

SO, YOU WANT TO GO TO AFRICA?

DO YOUR RESEARCH

- ❖ Recognize that Africa is a diverse, vast continent. Be specific with your research and focus on the area you will visit. Understand that one thing someone says does not apply to everywhere on the continent.
- ❖ Draw from a variety of reputable sources including books and articles by experts in their fields. A good place to start is with university African Studies Centers websites such as exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu
- ❖ Understand current events, issues and conversations by reading local news sources (e.g. allafrica.com collects news stories in English from all over the continent).
- ❖ Put in the hard work to understand the people and cultures of the place you will visit

ACT ETHICALLY AND INTENTIONALLY

- ❖ Understand respectful ways of entering a community, organization, or government office.
- ❖ Be professional and respectful in your dress and communication. Know the appropriate language and ways to dress in different situations. (You wouldn't wear a tank top and shorts to meet with your professor.)
- ❖ Respect cultural traditions and ask for consent when taking pictures. Don't take pictures of random people and post them on social media without their permission.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- ❖ Why do I want to go to Africa?
- ❖ What are my motives and intentions?
- ❖ Are these motives in line with the real, not perceived, needs and objectives of the culture and people I am trying to help or study?



CONSULT AND WORK WITH LOCAL EXPERTS OR ORGANIZATIONS

- ❖ Whatever you are doing, do your best work with people from that country.
- ❖ Research and reach out to local experts and established organizations. Take your lead from them. Strive for engagement rather than paternalistic handouts.
- ❖ Seek out people from the area you will visit through on-campus student groups and academic programs.
- ❖ Listen to and work with a variety of people with different perspectives.