

Yoga Noi!! Welcome to the May 2023 Uganda trip blog. My name's Julie, and I was in charge of documenting this trip, so I took an insane amount of pictures and delirious notes. This blog is meant to offer non-technical and non-work-related travel advice, tell some funny stories, and show our funnier pictures. Be sure to check out our Instagram @cwebuganda for more fun spotlights.

Day by Day

5/13-5/17

Travel advice:

- If there is a layover, contact the airline that gave you the tickets ahead of time for a hotel (free?)
- If you have a vegan/vegetarian/dietary-restricted team member, check whether you need to call ahead for that option to be available on the flight.
- When it comes to how we packed our bags:
 - Martha: 1 checked, 1 backpack
 - Bernard: 2 checked, 1 backpack
 - Sophia, Julie, Alicia: 1 backpack
 - If the team is splitting up at the airport post-trip, consider rethinking this approach because we put clothes in our checked bags. Then the flight home was uncomfy because we had to carry more individually.

Our experience:

- New York
 - We packed on Friday night, so it was a very chaotic and eventful evening. On Saturday was move-out, so we camped out in Butler doing final touches like printing out surveys and stuff until we had to leave. We didn't get summer housing, so everyone stayed in different places. On Sunday, we met on campus, and took the subway to the airport. Martha met us there; she had already checked in, so we met her at the gate.
 - Daryl met us at the gate because he went with his parents to the airport. Daryl and Martha did not meet at the gate, which was so funny.
 - Since we got our tickets at different times, some of us, like Julie, couldn't check in, but we had to check in our bags anyways, so we all went to the same counter.
- Dubai
 - During our layover in Dubai, Martha booked an Airbnb. We were close to the Dubai Mall, so we went there for dinner(MICKEY D'S!!) and went up to the Burj Khalifa. Martha paid about 75 dollars for each of us, and we Venmoed her later.
- Kampala
 - We were there ahead of time at our gate in Dubai and even went to our gate early, but they still said it was the last call because you take a bus to the flight. So be 30-45 minutes early to the stated boarding time.
 - Our wonderful driver, Moses, picked us up from the Kampala airport with his Sophia Guizzo and Team sign. He brought us to our hotel, the Hilton. Bougie. When you're working out the bookings, make sure the rooms are all organized

because we had to pay for an extra cot, and then the girlies had to 3 peas in a pod into the king-size bed.

- It was a short walk to the local mall, so we went there for the atm and got food. We went to Carrefour (a supermarket) for small snacks. We got yogurt for breakfast, but in Uganda, hotels don't keep their fridges plugged in; you have to do it yourself, so they ended up spoiling. For dinner that night, we got KFC because that was the only thing open.
- Soroti
 - The next morning, we did some game plan work. We also got locked out of room which was a bit wild. Then we waited for Moses, about 30-45 minutes late because traffic in the city is crazy and timeliness isn't very important.
 - We drove to the EWB office, met with the board, like Lydia and Ali, and got a tour. We then took inventory, packed the car, and drove the 6 hours to Soroti.

5/18

We woke up early-ish to pack up and get breakfast. We picked up our sleeping mats that were thick foam material and mosquito nets. We tied them to the top of the car. When we got to Otubet, there was a short meeting with the SMC (school management committee), and we unpacked into individual rooms in Otubet Primary. We kept our backpacks on our person, put any valuables in the medical center, and gave our food to be prepared by Rebecca. We met James from Jaflo and then headed to meet with local authorities:

- **Chairperson Moses**
- **Head of Security of Uganda**
- **Local police**
- **the RDC regional district chairperson was out**
- **We sign guest books everywhere we go**
- **LC3**
- **Olpot**
- **There was also the Uganda version of the CIA**

However, after one of our meetings, we were no longer allowed to stay in the primary school. So we had to figure that out. We decided to stay in the Akello Hotel, and the loss of time meant we had to work weekends. We had lunch, typically potatoes, maize flour porridge, rice, and beans. The girlies (Alicia, Martha, Sophia, and I) braved the Otubet Primary outhouse, which had a wasp, so we were scared. You need to bring your own toilet paper to the bathroom when you go, so make sure to buy some there. The one in the medical center is nicer, but you need someone to unlock it. We did some tech stuff. There was an insane downpour, but all the water was immediately sucked into the ground, which was so cool! The district is making us leave at sundown every day! We all fell asleep and almost missed our malaria pills, but Sophia woke us all up by flicking us, so we got those. Have someone set an alarm or reminder for during the trip and the week after.

5/19

Okay, so we ended up staying in the Akello Hotel. We liked it a lot more, so Sophia canceled our reservation at the other hotel and extended our stay for the full week at Akello. We went to the market. We also went to the supermarket to get water. We got big bottles of water since we can't drink tap water. Martha, Bernard, and Alicia had their own water bottles that they filled using those plastic ones. Still, Sophia and I didn't, and that was also fine. We just kept a plastic one on us.

Some tips:

- Potatoes are called "Irish."
- Go with a local, or else they'll overcharge
- We left bags from the market at the desk of the supermarket before entering
- it is okay means Awesome!!
- Ugandans are not forthcoming. You have to ask questions to get information; they won't just tell you.
- You can only eat something cooked with a peel, even in smoothies.

On our way to the community daily, we picked up Odongo and Barnabas, the solar engineer. We left our supplies in the health center because it locks. Olobo's sons, Tom and Alfa, have the keys to the health center. We cleaned off the solar panels. The problem was in Odelel Primary, the headmaster had brought his own technician who took the charge controller to "repair" and never returned it. Also, children love to follow you around and watch you do stuff. They also do a special handshake as a greeting, so have someone from the travel team show ya.

More battery knowledge! → Good voltage is 12

5/20

Okay, so this is a couple of days in. We're putting on sunscreen like madmen; we even got Daryl to wear some, even though he's never w before. EXCEPT I missed my neck. So this fine morning, I woke up with a red, crisp, sizzling neck. So make sure to get any exposed skin slathered up with sunscreen. Aloe vera was easy to find in the supermarket, though; thanks, guys. We went to market just for tomatoes, we got a kilo for 2500 shillings, a little much, but we weren't arguing much. A quick good morning or hello gets the vendor's attention in the market. So we bought nature valley bars for this trip. Don't! Get granola bars you're not gonna get sick of because those chewy bars were a 10/10 on any day, but gosh, I resented those nature valley bars. We talked to a teacher named Irene at Otubet Primary, and she told us about how they do lessons from morning into nighttime, which is wild. The girlies (Alicia, Martha, Sophia, and I) braved the Otubet Primary outhouse, which had a wasp, so we were scared. You need to bring your own toilet paper to the bathroom when you go, so make sure to buy some there. The one in the medical center is nicer, but you need someone to unlock it.

Anyways, basic battery stuff I learned:

Parallel is positive to positive

Series is negative to positive

Negative to negative always for connecting charge controllers and such to batteries

5/21

Okay, another day, another issue of some kind, but that's how it goes. I got a nosebleed! Probably dehydration, so big tip! Bring electrolyte tablets because we were chugging water, but you can still get dehydrated. Today we met with Odongo at his home, and he showed us about

the MFP or the multi-functional platform that EWB installed in **2007**. Also, something to keep in mind is that people pray before any meal, so be respectful and say amen! We learned that African cows have humps to store water which is cool. We also slowly realized that we have too much travel advance because food is much cheaper in Uganda. So keep that in mind when budgeting. Our total amount spent should be somewhere in the wiki or post-trip, but ask Bernard if you need help finding it. Also, this was Sunday, and typically Sundays are for rest, and regular EWB trips take the weekend off; however, we also quickly realized that we had an insane amount to do, so we worked it out ahead of time with Ali, James from Jaflo, and the governing board that we would work on Sunday. We started a little later in the day tho.

Ateso pop quiz! JK, just some phrases I learned. I don't know the proper spelling, so I wrote my way of writing it to sound it out and the definition

- Yoga = hello
- Noi is used for emphasis!
- Yalama noi = thank you very much
- Yogado = bye
- Yoga biaybok = How are you
- Jakuna = I'm fine
- Naibo ekiro kohn = what is your name
- Ejok = I'm okay
- A ka Kiro = my name is
- Yalama anunjo = nice to meet you
- Yalama anuyes = nice to meet you all
- Etameet = good
- Yoga swa ebo = well done

5/22

So we successfully got the welder to remake the security panel on OTC. Martha and Bernard talked to all the business owners about what was missing and which businesses wanted to remain on the system. He made a map. We also had a meeting with the governing board. Meetings always need an agenda, and there is a prayer to start it. Also, another grammar tip: Ugandans don't use contractions, i.e., do not instead of don't. At the end of meetings, ask if there are any additional concerns. We also planned our feast for Martha's going away party. Coordinated with Olobo and Odongo to get the word out and invited some district authorities. Shopping list example: (Rebecca, who cooks for us and needs to be paid, gives us a list post-lunch)

One day:

- Thing of rice
- 5 kilos Irish potatoes 12500
- 2 kilos onions 6k
- 10 kilos tomatoes 25k
- 5 cabbage 4K each 20000 total

Another day:

- Green peppers
- Onions

- Tomatoes
- Rice
- Beans
- Irish potatoes
- Cabbage
- Milk

Puns

I lug that

Good lug

Screw you

Nailed it!

Let's hammer down those details.

5/23

We got an update on lights: Odelel lights turned off after 5 minutes, and Otubet was doing great with 3 hours past sun-down. We started working out maintenance training, putting up poles (make sure the eucalyptus is mature so termites don't eat it). It was also the day of our feast! We worked in the morning on welding the security frame on the trading center. No protective gear was worn, and as Ali said, "0 safety. Negative Safety," Moses gave people rides to Otubet Primary, where the feast was. We sat around in a huge circle. People made speeches, and Sophia made one too. Alicia and Martha got proposed to, which is a common thing. Often people ask about going to America.

5/24

Shopping list:

- 4-5 Oil-based spray paint
- 30 light bulbs(5 AC load)
- 15 light bulbs holders
- 20 m of 2.5 mm PVC
- A few boxes of Tower clips (need to fit 2.5 mm wire)
- Screws that fit

When we arrived in October, we were told that the lights stayed on in the trading center for about 6 hours which is good! October turned off at 1 am, and Odelel lasted minutes, so we spent some time there. I only wrote a little for this day. It was a tough day, as it was painting day. Alicia, Bernard, Sophia, and I sanded down the rust on the Trading Center's structure as much as possible, then primed and painted. We tried washing off the paintbrushes, but you can tell by the pictures that we failed. We did wiring fixes in the businesses and finished off the poles.

5/25

I genuinely wrote nothing for this day. It was jam-packed; we spent all day in the trading center, going to each business, writing down how many lights they had/were supposed to have, and making repairs as we went. Sometimes the language barrier can get tough, but stay positive! We were totally exhausted after this day.

Our shopping list:

- Light switch box
- Screws
- Paintbrushes

- For the cooks
 - Sugar
 - Strawberry jam
 - Dates
 - OMO powder
 - Loaf
- Maize flour
- Cooking oil 4 liters
- Rice for Friday
- 6 kilos Beans 30 k
- 4 kilos Irish 10 k
- 5 packets of green peppers 1k each

5/26

Alrighty, last day! We went around to shops to buy stuff for the community for them to finish up any repairs they're gonna do once we leave. The lights stayed on all night at the trading post, Odelel, and Otubet, which was great. We went around Odelel and replaced any broken bulbs and fixed any broken/replaced switch boxes. Daryl and Ali spent all day in the trading post shed to figure out what was wrong with the panels; it ended up being a wiring thing! We hate MC4 connectors. We had our final meeting with the governing board, a conversation about appreciation, and an amazing moment when all the trading center lights turned on after sunset. We also made a card for Ali that we printed that morning, and we all signed it.

5/27

We had breakfast, then set off on our journey back to Kampala. On the way, we stopped at a small sports shop to get some very authentic soccer jerseys. At the Kampala Hotel, we did our laundry and then went to a restaurant. Alicia and I taught everyone how to play Durak, a card game. Our clothes didn't fully dry, so we had to blow dry them the following morning.

5/28

Got to the airport. There's a waiting area to get into the airport, but we just asked security about when to enter. We had to put our stuff down in a drawn circle, and a dog sniffed it, which was cute. Once we got past the first man who checked our passports, we went through the first security, checked in, 2nd security, bought food, and got on the plane. After a fun stop at the Nutella cafe in the Dubai airport, we took our flight back to the USA.