Guidelines for staying with Ugandan hosts in Uganda during a Bristol link visit

Staying with people in their homes is a wonderful opportunity to gain an insight into a different culture from the ‘inside out.’ Inevitably it brings with it challenges as we step right out of our comfort zones and are dependent on the hospitality of strangers. Sometimes it can be difficult but when it works out it is wonderful as lifelong friendships can result.

**Guidelines for participants:**

1. You are staying in someone else’s home and to them it will be precious. So however different it may be treat it with the same respect that you would your own
2. Homes in Uganda may be much simpler than our own here in the UK. Be prepared for that fact that there may be no running water, the toilet may be outside and light might be supplied by candles at night. Although initially this might seem challenging most people adjust very quickly so long as it is clean and we feel secure.
3. Every care is taken by our hosts to ensure that the homes we stay in are suitable for Westerners so be aware that you may be in some of the best houses in the neighbourhood.
4. Take time to listen and not to judge quickly. The way families are structured, the role of children, women, men, older people may be very different from what we are used to and there will be things that we don’t understand and things that we will learn from.
5. If something isn’t working out for you don’t suffer in silence, first of all ask your hosts, secondly speak to the group organiser so that any problems can be sorted out.
6. Please don’t offer to ‘pay’ people for looking after you – we would hate that in the UK, but there are likely to be ‘maids’ in the household who will do your washing and cleaning for you and it is nice to give them a small bonus at the end of your stay. Please do find some way of saying thank you in as generous a way as you can.
7. Don’t be afraid about sharing your life, experiences and faith with your hosts, but be aware that there are some profound differences between our societies and we don’t want to cause unnecessary conflict. For example, over issues such as alcohol and homosexuality. Be aware that we come from a society where we are taught to argue and debate, but our hosts have come from a society where they are taught to respect their elders and so some may find it difficult to articulate it if they disagree with you as by virtue of being a guest, white, able to travel and part of the Diocese of Bristol you are automatically a person of status. The key thing is to listen carefully.
8. Finally, relax, enjoy the hospitality and make new friends!!

**Guidelines for Organisers:**

1. It is important to keep in close contact with the Ugandan co-ordinator and to be very clear from the start about joint expectations. This may be quite hard work on both sides.
2. A period of ‘settling in’ to the diocese and country is important, so people should have a few days together before going to their hosts.
3. Visitors need to be informed as soon as possible with whom and where they will be staying - If possible it is good to try and match the hosts to the interests of the visitors.
4. Visitors need to be prepared for the kind of facilities that may be available e.g. kind of toilet, washing, bedroom (might they be expected to share a room when staying with Ugandan hosts) and laundry. British visitors to Uganda will need to understand that these facilities will generally not be to the standard they would expect in the UK and be prepared to adapt to this.
5. It is a good idea not to have to change hosts too frequently – ideally a person will stay with the same host throughout.
6. Hosts need to know clearly what is expected of them. This should include meals that they need to provide, exactly when the visitors will be with them and ensuring that the hosts will be there. Any dietary requirements of visitors should be clearly conveyed to the hosts.
7. For some groups it may be appropriate that visitors should be hosted as close to each other as possible. However, if they have expressed a desire to be hosted in a village setting and are happy to travel alone or in pairs a more adventurous option can be immensely rewarding.
8. Ensure that every team member has a clear way to communicate with the rest of the team & with their family back home – the best way to do this is by ensuring that every team member has an ‘unlocked’ mobile phone, a Uganda SIM Card and the contact numbers for the whole group.
9. Clear guidance needs to be given about paying hosts and giving them gifts.

**Health and Safety Concerns:**

1. No under 18 year olds should be hosted alone, and they should be housed in close proximity to one of the team leaders.
2. Single people should not host members of the opposite gender, and in households where the wife/husband may be called away we should ensure that another female/male relative takes their place.