



SAVE
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Uganda Community Project Project Overview

Background of our organisation

SAVE Foundation is a registered non-profit organization (NPO) that assists communities in Africa. Our work involves setting up and facilitating sustainable community and conservation development projects in South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi and Kenya as well as assisting non-profit organizations that are actively involved in the local communities.

Our Mission

SAVE is dedicated to empowering local and global communities through sustainable service, transformative learning, and adventurous exploration.

Ethos

SAVE's ethos is "developing together"; our aim is to support local communities in developing areas whilst empowering volunteers to gain life-changing educational experiences through cultural immersion, social engagement and challenging adventures!

The SAVE Way

Volunteers pay a fee that covers the costs of their stay such as accommodation, transport and meals, as well as a donation that assists to finance the projects. In return you get to experience a new country, learn new skills, and make a lasting difference.

Volunteer programs include teaching children in the classroom and on the sports fields, assisting in hospitals, building schools and homes, helping out at a radio station and teaching adults in the local community IT skills. The only funding we receive for projects comes from volunteers and sponsors.

SAVE supports communities in creating opportunities for further development. In addition to funding all building materials, we also employ one local person at each project location for each volunteer (on average) that we accommodate. This may be a skilled mason, carpenter, driver, or a cook, and underpins our 'Developing Together' ethos.

This is a project that SAVE runs in collaboration with **Soft Power Education** (SPE), a British registered charity and Ugandan NGO. Since 1999 they have been working with communities in Uganda with a mission of "*Improving quality of life through education*" and vision for "*An empowered and self-sustaining society taking responsibility for its own development*". The work of Soft Power Education is focused within three key areas:

- *Alternative Education* – Supplementing mainstream education with innovative ideas;
- *Livelihoods* – Empowering people to drive forward their own development;



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- *School Infrastructure* - Providing clean, safe and inspiring learning environments.

The Government of Uganda currently relies heavily on input from external sources, particularly NGOs, to meet the basic needs of its population. Although the government is very supportive of the work that we do, at SPE we work with a view to reducing dependency by equipping people with the skills and resources they need to break the cycle of poverty for themselves.

To-date their work has been largely focused on infrastructure in the primary education sector, however, in recent years we have begun to tackle many more of the factors that contribute to poverty, including;

- training children in transferable life skills at our Amagezi Education Centre;
- supporting Special Educational Needs awareness;
- running various community development programmes aimed at promoting entrepreneurship;
- tackling health issues by improving sanitation at schools;
- promoting environmental conservation through education.

Fundamental to their success in delivering beyond our original scope has been the on-going and sustained support from visitors to Uganda. From the outset SPE has aimed to facilitate partnerships and friendships between visiting tourists and the local community, providing an opportunity for travellers to contribute in a meaningful way. SPE channels the enthusiasm of overland truckers, visiting university and school groups and independent travellers to assist with programmes. Volunteers are often so inspired by the work they have done and the change that they have been able to effect that they continue to fundraise for Soft Power Education when they return home. This ensures that we can pay for skilled Ugandan staff, such as foremen for construction, tutors at the Education Centre, and programme managers.



Background to the project

Hailed as the "Pearl of Africa" by Winston Churchill, Uganda is a country of staggering beauty - a lush green land whose stunning and diverse countryside supports incredible wildlife - Lions, Elephants, Cape Buffalo, Leopards, Rhinoceros, and half of the world's population of Mountain Gorillas and Chimpanzees. Become part of a rural community village and experience true East African culture.

While primary education is now free across East Africa, the government rarely provides funding for infrastructure, especially within rural villages; thus, our Projects provide the most impact here.

Our approach

Considering the complex problems of poverty, corruption and lack of education faced across Africa today, it can be difficult to see what contribution a SAVE project can make in just a week or two. We can't make a huge difference in a matter of days in the grand scheme of things, but by choosing projects carefully we can make a real contribution as part of a long term commitment to a specific location.

In recent years, the Ugandan government pledged free primary education across Uganda, in keeping with the millennium goals of universal education. This project focuses on this realm of education. SAVE project leaders on the ground in Uganda thoroughly research each potential project to assess its long-term sustainability and its contribution to development.

You will join like-minded volunteers to assist communities to improve their living situation in rural Uganda and getting involved in assisting teachers in the classroom and running after-school activities, especially in sports clubs.

Working alongside local teaching staff, spending time with the kids and staying in the villages, you will become an essential part of the community. These projects will tackle needs that have been identified to ensure that your financial and physical investments are sustained long into the future. Tackling side projects such as educational murals or competitions will inspire your community to work with you and achieve their goals alongside you and other volunteers.

Volunteer tasks

Volunteer working hours are usually 8am-4pm with breaks during the day. Volunteers will work 5 days a week. The volunteers' mornings are either spent helping in a school or building in the community.

You will be introduced to the different projects in your orientation. This is your volunteer experience and the timetable can be suited to where you feel most comfortable. Below is a description of our different projects.

Pre Schools: 8.30 - 12.30

We suggest volunteers run small group activities with the children. This gives the children an opportunity to have some more quality time (usually they are in a class of 30!). Once the

school day has finished then volunteers can speak with the teachers about activities for the next day. We do have resources at the pre-schools but we do encourage volunteers to bring things with them if they have specific activities in mind (such as art or sports games).

Amagezi Education Centre: 09:00-17:00

Here the volunteers can assist in the lesson running, although there is sometimes difficulties with language and so often our volunteers get stuck in making resources for the lessons – which is of course extremely vital.

After School Club: 15:00-18:00

We run an afterschool club at one of our residential Special Educational Needs units. The volunteers go up and run group activities with the children – an absolutely fantastic programme where both the volunteers and the children gain a lot. Again we have lots of resources for this in terms of sports equipment, but if the volunteers want to do anything different/more specific, they are very welcome to bring things with them (such as art materials).

SEN Clinic: 8:30 – 17:00

The clinic actually runs throughout the week but Friday is by far the busiest day and so volunteers are very much welcomed on this day. The clinic operates both occupational and physiotherapy, as well as small teaching activities. Volunteers can assist with the physiotherapy and keep children busy that are waiting for their therapy. There is also a clinic at the Kybirwa Children's Centre that helps several children with special educational needs at the moment. During this clinic volunteers can assist with the teaching aspect of the clinic, running group games and doing basic maths and literacy activities.

School Infrastructure: all day

This programme can be run on any day, but we do it as an induction day for all new arrivals and so have incorporated it into your volunteers timetables on those days also. It's a fantastic way to get out into the village, and will also be a great way for them to meet all the new arrivals. Painting the schools can be one of the activities done during this programme.

Because of the poor standard of English (for most of the very young children at the school Lusoga is their first language and then very rudimentary English), teaching any core academic subjects will be a language challenge for international volunteers. The Pre-School children are still young and learning, the students at the Education may know some basic English and the children at the SEN clinics and SEN glass are also still learning. However, there will be teachers and other SPE staff to help overcome the language barriers. Furthermore, we already have qualified teachers employed at the schools, so the volunteers will mainly be assisting and not doing the actual teaching. Arts and crafts classes, and PE (which could include football, netball, cricket, rounders, baseball etc) can be taught after school finishes at 3pm. Any materials for such classes should be brought with you (only basic stationery is available locally) and can be donated to the school on your departure. We have a local crew leader who can help with translating.

Every SAVE/SPE project is unique and the experience is enriched by your input and commitment, the more you put into your project the more you will get out of it.

This is your proposed project plan. This can be changed after orientation. Please note that during school holidays, you will assist with the school holiday program.

Example Itinerary

	Monday	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Friday	Sat	Sun
AM	Induction at Amagezi Education Centre	Kyabirwa Pre-School	Buwenda Pre-School	SEN-class at Kyabirwa	SEN-class at Kyabirwa	Off	Off
PM	Painting	Afterschool activities at Kyomya	Amagezi Education Centre	Afterschool activities at Kyomya	Volunteer meeting	Off	Off

Please note that from time to time there can be unavoidable changes to projects. These can be caused by weather, conservation priorities, materials supply, or because ongoing projects have progressed more quickly or slowly than originally planned. We ask you to accept the changes – we are sure that you will enjoy the replacement projects just as much.

Project tasks may sometimes seem repetitive – but your efforts will make a huge difference. Enjoy the project locations, your fellow team members, and the fact that you are helping to make a difference in the education levels of children that will benefit them in later years. Know that through your efforts, many children who would otherwise have had nowhere to go during the day are in a safe and loving environment.

Project highlights

- Learn new things and interact with community members/other volunteers in a Ugandan community
- Become part of a Basoga community and learn about their culture
- Help with community initiatives that will change people’s lives
- Make a difference to a community

Information about the children and schools

- Most of the children can speak English yet their home language is mainly Lusoga.
- The children live in underdeveloped areas.
- Children in the program range from 4-15 years old.
- School terms:
 - Term 1: runs from the beginning of February until the end of April
 - Term 2: runs from mid May until the beginning of August
 - Term 3: runs from the beginning of September until the beginning of December

Please take note of the term dates; as our project heavily revolves around the school terms. We do have programmes running outside of these terms. If you are planning on staying

with us outside of term/during Christmas or any other holiday, please contact us to find out what is going on during that time.

Included

Accommodation

You will be staying at Mama Flo's Guest house in Jinger. Beds will be foam mattresses and bedrooms are shared with your fellow volunteers and crew. You may have a social area such as a living room and there may be a garden to relax in after school. Storage will be limited and your backpack must have a lockable compartment in it. Your accommodation is selected in a secure location in close proximity to the school. A local cook is provided which often will be a member of the host family within whose house you are staying.

Your house will not have running water. You will have a shower cubicle either indoor or outdoor, in which you can make use of the traditional 'bucket shower'. Ten minutes down the road you will find water at the Nile River Camp. Electricity may not be available but alternatives will be provided - usually paraffin lamps which create quite a cozy environment in the evenings. You will be given a chance to charge phones at least every weekend if you choose to do independent travel away from the project site.

Meals

At your accommodation you will have a local cook who will cook at the house on charcoal stoves. The food will be of good local standard. Breakfast will be a simple affair consisting largely of bread, jam and fruit, and dinner will consist of good quality local food- this being any combination of; rice, potatoes including sweet potatoes, ugali (a maize meal stiff porridge), chapattis, spaghetti, cabbage, spinach, beans, seasonal vegetables, eggs, beef stew, with sauces of a tomato base. Most meals will be vegetarian.

You will be given a 5000 UGX allowance per day for lunch. This can be used to order lunch from mama flo, or you can use it towards a meal in the village or local camp site.

Important Reminder: Participants must advise SAVE of their dietary needs (e.g. if they are vegetarian or have any allergies) prior to their departure. Participants with very specific dietary needs may be required to supplement their meals at their own expense.

NOTICE: The most important things to bring are a sense of humour, patience, an open mind and a positive attitude!

Location information

Jinja District is located in the South-Eastern part of Uganda. It is a small district found east of the River Nile and along the northern shores of Lake Victoria. Jinja District has an area of 767.7sq Km of which 701.9 sq km is land and the rest (65.8 Sq km) is covered by water bodies.

Jinja Town Centre is located approximately 45 kilometres north of the Equator and has a population of 72,9.31. It enjoys a pleasant climate with temperatures varying between 20°C

and 28°C. There are two rain seasons and two dry seasons in Uganda though it seem like Uganda, like the rest of the world, is subject to climate change these days. The rain seasons are usually March to May and November to December.

Due to Jinja's location at the source of The River Nile and the Northern shores of Lake Victoria and due to the good climate Jinja attracts a lot of tourists. There is plenty to do and see in Jinja; River rating, Horseback riding, quad biking, The Source of the Nile, Bungee jumping, mountain bike tour to the rainforest just to mention some. Bujagali is located 6km downstream from the Source of the Nile (in Jinja town). The area is named after the falls 'Bujagali Falls' that were running through the area. Budhagli is the name of the river spirit. Since 1996 the area has been known for its' white water rafting offering some of the best rafting opportunities in the world. In 2011 the Bujagali Dam was built resulting in Bujagali Falls turning in to Bujagali Lake. This does not mean that there is no longer rafting – but it now takes place a little further down the lake at Itanda Falls. Bujagali however, is still having lots of tourists due to the campsites that are still located in that area.

Kyabirwa village, which is where Soft Power Education initiated their work in 1999, is also located in Bujagali. In this area you will find Soft Power Education's Amagezi Education Centre as well as Buwenda Pre-School and Kyabirwa Children's Centre. Despite of Bujagali being a tourist epicentre the villages in Bujagali are still quite poor. Kyabirwa village is a rural farming and fishing village with an approximate population of 2500.

Free time

Weekends during the project are generally free, and most of the time Volunteers use this opportunity to travel and see some of the area.

Possible trips include a trip up to Sipi Falls on the foot of Mt Elgon where you can do various treks, abseil down the side of the falls, or simply sit and enjoy the view! Other options include a trip to one of Uganda's national parks – lesser known than those of the famous counterparts in Kenya, but just as beautiful! Queen Elizabeth National Park is on the shores of Lake Edward, here Elephant sightings are common, Hippos bask in the water, and Uganda's beautiful national bird-the Crested Crane-is often sighted.

If a relaxing break is needed, you could take a trip to one of the Ssesse Islands on Lake Victoria where you can sit back on one of the Jungle-clad beaches and enjoy the local freshwater fish, Tilapia. Please see our Uganda FAQs for more information.

There are many adventurous activities to do around Jinja which include white water rafting, kayaking, swimming, quad biking, archery, and bungee jumping. If you plan on doing rafting or any other adventurous sport please ensure they are covered in your travel insurance policy.

Participating in a SAVE project is all about personal development, rather than being provided with a pre-organized activity holiday. For this reason, Project Leaders do not organise weekends, and we encourage volunteers to make their own plans. The volunteer coordinator and volunteer manager are always available to advise on local transport, good places to go etc. and volunteers usually travel in small groups. Please note that travel

costs, accommodation and food during weekends are the responsibility of volunteers.

SAVE Policies

Insurance

All SAVE participants must have medical, travel and trip cancellation insurance for the duration of their program. SAVE must receive proof of insurance prior to arrival.

Drugs

SAVE has a zero-tolerance policy for illegal drugs. Offenders will be removed from the program immediately without refund.

Smoking

No smoking is allowed during project hours.

Alcohol

A responsible level of drinking (for volunteers of legal age) during free time is allowed. However in these limited situations:

- Alcohol is never to be consumed during project hours
- Participants are never to be intoxicated during project hours
- No hangovers will be tolerated on project so please keep drinking to off days

Failure to comply will be treated as a serious matter. SAVE reserves the right to remove a participant from the project without refund if they disregard this policy. Participants who endanger their safety or the safety of others through irresponsible drinking of alcohol or negligence may be removed from the program without refund.

Accommodations

Participants are expected to keep their rooms and personal belongings tidy at all times and participate in any chores as required for the cleanliness and operation of the shared facilities, vehicles and projects.

Participants may not bring non-SAVE persons back to the project accommodations under any situation. Visitors can be met at any of the public areas nearby.

For safety reasons, participants are expected to return to the accommodations each night prior to a working day. If a participant does not follow this policy, they may be prohibited from joining the group/program. It is not safe to sleep in public areas such as beaches.

Important points to read

What is the difference between volunteering and regular tourism?

In *regular tourism* the emphasis is on the tourist who expects to receive excellent service on their trip (great hotel, good food and all excursions working according to a timetable). The place and local community becomes less important with the tourist becoming the center of attention.

In *volunteer tourism* (or "voluntourism") the emphasis shifts to work contribution, goals of the program and helping the local community. It is the success of the program and the

atmosphere between the community and the volunteers that helps make the trip unforgettable – not the level of service or the quality of the hotel. Many programs are underfunded and staffed so inevitably there will be some difficulties; however it is the overcoming of any challenges which creates a sense of achievement and satisfaction not found in regular tourism.

Will there be any surprises?

Volunteer tourism can be unpredictable! While SAVE does the utmost to stick to timetables and examples of type of work needed by the volunteer, there are many factors that can impact these plans. For example, the weather and seasons, local holidays, mood of the wildlife and immediate needs of the programs.

The information you will receive from the program is important and valuable however things can change and we urge you to use it as a guideline and *expect the unexpected* – this is what makes volunteer tourism so diverse and exciting.

It is important that you arrive with a *flexible attitude* and remember that just by being at the project you will be contributing to its running, growth and success. Many of these programs are in cultures very different than yours and as such the type and length of work given may or may not seem important to you but it will be for the program.

The first few days

These are the most important and can be the most difficult ones. You have just arrived off a long flight in a strange location and are living with new people. Even if the first impression might not be as you had expected. Please give yourself a couple of days to acclimatize and give the project the help it needs.

Volunteer work – some examples

It is important to realize that not all the work will be easy or 'romantic'. A lot of the time you will need to roll up your sleeves and get dirty with tasks such as:

- *Animal projects*: working with raw meat, cage cleaning, removing ticks, etc.
- *Environmental projects*: manual labor, carrying heavy items, getting dirty, working in the rain, etc.
- *Humanitarian projects*: cleaning up after the kids, kitchen duty, changing diapers, wiping runny noses, etc.
- *Building projects*: mixing concrete manually, picking up garbage off site, removing vegetation, etc.

Keep a positive attitude and note that even 'boring' tasks contribute and are also very important to the program. Also remember 'boring' tasks are not given to you on purpose but they form a part of the overall volunteer experience as it takes care of the needs of the overall project.

Sticking to a timetable

Each program asks its volunteers to stick to a timetable which helps the program run smoothly. Please follow the instructions from the program managers. However, please note that volunteer programs are usually underfunded and understaffed which can lead to

multiple changes in the program timetable. Volunteer work needs to be flexible for various reasons and should not be seen as a nine to five office job even if some changes do not make sense to the volunteer. *Flexibility* and an '*expect the unexpected attitude*' are needed – however never forget that by volunteering you are contributing immensely to the program.

Before you leave for project

Please look after yourselves and listen to the Leaders and the program staff you are visiting. Drink lots of fluids and remember your sunscreen. Volunteer trips are what you make of them and coming with an open mind and listening to the program managers/Leaders will help you experience an unforgettable trip.

The volunteer leader

Most programs will have a volunteer leader. This person is usually a volunteer who is on a long term contract or has volunteered on the same project in the past. The volunteer leader can be of great assistance when a problem arises though please approach them at a convenient time outside of busy working hours. It is important that you listen to the volunteer leader and cooperate with them.

Problems? Here is the solution!

If there are any problems during the program please speak to the volunteer leader. It is important to initially raise and discuss the issue in the program as most can be solved in this manner. Approaching us directly will help us to resolve the issues for future volunteers or for the sustainability of the project. We want to make it an unforgettable experience for you and all others. We also want our projects to continue receiving the much needed volunteers – we can only help if we know what the concerns are! If the problem is not resolved within 24 hours, please feel free to approach the SAVE manager. If, within a further 24 hours, you still feel the problem has not been dealt with, you should contact bookings@volunteering.org.za or +27 73 333 4338 and we will do our best to sort out the problem.

Culture shock

The volunteers you will be working with come from all over the world and may be from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. Volunteering is also a cultural experience where you can learn about different cultures, please be both tolerant and patient. Do not be shy in sharing your experiences, recipes, songs and traditions it will just add to the overall group cohesion. For example, children may be raised in ways that are very different to what you are used to. If you are ever unsure about a certain issues, please feel free to discuss it with your volunteer leader.

Extra expenses

Please take into account additional expenses like tours, trips, telephone, restaurants and bars. It is a good idea to have different types of payment available to you like: cash, credit cards, debit cards and traveler's cheques.

Travel insurance

It is very important and necessary to purchase and carry travel insurance for any unforeseen eventuality. We would be happy to recommend a reputable insurance company.

Please note that if you decide to partake in any extreme sports/activities during your stay it is important to check if your insurance will cover any necessary medical assistance during unforeseen injuries etc.

References & Suggested Readings

It is strongly recommended that all participants read and print out areas of interest from the websites and reference materials listed below as these will provide valuable background information and help to put project goals and activities into context.

- Cape Town tourism: www.tourismcapetown.co.za
- Saltycrax Adventures: www.saltycrax.com
- SAVE volunteering www.volunteering.org.za
- Long Walk to Freedom – Nelson Mandela
- SAVE Foundation: www.savefoundation.org.za

In short

- You can't change the world, you can only change a small rock in a river - but it means a lot more than you know in the bigger picture!
- Be prepared to learn a new culture, T.I.A. (This Is Africa) - things change, that's the awesome part of the experience. Patience can go a long way to making your trip unforgettable!
- Please come with an open mind and positive attitude - you will have time off your life!
- It is not a hotel or holiday, you will have to look after yourself, do your own dishes and clean your own room etc.
- You will be expected to take initiative and add value to the project.
- Don't get stuck on the little discomforts. Focus on those things that you wish to remember later.

The more positive you are, the more positive your memories will be! Your time on project will be over sooner than you know, what would you like to think back on later in your life?