

Country/Town Visited: Lake Bunyonyi, Uganda

Winston Churchill once called Uganda the Pearl of Africa and I couldn't agree more. I have travelled a lot in east – and southern Africa and Uganda is absolutely one of my favorite destinations. The nature is stunning and the people are just as beautiful on the inside as on the outside.

To travel as a volunteer is the best thing I've done. I've been in both South Africa and Uganda as a volunteer and it's great to be able to help other people who are so grateful for your help and life in general, although they often live in cramped and difficult conditions. The reason I initially went out as a volunteer is because I feel enormously privileged. I have had a comfortable upbringing in Denmark, with many opportunities, support from a good family and a welfare society where you get picked up by the society if you step too far on the side. But also because I personally have a great need to help others so they can feel good. In my belief everyone should have opportunities even though they may have been born in an unfortunate place without democracy and where resources are limited.

After my first trip to Africa, I was lucky enough that Duncan (the founder of Little Angels Needy Children and Orphan Project) got in touch with me and suddenly I was on my way to Uganda, without any knowledge of whether the school, where I expected to spend my time, even existed. But these concerns were unfounded as it turned out that I had involved myself with an amazing person with admirable visions and a project that really makes a difference to the community.

By appointment, I was staying with a local family where they spoke very little English. But they were sweet to try their best and otherwise we communicated mostly through gestures and my newly acquired Rugika dictionary. Here I had my own room, however I was accompanied by various "livestock" and found myself comfortable with the very simple lifestyle that is found in Uganda and most of the rest of Africa.

At the school I was put into the school curriculum, like the rest of the faculty and got my own class that I taught English and Mathematics. In the beginning I lacked teaching materials for my two subjects and therefore I taught from my free imagination. After more donations the school acquired the books and it made it a whole lot easier to teach. My students were from about 8-11 years and from day one, I was teacher Louise and for me they were just my children. Amazing kids!

From home, I had been able to gather more money for the project. Money that can make a huge difference in a place like this, since the project relies only on donations from tourists who believe in the work they do. It was a privilege for me to have these donations and, in consultations with the founders, decide where the money could be most useful. The money helped in many areas but especially one place meant a lot to me. Duncan and I went out to buy mattresses and blankets for the children, as most sleep directly on the floor and without anything to put on it. The day we gave them out to the kids was absolutely amazing. It touched me to watch those little faces light up with a huge smile, but also the adults, like my host family and the teachers who were so grateful.

My time in Uganda has, with no doubt, been one of the best in my life. I have met some amazing people, my kids at the school, the teachers, some were close friends who I stay in touch with, my host family who opened their home to me but also strangers I met on my path. I've met so many people who themselves live under strained circumstances, but still have the energy to help others and devote time to those who have it harder than themselves. And then there is Duncan, who is someone very special. Duncan grew up with a fate like these children. He was a smart boy, but was not financially able to continue his education through secondary school. It was his luck that he met someone who truly believed in him and chose to sponsor his education. With a sincere desire to give something back, Duncan started the project in Uganda and creates every day the same chance for many children from his community, in whom he can identify himself.

I am truly grateful that I have been allowed to get these experiences and to meet these inspiring individuals. Because of them, I feel that I have received twice as much again as I have been able to accomplish as their volunteer.

It's hard not to invite everyone to visit Uganda and especially Little Angels. Being a volunteer is indescribable, but to visit the project for one day is also recommended. Those children will greet you with their huge smiles and little hands that suddenly hold yours.

Uganda had become my second home where I have my second family and my sponsor child Bruce. I've added some images from my time in Uganda below.

Rating system

Would you recommend volunteering at Little Angels: **Yes**

Overall rating: **5 out of 5**

By: Louise