



Predeparture Program Guide

KAKAMEGA, KENYA

2017

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FSD VALUES

At the center of the internship experience are the core values, vision, and mission that make FSD the organization that it is. We ask that as an FSD participant, you understand and remember these tenets throughout your time abroad, in order to make your program a meaningful experience for both you and the communities in which you serve.

MISSION

FSD achieves community-driven goals through asset-based development and international exchange in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

VISION

FSD envisions a world where all people have the opportunity and capacity to direct economic, social, and environmental resources toward sustainable outcomes that improve lives and communities.

CORE VALUES

- **Start with Assets, Not Problems:** We take an asset-based approach to development work. We begin by listening to the priorities set by our community-based partners at our international program sites. We then identify and utilize existing assets and capacity to address those priorities.
- **Motivate Community Ownership:** We partner with leaders, organizations, and stakeholders committed to change, action, and social justice. We stress community ownership and participation before launching initiatives, especially in our volunteer programs.
- **Generate Enduring Results and Impact:** We ensure the outcomes of our support have long-lasting benefits for our partners. We think hard about how to participate appropriately and effectively in development, and on how to become redundant so that our initiatives outlast our involvement.
- **Focus On The Site Teams:** We are headquartered in California, but our International Site Teams direct our programs across Africa, Asia, and Latin America on the ground, 365 days a year. These teams build partnerships based on trust, respect, efficacy, and alignment with an asset-based approach.
- **Build Capacity:** We strengthen the skills, competencies, and abilities of the leaders of our community based partners and of our students and professional volunteers. We educate and train, facilitating the sharing of best practices across all of our stakeholders to support our partners' priorities.
- **Be A Bridge:** We relentlessly build a network of students, professionals, and passionate advocates for our community-based partners to access. We connect this network of assets and volunteers with the work of our partners through our international exchange and grantmaking programs.
- **Change Perspectives:** We share our experiences and learning about the complexities of development with friends, family, and colleagues. We promote cultural exchange and sensitivity, encouraging a reflective approach to navigating cross-cultural issues, confusions, and tensions.
- **Promote Reciprocity:** We operate on our founding principle that producing strong community outcomes must be the priority. We base all partnerships, strategies, and decisions on the Fair Trade Learning concept that we must be ethical and reciprocal in our planning, implementation, and outcomes.

LETTER FROM FSD

Congratulations again on your acceptance to the Foundation for Sustainable Development's program! For many of you this experience will spark a lifelong interest in development. For others, it will be a chance to gain insights into other cultures that can only be obtained through direct experience. For all of you it will be a chance to make a lasting impact on people and communities in your host country, and an opportunity that will make a lasting impression on your life.

Many challenges await you. It is likely that the most difficult obstacles you face will not be the ones that test your technical skills or knowledge. More often it will be the difficulty of gaining the cultural competencies necessary to do successful work in a community. It will be learning to see the problems facing a region from the eyes of a community member rather than through the eyes of an outsider. Remember that culture, community, and language should guide your work as much as your own knowledge.

During your program you will represent both yourself and FSD in your community. Many people in the region that you will work in have had very little experience with people from outside their country. As such they will develop opinions of you and the work of FSD through their interactions with you or what they hear about you. We ask that you take your visibility into consideration when you make decisions about your actions in your host country.

It is the intention of FSD to provide you with a broad support network to best position you for success, but at the end of the day, it is your effort that will most influence the success of your experience with FSD. You will need to take initiative and put yourself in situations that stretch your comfort levels. You will have to work within cultural contexts that can cause extreme frustration. Many other challenges await, but at the same time you face these challenges you also have an incredible set of opportunities. Go into the experience with the willingness to listen and learn. You will find that through this willingness you will increase your ability to give to your community.

This guide has been developed to help make clear what FSD expects of our interns and volunteers and what you can expect of us. We look at your internship or volunteer program as a partnership. It is our hope and belief that clear expectations are the foundation for a solid working relationship. Please read this guide thoroughly; it contains information that is crucial to the success of your experience and our partnership.

Above all, you should feel comfortable contacting us at the US based headquarters if you need any additional support or have any questions.

Good luck!

KAKAMEGA TEAM



Priscilla Ong'ayo | Kakamega Program Director

Priscilla Ong'ayo is a native of Kakamega. She has a vast experience working with grassroots organizations in western Kenya and international agencies. She has been involved in program development and administration and also actively involved in mentoring youth for academic success in Kenya and abroad. Specifically, she has been involved in programs in Human rights and gender equality in the areas of gender-based violence and combating violence against women and. In these programs, Priscilla served as a trainer, a volunteer, and a team leader. This served in expanding her experience in cross-cultural collaboration internationally since it involved working with people from over 25 nationalities from around the world. A graduate of Moi University holding a BEd (Arts), Priscilla is currently working on a Master's of Science in Human Resource Management at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. She was awarded a Diploma in Project Management from Uppsala University, Sweden. This was done in conjunction with SIPU INTERNATIONAL (The Swedish Institute for Public Administration) and Sida.



Susan Mulyanga | Local Program Coordinator

Susan was born and raised in Kakamega, Kenya. She graduated from Laikipia University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics. Previously, she worked with Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO) as an enumerator in western Nyanza and Rift Valley regions of Kenya. At KALRO she engaged frequently with local communities, advocating for poverty eradication through farming activities. She is passionate about community development and youth empowerment. She is excited to work with FSD as it's an opportunity for her to advocate for sustainable development. She looks forward to working with enthusiastic interns and volunteers who want to make a change in Kakamega through knowledge and skill transfer. During her free time she enjoys reading novels, listening to music and watching documentaries.



Devin Graves | International Program Officer

Devin discovered the power of social change when he learned that he shared a birthday with Nelson Mandela. Studying about Mandela's life gave him the determination to impact the world, and because of this desire, he pursued a Master's degree in Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. As part of his studies, he focused on sustainable project design with an emphasis in monitoring and evaluation. Before joining FSD, he spent two years designing and implementing development projects among Mayan communities in both Mexico and Guatemala, and in the eastern districts of Uganda.

FSD STAFF ROLES

Program Director: FSD's program directors are local experts in the field of community development. Their experience and strong community ties make them a great resource to support you in your in-country project work. The program director develops and maintains FSD's relationships with our host organizations and is heavily involved in the process from the time you apply to FSD to the end of your term of service.

Program Coordinators: Your program coordinator(s) provides ongoing support to you, FSD's host families and our partner organizations. During the application process, they advise the program director and San Francisco staff about your placement. Once you're in the field, they serve as a bridge to the local culture and language and as lifeline when culture shock inevitably sets in. They are also available to advise you as you develop your program workplan.

Program Officer: FSD's program officers coordinate the work done at FSD sites in different regions of the world. They manage program logistics and design, corporate and university partnerships, and programmatic issues. Program officers are also your U.S. based emergency contact.

FSD Headquarters Contact Info

- Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. PST
- General Inquiries: info@fsd.org
- Office Phone: 415-283-4873
- Emergency Phone: 415-828-8414

SAFETY & SECURITY

The safety and security of our program participants and staff is our first priority. Our safety and security protocols meet international standards and have been developed over 20 years of operation, and from the practical experience of our staff. We have rigorous and conservative safety and security procedures, including triaged security measures for students (such as restricted travel, curfews, and buddy systems) should any emergent or potentially emergent event occur. Every site has an emergency evacuation plan (supported by our travel insurance partner) that identifies safe houses, on-call transportation, and provides a variety of options for moving participants out of unsafe areas via land and air routes.

For each site, we have identified physicians, health centers, and hospitals for routine and emergency care that meet standards of care for foreigners, including the locations of and contact for relevant embassies and consulates. These procedures are supported by duty officer training of our support staff in San Francisco who monitor an emergency call line 24/7. But the most critical components of our safety and security system are our local staff, who are also on call 24/7, and our network of community partners at each of our program sites. Our local staff have the best knowledge regarding the potential of local events to become critical, and they have a network of community members to turn to for safety information.

While working abroad, there is always a potential risk that emergencies may occur, and we have experience dealing with a variety of issues, from localized civil unrest and natural disasters to total evacuation of programs. The US office is in constant communication with our program sites through a variety of communications channels, including biweekly phone calls and reporting on each participant, and we also monitor international media for emerging events.

All of our program sites are in safe areas. However, similar to the US, certain common-sense safety measures must be taken. These will be reviewed extensively during orientation, when every participant receives a safety briefing. We emphasize that the most important ways to stay safe are to exercise good judgment, to have a strong network of local contacts, and to have an awareness of the potential for harm.

FSD will do its utmost to provide a safe environment and a responsive support system to you throughout your experience. To ensure a safe and successful experience for everyone involved, we depend upon our staff to serve as a barometer of the local political, social and economic climates, and to use that knowledge to maintain a safe and secure environment for FSD participants. We depend on our participants to act prudently and be receptive to instructions and suggestions regarding safety and security.



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FSD RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure a safe and secure host community. Our host organizations and programs are run by FSD staff and trusted colleagues who live locally and often have years of experience with FSD. While the political climate varies by location and timing, we feel that partner organizations provide us with a good barometer of the climate in relation to the safety of foreign volunteers.
- Inform you about safety and security in your host community through materials like this predeparture guide. We equip you with the information and tools to be aware of the realities of your host community, to avoid situations that would put you at risk, and to manage these situations should they arise.
- Send you an electronic proof of insurance card.
- Direct you to a preferred medical facility in the case of an emergency.
- Support you logistically and emotionally through any medical or emergency situation.
- Contact your emergency contacts in the case of a major emergency.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Learn about the history and current events of your host country and community.
- Secure all recommended vaccinations.
- Secure legal and visa requirements for your stay.
- Follow the directions of your site team and host family.
- Register with the US State Department or equivalent.
- Avoid volatile or risky situations. Travel with someone you know, and avoid being out alone after dark.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Walk purposefully and act as though you know where you are going.
- Notify your site team of any incidents of harassment, illness, accident, or any other serious event as soon as possible.
- Review your insurance coverage to determine whether you want to purchase an enhanced package. FSD program insurance ensures that adequate support is available to you in the case of a major emergency. There is a US \$250 deductible for which you are responsible. The illnesses and medical issues you are more likely to encounter may require medical consultations and prescriptions. Beyond taking all necessary precautions to prevent illness and accidents, please plan financially for these types of expenses. Hospitals and clinics may require payment up-front for services; please bring cash and/or a credit card (Visa or Mastercard) for emergency medical expenses and seek reimbursement directly from the insurance provider. FSD is not responsible for medical fees.



HEALTH PREPARATIONS

As an FSD participant, it is your **full responsibility** to identify and take all necessary health precautions prior to, during, and following the program. Please start your health preparations early, as some vaccinations must be taken as far as eight weeks or more before departure. Providing detailed medical advice is beyond the expertise of FSD so it is very important to consult the resources below as well as medical professionals such as your doctor or local travel health clinic.

Topics to talk to your doctor or local health clinic about:

- Anti-malarial medications and mosquito repellent
- The symptoms of the most common illnesses contracted by travelers, and the appropriate treatment
- Medicines and supplies for preventing and treating common illnesses and maladies (diarrhea dehydration, sunburn, food poisoning)
- Anti-Malarial medications and mosquito repellent
- Rabies
- Food and water-borne diseases
- Nutrition

What happens if I get sick?

For serious illness that may occur during your program, there are public and private clinics and hospitals available in most areas. If you should become sick, please alert the FSD site team and your host family immediately and they will ensure that you receive appropriate medical care. Kakamega is home to several very good hospital facilities and well-trained, sensitive doctors are easily found.

Health Resources

HEALTH RESOURCES

Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Recorded information about health risks and precautions for international travelers: 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747)

Traveler's Health for Kenya

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/kenya>

Malaria Hotline

404-332-4555



VISA INFORMATION

The recommendations provided here are subject to change at any time. As an FSD participant, it is your full responsibility to secure the appropriate visa and ensure the full legality of your stay in the host country during the program. To do so requires consultation of resources above and beyond the information provided by FSD. Please check with a Kenyan consulate or embassy for the most current information.

A single entry, 90 day tourist visa costs \$50 US dollars and can be purchased at the Nairobi airport with currency 2008 or newer. A multi-entry visa is also available for \$100, but is only needed if you are traveling outside of East Africa (Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania). The visa fee must be paid in US dollars. Participants that stay longer than 90 days will have to renew their visa while in Kenya. Participants are advised to apply for a tourist visa; if you say you are volunteering or working the visa will be much more expensive and more difficult to get. For more information, please visit the Kenyan embassy's website at <http://www.kenyaembassy.com> or in-person at the embassy or a Kenyan consulate.

VISA RESOURCES

U.S. State Department: Information for U.S. travelers to Kenya:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/childabduction/en/country/kenya.html>

Embassy of Kenya

2249 R Street N.W.

Washington, DC 20008

Telephone: (202) 387-6101

www.kenyaembassy.com



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PACKING & LUGGAGE

RECOMMENDED PACKING LIST

Clothes

- A variety of shirts (collared button up for men) and pants/full or knee length skirts (see Clothing FAQs below)
- A light jacket and/or sweater
- A lightweight waterproof jacket
- A pair of comfortable, sturdy shoes
- Sandals (these can double as slippers)
- A pair of comfortable shoes that you can wear to work
- Rubber rain boots (can also be purchased inexpensively and easily in Kenya)
- Thick cotton socks
- Modest sleepwear
- A sun hat

Health and Hygiene

- Strong, waterproof sunscreen
- Strong insect repellent (Permethrin can be used to treat clothes)
- Aspirin and/or non-aspirin pain reliever
- Over the counter medicines (Pepto-Bismol, Immodium AD, etc.)
- Any medications you use in their original containers and a copy of your prescriptions
- Vitamins
- A supply of hand wipes (biodegradable) and anti-bacterial hand lotion
- Water treatment tablets or a camping water filter for backup
- Personal hygiene products like shampoo, toothpaste, sanitary pads, etc. (at least enough for your first few days as you can buy most products locally)
- Sunglasses, glasses, plenty of contact lenses (the dry, dusty environment can be very hard on the lenses), copy of your prescription, saline solution
- Strong insect repellent and Calamine lotion or other itch-relief cream (you will get bitten by insects at some point during your stay)
- Vitamins
- Antibiotics for travelers' diarrhea
- Sunglasses
- Contact lens solution (is prohibitively expensive in-country)
- Feminine hygiene products (sanitary pads are widely available, tampons are not)

Practical Supplies

- Towels, the quick-drying variety are a good idea
- Travel alarm clock (with extra batteries)
- Backpack for overnight or day field visits

- Bright, LED headlamp or flashlight
- Adapters for laptops and other electrical appliances as necessary
- Camera and extra memory cards
- Small combination locks for luggage
- Money belt (waist is more secure than around the neck)
- Utility knife (make sure to put this in your checked luggage at the airport)
- Travel water bottle
- USB (flash) drive
- Notebooks, pens, paper

Documents and Money

- Passport with Kenyan visa and 3-4 photocopies of both, stored in different parts of your luggage
- Vaccination booklet and copy
- FSD Insurance Card and copy
- ATM card (Visa or Mastercard more widely accepted than others)
- Photocopies of all other important documents (including credit card front and backs)
- Cash (at least US\$200 when entering country)

Other

- Reading materials
- Pictures of your family, friends, neighborhood, work
- Books and other reading materials
- Small inexpensive gifts for your host family (these are nice to bring but are not mandatory)

LUGGAGE FAQ

What kind of luggage should I bring?

Don't overdo it—pack lightly so you can travel more easily and store your bag in small places. Remember that clothes can be bought fairly cheaply in Kakamega. Think in terms of a backpack, duffel bag, or moderate-sized suitcase and a daypack. Bags with shoulder straps are preferable to suitcases because they're easier to carry.

What should I bring in my carry-on luggage?

We recommend that you carry all valuables (money, credit card, passport, identification, immunization booklet, insurance card, etc.), prescription medication, and a complete set of clothes (change of shirt, pants/long skirt, underwear) in your carry-on luggage in case your checked bag is temporarily lost or delayed.

What documents should I bring?

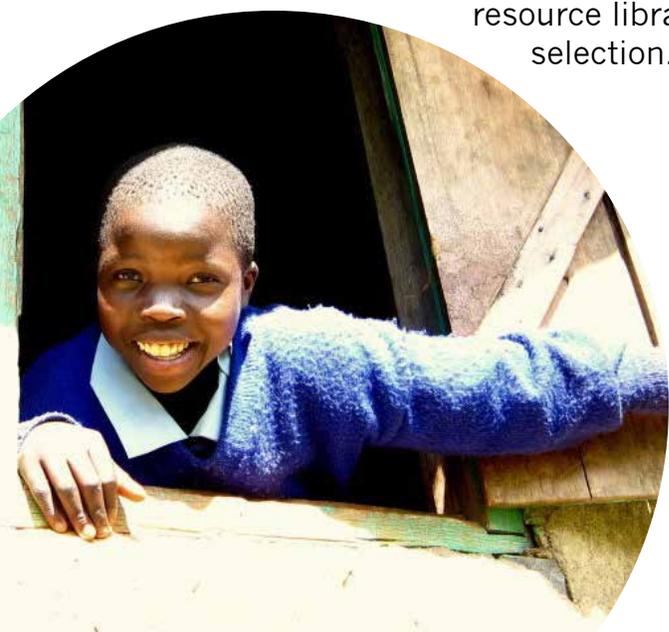
We recommend that you carry all valuables (money, credit card, passport, identification, immunization booklet, insurance card, etc.), prescription medication, and a complete set of clothes (change of shirt, pants/long skirt, underwear) in your carry-on luggage in case your checked bag is temporarily lost or delayed.

What should I bring for rural field visits?

We recommend that you call of the accommodations in rural areas are clean and hygienic, but very basic. Participants staying overnight should expect bucket showers and Kenyan-style toilet facilities. Participants should therefore bring extra hygienic supplies (hand sanitizer, hand wipes, etc). Rural areas will have electricity, but will often experience power cuts (usually during working hours), so a headlamp or flashlight and extra batteries can be very helpful for field visits.

What are some items especially difficult to get in Kenya?

Electronics (for a reasonable price), books in English (books in English are available in some bookstores, but are often of poor quality). There is a resource library available for reading, however there is a limited selection.



CLOTHING FAQ

What should I bring for rural field visits?

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How are clothes washed?

Families will wash all of your clothes except your underwear. Washing machines will not be available- your clothes will be hand-washed and line-dried. Please note that because clothes are washed and dried outside they will probably endure some wear and tear. The climate is so humid that it can often take days to get clothes fully dry, keep this in mind while packing and opt for lighter weight clothes that will dry quickly. You will wash your personal items by first soaking them in powdered detergent and then washing them by hand, using detergent soap.

What type of clothes should I pack?

Keep in mind that darker colors are easier to keep clean, and consider what kind of work you will be doing: for example, if you'll be working in a rural area, it is likely you'll need to wear sneakers for going out to the rural areas, whereas an urban school or microfinance organization will require dress shoes or nice sandals. Lightweight clothes that will breathe in the heat are highly recommended.

What should I wear?

The rule of thumb (for men and women) is to dress conservatively.

To avoid uncomfortable stereotypes and feel safe (this is especially important for women), dress somewhat conservatively; politically-oriented T-shirts, skimpy tanktops and mini-skirts are not appropriate for work.

At work: Women should plan on wearing skirts, especially in the rural areas.

Nice pants (not jeans) are acceptable at workplaces in town. Kenyans have little qualms about women showing skin above the waist but showing legs is considered inappropriate. Skirts should reach at least the bottom of the knees and the longer the better. Shirts for work should be professional, and not too revealing or tight. Sleeveless professional shirts are okay. It is also a good idea to bring blouses, decent looking t-shirts and polo shirts. Men should plan on wearing pants or slacks

and short-sleeve shirts during the day. It is uncommon for Kenyan men to wear jeans as they are quite hot to wear. If you are working in town then you should bring a decent looking pair of brown/black shoes. Kenyans will polish their shoes every morning before work so make sure that you are wearing something that suits. You should bring polo, collared, or button-up shirts (especially if you are working in town), and some decent looking t-shirts. Women should refrain from wearing leggings as pants.

Around town after work or on the weekend: You should continue to dress conservatively when in public in Kakamega after work or on weekends. Casual wear, however, is more acceptable outside of work, such as jeans, t-shirts, and sandals. You can wear casual clothes, but must make sure that you are clean and your clothes are free of wrinkles or holes. Kenyan's are impeccable dressers and are always seen wearing freshly ironed clean clothing. Revealing or tight-fitting clothes is not appropriate to wear in public even on weekends or after work as it may attract unwanted attention. You should also bring a raincoat or umbrella, as well as a hat for the sun and sunglasses.

At home: This is very dependent upon where you are living. If you are living in a village with a traditional family then it is best to remain conservative and neat. However, if you are in town, pants and even shorts may be okay. The best thing to do is to observe those around you and see what your family wears and try to match them. Bring a combination of both types of clothes so that you can adjust accordingly. You can also purchase second-hand or new clothing (especially skirts) upon arrival if you need more. Both men and women should bring one nicer outfit in case you are invited to events such as weddings or burials, or in the case that you give a presentation as part of your work. A pair of sturdy sandals that you can walk in is also essential, and a pair of close-toed shoes for cooler evenings during rainy seasons.

ELECTRONICS

LAPTOPS

Generally, it is recommended that interns bring their own laptop or netbook when possible. Computers are frequently used at work for doing research, writing work plans, budgets, reports and proposals, and designing materials. Most host organizations have limited computers for staff and one is not always available for intern use. It is unusual for host families to have computers at home. Netbooks offer a cheaper alternative to the traditional laptop and are often sufficient for the work necessary. It may also be a good idea to invest in a cheap USB drive. These are an excellent way to cart around your documents: email, print or fax them from an internet cafe. It is recommended that if you bring a laptop or netbook that you back up your files, install anti-virus software, and install any programs you may want to use while abroad before leaving.

Please understand that taking a laptop entails the risk that it could be lost, stolen or damaged. FSD is not responsible for your possessions.

SHOULD I BRING MY IPOD?

iPods are becoming more common, but you should generally not walk around listening to your iPod; they automatically advertise your wealth and set you apart. Keeping it at home and listening to it with your family is perfectly fine.

FOOD & WATER

Can I drink the tap/well water? Where can I get safe water?

Do not drink or brush your teeth with the tap water for the first few weeks of your stay while your body adjusts, and never swallow this water. You are only to drink filtered water or water that has been boiled.

Where can I get safe water?

It is very hot in Kenya, so please pay close attention to your hydration at all times and be sure you're getting plenty of (safe) water. Your host family will make purified water available to you. When visiting other families or communities; bring your own water with you at all times, and when in doubt, drink a bottled beverage. Most shops and grocery stores in Kenya sell bottled water. Before purchasing a bottle of water, please ensure that it has an intact plastic seal covering the lid. Very rarely, unscrupulous vendors re-fill used bottles with tap water. You can protect yourself from this scam by purchasing only sealed bottles. The most sustainable way to ensure that you always have a supply of purified water available is to bring a stainless steel water bottle and re-fill it each morning from your host family's supply. You should also bring water treatment tablets for backup.

What is typical food?

The main staple of the Kenyan diet is ugali, a coarsely-ground maize meal that is cooked with water until stiff. Small pieces are pinched off and dipped into other foods. In Kakamega, where the diet is more traditional, you can expect to eat ugali at almost every meal (aside from breakfast). Common side dishes include sukumawiki (kale), kunde (cowpea leaves), maharagwe (beans), ndengu (lentils), ndizi (green plantains), and wali (rice). In Kakamega, it is also customary – if the hosts can afford it – for guests to be served kuku (chicken). Breakfast usually consists of chai (tea), often served with milk and sugar, and white bread.

The Kakamegan diet reflects the cultural diversity of the region with Arab, Indian and European influences. Common dishes include pilau (spiced rice with meat), curries, biriani, and sambusa (samosas). If you are living with a Muslim family, remember that it is customary to eat only with the right hand. If you are coming to Kakamega and your right hand is uncoordinated, it would be a good idea to practice before you depart for Kenya. In all families, ugali and its accompaniments is eaten with the hands. Traditionally, the host will pour water over a guest's hands before meals, but soap is rarely provided – you may consider bringing a small bottle of hand sanitizer to use (discreetly) before meals.

What do most people drink?

Most families drink plenty of chai throughout the day and, at meals, also drink water (often treated with a locally-available chemical agent). If it is available, many Kenyans enjoy maziwa lala (“sleeping milk”), or curdled milk. It is definitely an acquired taste. Soda is considered a treat and not standard in most Kenyan homes, but can usually be purchased at small roadside kiosks (be sure to return your glass bottle to get your deposit back!). When coffee is available it is usually Nescafé, though fresh coffee is easily

purchased in grocery stores as it is one of Kenya's main exports.

How vegetarian-friendly is the local cuisine?

Meat is a luxury not afforded to many Kenyan families, especially in rural areas. However, you will find that because you are a guest, most Kenyans will want to treat you with kuku (chicken) or nyama (meat). Vegetarian diets are easily accommodated, but please be specific as to your preferences (i.e. whether you eat chicken but no red meat, no fish, no eggs or dairy, etc.) and let the FSD staff know beforehand so they can alert the family. If you are invited to another home for a meal, please inform the host well ahead of time of your diet preferences so they do not prepare something special for you.

What foods should I avoid?

Avoid uncooked food, street vendors and restaurants that have not been recommended by FSD Site Team. Do not eat raw fruits or vegetables unless they are peeled or have been thoroughly washed with boiled or treated water. Do not eat pork to avoid the risk of acquiring schistosomiasis. To prevent parasites and diarrhea, you should eat lightly upon arrival and stay away from milk and cheese that has not been pasteurized.

Can I eat fresh fruit from street stands, and trees?

In Kenya you are likely to encounter an abundance of fresh fruit. As a rule, if you can peel it, you can eat it! Avoid peeled fruit served on the street unless you watch the vendor peel it, and even then, be sure ahead of time that the knife being used is clean.

How should I express my preferences, or turn down unsafe food that is offered to me?

In many places food is an important form of hospitality and it is a cultural practice to offer food and drink as a welcoming, friendly gesture. Never put yourself at risk, but please be diplomatic in expressing your needs. Take care not to offend your hosts with negative comments or facial expressions. Your host family will be notified of what you can and cannot eat or drink, but you should also be sure to tell your family what you do and do not like to eat. You should feel comfortable politely asking your family for food to be less greasy or salty, to put salt on the side, to mention that you like fruits and vegetables, or to be given more or less food.

Are there any US-style restaurants?

In Kakamega, aside from french fries which are very popular (called "chips"), it is somewhat rare to find restaurants serving western food. Most restaurants serve the local food, however there are a few that offer pasta and pizza. In Kisumu, about an hour away by matatu (public bus), some other American-style food is available.

COMMUNICATION

Staying in touch with your family and friends back home is important. You'll be eager to share your experiences and accomplishments while gaining reassurance and comfort by communicating with them. Here are some ways in which this will be possible during your stay in Kenya.

What is the best way for friends and family at home to reach me?

Email is the most reliable way to be in touch with your friends and family at home. So that you can stay in contact with the site team and make other local calls you will be provided with a cell phone once in-country, but you will have to purchase credit to cover most calls you want to make. Through your cell phone your family will always be able to contact you at no cost to you (incoming calls are free), but beware – calling both from the US to Kenya and from Kenya to US is quite expensive! If your host family has a phone, you can ask them if it is all right for your family to call you on that line.

Realize that phone communication is often interrupted by bad weather, local technicalities or overloaded circuits, and sometimes lines are cut in the middle of a call. Please ensure that your friends and families are aware of this and understand that it is best not to schedule international calls at exact times.

In case of an emergency, your family can also call the FSD site team and leave a message for you. Please remember that many host families do not speak English well enough to converse on the phone. In these cases it may be better to call the US emergency cell phone.

Can friends and family call me?

You can receive calls from friends and family on your cell phone. The majority of host families do not have house phones and instead rely on cell phones. Never make any long distance calls from your host family or organization's phone without permission (if you use a calling card and ask permission from your family this could be OK).

Is there access to internet and email?

In Kakamega Town, there are plenty of internet points (called cybercafes). Access is usually around 1 shilling per minute, or about US\$0.85 per hour. USB internet modems are also widely available and cost around \$30, after that you pay by the amount of uploaded and downloaded data (measured by the MB) or by the minute.

How do I call the US?

To call the U.S., dial 001, the area code, then the seven-digit number. Calls to the US are very expensive, ranging between about US\$0.30 to over US\$1 per minute. If you are calling from a cell phone, you may need to dial +1 (producing the “+” symbol by pressing the “*” button twice) before the area code and seven-digit number.

How do I make a call within Kenya?

You can call anywhere in Kenya simply by dialing the 7 to 10 digit number. Area codes are included in any number you will be given. For directory inquiries dial: 991



MONEY

How much cash should I bring with me?

Plan on having US \$200 in cash when you arrive, as well as an ATM card and an emergency credit card. While you can exchange money at the airport or at change bureaus in Nairobi upon your arrival, we recommend that you plan on drawing all your money from ATMs, as it is more convenient and you avoid costly exchange fees. To ensure that your ATM card will work in-country, please check to see if it bears a Visa or Mastercard logo. Check if your bank has relationships with any companies in Kenya that you can withdraw from free of charge.

How much money should I plan on spending in country?

FSD covers most of your necessary expenses, including room and board, in-country transportation, trip expenses (if applicable), orientation, midterm, and debriefing sessions. You will need to purchase your own water or beverages during orientation and the midterm retreat, however all meals are provided. Recreational activities during the midterm retreat are not covered, so you should bring extra money for excursions and activities. You may also want additional money for entertainment, snacks, books, gifts, newspapers, weekend excursions, additional transportation and health emergencies. You should budget for about US\$5/day and about \$50 for a weekend trip. Bring more if you plan to go out often or buy gifts. Never carry a large sum of cash or your passport on public transportation; if you must, please do so with caution. Bring only what you need for the day and use a nondescript bag to carry books or papers.

How can I get cash?

ATM machines are recommended because they are available, secure, and get a good rate of exchange. ATMs are widely available in Kakamega Town. Traveler's checks are not recommended: they do not get a good exchange rate (cash is much better) and are not widely accepted. Do not exchange money with street dealers; banks or exchange bureaus are much more secure.

Are credit cards accepted?

Credit cards are only accepted in more expensive shops and restaurants, and often require a minimum purchase. Bring a Visa since it is the most widely accepted. MasterCard is no

Monetary Unity & Exchange Rate

Monetary Unit

Kenyan Shilling

Exchange Rate

The exchange rate is approximately 100Ksh to the US Dollar. You can find the current rate online through websites like www.xe.com

longer accepted in most places.

What is the local attitude towards bargaining?

Bargaining is part of the culture and expected at local markets. In Kenya it is generally accepted that mzungus (lit. “Europeans,” or whites) will have plenty of money to spend and thus most vendors will initially quote an exaggerated price (commonly referred to as the “mzungu price”). The rule is generally that you will divide that price in 3 to 5 and begin bargaining from there. Stand your ground, but have fun, too – the bargaining process is generally conducted good-naturedly, almost like a game. Knowing enough Swahili to haggle a bit will demonstrate you’re not a tourist and often helps you get the best price.



TRANSPORTATION

Which airlines are recommended?

KLM, British Airways, Emirates, and Kenya Airways are all recommended international airlines to get you to Nairobi. Please try to choose a flight with the shortest and most comfortable layover. If possible, layovers in Europe or other areas which have large, safe airports with conveniences are recommended over layovers in Nairobi (please see below for more details.) . There is an airport in Kakamega which has daily flights arriving from Nairobi. At time of writing, fly540 and Fly County were the only airlines flying to Kakamega, and you will need to book this leg separately from the rest of your journey. More airlines fly into the Kisumu airport, which is about a 1 and 1/2 to 2 hour drive away from Kakamega. Please ask the site team if you need advice on booking this segment of your travel.

If I cannot meet the group for the scheduled pickup how do I get to the orientation site?

Contact your site team to coordinate your arrival if you cannot meet the group at the set pickup time. They will be able to give you direction and tips to help ensure your safety and comfort.

How do I return to the airport on my day of departure?

The site team will help you to arrange transportation to the Kakamega airport in time for your departure flight.



IN-COUNTRY TRANSPORTATION

What are the most common modes of transport and are they expensive?

Bodabodas (bicycle taxis), pikipikis (motorbikes), Matatus (public buses), and taxis are all available forms of transportation in Kakamega and Kenya in general. For the most part, payment is negotiated based on distance. When taking a motorbike, make sure to use a helmet which can be purchased in-country, or borrowed from the FSD office. It is best to use a driver recommended by your host-family or FSD whenever possible.

Can I travel after dark?

It is recommended that you do not travel after dark (which is normally around 6:30-7pm), so plan ahead and be cautious.

Is it safe to go out at night?

Do not walk around after 7 p.m. If you must go somewhere, do not go alone. Consult with your host family about safety information specific to your neighborhood. Plan ahead and be cautious.

Know Where You Are Going

Always know where you are going and the name of the stop (or stage) before you get on a matatu. If you are going to an unfamiliar location, ask a member of your family or a member of the FSD site team for landmarks or nearby stops to look for and indicate to the driver. If you are still unsure where to get off, usually the conductor or driver will readily inform you of your stop when you've arrived.



HOMESTAY IN KENYA

Kakamega has both rural and urban home stays. In the rural setting families often live in a compound comprising of several different homes that belong to different family members. Majority of the rural homes have no electricity or running water, but do have access to water and lanterns to use after dark. In most cases rural families have small farms adjacent to their compounds where they grow some of their food. In the urban setting there is a much higher percentage of homes with both electricity and running water. Unlike in the rural setting, urban homes are usually a single dwelling, where all family members live together. Kenyan families usually have three to four children, and often times there are members of the extended family living in the household. There is therefore a high probability that most families will have children in the homes. In both settings there is normally one family member, either the mother or the father who work outside of the home.

One of the most rewarding, challenging, and meaningful experiences during your time in Kenya is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. Host families offer the rare opportunity to truly integrate oneself into the local culture and build meaningful relationships that will last long past your stay. The families who host FSD Participants are carefully selected and offer their homes out of a genuine sense of generosity and the wish to learn about another culture. Your host family will view you as a member of the family and treat you as such. We hope that you will feel equally at home with your family but we ask that you never forget you are a guest in their home. Please always be respectful of their rules and help out the best you can.

What will my host family provide?

Your family is required to provide you with a private room with a bed and bedding, three meals a day, purified water and weekly hand-washing of your clothes. Toiletries and a towel are not provided; you must bring your own.

What are the living accommodations like?

Living accommodations are very basic by U.S. standards. In rural areas, many host families are without running water or electricity, making kerosene lamps and bucket baths the norm. Even in more urban areas, often water and electric services will shut off for short periods of time. However, all FSD host families keep very clean houses and will do their utmost to keep you comfortable during your stay. Ants, mosquitoes, geckos, and occasionally spiders and small rodents can creep into the house, though these are generally not harmful and your host family can help prevent their entering if you let them know. Storing food in its proper

place and keeping your living area neat will make a big difference. You will become accustomed to a fair amount of night sound, varying between urban and rural sites but often including traffic, animals, rain and wind on tin roofs, drumming from traditional nighttime ceremonies, and radios. Ear plugs can help.

How are families structured in Kenya?

Many Kenyan families consist of parents, grown children, and grandchildren in the same home, or in several small homes scattered around the same plot of land. Please note that in rural areas, polygamy is not uncommon, although most families are limited to two wives. Children in Kenya, like children anywhere, can be both adorable and annoying, but try to maintain your patience with them in order to integrate smoothly into the household. Sometimes young children will be afraid of you for the first few weeks because you are a stranger and you look and act differently than the people they're used to. Please don't take this personally and be patient—they'll warm up to you with time. It is sometimes difficult to understand family structure in Kenya as many people refer to their aunts and uncles as "mother" and "father" and their cousins as their siblings. Sometimes families will take nieces and nephews into their homes and raise them as their own children. Don't be afraid to ask questions – this is a great opportunity to better understand the structure of Kenyan families.

Do I need to help out with chores?

We ask families to treat you as another member of the family, which means you will pick up after yourself, keep your area neat, and help out with the cooking and cleaning as appropriate. For women, spending some time with mama in the kitchen can be a great culinary learning experience! Men may expect to have the opportunity to help tend to animals or work on carpentry projects with the males of the house.

Is it safe to bring and store valuables at my host family's house?

There is no need to bring many valuables, or openly advertise any that you do bring. We require that you keep items of value locked in your luggage at all times. This is extremely important because friends and relatives are often in and out of the house. However, there have been incidents when an intern thought something was stolen only to find that s/he had misplaced it. This kind of "scandal" is hard on the host family who take great care to protect you and your things. If something unusual of this nature does happen, please speak with your host mother and/or the FSD Site Team immediately.

What are standard meal times?

Lunch is at midday, however breakfast and dinner are served a bit earlier than you may be used to, generally because people both arise and go to bed earlier. Family

members often eat at different times. Many families watch the news or soap operas during lunch and dinner. Don't be surprised if the family serves you before or after their own meal.

How should I tell my family that I'd like less food, or different kinds of food?

Don't be shy about asking your family for particular foods or the amount of food you want to eat. Vegetarian food is always available. You should tell your family what you do and do not like to eat. Politely ask your family for food to be less greasy or salty, to put salt on the side, mention that you like fruits and vegetables, or ask to be given more or less food.

How much time should I spend with my host family? What should we talk about?

One of the most rewarding, challenging, and meaningful experiences during your time in Kenya is likely to be the time you spend living with your host family. You will learn a great deal about Kenyan culture and habits through the people who live there, so cultivate a habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing. Ask questions and share your perspective. Be sensitive to the feelings of others and embrace the different viewpoints, lifestyles, experiences and company your family provides. Host families are eager to get to know you and learn about your western life so be ready to talk about your interests, culture, family and plans. We encourage you to share pictures and stories from your life at home.

How often should I check in with my family?

You are entrusted in the family's care and just like your own family, they will worry about you if you don't check in. Please advise your family in advance if you do not plan to be home for a meal. Likewise, be sure to notify your family in advance of any weekend excursions you take other than those in the scheduled program.

Can I have visitors come over to the house?

Please advise your family before you invite anyone to the house, especially someone of the opposite sex. Overnight guests are NOT appropriate and are unacceptable during the program. Protect your family's safety and privacy. Do not give out their home number. Remember: Even though you will be treated as part of the family, you are still a guest in their home and must be respectful of their rules.

Will I receive my own set of keys?

You should receive your own keys to the house so that you are free to come and go as needed.

Can I go out at night?

Yes, although opportunities to do so will vary widely according to your site. In some rural areas, for example, there will be no reason to go out after dark

and nocturnal excursions will be limited to weekends that you spend in more urban areas. If you do make plans to go out at night, please advise your family of your transportation, who will be accompanying you, your return time, and arrangements for getting home and into the house. Exercise good judgment: As anywhere, it is best to go out with family members, coworkers or friends that you meet. Be extremely wary of lavish attention from strangers in bars or nightclubs and always be aware of your surroundings. Simply being an westerner makes you more of a target for theft, harassment, etc. You should never be out alone at night past 7 p.m.

How should I handle requests for money?

FSD program fees subsidize all of your room and board expenses so there is no need for you to discuss money with your family. They should not ask you to borrow money and if this happens, tell them it is against your program rules to lend money. If children ask for money, gently remind them that it is against the rules, and let your Site Team know about the incident.

What types of gifts are appropriate to bring for my host family?

We suggest that you bring small and modest gifts for your host family as a token of goodwill and gratitude for their hospitality. Ideas: souvenirs of your hometown or state, chocolates/candies, inexpensive solar calculators or watches, inexpensive jewelry or headscarves, school supplies for the children, etc. It is possible to purchase small gifts in Kenya too, but regional gifts are special. Use your imagination!



REFLECTION ON KENYA

By Josh Silverman

First of all, let me just say that I cannot believe that I have already been in Kakamega for over a month. Talk about how time flies! Even scarier, however, is the thought that I only have one month left to accomplish any of my goals at work. As I mentioned in my last post, I spent a lot of time during weeks 2 and 3 formulating my work plan. How could I have a sustainable impact on KES and the Kakamega community? This was a really difficult question to answer, and after hours of deliberation I decided not to focus on just one idea, but instead to work on a series of small projects that could improve the cooperative's effectiveness in Kakamega.

My first objective is to facilitate the involvement of current members and the recruitment of new members. KES has over 400 members, but suffers from a very high monthly default rate due to their "goodwill" debt collection procedures in which members are expected to pay monthly without any staff or loan officers to guide them. This high rate of default is detrimental to the cooperative's growth and I believe it needs to be addressed as soon as possible if the SACCO is to reach its goal of being fully operational by 2012.

My first idea is to create a quarterly newsletter, targeted specifically at members who have been dormant for more than two months. This newsletter (only 4 pages long) is almost complete and will be ready for KES' Annual General Meeting scheduled to occur on June 27th. In addition, I am hoping to implement new incentive programs to encourage continuous payment of loans and member recruitment. Specifically, a member who makes loan payments every month for a year (a rarity in the current records) will receive the last month's interest free, a member who pays his shares every month for a year will get the opportunity to take out a loan at a lower interest rate (.8% monthly instead of 1%), and members who recruit new members will receive a certain amount of money for every member they bring in. Finally, I have agreed to help the SACCO design a sign to help advertise their location on the main road of the town. These are all very simple ideas, but I hope that in combination they will give KES a boost in member recruitment and involvement.

My second objective is to update their accounting systems. Currently, the bookkeeper uses Microsoft Excel for all accounts, but none of her spreadsheets are dynamic. In other words, she adds everything up with a calculator (and occasionally makes mistakes along the way) instead of using formulas (as simple

as auto sum) that could calculate everything automatically. I have already worked out a good system, but my goal is not to just teach the bookkeeper to use the system that I have created. Instead, I am trying to teach her how to create general dynamic spreadsheets – that way after I am gone she will be able to design efficient systems of data management using excel as the need arises.

Thirdly, I am working with KES' microfinance sector to jumpstart a new group of boda boda drivers. This is probably the part of my project that I am most excited about. A boda boda is essentially a bicycle taxi, who shuttles people around all day for about 15 cents per trip on average. Most of the drivers (there are hundreds of them) have no other way of making a living – many have even finished high school or university but just don't have any other career options. Our goal is to get a group of 15 boda bodas to start saving monthly for four months, after which they will have the opportunity to take out a small business loan. After this loan is paid back, they will eventually take out a bigger loan and will thus be given the opportunity to work their way up out of poverty.

At first I was unsure that we would be able to get a group of bodas interested in this kind of project – as a matter of fact KES tried to implement this kind of project with an FSD intern last year and the project was ultimately unsuccessful – but last week I was happy to find that my fears were unfounded. I met with the bodas for the first time on Friday, and it was probably the most powerful experience I have had since coming to Kenya. We met for about an hour in a small hot room, with someone translating what I was saying sentence by sentence into Kiswahili and then translating their questions back into English.

After their skepticism had been assuaged (many Kenyan workers have been victims of fraudulent pyramid schemes), I could sense the excitement and nervousness in their tone of voice. Nobody had ever before put their faith in the hands of these boda drivers, and I believe they saw in this newfound trust an opportunity to change their lives. Contrary to my expectations, they were very proactive about organizing their next meeting time and even asked if they could bring new members. At the next meeting (July 3rd) we will go over/amend the group constitution, and elect officers (chairman, treasurer, secretary).

My final project involves evaluating the KES Strategic Management Plan that was created in 2007. In the SMP, KES has set specific goals for each year from 2008 to 2012 (ie. number of members, amount of capital etc.) and I plan to go through their records and make a report detailing their progress.

In the end, I hope that some if not all of my projects will be sustainable, and will help KES to reach the goals outlined in their SMP.

CULTURAL PRACTICES

For the most part, you will gain insight into Kenyan culture through your own experiences, but here are a few common questions that are likely to arise:

How important is punctuality in Kenyan culture?

The concept of time is very flexible in Kenya. Many people, especially in the villages, do not use or own any time-keeping device. For this reason, as well as many outside factors like transportation issues or severe weather, some Kenyans will arrive for meetings or appointments significantly late by western standards (or sometimes not at all). Often there is no way to communicate when someone is running late or unable to come. While this cultural trait will require some adjustment for most westerners, with time you'll find that this relaxed pace has merits of its own!

How do people in Kenya feel about privacy?

Privacy is not a value in Kenyan culture. You will often be surrounded by adults or children, particularly if you live in a village. Many Kenyans are not shy about asking personal questions once they know you. Should they arise, take uncomfortable inquiries with a grain of salt and try to bounce back with a sense of humor, when possible. There may also be many more people in a small house than you are accustomed to, but you should always be allowed privacy within your room. Sometimes your host mother or children in the house may forget to knock before opening your door, and it's okay to gently remind them that you would appreciate a warning before they enter.

How do people in Kenya greet and say goodbye to each other?

Extended greetings are very important to Kenyans, and you should at least learn the greetings and some other basic vocabulary (such as "thank you") in Swahili and in Kibaluha in order to appropriately converse with locals who don't speak English. Handshakes are by far the most common greeting gesture in Kenya, and most people you meet will be particularly interested in shaking your hand as you are a foreigner. When you enter a large room full of people, don't be surprised if you are expected to shake the hand of each one – small children included! Despite the importance of greetings, introductions are uncommon in Kenya. If you are unsure of who someone is, you may ask politely, but do your best to remember names – sometimes your new acquaintance will jokingly quiz you on your memory the next time you meet!

What are some common non-verbal gestures and body language to know?

Extended greetings are very important to Kenyans, and you should at least learn the greetings and some other basic vocabulary (such as “thank you”) in Swahili and in Kibaluhya in order to appropriately converse with locals who don’t speak English. Handshakes are by far the most common greeting gesture in Kenya, and most people you meet will be particularly interested in shaking your hand as you are a foreigner. When you enter a large room full of people, don’t be surprised if you are expected to shake the hand of each one – small children included! Despite the importance of greetings, introductions are uncommon in Kenya. If you are unsure of who someone is, you may ask politely, but do your best to remember names – sometimes your new acquaintance will jokingly quiz you on your memory the next time you meet!

What kind of public touching gestures are acceptable in country?

Handshakes between both sexes and across all ages are not only acceptable, but the norm. Generally, other public displays of affection are considered distasteful and rarely seen, especially in the more conservative Western highlands. It is very common, however, to see same-sex friends walking down the street hand-in-hand. If a Kenyan of your gender takes your hand as you walk, consider it a compliment devoid of sexual connotations. It is also common to lightly hold a person’s arm or elbow to get their attention.

How do Kenyans view household animals/pets?

While domestic animals like cats and dogs are less common in Kenya, farm animals represent an extremely important part of life for most Kenyans and many families rely on cows, chickens, and goats as food sources. Chickens especially can be seen scattered about most rural yards and can sometimes even be seen traipsing through a family’s sitting room! Some families do have dogs but their relationship with them will probably be different than what you are used to back home. Dogs that live with families are generally kept within the compound (yard) but outside of the house, even at night, and also serve to guard the home and deter intruders.

What is religion like in Kenya?

Religion plays a major role in the lives of most Kenyans. Along the coast, most people are Muslim, but throughout the rest of the country, Christianity is by far the most dominant religion. Many Kenyan Christians are very vocal about their faith, and may press you about your beliefs and denomination or ask you if you are “saved” or “born again.” Evangelical preaching on television and in crowded markets or streets, where a large crowd will often be gathered around, is quite common. Most host families and some host organizations actively incorporate religion into their daily activities and may precede ceremonies or meals with

prayer. Even if you do not follow the same faith, please be respectful of your hosts by bowing your head during prayers.

What are some other values and/or beliefs which will help me adjust to and immerse myself in my new host community?

Due to the prevalence of disease and the lack of health care death is also a very common and unfortunate part of life in Kenya. In rural areas, you may often hear drumming throughout the night which indicates a death in a nearby home. It is common for people to miss work for burials. If someone in the village you are staying in passes away, work may stop or slow down and may not pick back up again for several days. It is likely that you be invited or asked to attend a burial during your time in Kenya. This is an important way to show your support for the family and community as a whole, but if you do not feel comfortable attending you do not have to. If you wish to attend please dress modestly, and be prepared as they may ask for a donation for the family.



MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

An important part of ensuring you have a positive experience in Kenya is to manage your expectations from the very beginning. Remember that you are arriving to learn and be a small step in the overall sustainable development process. It is normal to feel lost and perhaps even without purpose at the beginning. Our suggestion is to follow the 3 Ps:

BE PROACTIVE

- Good relationships lead to good projects, not the other way around. Take the initiative to begin to form relationships in your organization and with other people that you meet in Kenya.
- Your supervisor will often not give you specific tasks. You may feel you are without direction. Take a moment and think of something you can be doing or working on. Think of possible obstacles and solutions in advance. Accept that you may have more free time than you are used to; relax and do something for you.

BE PERSISTENT

- You may need to ask for things you need more than once. You are your own best advocate. Even if it takes a few tries, don't give up on asking for what it is you need.
- Things may not work out on the first try (or second, or third, etc). Analyze what did and did not work and try again.

BE POLITE

- No matter how frustrated or confused you are, always be polite. Remember that you are not at home and that rash reactions can often offend. Learn a few stress management techniques and see which works best for you. Learn the difference between being firm and being rude.

Development is often a painfully slow process. Take the time before you arrive to mentally prepare yourself for a different pace of life and work. Keep in mind you may need to change your definitions of productivity and success. Even small accomplishments and projects require significant amounts of time. Be prepared to be frustrated at times; adjustment and adaptation can be difficult, especially at first. If you ready yourself for these realities before you arrive, the process will be easier once here.



WORKPLACE FAQ

What is the general perception of work in country?

Work is generally approached with the same degree of seriousness and commitment as in western cultures, although you may find that schedules and time frames are much more relaxed here. Still, it is very important to maintain professionalism in the workplace by arriving and leaving on time and dressing appropriately. If the office opens later than scheduled, discuss timing with your supervisor and Site Team to determine the best way you can adapt to the organization's office hours.

What is a typical work schedule in Kenya?

An 8 or 9-to-5 schedule with about an hour break for lunch is the norm for almost all office jobs and FSD host organizations.

How is personal initiative viewed? Is it appropriate to voice my opinions?

It is appropriate and encouraged for you to voice your opinions, though we recommend doing so first in private with your supervisor, especially if you would like to discuss an issue which pertains directly to one of his/her ideas or initiatives. As in any other work or internship setting, it is imperative that you avoid taking a condescending tone or blatantly criticizing the ideas of others.

What are common practices for socializing with colleagues?

It is common for colleagues to eat lunch together or run errands around town. In cases where you become especially close with one of your colleagues, you may be invited to a meal at their home or, as mentioned above, a funeral of a family member. All of these activities are perfectly acceptable. If you feel that a colleague is becoming too close or attempting to make inappropriate advances, you may politely decline extended invitations and notify the FSD Site Team if you are becoming uncomfortable.

RACE, SEXUALITY, & GENDER

How you interact with others (and they with you) will initially have a lot to do with preconceptions. You'll feel more comfortable once the inevitable "getting to know you" period is over, but keep some cultural norms in mind:

RACE AND ETHNICITY

In Kenya, you may not encounter the same level and/or kind of awareness and sensitivity surrounding race relations and conceptualizations of heritage as you may be accustomed to finding in the U.S. If you have features associated with an Asian heritage, you may be referred to as "Chinese." If you have fair skin, kids and adults will shout out, call or greet you as "Mzungu" (Lit. "European"). Even persons with dark skin and an African heritage will sometimes be referred to as "Mzungu", in this case meaning any westerner or, often, any person showing the appearance of wealth associated with western nations. If you have features associated with an Indian or South Asian heritage, you may be referred to simply as "Asian." In most cases, these names are not necessarily derogatory terms; many people use them simply because your skin color or features are unusual or intriguing within that context. Please be patient and try to remember that, especially in Kakamega and more rural areas, your appearance is most likely very unusual and provokes curiosity in locals. In some cases, it may be valuable to engage the people you meet in a conversation about the specificity of your heritage.

SEXUALITY

Sexual orientation or preference is not a topic that is openly discussed in Kenya. Please realize that homosexuality may not be regarded with the same understanding or sensitivity in Kenya. Please do your best to take this into consideration when discussing such issues with your host family or other members of the community. Also take note that homosexual relations are illegal in Kenya.

GENDER

If you are a woman, expect to get a lot of unwanted attention; it is likely that men will talk to you in the street and attempt to engage you in conversation. Use your common sense. The best thing to do is to ignore them. Do not give out your phone number to people you don't know. You can explain that you are living in someone else's house and are not allowed to receive calls or visitors.

DISCRIMINATION

The previous three sections are not written to validate or excuse discriminatory behavior. In Kenya, when someone refers to you as Mzungu, the majority of the

time they are not doing so in a discriminatory fashion, but more out of lack of understanding regarding diversity. Not only is there a lack of awareness regarding diversity of race, gender, and sexuality, you may also find a lack of awareness in regard to religions, ethnicities, and nationalities. This lack of understanding/awareness does not always translate into discrimination.

However, if at any time you feel discriminated against at your host family, host organization, or during your interactions within the community, please inform the FSD site team immediately so we can help. We will work with you to ensure that you are able to enjoy your time with FSD to the fullest without worrying about discrimination.



FILM GUIDE

Out of Africa Director: Sydney Pollack, 1985 — This film tells the true story of Baroness Karen Blixen-Finecke, a Danish woman who relocated to the British East Africa Protectorate (Kenya) with her husband in 1914 to take charge of a large coffee plantation. Based on Blixen's 1937 autobiographical account written under the pen name "IsakDineson". Out of Africa won seven Academy Awards in 1986, including Best Picture.

The Kitchen Toto Director: Harry Hook, 1988 — Mwangi is a Kikuyu boy whose preacher father is murdered by Mau Mau rebels in 1950. Soon afterward he goes to work as a house servant for a colonial police officer and his wife and young son. When the rebels kidnap Mwangi and make him swear allegiance to their cause, a potentially explosive situation arises. A gripping story about one of the bloodiest episodes in the history of British decolonization and the birth of modern Kenya.

Something of Value Director: Richard Brooks, 1957 — Peter, a Kenya settler boy, and Kimani, a Kikuyu, are childhood friends. After his father is jailed for following tribal customs, Kimani joins the Mau Mau rebellion. Kimani believes in the cause, but does not agree with the indiscriminate killing of women, children, and those who will not join or support the rebels. Peter, even after the deaths of his little sister and brother by the Mau Mau, still believes that there is a chance for peaceful co-existence.

Massai, Les Guerriers de la Pluie (Masai, The Rain Warriors) Director: Pascal Plisson, 2004 — This French film follows the lives of a group of young and inexperienced Masai warriors on a search to bring back the mane of Vitchua, a mythical lion and incarnation of the god of revenge. In doing this they believe they will put an end to the drought that has cursed their land. As they press onward through the plains of Kenya, the young warriors are at every moment confronted with danger, betrayal, fear, and competition to become men.

The Constant Gardener Director: Fernando Meirelles, 2005 — Justin Quayle, a British diplomat stationed in Nairobi, investigates the brutal murder of his health activist wife despite the wishes of his superiors that he rely upon the official inquiry for answers. Instead, Quayle discovers a sinister conspiracy between his government and the pharmaceutical industry to test experimental drugs on unsuspecting Kenyan slum dwellers. Based on the best-selling novel by John Le Carré with scenes filmed in Kibera, Nairobi's notorious slum and the largest in all of Africa.

The Knife Grinder's Tale Director: R.L Hooker, 2007 — This short film tells the story of Ogwang, a countryside knife grinder who loses his son to an angry mob in a Nairobi slum. Wanting to know the place and circumstances of his son's death, Ogwang sets out on a journey to bridge the distance between love and death in the face of violence. Based on a short story by award-winning Kenyan author Yvonne AdhaimboOwuor.

Kibera Kid Director: Nathan Collett, 2006 — Otieno is a twelve-year old orphan living in Kibera, Nairobi's notorious slum and one of the world's largest. He lives with "The Razors," a gang of petty thieves. After a theft gone bad, Otieno is forced to choose between saving an innocent man's life and his loyalty to the Razors, the only family he knows. A compelling look at the widespread poverty and violence that is a daily reality in much of urban East Africa.

Hip Hop Colony Director: Michael Wanguhu, 2005 — This documentary traces the unique development of hip hop music in Kenya. US influences have combined with the traditional music of Kenya to create a new style, "Genge," that is extremely popular throughout the country. The documentary intersperses concert footage and interviews with musicians and producers. An interesting glimpse into how contemporary East African culture is shaped and influenced.

RECOMMENDED READING

The Mzungu Boy by Meja Mwangi (Groundwood Books, 2005)

For Kariuki, life in a small village in Kenya is one great adventure. The best part of his day is the walk home from school, when he is free from both his bullying headmaster and his mother's long list of chores. The landscape around his village is beautifully wild, and Kariuki knows it well. One day Kariuki meets Nigel, a boy from England who has come to visit his grandfather, the fearsome Bwana Ruin, who owns the farm where the villagers work. The villagers call Nigel the mzungu boy (westerner), and view him with suspicion and fear, but not Kariuki. In this novel, the author captures a time of innocence, wild beauty, and the growing violence that eventually changed the entire structure of colonial Africa.

Petals of Blood by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1977)

Called "The definitive African book of the 20th century", a novel presenting an impassioned critique of the hypocrisy of post-colonial Kenyan rulers, corruption, and the deterioration of the traditional Kenyan culture. Set in Kenya just after independence, the story follows four of the novel's major characters - Munira, Abdulla, Wanja, and Karega - whose lives are all intertwined due to the Mau Mau rebellion. In order to escape city life, each retreats to the small, pastoral village of Ilmorog. As the novel progresses, the characters deal with the repercussions of the Mau Mau rebellion as well as with a new, rapidly modernizing Kenya.

Flame Trees of Thika: Memories of an African Childhood by Elspeth Huxley (new ed. Penguin Classics, 2000)

The classic vivid account of the author's childhood on a coffee plantation in colonial Kenya. With an extraordinary gift for detail and a keen sense of humor, Huxley recalls her childhood on the small farm at a time when Europeans waged their fortunes on a land that was as harsh as it was beautiful. For a young girl, it was a time of adventure and freedom, and Huxley paints an unforgettable portrait of growing up among the Masai and Kikuyu people, discovering both the beauty and the terrors of the jungle, and enduring the rugged realities of the pioneer life.

I Laugh So I Won't Cry: Kenya's Women Tell the Stories of Their Lives Ed. Helena Halperin (Africa World Press, 2005)

A beautifully composed collection of first-hand accounts from a broad array of Kenyan women .

A Primate's Memoir: A Neuroscientist's Unconventional Life Among the Baboons Robert M. Sapolsky (Scribner, 2001)

The author gives a smart, descriptive account of his translocation from Brooklyn to the Kenyan bush as a primate researcher, anecdotal and witty as he relates his loss of naïveté. Sapolsky flings a few darts along the way at the late activist Dian Fossey-who, he hints, may have indirectly caused the deaths of her beloved mountain gorillas by her unstable, irrational dealings with local people-and at local bureaucrats whose interests did not often coincide with those of Sapolsky's wild charges.

Tick Bite Fever by David Bennum (Ebury Press, 2004)

Tick Bite Fever is the unconventional memoir of a very unconventional childhood. In the early Seventies, Dave Bennun's family transplanted themselves from Swindon to the wilds of Kenya. His father had lived in Africa before, but for Dave, Kenya was bemusingly new. It would be his home for the next 16 years, with things sometimes seeming a bit surreal.

RECOMMENDED WEBSITES

Daily Nation

Kenya's most widely-distributed newspaper. Most critics agree that it is relatively independent and balanced

<http://www.nationmedia.com/dailynation/nmgindex.asp>

East African Standard

Kenya's oldest newspaper – a privately-owned daily

<http://www.eastandard.net/>

BBC News: Africa

Arguably the best site on African news and current affairs

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm>

