

Teacher's Notes: Where is Uganda?

Objective

This is a quick activity to introduce students to Lucy's home country – Uganda. Most students are unlikely to know where Uganda is, or anything about this country. They may have some prior knowledge and beliefs about Africa and the people who live there.

This activity could be undertaken either prior to or after viewing the film clip “Lucy's Story”, and is suitable for students at all year levels.

It will support students' geography skills in understanding and using maps, and recognising that people live in different places and have different living conditions.

Resources

- Teaching Aid: “Where is Uganda?” World map highlighting location of Uganda and Australia, and country map of Uganda

Note: while a world map has been provided, this activity could also be undertaken using a classroom globe, map or atlas.

Note: recommend printing out the Teaching Aid on A3 paper so the maps are large enough to be visible to all students. Alternatively it may be suitable to print out a few smaller copies to distribute amongst small groups of students.

Activity

Ask students if they have heard of a country called Uganda before, and what they may know about it or the continent of Africa.

Advise students that the film clip “Lucy's Story” will show them about the life of one girl who lives in Uganda.

Using a world map, either ask students to identify Australia, or (depending on age/background knowledge) point out Australia. Identify where in Australia their school is located. Then identify Uganda on the map, and show students the country map of Uganda.

Based on the information provided in the Notes section below, share with students some of the information about the geography and people of Uganda, as appropriate depending on year level.

Notes

COUNTRY PROFILE - UGANDA

GEOGRAPHY

Uganda is a landlocked country in East-Central Africa. The country's landscapes vary from volcanic ranges to savannas to swamps. The source of the Nile, the world's longest river, is in Uganda. Uganda's location beside Lake Victoria, and its altitude (900 to 1500 metres above sea level) make its climate cooler than might be expected in a country which lies across the equator: temperatures range from 15-32°C. This climate favours a wide range of vegetation and agricultural production.

PEOPLE

Most of Uganda's people live in the cooler and higher regions of the east and the southwest. There are over 30 ethnic groups. Small numbers of people are also of Indian, European and Arabic descent. While English and Swahili are the official languages, these are spoken alongside many local languages, of which Luganda is the most common. More than half of Uganda's population are Christians, while many follow traditional religions and some are Muslims.

HISTORY

Human habitation in Uganda stretches back at least 52,000 years. Hand axes which date back to 50,000 BC have been found along Uganda's Kagera River. During the reign of King Mutesa I (1856-84), European explorers first entered the region of Buganda. The colonial future of Uganda was decided by negotiations between Germany and Britain in 1886 and 1890, with present-day Uganda (incorporating Buganda and the lands of 28 other ethnic groups) assigned to British rule. Uganda, like Australia, is part of the Commonwealth of Nations.

In 1962, Uganda became independent under Prime Minister Milton Obote. However, Obote's government was toppled in 1971 in a coup led by Major-General Idi Amin. In a reign of terror, Amin eliminated his opponents and ruined the economy. He was overthrown in 1979 and civil war followed. Guerrilla leader Yoweri Museveni took power in 1986 and he has been credited with substantially improving the country's human rights record. He has also achieved some stability and a fragile unity but this has not been uniform across the country.

Since the 1980s, The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, has opposed Museveni and caused great suffering. Comprised almost entirely of abducted child soldiers, the LRA has conducted raids in northern Uganda and displaced approximately 1.8 million people. It is estimated that 30,000 children have been abducted by the LRA. An agreement to end hostilities was signed by the Government of Uganda and the LRA in August 2006, however at least 900,000 people remain living in camps for internally displaced people (IDP). This conflict has caused great human and financial cost to Uganda and its development.

ECONOMY

Uganda's economy shows a mixed picture of recent growth alongside ongoing problems with debt and costs resulting from economic mismanagement and conflicts. Agriculture provides 70 percent of income and employs 80 percent of the labour force. Coffee is the main export, followed by cotton, tea, gold, tobacco, corn and fish.

Most farms are small and the average size is three hectares. Tea and sugar are produced on large estates. Food crops include plantains (cooking bananas), cassava, millet, maize, and potatoes. Rivers and lakes are a good source of fish. Livestock is important but tsetse fly is a problem in the north. Inequities in the world trading system make it difficult for Uganda to trade its way out of poverty.

LIVING CONDITIONS

Most Ugandans live in rural areas. Housing varies from square or round mud-walled buildings or grass-thatched huts in the countryside, to concrete block or brick homes with tin roofs in towns. Contaminated water and inadequate sanitation are problems for the poor. Even in Kampala, slums lack running water and electricity.

The staple diet is high in starch and low in protein, consisting of matoke made from cooking bananas, or porridge made from millet or sorghum. Though women are the major contributors in the agricultural labour force (70 to 80 percent), only 7 percent own land.

Wages of most people, including public servants, have not kept pace with price increases and families need several income-producing activities to make ends meet.

Officially the government provides medical care but much of the population does not have access to health facilities. HIV and AIDS brought about a major crisis to Uganda. It has claimed many lives and created over two million orphans. The epidemic has placed major strains on scarce resources, as well as causing labour shortages. But Uganda has been waging a vigorous campaign against HIV and AIDS and this has helped to reduce the prevalence rate of the virus – which reached 30 percent of the population in the 1990s – to 5.4 percent in 2010.

EDUCATION

In 1997, school fees for primary education were abolished and enrolment rates increased from 62 percent in 1992 to 86 percent in 2004. However, many children experience huge class sizes of up to 100 children, and teachers have limited resources and training.

Source: adapted from Uganda Country Profile, November 2010, available at: <http://www.worldvision.com.au>