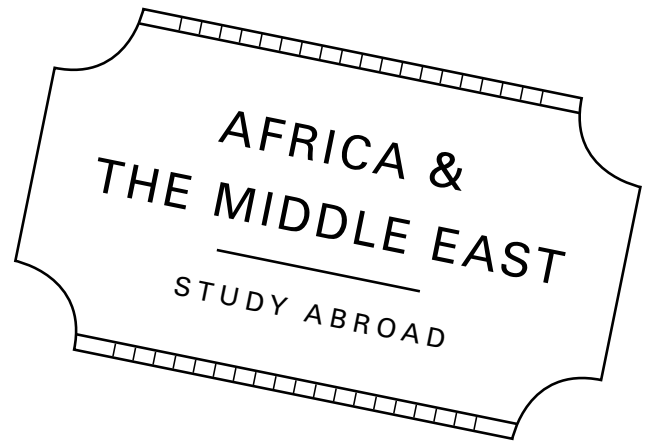

MSID Kenya

PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2015–16



LEARNING ABROAD CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Important Names & Addresses

The Learning Abroad Center provides a full range of services from preliminary program advising to assistance with re-entry. Do not hesitate to contact any of the MSID Learning Abroad Center staff with your questions. Prior to departure, please direct all questions to the Learning Abroad Center. Friends and family members should always contact the Learning Abroad Center, not the on-site staff, for assistance, even once you are overseas.

In the United States:

Learning Abroad Center
University of Minnesota
230 Heller Hall
271 19th Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-0430
Phone: 612.626.9000
Fax: 612.626.8009
Toll Free: 888.700.UOFM
Email: UMabroad@umn.edu
Web: UMabroad.umn.edu

Jessica Hartnett, Associate Program Director
hart0581@umn.edu, 612.626.6380

Cathy Huber, Program Director
chuber@umn.edu, 612.624.4525

Emergencies

In case of a serious emergency, contact the Learning Abroad Center at 612.626.9000. If it is after business hours, a recording will give you a number to call. The Learning Abroad Center has someone on call for emergencies and to contact the on-site administrators if needed. Once overseas, participants should contact their in-country program staff.

In Kenya

Telephone Codes

- 011 International access code from the US. The code from other countries will probably be different.
- 254 Kenya's country code used for dialing from outside Kenya.
- 20 Nairobi city code. Not necessary for calls within Nairobi. Cell phones have a different code.
- 000 International access code from Kenya.

Time Differences

Kenya is nine hours ahead of Minnesota during the winter and eight hours ahead during the months when the US is on daylight saving time.

Addresses

NOTE: Please direct all pre-departure questions to the Learning Abroad Center, not the on-site staff.

Your Address in Kenya

During your stay in Nairobi, mail should be sent to you at the following address:

Your name (clearly spelled out)
c/o MSID Kenya
PO Box 66731
00800 Westlands
Nairobi, Kenya

MSID Office

PO Box 66731
00800 Westlands
Nairobi, Kenya
Emergency Phone: (254) 72.898.6411
Phone: (254.20) 235.3280/235.3283

US Embassy

For information on the local US Embassy in Kenya, please visit the following website: <http://usembassy.state.gov>

Web addresses

Visit your MSID country website for useful health, safety, travel, development, and country web links: UMabroad.umn.edu

Know Before You Go

Before you leave the country, make sure that you have read and understood the information in your Confirmation Checklist, Online Orientation, and the Learning Abroad Center's policies (UMabroad.umn.edu/students/policies). These materials will guide you on a safe and successful learning abroad experience.

Friends & Family Resources

Valuable resources for your friends and family members can be found at UMabroad.umn.edu/parents. Topics such as health and safety, program prices, logistics, and travel are discussed.

Program Health & Safety



Program health and safety information is available at <http://global.umn.edu/gosafe/index.html>.

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Purpose of This Handbook

This program handbook provides an overview of your unique study abroad program. It contains information relevant to the program as well as specifics about the country. The program handbook should be used in tandem with the Learning Abroad Center's online orientation and website for information regarding registration, credit, payment, refunds, academic policies, health, safety, insurance, and cultural adjustment.

MSID & You

The information below can help ensure that your learning goals match MSID's program philosophy. Consider these statements and reflect on your own goals for the program.

Introduction to MSID

Mission

Minnesota Studies in International Development (MSID) is devoted to the preparation of culturally sensitive individuals who are committed to the concepts of justice and sustainable development for all societies in our interdependent world. MSID seeks to engage students, faculty, and staff, as well as the general community, in dialogue and reciprocal learning with people from Africa, Asia, and Latin America concerning local and global problems, with a particular emphasis on development issues. Through grassroots internships and research experiences in development projects, MSID participants gain firsthand experience with the conditions, needs, and strengths of the countries involved with the program.

Philosophy

Founded in 1981, MSID is an interdisciplinary, academically, and personally challenging study abroad program, combining classroom learning with practical experience. At its core is a grassroots internship or research project with an agency striving to contribute to development or social justice. Participants often report this placement to be one of the most life-changing experiences they have had.

Cultural Experience

MSID seeks to maximize cultural immersion through:

- Internships
- Research projects
- Housing with host families, usually one family during the classroom phase and a second during the internship phase (some students with urban internships may have the same family throughout their in-country MSID experience).

Written assignments help students bring their experiences back into the classroom and to relate them to course themes and concepts.

MSID focuses on issues of development.

MSID participants should be keenly interested in learning about these themes. This is not to say that you must have lots of relevant background—MSID does not require students to have studied development or engaged in service-learning—but the content of the curriculum should mesh with your learning goals. Most participants also want to “experience Kenya,” “learn about Indian culture,” or “improve my French in Senegal.” You will indeed learn a great deal about your host culture and language.

MSID will give you many questions but few answers.

Poverty and complex social issues are challenging realities to tackle. None of the world's development models seem to be working well—at least if our definition of development incorporates sustainability and equity. You will be looking at development and social issues as they present themselves in the “real world” and not just in textbooks.

MSID emphasizes grassroots.

MSID internships will immerse you in the everyday realities of the country where you are studying. Your experiences will give you insights into the conditions of life for the great majority of the population that is poor. This means that MSID seeks to arrange placements in rural areas or relatively poor urban neighborhoods and that, as a result, your living and working conditions may be rather basic.

MSID is experiential and academic, flexible and highly structured.

MSID requires a balanced learning style and is for students who want to learn from field experience, but it also involves reading, writing, schedules, and deadlines. It requires a strong commitment to your host family, your agency, your community, and your faculty.

MSID calls for cultural sensitivity.

Respect for other cultures is a must in any study abroad program and especially in an immersion program like MSID. You will live with a local family, work in a local agency, receive instruction from local faculty, and depend on support from local administrative staff. You will need to adapt to the host culture and not expect it to adjust to you.

MSID presents special challenges to women.

For some students, the feelings engendered by being female in what may seem an anti-feminist society have proved painful and distracting. While striving to remain culturally sensitive, women have experienced incidents of harassment, seeming overprotectiveness by host families (with respect to hours

kept, places frequented, friends chosen), and a general feeling of being watched and even judged in public. Roles are defined by gender in many cultures, and you may elicit negative responses if you do not follow the prescribed role; moreover, foreign females may sometimes experience harassment even if they do follow the rules. When in country, be prepared to find your values and understanding of the world challenged daily.

MSID will change you.

Students repeatedly return from this program talking about how it has transformed their lives. You will learn astonishing things about yourself, acquire invaluable skills, and return to the US asking searching questions about your own society and your own values.

MSID Learning Outcomes

- Foster an understanding of the global context through classroom and experiential learning
- Cultivate awareness and appreciation for development issues through engagement with diverse communities
- Translate insights gained into thoughtful and respectful long-term perspectives on concepts of social justice and sustainable development
- Strengthen communication skills through acquisition of local languages and cultural awareness
- Gain cross-cultural competencies through extended engagement at a local grassroots organization

Preparation & Planning

Documents

Passport

A valid passport is required to enter your country and to re-enter the US. You also need a passport in order to receive a visa. For information on applying for a passport, see the Learning Abroad Center website: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/travel/passports.

Since obtaining visas for MSID countries can be a lengthy process, it is essential that you apply for your passport immediately. Passport processing typically takes eight weeks, so plan ahead.

Visa

All of the MSID countries require you to obtain a student visa in order to stay a semester or more. Visa requirements vary from one MSID country to another. MSID Ecuador,

India, and Kenya participants must use Perry International, based in Chicago, to process their student visa. MSID Senegal participants must complete an online process on the Senegal embassy's website. Detailed instructions are provided on the Learning Abroad Center's MSID Senegal web page under the Apply tab. Perry International *cannot* assist with Senegal visas.

Visas through Perry International (Ecuador, India, Kenya)

Perry's processing fee is included in the MSID program fee; you need to submit payment only for the actual visa. Since you need special documents from our office, which we send to Perry International, you must use Perry's services for your visa. You must submit your passport to Perry International in order to receive the student visa for your MSID country. Always send your passport via express mail.

Visa information is located on the Learning Abroad Center's website. Additional information can be found on Perry International's website at www.perryvisa.com.

From Perry International's website:

- click on "Visas"
- select your country
- select 'MSID' as your account
- print the student visa packet

Read the instructions carefully and return all requested forms and payment directly to Perry International. If you travel abroad on the wrong visa, you will be responsible for returning immediately to the US to correct your visa.

Applying for a visa can be a lengthy process. Do not delay in visiting Perry's website to inform yourself about the visa process and begin the paperwork for your country.

If you are planning to arrive early or travel after the program, inquire with Perry International regarding any visa restrictions.

In-Country Process

Once in country, your local MSID staff will give you advice about keeping your passport and visa secure. In some countries, you can carry a photocopy of the relevant pages and keep the documents themselves locked up. When you do need to carry your passport, always keep it in a money belt.

Your passport and visa are valuable documents. Do not lose them. You cannot leave your host country without them. It is always wise to have a copy of your passport and visa in a separate location and one copy at home in case your passport is lost or stolen. The process of replacing a passport is much easier if you have a copy of it. If your passport is lost or stolen, you should notify your local MSID staff, the local police, and the US Consulate.

Coordinated Flight

Participants will receive flight information and booking instructions from Village Travel which handles flight arrangements for the Learning Abroad Center. Students from the Twin Cities area fly in a group; students from elsewhere join that group in either a US or a European hub. Coordinated flight information will be available in mid-October for spring semester and in late April for fall semester/academic year. Visit Village Travel's website at: www.villageinc.com. If you elect not to take the coordinated flight, you must arrive within six hours prior to the coordinated flight.

Always bring a copy of your itinerary and your electronic ticket number (NOT your confirmation number) with you. Some airlines and ticketing agents outside of the US will require you to show this at the airport check in. If for any reason you choose not to book your flights through Village Travel, you must provide the Learning Abroad Center with a copy of your itinerary.

Travel & Visits

You are encouraged to travel during official program break periods, over holidays, or after the program is completed. There is no program break during fall semester, and some MSID sites may not have a spring break. During the semester, travel on the weekends should be limited to nearby locations in order to ensure that you are able to maintain good rest, health, and timely completion of all coursework. Students are not permitted to travel during the program to countries currently under a US State Department Travel Warning. See <http://travel.state.gov/> for the most up-to-date list. It also compromises the host family experience if you are away every weekend. Before traveling, complete the correct permission form with MSID on-site staff and be aware of any relevant travel concerns or State Department advisories. It is important that you share with the MSID on-site staff your travel plans, including dates, destinations, and information about how to reach you in case an emergency should arise.

If any friends or relatives wish to visit, they can visit only during official program breaks or before or after the program, not while classes are in session. Visits at other times interfere with your ability to focus on the program and host culture and are not allowed.

Packing

Packing is highly individual, and no single list will work for everyone. A packing list is provided at the end of this guide. The following considerations can help you pack wisely.

Packing Principles

Think about laundry. Lighter colors help you stay cool, but darker colors show dirt less; you might wish to strike a happy medium if you expect to be in hot areas. Stress lightweight fabrics that can be easily hand-washed, can hold up to repeated washing, and do not need ironing. A key question for choosing clothes: How long does it take to air dry?

Plan to be presentable. People dress nicely every day in Kenya, especially in the cities, and local students often dress well, since they are proud to be among the elite group attending university. Clean, fairly conservative western office-type apparel is appropriate. Include one or two dressy outfits for evening outings, for which people tend to dress up. Pack clothing that is relatively new, both to be sure it lasts through your time overseas and because you will feel uncomfortably out of place if you wear ripped, baggy, or faded clothes.

Be conservative. Some clothing that is common on a US campus would be considered provocative in MSID countries. If you wish to pack a running outfit, choose athletic pants or shorts that extend to the knee. Do not plan on using shorts except when you go to the beach. If you use tank tops, choose modest ones. Women tend to wear skirts in rural areas, and although you may wear pants without offending, in some rural settings you may look out of place.

Try to anticipate your internship, research project, and other activities. For example, if you think you will work partly in an office setting, you will dress more formally than if you want to work in a village. If you expect to work outdoors a lot, include boots and rugged clothing. If you guess wrong, you will be able to purchase most clothing items you need.

Choose your luggage wisely. Most students prefer backpacks to suitcases. Buy a high-quality backpack/daypack. Can your smaller backpack/suitcase nest inside a larger one? Will your carry-on double for weekend travel?

Anticipate possible delays (or even losses) in checked baggage when packing your carry-on. Pack in your carry-on anything that you would need during your first two or three days in country, including prescription drugs, as well as small items that are fragile, irreplaceable, or of significant monetary value. Do not take scissors, knives, etc., in your carry-on.

Remember you can buy things in country. You can purchase clothing in country, although you will not have time to devote to shopping for new items. If you have a strong brand preference, ask a returnee whether your brand is available in your country. Very tall students might find it hard to purchase clothes of the right size.

You will find many clothing items to be cheaper in country than in the US. However, other products, such as batteries, personal hygiene, feminine products, etc. are often more expensive in these countries and not always readily available.

Don't take the kitchen sink. The most consistent hindsight of returned students is “I took too much.” Be selective. No one will need all the things on the packing checklist in the Appendix. Decide what, and how much, is really essential to *you*. Try to get by with one large backpack and a carry-on. Many savvy travelers recommend that you pack once, try walking around the block with all your stuff, and then begin eliminating things until you can do it comfortably.

A Note on Electricity

In all four countries, the supply of electricity tends to be erratic, with frequent blackouts and occasional power surges. You will need a good surge protector if you are taking a laptop computer or any other sensitive items, and if you are using a computer you should save documents frequently.

Electricity is very expensive. Host families may want students to limit their use of electronic appliances in the home.

Health & Safety

Health

The website of the Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov/travel, provides extensive information and advice on immunizations and on staying healthy in your country.

Medical facilities and health conditions in MSID countries are significantly less advanced than in the US. It is important that you inform yourself prior to departure what precautions to take while living in your MSID country.

Long before travel, consult with a health provider specializing in travel medicine; most general practitioners lack the requisite knowledge. Do this as early as possible, for some immunization series begin many months before departure.

Following consultation with a travel health specialist, you will need a number of immunizations. Ensure that these are recorded in your international immunization record, a yellow card that you should keep with your passport.

The program headquarter cities have good doctors and medical facilities, and care may be quite satisfactory in some other major cities as well. Only rudimentary levels of care, at best, tend to be available in villages and small towns.

A Few Additional Tips

- Avoid eating in restaurants with poor hygiene or buying food from street vendors. Assure yourself that food is well cooked. Avoid uncooked fruits or vegetables unless you can peel them yourself.
- Wash your hands frequently.

- Tap water is not recommended. Drink boiled or bottled water (either carbonated or non-carbonated). Soft drinks are usually okay, but beware of juices that may be diluted with water.
- Ice is as unsafe as water. Never add it to drinks unless it has been made from boiled or bottled water.
- Take your own medications with you.
- If you travel to high altitudes, avoid intense exercise until you have adapted. Drink lots of liquids and eat lots of carbohydrates. Monitor any symptoms of altitude sickness, which can include headaches and nausea.
- It is strongly recommended students bring a water purification filter.

Malaria Prevention

Malaria is a very serious illness. Your travel health specialist will recommend that you take a prophylactic (preventive) drug for malaria, possibly beginning before you are scheduled to arrive in country. Different medications are required for different countries so seek medical consultation. It is essential that you purchase and take the necessary medication. Without medication you will become very ill very quickly and may need hospitalization. While the medication cannot prevent you from contracting malaria, it significantly reduces the symptoms, allows you time to seek medical attention at a clinic in country, and facilitates a speedy recovery.

Speak with your US health care specialist about possible side effects and alternative anti-malarials if a change needs to be made overseas. Not all overseas physicians are aware of the different types of medications available so inform yourself before you leave. Should you experience side effects once overseas, speak with the on-site staff about possible alternative medications.

Students in the past have inquired about purchasing medication in country against malaria. In order to be protected, you must take the medication prior to your departure. Exposure to malaria-carrying mosquitoes could occur as soon as you arrive in country, and it is difficult to arrange clinic visits immediately upon arrival. Clinic visits are quite time-consuming, and medication in country can be unreliable. If you determine that your country-specific conditions require medication, purchase and take your medication while in the US.

Insect repellent with at least 21% DEET will additionally help ward against malaria-carrying mosquitoes. A new product called Ultrathon, manufactured by 3M, contains 30% DEET and has been recommended by health professionals.

You should use insect repellent both during the day and especially at dusk and in the evenings. Mosquitoes carrying dengue fever are active in the day, and malaria-carrying mosquitoes are active at night.

Medication Overseas

Keep in mind that it is illegal to ship medication overseas, and any packages that are held at customs abroad will require payment of a high import tax before they are released. Bring all necessary medication (including such items as birth control) with you to your study abroad site. CISI insurance can also assist in determining whether and how medication can be transported to another country, if necessary. Some medication and dosages that are legal in the US may not be available overseas.

Rabies Vaccination

Rabies vaccination is recommended but not required prior to departure. Although it is highly unlikely that you will encounter an infected animal, it is an added precaution to be protected prior to your arrival in your MSID country and will simplify medical treatment in country.

MSID & Safety

MSID receives all new or revised State Department travel advisories. The office in Minnesota forwards relevant bulletins to the MSID in-country staff, who share them with students. Read them carefully. The most recent travel information for every country of the world is also posted at <http://travel.state.gov>. The on-site staff also keep in touch with the US Consulate in times of political unrest or natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes. Be careful to keep electronics, such as cell phones and laptops, hidden in public to avoid thefts.

Sexual Harassment & Sexual Assault

Do not tolerate behavior that feels threatening or disrespectful by internship/research project colleagues, MSID staff or faculty members, or homestay family members. When in any doubt, consult with an MSID staff or faculty member with whom you feel comfortable. Report any incidents of sexual harassment or sexual assault to on-site staff immediately.

Health Insurance

All students enrolled at the University of Minnesota are required to have US health insurance. This includes students registered for education abroad. For more details and specific process information for students with University of Minnesota Student Health Insurance through the Student Health Benefits Office, visit the Learning Abroad Center's US Insurance webpage: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance/ushealthinsurancerequirement.

In addition to your US health insurance, the University has contracted with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) to provide comprehensive international travel, health, and security insurance. This coverage is mandatory for all

students and included in the program fee. You are covered by CISI only for the dates of the program. If you plan to travel before or after your program you should extend your CISI coverage or purchase your own insurance.

CISI does not include any preventative care, and individuals are advised to consult their medical providers for any check-ups or preventative care prior to departure.

Your CISI card and insurance policy will be emailed directly to you. Carry the card with you at all times. If you have any questions or need additional information about CISI, visit the Learning Abroad Center's insurance webpage: UMabroad.umn.edu/students/healthsafety/intlhealthinsurance.

Coordinated Flight

Participants will receive flight information and booking instructions from Village Travel which handles flight arrangements for the Learning Abroad Center. Students from the Twin Cities area fly in a group; students from elsewhere join that group in either a US or a European hub. Coordinated flight information will be available in mid-October for spring semester and in late April for fall semester/academic year. Visit Village Travel's website at: www.villageinc.com. If you elect not to take the coordinated flight, you must arrive within six hours prior to the coordinated flight.

Always bring a copy of your itinerary and your electronic ticket number (NOT your confirmation number) with you. Some airlines and ticketing agents outside of the US will require you to show this at the airport check in. If for any reason you choose not to book your flights through Village Travel, you must provide the Learning Abroad Center with a copy of your itinerary.

Practical & Program Information

Housing Considerations

Homestays are an integral component of the MSID learning experience. All students live and share most meals with at least one family, and many with two different families—one during the classroom phase, and a second in a different part of the country during the remainder of the program. Students with internships or research projects in the main city typically choose to remain with the same family throughout. Only in rare cases does MSID permit alternative housing arrangements (e.g., a rural setting where no adequate homestay is available and the student must stay in a school or a clinic). Do not ask to live independently.

Students take at least breakfast and the evening meal with their host families, and all three meals on weekends. Often distances preclude returning for the noon meal during the week. Although you generally will be expected to eat the same food as your family, MSID does ask the families to accommodate the dietary needs of students who have food allergies or are uncompromising vegetarians. Many students who are vegetarians in the US decide instead to relax their standards during their MSID experience in order to minimize the inconvenience to non-vegetarian host families.

Students report that the homestays are among the richest and most challenging dimensions of MSID. You will find that a tremendous amount of your language and cultural learning takes place while you are at home. Students constantly bring insights gained from their families into the academic program, and, similarly, the classroom learning helps provide tools for a successful homestay. MSID places students with a variety of families in terms of family size, profession, ethnic background, etc. Not only do students speak in class about the differences among their families, but they also drop in on fellow MSIDers in their homes. Think of each visit as an important learning experience.

The stipend paid by the MSID program to the host families is only a token gesture of appreciation for the time and expense of hosting you. The money in no way covers the cost of hosting an MSID student nor compensates for the adjustment the family agrees to undertake in order to incorporate an MSID student into their family.

Consult the country-specific section in this handbook for more detailed information on housing in your MSID country.

Homestay Placement Process

The in-country staff strives to match students with families that meet as many of the characteristics as possible that students have requested on their forms. It is often not possible to find a family that meets all the criteria a student has listed.

If your internship or research project is in a different part of the country, the administrative staff will arrange your second homestay at the same time your internship or research project is being negotiated.

MSID typically receives basic information about your first homestay family (name and address) approximately one week prior to the program start date, and we will send the information to your University of Minnesota email account. Last-minute changes occasionally occur.

Since you may not know much about your host family(ies) prior to departure, we encourage you to bring a range of generic gifts to give as gifts. Past students have recommended coffee table books from your home town/state, a board game, T-shirts, calendars, magnets, keychains, and sweets such as jellybeans. Keep in mind you will likely have two families: one in the main city and one in the rural area.

The in-country MSID administrative staff will outline for you and the family your respective rights and responsibilities in the homestay. The family is told that for the most part your presence should not lead them to change their customs, operating rules, or food.

Tips for a Successful Homestay

The MSID in-country staff seek families eager to incorporate US students into their lives. Host families are generally warm and welcoming and will want their students to participate in social events with friends and extended family. When you are placed with a family, you will probably get more than the family itself. You will get a wide range of friends, not to mention information, coaching, advice, and endless opportunities to practice your language skills. If you and the family are both willing to throw yourselves into making the experience a rich one, you are likely to look back on your homestay as a highlight of your time in MSID.

A successful homestay requires consideration and cultural sensitivity. At times your cross-cultural skills and insights will be stretched to the limit. The country-specific section of this guide includes information and advice concerning homestays for your MSID country. The in-country MSID staff will supplement this with initial support and ongoing coaching to create a smooth linkage between students and their families. Staff are always available to assist and sort out cultural adjustment problems as they arise.

In most MSID countries, the notion of private space and time is not as common as in the US. Spend plenty of time with your host family and do not seclude yourself in your room. This is often viewed as rude and may cause your host family to wonder if you are sick or unhappy.

You will find your homestay parents and siblings very concerned for your well-being. They will be good sources of information and advice about negotiating the transportation system, safety precautions, etc. At the same time, their concern might occasionally seem to border on overprotectiveness, especially if you are a woman. Understand that the family is not trying to control you but to fulfill its inescapable responsibilities for the welfare of its US daughter or son.

In most cases, your family will do your laundry. Since dryers are infrequent, have sufficient undergarments for the delay in receiving your items back. Keep in mind that you should rinse and clean any underwear that is soiled, as this is considered a very private matter.

Host families may not have Internet access. Be aware the cost of electricity and Internet use in homes can be very high. You may be asked by your host family to pay a fee for your Internet use, and you should consult with the on-site staff about correct cultural protocol.

When you leave the house, it is important to let the family know where you expect to be and approximately what time you plan to return. Never stay overnight elsewhere without first notifying your family.

In case of minor illnesses, your family will help you seek medical attention. In the case of more serious problems, you and your family are expected to notify the MSID administrative staff immediately in order to coordinate the best possible treatment.

Most families are conservative about relations between men and women. You are not allowed to have overnight guests of the opposite sex or to receive visitors in a closed bedroom.

Be judicious in your use of alcohol. Your host family and work colleagues will disapprove of substance abuse, and drunkenness could irreparably damage your relations with people who are important to you.

It is important not to abuse hospitality. Remember to ask the family for permission to bring friends, and be ready to cover extra expenses when inviting them.

Keep your room very neat and tidy and be respectful of the common spaces in the house. Since you are a guest in the home, your bedroom should be kept in a manner that shows your respect and appreciation. In most countries, the notion of personal and private space does not exist in the same manner as in the US, and your room in your host family is not the same as having your own room in the US. Do not leave your clothes strewn on the floor or leave personal belongings around the house. Do not put your shoes on furniture, including your own bed. Unfortunately, US students are often viewed as messy and disrespectful. Do your part to correct this image. Keep in mind that personal hygiene is also very important. You are a guest in their home and should present yourself with respect and cleanliness.

If you have questions about your homestay experience, speak to the on-site staff. As in the US, it is not acceptable for you to be asked, for example, to assist with caring for a host family member on a daily basis, be exposed to drunken or rude behavior, or tolerate any sexual advances. Although it is extremely rare for a host family experience to involve any of these, speak to the on-site staff if you have any concerns.

Before you leave for your MSID country, it may be difficult to imagine the depth of the bonds that can develop between you and your host families. There is a special magic to friendships that cross deep cultural boundaries, and you may find the relationship with your family to be quite unlike other relationships you have experienced.

Farewells at the airport are often tear-filled on both sides. As your life becomes filled with the US hectic pace following your return, however, it can be all too easy not to take the time to keep in touch. An occasional letter, postcard, or email

from you means a great deal to a family for whom you are as unforgettable as they are for you. MSID asks you to take a few moments to write from time to time. Keep in mind, however, that host families should not be expected to host you after your MSID experience or on future visits you may make to the MSID country.

Staying after the Program

If you intend to stay in your MSID country after the program ends, you are responsible for your own housing and your transportation to the airport when you depart. It is not acceptable to remain in your homestay after the program, unless the on-site staff authorizes it. In all cases, you must pay for any lodging after the program ends. For students departing on the official coordinated flight on the program end date, the on-site staff will arrange transportation to the airport for you.

Diversity & MSID

Race & Ethnicity

Race can influence students' perspectives on their host country. Past participants of color tell us that the differences between their experiences and those of Euro-Americans can include both advantages and disadvantages. Students of color often learn a great deal about their identity as a US citizen through an experience in a foreign country, and they sometimes find the new cultural context quite liberating. On the other hand, they occasionally encounter new forms of prejudice and discrimination. It is important that participants of all races avoid projecting American assumptions and attitudes about race onto the host culture. For example, definitions of racial categories, if they exist at all, may be very different from those in the US.

It is difficult to generalize about the overt and covert levels of racism that may or may not exist in any given culture, or to predict what a particular student's personal experience will be. It can be said that any experience abroad will be a combination of circumstances, attitude, and coping skills. Some study abroad offices have put together resources for students of color who are preparing to study abroad. You should contact your own study abroad office or a member of the MSID staff for additional information.

Students going to a location related to their ethnic heritage—for example, an African-American student to Kenya—might wish to examine critically their expectations in advance. If part of your reason for enrolling in MSID is to explore your own identity, be careful not to romanticize what you might find. Students often discover that local people perceive them much more in terms of their American identity than their racial or ethnic background. You may gain rich insights into your roots, but do not expect members of the host society to treat you as a returning brother or sister.

Gender

Gender roles tend to be more rigidly defined in all MSID countries, especially in rural areas, than they are today in the US. You may find that people respond quite differently to you depending on whether you are male or female. You may also observe a strongly gender-based division of labor in your homestay family or your agency. This sometimes challenges students' cross-cultural understanding and skills. As in other areas, try to understand what is going on rather than to judge. It is all right to gently test the limits of gender roles—for example, if you are male to see what happens when you offer a couple of times to help with the dishes in your homestay, or if you are female to try to be more assertive than you observe among female colleagues in your agency—and be sensitive to the feedback you receive. Above all, resist any temptation to launch a one-person crusade to change things. For example, even if you feel that your homestay mother and sisters are “oppressed,” you will not be able to “liberate” them, and any attempt to do so could irreparably harm your relations with your family.

Many women experience “cat calls” and other forms of gender harassment while overseas. Be prepared in advance for this possibility and consider the following coping strategies: look straight ahead and keep walking; walk with a purpose and do not appear to be wandering without aim—walk quickly and with confidence; say “no” or “no, thank you” with conviction; consider wearing local attire to help you blend in (shawls, head scarves, etc. can reduce the possibility of intruders catching your eye and attention); develop a tough skin and do not take the matter personally; avoid walking alone or at night.

Cultural norms concerning relations between men and women, including dating, vary considerably among MSID countries, and even from one region to another or between rural and urban settings. This topic will be included in your in-country orientation. When in doubt concerning what behavior is acceptable, consult with a trusted MSID staff or faculty member.

Sexual Orientation

Attitudes toward sexuality are very traditional. People are generally intolerant of different sexual preferences, and strict taboos and laws against such relationships exist. We encourage you to find out how different sexual preferences are viewed overseas and where your support may exist, so that your time overseas can be as enriching as possible. Consult with the Learning Abroad Center staff for more information on gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues if you have any questions.

For additional resources, you can contact the Office for Equity and Diversity at www.academic.umn.edu/equity.

Disabilities

MSID in-country staff are more than willing to help locate personal assistance or arrange testing accommodations as needed, so long as they learn early enough of your needs. The level of physical accessibility varies from country to country. For example, wheelchair-accessible transportation or elevators may be non-existent in some MSID sites. On the other hand, local people tend to be very supportive and will often assist you in gaining access to public transportation or buildings. It is important to consider your comfort level in asking for access assistance while abroad. For more information on access and available accommodations, contact the Learning Abroad Center.

Diversity among MSID Participants

Whatever your own sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or physical ability, keep in mind that you will be part of a diverse group. Some differences will be obvious or made known to you, others will not. Sensitivity to diversity within your own group will further enrich your experience abroad. Some of your most powerful learning experiences may revolve around differences within your group. MSID participants also come from extremely varied academic backgrounds. Majors range from the social sciences or humanities to fields such as engineering, business, or agriculture. An economics or political science student who has taken considerable coursework on development may find that some aspects of the academic coursework are repetitious; on the other hand, the field experiences in MSID offer a rich opportunity to explore the application of theory to practical settings. An engineering major may have little background in development or cross-cultural communication but may have practical skills and knowledge that make internship placements easier to find than for a liberal arts major. A student with limited course preparation relevant to MSID may bring a wealth of volunteer experience or social and political activism to the program. All students are strong in some dimensions and weak in others. Be prepared to share your strengths and to draw on those of your classmates.

Academics

Program Enrollment Options

August or January Language Session

Students can choose to participate in the August or January language session for an additional fee. This program grants 4 language credits and runs for three and a half weeks in August or January. Students live with host families and participate in excursions. Contact the Learning Abroad Center for details.

Pre-Departure Preparation

Students accepted into MSID receive pre-departure readings with their orientation materials. The cost of these materials is included in the program fee. Some are read by all students; others are country specific. In-country faculty will assume that these readings have been completed by the time the program begins and will expect students to be able to draw on them during class discussions. These readings are significant and cannot be completed on the airplane or over a weekend. Plan for approximately 40 hours of reading time.

Semester Program

Courses Offered

All undergraduates take the following courses totaling 16–17 semester credits. Complete course descriptions are available on the Learning Abroad Center's website.

- MSID 4001/5001, *International Development: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Practice*, 4 credits
- MSID 4002/5002, *MSID Country Analysis*, 4 credits
- MSID language course, 4 credits
- MSID 4003/5003, *Community Engagement in the Global South*, 4 credits
- (optional) *Global Identity, Connecting Your International Experience to Your Future*, 1 credit

The Development course will be divided into the following tracks so that students can prepare for their upcoming internship:

- Public Health
- Education/Literacy
- Literature, Arts, & Cultural Studies
- Environmental Studies/Ecology/Sustainable Agriculture
- Microbusiness/Alternative Economies
- Social Services (poverty, homelessness, housing, youth-studies)—offered in combination with one of the tracks above. Exact matching varies by site.

Global Identity: Connecting Your International Experience to Your Future

This optional, 1-credit course will provide opportunities for you to “make meaning” of your learning abroad experience and prepare you to communicate your intercultural competence to future employers, graduate schools, or law schools. As global connectivity becomes increasingly important, you are asked to think beyond the borders of your own perception and better understand the world based on the new ideas and experiences to which you are exposed. Your ability to work in a multi-cultural setting and to succeed in different cultural contexts is vital to your future. This course will help you apply these skills to your post-graduation plans. This course is offered for an extra fee and is not part of the MSID program fee.

Semester Schedule

The semester program consists of the following phases:

Orientation (1 week)

In-country Classroom Work (7 weeks)

You will spend an average of around 20 hours per week in the classroom, plus time outside doing readings and assignments. Local field trips and field assignments supplement the classroom work. You will also work with MSID staff and faculty throughout this period to define the subsequent internship or research project.

Internship/Research Project (6 weeks)

Once the classroom phase concludes, students move to their individual placements with development agencies/projects in scattered locations, some urban and some rural. Unless you are interested in a specifically urban topic, MSID urges you to consider a rural placement. You cannot really know your country if you experience only the city.

Activities. The internships/research projects are the most important hallmark distinguishing MSID from most study abroad programs. In addition to contributing to their agency/project/community, students do written assignments connected to themes and concepts from the various courses.

Support. The MSID on-site director or another member of the program faculty visits each student at the internship site once during this phase. In addition to any trouble-shooting regarding the internship, these visits serve as occasions for you to hand in coursework and reflect on what you are learning.

Academic role of the internship/research project in the semester programs. In addition to academic work for the internship/research course itself, during this phase students also complete written assignments for the other courses. Each course thus becomes a different lens through which you interpret your experiences in your agency/project and your community. You might think of the internship or research project as a sort of lab section for the courses. Course descriptions are available on the Learning Abroad Center's website.

Final Seminar (1 week)

The concluding week of the semester program brings students back together, whether in the headquarters city or in a retreat setting, to analyze their internships or research projects. In final sessions of the various classes, each instructor helps students tie their experiences systematically to themes and concepts from the particular course. Any final exams are also given at this time. The week concludes with an integrating seminar at which the program staff help students reflect more holistically upon their MSID experience.

Academic Year

The academic year program is best suited for students who are independent, self-sufficient, and seek an extended internship experience in their MSID country.

Academic year students register for an additional 16 spring semester credits. Course descriptions are available on the Learning Abroad Center's website.

- MSID 4004, *Topics: Case Studies in International Development*, 4 credits
- MSID 4006, *Applied Field Methods*, 4 credits
- MSID 4007, *MSID Directed Research*, 4 credits
- MSID 4005, *Advanced International Development Internship*, 4 credits

Second Semester Schedule

The calendars of the second semester vary somewhat. The following is a representative sequence.

Research Seminar (1–2 weeks)

After returning from their travel break, academic year students work with program faculty to refine the plans they have begun to lay in the fall for their research projects. This phase includes group sessions on methodology plus individual meetings with faculty. In some countries, students also receive additional language instruction during this phase. Students receive an additional 20 hours of language instruction, as needed.

Internship & Research I (5–6 weeks)

Academic year students return to their sites in mid-January for their internships and their research. Each student receives

a visit from the MSID on-site director or another MSID staff member sometime during the second semester. This visit is the scheduled point in the second semester for academic year students to hand in assignments.

Spring Midterm Research Week, Seminar (1 week)

Students travel to the headquarters city for a week and a half. They have a week to work on their research and writing, then join the in-country directors for a midterm seminar. This is a time to compare experiences, take stock of progress on the internship and research project, plan for the home stretch, and reflect with classmates and program staff on what has been learned. It is also a second scheduled point in the semester for handing in assignments. Following the seminar, some programs have a week-long spring break.

Internship & Research II (5 weeks)

During this period students may receive a second visit from the MSID on-site director or another MSID staff member. Again, some written assignments may be due during the visit.

Final Seminar (1 week)

The mid-semester pattern is repeated. Students again have a week in the headquarters city to finish any last research and writing, then join the director for a final seminar. As with the end-of-semester gathering, this seminar provides an opportunity for debriefing experiences and processing learning, as well as for evaluating the program.

Hours of Student Effort

University of Minnesota policy specifies that each semester credit should reflect approximately 12.5 instructional contact hours of 60 minutes and twice that amount for out-of-classroom assignments. The policy also notes that certain kinds of courses with a strong experiential component—including field seminars, internships, and research projects—may involve fewer classroom contact hours than this and greater out-of-classroom hours.

Semester programs: MSID courses conform to these standards, which means that each 4-credit course has 50 instructional contact hours, including didactic instruction during field trips. Out-of-classroom hours of student effort are achieved through reading assignments, focus paper assignments, group work, excursions, and cultural contact with host families and program-sponsored activities. Semester program internships have a minimum of 120 contact hours.

Second semester of the academic year program: The second semester of courses for academic year students is highly individualized. Students meet as a group during the first weeks of January and during the midterm and final seminars. The course content revolves around each student's internship and research. Just as with internships or directed research at the University of Minnesota, contact hours during the

second semester are thus far fewer. Scheduled contacts (initial research seminar, faculty visits to students at their internship sites, individual meetings with faculty during the research week, midterm and final seminars) total, on average, 50–70 hours. The remaining hours of student effort come from the research, the engagement in the internship, and their written assignments. The total contact hours at the internship site is a minimum of 240 hours with most students exceeding 280 hours.

Grades & Credit

All courses must be taken for A/F credit. MSID does not permit S/N (pass/fail) registration. The University of Minnesota's A/F grading scale includes grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, and F.

All MSID coursework is posted on a University of Minnesota transcript *approximately eight weeks* after the end of the program. For non-University of Minnesota students, the Learning Abroad Center sends a transcript of work completed on the MSID program to the address the student has specified on the Transcript Release Form. Verify that this address is the correct one. Non-University of Minnesota students can order additional copies for a charge directly from the University of Minnesota's transcript office at: www.onestop.umn.edu/onestop/grades.html.

Using Credit for Specific Purposes

Regardless of whether or not you are a University of Minnesota student, obtaining credit is one thing and getting that credit accepted toward an academic major or minor is another.

Many students wish to use one or more of their MSID courses for such purposes. Students are often able to negotiate one or more of these courses toward an appropriate major on the home campus. This will likely require documentation—one of the reasons it is so important to hold onto syllabi, graded assignments, and so on.

If you hope to apply an internship or research project toward your major or minor, it is essential that you consult with appropriate advisers and faculty *before* going overseas. Use the course descriptions on the Learning Abroad Center's website in the discussion with your adviser or faculty. Ask your adviser for written guidelines if they exist. A faculty member in your department may wish to review the final product before deciding whether it can count toward your major or minor.

University of Minnesota students should note that MSID fulfills two Liberal Education requirements for graduation: the Global Perspectives theme and the Civic Life and Ethics theme.

Incompletes

MSID does not grant incompletes or allow students to opt out of a particular course. All coursework, including the directed research projects, must be handed in by the end of the program. Rare exceptions can be requested in cases such as serious health problems or family emergencies. These exceptions must be approved in advance by the on-site director.

Academic Rigor

Students will need to learn to function simultaneously in two cultural contexts. Local time as experienced in the village or the family may be more fluid and informal than “MSID time.” It is important to learn to flow with local time; it is equally important to retain enough structure and self-discipline in the academic part of life to avoid getting behind on assignments. Students who fail to attend class or who miss internship or research hours without prior permission from the on-site director will be dismissed from the program.

Grade Petitions

If you wish to question a grade issued for a particular course after the program is completed must provide evidence that the professor made an error in his/her grade calculation. The following are **not** reasonable grounds for grade appeal:

- Differences between US and host country educational systems
- Personal disappointment in the grade outcome
- Comparison with one's own prior academic record/GPA
- Failure to complete one or more assignments
- Minimum grade requirement of college/department or home university (in the case of non-University of Minnesota participants)
- Health concerns/missed classes

Contact the Learning Abroad Center for a Grade Petition Form if you believe an error has occurred.

Student Grievances

Academic grievances are complaints brought by students regarding the provision of education and academic support services affecting their role as students. For grievances concerning University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center or affiliated programs offered through the Learning Abroad Center, students should make inquiries and appeals to the appropriate University officials, in the following order: the program representative in the Learning Abroad Center, the Director of the Learning Abroad Center, the Student Dispute Resolution Center, and the Office of the General Counsel. For complaints concerning non-University of Minnesota programs, students should make appeals to the program sponsor.

Changing Enrollment Options

During the course of fall semester, students sometimes change their mind about the enrollment option they have chosen. MSID allows students who have chosen fall semester to lengthen their enrollment to the full academic year, or academic year students to scale back to fall only. Neither change carries an administrative fee, but students should keep in mind that the fall semester fee is higher than half of the academic year fee. Students reducing to one semester will be billed this difference in cost. The Learning Abroad Center must receive notice for such a change in writing; email messages are acceptable means of notification. You must notify the Learning Abroad Center by December 1 for any enrollment changes.

Non-University of Minnesota students considering an enrollment change will also need to consult with their home study abroad office. Some institutions can more easily accommodate requests to extend to an academic year than others. Even if you have not made a final decision about whether to change your enrollment, please initiate the communication with your home campus early so that you will have no problems meeting MSID's December 1 deadline.

Graduate Credit

Students participating in MSID for graduate credit take 5xxx-level counterparts to the 4xxx courses (e.g., 5801 instead of 4801), each for 3 credits. The language course does not generate graduate-level credit, although it is posted on the student's University of Minnesota transcript. It is University of Minnesota policy that graduate students are expected to meet higher standards than undergraduates. MSID complies with this policy through two measures. First, the 5xxx-level courses are worth 3 credits versus the 4 credits for undergraduate. Second, MSID informs the in-country director which students wish to be considered at the graduate level. In-country faculty then adjust academic expectations accordingly.

FERPA

It is important to be aware that the Learning Abroad Center and the Office of Student Finance, in compliance with the Federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and Regents policy, cannot share financial or academic information with a third party (including parents, spouse, guardians, etc.) without your written permission. You can download a Student Information Release Authorization at onestop.umn.edu. Complete the form and send it to OneStop Student Services, 200 Fraser Hall, 106 Pleasant St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. The Learning Abroad Center must receive a copy of a notarized Power of Attorney form in order to share any program-specific information.

MSID Internships & Research Projects

MSID internships and research projects are grassroots experiences with local nonprofit agencies. MSID does not organize internships with banks, embassies, for-profit organizations, or large political agencies.

Internship Versus Research

Internships focus on applied learning complemented by a thematic paper that reflects on the student's experience. Activities might include: teaching English to school children, shadowing a health professional in a clinic, assisting with a reforestation project, shadowing reports and assisting with newspaper articles for a local nonprofit news agency, and organizing activities at an urban youth center.

Research projects focus on a larger theoretical topic that is relevant to development in the MSID country. Sample topics include: the structure and educational goals of primary education, the realization of public health care services, organic farming and its role in the local economy, and government and private funding resources for homeless children. Students who engage in a research project will typically not participate in applied, hands-on activities. The goal is to conduct research under the supervision of the host NGO agency on a larger theoretical topic.

Semester Program

For those students who enroll for a semester, the shorter internship or research period provides a meaningful opportunity to begin to understand the many aspects of the term "development." The six-week experience entails service to the agency, and job responsibilities are usually less ambitious. The experience will also afford a powerful venue for participant observation related to MSID course themes.

Academic Year Program

Academic year students have the opportunity to develop a meaningful project or work assignment. These students can be of real assistance to their host agency. However, MSID cautions you not to underestimate the time it will take to get into the heart of an internship or research project, nor the number of things that can go wrong even at later stages. It is reasonable to hope to make a contribution to the agency or project, but it is important also not to judge the success or failure of your experience exclusively by how much you are able to accomplish. MSID is first and foremost an educational program, and even internships or research projects that seem to "fail" can be powerful learning experiences. In most cases, semester and academic year internships or research projects will be with the same agency.

Internship or Research Placement

As part of your acceptance process, you need to submit an Academic Information Form to the Learning Abroad Center. This form permits you to identify a sector in which you wish to be involved (e.g., health, environment, education), to specify, as well as you can, what sort of project you would like to have within that sector, and to indicate whether you are interested in a rural or urban placement. MSID strongly recommends that you consider a rural placement, both because it will introduce you to a very different life from that of the city where the classes are held, and because it is easier to become fully integrated into the life of rural than urban communities. Not all types of placements are feasible; for example, health-related internships or research projects in some countries cannot be in clinical settings.

MSID will forward all of the completed forms to the in-country staff, who will begin exploring potential placements even before you arrive. Upon arrival you will further discuss your placement ideas with the in-country staff. The in-country staff will make contact with one or more organizations working in the field you identified and will inquire about their interest in hosting an MSID participant. Once a tentative placement has been identified, you will have an opportunity to discuss it before it is finalized. Most requests for placement within a general field can be accommodated, but in country issues may sometimes require adjustments. Particularly if you request a project related to sensitive populations, your project may be very limited or not possible.

Characteristics of MSID Internships/Research Projects

- Related to development
- Grassroots, immersing the participant, directly and personally, in the social realities of the poorer strata of the population
- Designed to serve the goals of both the student and the agency
- Guided by objectives agreed to by the participant, supervisor, and in-country director
- Generally involve about 25 hours per week of work

Placement Categories

MSID projects fall into the following categories:

- Public Health
- Education/Literacy
- Literature, Arts, & Cultural Studies
- Environmental Studies/Ecology/Sustainable Agriculture
- Microbusiness/Alternative Economies
- Social Services (poverty, homelessness, family welfare, housing, youth studies)—offered in combination with one of the tracks above. Exact matching varies by site.

Visit the MSID program website for your specific MSID country at UMabroad.umn.edu for examples of past placements for your MSID country.

The Importance of Initiative and Imagination

Past students and in-country staff have repeatedly stressed the importance of student initiative in developing successful placements. Yes, it is true that some students receive a detailed job description from their agency when they arrive at their site, but that is the exception rather than the rule. You are just as likely to be given only the vaguest idea of what to do. If you wait for someone to hand you everything on a platter, you will be disappointed. When you get to your site, observe, think critically, try out ideas on your host-country colleagues, and use your imagination. Usually when students say, “there is nothing for me to do here,” it is because they are waiting for someone else to do the hard part for them.

Location

Internships and research projects in all countries are restricted to certain geographical regions. It is essential that your project be in a location that is safe and accessible. Keep in mind that most internship placements are located outside of the capital city to offer you the possibility of a comparative experience.

Alternative Schedule

You must discuss with your site supervisor any alteration to your schedule due to illness or travel for medical care or other necessary meetings. You or your site supervisor must also notify the MSID on-site director or coordinator if your schedule changes significantly.

Changing an Internship or Research Project

MSID directors will do their best to help you and your site supervisor make your placement successful. Commitments are made on your behalf before you start your project, and they should be honored to the fullest extent possible. Difficulties with an internship or research project should be discussed with the site supervisor and the MSID director. Changes in placement should be a last resort. Adjustments are ultimately the decision of the on-site director.

Any participant who abandons an internship or research project without prior notification and approval of the on-site director will automatically receive a failing grade for all related coursework and may be removed from the program.

Extending Internships/Research Projects

Occasionally an agency and a student would like to continue an internship or research project beyond the end of the program. Your ability to do so depends on the enrollment option you have chosen.

Fall semester students. You may not extend your internship beyond the end of December.

Spring semester and academic year students. If you complete the full program and you and the agency agree for you to stay on, you are free to do so. Typically students continue to work during such extensions on a volunteer basis. Take into account visa and health insurance issues.

Within these guidelines, any arrangement to extend an internship or research project is entirely between the student and the agency. After your particular enrollment option finishes, you are no longer an MSID student. Neither the Learning Abroad Center nor MSID's in-country staff is a party to such arrangements, nor does either bear any responsibility for your welfare as you continue your work.

Guidelines for Health-Related Projects

Keep in mind the limits of your expertise. The need is very great in MSID countries, and you must be careful to limit yourself to the areas in which you truly are knowledgeable, regardless of what people ask of you at your site.

You should decline to engage in any activity for which you are not personally trained. This includes such as activities as birth deliveries, giving injections, drawing blood, and surgery. If you are asked to engage in these kinds of activities, decline and seek assistance. It is much more dangerous to assist in these areas than to wait and find someone who is trained to do these activities.

You should not be asked to engage in activities that involve contact with bodily fluids, wound cleaning, or invasive procedures. Since you cannot know for certain what illnesses the patient may have, it is important to observe these activities and not participate. You can learn a great deal from observation, and you should protect your health. Be certain to take universal precautions, including using face masks, eye shields, and non-latex gloves. Because these items may be in short supply in your MSID country, you should bring these items with you.

HIV and HBV transmission can occur when someone is exposed through an open wound, mucous membrane or punctured skin to infected blood or bodily fluids that are contaminated with infected blood. These bodily fluids include amniotic fluid, pericardial fluid, semen, and vaginal secretions. HIV and HBV transmission has not been documented to occur from exposure to bodily fluids such as feces, nasal secretions, sputum, sweat, tears, urine, or vomit. Saliva is only a risk factor in dental settings where saliva is likely to be contaminated with blood.

Vaccinations: It is important to meet with a travel nurse or physician to discuss the vaccinations you will need for your MSID country. If your project might involve participation in tasks or activities with exposure to blood or other bodily fluids, you should be vaccinated with hepatitis B vaccine, and you should discuss this with your health care provider.

While meeting with your travel doctor or nurse, discuss bringing along an anti-retroviral. If you decide not to take

one, identify a place in the country where a reliable anti-retroviral can be purchased in the event of exposure.

MSID students in health care or HIV-related settings should use surgical gloves when handling patients if there is likely contact with bodily fluids or when handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or bodily fluids. You should bring a box of surgical gloves with you.

You should wash your hands frequently and thoroughly. Wash the front and back of your hands and in between your fingers with plenty of soap and water (or waterless hand cleaner) for several minutes. Particularly after exposure to any bodily fluids from another person, it is important to wash your hands thoroughly. You should also wash your hands immediately after removing surgical gloves. This not only helps protect you; it reduces the spread of illnesses from hand-to-hand contact.

You should take precautions to prevent injuries to yourself through needles, scalpels, or other sharp devices. In orphanages, you should not be asked to change diapers or clean vomit or other bodily fluids, regardless of whether the children are infected or not. Keep in mind, however, that you can be exposed to bodily fluids just in the daily contact with children. Bring along an extra set of clean clothes or at least a clean shirt to your internship site. Also keep a log of any injuries or exposures, in case medical follow-up is needed at a later time.

Designing Your Research Project

Students wishing to use their research toward their major, including as a senior project, should consult their major adviser on the home campus. See the discussion on Using Credit for Specific Purposes, in the introduction to the section on the Academic Program.

When planning a research project, keep in mind that you will be engaging in the ongoing research activities of the NGO where you will be placed. While students can often conduct additional independent research on theoretical topics that complement the agency's activities, research involving interviews with human subjects are significantly restricted by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB). Contact the Learning Abroad Center well in advance of your MSID participation if you have questions about your research interests.

Choosing a Topic

You will determine your topic in consultation with the academic director and, in some cases, another faculty member given responsibility for overseeing the project. With this project supervisor you will develop a research plan specifying the questions to be addressed, the background reading necessary, the methodology to be employed, and the outcome to be developed.

Some students choose their topic before leaving their campus; others wait until they are in country and can ground their choice in better knowledge of local conditions. So long as you remain flexible, there are big advantages to making at least a tentative selection while you are still in the US; it permits you to consult with faculty on your campus and to use library and computer resources that may be difficult to match in country.

Regardless of whether you decide on a topic before or after arrival in country, you should to begin asking yourself the following questions as early as possible:

- What degree requirements do I wish to meet with my project? Does it need to fit into a particular major or minor? Does it need to meet departmental guidelines for a senior thesis? Do I understand those guidelines clearly?
- Is my topic feasible in relation to the time constraints I face?
- Am I sure I am not asking questions that are too sensitive politically or culturally? Does my host country impose any legal constraints on research?
- Do I have the necessary linguistic and/or methodological skills to carry off my project?
- Does my project require specific local resources (e.g., libraries, interpreters, or a steady supply of electricity for my computer)? If so, am I sure those resources will be available to me?
- Can my topic command the necessary faculty support?
- Can I get assistance on my campus prior to departure?

Starting Your Academic Planning

Once you have selected a topic, you need to begin shaping the project:

- Limit your topic to something manageable. Projects that are too large are difficult to complete.
- Think through your methodology carefully, and seek advice from faculty on your campus. What do you propose to do once you are on site? What will you be looking at? With whom will you want to speak? What research tools will you use?
- Try to identify in advance the vulnerable points in your research strategy. On what local resources or circumstances are you counting? Discuss contingency plans with faculty in case those resources prove unavailable or those circumstances nonexistent.
- Budget enough time for such post-fieldwork activities as data analysis and further library research, not to mention the writing itself.

Additional Resources

The University of Minnesota libraries has a dedicated page for study abroad research: www.lib.umn.edu/libdata/page.phtml?page_id=4349.

Writing for MSID

MSID writing assignments can range from traditional to highly experiential, from individual to team-based. MSID requires approximately five Focus Papers per course and a longer end-of-term paper.

Focus Papers

Focus Papers are less formal than traditional term papers, and they generally ask you to draw on both your formal coursework and your experiences as you consider an issue. A typical Focus Paper might be three to five pages in length. Focus Papers are assigned within individual courses (their number and due dates are specified in course syllabi).

You might find it useful to think of a Focus Paper as a sort of take-home essay exam designed to help you structure your thinking about the relation between your in-country experiences and course themes. Topics will vary from course to course, from country to country, and from year to year.

Focus papers have two parts which faculty may combine into one paper or ask students to submit as two different papers:

Field Observation: an analytical account of something you have seen, heard, read, or experienced. Your analysis reflects on aspects of development and how it is manifested in your MSID country.

Personal Observation: a written record, grounded in experience, of your own journey. It can contain description, exploration of issues, reflection, the posing of questions, personal perspectives, and analysis of your thoughts, feelings, and observations. The focus is on the ways in which a particular aspect of development impacts you personally and your values.

The focus papers are essential vehicles for you to record the learning that is taking place throughout your MSID experience. MSID faculty have high expectations for these reports. As you write, ask yourself whether you are demonstrating not only what you have experienced but also what you have learned.

Format

Each focus paper must include at the beginning:

- Your name
- A title
- A date
- Course name

Evaluation

In evaluating the focus papers, the faculty member will assess the extent to which you have met the following general criteria:

- *Relevance to MSID curriculum.* Is the topic related to the content of the course?
- *Quality of description.* Does your entry include a detailed description of the particular event or topic that you plan to analyze? Have you been able to avoid interpretation disguised as description?
- *Quality of analysis.* Does your entry reveal that you have thought in some depth about the subject? Do you develop one or more hypotheses to explain what you have written about? Do you criticize your own hypotheses?
- *Use of theory-experience dialogue.* How well does your entry relate what you have experienced or observed to bodies of academic knowledge that have been introduced through lectures, assigned readings, etc.? Do you attempt to understand what you have observed by holding theories and concepts when relevant? And/or do you use your observations to support or challenge theories and concepts?
- *Evidence of growth.* Do your entries show a growth in your understanding over time, whether of the host culture, of development, or of yourself? Is the quality of your description and the depth of your analysis improving?
- *Quality of writing.* Is the entry clearly written? Well organized? Free of spelling and grammatical errors?

As you write, try to imagine someone grading your reports and deciding, partly on the basis of what you have written, that you deserve University of Minnesota credit. If that exercise makes you feel uneasy, maybe you need to thicken your description, sharpen your analysis, read some more, and/or tie your experiences more systematically to formal bodies of knowledge and theory.

Coming Home

The MSID Re-Entry Experience

In the particular case of MSID, the following tend to be among the biggest issues:

- *Poverty and affluence:* MSID students catch many glimpses of the meaning of real poverty. You will gain a new perspective on resource use as you observe the austerity of most people's lives in your host country. Everything is used until it is worn out, then reused by someone else who is still poorer. Your host family may discourage you from showering more than a minute or two per day in order to conserve water, or from reading late at night because of the energy that a light bulb consumes. Then, when you return home, you may experience a profound sense of resentment at overconsumption and waste in the US. People in the US may seem to have far too much, and their dissatisfaction about still not having enough may seem incomprehensible.
- *US influence:* Living in another country, especially a poorer one, affords many opportunities to observe the economic, political, and cultural roles the US and its corporations play on the global stage. Especially when viewed from the perspective of the poor in your host country, those roles may seem less than constructive. Upon return to the US, you may feel resentful that such issues trouble your friends and family members so much less than you think they should.
- *Ignorance and distortion:* You may find yourself intensely resentful of the US media. Coverage of the rest of the world, when it exists at all, may seem shallow and ethnocentric, and the depths of American ignorance may appall you. Remember, though, that you were probably almost equally ignorant of your future host country a year ago.
- *Social justice:* The inequalities of your host society probably hit you daily throughout your MSID experience. Upon return you will likely be more attuned to see the inequalities in our own society. You will find yourself asking why so rich a country should have the most inequitable distribution of income and wealth anywhere in the industrialized world, and you may find it strange that others here can be so oblivious to injustice.
- *Values and pace:* The MSID experience leads many students to reexamine their own values and lifestyle. Although the slow pace of life in your host society may have been frustrating initially, you finally did learn how to just "be," rather than always needing to "do." Now the hectic pace of US life may well feel disconcerting, even offensive. US society may seem obsessed with productivity, leaving little time for cultivating the human relationships you have found central to your host culture.

Cultural Adjustment

The On-Site Experience

What happens when you suddenly lose clues and symbols that orient you to situations in everyday life? What happens when facial expressions, gestures, and words are unfamiliar? The psychological discomfort and adjustment period in a foreign country is commonly known as culture shock or cultural adjustment.

You will almost certainly experience some form of culture shock. It might hit you after two days, two weeks, or two months—timing varies widely for different people. Six common phases of cultural adjustment are listed below. These may be out of order for you, one phase may last longer than another, or you may skip a step entirely.

Initial Fascination: On arrival your surroundings seem glamorous and exotic, and you feel like the focus of attention and activity.

Initial Culture Shock: The initial fascination and euphoria fade as you settle in and you enter an emotional decline.

Surface Adjustment: After the initial “down” (a few days to a few weeks for most), you begin to truly adjust and settle into your surroundings. Language skills begin to improve, and you’ll feel less fatigued. Often you’ll be forming a small group of friends at this stage as well.

Feelings of Isolation: Difficulties in your new culture seem to stubbornly remain and you grow frustrated with the process.

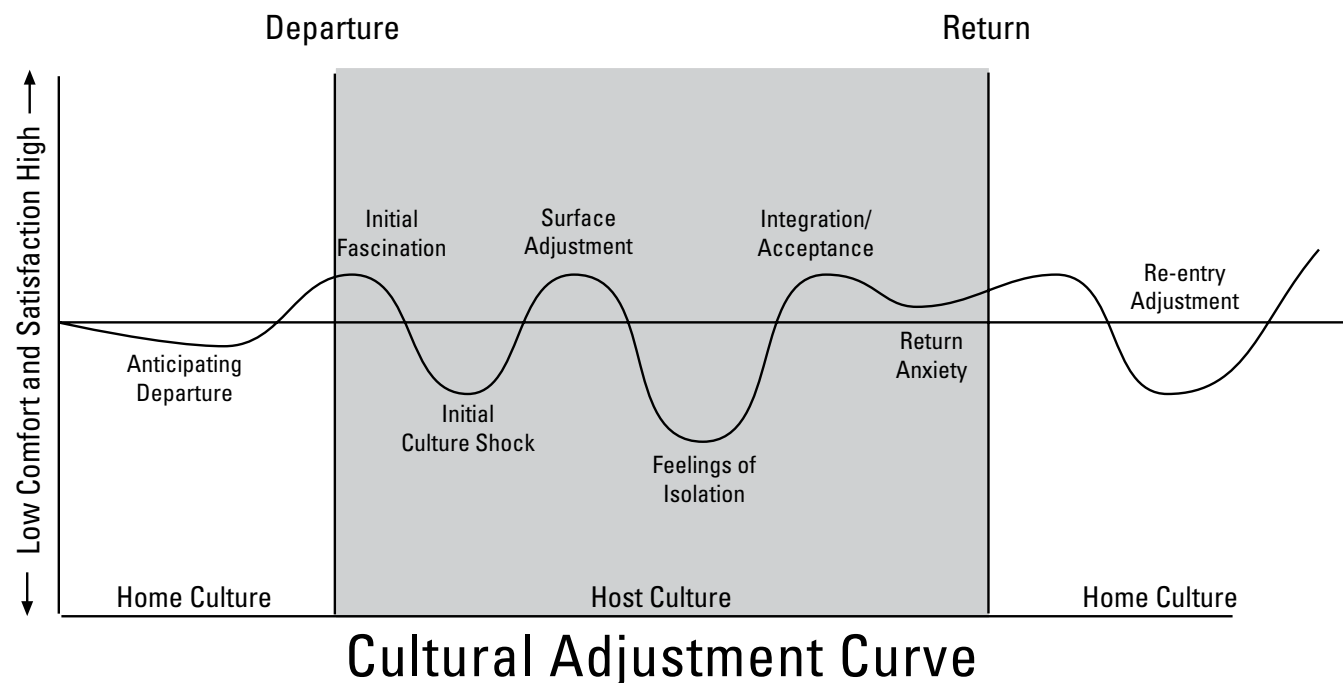
A sense of isolation sets in. Boredom and a lack of motivation often follow. Unresolved personal issues often surface during this stage.

Integration/Acceptance: After continued effort you find yourself more at ease with language, friends, professional, and academic interests. The culture you are living in is more easily examined. Differences between yourself and the society you live in become understandable and you come to accept both the situation and yourself in it, allowing you to relax and feel at home.

Return Anxiety: Just when you feel at home in the new country it’s time to go. Thoughts of leaving new friends raise anxiety similar to those felt before departure. You sense that you’ve changed as a person and apprehension grows when you think about people at home that may not understand your new feelings and insights, yet you may feel guilty for wanting to stay.

When in any of the above phases you may experience: changes in sleeping habits, feelings of helplessness or hopelessness, loneliness, depression, unexplainable crying, placing blame for difficulties on the program or host culture, homesickness, getting angry easily, increase in physical ailments or pain, compulsive eating, or lack of appetite.

Other symptoms may manifest themselves as well. It is important to understand these are part of a normal process of adjustment, however, if uncomfortable feelings persist for extended periods or seem unbearable, seek assistance from your program’s on-site support staff.



Cultural Adjustment Curve

Adjusted from Oberg (1960) and Gullahorn (1963)

MSID in Kenya

On-Site Staff

At each MSID site an on-site director and a program coordinator work closely as a team to manage the program. There is also a team of support staff to assist your daily life adjustments. Both the on-site director and the program coordinator maintain frequent email communication with the MSID staff in Minnesota.

The staff also have personal lives and should be contacted in the evenings and on weekends only in case of an emergency.

MSID Kenya has two main staff members who oversee the program:

Director

The Director of MSID Kenya is Mohamud Jama. Dr. Jama received his Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Washington State University. He is an associate Professor and the former Director of the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi. He has been principal investigator on dozens of projects and papers in the areas of environmental economics, agriculture, land use, and economic policy. He has served as consultant for the World Bank, the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, and the United Nations Development Program's Africa 2000 Network project, and he is on the board of directors of the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). He is also a National Governing Council member of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Kenya Secretariat. Dr. Jama has taught courses for the School for International Training and has been with MSID-Kenya since 1996.

Program Coordinator

The Program Coordinator is Mohamud Khalif Maalim. Khalif has a Diploma in Ranch Management from Egerton University, Kenya, and completed a Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management in 2008 from the University of Nairobi. Before coming to MSID, Khalif worked for eighteen years with community development projects in the public sector, the financial sector, and an international nongovernmental organization. He worked with Kenyan communities to establish cooperatives and group ranches, and has also worked as a branch manager of a parastatal (quasi-governmental) organization, the Agricultural Finance Corporation. Immediately before coming to MSID he served as assistant director of the International Islamic Relief Organization. He is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Development Studies at the University of Nairobi. Khalif has been with MSID-Kenya since 2001.

Facilities

The MSID Kenya office has a small library, computer room, and study space. Classes meet nearby at the former campus of Nazarene University. The on-site orientation includes activities designed to familiarize students with the resources of various libraries and research centers in Nairobi.

Computers

MSID Kenya has 12 computers available for student coursework use only. You are encouraged to bring along an inexpensive PC (not Mac) laptop to use for completing assignments, and the Kenya program office has wireless internet access. Bring an adaptor to plug in your computer and keep in mind that laptops are easily stolen. Keep it well hidden when storing and traveling with it. Never put these kinds of valuables in your checked luggage.

Homestay Families

Kenyan families differ greatly one from another. Among the most important variables are socioeconomic level, religion, ethnic background, and rural vs. urban location.

A good starting point in your attempt to adapt is to understand the family structure as well as possible. Extended families are much more prevalent in Kenya, especially in rural areas, than in most industrialized societies, and your family may well include not only your homestay parents and their children but grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other relatives or quasi-relatives. In some cases it may even be difficult to determine who comprises the household. You may see some family members drifting in and out, perhaps staying for long periods of time and then suddenly disappearing, or perhaps sleeping in your home only on weekdays or only on weekends.

Many Nairobi families still consider their ancestral town or village to be "home," and they may continue to visit it frequently if it is not too far. Indeed, your family may still own another home in their place of origin. Most Kenyan families are Christian—often with elements of traditional African religions mixed in. The main exceptions are along the coast and in northern Kenya, where the majority are Muslim. Many families are quite fundamentalist and deeply involved in their church. You may be asked very directly about your religious life and beliefs. ("Are you saved?" "Do you go to church?") Your family may expect you to accompany them to church for worship. This should be viewed as part of a homestay family routine, like any other, and is to be respected. Some students have nonetheless found it to be a source of some discomfort. It is acceptable to establish some limits to your participation, but always do so in a manner that makes clear your respect for the family's religious commitment.

Most Kenyan families are quite patriarchal. There is typically a distinct distance between the father (the head of the family) and the rest of the household members, especially the children. American students often find it hard to adjust to what they perceive as gender inequities in their families. For example, the mother and her daughters may work constantly while the father and his sons expect to be waited on. Try to accept this; any attempt on your part to change it will cause unending friction.

Polygamy is common among the Muslims of the coast and some interior tribes. If your homestay family is polygamous, you will be assigned to one wife as your homestay mother.

On the surface, many urban families will seem roughly similar to western families, but you will discover more and more difference as you get deeper into the homestay experience. Rural families on the whole will be considerably more traditional. Families will not impose traditions on the students, but students will be expected to learn to accept some of the cultural routines of eating, sleeping arrangements, socializing, etc.

Placements can vary from a home with telephone, satellite television, several cars, and your own room with private shower, to a simple home with no running water, a pit toilet, an open cooking fire, and a shared bedroom. This variety is an educational opportunity. Try to visit some of your classmates' homes to gain comparative insights into Kenyan family life. Students living under the most basic conditions, incidentally, often turn out to be the happiest with their homestays.

Although diet varies from one tribe to another, by far the most common meal consists of maize meal (*ugali*) and vegetables. Meat is also comparatively cheap and popular. Some vegetarian students have chosen to relax their dietary habits during their stay in Kenya; however, it is possible to sustain vegetarian standards in your homestay if it is important to you.

Living in Kenya

Arrival

Consult the coordinated flight section in the beginning of this handbook for general information regarding arrival. Below you will find country-specific instructions.

Students traveling to Kenya are strongly encouraged to take the coordinated flight. Students who would like to arrive early to Kenya must receive approval from their MSID contact at the Learning Abroad Center. Permission will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Students arriving early to Kenya are responsible for their own arrival transportation and lodging and must contact the Learning Abroad Center in advance to make arrangements to join the group at a specified time and place.

Upon arrival at the airport you will go through customs. You will need your passport with the visa you received from Perry stamped inside and a completed form that you will receive during the flight. After clearing customs, you will be directed to pick up any checked luggage.

If you arrive with the group, there will be a person carrying an "MSID" sign waiting for you as you depart from the luggage area to take you to the orientation location, where you will spend the first couple of nights.

If for any reason you will not be arriving as planned and you are not able to communicate with the staff in Kenya or the University of Minnesota about this, or if you are not able to locate the MSID staff at the airport, call Khalif's cell phone number (722.301.159), and he will be able to make the necessary arrangements for you to be picked up.

Note: If you do not arrive with the coordinated flight, you must arrive no more than 6 hours prior to the coordinated flight.

You will not be able to call home upon your arrival.

Telephones are not readily available, you will be exhausted, and orientation will begin quickly. Let your friends and family know that it may take several days for them to hear from you, and you are likely to contact them via email. The on-site staff will notify the Learning Abroad Center if a student does not arrive, and we will call the student's emergency contact, as needed. **Remind friends and family members not to contact the on-site staff directly.** All contact should be through the Learning Abroad Center.

Orientation In Country

In Kenya, you will stay as a group in Nairobi for the first night. The group will then travel to Lake Nakuru National Park for a 4-day orientation program. This gives you some time to recover from the trip and to begin acquainting yourselves with each other before moving to your homestays. During this time you will receive an orientation to Nairobi and Kenya, the MSID program, and its staff and faculty. When it comes time to move to your homestay, your host family will come to the MSID office to pick you up and take you to your new home.

The MSID in-country staff and faculty provide an orientation covering a wide variety of topics including the academic program and its courses; expectations of staff, faculty, and students; cultural differences; the homestays; health and safety; local transportation, communication systems; and other practical matters. Most of this orientation takes place during the first few days in country, but a few topics are deferred until students have had time to make the initial adjustment. An orientation and program schedule, as well as a handout for emergency needs, will be provided upon arrival.

Let friends and family know that it will be difficult to reach you during this orientation period. Reassure them that you will be in touch via email as frequently as possible.

Academics

Language of Instruction

MSID Kenya can accommodate different levels of Swahili, and offers the following language course:

- Beginning, Intermediate, or Advanced Swahili (MSID 1221, 1222 3225, 3226, or 3231)

Communication

Students communicate with their friends and family members in the US through various means. Students are required to purchase cell phones in country, which allows for unlimited incoming calls, including from the US, text messages, and local calls.

Let family and friends in the US know that you will not be able to contact them immediately upon your arrival in country. It will usually be several days before you have the time to make contact, and students frequently correspond most easily by email.

Email & Internet

Internet cafés are available in a number of Kenyan cities and cost one to three shillings per minute (20–25 minutes for \$1). All personal student email must be done at internet cafes and not on the MSID program computers.

Telephone

Even if your Kenyan home has a telephone, you will not be allowed to make international calls. You may be able to receive calls. There are many bureaus from where you can make international calls at reasonable cost. You may wish to arrange a monthly time for your family to call once you have settled in and have a schedule and specific location. In many rural settings it is impossible to receive phone calls. Generally you should share your homestay phone number with your parents only. Most homestay parents do not like excessive use of their private home phones (which are usually in their bedrooms), whether to receive or call out. Moreover, even for local calls there is a toll, so use the phone sparingly.

The MSID Kenya program requires all students to purchase and carry cell phones while on the program. This is not only a good safety precaution, it also facilitates communication between students and program staff. MSID Kenya on-site program staff will assist students with selecting and obtaining cell phones and service contracts. The cost of the cell phones are included in the program's budget estimate. The service contract or minutes that are purchased by students are not included in the budget estimate.

There are two major service providers for cell phones, SAFARICOM and AIRTEL. A number of different plans are available. Rather than opting for the type of service that

carries a monthly charge, most students instead purchase “Scratch Cards” for a specified number of minutes. Although most students use cell phones only within Kenya, a few have also called the US. Unfortunately, costs are exorbitant—about 1,000 shillings (\$13.50) for three minutes during low-rate hours. International calls can be made cheaply via the Internet from a internet café.

Mail

During the classroom phase in Nairobi, mail can be sent to your host family's address. During the internship phase, you may be able to have mail sent to you in care of your host family or your agency, however, please ask first. Otherwise, mail should be sent to the MSID Kenya office on the cover of this Guide.

Mail takes about two weeks to reach Kenya from the US. It is advisable to send everything first class airmail. Letters posted to Nairobi arrive much faster than letters sent to smaller towns. Any valuable items should be registered; obtain a receipt and airway bill number, which can assist in tracing packages should they get lost. Do not attempt to send a parcel or letter by surface mail; it would take at least 3 months. Mail whose contents are liable to customs duty (tax) will have to be received in Nairobi where duty is normally collected. An advice slip is posted to the recipient to come to Nairobi to declare the item to be duty paid. Make sure friends and family indicate on the parcels, “Contents are of no commercial value.” This may help the authorities decide whether or not to charge duty on parcels.

Fax

Faxes cost an average of about \$3.00 per page at the Post Office or EXTELECOM. It is best to produce fax messages as a word document and then send them directly from the computer to the fax machine instead of first printing them out.

Money Matters

Money & Currency Exchange

The shilling (Ksh.) is the monetary unit in Kenya. It is based on a decimal system. Coins are in 50-cent and 1, 5 10, 20 and 40-shilling denominations. Notes are in 50-, 100-, 200-, 500- and 1,000-shilling denominations. Check the current exchange rate at www.xe.com as rates change frequently.

Past students have recommended that you carry a debit card to withdraw shillings from ATMs. You should inform your bank in advance of your travel to facilitate international use. The exchange rate on such cards tends to be a bit better than on cash or traveler's checks. ATMs may be hard to find outside Nairobi and Mombasa. Moreover, a lost or stolen ATM card can take longer to replace than traveler's checks. Thus it is a good idea to take at least some money in the form of traveler's checks, and probably a small amount of cash in

dollars as well. You can exchange money for a nominal fee at a local bank (not all banks handle foreign currency, however), an exchange office, or the Nairobi airport. When exchanging US currency, the exchange rate will be less favorable if you are exchanging bills that are \$20 or less. Be sure to carry all cash, traveler's checks, debit cards, and credit cards in your money belt except what you might need during the day. Upon your arrival, MSID Kenya staff will help you exchange your US dollars for shillings.

Wiring money can be costly, and the money can get lost. US checks or bank drafts sent from home require an additional fee to cash and may not arrive in time. Money orders, cashier's checks, and certified checks are extremely difficult to cash in Kenya. Students can open bank accounts in Kenya, but only in Kenyan shillings.

Warning: Thousands of fake US dollars are in circulation in Africa, and many are found in Kenya. Students are warned not to accept change in small denominations from non-bank outlets.

Credit Cards

It is strongly suggested that you carry a major credit card in your name, which you can use to charge items and to receive cash advance in an emergency situation. Students report that Visa is the card most widely accepted in Kenya, although many places also take American Express or Mastercard. As with your ATM card, you must inform your bank in advance of your travel to facilitate international use, and your card must be Cirrus or Plus compatible (check the back of the card for the symbols). Credit card advances are accessible, but there are fees to consider. You will need to know your PIN number, and in order to receive cash advances from a local bank, you will need to show your passport. Remember that credit card cash advances accrue interest from the moment you take them, even if you pay off your card monthly and do not have to pay interest on purchases.

Although many establishments oriented to tourists or the Kenyan middle and upper classes accept credit cards, do not expect to use one for purchases as routinely as you might in the US. Street markets and the more inexpensive sorts of hotels, restaurants, and shops that students on a tight budget patronize typically do not accept credit cards. Be certain to make arrangements for someone to pay your credit card bill in the US while you are overseas. Alternatively, you may be able to avoid interest charges by pre-paying to build up a positive balance in your credit card account.

Financial Planning

Please consult the program budget sheets on the MSID country website for recommended spending amounts and

plan to bring the appropriate amount. Review travel guides, such as Lonely Planet, for estimated daily expenses.

Two daily meals (breakfast and dinner) during the week and all three meals on the weekend are provided by your host family. You will need to budget for your weekday lunches, bottled water (\$2-\$5 per day), local transportation, and other miscellaneous expenses.

Personal spending habits vary too greatly to predict exactly how much it will cost you to live in your country during the program. Expenses tend to be higher in major cities than in most other locations. But wherever you are, the amount you spend will depend on your lifestyle and your own objectives in participating in MSID. The big variables are optional activities such as nights out, music or dance lessons, gifts, and especially recreational travel. You should budget accordingly.

In the past, many students have found that they spent much more money than they had anticipated. When asked what they spent it on, however, most have said travel.

Climate & What to Wear

Except when you are climbing mountains, you will find it mild to hot everywhere in Kenya, as well as in areas you are likely to travel to in adjacent countries. You might wish to take one light sweater and one light jacket with you for cooler nights in Nairobi or other highland locations, but you should generally prepare for shortsleeve weather. You will need rain gear, including a good pair of "mudder" boots, for the wet season. If you want to climb Kilimanjaro or Mount Kenya you will need warm clothing. You are able to rent a sweater and a jacket for a few dollars a day, but take your own cap, gloves, and long underwear with you.

Water is scarce in much of Kenya. The greatest rainfalls tend to occur in the higher southwest area of the country and along the southern portion of the coast. In general, rainfall decreases from south to north both on the coast and in the highlands. The dry north is Kenya's portion of the Sahel, the vast semi-arid transition belt between the Sahara to the north and areas of higher rainfall to the south. As everywhere in the Sahel—which stretches across the entire continent from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean—rainfall is not only low but highly unreliable.

Within the southwest, the hills and mountains are better watered on the whole than the plateaus or the Rift Valley. It is not only that more rain tends to fall at higher elevations, but also that evapotranspiration is slower here than lower down. A little rain can go a long way in the cooler highlands.

Contrasting with most of Kenya, the extreme south of the country, like Tanzania beyond it, has a single wet season from December to March.

The temperature and rainfall tables on the chart at the end of this section compare Kenya's two largest cities: Nairobi (5,000 ft.) and Mombasa (sea level). Because the coast is so humid, the difference in temperature between them actually feels greater than it appears to be from the charts.

A Cautionary Note on Gift-Giving

MSID counsels restraint in gift-giving. You run the risk of seeming the condescending, rich American, of causing resentments over inequities in your giving, or of giving things of little use to the recipients. Never give gifts to strangers. Avoid giving expensive gifts; it is the thought that counts to Kenyans, not the value of the item. In general, a gift to a whole family or an agency is better than individual gifts, especially when it is hard to know where the family ends and who might be offended through exclusion. For a Nairobi family, some symbolic remembrance from your home might be appropriate (e.g. a plate with something from your state, pens and pencils, or a coffee table book or a calendar with nice photos). For a family in a rural area, something from Nairobi (e.g. a thermos) will be as welcome as something from the US. By all means do give appropriate gifts when the situation calls for it of Kenyans as well as you—for example, a birthday party for a child in your family.

Remember that the greatest gifts you can give are nonmaterial: your friendship, your empathy, and your work. A part of such gifts should take the form of keeping in touch after your return to the US.

You should be aware that the MSID program budget includes a small contribution to your agency; you will want to speak with an MSID–Kenya staff member about what that contribution should be, assess the needs of the agency/community, and try to use the contribution for something that you know can really be used. In most cases MSID staff counsels giving an article of some kind rather than cash. You and the MSID–Kenya staff should decide together how this line might best be used.



Introduction to Kenya

Kenya is located on the equator on the east coast of Africa. It borders Ethiopia and Sudan in the north, Uganda and Lake Victoria in the west, Tanzania in the south, and the Indian Ocean and Somalia in the east. Kenya covers an area of 225,000 square miles, about 84% of the size of Texas.

A network of roads of varying quality connects Kenya with its eastern African neighbors of Tanzania, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia; railroads still run to Uganda and Tanzania as well. Southward, roads and rails can take travelers all the way to Cape Town at the southern tip of the continent. Surface travel to the west and north is more difficult. Although the Nile River is navigable from Uganda to its mouth in Egypt, the civil war in the southern Sudan has greatly decreased its use, and surface travel to northern Africa is now mostly unfeasible except via the Red Sea. To the west, the road system through the Congo rainforest has deteriorated so badly under conditions of persistent civil war that land travel to West Africa is virtually nonexistent.

Economy

On the whole, Kenya lacks the oil or major mineral deposits that help many African nations earn foreign exchange, and much of the country is poor in agricultural resources as well. On the other hand, the good soils and abundant moisture of the more favored highland areas would be the envy of many tropical countries. And any catalog of resources could not fail to note the game reserves and beaches that make Kenya a leading tourist destination.

As is true throughout Africa, most of Kenya's population is engaged in agriculture. Yet, agriculture and stock raising account for less than 30% of the country's gross domestic product. Besides the two major export crops, coffee and tea, Kenya's principal agricultural products include maize, wheat, sugarcane, fruit, vegetables, dairy products, beef, pork, poultry, and eggs. Rural life is very tough, and were it not for the hard work of Kenya's farmers the country would be far from food self-sufficiency.

Industry contributes a further 18% of the gross domestic product. Kenyan factories produce mostly small-scale consumer goods (plastics, furniture, batteries, textiles, soap, cigarettes, flour). Agricultural processing and oil refining are other significant industries. Production is overwhelmingly for the domestic market and has traditionally depended on high tariff barriers to protect it from goods produced in the industrialized countries. Many industries are suffering due to free trade.

The most unusual feature of Kenya's economy compared with many African countries is the large role of the service sector, which accounts for more than half the gross domestic product. The reason is tourism, which contributes over a quarter of Kenya's foreign exchange—more than the two leading exports, tea and coffee, combined. The number of

tourists visiting Kenya per year grew from 684,000 in 2003 to 1.2 million in 2007. Unfortunately, tourism plummeted in 2008. Conferences cancelled and business travel also declined, resulting in a significant revenue loss for the country. Several factors contributed to the dramatic decline including the post-election violence that followed the December 2007 controversial presidential election and the global financial crisis.

People

In the 1970s Kenya had what experts believed to be the highest rate of population growth in the world. Thanks mostly to an astonishing birth rate of over 50 per thousand population; its natural increase was about 3.8% per year—which meant that the population was doubling approximately every 18 years. Although population continues to expand rapidly, the birth rate has declined notably in recent years to an estimated 35 per thousand (compared with 41 for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole and 15 for the US); its death rate is 14 per thousand (compared with 16 and 9 respectively). At the current growth rate the doubling time is now approximately 33 years.

Death rates are rising in the short run because of widespread AIDS. Unlike the many African countries that initially denied they had an AIDS problem, Kenya launched a massive public education program early to alert the population to the danger and recommend safety measures. A traveler in the country will be impressed by the number of AIDS billboards in a multitude of languages. Although the AIDS epidemic still reaches alarming proportions, as a result of the educational campaign the rate of infection is growing somewhat more slowly than in many African countries.

Over half of all Kenyans speak languages belonging to the Bantu family (much as French, German, and English all belong to the Indo-European family); most of the remainder speaks Nilotic languages. Speakers of Cushitic languages, which some linguists classify as Hamitic, constitute only about 3% of the population. The Maasai and the Turkana speak blended Nilotic-Cushitic languages.

If you randomly selected any pair of Kenyans, the odds are strong that they would be unable to communicate with each other in the first language of either. However, they might be able to resort to Swahili, or Kiswahili, as it is locally known. Swahili serves as a common second language for millions of Kenyans who do not share a maternal tongue. Indeed, it has become a lingua franca not only for Kenya but also for much of the rest of East Africa. It is the official national language of neighboring Tanzania and one of two official languages in Kenya.

Kenya's other official national language is English. Even though it carries a certain stigma as the tongue of the European colonialists, it represents neutral ground in the competition among the various African languages, none of which would be acceptable as a national language to speakers of other tongues.

The majority of Kenyans are Christians. About 40% belong to various Protestant churches and 30% are Roman Catholic. Many Catholics and Protestants alike are quite fundamentalist, and MSID students often are astonished at the depth of religiosity in their host families.

The 6% or so of the population that is Muslim lives mostly along the coast and in the northeast, although mosques are a common sight throughout the country. The Asian community includes not only Muslims but also Hindus and Sikhs.

Most of the rest of the population follows indigenous belief systems or nontraditional Christian beliefs. But the clean categories of the statistics are misleading, for they imply that everyone in the population adheres to one, and only one, religion. Actually, many people blend two belief systems into one, sometimes holding apparently incompatible beliefs side by side. People who claim to be Christian or Muslim, for example, may also subscribe to some traditional animist beliefs. The same individual might go to church on Sunday morning and then to a divining ceremony in the afternoon.

Living in Nairobi

From its founding as a collection of shacks along the new railway in the late nineteenth century, Nairobi grew quickly. It received a huge boost when the colonial government moved the capital of British Kenya from Mombasa in 1907. Its growth has continued unabated since then to its present population of some 2.9 million.

Traffic jams and skyscrapers contrast sharply with vast peripheral shantytowns. The financial and administrative portions of downtown look like their counterparts in an industrialized country. Smartly dressed office employees on the way to work reinforce that impression. But the beggars, street vendors, and con artists remind you that this is a developing country—as does the kaleidoscope of sounds, colors, and movement that mark the traditional market area immediately adjacent to the financial sector.

Nairobi's rapid growth has strained its infrastructure. Hundreds of thousands of people in shantytowns lack running water and sewers. Power outages, brownouts, and surges occur with some frequency; a surge protector for any electronic equipment is a must. Infuriating traffic jams develop at rush hour or when it rains hard. Smog becomes worse each year.

In addition to the nation's political capital, Nairobi is also its industrial, commercial, financial, administrative, and cultural center. It houses a large proportion of Kenya's factories as well as the headquarters of most businesses, whether foreign or Kenyan-owned. Nairobi also has Kenya's finest museums and other cultural attractions.

In effect, Nairobi is the capital not only of Kenya but also of East Africa. Daily flights connect it to Europe, Asia, and countries in other parts of Africa; moreover, travelers bound for other East African countries often must fly by way of Nairobi. Many international agencies have their East African headquarters offices here.

Tips from Students

Past students have compiled the following list of additional information:

- Be mindful of safety when you travel through the city and always keep careful watch for your belongings.
- As a foreigner, you are likely to be perceived as rich. Even if you think of yourself as a poor student, you probably are rich by Kenyan standards. Be prepared to be asked for things, including help to get to the US or to obtain a US visa.
- Avoid contact with street hustlers. Any response will likely set you up for an unforgettable experience.
- The MSID Kenya staff are very helpful. Turn to them for guidance on safe travel, both locally and during the breaks.
- Pack a few nice outfits incase you want to go out with your host family or friends.

Conclusion

MSID is likely to prove to be one of the most profound learning experiences of your life. It will not always be easy, but if you are willing to invest the requisite amounts of emotional and intellectual energy, you will be forever changed. MSID staff and faculty will do everything in their power to assist you in this adventure, but ultimately it is you who will make the experience what it is.

Temperature (°F) & Rainfall (inches) in Nairobi & Mombasa

Nairobi	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high	77	79	77	75	72	70	79	80	82	86	82	82	78
Average low	54	55	57	58	56	53	51	52	52	55	56	55	54
Average precipitation	1.5	2.5	5.9	8.3	6.2	1.8	0.6	0.9	1.1	2.1	4.3	3.4	38.7
Mombasa	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high	87	87	88	88	83	82	81	81	82	84	85	86	84
Average low	75	76	77	76	74	73	71	71	72	75	75	75	74
Average precipitation	1.0	0.7	2.5	7.7	12.6	4.7	3.5	2.5	2.5	3.5	3.8	2.4	47.8

Appendix

Packing Checklist

The following is a list developed by past MSID students and in-country staff. Adapt it to suit your own style and priorities. You will not need all the items on the packing list, they are only suggestions.

Clothing

- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes
- 1 pair of comfortable walking sandals
- 2–3 pairs of flip-flops
- 1 pair of dress shoes
- 1 dress outfits
- Lots of underwear, durable bras
- Lightweight socks
- T-shirts, pack more t-shirts than tank tops
- Tank tops, thick straps
- Skirts/dresses that extend below the knee
- 2 pairs of pants for ladies, 3–4 pairs of pants for men (jeans, khakis, etc.)
- 3 pairs of capris for ladies
- 1–2 long-sleeve lightweight shirts
- Several short-sleeve shirts
- 1 long-sleeve warm top
- Sweat pants (light-weight)
- Shorts (hiking/sport style) for beach and sports wear
- Bathing suit
- Bandanas or handkerchiefs
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Fleece jacket or lining or lightweight sweater
- Lightweight long-sleeve, long-leg pajamas
- Sun hat/cap

Household/Personal Items

- Money belt containing passport, international immunization record, credit card, cash card, traveler's checks, any dollars you are taking in cash, etc.
- 1 towel and washcloths
- Compactable umbrella

- Travel alarm
- Camera with extra batteries
- Cord to connect your camera to your computer
- Film or digital flashcards (most film/batteries/developing are available in country)
- Ziplock plastic baggies
- Flashlight
- 1 or 2 water bottles
- Sewing kit, safety pins
- Wristwatch
- Music player
- Electric converter and adapter if you are taking electrical items
- Contact information of friends/family/academic contacts
- Guide book (e.g., Lonely Planet or Rough Guide)
- Pocket knife (large enough to peel fruit with)
- Photographs of friends and family, your house, your community, etc.
- Duct tape or packing tape
- Locks for luggage
- Zip/flash drive
- Rolls of quarters
- Bilingual dictionary
- Notarized copy of passport
- Journal

Health Items & Toiletries

- A full supply of prescription drugs in original bottles (in case customs needs documentation); include one prescription for bacterial dysentery and directions for its use
- First aid kit
- Insect repellent (at least 21% DEET)
- Anti-itch gel for mosquito bites
- Condoms, birth control
- Tampons (expensive or unavailable in country) or Diva cup
- Bladder infection medication, yeast infection medication
- Anti-diarrheal medicine

- Pepto-Bismol or similar stomach settler
- Laxatives
- Small packages of tissue or toilet paper
- Pain medicines
- Sunscreen (high SPF)
- Aloe vera gel for sunburns
- Eye drops
- Ear plugs
- Sunglasses
- Lip balm with sunscreen
- Vitamins
- Hand sanitizer
- All contact lens materials needed for your stay
- An extra pair of glasses and a copy of your prescription
- Sanitary moist wipes
- Toiletries: soap, deodorant, shampoo, and toothpaste are all easily available in country (but take enough for first few weeks); dental floss (take enough for your stay), nail clippers, toothbrush, hairbrush or comb, razor
- Box of latex gloves (for medical internships)
- Thermometer to detect a fever. In hot climates, it is very difficult to assess a fever independently.
- Granola bars
- Water filter/purifier, iodine tablets