Expeditionary Culture Field Guide

UGANDA

U.S. AIR FORCE

About this Guide

This guide is designed to prepare you to deploy to culturally complex environments and achieve mission objectives. The fundamental information contained within will help you understand the cultural dimension of your assigned location and gain skills necessary for success.

The guide consists of 2 parts:

Part 1: Introduces "Culture General," the foundational knowledge you need to operate effectively in any global environment (Photos a courtesy of Pro Quest 2011).

Part 2: Presents "Culture Specific" Uganda, focusing on unique cultural features of Ugandan society and is designed to complement other pre-deployment training. It applies culture-general concepts to help increase your knowledge of your assigned deployment location.

For further information, visit the Air Force Culture and Language Center (AFCLC) website at http://culture.af.mil/ or contact AFCLC's Region Team at AFCLC.Region@us.af.mil.

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PART 1 – CULTURE GENERAL

What is Culture?

Fundamental to all aspects of human existence, culture shapes the way humans view life and functions as a tool we use to adapt to our social and physical environments. A culture is the sum of all of the beliefs, values, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning for a society. All human beings have culture, and individuals within a culture share a general set of beliefs and values.

Members of a culture also usually assign the same meanings to the symbols in that culture. A symbol is when one thing – an image, word, object, idea, or story – represents another thing. For example, the American flag is a physical and visual symbol of a core American value – freedom. At the same time, the story of George Washington admitting to having chopped down a cherry tree is also symbolic, representing the importance Americans place on personal honesty and leadership integrity.

Force Multiplier

The military services have learned through experience the importance of understanding other cultures. Unlike the 20th-century bipolar world order that dominated US strategy for nearly half a century, today the US military is operating in what we classify as asymmetric or irregular conflict zones where the notion of cross-cultural interactions is on the leading edge of our engagement strategies.

We have come to view the people themselves, rather than the political system or physical environment, as the decisive feature in conflict areas. Our primary objective hinges on influencing constructive change through peaceful means where possible. We achieve this endeavor by encouraging local

nationals to focus on developing stable political, social, and economic institutions that reflect their cultural beliefs and traditions.

Therefore, understanding the basic concepts of culture serves as a force multiplier. Achieving an awareness and respect of a society's values and beliefs enables deploying forces to build relationships with people from other cultures, positively influence their actions, and ultimately achieve mission success.

Cultural Domains

Culture is not just represented by the beliefs we carry internally, but also by our behaviors and by the systems members of a culture create to organize their lives. These systems, such as political or educational institutions, help us to live in a manner that is appropriate to our culture and encourages us to perpetuate that culture into the future.

We can organize these behaviors and systems into categories – what the Air Force refers to as "cultural domains" – in order to better understand the primary values and characteristics of a society. A cross-culturally competent military member can use these domains – which include kinship, language and communication, and social and political systems among others (see chart on next page) – as tools for understanding and adapting to any culture. For example, by understanding the ways different cultures define family or kinship, a deployed military member can more effectively interact with members of that culture.

Social Behaviors Across Cultures

While humankind shares basic behaviors, various groups enact or even group those behaviors differently across cultural boundaries. For example, all societies obtain food for survival, although agrarian societies generally produce their own food for limited consumption using very basic techniques.

Conversely, industrialized nations have more sophisticated

market economies, producing foodstuffs for universal consumption. Likewise, all cultures value history and tradition, although they represent these concepts through a variety of unique forms of symbolism. While the dominant world religions share the belief in one God, their worship practices vary with their traditional historical development. Similarly, in many kin-based cultures where familial bonds are foundational to social identity, it is customary for family or friends to serve as godparents, while for other societies this practice is nearly non-existent.

Worldview

One of our basic human behaviors is the tendency to classify others as similar or different according to our cultural standard.

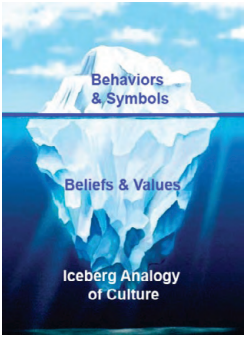
As depicted in the chart below, we can apply the 12 cultural domains to help us compare similarities and differences across cultures. We evaluate others' behavior to determine if they are "people like me" or "people not like me." Consequently, we assume that individuals falling into the "like me" category share our perspectives and values.

This collective perspective forms our worldview– how we see the world and understand our place in it. Your worldview functions as a lens through which you see and understand the world. It helps you to interpret your experiences and the values and behaviors of other people that you encounter. Consider your worldview as a way of framing behavior, providing an accountability standard for our actions and a logical explanation of why we individually or collectively act in a certain manner.

Cultural Belief System

An important component of a worldview is our belief system. A community's belief system sets its universal standards of what is good and bad, defines right and wrong behavior, and assigns a value of meaningful or meaningless. Our beliefs form the fundamental values we hold to be true – regardless of whether there is physical evidence to support these ideas. Beliefs are a central facet of human culture. They are shared views about world order and how the universe was physically and socially constructed.

While all people have beliefs, their specific components tend to vary depending upon respective world views. What people classify as good or bad, right or wrong depends on our deeply-held beliefs we started developing early in life that have help shape our characters. Likewise, these values are ingrained in our personalities and shape our behavior patterns and our self-identities. Because cultural beliefs are intensely held, they are difficult, though not impossible, to change.



Core Beliefs

Core beliefs shape and influence certain behaviors and also serve to rationalize those behaviors. Therefore, knowledge of individual or group beliefs can be useful in comprehending or making sense of their activities. We will use the iceberg model for classifying culture to illustrate two levels of meaning, as depicted. Beliefs and values, portrayed by the

deeper and greater level of the submerged iceberg, are seldom visible, but are indicated / hinted at / referenced by our behaviors and symbols (top level). It is important to recognize, though, that the parts of culture that are not visible (under the waterline) are informing and shaping what is being made visible (above the waterline).

In many cases, different worldviews may present behaviors that are contrary to our own beliefs, particularly in many regions where US forces deploy. Your ability to suspend judgment in order to understand another perspective is essential to establishing relationships with your host-nation counterparts. The ability to withhold your opinion and strive to understand a culture from a member of that culture's perspective is known as cultural relativism. It often involves taking an alternate perspective when interpreting others' behaviors and is critical to your ability to achieve mission success.

As you travel throughout the African Continent, you will encounter cultural patterns of meaning that are common among most African countries. What follows is a general description of 12 cultural domains which are used to frame those commonalities.

CULTURAL DOMAINS

1. History and Myth

History and myth are related concepts. History is a record of the past that is based on verifiable facts and events. Myth can act as a type of historical record, although it is usually a story which members of a culture use to explain community origins or important events that are not verifiable or which occurred prior to written language.

Africa has a history that spans the entire existence of humankind. In ancient times prior to the emergence of written languages, history and wisdom were preserved across generations

and ethnic boundaries through oral folk legends or myths. Most early human evolution began as hunting and gathering cultures in East and South Africa, with countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and South Africa renowned for their early human sites. In the last several millennia, the development of agriculture and pastoralism (animal herding) replaced hunting and gathering lifestyles.

Ancient civilizations evolved in all corners of Africa, inspired in part by peoples from the Middle East bringing trade, beliefs, customs, language, and on occasion, colonization. Far from being isolated empires, the African civilizations were intimately connected by commerce and marriage throughout various regions of the continent, and when confronted by outsiders, managed to adapt to their influences. Eventually, Arab traders introduced Islam to Africa and also instituted the Trans-Saharan African slave trade that lasted from the 7th to 19th Centuries.

The “golden age” of European exploration, which lasted from the 18th to mid-20th century, prompted the wholesale exploitation of Africans resources – first human assets through slavery, followed by natural resources such as minerals, precious gems and metals, and wildlife, thereby diminishing most of what was traditional and African.

The introduction of the European Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade altered the slave trade through both the sheer number of Africans enslaved and through the cementing of a racist ideology of Black inferiority to legitimize the institution of slavery. Slavery decimated the African continent for over 400 years through the forced relocation of an estimated 25 to 30 million Africans worldwide. This figure does not include those Africans who died aboard ships or during capture. While abolition of the slave trade dissolved the institution of slavery, it did not end the European

presence on the African continent nor did it drastically alter their attitudes towards Africans.

Starting in the mid-19th century, European colonialism served to redefine African ethnic relations on a large scale; however, as African societies began to resist colonial rule and seek their independence, widespread ethnic conflict and genocide occurred. Sustained westernization and globalization continue to shape the continent through poverty, disease, and social reform. A history still to be recorded, Africa's future identity faces many challenges in critical areas such as environmental change, ethnic strife, women's health and security, and education.

2. Political and Social Relations

Political relations are the ways in which members of a community organize leadership, power, and authority. Social relations are all of the ways in which individuals are linked to others in their community. Traditional African political organizations in the form of bands, tribes, and chiefdoms have existed for several millennia and continue to influence contemporary African governments. Uncommon in modern society, bands are limited to hunting and gathering economies, such as the !Kung of the southern African Kalahari Desert and foragers of central African forests.

Tribes are still represented today across the African political landscape, although the use of the word "tribe" is sometimes misinterpreted due to its western notion of "primitiveness" and oftentimes substituted with the term "ethnic group." Lacking centralized authority, tribes are organized around segmented descent groups or in some cases age groups.

Everyday governance is discharged through councils of respected elders and sanctioned through ritual and other means. East African pastoralist groups such as the Maasai,

along with some West African tribes and the Berbers in North Africa, represent this type of organization.

Chiefdoms or kingdoms are ruled by kings or queens from a royal clan and generally incorporate millions of subjects. Kingdoms such as the Zulu or Swazi in southern Africa developed through conquest, while others like Ghana's Ashante developed through an association of related traditional states. However, colonialism eventually diluted the power and reach of these empires, whose leaders were often retained as indirect rulers or figureheads.

Today, all three of these political organizations still exist, although in the confines of modern African nation-states created by colonial powers who had little regard or understanding of African cultures. This juxtaposition of modernity with tradition has caused severe conflict throughout the continent.

Challenged to construct their respective "national" identities, regional leaders attempt to do so by diluting the traditionally cohesive power of ancestry. These national ruling elites, who derive their power from wealth and commerce rather than tribal affiliation, feel threatened by loyalty to these traditional organizations, labeling their rule as "tribalism."

This "class versus descent" scrimmage for power has resulted in conflicts across the continent and a dramatic divergence of interests. As a means to overcome these and other issues on the continent, a 53-nation federation, the African Union (AU), was formed in 2002. AU's charter is to promote "greater unity and solidarity between African countries and peoples" by building partnerships in all segments of "civil society."

3. Religion and Spirituality

Religion is a cultural belief system that provides meaning to members of a community. Religious and spiritual beliefs help preserve the social order by defining proper behavior. They also create social unity by defining shared identity, offer

individuals peace of mind, and explain the causes of events in a society. Prior to the arrival of Islam and Christianity, the African continent consisted of orally transmitted indigenous religious practices. As in many societies, African indigenous beliefs influenced diet, subsistence patterns, family structures, marriage practices, and healing and burial processes. In essence, Africans constructed their worldview through their indigenous religions.

Today, the African continent is primarily either Muslim or Christian. Other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism exist as pockets in different regions of the continent, primarily in urban areas. The historical trajectories of Islamic and Christian expansion in Africa offer intriguing commonalities in how Africans across the continent initially reacted to the introduction of each of those religions. For example, it is common throughout the continent to find a blending of many elements of indigenous religious practices with local Islam and Christianity (Photo a courtesy of Wikimedia).

Consequently, many African native religions share similarities with religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in their understanding of God as the creator and ruler of all life, although He is considered untouchable by humans.

However, unlike Christianity and Islam, many African indigenous religions believe that God is not directly involved in people's lives. To them there is a spirit world populated with former good and bad human beings. The good spirits intercede with God on behalf of their living families to whom they then relay God's will through dreams and acquired possessions. The bad spirits work to bring misfortune through sickness,

death, or natural disasters to those who behave inappropriately.

Many indigenous African religions revere "nature" spirits living in the sky, water, and forests. These impersonal spirits help protect people from harm and provide them with life's essential ingredients such as water, sun, and wildlife. This belief system is commonly referred to as animism.

Just as spirits mediate relations between God and humans, religious specialists act as mediators between spirits and humans to provide protection from harm.

4. Family and Kinship

The domain of family and kinship refers to groups of people related through blood ties, marriage, or through strong emotional bonds that influence them to treat each other like family members (often called "fictive kin").The traditional African family with respect to marriage, family structure, and descent is a much different arrangement than is found in most American families. Likewise, there are several components of the traditional African family that are common to all African cultures.

First, perhaps the most difficult feature to reconcile to Americans is that of polygyny – the practice of a husband having more than one wife. A benefit of this arrangement is that it promotes societal alliances through marriage, procreation, and family wealth through female labor.

Second, due to polygyny, the family in most African cultures has historically consisted of an expanded set of kin or relatives that extends well beyond the American notion of a nuclear family. This arrangement created a family environment where children considered all siblings as "brothers and sisters" and all of the wives/mothers as "mother."

Third, the extended African family traces descent through either the male or female side of the family, a practice which differs considerably from the American family. Patrilineal descent (through the male side of the family) is the more common approach and usually features polygyny. The matrilineal (through the female bloodline) marriage pattern is more uncommon and almost always features monogamy – it is rare to encounter a wife having more than one husband.

Lastly, it is common for two or more blood lines (lineages) to share a common ancestor and collectively form a clan, which is the largest social unit. Clans do not have formal leaders or organizational structures. Membership is transferred from father to child and cuts across ethnic and social boundaries.

The dramatic social changes in Africa during and after colonialism in the last 4 decades have obviously affected the traditional family, and variations on these 3 features can be found across the continent.

5. Sex and Gender

Sex refers to the biological/reproductive differences between males and females, while gender is a more flexible concept that refers to a culture's categorizing of masculine and feminine behaviors, symbols, and social roles. Gender roles in Africa follow no single model nor is there a generalized concept of sex and common standard of sexual behavior.

Prehistorically, gender role differentiation in Africa's hunting and gathering cultures was based on a division of labor featuring different, yet complementary, sets of responsibilities for males and females, adults and children. Females gathered over half the caloric needs from natural vegetation, while also reproducing and raising offspring. Males were primarily hunters but also assisted with gathering.

These gender patterns continued as agricultural practices advanced.

Females shared in farming while continuing to provide for the family's subsistence, and males produced the cash crops. Pastoralists like the Maasai of Kenya traditionally have featured males involved in cattle-raising and females in food production.

The 19th-century European colonial period introduced a cash economy into Africa, with female labor used to produce the cash crops. By inserting male authority over females, colonial administrators disrupted the distinct yet complementary male/female relationship that had been traditionally African.

More recently, western influence across the continent has dramatically altered the traditional gender roles. Educational and professional opportunities for females, along with increased family migrations to urban areas, have radically altered traditional male and female gender roles.

Likewise, the number of singles parents and even child- or other relative-led families has increased with the predominance of HIV/AIDS-related deaths and warfare, further altering traditional gender responsibilities. Additionally, ethnic conflicts involving abuse of women are prevalent in many unstable countries, and while the rubric of traditional African gender generally remains, the forces of change are gradually ripping it away.

6. Language and Communication

Language is a system for sharing information symbolically, whereby words are used to represent ideas. Communication is defined as the cultural practice of sharing meaning in interaction, both verbally and non-verbally. America is predominantly a monolingual society, where traditionally, fluency in a second language has been considered a luxury rather than a necessity. Conversely, national survival for many societies in Africa required them throughout their existence to adopt multilingual

practices, if for no other reason than to preserve their native heritage.

You may find it challenging to comprehend the scope of Africa's linguistic diversity. There are over 2,000 African languages (many spoken-only) from 6 major language families, and perhaps 100 of these languages are used to communicate among the more dominant ethnic groups such as Berber, Swahili, Yoruba, and others.

Official languages of African nation-states are few, yet the linguistic diversity expressed across the continent (Nigeria has 250 languages) has prompted an awareness of the value of Africa's linguistic traditions. While most areas of the continent speak the adopted language of their colonial past – such as French and Portuguese in West Africa, French and Arabic in Morocco, and English in Kenya and South Africa – the majority of people also speak one or more traditional "indigenous" languages of their and other ethnic groups. As African independence spread throughout the continent, ethnic groups continued to depend on their indigenous identifiers, such as language, to celebrate their "release" from colonial rule and to preserve a sense of indigenous identity.

While communication styles tend to vary by ethnic or social groups, Africans generally are friendly and outgoing people although they tend to communicate with reserve to avoid confrontation. As in most kin-based societies, Africans believe that saving face or protecting one's honor and dignity are of utmost importance; therefore, they avoid public criticism and controversial topics at all costs – even to the extent of withholding their honest opinion or modifying the truth.

Africans admire and even expect extended greetings and small talk, and to attempt to rush or avoid social graces is considered disrespectful. Similarly, Africans avoid direct eye contact when communicating with new acquaintances and people of status,

particularly elders. They also are fond of non-verbal gestures, and it is common throughout African societies for members of the same gender to hold hands or touch while conversing.

7. Learning and Knowledge

All cultures require that the older generation transmit important information to the younger generation. This information can be strictly factual (for example, how to fulfill subsistence and health requirements) and culturally traditional (the beliefs, behaviors, and symbols that have meaning to the community). This knowledge transfer may occur through structured, formalized systems such as schools or through informal learning by watching adults or peers.

The contemporary African educational system hardly resembles the traditional pre-colonial structure, whereby community elders were primarily responsible for preparing youth for adulthood. Their instruction included fundamentals of ethnic ritual and ceremony, along with customary protocol for their distinctive gender roles. A rite-of-passage commemorating their successful journey from childhood to adulthood served as a form of graduation.

European colonialism brought a more structured, formal educational system that catered to a small group of African elite who demonstrated potential to administer expanding colonial territories. Following independence, many African nations adopted the European system because they believed it would prepare them to be more competitive in intra-continental and global marketplaces, thereby enhancing their quality of life.

However, progress in developing and maintaining reliable educational institutions has been slow for a variety of reasons. Since most Africans live in rural environments, they continue to rely heavily on child labor for family survival, resulting in decreased school enrollments or early withdrawals. Likewise, widespread HIV/AIDS epidemics, ethnic conflict, teacher and resource deficits, and inaccessibility to remote rural areas also hamper progress. According to 2005 statistics, only half of the

continent's children were enrolled in primary school, leaving over 40 million African children without any schooling at all.

8. Time and Space

In every society, people occupy space and time in ways that are not directly linked to physical survival. In low-context western cultures, people tend to be preoccupied with strict time management, devoting less effort to relationship-building. Conversely, most African cultures are traditionally high-context societies, whereby people center their activities on socializing and establishing close associations, having little regard for the passage-of-time.

Only after establishing trust and honor will your typical African counterpart agreeably proceed with business. In his worldview, time is a precious commodity used to establish relationships and form alliances. Any attempt to accelerate the tempo at the expense of social pleasantries will likely result in deadlock.

To an African, close physical proximity between individuals encourages cooperative trust, and for centuries they have viewed human linkage as a core element to survival. This closeness is best represented in a traditional African village where strong kinship connections are evidenced by a display of close interpersonal relations among family members.

While conventional African concepts of time and space remain intact, throughout the continent western influence and globalization have stepped up the pace of African living, mostly in urban areas. Consequently, rural-to-urban migrations have reshaped traditional social and subsistence patterns.

9. Aesthetics and Recreation

Every culture has its own forms of creative expression that are guided by aesthetic principles of imagination, beauty, skill and style. Prior to 19th-century European colonization of Africa,

recreation served a vital subsistence role, whereby adolescents and adults alike participated in intellectually stimulating leisurely activities that concurrently served to develop essential hunting and pastoral skills.

Games of chance and skill were important to early childhood development, providing social outlets within and outside their community. Featuring wrestling, jumping and running; traditional African sport was steeped in religious ritual.

Along with colonialism came the introduction to Africa of western sports such as soccer, cricket, rugby and track and field. This emphasis on western sport continued to thrive with African independence and globalization, as seen in sporting events such as the Olympics and the World Cup.

Leaders such as Nelson Mandela skillfully employed sport to promote a unified South African nation. Importing the predominantly "white" game of rugby, Mandela used it to fuse a racially divided country following his election in 1992. This event is the theme of the motion picture "Invictus," exemplifying how sport can serve to create national identities and overcome ethnic division. His efforts have inspired many other African nations to follow suit.

Likewise, East African countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia have produced the world's dominant male and female distance runners, and South Africa, Cameroon and Nigeria emerged as strong contenders in the 2010 World Cup. African nations are now competing in leagues such as the International Basketball Association (FIBA) World Championships, and there is also a

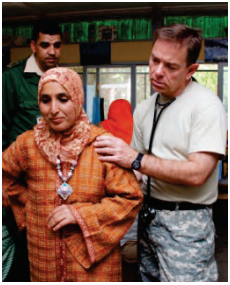
growing number of African basketball players on US college campuses and in the National Basketball Association (NBA).

10. Sustenance and Health

Societies have different methods of transforming natural resources into food. These methods can shape residence patterns, family structures and economics. Theories of disease and healing practices exist in all cultures and serve as adaptive responses to disease and illness.

Despite having only 11% of the global population, Africa is a victim of many of the world's debilitating health disorders. According to the World Health Organization, 60% of the global HIV/AIDS cases and 90% of malarial diseases occur in Africa.

These and other medical conditions are attributed primarily to viral infection and widespread poverty caused by extreme climatic conditions and civil unrest, coupled with inadequate preventative measures. While extensive drought generates widespread famine, civil disturbances generate millions of displaced persons. Likewise, with only 58% of the Sub-Saharan African population having access to safe drinking water, water-born bacterial diseases such as cholera and schistosomiasis are common.



Many people in Africa lack access to western medicine, and as a result depend on traditional health practices to combat disease. In addition, some traditional beliefs run counter to western medical practice and perhaps discourage individuals from utilizing those services even when they are available. This problem is further intensified by lack of federal regulatory healthcare management.

While modern healthcare procedures are more common in urban areas, many rural people rely on traditional practitioners who use a variety of plants and herbs to treat patients. Similarly, many families have their own secret remedies. While in some cases traditional medicine proves effective with fewer side effects than modern drugs, traditional practices do not adequately treat many of the more serious conditions.

On a positive note, western influence has stimulated some progress in combating Africa's health crisis. More resources are devoted to achieving basic human security by assessing disease symptoms early and with scientific accuracy.

11. Economics and Resources

This domain refers to beliefs regarding appropriate ways for a society to produce, distribute, and consume goods and services. Traditionally having an agrarian-based economy, Africa today remains predominantly agricultural, featuring less industrialization than most other parts of the world. Post-colonial adversities such as civil war, disease, poverty, and unstable dictatorships posed unusual hardship on several young African nations; however, Africa currently stands at the cross-roads of economic development with many nations becoming some of fastest growing regions in the world.

Colonialism institutionalized the exploitation of Africa's mineral resources, resulting in today's oil industry dominating the economic market in several coastal regions. A surge in global oil prices; a growing African middle class; and reduction in civil wars, foreign aid, and inflation collectively promise a more positive outlook for the future.

Countries such as Botswana, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and South Africa are economically the wealthiest on the continent, with regions such as East Africa showing signs of economic stability. Despite the economic upswing, much of sub-Saharan

Africa's future economic prosperity is held hostage by devastating diseases such as AIDS, particularly in areas of southern Africa, and the growing effects of climate change and man-made environmental degradation throughout the subcontinent.

12. Technology and Material

Societies use technology to transform their physical world, and culture heavily influences the development and use of technology. Africa lags far behind most of the world in manufacturing capacity and output. Even the more economically-developed nations such as South Africa are competitively weak when compared to non-African industrialized nations. During the 1970s and 1980s, Africa experienced some growth in raw exports although this increase did little to boost long-term manufacturing capacity.

Today, Africa is experiencing an actual decline in manufacturing capacity due primarily to a lull in the global economy, along with other indigenous issues such as environmental stress, poor physical and organizational infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled personnel. Likewise, African manufacturing capacity is no match against global powers such as China and significant Southeast Asian markets.

International aid from both governmental and non-governmental organizations has helped African nations establish preliminary economic footholds. For example, many of them have dedicated industrial developmental zones to attract foreign investment and increase export-related manufacturing capacity, although Africa is far removed from having a significant role in the global marketplace in the foreseeable future.

Now that we have introduced general concepts that characterize African society at large, we will now focus on specific features of Ugandan society.

PART 2 – CULTURE SPECIFIC

1. HISTORY AND MYTH

Historical Overview

The history of Uganda is a story of complex rivalries between regions, religions, and ethnic groups. Due in part to colonial policies which aggravated those rivalries, Uganda experienced extreme violence during the second half of the 20th century.

Early Uganda

Based on evidence discovered at Stone Age sites in Uganda, humans inhabited the region as early as 150,000 years ago. About 3,000 years ago, hunter-gatherers who resembled the Khoe-San of southern Africa in culture and appearance began migrating to present-day Uganda from the Congo. Beginning around the same time and continuing until the early centuries AD, Bantu-speakers from the Niger Delta slowly filtered into the region, bringing agriculture and Iron Age technology with them.

Early Political Structures

Small, kinship-based societies were the first political structures to emerge in present-day Uganda. Although these societies were conducive to resolving disputes and performing religious rites, they were ill-suited to govern the large numbers who had settled in the Lake Victoria region by 1000 AD. Consequently, larger political units began to develop in southern Uganda.

Bunyoro: Based in present-day western Uganda, Bunyoro was probably the first kingdom in the region. Oral tradition suggests that the Batembuzi, the first dynasty, came to power around 1100 AD. Although Bunyoro was populated by Bantu-speakers, its rulers probably migrated from present-day Ethiopia, Sudan, and South Sudan and later adopted local language and culture. Most modern Ugandans with royal lineage still claim descent from the mythic Bacwezi, the second dynasty to rule Bunyoro.

Later Kingdoms

During the late 15th century the Luo ethnic group of present-day South Sudan migrated into what is now northern Uganda. Some of the Luo continued south to Bunyoro and brought an end to the Bacwezi dynasty, although it is not clear whether they used force. During the same period, 3 additional kingdoms emerged in present-day Uganda.

Buganda: Originally founded by a breakaway contingent of the first Luo dynasty to rule Bunyoro, Buganda remained small until the mid-17th century. Because Buganda was located on fertile land north of Lake Victoria, agriculture dominated its economy.

The Origin of Death in Buganda

In ancient times, African legends and myths developed as oral traditions used to preserve history and wisdom across generations, teach moral lessons, and entertain. According to Baganda lore, Kintu, the first ***Kabaka*** (King) of Buganda, traveled on a rainbow to Ggulu (Heaven), where he fell in love with Nambi, Ggulu's daughter. Ggulu blessed the union but warned the couple to return to earth quickly and not to return for anything, lest they attract the attention of Walumbe (Death), Nambi's evil brother.

On the way, Nambi realized that she had forgotten to bring millet for her chickens and decided to retrieve some from Ggulu against Kintu's wishes. By the time Nambi made it back to Ggulu, Walumbe emerged and insisted on following his sister back to earth.

Walumbe soon caused mayhem on earth. He particularly enjoyed kidnapping Nambi's children or causing them to fall ill. A distraught Ggulu decided to send Kaikuuzi, another of Nambi's brothers, to take Walumbe away from the earth. However, Kaikuuzi soon grew dispirited as Walumbe repeatedly hid in the underworld. Kaikuuzi eventually relented and returned to Ggulu, but not before promising to return to earth one day and exile Walumbe for good.

Busoga: Based in the land immediately east of Buganda, the Busoga have a similar culture and language to their neighbor. However, Busoga is unique among the traditional kingdoms of Uganda for claiming no link to the old dynasties of Bunyoro. Indeed, as a federation of 11 tiny hereditary chiefdoms, Busoga was not even considered a "kingdom" until 1918.

Ankole: According to oral tradition, Ankole was founded by Ruhinda, a son of Ndahura, the first Bacwezi ruler of Bunyoro. This fact explains the traditional Ankole emphasis on Bacwezi traditions. Like their Rwandan neighbors, the people of Ankole emphasized cattle ownership, which distinguished the pastoral ***Bahima*** class from the agricultural ***Bairu*** class.

Shifting Balance of Power

The balance of power began to shift about two centuries after the arrival of the Luo, when a plague decimated the cattle of Bunyoro. In order to replenish his herds, the ***Omukama*** (King) of Bunyoro invaded neighboring Ankole and then continued on to Rwanda, where he was killed in battle. The ***Kabaka*** (King) of Buganda took advantage of the disarray which followed by seizing several territories belonging to Bunyoro. The power of Bunyoro declined further over the next 200 years, especially in the 1830s, when an internal territory known as the ***Toro Kingdom*** seceded from Bunyoro. Buganda was the most powerful kingdom by the late 18th century, and Bunyoro was just a quarter of its former size by the mid-19th century.

Outside the Kingdoms

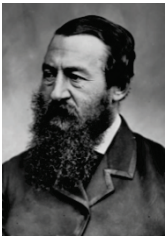
While the societies of the Lake Victoria region developed into centralized, hierarchical kingdoms, the societies of present-day northern Uganda remained small and kinship-based. Although larger political structures occasionally emerged, they inevitably turned out to be temporary, as the harsh northern climate forced both agriculturalists and pastoralists to move frequently in search of fertile land. The same factors also contributed to frequent lethal conflict among early northern societies.

In contrast to the southern kingdoms, early northern societies were not hierarchical: the only social distinction was between elders and non-elders, and even elders did not receive special privileges. Although elders were trusted to serve on councils and select clan leaders, most decisions ultimately were made by consensus. Some of the best-known northern societies include the Iteso, Lango, Acholi, Lugbara, Alur, Bagwere, and Karamojong (see *Political and Social Relations*).

Arrival of Outsiders

While Uganda had little contact with the wider world for much of its history, this isolation came to an end with the arrival of Arab slave traders and European explorers in the mid-19th century.

Bunyoro and Baker: Kamurasi, the Omukama of Bunyoro in the mid-19th century, initially welcomed these outsiders in the hope that their support would revive his flagging kingdom. However, one of the Europeans began to threaten an invasion of Bunyoro soon after Kamurasi was succeeded in 1869 by a highly effective military leader named Kabalega.



The problematic European was Samuel Baker (pictured), a British explorer who arrived in 1864 and spent one year living in Bunyoro. He returned to the region in 1872 after the ***Khedive*** (Viceroy) of Egypt dispatched him to conquer the kingdom. Kabalega responded to Baker's invasion by attacking one of Baker's forts, compelling him to retreat northwards. Humiliated by the episode, Baker took his revenge by disparaging Kabalega and the people of Bunyoro in a widely read book. This petty gesture contributed to a bias against Bunyoro among future colonial administrators.

The Scramble for Buganda: It was not long before Buganda faced similar problems with outsiders. Slave traders from Zanzibar, an archipelago off the coast of present-day Tanzania, were the first to arrive. Their Islamic faith took hold in Buganda and won converts without displacing local religious beliefs. French Catholic and British Protestant missionaries arrived soon after and won converts of their own, leading to a religious divide in Buganda (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

After failing to leverage this religious divide for his own benefit, Mwanga, the Kabaka of Buganda, decided in 1887 to side with those who had not converted to any foreign faith, prompting the Muslim and Christian factions to unite and topple Mwanga in 1888. However, war broke out between the Muslims and the Christians just 1 year later after Mwanga's Muslim-supported successors began persecuting Christians. The Christians won a swift victory and reinstated Mwanga as Kabaka of Buganda.

The Christian alliance split soon after the defeat of the Muslims, with the Catholics favoring an independent Buganda and the Protestants favoring British control. Mwanga sided with the Catholics, forming an alliance which made some early progress but was ultimately outmuscled by British troops armed with an early form of the machine gun. By 1893 Mwanga was left with little choice but to yield most of his sovereignty to the British and allow Buganda to become the basis of a newly created colonial political structure known as the Uganda Protectorate.

The letter "B" was dropped from "Buganda" when used as the name of the new Protectorate because the British originally hired Swahili-speaking guides. In both Swahili and Luganda, the language of Buganda (see *Language and Communication*), related words can be formed by attaching different prefixes to one root word. However, Swahili uses the prefix ***u-*** to denote "land of," while Luganda uses the prefix ***bu-***.

The Uganda Protectorate

As the British angled for power in the Buganda Kingdom, they also sought to extend their control into the other kingdoms. Bunyoro was the most challenging kingdom to conquer because it was still ruled in the early 1890s by the militaristic and highly competent Kabalega, who had expansionist ambitions of his own. In 1893 these ambitions led Kabalega to invade Toro in an attempt to recapture territory which had once been part of Bunyoro. British forces dispatched from Buganda, including 20,000 Baganda (refers to "people of" Buganda – see *Political and Social Relations*) soldiers, repelled the invasion, and pursued Kabalega back into Bunyoro, prompting the king to burn his capital and launch a guerilla war.

Although this campaign saw some success, Kabalega was weak enough by 1896 that the British were able to incorporate Bunyoro into the Protectorate. In 1898 Britain further extended its control into Ankole, which had been weakened by infectious diseases. During the early 20th century, the Protectorate also came to include Busoga and parts of today's northern Uganda.

British Rule

Britain ran the Protectorate (flag pictured – the crane is the national symbol of Uganda) using both direct and indirect rule. In northern Uganda where there were no large political structures for the British to co-opt, British officials ruled colonial subjects directly. By contrast, the kingdoms of southern Uganda provided a convenient structure for implementing indirect rule, where Britain implemented colonial policy through indigenous African authorities.

In acknowledgement of Buganda's support in the war against Kabalega, Britain exercised its indirect rule in southern Uganda exclusively through the traditional authorities of Buganda. The other regions, especially Bunyoro which was administered as "enemy territory," resented taking orders from Buganda's authorities.

The Lost Counties: One of the most controversial examples of special treatment of Buganda is the issue of the Lost Counties of Bunyoro. In order to reward Buganda and punish Kabalega, Britain in 1900 transferred to Buganda 6 counties which had formerly belonged to Bunyoro and which contained many sites of traditional importance to the people of Bunyoro. This action sparked great resentment in Bunyoro and remained a source of internal discord in Uganda even after independence.

The Neglected North: British rule also helped to create a large socioeconomic gap between northern and southern Ugandans that compounded cultural differences between those groups (see *Political and Social Relations*). Because Britain developed neither reliable transit links nor an adequate education system in the North, many northerners migrated south. Many of these migrants joined the military or police at very low wages.

Benefits of British Rule: Although British rule set the stage for the sustained internal strife that has plagued modern Uganda, it also had some positive effects. For example, because the British discouraged white settlement in Uganda, it was mainly indigenous Africans who benefited from the creation of a cotton export industry. Indirect rule also gave some Ugandans greater autonomy than most Africans living under colonial rule.

Nationalism and Independence

Both the positive and negative aspects of British rule helped delay calls for independence in Uganda. The negative aspects, such as the British insistence on ruling people separately according to ethnicity, promoted factionalism and thereby delayed the development of national unity. The positive aspects mitigated in Uganda many of the grievances which led to calls for independence in other colonies: the British interfered little with local government, there was no entrenched class of white settlers, and cotton exports ensured that Ugandans were well-off relative to residents of other African colonies (Photo: The Coat of Arms of Uganda).

Political Parties: Motivated more by post-World War II trends toward decolonization than by pressure from Ugandans, Britain began to prepare Uganda for independence in the late 1940s. This decision prompted a flurry of political activity as various internal factions tried to secure positions of power in the post-colonial era. The first elections in which Africans were elected to the national government were held in 1958.

In order to select a set of rulers who could provide a basis for self-government, further elections were scheduled for October 1961. On the eve of these elections there were 3 major political parties: the pro-Buganda Kabaka Yekka (KY), the pro-Catholic Democratic Party (DP), and the Uganda People's Congress (UPC), which enjoyed support from a variety of groups. Despite having little support beyond its Catholic base, the DP won a majority after voters in Buganda boycotted the election to protest British plans which would strip Buganda of its preferential treatment in the post-colonial era.

Uganda gained full internal self-government on March 1, 1962. A second set of elections was held the following month as part of the final preparations for full independence. In order not to repeat the DP's upset victory, the UPC (pictured: the UPC flag) and the KY formed a coalition based more on political expedience than on shared ideology. The new alliance won easily, and UPC leader Milton Obote became Prime Minister. Uganda attained full independence on October 9, 1962.

The First Obote Era

Less than two years after taking power, Obote addressed the issue of the Lost Counties by holding a referendum in those counties. Nearly 80% of voters favored returning them to Bunyoro. Obote complied which opened a permanent rift between the UPC and the pro-Buganda KY. While the outcome of the Lost Counties referendum severely weakened the KY, it also caused factions to emerge within the UPC which no longer faced the unifying pressure of strong KY opposition.

Those UPC factions took center stage in early 1966, when several UPC ministers tried to remove Obote from power after evidence emerged that he had ordered secret, for-profit military operations in neighboring countries. Obote responded by arresting the ministers, voiding the constitution, and forcing Parliament to pass a new constitution that expanded the Prime Minister's powers and stripped the kingdoms of federal status.

Mutesa, the king of Buganda, rejected the new constitution. Obote responded by ordering Idi Amin, the commander of the army, to attack Mutesa's palace, an action that forced Mutesa to flee. The Baganda who defended the palace were later taken to the countryside and killed alongside other members.

In 1967 Obote unveiled yet another constitution that eliminated the kingdoms entirely, divided Buganda into four districts, and granted the government powers of preventive detention during states of emergency, as defined by the government. These powers were employed immediately in Buganda, which was ruled under martial law in the years after the 1967 constitution.

Fall of Obote: Although Obote needed Amin to retain his grip on power, he did not trust his military commander and planned to arrest him on charges of embezzlement and complicity in a murder. Amin learned of these plans and decided to preempt them by staging a military coup on January 25, 1971, while Obote was in Singapore for a Commonwealth Conference.

Idi Amin

Despite the fact that Amin played a key role in many of Obote's worst excesses, many Ugandans welcomed the coup, probably assuming that things could not possibly get any worse. Amin soon proved them wrong. During his 8-year reign, Amin gained global notoriety both for his erratic behavior, such as insisting on being called "Big Daddy," and his inhuman atrocities which resulted in an estimated 100,000 deaths.

Amin initially kept his crimes targeted and quiet as he gradually purged the military and cabinet of those whom he thought were loyal to Obote. Amin's true nature became more evident when he ordered the murders of DP leader Benedicto Kiwanuka and the Vice Chancellor of the prestigious Makerere University. By 1974 Amin had extended his purge to the entire population, often relying upon an outfit known as the State Research Bureau to torture and interrogate suspects.

Fall of Amin: One of the few African leaders to condemn Amin was President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Nyerere harbored many of Amin's highest-profile opponents, including Obote and Yoweri Museveni, the current President of Uganda. Hoping to unify Uganda, Amin declared war on Tanzania in 1978. Tanzanian forces and exiled Ugandan rebels responded by invading Uganda and forcing Amin into exile in April 1979.

The Second Obote Era

After the fall of Amin, an alliance of 22 Ugandan groups chose Yusuf Lule, an academic, as interim President. Accused of being too pro-Buganda, Lule was replaced after just 90 days with Godfrey Binaisa, who had been an official under Obote. Binaisa lasted almost a year before being deposed in a military coup orchestrated by Paulo Muwango, Obote's right-hand man.

An election was eventually scheduled for December 1980. The main contenders were the DP, led by Paul Ssemogerere, the UPC, still led by Obote, and the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), led by Museveni. Although there was evidence of election fraud, the UPC emerged victorious and Obote again became President.

National Resistance Movement: Disturbed by what he saw as a denial of democracy and the start of another reign of terror, Museveni formed a rebel guerrilla group known as the National Resistance Army (NRA). Operating out of the Luwero Triangle north of Kampala, the NRA attracted Obote's attention with a series of guerilla attacks. Obote soon launched a ruthless total war in order to eradicate the NRA. Lasting from 1981-1986, the war between the NRA and Obote's forces claimed the lives of an estimated 500,000 people.

Despite the pleas of his commanders, Obote refused to stop prosecuting the war, prompting Tito Okello, the commander of his army, to depose Obote in a military coup on July 27, 1985. After failing to reach an agreement with the NRA, Okello was himself deposed just 6 months later when the NRA entered Kampala and Museveni was sworn in as President.

Uganda under President Museveni

Museveni (pictured with President George W. Bush) began picking up the pieces of his shattered nation by reinstating basic liberties and the rule of law, appointing a national unity government, and encouraging the return of exiles. He also put in place pragmatic economic policies in an effort to begin undoing decades of damage. In 1993 he also permitted kingdoms to form once again on the condition that they stay out of politics. Although Museveni's leadership and policies have guided Uganda into a new era and forged for the first time a genuine sense of national unity, some commentators have criticized Museveni for refusing to retire after several decades in power (see *Political and Social Relations*).

2. POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

Official Name
Republic of Uganda

Political Borders
South Sudan: 270 mi
Kenya: 580 mi
Tanzania: 246 mi
Rwanda: 105 mi
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC): 475 mi

Capital
Kampala

Demographics
Uganda's population of 37.1 million is growing about 3.24% per year – the 5th highest rate in the world. Uganda is also among the most densely populated countries in Africa, despite the fact that only about 16% of the population lives in cities. About half of the country is under age 14, and Ugandan women give birth to 6 children on average. The United Nations (UN) estimates that Uganda's population will top 90 million by 2050.

Flag
The flag contains six alternating horizontal bands of black, yellow, and red. Black signifies the African people, yellow symbolizes vitality and sunshine, and red represents African brotherhood. In the center of the flag is an inward-facing crane superimposed on a white disk. The crane is the national symbol of Uganda and traces its roots to the military badge worn by colonial Ugandan soldiers.

Geography
The Republic of Uganda has a total area of just over 93,000 sq mi, which is about the same size as Oregon. Although Uganda is landlocked, nearly 1/5 of its total area consists of open water. Major lakes include Victoria, Albert, Edward, and Kyoga, while the major river is the Nile. Uganda is located on the equator.

Topographical features include a large plateau covered with woodland and savannah in the center of the country, dense rainforests in the South, arid semi-desert in the Northeast, and mountain ranges along both the eastern and western borders. Elevations range from just over 2,000 ft on the shores of Lake Albert to 16,765 ft at Margherita Peak on Mount Stanley. About 12% of Ugandan territory is reserved for natural parks.

Climate

Due to the fact that Uganda is both located on the equator and has a high elevation, temperatures are generally warm but not sweltering, ranging from about 60°F in the mountains of the Southwest to around 85°F in the semi-desert of the Northeast. Kampala falls between these extremes, with an average low of 63°F and an average high of 80°F.

Uganda is rainy for most of the year, although there are two dry seasons from December-February and June-August. The South is generally wetter than the North with some areas near Lake Victoria getting up to 80 inches of rain each year. The Northeast sees a more modest 20 inches while Kampala falls between the extremes with about 46 inches of annual rainfall.

Environmental Challenges

Despite Uganda's ample rainfall, the country still experiences periodic droughts which constrain agricultural production and threaten domestic food supplies. Similarly, insufficient rainfall near Lake Victoria in recent years has reduced the water table in that region to some of its lowest levels ever recorded. Human activities such as grazing livestock and draining wetlands for agricultural use have amplified drought-related problems.

Government

The Republic of Uganda consists of 4 main regions (Northern, Eastern, Central, and Western) which collectively comprise 112 districts. Uganda's current constitution came into effect on October 8, 1995, and the country has held multiparty elections since a referendum on July 28, 2005.

Executive Branch

The President, currently Yoweri Museveni (pictured), is head-of-government, head-of-state, and commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The President is elected by popular vote to serve a 5-year term, and there are no longer any term limits. In addition to selecting a Cabinet, the President appoints the Vice President, the Prime Minister, and all judges for the High Court, Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court. These appointments are all subject to approval by Parliament.

Legislative Branch

Uganda has a one-chamber Parliament composed of 388 Members of Parliament (MPs) serving 5-year terms, including:

- 238 MPs elected to represent single constituencies
- 112 female MPs directly elected by each district
- 10 MPs chosen by elected MPs to represent the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF – see "Defense")
- 15 members chosen by elected MPs to represent in equal measure disabled persons, workers, and youths
- 13 non-voting MPs (Cabinet) appointed by the President

President Museveni's party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), currently enjoys a large majority in Parliament with 263 MPs. Independents form the next largest group with 44 MPs, while the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) is close behind with 34 MPs. Five other parties have 12 MPs or fewer.

Judicial Branch

Uganda's legal system is based on British common law and incorporates some aspects of customary law, which includes the legal practices of indigenous ethnic groups. Uganda has four types of courts. The Supreme Court, which consists of a chief justice and at least six other justices, deals only with appeals from lower courts. The Court of Appeal, which consists of a deputy chief justice and at least seven other justices, is responsible for both High Court appeals and constitutional questions. The High Court, which is composed of a headquarters in Kampala and seven circuit courts, deals with appeals from the lowest-level Magistrates' Courts.

Political Climate

Shortly after taking power in 1986, President Museveni banned political parties and suspended elections in an attempt to unify a country divided along ethnic, regional, and religious lines. As their country was emerging from a quarter-century of brutal rule partly based on factionalism (see *History and Myth*), many Ugandans accepted Museveni's "no-party system" in 1986.

Since then, Museveni has continued to find novel ways to retain power. For example, he allowed multiparty politics in the early 2000s, but only after he had secured a constitutional amendment eliminating term limits. These sorts of actions have led many Ugandans to question whether the open-ended tenure of Museveni and the NRM has outlived its usefulness.

Although Museveni and the NRM won a commanding victory in the 2011 elections, there are indications that Museveni's days may be numbered, including widespread allegations of election fraud, pressure from foreign donors to democratize internal politics, and weakening loyalty among younger members of the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF). In addition, violent protests over rising prices have rocked Kampala, Gulu, and other cities in Uganda since April 2011. Museveni's position nevertheless appears to be secure for the time being, as world leaders are eager for the UPDF to continue its role in Somalia (see "Peacekeeping") and the advantages of incumbency still appear to outweigh mounting domestic dissent.

Defense

The UPDF traces its roots to the National Resistance Army (NRA), the guerilla force which took power under the command of President Museveni in 1986. This pedigree is evident in the UPDF's tactics, which emphasize mobility and light weaponry. With 51,000 active-duty troops and 30,000 reserves, the UPDF is one of the largest militaries in Central Africa. Consisting of an Army and Air Force, the UPDF is charged with national defense, national development, disaster relief, and the improvement of relations between civilians and the military. Currently, the main focus is on operations against insurgent groups (see "Security Issues").

Army: Comprising about 50,000 troops, the Army is by far the largest service within the UPDF. Although the Army's tactics and strategy continue to resemble those of the NRA, Uganda's land forces are poised to undergo a transformation after an internal report published in 2004 recommended that the UPDF adopt a more conventional structure by bolstering its airborne, artillery, and mechanized capabilities.

Marine Unit: Uganda has no Navy. Instead, the country's lakes and rivers are patrolled by a Marine unit which falls under the command of the Army. Composed of about 400 personnel, the Marine unit has a small fleet of aluminum- and fiberglass-hulled patrol boats outfitted with small machine guns.

Air Force: Deriving from the Army in 2004, the Air Force comprises about 800 personnel and a small fleet of fighter jets, transport aircraft, and attack helicopters. Allegedly, some of Uganda's aircraft, such as its half dozen or so MiG 21s, are operated by Russian contractors. The primary duty of the Air Force is to support Army counterinsurgency operations against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA – see "Security Issues").

Peacekeeping: The UPDF plays an active peacekeeping role by participating in UN and African Union (AU) missions across Africa. At the end of 2010, Ugandan personnel were deployed in Somalia, Sudan, and Cote d'Ivoire. Uganda also contributes to the East African Standby Force, part of the African Standby Force overseen by the AU. Uganda has garnered particular praise for being an early and sustained contributor to the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

Security Issues

Most instability in modern Uganda results from the activities of rebel organizations which operate along the country's eastern and western borders. Organized crime, petty crime, and Islamic extremism have also become important concerns in recent years. Political instability in neighboring South Sudan and the DRC continues to affect the entire region.

Lord's Resistance Army (LRA): Operating in Uganda, South Sudan, the DRC, and the Central African Republic (CAR), the LRA is an extremist paramilitary organization seeking to replace the Museveni government with a regime based on the Ten Commandments. Although the LRA claims to be the protector of northern Ugandans, the group rampaged through northern Uganda for much of the 1990s in a brutal campaign of murder, assault, rape, and child abduction.

With Sudanese support, the UPDF in 2002 launched Operation Iron Fist in an effort to eliminate the LRA, prompting the LRA to resume and intensify its attacks in northern Uganda. The Ugandan government responded by placing about 1.8 million civilians into protective refugee camps over the next few years, despite the fact that many civilians did not want to be relocated (Photo: Ugandan civilians in a refugee camp). In 2005 the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants for LRA leader Joseph Kony and four of his commanders. This move, along with a general deterioration of LRA strength after years of UPDF military pressure, prompted the LRA to relocate to the DRC and effectively end its permanent presence in Uganda.

Peace talks between the LRA and the Museveni government commenced in 2006, and it appeared that an agreement was in place by 2008. This agreement was derailed when Kony failed to attend the signing ceremony and the LRA carried out further attacks in Sudan and the DRC. Those governments responded by joining with Uganda in late 2008 to launch a renewed offensive against the LRA and its bases in eastern DRC.

Although these operations probably have reduced the number of core LRA fighters, the group has compensated by abducting civilians and forcing them into service. In early 2009 the UN reported that the LRA had dispersed across present-day South Sudan, the CAR, and the DRC in 7-10 groups of about 100 fighters apiece. In late 2011 the US announced that it would deploy 100 special operations personnel to help Uganda track down the remnants of the LRA. These troops were deployed in a strictly advisory capacity and were not authorized to engage the LRA.

Karamojong Warriors: Although they are not a serious threat to the national government, warriors from the Karamojong ethnic group (pictured) are a destabilizing force in eastern Uganda. Karamojong warriors are known for resolving feuds with small arms and for conducting violent cattle raids in adjacent regions during times of drought. As the LRA insurgency began to weaken in 2004, the UPDF shifted its focus to disarming the warriors. Disdainful of the national government, the warriors resisted violently and thereby gave birth to a continuing pattern of low-level conflict with the UPDF.

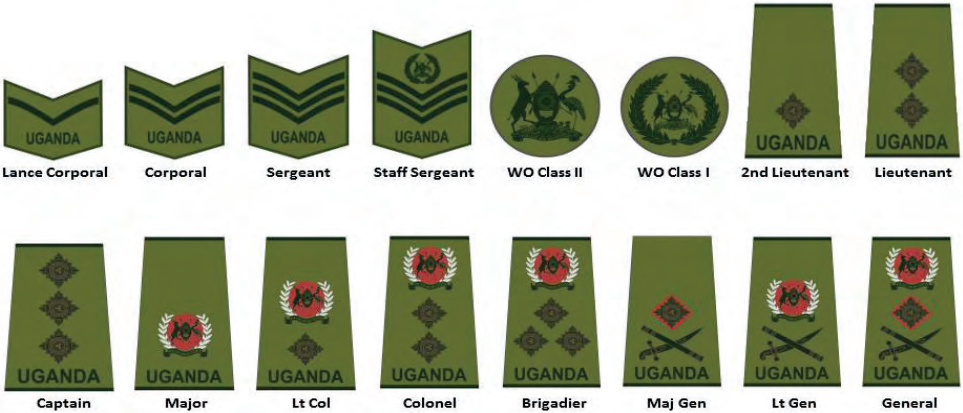
Allied Democratic Forces (ADF): Consisting of both Ugandan Islamic extremists and troops from a variety of defunct regional militias, the ADF is a paramilitary organization which in the late 1990s carried out a series of attacks against mostly civilian targets in southwestern Uganda. Although the group is thought to be largely defeated, it is speculated that some elements still operate in eastern DRC. Since 2001 an outfit of about 2,000 UPDF troops called the “Mountain Brigade” has patrolled the Rwenzori Mountains on Uganda’s western frontier.

Terrorism: Al-Shabaab, an Islamic extremist group which aims to overthrow the Somali government, carried out two bombings in Kampala in July 2010 in retaliation for Uganda’s role in AMISOM (see “Peacekeeping”). These attacks were the first to be conducted by al-Shabaab outside Somalia.

Trafficking: Like many of its East African neighbors, Uganda is an emerging hub for smuggling routes linking heroin producers in Southwest Asia with European markets. Traffickers either connect through Entebbe Airport en route from hubs in the Middle East or smuggle their contraband by land through East Africa and depart for Europe from Entebbe.

In addition to narcotics trafficking, Uganda is home to an illegal arms trade along its borders with South Sudan and Kenya. Although the region’s many conflicts translate into a large and persistent demand for illicit weapons, Uganda’s efforts to curtail the arms trade have reportedly led to significant price spikes.

Ugandan Defense Force Rank Insignia



Diplomatic Relations

Uganda's diplomatic relations with neighboring countries are both difficult and important because most threats to Uganda's internal security come from mobile paramilitary groups which cross borders easily. Consequently, Uganda has experienced diplomatic setbacks with its neighbors in recent years, although the country now maintains cordial relations with all of them.

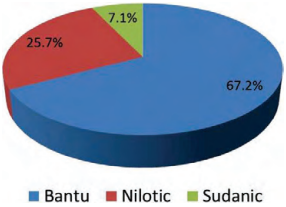
Uganda bolsters its regional relations by participating in multilateral organizations such as the 20-member Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the 5-member East African Community (EAC). Consisting of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda; the EAC formed a customs union in 2005 and intends to form a political federation by 2015, although these plans appear to be remote.

Uganda's relations with countries farther afield are complex. Although Uganda seeks good relations with Western powers, it also has strong ties with countries such as China, Iran, and North Korea. In addition, Uganda has a strong relationship with Israel based on trade and military assistance.

US-Uganda Relations: Since coming to power in 1986, the Museveni government has enjoyed strong bilateral relations with the US (Photo: President Museveni with President Obama). Although relations were strained in the late 1990s when the UPDF was accused of human rights abuses during an intervention in the Second Congo War, Uganda's strong cooperation in the War on Terror has done much to repair the damage. Uganda was one of only five African nations to support the US invasion of Iraq, and the militaries of the two countries share a close working relationship.

The US is one of Uganda's most important donors, providing aid through several channels (see *Economics and Resources*). The US participates in a variety of cultural exchange programs with Uganda, such as sponsoring American Fulbright scholars and sending Peace Corps volunteers.

Ethnic Groups



Uganda is home to more than 40 ethnic groups, each of which belongs to one of the country's 3 linguistic groups: Bantu, Nilotic, and Sudanic. These groups mostly live in separate parts of Uganda, with Lake Kyoga in central Uganda serving as a rough dividing line between the Bantu-speakers of the South and the Nilotic- and Sudanic-speakers of the North.

Note: Bantu languages indicate relationships between people, language, and place by attaching prefixes to a root word. The prefix ***bu-*** means "land of," the prefix ***ba-*** means "people of," and the prefix ***lu-*** means "language of." When attached to the root word ***-ganda***, these prefixes allow one to say, for example, that the ***Baganda*** live in ***Buganda*** and speak ***Luganda***.

Bantu

Important Note: "Bantu" is a linguistic classification. Speakers of Bantu languages should never be referred to as "Bantus."

Bantu-speaking ethnic groups comprise the largest of the three linguistic groups and primarily live in the South and Southwest. Ugandan Bantu-speakers are sometimes divided into Eastern Lacustrine, including the Baganda and Basoga, and Western Lacustrine, including the Batoro and Banyankole.

The largest Bantu-speaking ethnic groups are the Baganda (18% of the population), Banyankole (10%), Bakiga (8.4%), and Basoga (8.3%). Although generally there is little correlation between religion and ethnicity in Uganda, Muslims are represented among the Baganda, Banyankole, and Basoga. Modes of subsistence vary: although most Bantu-speakers are agriculturalists, some Banyankole are pastoralists.

Bantu-speakers traditionally have enjoyed privileged status in Ugandan society. This arrangement traces its roots to the colonial era when British administrators favored the Baganda over peoples of the North (see *History and Myth*). The privilege of Bantu-speakers endures mainly due to the dominance of President Museveni and his Bantu-based NRM.

Nilotic

Mainly living in the North and Northeast, Nilotic-speakers comprise the second largest of Uganda's linguistic groups. Ugandan Nilotic-speakers subdivide into the Luo peoples (includes the Acholi, Langi, and Alur, and Paranilotic sub-groups. The latter sub-divides into the Iteso and Karamojong). The largest Nilotic-speaking groups are the Iteso (6.1% of the population), Langi (5.9%), Acholi (4.5%), Alur (2.5%), and Karamojong (2.2%). Large concentrations of Muslims exist among the Alur and Kakwa (Photo: Acholi children in a camp for internally displaced persons).

Nilotic-speaking northerners had a major impact on Ugandan politics from 1962-1986 through the rule of Idi Amin, a Kakwa; Milton Obote, a Langi; and Tito Okello, an Acholi (see *History and Myth*). The accession of Yoweri Museveni, a Munyankole (member of Ankole), restored the supremacy of Bantu-speaking southerners. Some commentators suggest that the emergence of groups like the Acholi-based LRA may be a reaction to the changing political fortunes of northern Ugandans.

Sudanic

Living mainly in dense settlements in far northwestern Uganda, Sudanic-speakers constitute the smallest of Uganda's linguistic groups. Sudanic-speaking ethnic groups include the Lugbara-Aringa (4.8%), the Okebu (1.2%), and the Madi (1.1%). Sudanic-speaking ethnic groups in Uganda share similar characteristics, with the Lugbara-Aringa and the Madi being especially similar in language and culture.

Social Relations

Due to language and ethnic diversity, it is difficult to establish more than a few accurate generalizations about Ugandan social relations. Overall, Ugandan society tends to be centered on the community, with emphasis on the extended family. Participation in community events such as weddings is considered both an enjoyable experience and an important means of maintaining social standing.

Ugandan culture traditionally places a strong emphasis on oral expression. In modern Uganda, face-to-face communication helps to bridge the gap between Ugandans with different levels of education because literacy is not a prerequisite for oral dialogue. Oral expression also serves to maintain communal ties within a diverse and changing society where exposure to Western influences has altered some traditions. For example, urban living is better suited to smaller single-family structures.

Visits and Gifts

Ugandans often make unannounced visits to the homes of family and friends. Their hosts usually do not mind these impromptu visits because Ugandans consider it socially desirable to have lots of visitors.

A typical visit begins with the guest removing his shoes at the door and exchanging greetings with the host (see *Language and Communication*). The host then offers food or tea, which the guest is obligated at least to sample. If the guest stays overnight, the host often sleeps at the home of a neighbor so that the guest can use his bed.

As a courtesy to their hosts, guests often bring household items like soap or staple foodstuffs such as bread, vegetables, or meat. Flowers are generally not an appropriate gift for simple visits because they are more closely associated with convalescence.

Indicators of Social Status

Ugandans typically show the greatest respect to the elderly, the wealthy, and the educated. For example, Ugandans who speak English fluently, have traveled abroad, and own automobiles or other expensive imported goods are treated with great respect. Ugandans generally stand when someone of high status enters a room and often greet them with gestures of deference (see *Language and Communication*). Baganda women, for example, often kneel when a high-status male enters a room.

3. RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

Overview

Uganda's constitution guarantees religious freedom, and, as in many other African countries, the population is generally very religious. In a recent survey, about 83% of Ugandans identified themselves as Christian and around 12% as Muslim. Only about 3% claimed to practice the other religions followed in Uganda, such as traditional beliefs, Hinduism, Judaism, or the Baha'i faith, a monotheistic religion founded in 19th century Persia (Photo: Army chaplain praying with schoolchildren).

Although most Ugandans identify themselves as Muslim or Christian, about 1/5 of the population also holds beliefs about the power of witchcraft, traditional herbal healers, and sacrifices to spiritual beings (see *Sustenance and Health*). There nevertheless are very few Ugandans who hold traditional beliefs exclusively: children are now socialized largely in modern educational institutions and have no opportunity to learn indigenous religious practices.

Traditional Beliefs

Traditional African religious beliefs vary in Uganda even within single ethno-linguistic groups. Generally, they revolve around ensuring human well-being in the present as opposed to offering salvation in a future world.

Supreme Being: Almost all followers of traditional religions believe in a remote supreme being who created all things. Although this creator presides over life, he does not exercise much influence over daily events. Instead, he manifests himself in natural forces such as the sun, the moon, rain, rainbows, thunder, and lightning. Certain trees and rock formations are considered evidence of his might and may serve as places of worship or sacrifice.

Subordinate Spirits: Subordinate spirits such as deceased ancestors are deeply concerned with daily events and influence them in both positive and negative ways. Individuals can communicate with these spirits either through dreams and visions or through specialists trained to make contact. Some people honor and seek to placate these spirits through libations (liquid poured on the ground as an offering) or other rituals performed under the supervision of family heads, chiefs, and healers. Among the Baganda, for example, the role of the Kabaka or king (see *History and Myth*) is partly religious, as he is responsible for protecting the kingdom from evil spiritual forces.

Social Order: Traditionally, Ugandans use oral lessons and myths to explain the creation and order of the world. People who neglect their familial and social responsibilities are believed to bring hardship and suffering upon themselves and their communities, although illness and bad fortune can also be the result of witches practicing evil magic. Religious specialists such as healers and diviners may be called upon to diagnose the root causes of illness and hardship and may prescribe rituals or medicines to restore social order or counteract the workings of witches.

Witchcraft Today: Although the Witchcraft Act of 1957 rendered witchcraft illegal in Uganda, many Ugandans still believe in evil spirits or witchcraft. The media occasionally report cases of alleged witches killed by their supposed victims as well as cases of children allegedly killed by witches for body parts to be used in rituals. Although allegations of witchcraft are brought before courts in some cases, evidence is difficult to obtain and most cases are dropped. The government's Anti-Human Sacrifice Task Force suggests that most cases of ritual human sacrifice are related to the increasingly popular belief that witchcraft can help people get rich quickly.

Islam

Origins of Islam: Islam dates to the 6th century when God's final Prophet, Muhammad, was born in Mecca in what is today Saudi Arabia. Muslims believe that while Muhammad was meditating in the desert, the Archangel Gabriel visited him over a 23-year period, revealing the Qur'an, or the "Holy Book," to guide their everyday life and shape their lifelong values.

Meaning of Islam: Islam is more than a religion to its adherents – it is a way of life. The term Islam literally means submission, and a Muslim is "a person who submits to God."

Muslim Sects: Islam is divided into two sects: Sunni and Shi'a. Sunni, the largest grouping in the world, are distinguished by their belief that the leader (*Caliph*) of the Muslim community (*Ummah*) should be elected. Conversely, members of the Shi'a sect believe the Muslim leader should be a direct descendant of the Prophet Muhammad.

Ramadan

Each year Muslims participate in this month-long ritual involving inner reflection, self-control, and God. The objective of Ramadan is to subdue life's passions and draw oneself nearer to God by purifying the body and studying the Qur'an. Because the Islamic calendar is based on the moon's appearance, Ramadan occurs at a different date each year on the Western calendar. When it occurs during the summer, keeping Ramadan requires great focus and endurance because people will not hydrate for up to 18 hours. It is common for Muslims to break their fast at sunset with a light meal followed by sunset prayer and then dinner.

Five Pillars of Islam: There are five basic principles of the Islamic faith that all Muslims accept and follow; these are commonly known as "The Five Pillars of Islam."

- **Shahada (Faith)**: "There is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger."

- **Salat (Prayer)**: Pray five times a day.
- **Zakat (Charity)**: Donate alms to the poor.
- **Sawm (Fasting)**: Abstain from food, drink, and sexual relations from sunrise to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan.
- **Hajj (Pilgrimage)**: Pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia if possible at least once in a lifetime.

Introduction of Islam to Uganda

Islam was the first non-indigenous religion to reach Uganda when Arab traders from Zanzibar (an archipelago off the coast of Tanzania) began to move inland in their search for ivory and slaves around 1848. In 1856 they arrived at the court of Kabaka Mutesa I of Buganda, who then converted to Islam and began to build mosques, observe Ramadan, and teach the Qur'an. Mutesa I himself never seriously took to the religion, however, and did not pressure his subjects to convert to Islam. Consequently, two state religions – traditional religion and Islam – coexisted in Buganda for almost 2 decades. When Christian missionaries arrived at Mutesa's court in the 1870s (see "Christianity"), they won converts of their own, prompting followers of the three religions to jostle for dominance.

Mutesa's successor, Mwanga, tried to use this religious divide to his benefit, ordering the torture and murder of several Christians (see "The Uganda Martyrs" below). Despite this attempt, Mwanga was overthrown in the conflict that followed, and the Muslim faction installed a new Kabaka in 1886. For the next few years, Islam flourished in Buganda while Christians underwent further persecution. Eventually, the Christians regrouped and rallied behind their former enemy Mwanga, returning him to the throne in 1889.

In addition to reaching Buganda by way of Zanzibari traders, Islam penetrated the Alur and Kakwa communities of northern Uganda during the 1870s (see *Political and Social Relations*).

Christianity

Introduction of Christianity to Uganda

Protestant missionaries from the Church Missionary Society of London arrived at the court of Kabaka Mutesa I in 1877 following a newspaper appeal by Henry Morgan Stanley, who had visited the king while seeking the source of the Nile with David Livingstone. French Roman Catholics from the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) arrived 2 years later.

Mutesa initially welcomed the Christians as a counterweight to Muslim influence, but neither he nor his successor Mwanga fully supported any of the outside religions. Political instability and civil war between factions supporting the Muslims, Protestants, and Catholics continued for many years.

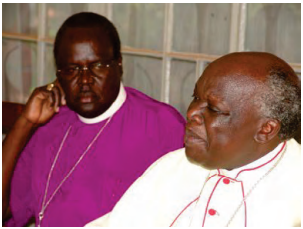
Most of the conflict in this period arose not between Christians and Muslims, but from the rivalry between French Roman Catholics and British Protestants. Mwanga eventually sided with Catholics favoring an independent Buganda, and hostilities continued until the British defeat of Mwanga and his Catholic faction and the formal initiation of the British Uganda Protectorate in 1893 (see *History and Myth*). British colonial rule ended open hostilities and set the stage for the rapid expansion of Christianity throughout the country. By 1901 Protestants had established more than 200 churches, and Catholics had established 17 mission stations and erected a stone cathedral in Kampala.

The Uganda Martyrs

Kabaka Mutesa I invited Christian missionaries to Buganda, and his court attendants were among the first to convert. His successor Mwanga began to regret the foreign presence, however, and between 1885 and 1887 he hacked, speared, or burned to death 22 court attendants who refused to renounce Christianity. All 22 were canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1969, and a shrine to the martyrs was dedicated in 1975 at Namugongo.

Religion Today

Both Christianity and Islam are flourishing in modern Uganda. In most other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, neither faith is expanding at the expense of the other, but a recent survey in Uganda indicates that about 1/3 of respondents who were raised Muslim now identify as Christians, while far fewer Ugandans who were raised Christian now describe themselves as Muslim. Within Christian churches, there also appears to be a significant number of Ugandans who, after being raised in a Protestant church, converted to Catholicism later in life.



Christianity: Ugandan Christians (83% of the population) divide fairly evenly between Protestant (46%) and Catholic (53%) denominations. There are more Catholics in southern Uganda than in northern Uganda. The Anglican Church has the largest membership (22% of all Christians) among Protestant denominations, followed by the Pentecostal, Seventh-day Adventist, and Baptist churches. Smaller communities of Methodists, Lutherans, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses also live in Uganda (Photo: Religious leaders in the Acholi region).

Islam: Most of Uganda's Muslims (12% of the population) are members of the Sunni branch of Islam, but there are also small numbers of Shi'a and Ahmadiyya Muslims. Founded in India in the late 19th century, Ahmadiyya Islam is considered heretical by most Muslims. Muslims generally set themselves apart from Ugandans of other religions by the long, loose, and modest dress worn by both male and female Muslims. Iganga District has the largest percentage of Muslims.

Recently, Muslim groups have promoted the passage of the Muslim Personal Law Bill. The proposed law would grant Islamic, or ***Kadhi***, courts jurisdiction over matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance for Muslims. Members of the Ugandan Joint Christian Council are pressing Parliament to reject the bill.

Abayudaya Jewish Congregation: The Abayudaya Jewish Congregation was founded in the early 20th century by a local tribal leader named Semei Kakungulu. Disenchanted with Christian missionaries, Kakungulu converted to Judaism in 1919, having himself and his male followers circumcised. This emerging Jewish community was largely self-taught until 1926, when a visitor from the Middle East began to provide rabbinical and Hebrew instruction. In recent years, the community has enjoyed much support from American and Israeli Jewish congregations and is now led by a trained rabbi (Photo: Navy chaplain visiting the Abayudaya Moses synagogue outside of Mbale).

Religion and Politics: Religion and politics have been enmeshed since before modern Uganda's founding. Although British colonial authorities took no official stance of preferring one religion over another, they required each Kabaka in Buganda to become a member of the Anglican Church, and in the rest of the country, they recruited primarily Protestant chiefs to rule at the county and sub-county levels. The British thus created a political and religious hierarchy – Protestantism first, Catholicism second, and Islam third – which remained in place for the remainder of the colonial period.

Religion and politics continued to be intertwined through the formation of the first independent political parties (see *History and Myth*). When Idi Amin overthrew Milton Obote in 1971 (see *History and Myth*), many Ugandan Muslims welcomed his rise to power. Although he elevated some Muslims to positions of power in government and industry, he was nevertheless a poor Muslim role model who flouted Islamic law and tradition and persecuted and executed Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

With Amin's fall from power in 1979, there was a general anti-Muslim backlash, and many Muslims went into exile. Recently, the Ugandan government passed the Political Organizations Act of 2002, a law that continues to restrict the formation of religious political parties.

4. FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Overview

Although Uganda has a wide variety of ethnic groups with their own unique traditions (see *Political and Social Relations*), the extended family provides for the economic, political, and social support of its members, extending across ethnic boundaries. Ugandans generally share a deeply ingrained collective mindset in which the triumphs and failures of the individual belong to the entire group. In recent years, modern trends such as urbanization and exposure to Western culture have begun to disrupt traditional forms of social organization (see *Political and Social Relations*).

Family Structure

Specific family structures vary across ethnicities, although nearly all Ugandan ethnic groups are patriarchal: men hold the power in politics and family life (see *Sex and Gender*) and patrilineal: descent is traced from father to son. In addition, most Ugandans place primary emphasis on the clan, which is a form of extended family. It includes all the descendants of a single (sometimes mythical) male ancestor, rather than the nuclear family, which consists only of two parents and their children. In many ethnic groups, clans are further divided into lineages, which are defined by shared descent from a more recent male ancestor.

Clans and lineages are important in Ugandan society because they give individuals a sense of identity and a framework of mutual support and shared resources. For example, among ethnic groups such as the Baganda and the Karamojong, members of the same lineage often live together in a single village or homestead (pictured) and rely upon one another in times of need. Because the clan plays such an important role, many Ugandans consider social standing within the clan to be more important than esteem within the nuclear family.

Residence

Typical Ugandan residences differ between the countryside and the city. Rural homes are usually round structures with mud walls and a thatched roof. Some ethnic groups in northern and eastern Uganda finish the floor by using stones to flatten and harden a mixture of earth and cow manure. Rural residences rarely have amenities such as electricity or running water.

Urban homes are larger than rural homes and usually have cement walls and a corrugated metal roof. They also have access to amenities like toilets, bathing facilities, gas stoves, and water taps, although these amenities often are located outdoors.

Traditional Marriage

In traditional Ugandan culture marriage signifies the union not just of two people but also of two families, lineages, and clans. Consequently, marriage is an important social custom in which the entire extended family plays a role. Although spouses were chosen traditionally with heavy input from the extended family, young Ugandans, especially those living in urban areas, are increasingly free to select their own spouses. Modern courtship often involves couples meeting at school, church, or festivals.

Bridewealth: In most Ugandan ethnic groups, a newly married woman is formally transferred from her father's lineage to her husband's lineage. Consequently, the groom pays bridewealth to the bride's father's family in order to compensate for the loss of her labor and presence. Although bridewealth traditionally consists of livestock or farm equipment, the realities of modern life have encouraged the use of other assets such as cash.

Polygyny: Polygyny, a practice in which men have more than one wife at a time, was once both common and highly valued in Uganda. Men were encouraged to marry as many women as they could afford. Polygyny was popular because it allowed a higher proportion of the female population to marry and thereby gain social respect. The popularity of polygyny has declined in modern Uganda for two main reasons. First, the rising cost of living has made it increasingly unaffordable for men to support

multiple women. Second, the spread of HIV (see *Sustenance and Health*) has increased the dangers of having multiple sexual partners.

Modern Marriage

Many rural Ugandans continue to prefer marriages conducted according to indigenous customs. Although each ethnic group has its own unique traditions, most groups follow a similar pattern of family-mediated courtship followed by the transfer of bridewealth and a wedding. In urban areas, many Ugandans opt for religious or civil marriages. Some of these marriages may be blended with aspects of traditional marriage.

Religious: Many Ugandans converted to Christianity or Islam during the 19th century (see *History and Myth* and *Religion and Spirituality*). Consequently, marriages conducted according to Christian or Islamic traditions are common, especially among urban Ugandans. Both Christian and Islamic weddings in Uganda generally incorporate some indigenous traditions.

Civil: Civil marriages are executed by government officials and can be as simple as signing the marriage certificate, although they are often conducted alongside traditional and religious marriages in order to establish legal legitimacy. Civil marriage is popular with urban couples who lack their parents' blessing.

Children

Ugandans eagerly welcome children to the world because having a large family is seen as a sign of wealth. No marriage is considered complete in Uganda until it has produced children. Consequently, childless couples seek help from both doctors and traditional medicine men (see *Sustenance and Health*) in order to address any barriers to conception.

Birth: Especially in rural areas, Ugandan children historically have been delivered at home with the help of midwives, also known as traditional birthing attendants (TBAs). The Ugandan government banned this practice in 2009 because too many TBAs lacked necessary training. Although practices vary widely

across ethnicities, most ethnic groups have their own unique customs and timetable for naming newborn infants. These traditions sometimes include elaborate ceremonies.

Development: Apart from their symbolic importance, Ugandan children are employed as family laborers as early as age 3. As children get older, they learn tasks specific to their gender by working alongside their parents. Girls tend gardens and supervise younger siblings while boys perform field tasks such as tending livestock and planting crops.

Death in Buganda

The Baganda were known traditionally for having an intense fear of death, while they apparently also were afraid of being buried alive. To verify that those who appeared to have died had in fact passed away, the Baganda allowed corpses to remain untouched for five days prior to burial.

Funerals were followed traditionally by a one-month period of mourning and, if the deceased was a head of household, included the rites of ***Okwabya Olumbe***. These rites represented the transfer of duties from the deceased to his heir and were meant to remove the disturbance created by the death. Okwabya Olumbe was a festive series of rites which involved food, beverages, and unrestrained sexual relations.

Death

As with other major life events, each Ugandan ethnic group has its own traditional outlook and rituals surrounding death (for example, see “Death in Buganda”). Generally, the body of the deceased is displayed at the home of a relative prior to burial. Although Ugandans grieve openly during this period, it is not considered appropriate to continue showing outward signs of mourning once the deceased has been buried. If the deceased passed away under suspicious circumstances, family members will sometimes consult a diviner in order to determine who was responsible for the death (see *Religion and Spirituality*).

5. SEX AND GENDER

Overview

Gender inequality is both substantial and pervasive in Uganda. Because they are viewed as inferior to men, women must work long hours for little or no pay. They also have limited access to resources, such as land and education, which might help them to improve their position in society. Women are also subject to alarmingly high levels of gender-based violence.

Gender Roles and Work

Ugandan men traditionally are responsible for tasks outside the home, such as hunting, fishing, and tending livestock. In addition, some men cultivate cash crops and sell them at the market. Ugandan women traditionally are responsible for all other tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, cultivating staple foods, raising children, caring for elders, gathering firewood, and fetching water. Some women generate additional income by selling domestic handicrafts.

Unpaid Labor: This traditional division of labor generally still holds, especially in less Westernized rural areas. Women make up over half of the labor force, but only 12% are engaged in wage labor because women are responsible for domestic work and subsistence agriculture. According to one study, unpaid domestic labor explains why Ugandan women work 15 hours-per-day on average while men work an average of 9 hours.

Wage Labor: About half of the Ugandan women who perform wage labor work in the three lowest-wage sectors: domestic, mining, and agriculture. Female domestic workers and miners receive at most half the average male wage in those fields.

Education: Unequal access to education is a major barrier to advancement for Ugandan women: more than 2/3 of the female labor force did not finish primary school, and 1/3 are illiterate. Consequently, women hold only a small share of high-level positions in business and government.

Gender and Politics

Holding 143 of 427 seats, women make up about 1/3 of Parliament (see *Political and Social Relations*) – almost twice the proportion of women in the US House of Representatives. Of those seats 112 were created specifically to increase female representation. Women account for 10 of 29 cabinet ministers primarily in the areas of Education, Finance, Health, Internal Affairs, Trade and Industry, and Energy and Minerals.

Gender and the Law

Although most of Uganda's legislation extend equal protection to both genders, customary law (see *Political and Social Relations*) tends to favor men, especially in family law matters like divorce and inheritance (see *Family and Kinship*). For example, statutory law dictates that widows and widowers are equally entitled to inherit at least 15% of their late spouse's property. However, due to the enduring influence of customary law, widows are often prevented both from inheriting their late husband's property and from retaining custody of any children who resulted from the marriage.

Rape and Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Rape and GBV are major problems in Uganda. According to the 2011 Demographic and Health Survey, 56% of women had experienced physical violence since age 15, and over half of those women had experienced it in the year prior to the survey. In addition, 28% of women reported having lost their virginity unwillingly. School-age girls appear to be especially vulnerable: according to one report, 8% of girls age 16-17 reported having had sexual relations with a teacher.

Although there are laws which prohibit assault, there are no laws which specifically prohibit marital rape or GBV. In addition, many clearly illegal rapes are never reported because there is a strong stigma associated with being a rape victim, especially if one contracts HIV. Those victims who do come forward face an extremely high standard of proof in the courts. Although greater numbers of victims have chosen to prosecute in recent years, it is still rare for those who commit rape to be punished.

Sex and Procreation

Most Ugandan ethnic groups espouse conservative views on sexual relations: neither public displays-of-affection nor open talk of sex is socially appropriate. Although all ethnic groups in Uganda have stiff injunctions against premarital pregnancy, responses to premarital sex differ. For example, some ethnic groups in southwest Uganda historically have punished premarital sex by bringing the offending girl to a deserted forest and leaving her to die. This practice has declined in recent years. In contrast, the Karamojong allow premarital sex as long as it does not result in premarital pregnancy, which historically necessitated a shotgun wedding and 30-cattle fine for the man.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a form of circumcision which involves modifying the female sex organ in order to decrease a woman's ability to experience sexual pleasure. A controversial practice in Africa and around the world, FGM was legal in Uganda until 2009. Perpetrators now risk a sentence of 10 years in prison, or life in prison if the procedure results in the death of the victim.

Although less than 1% of Ugandan women undergo FGM, the practice is very common in northeastern Uganda, where some ethnic groups subject up to 90% of their women to FGM. In addition, some studies imply that FGM is far more common than the standard statistics suggest: according to one survey, 15% of Ugandan Christians and 6% of Muslims report that at least one daughter has been circumcised.

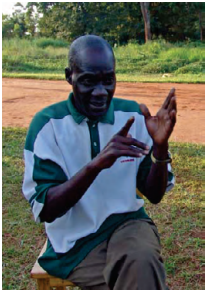
Homosexuality

Homosexuality is illegal under Ugandan law, and since 2009 Parliament has been debating a controversial new bill that would increase to life imprisonment the punishment for certain homosexual behaviors. These include homosexual acts with a minor, disabled person, or HIV-positive person. The bill enjoys broad support in Uganda, where homosexuality is widely seen as an immoral lifestyle choice: according to a poll conducted in 2007, 95% of Ugandans oppose legalizing homosexuality.

6. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Language Overview

Like many African countries, Uganda is linguistically diverse. There are 30 major languages spoken in Uganda, and all but 2 of them are associated with a particular indigenous ethnic group (see *Political and Social Relations*). For most Ugandans, these indigenous ethnic languages are their primary means of verbal communication. Many people also speak a regional tongue such as Swahili, and most educated Ugandans also speak English.



Ethnic Languages

Nearly all Ugandans speak their ethnic language in the home, even when they speak English or Swahili in external settings. Uganda is home to more than 40 indigenous ethnic languages and numerous dialects. Although Ugandans who speak similar dialects often can understand one another, they generally disagree on standard spellings and pronunciation.

The geographical distribution of languages in Uganda corresponds almost exactly to that of ethnic groups (see "Ethnic Groups" in *Political and Social Relations*): Bantu languages predominate in the South while Nilotic languages prevail in the North. The most widely spoken ethnic languages are Luganda, Nyankole, Lusoga, Rukiga, Ateso, Langi, Acholi, and Lugisu, all of which were spoken by at least 4% of the population as of 2002.

Luganda: Luganda, a Bantu language spoken by the Baganda people (see *Political and Social Relations*), is the most widely spoken ethnic language in Uganda. As of the 2002 census, about 17% of Ugandans spoke Luganda in the home, and about half as many spoke Lusoga, a closely related language. Luganda is a common *lingua franca* for Ugandans of different ethnic groups and is one of the primary languages used for sermons, television, radio, and newspapers. Dialects of Luganda include Diopa, Kooki, Sese, and Vuma.

English

Introduced by British colonists in the mid-19th century (see *History and Myth*), English is the official language used for government, business, and higher education. Despite its British roots, Ugandan English is a distinct dialect which clearly reveals the influences of both Swahili and indigenous ethnic languages. English-language content accounts for about half of the Ugandan media, and shop and street signs are commonly written in English. Despite this high level of usage, less than 5% of the Ugandans speak English proficiently, and most of that small group lives in urban areas.

Swahili

Swahili, or Kiswahili, belongs to the Bantu branch of the Niger-Congo language family and is written in the Latin alphabet. An important language in East Africa and the continent as a whole, Swahili is one of six working languages of the African Union and is the most widely spoken language in Africa after Arabic.

Swahili plays a complex role in Uganda's linguistic landscape. The government promotes Swahili because it is widely spoken in East Africa and has the potential to serve as a lingua franca that is both native to Africa (unlike English) and free of ethnic ties (unlike Luganda). However, many Ugandans view Swahili with suspicion because it was spoken by the security forces of Milton Obote and Idi Amin (see *History and Myth*). In 2009/10 the Ministry of Education and Sports began implementing plans to phase in Swahili as a compulsory subject starting in 2012.

Communication Overview

Communicating competently in Uganda requires not only knowledge of Swahili or ethnic languages, but also the ability to interact effectively using those languages. This broad notion of competence includes paralanguage (rate of speech, volume, intonation), nonverbal communication (personal space, touch, gestures), and interaction management (conversation initiation, turn-taking, and termination). When used properly, these forms of communication ensure that statements are interpreted as the speaker intends.

Communication Style

Although Ugandans tend to be hospitable, their characteristic emotional reserve may seem to indicate otherwise. The best way to penetrate this reserve and foster relationships is by finding mutual interests rather than following specific rules for social interaction. Yet, acquiring a basic knowledge of those rules is a good point of departure.

Unlike Africans from other countries, Ugandans are generally open, frank, and direct communicators. However, they tend to avoid confrontation and prefer to keep personal disagreements private. Although Ugandans are usually not as concerned with maintaining face as other Africans, constructive criticism is best delivered privately to the individual concerned.

The Communication Process

A leisurely approach to communication, especially while exchanging greetings (see “Greetings” below), is essential to building alliances in Uganda. Patience and politeness are also important to listening and speaking effectively. Rather than demonstrating politeness through verbal cues such as “please,” “thank you,” or their equivalents in other languages; Ugandans pace their conversations carefully by devoting close attention to those with whom they are speaking. Ugandans are fairly consistent in using a moderate, reserved tone of voice and speaking at a relaxed pace, conversational volume varies.

Undignified Syllables

Some Ugandans follow verbal taboos which limit their ability to communicate effectively in foreign languages. One notable group is the Batoro (see *Political and Social Relations*), who prefer not to utter syllables which make the face appear undignified. For example, the syllable *jaw* is avoided because it distorts the mouth and leaves it open at the end of the syllable. This taboo often forces the Batoro to think of alternate words on the fly while speaking foreign languages, a practice which may make them appear deceptive.

Gender

Social contact between people of different genders is inappropriate in many parts of Uganda, particularly in traditional rural areas. Men must be careful when conversing with women, as even casual remarks can be construed as a romantic invitation. Consequently, male acquaintances often address women through male companions rather than speaking to them directly. A notable exception is with regards to female foreign nationals who should be prepared to receive direct communication from Ugandan men: especially if they have a light complexion, female tourists are often the target of catcalls, stares, and even physical contact.

Greetings

Greetings are an essential part of social interaction in Uganda and are appropriate in most contexts, including conversations with large groups or strangers on public transit. A typical greeting is a handshake, fist bump, or hug along with verbal salutations and inquiries about wellbeing. Since the physical aspects of this greeting are generally not acceptable between Ugandans of different genders, consequently women often kneel or bow when greeting males.

Specific verbal greetings (see “Useful Translations” below) vary by ethnicity, the time of day, the nature of the occasion, and the social status of the people involved in the greeting. Ugandans often introduce foreign nationals who happen to be accompanying them. Even if they do not, other Ugandans are usually anxious to greet foreign nationals, often by shouting ***mzungu***, a Swahili term which means “wanderer” or “traveler.”

Forms of Address

Because Uganda is a status-conscious society (see *Political and Social Relations*), using titles is common and expected, although the actual forms of address vary. Some superiors prefer to be addressed with the term *Mr.*, *Ms.*, or *Mrs.* and their last name, while others wish to be called *Sir* or *Madame*. Still others prefer a title such as *Director*. Even non-relatives often address elders as *Uncle* or *Auntie*. Mothers are often referred to as *Mama* followed by the name of their child.

Empaakos: Used only among the Banyoro and Batoro (see *Political and Social Relations*), ***empaakos*** are nicknames and terms of endearment. Apart from *Okaali*, which is reserved for the king, there are 11 empaakos: *Abbala*, *Abbooki*, *Abwooli*, *Acaali*, *Adyeeri*, *Akiiki*, *Amooti*, *Apuuli*, *Araali*, *Ateenyi*, and *Atwooki*. Empaakos convey respect and positive regard.

Conversational Topics

Ugandans are friendly toward visitors and often engage foreign nationals in conversation. When conversing with Ugandans, foreign nationals should expect extensive personal questions, especially about their spouses and children. Other acceptable topics include homes, occupations, soccer (see *Aesthetics and Recreation*), and favorable impressions of Uganda.

Foreign nationals should avoid discussing their income or living standards. Although Ugandans have a good sense of humor, foreign nationals should keep their humor straightforward – sarcasm often translates poorly across cultural and language boundaries. It is best for outsiders in Uganda to withhold judgment or opinion regarding sensitive topics like religion or politics, particularly as they pertain to Ugandan society.

Gestures

Ugandans use many gestures in familiar conversation, such as raised eyebrows to indicate agreement or crossed arms to display insolence. Ugandans may also use gestures to start a conversation. For example, one can summon others in Uganda by extending the right arm with the palm down and then quickly closing and opening the fingers. Ugandans never point with a single finger, instead thrusting their lips or an entire hand in the appropriate direction. Although gestures are relatively common in Uganda, excessive use is considered to be strange behavior.

Language Training Resources

Please view the Air Force Culture and Language Center website at http://culture.af.mil/resources/index.aspx for language training resources.

Useful Translations

English	Swahili	Luganda
Do you speak English?	Unasema Kiingereza?	Omanyi
Hello/Hello to all	Hujambo/ Hamjambo	Oli otya?/Muli mutya?
How are you?	Habari?	Oli otya?
What's up today?	Umeshindaje leo?	Ki Kati?
I am fine	Sijambo	Mulungi/Bulungi/ Belungi
Good morning	Habari za asubuhi?	Wasuze otya nno?
Good evening	Habari za jioni? ***or*** Salama za jioni?	Osiibye otya nno?
Good night	Usiku mwema	Sula bulungi
Please	Tafadhali	Mwattu
Thank you (very much)	Asante (sana)	Webale (nnyo)
Welcome/Welcome to all!	Karibu!	Tukusanyukidde!/ Tubasanyukidde!
Attention!	Samahani!	Wulira!
Yes/no	Ndiyo/Hapana	Ye/Nedda
OK	Sawa/Mzuri/Poa	Kale
Sorry/Sorry to all	Pole	Munsonyiwe/ Nsonyiwa
What is your name?	Jina lako nani?	Erinnya lyo ggwe ani?
My name is ___	Jina langu ni ___	Erinnya lyange nze.
See you later/Goodbye	Kesho/Kwaheri	Tunaalabagana/ Weraba
Who?	Nani?	Ani?
What?	Nini?	Kiki?
When?	Lini?	Ddi?
Where?	Wapi?	Wa?
Why?	Kwa nini?	Lwaaki?
Calm down	Tulia	Téka!
Stop!	Ngoja!/Simama!/ Kuacha!	Yimilira!
Help!	Saidia!/ Msaada!	Nnyamba!

7. LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE

Literacy

- Total population over age 15 who can read and write: 78.4%
- Male: 85.3%
- Female: 71.5% (2015 est.)

Traditional Education

Although traditional educational methods varied across ethnicities, the universal purpose of education was to help young people adapt to their physical and social contexts by passing on values, beliefs, and skills. This process took place during childhood and adolescence and continued into adulthood. Many lessons related to family life were taught during initiation ceremonies which marked the transition to adulthood.

The core of the traditional curriculum consisted of values (such as cooperation, discipline, hard work, honesty, and respect for elders) and beliefs (such as those about clan relations, cultural taboos, and spirituality). These values and beliefs were often taught through parables, riddles, and songs.

The traditional curriculum also included skills training in animal husbandry, agriculture, hunting, and healing. Training for some skills was gender-specific: while boys learned blacksmithing, divination, and rainmaking; girls learned pottery and basketry. Children often learned these gender-specific skills by working alongside their parent of the same sex.

Introduction of Formal Education

In 1886 the Church Mission Society of London (see *Religion and Spirituality*) established the first formal, Western-style school in present-day Uganda. Eager to compete for converts, other mission societies arrived shortly thereafter and built their own schools, focusing on reading, writing, and religion. The mission societies willingly bore the expense of establishing and running these schools because they felt that demonstrating the benefits of Christianity would attract Ugandan converts.

Education in the Uganda Protectorate

Mission societies maintained a monopoly on formal education in Uganda until well into the 20th century. Despite controlling most of Uganda by the end of the 19th century, the British colonial administration (see *History and Myth*) was wary of establishing its own schools from fear of creating a class of educated Africans who would demand equal rights.

A growing need for skilled labor eventually forced the colonial administration to revise this position. After establishing a small technical college in 1922, the colonial administration founded a secondary school in 1924. Although other schools funded by the colonial government soon followed, mission societies still controlled 47 of 53 secondary schools in Uganda in 1950.

Makerere University: The most enduring contribution that the British colonial administration made to the education system of Uganda is probably Makerere University, which grew out of the technical college founded in 1922. In 1949 Makerere joined the University College London system, meaning that its graduates earned general degrees from the British institution. Makerere joined the universities of Nairobi and Dar es Salaam to form the University of East Africa system in 1963 before becoming an independent university in 1970.

Education in Independent Uganda

After independence in 1962 (see *History and Myth*), many villages were awarded government assistance to establish schools and hire teachers. During the same period, the Ugandan government began to develop national standards and certifying examinations. The education system appeared to be on a positive track until the late 1960s, when the young nation began to descend into violence (see *History and Myth*).

Although the education system still functioned and enrollments even increased during the reigns of Idi Amin and Milton Obote, educational quality suffered in every respect: school buildings were poorly maintained or damaged by armed conflict, many teachers were demoralized by constant upheaval and low pay, while other teachers fled Uganda to more peaceful countries.

When President Museveni took power in 1986, he implemented a plan designed to reverse two decades of educational decline. Museveni's plan focused both on capacity, by rebuilding the physical infrastructure of the education system, and on quality, by improving teacher training and revising curricula. This plan laid the groundwork for significant improvements to education in Uganda, but resource constraints continue to limit quality.

Modern Education System

Consistent with its colonial history, Uganda closely follows the British educational model. Students begin schooling at age 6, and then have 7 years of primary school, 4 years of secondary school, 2 years of senior secondary school, and then 3-5 years of university education, depending on the degree program.

Although English is the preferred language of instruction at all levels, a lack of English-speaking teachers means that regional languages are often used during primary school. Students are evaluated based on a single essay examination given at the end of the school year, which runs from January to December.

Primary: Primary school is free but not compulsory in Uganda. Primary school enrollment increased dramatically following the introduction of universal primary education in 1997, and as of 2014 there were about 8.1 million Ugandan children enrolled in primary school. Primary schools are close to evenly distributed between cities and rural areas, and there were over 18,000 primary schools registered with the government.

The core primary school curriculum includes reading, writing, arithmetic, natural science, religion, health, physical education, and agriculture. Additional subjects include history, geography, foreign language, arts, and crafts.

Secondary: Although only a small fraction of the students who complete primary school continue on to secondary school, the situation has improved since universal secondary education was introduced in 2007. However, school uniforms and other associated expenses remain prohibitive for some families.

As of 2014 about 1,330,000 students were enrolled in secondary school, a larger share of males (55%) than females (45%). In the same year the government recorded more than 4,000 secondary schools, of which more than 80% were neither operated nor funded by the government. Because they are located far from student homes, secondary schools in Uganda are usually operated as same-sex boarding schools.

The core secondary school curriculum includes mathematics, literature, history, politics, religion, physics, chemistry, biology, geography, business, English, and French. Some schools have also introduced courses in practical disciplines such as metal fabrication, woodworking, agriculture, and domestic skills.

Tertiary: As of 2011 there were about 200,000 students enrolled in Uganda's 164 universities, of which 49 are public and 115 are private. Makerere University is a public institution which singularly accounts for about 1/3 of all students, while private universities collectively claimed about 40%. A bachelor's degree takes 3 years to complete in Uganda, while an engineering degree takes 4 and a medical or dental degree 5. Some of the most popular degree tracks include architecture, dentistry, and medicine.

Religious Education: Religious organizations run a variety of schools in Uganda which traditionally catered to European and South Asian minorities. There are about 200 Islamic schools in Uganda as well as about 1,000 schools each run by the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of Uganda.

HIV/AIDS Education

Public education has played a major role in Uganda's response to the HIV/AIDS crisis (see *Sustenance and Health*), first through the "**a**bstain, **b**e faithful, use **c**ondoms" (ABC campaign) and later through the Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to. PIASCY was designed to teach primary school children beginning in 3rd grade about issues related to HIV/AIDS. Schools were encouraged to discuss HIV/AIDS at least once a week in order to compensate for a cultural taboo which prevents parents from discussing sex with their children.

8. TIME AND SPACE

Concept of Time

Like most Africans, Ugandans take a more relaxed view of time than people from Western countries. The rhythm of life is based much more on the sun and the seasons than on calendars and clocks. Ugandans see few things as urgent and consistently emphasize people and relationships over tasks and schedules.

Time and Work

Although working hours vary, businesses and government offices usually open at 8:30am and close at 4:30pm-5:30pm, with banks closing earlier at 3:00pm-4:00pm. Some banks, shops, and post offices on Saturdays usually between 8:30am and 1:00pm. It is customary for Ugandans to take long lunch breaks; therefore, many businesses usually close from 12:00pm-2:00pm. Businesses in heavily Islamic areas sometimes close on Friday (Muslim worship day) afternoons to allow employees to attend prayer services.

When Ugandans entertain guests in the home, a snack along with coffee or tea is often served around 4:00pm. Those who are able to often relax or take a nap in the afternoon, during the hottest part of the day. Later in the evening, many Ugandans light kerosene lamps and use the time to socialize.

Swahili Time: “Swahili Time” is a method of timekeeping that divides the day into two 12-hour periods, marked by “midnight,” which occurs at dawn, and “noon,” which occurs at dusk. Because dawn occurs around 6:00am, Swahili Time is 6 hours ahead of UTC+3, the time zone in which Uganda is located.

Lunar Islamic Calendar: Ugandan Muslims use the Islamic calendar for spiritual purposes. Because it is based on lunar phases, each date of the Islamic calendar falls 11 days earlier each year according to the Western calendar. There are 12 months in the Islamic calendar, all of which have 30 days or fewer. Weeks in the Islamic calendar begin at sunset on Saturday.

Punctuality: Ugandans tend not to be punctual in the Western sense, and it is generally acceptable if individuals arrive within 1-2 hours of their appointed time. Although punctuality is more common in professional contexts, foreign nationals should still expect to be kept waiting for appointments, particularly when with a person of high-status. To demonstrate impatience when encountering this sort of inconvenience is usually counterproductive and reflects poorly on the foreign national.

Negotiations: Negotiations can be time-consuming primarily because Ugandans prefer to establish trust by building a personal relationship prior to conducting business. In addition, decisions often depend on the approval of many different stakeholders. Foreign nationals negotiating with Ugandans are advised to show patience and foster a trusting partnership through face-to-face communication.

Concept of Space

Although proximity, eye contact, and touching are common and acceptable in Uganda; there are important cultural boundaries regarding their use, especially with relation to gender.

Personal Space

Most Ugandans neither expect nor require a large amount of personal space: conversations are generally conducted within an arm's length of space, and Ugandans entering a sparsely occupied public space will generally sit or stand next to others rather than choosing a spot away from them.

Eye Contact: Ugandans generally prefer indirect eye contact. Although direct eye contact is not taboo, it is often perceived as hostile, especially if directed by a man at a woman. Ugandans consider it polite to acknowledge people on the street when eye contact is established. Female foreign nationals should be circumspect about making eye contact with male Ugandans –

depending on the context, such eye contact may be construed as a romantic invitation.

Touch: Ugandans are usually comfortable with a moderate degree of touching. Handshakes typically start a conversation followed by light touches to the shoulders and arms while speaking, and handholding, which sometimes extends for the duration of an interaction. Ugandans almost never touch members of the opposite sex in public, and they consider it offensive to touch the head of an elder or a Muslim.

Handshakes: Although Ugandans of opposite genders do not generally touch in public (see *Language and Communication*), some Ugandan women, with the notable exception of Muslims, do shake hands with men. The best way for male foreign nationals to respect a woman's preferences is to wait for her to offer her hand before shaking hands with her.

For greetings between men, however, the handshake remains the greeting of choice. The Ugandan version of the handshake is enthusiastic although soft and gentle, as many Ugandans feel that this style is humble and considerate. It is appropriate for foreign nationals to display an added measure of respect by placing their left hand under their right elbow during a handshake.

Left Hand: The left hand should not be used in Uganda for any purpose other than personal hygiene. Foreign nationals should use the right hand to give and receive items. If a handshake is offered and the right hand is occupied or dirty, the right wrist or elbow – not the left hand – should be presented as a substitute.

Photographs: Due to heightened regional security concerns, foreign nationals should not photograph property or locations associated with the government or military. In addition, foreign nationals should always seek permission before photographing local nationals and should be aware that they may expect payment for being photographed.

9. AESTHETICS AND RECREATION

Overview

The aesthetics and recreation of Uganda represent a powerful blend of beauty and utility: performing arts both entertain and educate while arts and crafts are both attractive and functional. This careful balance may explain at least in part why Ugandan culture has proven so resilient to outside influences.

Dress

Apart from the Karamojong (see *Political and Social Relations*), who prefer traditional dress, Ugandans generally wear conservative, Western-style attire. Because Ugandans place a high premium on looking neat and tidy, clothing is usually neatly pressed and dress shoes polished. Ugandans consider it embarrassing to wear flip-flops in public. Although recently it has become more common in urban areas, revealing clothing is considered disgraceful.

Men: The traditional male garment is the ***kanzu*** or ***boubou***, an embroidered, floor-length white gown which is often worn with a jacket and shoes. Ugandan men usually wear this outfit on special occasions. The most common daily outfit is a shirt or t-shirt with pants or shorts, although office workers tend to dress formally. Minimum business dress is a long-sleeved, collared shirt with dress pants, although many businessmen wear suits.

Women: Designed by European missionaries who felt that pre-colonial dress was too revealing, the traditional female garment in Uganda is the ***gomesi*** or ***busuti***, a full-length wraparound dress. The textiles used to make the gomesi are quite colorful and often feature patterns with flowers or African wildlife.

Modern Ugandan women generally reserve the heavy gomesi for ceremonies or special occasions, relying on blouses with dresses or knee-length skirts for daily wear. Although they are becoming more common in cities, pants are not traditionally considered acceptable attire for women.

Recreation

Ugandans generally do not have a large amount of free time because most people are subsistence farmers (see *Economics and Resources*) who cultivate year-round due to the country's favorable climate. Those Ugandans who find themselves with surplus time often enjoy sports, games, music, and dance.

In addition, socializing over beers in the afternoon is popular among men. Many Ugandans, especially Muslims, also enjoy chewing ***miraa*** or ***khat***, a mildly narcotic leaf which acts as a stimulant. Stopping by a sauna before coming home after work is becoming increasingly popular among middle-class men.

Soccer: Known locally as "football," soccer is the most popular sport in Uganda. Ugandans of every social class love to watch and play in matches, both formal and informal. Although Uganda has a professional soccer league, it enjoys only limited appeal. Many Ugandans instead follow the English Premier League, especially teams such as Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, and Manchester United. Uganda also has a national soccer team known as the Crested Cranes which has seen little success in international play.

Other Sports: Because most Ugandans are poor by global standards, recreational equipment is a luxury. Consequently, in addition to soccer, Ugandans prefer sports which require little or no equipment, such as track and field, simple weightlifting, basketball, and netball (a variant of basketball played mostly by women). Sports such as golf, tennis, swimming, squash, rugby, and cricket are popular among wealthier Ugandans who can afford equipment and club dues.

Games: Ugandans of all ages enjoy ***Omweso***, a traditional 2-player board game in which players try to capture each other's seeds on a board with 32 pits. Omweso is rarely a silent affair, and players often chat about village news, events, and gossip during the game. Ugandans also play a game in which adults hide seeds in piles of dirt and have children look for them.

Music and Dance

Music and dance play an important role in the work, recreation, and religious rituals of Ugandans. Prior to the colonial era (see *History and Myth*), Ugandan music consisted entirely of styles developed by indigenous ethnic groups, and there was little overlap between these styles. In contrast, modern Ugandans embrace genres which fuse traditions from all around the world.

Traditional Music: Traditional music has multiple purposes in Ugandan culture. As in many societies, Ugandan traditional music is used for communication, entertainment, and emotional solace. In addition, traditional music is used to regulate social behavior by teaching young people about proper gender roles, announcing the time for specific rituals, and promoting behavior which harmonizes with traditional values. Song topics overlap with those of other styles of music: love, family, and myths.

Based on a five-note scale, traditional instrumental music is loud, rhythmic, and usually accompanied by vocals. Instruments vary across ethnic groups, but drums dominate in every traditional style. Instruments used across Uganda include the ***amadina*** (xylophone), the ***endigidi*** (tube fiddle), and the ***endeere*** (flute).

Traditional Dance: Although dance styles also vary across ethnic groups, there are notable regional similarities: dances from the North feature movements of the neck, arms, and feet; dances from the South are characterized by fast hip movements; and dances from the Southwest and Northeast are known for leaping and stomping. In all styles of traditional dance, minute variations can change entirely the meaning of a given routine. Although traditional dance is open to both genders, some dances are specifically intended for a single gender.

Modern: Uganda is home to a popular and thriving music industry based in Kampala, although Ugandans also enjoy a wide variety of foreign styles from Africa, Europe, the US, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. International music is common on the radio and in nightclubs and bars, and some of the most popular genres blend African music with international genres.

For example, many Ugandans enjoy ***Afrobeat***, a genre which mixes standard or Ugandan-style pop music with African folk music. Ugandans historically also have been fans of ***Lingala*** or ***soukous***, an African take on the rumba which originated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Lingala has declined in popularity as Ugandan styles have matured. One such native genre is ***Kadongo Kamu***, which pairs traditional drum music with narrative lyrics and a single bass guitar.

Despite the popularity of these hybrid genres, Ugandans also enjoy music from common genres such as gospel, jazz, R&B, reggae, and hip-hop. These styles are usually adapted to the Ugandan context. For example, some local hip-hop artists create "gospel rap" about their religious beliefs or rap in local languages such as Luganda and Swahili (see *Language and Communication*).

Theater

Like music, theater serves as both a form of entertainment and a key means of socialization. Although limited public funding means that most performances are staged by amateurs, the dramatic arts take a variety of forms in Uganda, ranging from acrobatics and puppetry to musicals and political plays. Many performances in Uganda are unscripted, a fact as much due to painful memories of artist persecution during the Idi Amin era (see *History and Myth*) as to Uganda's widespread illiteracy.

Literature

Literature is a key part of Ugandan culture because storytelling, like music and theater, has the ability to impart cultural values. The total amount of literature in indigenous ethnic languages is massive, but little has been converted into written form.

Few modern Ugandan authors write in indigenous ethnic languages, instead preferring English. The notable exception to this rule is Okot p'Bitek, a Ugandan author who wrote in his native Acholi language (see *Language and Communication*). His most famous works are *Lak Tar Miyo Kinyero Wi Lobo* and *Song of Lawino*.

Arts and Crafts

Arts and crafts traditionally are considered the purest form of expression in Uganda, and each ethnic group made its own distinctive handicrafts as symbols of prestige and power. In modern Uganda, art serves as a substitute for written literature because it transcends the barriers of language and literacy.

The most common arts and crafts in Uganda are those which blend form and function; such as ceramics, textiles, musical instruments and household items like baskets and pots. Many forms and colors mirror the African landscape and way of life.

Public Holidays

- January 1: New Year's Day
- January 26: Liberation Day
- March 8: International Women's Day
- March – April: Good Friday
- March – April: Easter Monday
- May 1: International Labor Day
- May 13: Ascension Day
- June 9: National Heroes' Day
- July 3: Martyrs' Day
- October 9: Independence Day
- December 25: Christmas Day
- December 26: Boxing Day
- Variable: Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)
- Variable: Eid al-Adha (Feast of the Sacrifice)

Holidays

Christmas is the most important religious holiday in Uganda. The standard Christmas greeting is *Mukulike Okutuuka Ku Mazaalibwa*, an expression that conveys one's happiness that his friends and family have lived to see another Christmas. Ugandans celebrate Christmas by feasting and drinking with loved ones. The most significant political holiday is Independence Day, which marks the day Uganda achieved independence from Britain with speeches, parades, singing, and dancing.

10. SUSTENANCE AND HEALTH

Dining Customs

Especially in rural areas, Ugandans generally eat their meals outdoors, either under a tree or on a porch. Although women are responsible for preparing meals in most ethnic groups, men usually are served first and allowed to eat their fill. Women and children must wait until men are done, and often they also must eat separately on a mat rather than at the main table.

Except for some urbanites who use cutlery, Ugandans generally eat with the right hand (see *Time and Space*). Consequently, it is customary in Uganda to wash one's hands in a basin prior to eating. Although rural Ugandans generally eat family-style from shared bowls and platters, many urban Ugandans who have been exposed to Western culture now use separate plates. Ugandans rarely talk during meals, a practice which is supposed to help prevent choking.

Traditional Diet

The traditional Ugandan diet consists of foods which Ugandan farmers historically have cultivated successfully; such as corn, rice, sweet potatoes, bananas, peanuts, beans, fruit, and green vegetables. Due to its many lakes and rivers, Uganda also has a supply of fish such as Nile perch, tilapia, and mudfish. Many Ugandans also hunt wild game or raise livestock such as cattle, chickens, sheep, and goats.

The emphasis placed upon each of these foods varies across ethnic groups. The Bantu-speaking groups of southern Uganda traditionally have emphasized crop cultivation and supplements of meat obtained through hunting or livestock husbandry. In contrast, the Nilotic-speaking groups of northern Uganda rely upon staples such as cassava, millet, sorghum, and sesame. The exception to this general division is the Nilotic-speaking Karamojong ethnic group, which derives most of its nutrition from cattle; however, the Karamojong also grow crops and trade occasionally for staples with neighboring agriculturalists.

Typical Meals: Depending on the resources available to them, Ugandans typically eat 2-3 meals per day. Breakfast generally consists of corn porridge, sometimes with bananas, and coffee or tea for those who can afford it. Lunch usually consists of a starch (often bananas) along with boiled sweet potatoes and a sauce made of beans, peanuts, or meat. Dinner is more or less the same as lunch, although wealthy Ugandans sometimes eat meat and rice stew.

Popular Dishes: Because Uganda has so many different ethnic groups, there is no universally popular dish. ***Matooke***, a dish made from mashed green bananas, is probably the most popular. Although matooke is typically served with peanut sauce, Ugandans also enjoy eating the dish with the more expensive ***luwombo***, a stew made with beef, chicken, or goat, when financial circumstances allow.

Despite the popularity of matooke, many city-dwellers prefer a corn porridge known variously as ***posho***, ***nsima***, or ***ugali***. Corn porridge is popular because it is less expensive than matooke and is a closer substitute for cassava and millet, staples which many Ugandans grew up eating. Corn porridge is often served with sauce made from beans or meat. Ugandans also eat both matooke and corn porridge with fried or stewed fish, and often snack on white ants, termites, or ***nsenene*** (grasshoppers).

Urban Ugandans have access to a greater variety of cuisine imported from abroad. Some of the most popular imports are rice, wheat bread, and ***mandazi***, a type of donut from the East African coast. South Asian foods such as ***samosas*** (fried meat or vegetable pies) and ***chapati*** (flatbread) are also popular.

Beverages

All Ugandans drink water at meals, and adult Ugandan males drink a variety of alcoholic beverages. Bananas seem to be the most popular ingredient in alcoholic beverages, appearing in ***marwa*** and ***pombe*** (banana beers) as well as ***waragi*** (banana gin), the most popular drink in Uganda. Ugandans who do not drink alcohol – mostly women and children – also enjoy juice, soda, and milk.

Traditional Medicine

The term “traditional medicine” refers to the range of methods used to protect and restore health in a particular region prior to the introduction of Western-style medicine. More than 60% of Ugandans still rely upon traditional health practitioners, who use an approach which considers physical, mental, and social factors to treat a range of diseases such as malaria, respiratory problems, skin ailments, and toothaches.

Traditional health practitioners are popular for several reasons. First, they are inexpensive. Second, they are accessible: there is a traditional health practitioner for every 200-400 Ugandans, while the ratio for Western-trained doctors is closer to 1:27,000. Third, they are trusted members of the community who share a cultural background with their patients.

An estimated 95% of Africa’s traditional health practitioners are herbalists who use herbal medicines to treat illness. Scientific studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of some Ugandan herbal medicines against HIV/AIDS and malaria. Based on these findings, the Ugandan government and the World Health Organization (WHO) have funded further scientific studies about traditional medicines.

Modern Healthcare System

The Ugandan healthcare system was devastated by domestic strife during the 1970s and 1980s (see *History and Myth*), not only by the direct effects of conflict but also by the mass exodus of medical practitioners from Uganda. There is still a severe shortage of medical personnel: Uganda had only 15 medical professionals for every 10,000 people in 2010, a figure well below the ratio of 23:10,000 recommended by the WHO. Fewer than half (44%) of the positions for doctors at public hospitals were filled in 2010.

Uganda has over 140 hospitals – about 15 are private for profit, 60 are private not for profit, and 65 are public. The government runs a well-equipped General Hospital in each of Uganda’s 4 regions (see *Political and Social Relations*) and over 10 smaller Regional Referral Hospitals located throughout Uganda.

Village Health Teams (VHTs): Since the early 2000s, Uganda has used a system of VHTs to provide healthcare guidance at the local level. VHTs are composed of 4-5 community members who are trained by the Ministry of Health and are expected to communicate basic information about the healthcare system to their neighbors and refer people to the proper facilities when care is required. There are VHTs in 72% of Uganda's villages.

Health Challenges

Having one of the world's lowest life expectancies at just 54.9 years, Uganda faces many serious health challenges ranging from communicable diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS and social problems such as alcohol abuse and domestic violence (see *Sex and Gender*).

HIV/AIDS: With a prevalence of 7.3% among adults age 15-49, Uganda has the 10th highest rate of HIV infection in both Africa and the world. Although this statistic is bleak, it represents notable improvement over the early 1990s when Uganda's HIV prevalence topped 10%. The Ugandan government has been praised for its response to the virus, which involved a massive public education campaign (see *Learning and Knowledge*).

Malaria and Tuberculosis: Malaria is endemic in all but 5% of Uganda, with the area near Lake Kyoga bearing an especially heavy burden. Approximately 10% of Uganda's population has contracted malaria, and 15% of all hospital deaths are attributed to malaria in 2015. Tuberculosis (TB) is also a problem: with an estimated 72 infections per 100,000 people, Uganda had one of the world's highest TB burdens in 2014. Not counting TB-caused deaths of HIV-positive individuals (which count as HIV deaths), TB killed an estimated 33,012 Ugandans in 2012.

Other Challenges: The most common health issues are colds, diarrhea, headaches, skin infections, alcohol abuse, and dental problems. Uganda has an infant mortality rate of 59.1 deaths per 1,000 live births (10 times the US rate) and a maternal mortality rate of 343 deaths per 100,000 live births. Mainly due to malnutrition, 14.1% of children under the age of 5 year were underweight in 2011.

11. ECONOMICS AND RESOURCES

Overview

The Ugandan economic growth has been averaging 5% per year since 1987, the year after President Museveni came to power (see *History and Myth*). During the same year the International Monetary Fund (IMF) implemented economic reforms which deregulated agriculture, devalued the shilling (see "Currency"), and privatized state-owned firms. This growth has been sustained mostly by profitable agricultural exports and large inflows of foreign aid and investment.

Despite this strong growth, Uganda remains a poor country in which about 20% of the population lives below the poverty line. In addition, Uganda has a high level of income inequality: while the richest 10% of Ugandans controls 36.1% of household income, the poorest 10% controls less than 3%.

With its fertile soil, abundant rainfall, and recently discovered oil and mineral reserves; Uganda has the potential for substantial economic growth. However, Uganda first must reckon with high energy costs, widespread corruption, weak infrastructure, and internal instability (see *Political and Social Relations*).

Services

Accounting for over half (51%) of GDP and 29% of the labor force, services comprise the largest sector of the economy. The Ugandan government purchases about half of services sector output. The largest subsectors are retail trade (mostly petty trade) and transport and communications (see *Technology and Material*), which is dominated by the mobile phone industry.

Tourism: Tourism, an industry which involves many services sector inputs, is growing quickly in Uganda due to attractions such as the mountain gorillas of the Southwest, the islands of Lake Victoria, and Bujagali Falls, which is famous for Nile River rafting. Nevertheless, Uganda's tourism industry still lags behind its counterparts in Kenya and Tanzania due to setbacks caused by years of civil strife (see *History and Myth*).

Industry

Industry accounts for 22% of GDP and 6% of the labor force. Most industrial activity is concentrated in the construction and manufacturing subsectors, each of which added 9% of. Foods, drinks, and tobacco products account for the bulk of Ugandan manufacturing, although construction materials are also important. Much manufacturing, such as ginning cotton or curing coffee, involves preparing local raw materials for export.

Mining: Although at times the Ugandan mining industry has been known mainly as a proxy for minerals extracted illegally in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda began exporting copper and small amounts of other minerals as early as the colonial era. Found mainly in the Rwenzori Mountains, copper remains an important export, along with cobalt, gold, and phosphate. Deposits of several other minerals have been located in recent years in southwestern Uganda.

Oil: Extractable oil was first found in Uganda at the Kingfisher well in western Uganda in October 2006. Originally estimated at 300 million barrels, Uganda's oil reserves are now believed to total 2 billion barrels, of which 800 million barrels is thought to be extractable. Further exploration continues at Lake Albert.

Agriculture

Although the agriculture sector accounts for only 26% of GDP, making it the smallest sector of Uganda's economy, it employs almost 2/3 of the labor force. The agriculture sector produces both cash crops for export and staples for domestic consumption. Cash crops, which account for about 30% of export earnings, include coffee, tea, cotton, tobacco, and cocoa. The most important staples are bananas, cassava, corn, millet, and potatoes.

In addition to food crops, Ugandan farmers also cultivate and export cut flowers. This industry has grown in recent years as infrastructure advances and shared industry standards have helped to boost quality. Fishing is also an important part of the agricultural sector, although the industry currently faces threats such as overfishing.

Currency

The official currency of Uganda is the Ugandan shilling (USh), which is issued in five banknotes (USh 1,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000) and four coins (USh 50, 100, 200, 500). Due to high inflation in Uganda, the exchange rate between the shilling and the US dollar fluctuates. As a general guide, $1 has been worth anywhere from USh 1,560-2,885 over the period of 2001-2011 and stood at about USh 3,339.6 in 2015.

Foreign Trade

Uganda's imports, which totaled $5.116 billion in 2014, primarily consisted of cereal grains, machinery, medical supplies, oil, and vehicles purchased from Kenya (18.31%), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (14.3%), India (12.8%), China (11.3%), India (8.2%), South Africa (6.2%), and Japan (4.4%).

Uganda's exports, which totaled $2.743 billion in 2014, mainly consisted of coffee, tea, gold, cotton, fish, fish products, and horticultural products like flowers sold to Rwanda (10.1%), the UAE (9.8%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (9.3%), Kenya (9.1%), the Netherlands (6%), Germany (5.7%), Italy (5.5%), and China (5.3%).

Foreign Aid

Although foreign aid comprised more than 1/3 of the Ugandan government budget in FY2009/10, aid inflows have declined in recent years. Some of this drop may be due to donor frustration with widespread bureaucratic corruption and high levels of military spending. Some donors have also cut aid to Uganda because its Parliament passed a controversial bill regarding homosexuality (see *Sex and Gender*).

US Assistance: The US provided about $465 million in aid to Uganda in 2014, a decrease in funding since the passing of the anti-gay legislation. The US also opted not to renew a program that helped fund the salaries of 87 employees of the Ugandan Ministry of Health who support the country's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

12. TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIAL

Overview

Uganda has an underdeveloped physical infrastructure which does not yet allow for quick, safe, and inexpensive movement of people and goods. However, the spread of mobile telephony in recent years has improved communications in Uganda.

Transportation

Vehicles: Motorized vehicles are the most common form of passenger travel in Uganda. Coach-style buses, which are usually the fastest and safest form of motorized transport, make regular trips along all of the major routes. Minibuses (also known as "taxis") travel a broader range of routes, although they depart only when at max capacity rather than in accordance with a fixed schedule. The most common choice for suburban transport is the ***boda-boda***, a bicycle taxi sometimes powered by a small engine.

Roadways: Uganda had 43,960 miles of roadways in 2011, of which 23% were paved. Highways, which are generally in fair condition, link Kampala with secondary urban centers such as Gulu in the North, Tororo in the East, Masaka and Mbarara in the Southwest, and Fort Portal in the West. Although Kampala is the major hub of the road network, traffic in the capital region has eased considerably since the opening of a bypass on the northern side of the city in 2008. Because most regional roads are unpaved, they can become impassable after heavy rains.

Railways: Uganda has a total of 773 miles of railways. Since 2006 a South African group called Rift Valley Railways has run the integrated and formerly state-owned rail networks of Kenya and Uganda. The Ugandan part of this network forks into two branches just after the Kenyan border, with one branch running northwest to Gulu while the other runs southwest to Port Bell (see "Waterways and Ports"). Although Rift Valley Railways announced plans to offer passenger service beginning in early 2012, those plans were delayed by a licensing issue.

Waterways and Ports: Despite being landlocked and having few navigable stretches of river, Uganda has access to several lakes which support commercial traffic. The most important is Lake Victoria, which connects Uganda's Port Bell with Kisumu in Kenya and Mwanza in Tanzania. Located outside Kampala, Port Bell is the only port in Uganda that can accommodate large ferries. Smaller-scale commerce flows through Jinja on Lake Victoria, Masindi Port on Lake Kyoga in Central Uganda, and Butiaba on Lake Albert in northwest Uganda.

Airways: Uganda has a total of 46 airports and airstrips, of which 5 have paved runways. Located 21 miles southwest of Kampala, Entebbe International Airport is the country's primary airport.

The national airline is Air Uganda, which operates a fleet of 4 small- and medium-sized airliners out of Entebbe. In addition to several flights per day to Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and Juba; Air Uganda offers several flights per week to regional destinations such as Bujumbura, Kigali, Mombasa, and Zanzibar. Smaller private and charter airlines offer service within Uganda.

Regional carriers such as Ethiopian Airways, Kenya Airways, and Precision Air (Tanzania) provide service to many other cities within Africa, while international carriers such as British Airways, Emirates, and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines link Uganda with destinations in Europe and the Middle East.

Energy

Electricity in Uganda is expensive, unreliable, and inaccessible for most people. Only 18% of Ugandans have access to electricity, and about half of that electricity comes from car batteries, solar cells, or small diesel generators rather than the electrical grid. Most Ugandans continue to rely upon wood fuel.

Uganda gets most of its electricity from the Nalubaale and Kiira Hydroelectric Power Stations, both of which are located at Jinja on the Victoria Nile. Because these stations alone are only able to meet about 80% of Uganda's peak electricity demand, 3 new diesel-powered plants were built in 2005. Located just north of Jinja, the Bujagali Hydro Power Plant also came online in 2012.

Media and Telecommunications

Although the Ugandan constitution guarantees freedom of the press, the government has shown itself willing to sidestep this guarantee whenever it senses organized political opposition. Private media nevertheless have thrived since controls were relaxed as part of broader reforms in the early 1990s.

Radio and TV: The Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC), Uganda's national broadcaster, operates 6 radio stations and 1 TV station, all of which focus on informational and educational programming. Although UBC TV broadcasts mostly in English, UBC radio stations broadcast in various regionally appropriate mixes of 23 different languages.

Private radio and TV stations focus mainly on entertainment. Private radio plays music ranging from indigenous music to Western pop, while private TV broadcasts a variety of foreign genres including Latin American ***telenovelas***. The linguistic profile of private broadcast media is similar to that of the UBC. Paid satellite services such as MultiChoice are also available.

Print Media: Daily newspapers such as *New Vision* (public) and the *Monitor* (private) compete with news magazines such as the weekly *Independent* and the semiweekly *Observer*. Due to high newsstand prices, daily circulation of all newspapers is estimated to be less than 100,000. It is thought that an average of 10 Ugandans share each newspaper in order to lower costs.

Telephones: Although fixed-line telephony remains inadequate, mobile service has now been extended to the entire population, and prices are falling quickly due to competition between carriers. Mobile subscriptions leapt from just 0.5 per 100 inhabitants in 2000 to 57 per 100 inhabitants in 2014.

Internet: Mobile phones are used to access the Internet for most Ugandans. The percentage of the population accessing the Internet increased from 0.2% to 16.8% between 2000 and 2014. Although they are not yet widespread, both broadband and 3G services are available in Uganda.

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