

Conference Review

My expectations of our trip to Uganda were mixed; I did not know what the country, people or the Discovery Centre would be like. However, I did expect it to be very different from the U.K and therefore I tried not to have a fixed view on what I would experience.

With regards to the conference, I thought that it would show the differences between the U.K and Ugandan perspectives on some of the topics but not all. I was worried about the public speaking, as I knew that my topic was the first to be presented yet I was looking forward to the discussion with my team and getting to know them.

When we arrived in Entebbe and first met some of the Ugandan people I was glad to find out how friendly they were. On our first morning it rained so heavily that I was shocked as I had not fully contemplated rainy weather and it was still so humid. Looking back on our time here, I find that the trip has been a lot better than I had expected I have enjoyed every day, in particular meeting the Ugandan students, talking with them and finding out about their lifestyles and their country. I never expected to get on so well with the other students, including the students from other schools in the U.K who I had never met before and I am so pleased that I came. I do not think that I ever could have made expectations that matched the trip and conference as it was so different from things I have done before. Despite this, I think that unbeknown to me, I did not expect the Discovery Centre to be as nice as it is, I didn't think that I would be so comfortable here or that I would settle in, especially since it is quite different from home. The differences between my expectations and what the last few days have actually held will really help me in the long term I think as it has aided me to expand my outlook on experiences and opportunities and makes me want to go out and view things for myself.

The experience taught me so much, not only about the topics under discussion but also about Uganda and the different opinions of others at the conference. However, the conference topics, a few of which I knew almost nothing about beforehand, allowed me to gain an insight into so many international problems. It also taught me of some of the issues in Uganda at the moment about which I knew nothing and it was interesting to see the conflicting views on these from the Ugandan students. In addition, the conference showed me the other students' impressive debating skills and public speaking abilities, which are things I need to improve upon and so this served as a perfect opportunity.

The differences between our problems and issues in the U.K to those in Uganda is incomparable and I was glad to learn more about their legal system and government as it appeared to differ from ours. Although I found the students from other schools in the UK were similar to us it was nice to meet them and to gain friends whilst learning about their schools. It made me realise with regard to both the Ugandan and UK students that we are all incredibly similar, regardless of where we live and what we believe. Furthermore, I have found that I should be a more open minded person and open myself up to new experiences like this, challenging myself to learn more about other cultures and world issues. I have found that I am more capable than I realised and that travelling is something I definitely want to do in the future.

In conclusion, the conference has helped me to obtain so much, the three central things being a broader perspective of our world issues, a better understanding of Uganda and the people who live here and lastly, it has shown me how many opportunities are out there to be taken. Moreover, I have thoroughly enjoyed the entire trip from arriving at our school at 3 o'clock in the morning to our final days

here and I have found that everybody who took part contributed to that. In particular the students from our school who have looked after one another and my topic team in the conference. I hope to return here someday in the future to see even more of this lovely place

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