



# The Kasiisi Diaries

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*Amorti*

# Introduction

**This diary covers the six weeks I spent in Uganda working with The Kasiisi Project as part of my Laidlaw Scholarship Leadership in Action (LIA) project.**

The Kasiisi Project is an NGO which ‘supports the conservation of Uganda’s Kibale National Park by helping communities protect and steward their lands, waters and wildlife’, through conservation, education and health initiatives.

It is so-called for Kasiisi village, a semi-rural place just outside Kibale National Park. Kasiisi village is host to the Kibale Forest Schools Programme (KFSP), the partner organisation of The Kasiisi Project. It handles the ‘on-the ground’ operations of the Kasiisi project, and it was KFSP who I and seven other Laidlaw scholars worked with for six weeks in the summer of 2025.



# Week One - Arrival and Orientation

**Days One to Two:** I unexpectedly met up with a couple of other scholars, Maddy and Alexa, at the gates of Doha airport. We arrived in Entebbe after a six hour flight, and spent the night there. The Gately Inn, where we stayed, was quite nice, and the following morning we had the chance to meet everyone properly over breakfast.

On the way to Kasiisi, we had roast chicken on a stick, which tasted much better than it sounds. The roads themselves were full of potholes, so what might have been a 4 hour drive on the British motorways I'm used to was actually a 7-or-so hour one. We arrived at the Kasiisi Guesthouse, where we'd be staying, in the evening. The Kasiisi staff recieved us with a buffet dinner, which was much needed after the long journey, before we retired for the night.

Going through Uganda, I felt a few doubts. I'd be away from my home and country for six weeks and didn't know what to expect - had I made the right choice? Would I be able to do something worthwhile here both for those involved in the project and myself?



I was thinking more about how different life was going to be for the six weeks - my normal routines and ways of life would be changed considerably. Many other Laidlaw Scholars do their leadership projects in Western Europe or North America, and so can maintain their lifestyles and patterns of work etc. I was thinking, should I have done the same thing?

Ultimately, I resolved to see this change as something of a challenge, and as part of this, I been aimed to avoid checking social media and seeing what my friends and family were doing at home, to avoid these feelings of 'FOMO'. Another large part of adjusting to Uganda was getting to know the other scholars, who were, of course, in the same boat, and enjoying the activities we had planned during orientation.

**Day Three:** The day after we arrived at the school, we had breakfast, before being given a tour by Patrick, a director of KFSP, as well as Moses, the headmaster of Kasiisi Primary School, which shares the ground with the Kasiisi Guesthouse and KFSP offices. They were keen to talk about the things the school was proud of, its facilities, its provision of water and food, progression from primary to secondary school (which I believe is about 90%), as well as the ability to offer board to pupils.

I was struck by two main things both in Uganda generally as well as in the school.

Firstly, the signage in the school. Some are perfectly normal, if a little amusing to see spray painted in that font you see in military flicks - for example, 'health is wealth' or 'brush your teeth twice daily', but others feel a bit darker or at least feel otherworldly: 'never accept gifts or money in return for sex' or 'virginity is dignity'.



Secondly, the way in which so much of the language and culture is based upon older British systems. Some examples:

- ‘Shillings’ is the name of the Ugandan currency.
- The way in which the national curriculum is still structured as having ‘O-Levels and A-Levels’.
- Many of the schools themselves sound remarkably like how the ones in the UK are named (e.g. ‘St. Mary’s Junior School’).
- On the wall decorations behind the headmaster - a picture of an Anglican Bishop, and charts of the winners of Bible recitals.
- School board listings have members titled as the ‘honourable’.
- Highways signage also looks similar to the UK’s.

This brought me and some other scholars on to a conversation about the way in which some schools have their signage advertise the fact that they’re *especially* religious. Is this genuine religiosity on the behalf of the schools’ directors, or is this a way of encouraging/reassuring the devoutly religious parents of children that sending their kids to school is the right choice?

**Right - Queen Elizabeth National Park, renamed for Elizabeth II who visited in 2007.**



The wider conversations we had about conservatism in Uganda were just as interesting. Cecille, was one student not affiliated with the Laidlaw foundation who joined us as interning for the Kasiisi Project. Her own project was related to girls in sports, and she discussed the belief that girls and young women risk losing their virginity if they ride a bicycle, as doing so may break their hymen. As part of this stigma, she had to get consent from parents of those she would be teaching how to ride bikes.

After the tours, we had lunch. In the early afternoon, we had a meeting with the whole KFSP team about their mission, their conservation/health efforts, how we should spend our allowance and expectations during the project. We then had our own meetings with our respective conservation/health teams. The KFSP conservation team includes Derrick, Catherine and Kenneth (these are their 'English' names, as opposed to their Ugandan and *Empaako* names). We were due to get our own *Empaakos* a few days later. For readers who aren't aware, an *Empaako* is a given African term/name of endearment, of which there are twelve different names one can be given.

We had quite a lot to cover in the conservation meeting, so rather than describing it here, I'll discuss our work in later entries. Another thing was that, during whole KFSP team meeting, the health staff mentioned that HIV and STI education was one of their functions. I expressed interest in having an involvement in this in addition to my conservation work.

Once the meetings finished, we headed back to the Guesthouse. However, Kasiisi Primary School had just started playtime. It's worth noting again how the Guesthouse is in the grounds of the primary school - a playing field was essentially our front lawn.

And so, when the children came out to play, we as scholars decided to join in. I never could play football when I was in school, so naturally went and got skipping ropes. One of children asked me whether I had any sweets, whilst a few others had fun with another scholar's phone. We also had some dancing too.

The children understood the 'unaccented' American accents spoken by Maddy, Cecille, Alexa and another scholar, Nina, much better than my Northern English one. The others included Elio, who speaks with a Chinese accent, Eavan - Irish, Dave - Nigerian-American and Theo - Canadian. Even Emily, the other KFSP director, commented on this in the whole staff meeting, saying she could only really understand Maddy's accent, and that the rest of us need to enunciate slowly and clearly.



**Day Four:** On this day, we visited a market near Fort Portal, before getting internet modems, visiting the gates of the King of Tooro, having lunch at a restaurant, going to a supermarket as well as a souvenir shop.

The market was very loud and busy. Vendors were using megaphones playing messages on repeat. The latrines we had to use were squatting ones and you had to pour water in a bucket and throw it in the basin to flush - a first for many of us. Whilst there, I noticed some primary school aged children with adults during school time hours. I asked Catherine, who was accompanying us, about this, and she said that some children take breaks from primary school when they're asked to repeat years.

We spent a very long time in the internet shop getting our modems, as well as waiting for our food to arrive at the restaurant. We put this down to *pole-pole*, the Swahili phrase for 'slowly, slowly'. This refers to the relaxed/un-hurried pace of life and work in some societies in East Africa.

At the shop, we bought Ugandan beer and wine, as well as other snacks and bits. We were surprised they had such a selection, but it's pretty comparable to what you might find in an ordinary corner shop in the UK.

**Right - palace gates of the King of Tooro**



Some interesting conversations I had on this day included:

- The reason why the signs advertising schools on the road always say they're 'church funded' or 'government funded' is because the government requires that this is displayed.
- Uganda's elected representatives include underrepresented groups, including women, disabled people and workers such coal miners.
- We also talked about the King of Rutooro, whose palace we went outside on our way to the market. Apparently, the people in Uganda were supportive of having their monarchies and the fact they're funded by the government.

The final point got us on to a conversation about why some people in the UK may be unsupportive of the monarchy and others supportive. My opinion was that it was in part because of how patriotism in the UK is dissimilar from other countries. In the UK, some people may celebrate their sense of nationhood through celebrating the monarchy, as opposed to celebrating their republic etc. On the flip side, people who are less patriotic tend to be less supportive of the monarchy.



**Day Five:** On this day, we went to visit the Kiko Tea plantation. It was interesting to see how the tea leaves were turned into ready-to-brew tea, and how the leaves themselves were picked. It's done either by these manual clippers and a bin strapped to the picker's back, or through a trimmer-like machine with a bag attached. In the factory, I was struck by how loud the machines in the factory were, yet how the workers didn't have ear protection.

In the fields, we learnt there were different methods of hand picking and machine picking, and even had a go on the hand picking tool ourselves. A fuzzy caterpillar landed on me in this gazebo, which had gave me these sort of nettle-stings when it went on my skin. The manager of the plantation taught me to rub the stings in my hair to get it out. Later, we tried some of the tea at the plantation's guesthouse.



Later, we visited to a Kasiisi Forest laboratory and had the chance to see the remains of some of the primates who the scientists were studying, and also frozen urine samples. There were both Ugandan scientists as well as foreign nationals studying at the complex.

The weather later became torrential rain and thunder , so our plan to visit one of the other Kasiisi guesthouses was moved to the following day. Instead, we just hung around the Guesthouse.

Some of the other scholars and I had another interesting conversation about progressivism/conservatism in Uganda. Namely, how in the ‘Global North’, we associate education with becoming more progressive - the more so as people complete secondary school, tertiary education, degrees etc. However, many of the politicians and government workers who passed the virulently anti-LGBT+ laws in 2023 in Uganda will have had degrees, which we certainly wouldn’t expect of policymakers in our home countries. One reason one of us speculated for this is how education in Uganda is different from how it is in Europe and America. People seem to take professional degrees (e.g. administration, business) much more than the liberal arts. Another raised how there are fewer international students and therefore global perspectives in Ugandan universities. Thirdly, the idea that education confers progressivism is itself a teleological assumption we make as ‘westerners’.

For what it’s worth, the people we’d interacted with during our work thus far saw things like women’s education and not going in to early marriages as an important. In this sense, education may still be described at the forefront of progressivism in Uganda.

**Days Six - Eight:** Over the past few days, we've done some more orientation-type activities. On Friday, we took a walk to the director's house, which is accommodation that KFSP/The Kassisi Project uses to house guests, usually ones who are researching chimps. This one had a garden and more spacious accommodation, but it's been empty for a while because there's been fewer of these guests in recent years. We then had an interesting talk from Emily, about her life and path to becoming a director of KFSP. This was especially striking in terms of her experience as a woman and taking on researcher/leadership roles.



After this, we had our RUMPs (Re-usable menstrual pads) creation training, which took a little while but we did get the hang of it. Some of us wondered how the people who might have to make RUMPs would actually have the materials needed for them - apparently, they are common enough to be accessible. Torrential rain later in the day meant that we were confined to the Guesthouse.

On Saturday, we took a hike around the crater lakes, which looked really cool - we also saw monkeys and mongooses on the trail. Later in the day, we had our *Empaako* naming ceremony and celebratory dinner. I and Cecille were given *Amooti*, which means 'to greet people like they're kings'.

The ceremony included bread making, stories, songs and dance, which we all really enjoyed. We also had so much food to get through, but most of us couldn't manage more than the big plate we were given. Later, we had a few Tuskers (a lovely Ugandan apple cider) and had a few games of *Heads Up!* before going to bed.



We later had a conversation around the authenticity of these sorts of ceremonies - could it be that it was 'put on' for touristic sensibilities? We concluded that this was a natural feeling - there are many things in the UK, for example, which showcase British culture (the Cooper's Hill Cheese-Rolling event springs to mind), but are still quite removed from our day-to-day lives.

On Sunday we had a bit of a rest day, but visited Fort Portal to pick up some supplies. I found that decaf items, whilst available, were quite expensive, and other things I wanted just weren't there.



## Week Two - Working Week I

**Day Nine:** The week started with planning meetings with both the conservation education as well as KFSP teams. We had set a few tasks for the week and decided who should cover what - this included revamping KFSP's conservation education materials, creating some new materials from scratch and getting activities ready for World Chimpanzee Week. Early on, we discussed how the pace of the desk work we'd be doing was going to be different to what we might expect. Rather than having a lot to do, we'd need to pace things so we didn't 'run out' of things to do and have work 'made up' for us. We knew that this was going to be interspersed with field work which would be a bit more full-on, however.

**Day Ten:** we went to the Kasiisi farm to do beekeeping. This involved collecting data from the beehives and using this bluetooth app to upload it to the cloud. Eavan, Theo and Kenneth unfortunately got stung, but I luckily avoided it.



Later, I had to go to Fort Portal to try sort problems I was having with my Wi-Fi modem. I also organised for us to have more data added to the Wi-Fi router in the Kasiisi Guesthouse - this proved really helpful. Most of us don't have data plans which cover Uganda, meaning we have to get the modems, which have a limited amount of data on them. The alternative is the Wi-Fi available at the KFSP office, but during business hours, it slows down massively because of the demand. There is a router in the guest house, but this is essentially a large modem (i.e. has a limited amount of data available). What I did was organise a whip-round of our allowance so we could get the largest/most cost-effective package of data for the router available, meaning we have an alternative for internet connection when we're working.

Later, we did our improved cookstove training. Improved cookstoves are basically these small brick structures that burn more efficiently and make less smoke, which is important for households where ventilation is poor and getting firewood represents a significant task. Building them means getting your hands caked in clay or mud, which forms the adhesive for the brick structures.

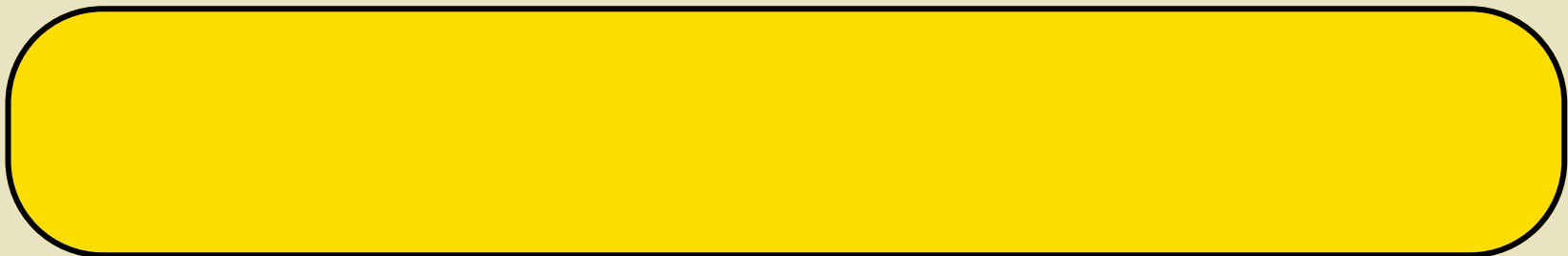


**Day Eleven:** On Wednesday, we went to the village of Busiriba to help deliver a mobile clinic with the village health team, and also to carry out some of our own conservation education activities. The format was quite distinct - there was a projector, tree and set of tables set up next to a tree on the perimeter of a football field, which is where people were 'checked in' to the mobile clinic. This was also where we gave our improved cookstove demonstration and presentations about wildlife. People waiting to 'check in' would watch us as the queue was taking quite a while.

I didn't actually do the 'checking in' of people itself, but from what other scholars told me about the experience, it was quite a challenge. Firstly, it seemed as though the names which were written in people's health documents were spelt differently by different practitioners. Secondly, there were people with quite serious illnesses (such as pneumonia) stood there in the queue, with no separation from other patients and no PPE for the staff checking people in. Finally, some of the colleagues who were also working on the 'checking in' desks didn't seem to have much medical experience either.

Whilst this was happening, the other members of the conservation education team and I were giving our presentations about wildlife and the national park. It was really helpful having an interpreter with us, as I had no idea what sort of proficiency the community had with English. The mobile clinic itself would then lead to the trained practitioners who could make a diagnosis, who had desks set up outside the local church next to the field. People would then collect their prescriptions at a final desk in the church.

The conservation education team also helped out some uniformed Kibale Forest rangers to give exercise books to the children in the nearby primary school - one ranger gave a talk on who he and his colleagues were and what they did. Once this was done, we gave the kids the books. When the final patients had got their medicine, we packed up and went home.



**Days Twelve - Thirteen:** Thursday was mainly made up of desk work, however on the Friday we had an interesting talk from Dr Zarin Machanda, who helps co-ordinates The Kasiisi Project from Tufts University in the USA. Zarin took us through the history of The Kasiisi project, and gave us a talk on chimpanzees, including their behaviour, their taxonomy etc. There were quite a few unexpected facts we learnt, such as how there is a spike in illnesses in chimps in Kibale National Park in March. This is apparently linked to how children returning from their holidays earlier in the year eventually pass on the bugs they've caught in their travels, leading to the spike in March.

**Days Fourteen - Fifteen:** On Saturday evening, we visited the Nyakia Hotel, the largest resort in Fort Portal. We had a meal and some drinks. They served quite nice cocktails, which a few of us really appreciated. On Sunday morning, we attended the service at the St. Stephen Church of Uganda church right next to the Guesthouse and school. We weren't expecting it, but the service ended up lasting over four hours, and was mostly in Rutooro (the local dialect). There came a point between those 4+ hours where it stopped being a church service and started being something of a parish council meeting, including auctions for a chicken and other produce. We had actually left earlier than the end of the service/meeting, having been (much to our relief) whisked away by Jane Ateenyi, a housekeeper of the Guesthouse.

## Week Three - Working Week II

**Day Sixteen:** As usual, the Monday started with our conservation education and general meetings. The main things we were doing on this day was getting ready for the visits we'd be making to schools in preparation for World Chimp Day. This would involve judging the performances the children had put together to celebrate the day, collecting posters they'd make (so we could select the best poster), as well as delivering conservation talks.

The problem on the Monday was that we were really struggling with internet access. As mentioned, we have a router in the Guesthouse which is essentially a large modem, but by the end of the previous week, the data added onto it had already run out, and we wouldn't be getting more until Tuesday. We agreed to have the router on only during working hours, and said that we needed to limit usage of the internet to work-related stuff. In the meantime, however, the internet issues were especially problematic, as we were trying to share presentations needed for our school visits to the KFSP staff's computers. I came up with the idea of using USB drives to directly transfer files from one computer to the other so we could overcome this, but not before a lot of head-scratching.

**Day Seventeen:** On Tuesday, we made our first visits to the primary schools to prepare them for world chimp day. I went to Kigorama Catholic School with Gorret, another KFSP member of staff. The children were really well behaved, and as we walked to the classroom, we saw their first exhibit for World Chimp Day - clay models of a chimpanzee and an elephant.

They then put on their performance, which involved a song spoken in English about chimpanzees and conversation. Once they finished, I gave the presentations and led the games sessions. This all went off without a hitch, which I was really pleased about.



Later that day, some of us went to one of the evening lessons to prepare the P6 (Primary Six - equivalent to Year Six) classes for their exams ('preps'). They were learning R.E. From what I was told by the others who had sat in these preparatory lessons before, the lesson we attended was less exciting. However, the pupils seemed reasonably well-informed about the syllabus. I was struck by how shy the children seemed to be when they were giving an answer for the teacher. The teacher also gave us a chance to talk about R.E. - we weren't very prepared, so I just ad-libbed about how the Church of England was founded, in part, so Henry VIII could end his marriage with Catherine of Aragon.

**Day Eighteen:** On Wednesday, we visited Rutoma B Primary School to see their preparations for World Chimp Day. They put on a good song and short play about conservation, but we had some problems with the technology. I managed to find an adaptor and video cable to get the visual side of our presentation going, but we didn't bring a speaker, so we ended up having to give our presentation with no audio, and had to narrate a 20 minute documentary to the children. This made me think it might benefit the project if I gave a demonstration on hardware, and from this point on during the week I started working on it.

Another large part of my hardware demo preparation has been about the ethernet. The whole of the KFSP office relies on wireless internet, with a main router in one office and another router which runs off the first one in the second office. For those who aren't as familiar with ethernet, it's more reliable and faster, which would be particularly useful considering how slow the internet connection can be in the offices during the working day.

**Day Twenty:** On Friday, we visited Iruuhura Primary School, for a careers day event that was happening there. We had a tour of the school - one thing I've noticed is how different some classrooms are to the others in different primary schools. I've seen classrooms which range from having literally just concrete floors and walls, a blackboard, no plug sockets, maybe 2-3 plain poster displays and some desks, all the way to those which have multicoloured chairs, painted walls, plug sockets, elaborate learning displays etc.

Iruuhura was in-between these, I'd say. The careers day event itself took place where almost all the kids were sat under a large tree, and the KFSP team and some other people who were invited were sat under a tent with desks underneath facing the children. I felt quite sorry for the kids - the event went on for about four hours with no break. The smallest children at the front were variously napping, playing, and bickering as the event went on. At the very least, they seemed the most engaged when the guest speaker, who was a veterinarian and demonstrated his various forest vet's equipment.



**Days Twenty-one - Twenty-two:** This weekend, I made an effort to get to know more of the pupils of Kasiisi Primary School. Over the past week, I'd been having struggling a bit with mouth ulcers which had made talking uncomfortable, but they were getting better, I was able to interact with people again.

I'm not so big on football, so we did some other playground games, and also phone games - they really like *Temple Run*. The kids were also going into the Guesthouse area a bit more, because they like to ask to borrow the sports equipment Cecille bought, and also look at what we're up to. However, for security reasons, they're not supposed to do this, so we've been establishing more of a boundary about this.



## Week Four - Working Week III

**Day Twenty-three:** On Monday, I gave my IT presentation to the KFSP staff and other scholars after the main meeting. This went really well, I thought! I went through ethernet and audiovisual technology and I think that the staff have a better idea how to use these now. The feedback I was getting was also positive, which was encouraging.

**Day Twenty-four:** On Tuesday, we went to Kyakatara school with Kenneth to give a conservation talk/WCD preparation. This went off without a hitch - I'd made a big thing of it to ensure we had all the necessary technology, although the weather looked as though it might rain at one point.

The children seemed really engaged with the curriculum we prepared, which was also a good sign. Their performances were decent, but we think it's going to be Rutoma B and Mitulli which will win the competition. Later that day, we had a guest speaker talk from a warden of the National Park, Kiriumira Dorothy. She had some really interesting stories to tell about her own career path and leadership. One of the key takeaways of her talk, for me, was to have and think about one's life plan and decisions in general, but also to give yourself time to do so; allowing oneself to 'struggle' through decisions and considering their consequences. She also talked about being honest with yourself and your superiors/colleagues, especially about when feeling burnt out, and the importance of keeping one's social life interesting.

In the evening, we attended preps - this one was fun to attend. The teacher, Francis, really knew how to keep the class engaged and listening. His lesson was about volcanoes, and he was originally going to show a video on his laptop placed on a chair stacked on a table at the front of the class, but we went and got a projector so the children could see better.



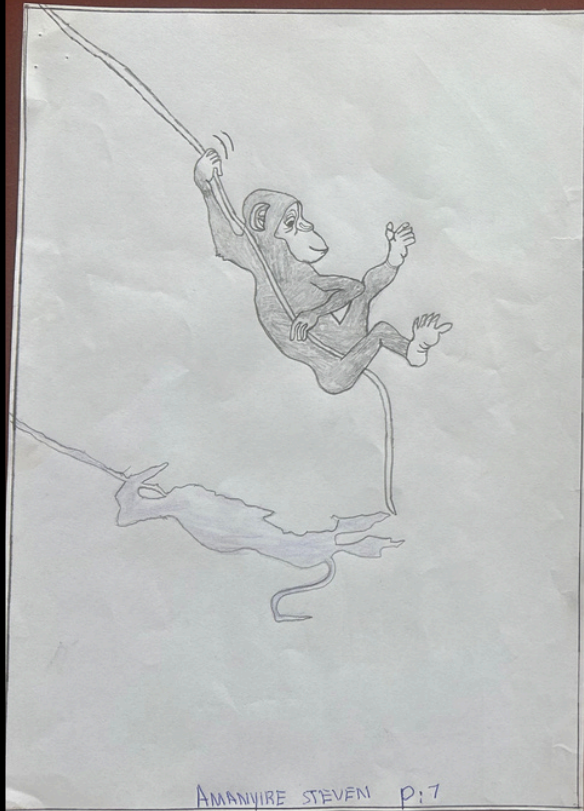
**Day Twenty-five:** On Wednesday, we gave a talk on STIs and HIV to the health club at Kasiisi School. We were experimenting with a new true/false game about sexual health, and this went really well - the kids were so excited when they got the answers right in their groups, holding up a true/false sign according to a prompt on the presentation.

Later, Alexa and I had an interesting conversation about the meaning of our work there and the idea of voluntourism - the question of whether the project was 'sold to us' in an accurate sense. Were we really having such a significant impact there compared to some other projects? Were we having a more moderate impact, and the experience was just about us learning and experiencing new things as it was us doing useful work?

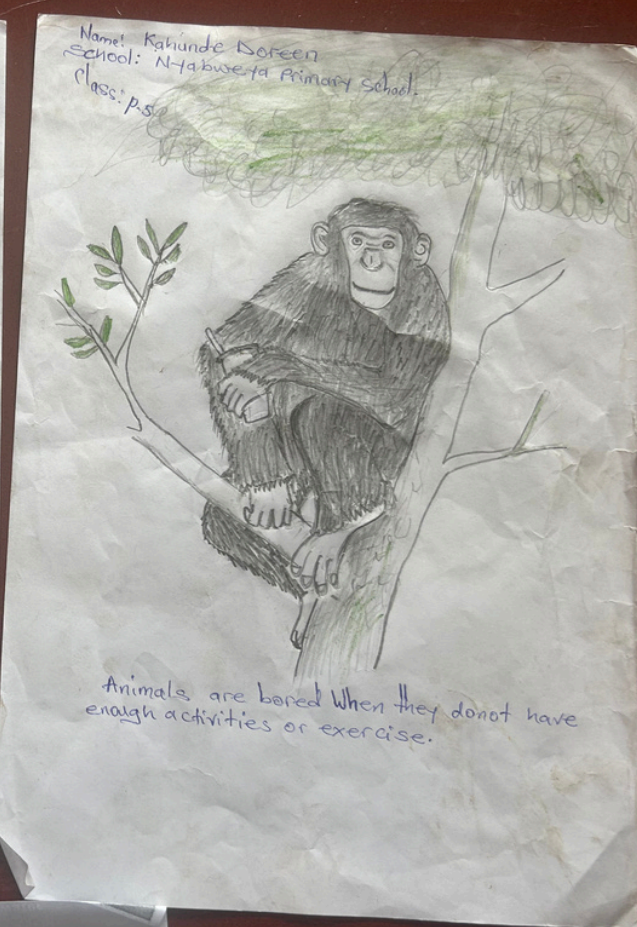
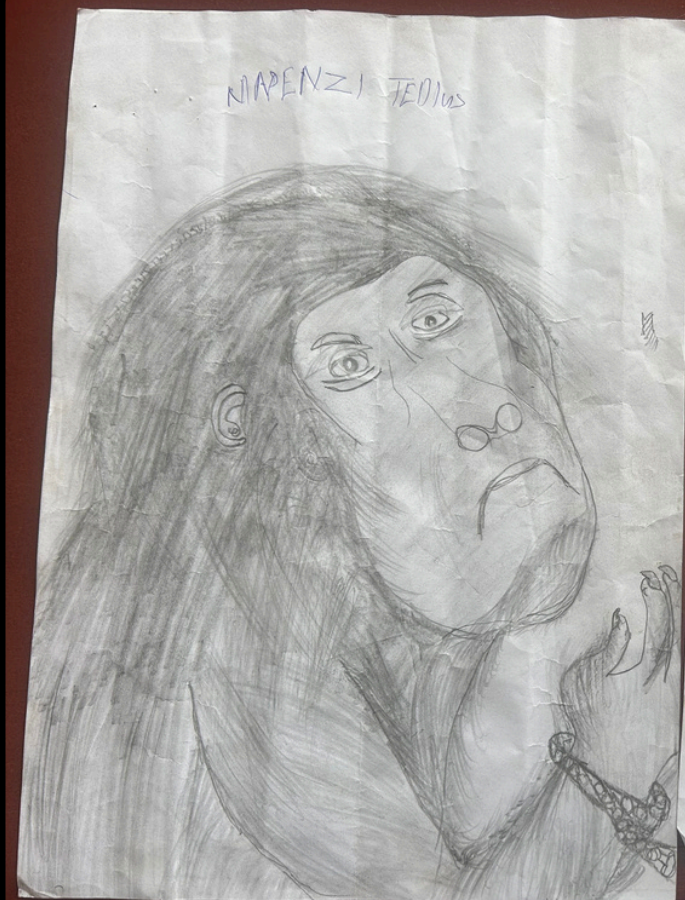
**Day Twenty-six:** On Thursday, we had a guest talk in the morning from Patrick , about his life, work and leadership. Patrick's personal experiences as well as professional ones were so interesting to hear about - it was really inspiring to hear how he'd overcome challenges and got himself into the position he did.

Amy Moore, the Programme Director for the Laidlaw scholarship, also joined us at Kasiisi. Amy has been interesting to converse with not least because of how we've been thinking about our scholarships/LIAs. Not only this, but Amy is from the UK like me, so it's been nice to talk to about the observations I've made about the British influence in Uganda that would be hard to appreciate for non-Brits. Of course, there's the more frivolous stuff too - like how the 'African egg rolls served at the Guesthouse look and feel so much like Scotch Eggs, which none of the other scholars understood!

Joined by Amy, we gave Improved Cookstove training to the children of Iruuhura primary school. This was the first time we had given the ICS presentation (as opposed to the demonstration), so we decided on a few tweaks which we thought might be useful. Overall, it was a decent session. There were a few kids who seemed to already have an idea on what they were doing with the ICS construction - this was really useful in showing to the others on what to do. Later, another scholar and I were deciding on which were the best posters for WCD - there were some really good submissions, a selection of which I've put on the next page.



Kigoma

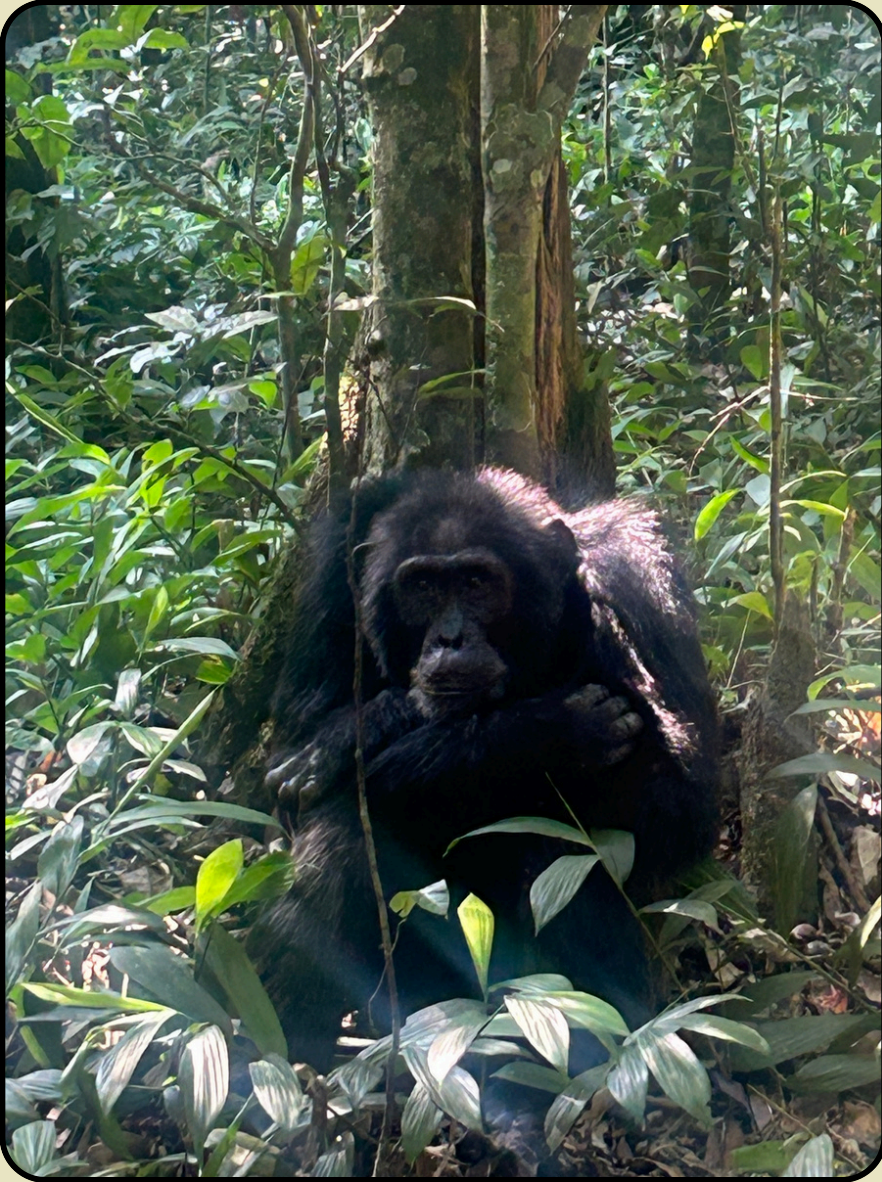


Nyabwiza

**Day Twenty-seven:** On Friday, we went to visit Kibale National Park to do chimp trekking, and we also went swamp-walking. We saw quite a few chimps relaxing on the ground, as it was a hot day. It was so cool to see them so close, even if they were just lounging around. Occasionally we'd hear groups of chimps all pant-hooting at the sight of an elephant, and the noise would echo so much through the forest. We also got to see lots of baboons walking around near the roads (apparently because it's warmer there earlier in the morning).

**Day Twenty-eight:** On Saturday, we went on a cultural tour in the Bigodi area. We started in a museum, learning especially about the various animal remains which the curator had preserved. Then we visited a faith healer, who was an elderly man sat next to his bed. This was a unique experience, as the faith healer explained the various treatments he could and could not offer. He had a stock of many different herbs and remedies, which could be used (amongst other things) for TB, Flu, cold, arthritis and cancer. However, there were certain conditions which he said he was unable to heal, such as Covid and HIV, and in these cases he would send them to the hospital. The healer was also able to make home visits, and charged a fee for transport. When it was time to go, the healer said that his ancestors communicated we had 'overstayed'!

We then had a demonstration of coffee-making, in which we were able to participate by churning the coffee. This was quite a well-timed thing, because we were so tired by that time of the day. We had the opportunity to buy coffee and ground nuts, also. After this, we visited a local female arts group, who gave us a few songs and dances, and also demonstrated the weaving/creation of various crafts. I picked up a few items here.



Finally, we went to 'Rest in Bananas', a banana processing shop. This included how they make banana gin, juice and banana beer (the beer was especially yummy). There were also a few funny T-shirts on sale, one of which I picked up.

**Day Twenty-nine:** On Sunday, we went to Lake Mbuoro National Park. The drive took quite a while (about four hours each way), but was definitely worth it. We got to see giraffes, zebra and lots of buffalo, amongst others.



## Week Five - Working Week IV

**Day Thirty:** World Chimp Day! We started this week with our usual staff meeting, where Patrick asked us to organise some more training sessions on graphic design, Microsoft Powerpoint and Google Drive. I helped people co-ordinate which trainings they wanted to do and when.

Later, we visited Mituuli Primary School, which was a winner of the World Chimp Day competition. The activities included speeches from a chimp researcher, a snare remover and a park ranger who worked at Kibale National Park. There was also a researcher from the US named Maggie who discussed what she was working on. Kenneth brought a puppet chimpanzee, which the children loved!

**Days Thirty-one - Thirty-two:** On Tuesday, I mainly worked on the computers in the KFSP office. On Wednesday, however, quite a few people started feeling unwell with a food poisoning, although I, fortunately, was fine. This meant that we had to postpone one of our school visits, and that we didn't manage to get much work done because half the team were unwell. On balance, we were still quite worn out from the previous busy weekend, so it was good to have a more restful day.

One task I did make headway with was selecting the posters about chimpanzees the children had made for the world chimp day competition. 10 of the schools had sent us a few dozen posters each, and we needed to pick the best two for each school.

**Day Thirty-three:** On Thursday, the others had started to feel a bit better, and we were able to start converting the posters into the templates. One issue we came across was that it wasn't exactly clear what we were to do with the posters. There was the suggestion that we were to digitally render the winning posters, but we didn't have the resources to do this. In the end, we concluded on making templates into which we could insert the children's drawings. I thought this was a much nicer solution as it was more faithful to the original art they had created.

I was especially averse to using gen AI to recreate the children's pictures, not least because of how bad the AI's attempts were to recreate it. On a deeper level, I'm quite weary of the use of AI in creative fields - AI essentially steals real artists' productions and, in my opinion, is incompatible with something (i.e. art) which is a uniquely human. An AI can never feel or understand the creation of art like people can, so sanitising the children's drawings of their originality just felt wrong.

**Day Thirty-four:** We spent this Friday starting drafting the report on our work of the project. This involved deciding what we wanted to cover and dividing it up into certain sections - I wrote about professional development and some of the technological aspects.

Later in the day, we celebrated Derrick's birthday with the KFSP staff. We bought him some beer and a birthday cake, and had a little party at lunchtime. Later, we had a beehive construction session - this was really interesting to watch. The demonstrators made it look so easy, but we struggled a bit more when we gave it a go.



**Day Thirty-five:** On Saturday, we went to Queen Elizabeth National Park - I'd say this was my favourite safari of the two we went on. This was because we were on a boat for most of the safari, and got to see lots of the animals up close - especially elephants, crocodiles and hippos. The boat really helps with being able to move around and get a better view of the animals.

We also stopped at this lovely resort which had really good views and a swim-up pool. We took the opportunity to go in the pool - fortunately for us, the hotel rented out swimwear! The lunch they were supposed to be serving us took us so long that we ended up having to take it away as a packed lunch after our safari.

Once we had our packed lunches, we went to the salt mines for a visit. This looked quite different from what I was expecting - it more resembles a grid of piers on the lake. The smell of salt was very strong, but in one of the neighbouring lakes there were flamingoes, which were so majestic to see them during the sunset. We couldn't get too close to them, but we had binoculars which gave us a better view.

**Day Thirty-six:** we spent Sunday at the Nyaika hotel, this time to sunbathe, go in the pool and visit the spa. The massages were cheap, and definitely worth it - I had a deep tissue myself. The Pina Coladas, on the other hand...

These tasted very different from the ones I was used to. I'm pretty sure they were made with coconut oil rather than coconut cream, which really does make the world of difference in taste (for the worse).





# Week Six - Working Week V and Farewell

**Day Thirty-seven:** on Monday, we continued the drafting of the final report on this day. Another task which we were finally able to make a start on now that I had one of the computers working, was the organisation of KFSP's files. I had delegated the actual organising of the files to some of the other team so I could help edit the report, especially as it was quite a time consuming thing.

**Day Thirty-eight:** on Tuesday, we visited Kigarama School to test the new curricula about birds, bats and bees we came up with. It worked quite well - one of the games we played (which involved a kerplunk-style bottle filled with sticks, and rocks added to the top to stimulate bird eggs) seemed to be engaging for the children and only needed a small adjustment.

**Day Thirty-nine:** on Wednesday, we finalised the reports and also gave photo headshots for the KFSP staff and interns. This was quite a fun task, and we ended up having some cute group photos together as well. Later, we met with a prosecutor named Harriet for a guest talk. She had some very interesting insights and stories to share about the justice system in Uganda, especially as a woman.



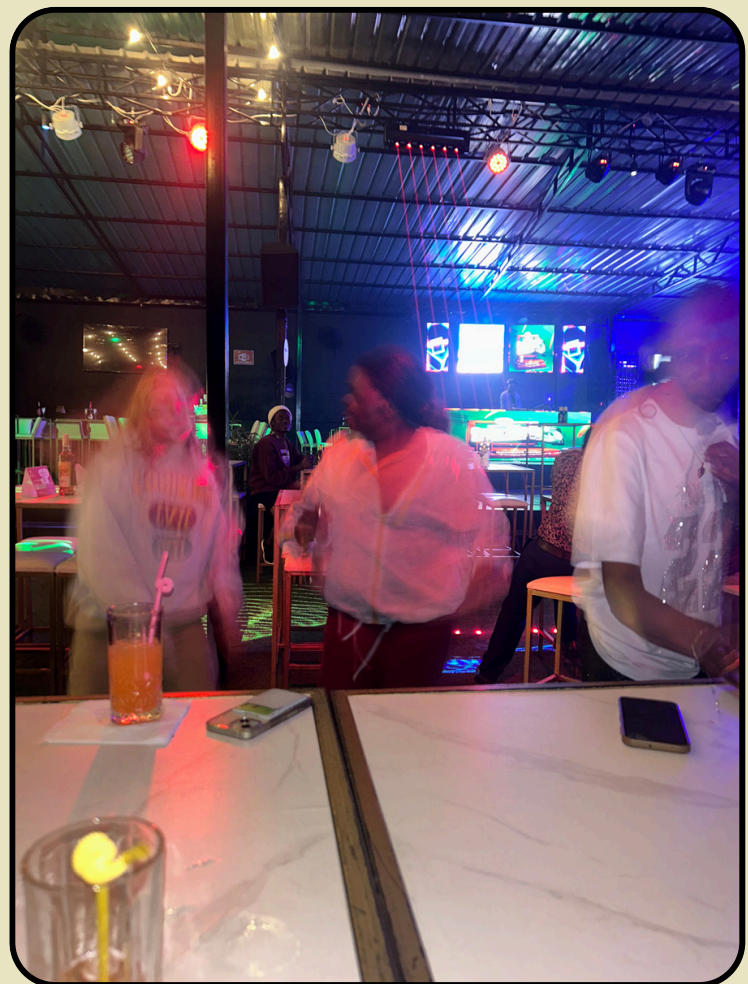
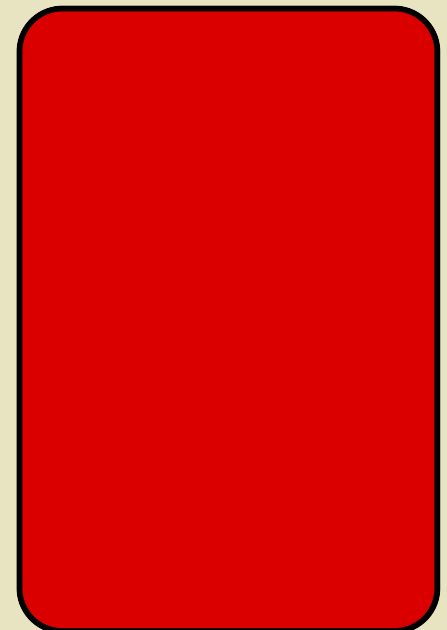
**Day Forty:** on Thursday, we very sadly started packing to leave Uganda! We had to sort through a lot of the unclaimed clothes in the laundry.

I, and a couple of other scholars, helped Cecille, who was hosting a bike training for girls session at Kigarama School. This was fun, if very tiring - I didn't realise how much energy you needed to help prop the bikes up as the children ride them, especially as they didn't have stabilisers.

A couple of us attended a P2 preps English lesson, which didn't seem to have a teacher attending. The kids asked us to teach them about opposites, which we did. One of the children had a biology book with a cartoon illustration of a person having diarrhea, and delighted in showing it to us. It made me laugh to see that no matter where you are in the world, the kids find things like this hilarious.



**Day Forty-one:** on Friday, we mostly did just more packing and saying goodbyes. We had a dinner party with the KFSP staff outside the Guesthouse, before heading to town for a few drinks. We went to one nightclub sort of place and one bar - the first one was quite empty but seemed to have surprisingly good facilities for a nightclub (multiple bars, a kitchen etc). The bar was a fair bit more busy, although we didn't stay for too long.



**Day Forty-two - Forty-three:** Leaving for Entebbe and saying goodbye to everyone! It was sad leaving all the kids behind and saying goodbye to our new friends that were the KFSP staff. I knew that what I'd seen had and would continue to really change my way of thinking about things, but I was also looking forward to going home. Six weeks is a long time to be away from what you're used to.

We stopped at the Gately Inn for a few hours and picked up some final souvenirs in a nearby shop. Some of the others were staying for a day or so longer, but there were four of us whose flights were leaving within 6 or 7 hours of us arriving in Entebbe. Nina left us in Entebbe airport, whilst Eavan, Alexa and I got the flight to Doha together. We then all parted ways at Doha.

One thing I forgot to mention was how we used to watch films on some nights on one of KFSP's projectors. We managed to get quite a few by the end, including: *Hairspray*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Legally Blonde*, *The French Dispatch*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, and *Wicked Little Letters*.





