

**SUDREAU GLOBAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE**

*“The further you get away from yourself, the more challenging it is. Not to be in your comfort zone is great fun.”* — **Benedict Cumberbatch**

## **Introduction to Uganda**

International travel is many things – exciting, challenging and stimulating. Travel in the developing world and especially to a country like Uganda is no exception. Uganda is a beautiful nation with kind and hospitable people. You will be greeted nearly everywhere with a broad smile and sincere best wishes. For the most part, Uganda is safe and will feel somewhat familiar. Navigating stores or restaurants is fairly easy. You will likely have a memorable and positive experience in the “Pearl of Africa.”

However, for all of its fun and engagement, your time in Uganda will probably include moments that are difficult or even overwhelming. You will be barraged by new sights, smells, sounds and situations. You will be immersed in an unfamiliar culture with traditions and expectations that you neither know nor understand. After your daily work in Uganda, you will return to communal housing shared with other students whom you may not know well. Things that you may use to decompress at home – friendships, food, favorite coffeeshops, TV shows, etc. -- may not be available to you in Uganda. There will be moments of frustration that come out of nowhere and might even be difficult for you to explain or understand.

On top of all of that, you will have important work responsibilities engaging with an unfamiliar legal system and practices. You signed up for this program because you want to help people, put your legal skills to work in the developing world and change lives. You may instead find yourself working on some boring or unimportant projects that seem totally unrelated to changing lives, freeing prisoners and enhancing justice in Africa. You may get unexpected feedback on your projects and work or you may get little guidance. You might look at the experience of other SGJI interns and think they are having a “better” or “more meaningful” time than you.

But despite the potential challenges, we at the SGJI believe in the transformative power of these experiences. Stepping out of your comfort zone and entering a new environment stretches you as a student, human, future lawyer and Christian. It opens up your worldview and turns you into a more thoughtful and engaged person who is better able to connect with the world and its inhabitants. If you are willing to lean into the process, both the fun and the difficulties, you will develop legal skills that will serve you for your entire career. You will build relationships with Ugandans

and fellow interns that could last the rest of your life. One way or the other, your life will be forever changed.

You cannot choose your circumstances in Uganda. Those will be somewhat out of your control. But you have complete control over yourself and how you approach the summer and react to things that happen. The quality of your time and summer is up to you.

## **This Manual**

This guide is not designed to prepare you for everything you may experience in Uganda—that is both impossible and diminishes the beauty of experiencing the unknown. However, because we want you to be a well-informed traveler and learn how to set healthy expectations for your trip, we have outlined some key cultural, work and practical information. We will discuss many of these issues as well as other topics in greater detail during orientation.

There may be some guidance in this manual that you might think is offensive, judgmental, or cynical. If you find yourself reacting in that way, know that releasing your U.S. expectations and sensibilities is important for your success this summer. Having an open mind and an unoffendable spirit is difficult but will increase your chances for a positive experience in Uganda.

## **People and Language**

Uganda is a nation of approximately 50 million people from 45-55 different tribes (depending on who you ask), many with their own language or dialect. The citizens of Uganda are some of the youngest in the world, with 78% of the population under 30 years old and 52% 15 years old or younger.

Although Uganda was a British protectorate for nearly 75 years, ending in 1962, Uganda did not fight a war to gain independence from a colonial power like many of its neighbors. So for most of the years since independence (the Idi Amin period as a notable exception), Uganda maintained cordial relationships with most other nations.

The “official” language in Uganda is English and, in Kampala, most Ugandans with whom you will interact will be conversant in English or even fluent. Most Ugandans also speak Luganda, although not everyone. Every Ugandan will also speak their native tribal language (Luganda for some) and a few will also speak Swahili.

Almost everyone you encounter in Kampala will be able to communicate in English. But if you travel outside of the city or interact with people in the local markets and food stands, you may find people who do not speak English. Even if you are

speaking with a Ugandan who is completely fluent in English, knowing a few key phrases in Lugandan will serve you well. Very few foreigners make an effort to speak *any* Lugandan so even attempting a greeting or conversation will trigger smiles and open doors. One certain way to make a Ugandan friend is to ask them to teach you a bit of Luganda.

Ssebo/Nnyabo	<i>Say-bow / Nya-bo</i>	Sir/Ma'am
Oli Otya	<i>Oh-lee Oh-tee-yah</i>	How is your day?
Wasu Ze Otya?	<i>Wasoo Zay Oh-tee-yah</i>	How is your morning?
Bulungi Ssebo/Nnyabo	<i>Buh-loon-gee Say-bow /Nya-bow</i>	I am well sir/maam
Mzungu	<i>Mah-zoon-goo</i>	White person
Mani katono Luganda	<i>Mah-nee kah-toe-no Loo-gone-dah</i>	I know a little Lugandan
Erinya lyo gwani?	<i>Lin-yah Lee-oh Gway-ah-nee</i>	What is your name?
Erinya lyange nze (your name)	<i>Lin-yah lee-ahn-gay ehn-ze (name)</i>	My name is -----
Bambi	<i>Bahm-bee</i>	Please
Webele	<i>Way-ba-lay</i>	Thank you
Yea	<i>Yay</i>	Yes
Nedda	<i>Nay-duh</i>	No

## City Life

Kampala is a major city with a population of over 1.7 million. You are coming to a massive, loud, congested, and bustling city. Kampala is not as large as Nairobi but it is a major trading hub and economic center in East Africa.

Although some would say a “city is a city” anywhere in the world, unless you have spent time in a large African city, Kampala may seem overwhelming, confusing, and chaotic. The best thing you can do is set healthy expectations and prepare to experience lively city life.

## Safety and Security

Uganda is generally a very safe country, even in Kampala and other cities.

However, you will be easily identifiable as a non-Ugandan outsider – a *mzungu* -- described below. The average Ugandan will assume that you are incredibly wealthy, which can make you a target for crime.

Property crimes like theft and burglary are, unfortunately, common. So not leaving money, purses/backpacks and laptops/phones lying around is wise, even at your apartment. The value of a phone, laptop, or iPad represents months of wages for the average Ugandan so the temptation to pocket those items is high. So, lock your doors, leave items of value locked away and out of sight and carry only what you need when you go out.

You can also ask Mosa Courts to lock very valuable items (passports) in their safe but you will need your passport at times during the summer, to change money, for example.

Violent crimes are increasing in and around Kampala although most are property-related, like strong-arm robberies and purse snatchings. So, if you are out in Kampala, limit what you carry. Don't walk with or pull out your phone on the street. Keep backpacks and briefcases over your shoulder and away from passing traffic. Walk or travel in groups if possible.

If you decide to give to beggars or buy from street vendors, it is unwise to pull out your entire wallet and go through a stack of bills to find the correct amount. Carry a few small bills or some coins in a pocket for that purpose.

Nightlife in Kampala is vibrant and ubiquitous. Restaurants, bars, clubs, sporting events, and celebrations of all kinds are not to be missed and are generally safe. However, use your common sense. If you go out or remain out after dark for any purpose, **DO NOT GO ALONE**. You must be in the company of another SGJI intern, staff member, or trusted Ugandan that works with the program. Make sure someone knows where you and any companions are if you do go out after dark. Make transport arrangements before you go, like with a trusted driver, so you don't get stuck with no way to get home. Pay attention to what you are eating and drinking and don't accept items from strangers.

## Housing

SGJI houses interns at an apartment complex in downtown Kampala called Mosa Courts. Mosa Courts is close to the Kampala High Court, the Court of Appeals and is a 20-30 minute walk from the Supreme Court. Interns share apartment units that have bedrooms, a central sitting room, and a small kitchen. The units are clean and

fairly well-maintained by Ugandan standards but they are spartan by American standards.

The complex is large with a number of separate buildings. There is a small pool and workout room. Mosa provides a daily breakfast as well as wifi, although many interns choose to arrange for backup internet access.

The facility is very secure. The compound is fully fenced and guarded 24/7. Mosa Courts borders a number of facilities that cater to expatriates so the general area is safe and guarded. Each individual unit has a door that locks and each bedroom within the unit has a separate door lock.

Our negotiations with Mosa begin in January every year so we should know the per-person costs for the summer by late February or March.

## Health and Medical Care

Kampala has reasonably modern medical facilities, particularly private clinics and hospitals. Most of these private medical facilities do not directly accept health insurance, meaning that patients have to pay out of pocket for care at the time of service and later seek insurance reimbursement. Thankfully the costs of medical care in Kampala are *significantly* lower than in the US so even out-of-pocket costs are reasonable.

The main clinic patronized by most expatriates is The Surgery in Ntinda, a 10-minute drive from downtown Kampala. There is an emergency room at the Surgery as well as a number of clinics and specialists.

Much routine medical care (general stomach discomfort, unknown bites/rashes, etc.) can be treated at local pharmacies or “chemists.” There are pharmacies on nearly every block and many in (and around) most malls. These stores can supply most necessary medications, often without a prescription, and do limited examinations.

A major medical issue or accident that would require significant medical treatment (surgery or lengthy hospitalization) might require transfer to a country with a more developed hospital system – Kenya, South Africa or Egypt are frequent locations. The costs of such treatment, as well as the medical evacuation, can be high, so interns are encouraged to consider travel insurance coverage not only for routine health care but also for medical evacuation.

What is likely at some point during your time in Kampala is a case of an upset stomach. This is normal and usually passes after a day or two, although it can be miserable. You may choose to take OTC medications for this (Pepto Bismol, Immodium) or stronger options like Azithromycin or Cipro. All of those

medications are available over the counter from any chemist in Kampala at a minimal cost.

## **Malaria**

This is a topic of considerable discussion every year – is there malaria in Kampala and should interns take prophylactic medications?

There is malaria in Kampala but it is fairly rare in developed areas (like downtown). You will hear about Ugandans who develop malaria in and around Kampala but these are usually people who have had it repeatedly, as most Ugandans have. Because the various malaria medications have side effects, many interns opt not to take them for the whole summer or during the times they are in Kampala. Other interns choose to take the medications throughout the summer. The choice is yours but we encourage you to consult with your local travel clinic.

We do encourage interns to take malaria medication leading up to and during the Prison Project week. Those events occur outside Kampala where malaria is more prevalent so you should plan to bring at least enough malaria medication to cover that week.

Because malaria medications are very expensive in the US, some interns opt to purchase the medications in Kampala. They are widely available and much less expensive in Uganda.

## **Traffic**

One reason SGJI tries to house interns in a central location is the Kampala traffic. “Rush hour” gridlock can begin at 7 am (or even earlier if there is an accident, a presidential motorcade, road closures, etc.) and last until 8 or 9 pm. Traffic is generally worst in the area you will be frequenting – downtown Kampala, north toward Mukono, and south through the city to the Entebbe Airport. There seems to be no rhythm or predictable pattern to the traffic. A trip one day could take 10 minutes and the next could take 90 minutes so planning a departure and arrival time is challenging. Typical applications like Google Maps are not very accurate in terms of predicted arrival times.

There are some guidelines, however, that can help.

- If possible, walk. Not every area has sidewalks and drivers are less considerate of pedestrians than in the U.S. but walking is often the most efficient way to get within Kampala.
- Leave early. Assume the trip will take 2-3 times as long as planned.

- Develop a relationship with a trusted driver (we can supply some names) if you are going further than a few km. Locals know every route and can *sometimes* get through traffic faster than expected.

Most Ugandans get around on foot, using 14-passenger vans that ply major streets (“taxis”) or by motorcycle taxi – a “boda boda” or “boda.” Bodas are everywhere. They are cheap to ride and move passengers through traffic faster than a car ever could. As tempting as they are to use, Pepperdine has a very simple rule for intern use of bodas:

**DON'T. DO NOT EVER USE OR RIDE A BODA. EVER.**

Boda drivers are generally untrained and unregulated. If they require you to wear a helmet, they may provide one with questionable utility. The very thing that makes bodas effective – weaving in and out of traffic, passing whenever possible, speeding – makes them unacceptably dangerous.

### **Street Kids and Vendors**

On nearly every street corner in Kampala, you will encounter “street kids” and vendors. Some will approach you to sell you items. It is amazing what you can buy on the streets of Kampala. Others will approach you asking for money or food or to “support” them.

You will see young mothers with children or even nursing babies. There are many young children apparently on their own. You will also see disabled adults. Most of these interactions will be non-threatening if you politely decline their requests. However, you may occasionally encounter more aggressive and inappropriate comments and behavior—often coming from older kids or teenagers. If this happens, do not continue to engage. Break off eye contact and end any conversation. Know that you are safe and try to find grace for these souls who likely lead difficult lives.

We understand the desire to do something to help these folks. However, be aware that attempts to help sometimes hurt instead. Therefore, the general practice at SGJI Uganda is to not hand out money in these situations. If you are interested in helping street youth or disabled adults, we can point you toward a number of charities and ministries that work with these populations. Many interns also regularly carry a few small items – granola bars, packages of peanuts, etc. – to hand out if approached. We know this is a challenging topic and we will discuss more during the in-country orientation.

### **Noise**

Kampala is lively and noisy. Churches often hold all-night services. Bars and clubs may play pounding bass until 4 am. Mosques send out their first daily call to prayer before sunrise. Right around the time dogs stop barking, the roosters begin. The Mosa Courts is in a quieter section of Kampala (especially at night) but bring earplugs and headphones. Or just get excited to experience the sounds of life in Uganda!

## **Culture and Lifestyle**

### **Greetings**

Life in Uganda moves slower than in the U.S. While this can be frustrating at times, it can also enable you to deliberately engage with your surroundings. This often happens through greetings. Anytime you see a Ugandan for the first time, prepare to greet them. They will say hello. They will ask about your night/day/sleep. They will ask about your family and friends. You should return those greetings and ask how they are doing/how they slept/how their family is/etc.

Do not expect to “get down to business” until greetings are completed. This even occurs by text. If you text a Ugandan leading with a question about work or some substantive issue, they will not answer your question. First, they will text back, “good morning” and “how are you?” After those greetings, business begins.

### **Punctuality, Sitting, and Waiting**

As Pepperdine works to develop and improve justice systems around the world, we try to set an example of professionalism and excellence in everything we do. One way is to be on time or even early to every meeting, conference, appointment, or hearing. We want to be present at the allotted time and ready to work.

Many meetings will start at the scheduled time. But between the generally slower pace of life and delays caused by traffic, punctuality is less common in Uganda than in the U.S. You may find yourself sitting and waiting a lot. A meeting may be scheduled for 9, people begin to arrive at 9:45 and the program actually begins at 10:30. Even for professional meetings, this can be a part of life in Uganda. Relax, bring something to do/read/work on and engage while you wait.

### **Confrontation**

Ugandans may have loud conversations about sports or politics. They may boisterously haggle at the market. But Ugandans rarely yell at each other, except when there is an extreme power imbalance (like a wealthy homeowner scolding a household servant). Ugandans do not generally display anger outwardly. Instead, they may cluck their tongue, shake their head, shrug their shoulders at the



offending party, and laugh. Keep all of this in mind at those moments when your frustration level gets high and you just want to shout at someone.

## **Food**

Kampala is a cosmopolitan city with fantastic food options. You can find great Italian food and pizza, Indian food, Lebanese/middle eastern, burgers, steakhouses, and wonderful coffee. There are thousands of “local” places where you can find posho, cassava, matoke, and all kinds of meat (goat is a delicacy and one of the most expensive options). If you yearn for a “taste of home,” there are many KFC and Pizza Hut locations. And restaurants are generally less expensive than in the U.S. A full meal at the best restaurant in Kampala costs about \$25-30, less than a burger and drink at most U.S. pubs.

Kampala also has many grocery stores that stock a wide selection of local and western items. The main chain is Carrefour but there are local options like Capital Shoppers and Jazz. Local items are much cheaper than imported (a medium-size jar of Jif peanut butter goes for about \$16) but imported items are available.

We have found, over the years, that concerns about food tend to be overblown. Even interns with significant dietary restrictions or allergies find great options in Uganda. There are many organic, gluten-free, and even vegan items available, although sometimes at a higher cost. But feel free to bring snacks and other items that you can't live without.

## **Traveling Outside of Kampala**

You will have an opportunity to leave Kampala for a week for the summer “Prison Project” that rotates through some of Uganda’s rural, underserved prisons. Pepperdine usually takes everyone on a sightseeing safari at the end of that week so you should have at least one opportunity to see some of the beauty of Uganda.

Many interns also take their own trips on weekends throughout Uganda. Murchison Falls, Sipi Falls, and Jinja are all just a few hours by car from Kampala. Other activities like gorilla trekking or hiking/climbing the Rwenzoris are more distant and costly but also options. We encourage all of you to get out of Kampala and explore and we can help connect you with trusted vendors to make those trips affordable and memorable.

## **Being a Mzungu**

*Mzungu* is a word for a foreigner and, more typically, a white person. *Mzungu* is actually a Swahili word that literally means “one who wanders.” The term was first used to describe Europeans who visited East Africa and moved from place to place

sightseeing. Africans simply didn't understand why someone would pay so much to travel so far from home, then rush from place to place just to see a list of items.

Whether or not you are white, Ugandans will likely refer to you as a *mzungu*. This is not a racial label. It is generally not derogatory. You should not take offense. But being a *mzungu* comes with some assumptions and stereotypes.

Your presence as a *mzungu* in Uganda means you have enough money to get on a plane, fly halfway across the world and spend months in Uganda. You are a foreign presence in a postcolonial nation. This will shape the way Ugandans view you. It should also inform the way you interact with them.

These are challenging ideas. They may be uncomfortable. But consider these issues, be curious, and be open to conversation and different views.

### **You Are Wealthy**

Most Ugandans assume that you, as a *mzungu*, are wealthy and powerful. No matter your bank balance, the car you drive in the U.S., or your amount of student debt, you are incredibly affluent by Ugandan standards. It doesn't matter if you don't see yourself that way. The fact that you attend a private university in the U.S. and were able to afford a trip to Uganda puts you at a level of affluence even some members of the Ugandan Parliament do not reach. This level is far beyond the reasonable life expectations for almost all Ugandans. This fact is not "bad" or "good," but it is something to understand.

### **You Are A Guest**

When you go to a friend's house, you conform to their rules and norms of life. If they don't wear shoes in the house, neither do you. If they keep the windows open or keep their living room at 60 degrees, you bundle up and don't complain. It is only polite to try new foods, customs, and practices even if you eventually decide not to try them again.

Pepperdine has a long and beneficial relationship with the highest levels of government of Uganda, particularly the Uganda Judiciary. You are now a part of that relationship and how you conduct yourself not only reflects on you and Pepperdine but it also affects the continuation and depth of that relationship.

While in Uganda you should be prepared to be a gracious guest as well as a representative of Pepperdine. This requires some attention and a consistent mindset. It may require you to substitute thoughts of "that's weird/strange/wrong/gross," with "that's much different than what I am used to."

This can be a difficult process. You will undoubtedly experience or see things that are disturbing, but there is a better time and place to comment on them. **You are always welcome to process your surroundings with the SGJI Team, but you should never verbally critique or comment negatively on your surroundings or events while around Ugandans.**

## You Are Here To Learn

The history of American and European involvement in Africa often falls into 2 categories (i) we are there to take something from them or (ii) we are there to help them “fix” some problem that they can’t resolve on their own. This history creates some understandable baggage.

Your internship is not a “short-term mission” with an expectation that if we work hard enough and perform well, real sustainable, and visible change will occur in 9 weeks. That is not what the SGJI is trying to do in Uganda or any of the other countries where we work. We have been invited to **partner** with Ugandans to help them create lasting solutions to problems they have identified in their justice system. The best solutions will come from Ugandans. We are merely here to be available to assist in facilitating those solutions when asked.

To be clear – we expect you to work hard, create excellent work product and be available for any assignment or challenge. You and your colleagues are smart, passionate, and have a lot to offer.

Although we are all here to serve, you may find that your time in Uganda is more about what the country and people might teach you. Come with energy, openness, and enthusiasm. Uganda is full of brilliant, well-educated problem solvers who have been working on solutions for justice challenges for years. You will get to work with them, help them, and learn from them. But there is little that a group of enthusiastic young American law students can do better than these professional Ugandans. Use this time as an opportunity to learn about a different justice system. That will only heighten your understanding of your own.

## Being A Young Woman In Uganda

As outlined above, Uganda is generally a very safe and welcoming country. If you use common sense and follow the rules and guidelines within this document, you should be perfectly safe and also able to fully experience all that Uganda has to offer.

Nonetheless, women should be aware that there are some unique social mores to consider. While the U.S. is by no means perfect when it comes to the treatment of women, you may find that Uganda is at a different stage.

## **Unwanted Male Attention**

Female interns may immediately notice how much unwanted attention they attract from Ugandan men. You may hear catcalls, yelled greetings, compliments, or even invitations as you walk on the streets. Any mzungu will attract stares but young white women are particularly noticed. In the U.S., a male caught staring at a young woman might be ashamed and look away. Not so in Uganda.

In social situations, male Ugandans may misinterpret politeness for romantic interest and become aggressive and “inappropriate” toward female interns in bars/clubs. Recent acquaintances may invite you to see their home, meet for tea, or greet their children. As mentioned above, be aware that in the eyes of most Ugandans, you are incredibly wealthy outsiders. To some Ugandans that will make you a target for crime or a relationship that could help them or even change their life.

The vast majority of the time, while this behavior may be annoying or frustrating, is not threatening or dangerous. If such behavior occurred in the U.S., you might be tempted to confront it or get angry. In Uganda, this may only encourage the actions. The best thing you can do is be clear that you are not interested, disengage and keep moving.

## **Body Image**

Ugandans are very different from Americans in an “ideal” body type. Women in the U.S. often strive to be thin but in Uganda, the “ideal” body is larger and curvy. A larger body shows affluence – that you have more than enough to eat and are successful. Because of this, it is not uncommon for a Ugandan to “compliment” you by mentioning your size or pointing out if you’ve gained weight. While this may feel very offensive and rude to you, it is intended as a compliment. This may be another opportunity to move outside your comfort zone and consider how different cultures view things.

## **Key People**

### **Scott and Sally Leist**

Scott and Sally have lived in Uganda since January 2021. Scott serves as the East Africa Director for SGJI and manages programs in Uganda as well as one beginning in Rwanda. Scott is the main connecting point between SGJI and our partners in Uganda as well as with SGJI headquarters in Malibu. Scott will be your immediate supervisor during your time as an SGJI intern. You can and should ask him anything.

Sally's gifts include connecting people and building relationships, especially in challenging environments – like a bunch of interns 9000 miles from home in Uganda. You can and should also ask her anything.

Scott and Sally lived overseas from 2008-2009 while Scott was the Field Office Director for IJM in Kenya. They have 2 girls – one a 2020 Pepperdine graduate presently working for Young Life and living in Michigan and one in college in Dallas at Southern Methodist University. Prior to working for SGJI, Scott was a police officer, prosecutor, and ran his own law firm in the Seattle area. Sally worked in nonprofit fundraising for many years, recently with World Vision.

One of the most important aspects of your summer is the intern community. As you grow and experience Uganda together, you will have an important group for issues, ideas, challenges, and thoughts. Scott and Sally are committed to helping build that community through regular events at their flat in Mbuya, where there is a swimming pool and a view of Lake Victoria.

### **The Mukono Project Team (Olive, Esther, and Hassan)**

One of the main projects for SGJI in Uganda is in Mukono, about 20 km outside Kampala. We facilitate plea bargaining, case resolution, and public defense in a multiple judge court handling misdemeanors and low-level felonies. Olive is the project coordinator/social worker for that project and Esther and Hassan are lawyers that work in Mukono. Although your interactions with them may be limited for a good part of the summer, you will have opportunities to visit and work in Mukono with them.

### **Patrick Ssebunya**

Patrick is employed by the Uganda Judiciary but has been semi-permanently assigned to SGJI programs as a driver. It is likely that Patrick will be involved in transport within Kampala and to program events. He can be an “on-call” driver for unofficial events at some additional cost. He is also an invaluable resource about Kampala places, events, and tourist opportunities.