

## Review of My Trip to Uganda

Leaving Campion School at 3.00am on Wednesday morning allowed my excitement to come to life as this trip to Uganda became a reality. I knew that this visit would be a truly great experience for me, yet my expectations were uncertain. I was not quite sure how the Ugandan citizens would behave towards us as, in a way; it was trespassing on their land. I had only seen pictures and videos of Uganda and from what I had seen, the land was very empty and still to be developed. I knew that poverty and disease were major issues not only in Uganda but the whole of Africa so I kept my opinions open minded about what I would expect from this country. Researching for my chosen subject was enjoyable and I looked forward to expressing my ideas with my fellow Ugandan team players at the conference. I imagined that when the Ugandan students arrived there would be silence within the room, with none of us knowing how to begin. I felt slightly worried about the conference and many questions played on my mind. Had I researched enough? Would my presentation be any good? However, I tried not to expect too much from the whole trip, including meeting the Ugandans at the conference as I didn't want to be disappointed if my expectations were not fulfilled.

My expectations were definitely fulfilled and there were things that I had never even thought about that occurred. Once arriving at the airport and travelling to the Discovery Centre I felt privileged to have had this opportunity to experience this incredible country. Kampala, Entebbe and Jinja were very busy and vibrant places and I enjoyed absorbing the culture when we travelled to the dam and Bujagali Falls. My expectations of the conference were much better and I thoroughly enjoyed discussing our topic and listening to other people. The Ugandan students were really friendly towards us and I enjoyed the session where we got to know each other. I was not expecting the Ugandan students to be as outgoing as they were, and I learnt that they were not that different from us. Joseph and Esther, who were part of my group, were very intelligent individuals and I was glad that I had the opportunity to team up with them.

From this wide experience I have learnt a lot about myself as an individual. Discussing topics at the conference has enhanced my knowledge within several key issues. I have learnt about the various problems occurring within Africa such as those in the north of the country, and those between the white Africans and the black Africans in the South. Through hanging out and having fun with the Ugandans I have learnt that we are very similar to each other, in the way of education, family morals, and interests. Arriving here with other schools from Northampton has taught me that it is not where you come from that determines whether you will become friends, in fact, you can have friends all over the world.

I hoped from this experience that I would learn a lot about myself, and I have, I feel that I am able to deal with situations positively, understanding the ways to approach different opinions and news. I have learnt that I can deal with situations more than I thought I could do, my communication and listening skills have improved and I have learnt that I can interact with people from all different backgrounds. My appreciation for others has been enhanced.

There are many things that I will take away from the conference back with me to England. From this experience I have learnt not to have too high expectations of people and situations. I have realised from the trip that I am glad I had little expectation as this conference was so much better than I could ever have imagined it to be. This visit has been one of the best experiences of my life and I am very grateful that I have had this opportunity.

Another key thing that I will take away with me is to not stop now in discussing these ideas. I feel that it is important that students of our age learn about the various topics we have talked about in order to increase self awareness of the country we live in and also how it is both similar and different to other countries.

The last key thing that I will take away with me is that I feel I can now do anything that is thrown at me in the future. I felt a bit apprehensive of what it would entail, however, I feel that I have climbed over the mountain that I was worried about and feel good about myself for doing it. I have learnt

that you should grab every opportunity thrown at you in order to achieve the best in life that you can.

Ellis Basford, year 13.