

Greetings from the GOSESO campus here at Kiganza Village in Tanzania! My name is Carter Bauman, I'm 21 years old, and I've now been in Kiganza for one month. Yared has given me permission to email you to share some of the insights I have gained in the time I have been here. This has been the best month of my life by far.

It's really hard to put my experience into words, but I hope that by sharing some of my thoughts, I can help GOSESO grow. GOSESO is a beautiful organization and I really want to spend the rest of my life here assisting in its transition to a powerful organization. Imagining the future here really feels my heart with joy.

The first time I met Yared was when I was six years old in Farmville, Virginia. Yared was then a freshman at Longwood University. Surprisingly, I remember it like it was yesterday. We were standing in a circle in my front yard playing hacky-sack. Ever since then Yared has been a very close family friend and we have seen him about every other year. My parents have supported Yared in his college days, and have remained annual donors to GOSESO through providing student scholarships. Literally, every student that goes to school at GOSESO is on scholarship! I have also received a \$500.00 donation to GOSESO in my name during the past two Christmas. Ever since ninth grade, when Yared spoke to my chemistry class, I knew one day I would be at GOSESO. Finally, that dream has come true, and it has lived up to every expectation.

I am a Public Policy & Community Service major currently enrolled at Emory and Henry College in Virginia. The major seeks to provide you with concepts and skills in community-centered analysis and action research and to help you better understand the impact of local, regional, national, and global structures, and institutions on social change. This community is exactly the ideal community we seek out in my major except for one thing, poverty. However, it is the strongest community I've ever seen; everyone depends on each other to survive. No one is starving here. In America we don't know our neighbors, aside from their names. Here your neighbor is your best friend, your co-worker, and your ticket to survive. People are so happy here and have no concept of depression. It is very interesting to see the difference in our cultures from the perspective of my major.

I have definitely experienced culture shock and have easily learned more in one month than any schooling has ever taught me. After one week of being here I remember thinking that my departure date of August 5th was never going to come. I had traveled in developing countries before, but never lived in one. I thought I would come right in and adapt immediately. I wanted to live just like the villagers, eating the same food, living in the same conditions. However, I found that I had to ease myself into this culture. My cousin, who recently spent two months in India, was sick most of her time there. Because of my living conditions, I have not been sick at all and have been able to contribute very quickly. Since arriving, I have worked on a farm, made bricks, made palm oil, gathered seeds from endangered trees and other tasks.

Two weeks after my arrival, I was worried that my departure was going to come too fast! I had fallen in love with this place in three weeks. I feel that other students and visitors who

come here will have a fantastic experience if they are able to stay long enough to get acclimated. I recommend that when you visit, you should plan to stay as long as possible (at least three weeks) to get the full experience. I have made friends that I will undoubtedly have for the rest of my life. I told one of them that I would build my house right in the open plot of land next to his house.

Some have complained that they would prefer to eat a local diet that is less expensive. However, it is my experience that visitors have a better experience if their food and living conditions are more what they are used to. In addition, providing services for visitors stimulates the local economy-one of GOSESO's goals! I am pleased that my hard-earned money is assisting a local woman who walks twenty minutes to bring my food and goes toward providing security, guides and other needs. It is my observation that the rates charged are very reasonable.



Luckily, for me, I am a semi-talented soccer player. I play soccer (mpira wa miguu) every evening and three times a week in the morning. It has really connected me to the community, because soccer is the heart and soul of this community. Imagine having 100 people watching practices, and hundreds of people watching the matches. It's a great environment..

Today marks the start of the Village Champions League that will go on for the whole month. It is a tournament sponsored by GOSESO's School without Walls. I'm very honored to say I have been invited to participate. We have been practicing and preparing very seriously since I arrived here. Last night my teammates all stayed in one house to prepare the team mentally and keep their mind focused from the outside world. This is a smaller tournament compared to the bigger Environmental Cup that GOSESO will also sponsor that begins later in the fall and involves teams from two-dozen villages in Kigoma Region. Too bad I will not be here! Soccer is very important in this community. There is more support and community spirit than I ever experienced on my high school or college varsity teams.

Soccer has become my project here. I have bought five soccer balls, the first time there has ever been more than one, in order to be able to run drills. There are over 50 pairs of used cleats in transit to Kiganza that I have collected through Facebook. Here, many people play barefoot, some have sneakers, some have baseball cleats, and few have soccer cleats. I have organized a soccer tournament/fundraiser in my hometown when I return to Virginia in August. My goal is to raise \$10,000 to build a soccer field on the GOSESO campus.

I'm going to be in Milwaukee for one year working for Habitat for Humanity and then I plan to return and work as director of the soccer academy. I want to widen the bridge Yared has built to America and increase the traffic.

One important thing I have learned in my studies is that a great deal of harm has been done and money wasted in developing countries when outsiders come in and attempt to

implement what works in other cultures without enough insight into what works best in that culture. This is the beauty of GOSESO! Yared has come to America to get a world-class education, but he is a native of Tanzania and has an intimate knowledge of what will work in his culture. His challenge is to take the best of what he has learned in the United States and adapt it to the local situation.

It is my observation that Yared and his Tanzanian team are doing a fantastic job. The GOSESO vision is already making a tremendous impact in this region, even in its infant stage. It is so exciting to be a part of the new, indigenous model that has a real potential to transform not only the Kigoma Region, but Africa. This is why I so passionately want to be involved with GOSESO for the long term.

Asante. Thank you!

Carter Bauman