and farmers. We'll be working with local farmers in the region to create a network of beehive fences that protect agricultural lands, thereby protecting the elephants, and providing a new form of income... honey! We join this innovative project, learning how this is bringing people together and allowing communities to thrive!

Following our stay with Wildlife Connection, the group heads into Ruaha National Park for a two-day Safari. Elephants, lions, giraffes, and hippos are all commonly sighted, with some groups having seen hyenas and leopards! Along the way we discuss the complexities of poaching in Tanzania, and what efforts are being made to protect Tanzania's wildlife.

Week 7-8: Community development in Uwembe village and reflection retreat on Lake Malawi, Tanzania

We push further west, arriving in Njombe town. This is the heart of the southern highlands. While Tanzania's north is heavily visited, you won't see many foreigners in this part of the country. We spend a few nights in the small town of Njombe before meeting up with our partner organization, Live Dunia. Live Dunia works in the southern highlands to promote cultural exchange between locals and visitors, and meaningful, independent community development. We spend two weeks in this small community, staying with host families, and learn the realities of international development. We are here as students to learn from this community, and we are invited to lend a hand in multiple projects ranging from gender equality initiatives, environmental policy, social enterprise development, or women's cooperatives. We also find time to travel to the shores of the beautiful Lake Malawi, where we engage in 3 days of mindfulness, learning new practices such as yoga and meditation, and reflect on the past two months. We believe wholeheartedly in the necessity of self-reflection in daily life, as the unexamined life often never leads to change.

Week 9: Student Directed Travel in Tanzania. Beginning in Njombe, ending in Dar es Salaam

This is your group's chance to take the reins and put into practice all the travel skills you have learned thus far. You have ten days to decide as a group where to go, where to stay, and how to get there. The Overseas Educators will take a mindful back seat and allow the group to create

their own itinerary, eventually bringing us back to Dar es Salaam to prepare for our time on the Swahili Coast.

Week 10: Education and Community Development on the Swahili Coast, Bagamoyo, Tanzania

We head north up the Swahili coast to the small town of Bagamoyo. It is here that we meet our partner organization, the Baobab Home. Many families in this region have been devastated by HIV, and some parents are not able to provide for their children. Sadly, there are many children either partially, or fully abandoned due to economic circumstance, or by death of their parents; they are unable to provide for themselves and have few future prospects. Baobab Home works to provide housing, educational opportunities, medical/mental health services, and organize a support group community for those living with HIV. During our week with this organization we learn how important the “community” is in “community development”. We offer some of our time by reading to students, we might lend a hand in construction projects if there are any, and we are invited into the Stronger Together support group as guests to participate in community activities and make new connections. This is an intense, eye opening week, as we come as guests to learn, and as friends to build new connections.

Week 11: Homestays and art internships in Stone Town, Zanzibar, Tanzania

We have been on the Swahili coast a week now: it’s finally time to take the ferry over to the Spice Island of Zanzibar. Zanzibar has been an important trading center for nearly 2000 years and has developed a very unique culture apart from mainland Tanzania. Predominantly Muslim, Zanzibar, in many ways, is a country unto itself. We arrive in Stone Town and walk the narrow, twisting lanes to meet our homestay families, who offer a window of insight into the cultural nuances of this area. Stone Town is known for it’s high quality artisans, and we’ll explore our creative side by engaging with local artists and learning their crafts. Wood carving, screen printing, and Tingatinga painting are just a few of your options. We also find time to learn about the islands history and get to experience unique foods only found in this unique part of East Africa.

Week 12: Scuba diving in the Indian Ocean, and departure, Matemwe, Zanzibar, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

We leave the small alleyways of Stone Town and head north to the community of Matemwe. We are here to literally dive into the sea and earn our Scuba certification. We work with a long established, professional PADI certified diving center. Learn the basics of scuba theory and equipment; complete your training dives; then head out into the Indian Ocean to put those skills into practice. Learning to dive opens up an entire new world of underwater exploration and adventure and teaches the confidence you’ll need to continue navigating underwater realms

throughout your future travels! In the evenings, your Overseas Educators will lead a few activities designed to explore ways of preparing for the upcoming reintegration to life at home. We'll talk about strategies in keeping our sense of adventure and inquiry engaged in the context of our daily lives, and how to keep the momentum of an amazing semester alive.

Finally, we bid goodbye to Zanzibar and catch the ferry back to Dar es Salaam. We have one final night to enjoy our last meal together as a group and share stories and gratitudes for each other before catching your flight back home and on to the next step in your life. Kwaheri Nkula! (goodbye)

****Carpe Diem reserves the right to make changes to the program at any time, and indeed has the responsibility to do so in some instances; changes may be required to provide the best possible experience, protect the safety of participants, or respond to changes in weather or political conditions.***