



Edmund Rice
FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA

Liberating Lives Through Education

GONE FISHING

2025



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Welcome

Congratulations on your decision to participate in *Gone Fishing!*

This pre-travel document will provide you with some guidelines and helpful tips to best help you prepare for your immersion trip.

Your travel

We recommend you utilise ERF's travel agent who is very experienced with our immersion requirements but you are welcome to use your own. Our agent details are:

Cayla Gibson, Sterling Travel Co
Cayla.gibson@envoyage.com.au
0431 231 334

Travel Insurance

You are covered under Edmund Rice Foundation travel insurance as an immersion participant for the dates and locations of the immersion. Any travel outside the immersion will need to be covered under your own policy.

Please print or keep a copy handy of the insurance policy page at Appendix A.

As you prepare

In the time leading up to your departure, try immersing yourself in the destination country. Google, Wikipedia and endless other online resources can help you. Study maps, learn the demographics, read about the political and cultural history, sub-cultures, tribes, inspirational leaders and personalities from that area.

YouTube will most likely have the personal travelogues of others who have been there. None of this will give you the experience of being there but it will begin your adjustment to that place.

Please read the Appendix to this document that was by a clinical psychologist who participated in *Gone Fishing* in October 2014 and was profoundly moved by the experience. The paper will help prepare you psychologically for *Gone Fishing*.

Vaccinations & medical

You will need to visit your travel doctor at least 6 weeks before you travel and obtain medical advice on the vaccinations and medical supplies you will need for your trip. Please note that there are several very good expat chemists and doctors in Nairobi.

You will need a **Yellow Fever Vaccination** certificate. The Yellow fever vaccination booklet will be required for re-entering Australia.

Other vaccinations that may be recommended include the following (this is up to you and your doctor and is not medical advice):

- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis

- Polio
- Measles, mumps, rubella
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Typhoid
- Rabies
- COVID-19
- Influenza
- Cholera

You will also need **malaria** medication for when you go to the **Maasai Mara**. There are a range of options, which you can discuss with your doctor.

You may wish to take some antibiotics in case you get an upset stomach (which is quite common).

Other over the counter medicines you may like to take include:

- Immodium
- Gastrolyte or Hydralyte for dehydration
- Panadol

Passport

It is important that your passport is up-to-date and valid for **at least 6 months** following your return from Africa.

Visa Requirements

Australian Citizens are required to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) before travelling to Kenya. This is applied for online and documents required to be uploaded are:

1. Valid passport for at least six (6) months after planned date of arrival into Kenya
2. Selfie or passport-type photo
3. Contact information, email address and phone number
4. Itinerary
5. Accommodation booking confirmation
6. Credit or debit card for payment

The application portal is: <https://www.etakenya.go.ke/en>

Information from Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade (DFAT)

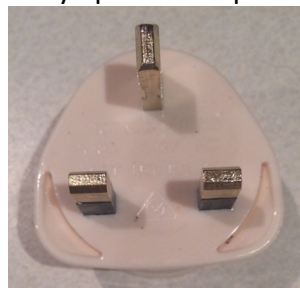
We recommend that you visit [Smartraveller.gov.au](https://smartraveller.gov.au) prior to your departure for Australian Government information on travel to Kenya.

Wifi

Wifi is available in hotels and also available in some cafes and shopping centres and is usually free.

Adapters

Kenya power adapters are UK adapters and look like this:



Safety

High levels of unemployment and poverty lead to issues with theft and safety. When walking around, ensure you dress appropriately (i.e. minimal, non-flashy jewellery) and do not display expensive equipment (i.e. keep cameras out of sight etc.). Don't bring valuables unnecessarily into the communities (i.e. passport). Carry minimal amounts of cash and keep it hidden. You can familiarize yourself with ERF's Safety and Security Policy

here: <https://erf.org.au/app/uploads/2023/08/Safety-Security-Policy.pdf>

Money Matters

There is no need to take travelers cheques or US dollars with you. There are ATMs available to withdraw local currency, when arriving in the country. This will work if your bankcard is connected to the Visa or Cirrus network. Notify your bank of your travel dates before you travel so they don't freeze your account when an international withdrawal occurs.

US dollars can be exchanged for local currency if you have them. However Kenyan Shillings are not well accepted once you leave Kenya.

Shopping

There are supermarkets where you can purchase most grocery items. There are also local markets that you will be able to visit.

Phones

Your team leaders will have mobile phones. You can check with your own provider before departure about options or you may wish to pre-purchase an eSIM. We successfully use www.esim.com.au.

What to Pack

- 3-4 pairs of pants (cargo type pants that are quick drying are great – please note that shorts are not suitable for visits to the slums)
- 4-5 shirts (t shirts/polo shirts/ light weight shirts)
- 3 shorts (for Edmund Rice Camp)
- Underwear
- Swimwear
- Socks

2-3 pairs of comfortable shoes (runners/hiking boots) - you will be doing a lot of walking and sometimes in slightly unsavoury places. An old pair of runners that you are happy to leave behind is ideal.

- 1 Hat
- 1-2 pullovers (it can be quite cool at night)
Pyjamas
- 2-3 Smart casual outfits for going out to dinner
Sunscreen
Insect repellent
Hand sanitizer
Toiletries
Camera/Go Pro/iPad
- 1 overnight bag which can double for safari weekend luggage/
carry-on luggage
- 1 Pair of good shoes/boots for semi-formal occasions

* Laundry will be done a couple of times while you are away, however you may need to handwash some items.

Gifts for Schools

There is a lot of need in Kenya and if you want to take gifts for classrooms here are some suggestions:

- Books
- Pens/pencils/crayons
- Art supplies
- Sports equipment (soccer balls are a popular item), skipping ropes
- Small toys
- Second hand musical instruments for schools

It is very difficult to send things to Kenya as they pay tax (and potentially bribes) to get things through customs. You can easily pack items but freight has its challenges.

Duty free alcohol

You are allowed 1 litre of alcohol per person over the age of 18.

Checklist

✓	Item / Description
	Passport
	Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)
	Insurance Cover (note, ERF has cover for your trip while on this Immersion)
	Yellow Fever Immunisation certificate
	Medications including anti-malaria

Appendix A

Insurance

Please see below the key information for the Travel Insurance for your upcoming trip to Kenya.

You are covered under Edmund Rice Foundation travel insurance as an immersion participant with;

Insurer: Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance

CATEGORY C – Participants of Immersion Programmes.

Please print or keep a copy handy of the below.

All overseas travellers should keep a record of the BHSI Care telephone number:

Telephone = **+61 2 8907 5605**

SMS = **+61 437 174 325**

Email = **assist@worldtravelprotection.com**

Please Quote:

Policy Number: **47-ZAH-331873-02**

Insured Name: **Oceania Province of the Congregation of Christian Brothers, Edmund Rice Community Services Limited, Edmund Rice Foundation Australia, Trustees of Edmund Rice Education Australia, Edmund Rice Education Australia Limited**

Please also advise the name of the Christian Brothers Ministry or Edmund Rice Education Australia entity that you and/or the insured person(s) are representing.

Guide for Immersions in Developing Countries (for travellers, workers & program participants)

Tim Galbally – Counselling Psychologist - Melbourne

The aim of this guide is to help you get the best from your trip and ensure it contributes to your personal and professional development. The practical exercises will help you develop psychological and emotional well-being and awareness.

When you visit a foreign country, the way you react will be influenced by your personality, your past experiences and the mental and emotional state you are in at the time. As you immerse yourself into a new culture, you bring your unique hopes and expectations and your own preferred ways of coping and your unique intelligence to that situation. In addition to your individuality you also have a lot in common with your fellow travellers and workers and also with the inhabitants of the country you are visiting. There are many things you can do to take good care of yourself and others while on your journey.

Express Yourself

Writing is a great way of defining and distilling your thoughts and feelings. Talking is a good way to do that too. In fact, expressing yourself thoughtfully is generally good for your well-being and development. When you travel to a foreign country your senses, mind and emotions have a huge amount of new information to process. Keep a journal and talk to others before, during and after your trip. This will help you stay more balanced and aware.

- *Take a moment now to write a brief assessment of your current life situation. How are your relationships, your home life, your work, family, friends, your relationship with your body, possessions etc? This is for your eyes only....just a brief stocktake of your life before the journey.*

Expectations

What you expect of a new situation, will influence your experience of that situation when it happens. Asking questions about the journey, expressing your expectations and researching the destination country are useful ways to ensure that your expectations are reasonable. Realistic expectations will build your capacity to enjoy the journey and feel resilient throughout.

- *Write down what you are hoping to get out of this trip. What do you want to occur? How would you like it to influence your life? How would you like it to influence others?*

During the weeks prior to your journey

Try immersing yourself in the destination country before you go. Google, Wikipedia and endless other online resources can help you study maps, learn the demographics, read about the political and cultural history, subcultures, tribes, inspirational leaders and personalities from that place. YouTube will most likely have the personal travelogues of others who have been there. None of this will give you the experience of being there but it will begin your adjustment to that place.

- *Research your destination country well before you intend to travel*

Practice focussing on the present

One way of learning to be more relaxed and open to your experience is through the practice of Mindfulness. This involves learning how to focus on the present moment i.e. on your senses and your current thoughts and emotions. Being Mindful is a great way to digest new environments. You can learn the process of Mindfulness through Apps on iPhones and Androids, many of which are easily available and often free of charge. These include Headspace, Smiling Mind, Mindfulness Meditation and others. You'll need to practice a bit each day. The sooner you begin, the better.

- *Learn and Practice the skill of mindfulness*

When you are away

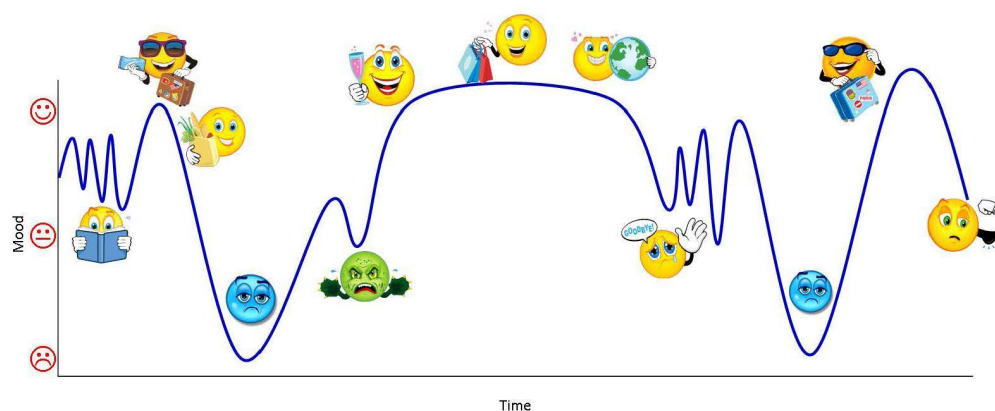
There's a lot of practical advice which is relevant to this guide and which can contribute a lot to your psychological resilience while you are away. Partners, parents, friends, travel agencies and Government agencies usually offer lots of conservative, practical advice designed to keep you safe and healthy when you are away from home. The usual recommendations range from eating and sleeping well and staying vigilant to specific travel warnings in certain areas around the globe. It pays to listen to all of that advice and consider it well, even if you choose at some stage not to follow it.

- *Research travel tips online and compile a list that are particularly relevant for you*

Emotions and Feelings

It is common to experience powerful emotions particularly when witnessing extreme poverty and human suffering. Sometimes you might turn off, as if emotionally numb. Or your moods might cycle between these two extremes. Whatever happens don't be alarmed by your reactions. It's quite reasonable that powerful experiences can cause powerful reactions.

- *Write in a journal or share your experiences with someone you trust. Self-expression assists you to process strong feeling reactions.*

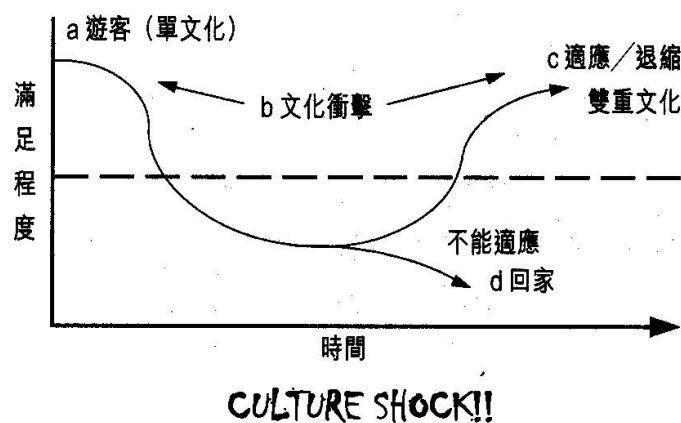


Adjusting to a foreign country

Immersing yourself into a new culture is an enriching experience which can also, simply by contrast, give you a fresh appreciation and insight into your own culture. All of this can result in a very positive, life-altering experience.

However, immersion into a foreign culture can be a shock to a person who has lived mostly in their home country. Big differences between cultures can make it difficult to adjust to new surroundings. The strangeness of a new country, the differences in behaviours, customs, weather and food require some adjustment. Add to that the impact of witnessing poverty first-hand and the recognition of disparities in health, welfare, work and life opportunities. Such impressions can be overwhelming for visitors to a poor country and can result in deep sadness, anger, disbelief, anxiety, depression, withdrawal and strong urges to go home.

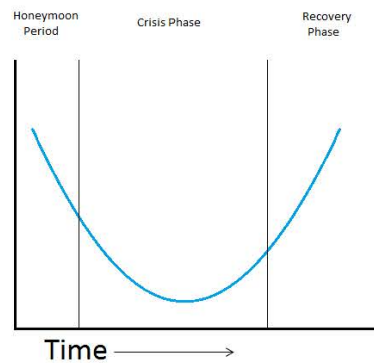
Over the years much has been written about 'culture shock'. While it is not a clinical condition, it does describe the experiences that many people have when they immerse themselves in a foreign culture, particularly if that environment has extreme aspects. In addition to the symptoms mentioned in the last paragraph, culture shock can also lead to difficulties concentrating, feelings of rejection, frustration and also a tendency to develop negative and simplistic views of the new culture.



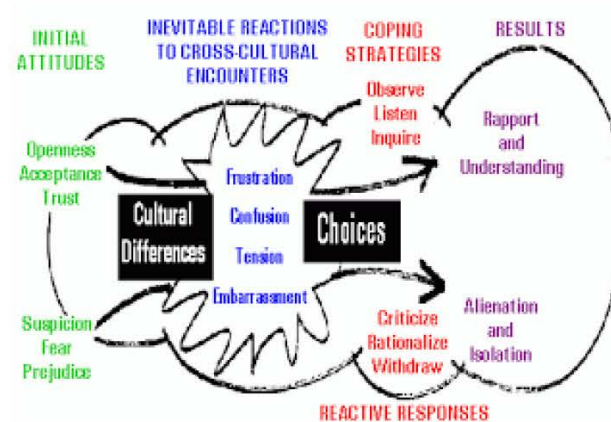
You may or may not experience such symptoms, but you will most certainly experience some kind of psychological, emotional and physical 'adjustment' to the foreign country. If you have good self-awareness and/or are journaling your experiences, you may detect that you go through 'stages' of reactions.

Some researchers have described stages of cultural adjustment as Honeymoon, Crisis and Recovery Stages. Arriving in a new country people often experience feelings of exhilaration, excitement and optimism. Differences between cultures are either not yet evident or they are seen as exciting and exotic. This Honeymoon stage is often the first stage of relationships. It's often followed by a crisis stage where reality sets in and differences between cultures feel frustrating and one can feel like an outsider. This is the stage where people feel the painful brunt of the cultural adjustment. The latter stage of Recovery occurs when people develop more comfort and peace in the new environment. This allows for

a more balanced perspective and helps with the longer term process of integrating the experiences of both cultures into one worldview.



The purpose of describing these stages is to help you *be patient with your reactions and mood-states*. It's usually not a good idea to make big decisions when you are having strong emotions. Let time pass. Emotions are transient and you will soon feel something different. If you stay calm, observe and learn, and keep things in perspective, you will probably find that difficult stages will pass. If you are really concerned about yourself, speak to a trusted confidante and your manager/leader.



During the period of 'cultural adjustment' some people may be tempted to withdraw from associating with the new culture and cling to the company of familiar Westerners. Try to stay open to the new culture. Perhaps develop little routines as you gradually adjust to the new environment. As you find little ways to connect with the community around you, you will feel less like a foreigner and more comfortable in your own skin.

More ways to minimize the effects of Culture Shock:

- Allow time for personal reflection
- Share your feelings and experiences with others
- Create a comfortable structured routine for a while
- Practice mindfulness. Focus on your senses rather than on your thoughts

Different is not Wrong

There's a concept known as 'ethnocentrism' which is the belief that one's own way of life or culture is superior to others. Remember, culture does not just describe the things around us, it also includes our own beliefs, our habits and our values. It's natural to see our own culture as 'normal' because that is the one we know well, the one we have assumed throughout our life. But take care that you don't judge another culture as wrong or naive simply because it is different to your own. For instance, in some cultures when someone is ill, they will go to the local shaman before they visit a medical doctor. This might seem strange to Westerners but it derives from deeply held beliefs and values that we should not judge lightly, nor even expect to understand.

Similarly, many indigenous cultures have a very different attitude to 'time' compared to Westerners. We might mistake them for being uncaring or lazy due to their apparent irreverence for punctuality. This difference derives from deeply divergent cultural backgrounds. It's better to assume that their laid-back attitude towards time is a difference that can teach us a lot, if we are open to learning rather than judging. When in doubt be humble.

- *Keep a list of fundamental differences that you observe between your culture and the culture of the country that you are visiting. You might admire some characteristics or be irritated by some. Whatever your reaction, you are observing natural differences.*

Prepare to be Stereotyped

Whether you like it or not, if you are white-skinned you will be seen as a stereotype of white & wealthy. No matter what your personal situation is at home, you will likely be viewed as having a lot of money. Their perception of you as rich is entirely accurate. In this developing country most of the inhabitants live below the poverty line. You may be called 'Mzungu' and you may be asked for money and favours and your contact details may be sought by some. This might feel distressing to you. You might think you are being treated unfairly. Just remember, this phenomenon occurs because you are at the conjunction of disparate worlds. One is exceedingly rich and the other is exceedingly poor. If you stay open and connected to this new culture, you might appreciate this as an opportunity to learn something about our world which allows such inequality to endure. In any case though, you will need to look after yourself in these situations. You will need to set your own boundaries around what you give and how you deal with the situations that arise. Sharing your experiences and thoughts with others may help you work through some of these issues.

- *Discuss with your peers and leaders how you deal with requests for money or personal details. Can you think of a policy for dealing with these situations that feels right for you?*

Humility is Wisdom

Have you ever noticed that the more you get to know a subject, the more complex it becomes? You begin to see grey areas and subtle nuance in what at first seemed obvious and clear. The idea that we can 'know' something when we have only had limited exposure to it is arrogance. As we immerse ourselves in a new culture, it is wise to stay humble and open-minded because so often we discover layers of complexity, detail and meaning that we first had not considered. Just as it seems an unfair generalisation for you to be labelled white & wealthy, so it is that your initial stereotypes of people in developing countries are likely to mature into more comprehensive appreciations of them.

- *If some Westerners are stereotyped as white & wealthy, what stereotypes do Westerners create of people in developing countries? Can you detect the ways you stereotype others?*

Just before you return home

Returning home to loved-ones can sometimes be challenging. You will want them to appreciate what you have been through in your travels, but you may struggle to communicate what you have experienced. Here are two exercises you can try in order to make re-entry a little easier.

Before you travel home, write a note/letter to your most trusted confidante at home. You won't be sending this letter as is, so don't try to write it well. The purpose of the letter is simply to 'vent' your thoughts and feelings without editing anything. The goal in this letter is to tell the raw truth of how you are feeling / what the trip was like / how it has affected you / what you have learned / how have you changed etc. Unload everything in a loose stream-of-consciousness style. When you have nothing more to say, just leave it aside for a few hours. Later, when you read it back, imagine you are the person you have written to i.e. your trusted confidante. How do you imagine they would respond to what you have written? This exercise is designed to do three things. It may help to release pent-up emotions. It may help you to define and distil the experience of your trip. It may also help you to find good ways of expressing yourself to your family and friends when you go home. If you decide you want to send the letter, alter it according to what you think will work best for that recipient.

Another good exercise is to write an Elevator Pitch that you can use to communicate your story to people back home. An Elevator Pitch is a very brief statement which conveys the story of your trip and its effect on you. You can't and won't want to tell everybody your full story when you get back home. This Elevator Pitch is a simple way of dealing with the majority of interactions you will have with others when there just isn't enough time or motivation to go deep into the story.

- *Write a 'venting' letter to your closest confidantbut only send it after due consideration.*
- *Construct an Elevator Pitch*

When you return:

The transition back to your home country may present you with an array of challenges. Some researchers describe a condition called 'reverse culture shock'. The immediate return to your home may be exciting, even euphoric. But the initial excitement can give way to a more flat mood as you try to integrate the overseas experience with your home-life. It may at times be a struggle to communicate the totality of your overseas experience to your friends. Some people won't be interested anyway. On top of that, you have to deal with the day to day trivialities of your life while you are still trying to process the big experience that you've just had in a very different world. Things that seemed important before, may have lost some significance, and vice versa.

It's important to recognize that the journey does not stop when you get back home. The effects of your journey may resonate within you at many levels for a long time to come. You may experience fluctuating moods, frustration and impatience with family, friends and colleagues. You may feel that a part of you is

still in that foreign culture dealing with those difficult issues. It is common for people to struggle to integrate their experiences of two cultures where there is a huge disparity of wealth and opportunity. For now, choose to be patient. Let time pass and be gentle with others and yourself. Don't make any big decisions if you are feeling disturbed and emotional. Over time you will likely develop more understanding and appreciation of your journey.

Things you can do to assist your homecoming:

- *Presume that the transition back home may be difficult at times.*
- *Don't presume others will understand what you have been through.*
- *Be patient with others. Trust that 'time' not 'conflict' will resolve things.*
- *Develop a support team. Link with people with whom you can discuss your experiences.*
- *Continue to write your thoughts and feelings in your journal.*
- *Stay in touch with peers who shared your journey.*
- *Maintain connection with your overseas contacts if you can.*
- *Stay involved with the work you have been doing overseas.*
- *You may want to share your story with the public e.g. articles and speeches*
- *Engage in activities that are meaningful to you.*
- *Continue your advocacy work.*
- *If you are worried for yourself, seek help from peers, leaders or counsellors.*

Someone once said that witnessing extreme poverty and inequality in the world had created in him an itch that he couldn't quite scratch. That person, and many others more, attempt to scratch that itch every day by helping to improve the health of the human family and the environment in which the human family lives. Perhaps you will bring your unique intelligence and abilities to similar goals.

May your journey be fruitful and rewarding.