

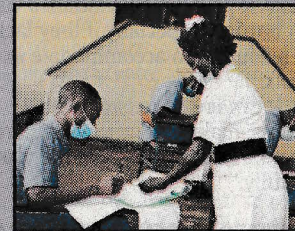
# ANALIMU

Is village  
still good for  
holidays?



**PARAMEDICS**  
No final exams  
for students  
with retakes

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**PARENTING**  
HOW TO KEEP  
HOLIDAYMAKERS  
OUT OF TROUBLE



# Taking a break from books

Learners have broken off for the third term holidays and many parents are stuck on how to keep them occupied so that they do not end up on the wrong side of the law. Some have decided to send the youngsters upcountry, so that they get to appreciate life there and grow into useful citizens, writes **UMARU NSUBUGA**

Every school holiday, Vincent Kimuli, a resident of Kisaasi in Kampala, takes his three children to their ancestral village in Kikyusa, Luwero district.

For Kimuli, these trips are more than just family visits; they are an opportunity to pass on the family values of hard work and respect that he learned from his parents.

A farmer himself, Kimuli believes that exposing his children to the rural environment helps them understand their roots, develop good character, and appreciate their country better.

However, not all parents see value in taking their children to villages. Many prefer to keep their children in urban settings, citing reasons ranging from security to diseases.

This raises important questions: should children visit their parents' villages? What are the benefits and what challenges could this practice pose?

## A WINDOW INTO HERITAGE, VALUES

Margaret Kiwanuka, a teacher and professional counsellor, highlights the value of village visits for children.

"These experiences connect children to their heritage," she says.

In a village, children can immerse themselves in traditional practices, listen to stories from elders, and learn the customs and languages unique to their family history.

This exposure helps preserve cultural identity and fosters a sense of belonging.

Kiwanuka says village life teaches children the value of hard work, adding that tasks such as fetching water, farming, or tending to animals instill discipline and responsibility.

He notes that this kind of upbringing can inspire a strong work ethic, even in children who live predominantly in urban areas.

## BUILDING CHARACTER

Village visits often provide children with a break from the fast-paced urban lifestyle. Without the distractions of gadgets and social media, children spend more time outdoors, exploring nature and engaging in physical activities.

"They learn to appreciate the simple

joys of life," Kiwanuka says.

For parents like Kimuli, this simplicity is a teaching tool. His children join their grandparents in farming, an activity that not only teaches patience and perseverance, but also allows them to witness the effort required to produce food.

Such experiences can help children develop a greater appreciation for the resources they often take for granted.

## STRENGTHENING FAMILY BONDS

Rose Sanyu, who owns a farm in Zirobwe, Wakiso district and regularly takes her children to the village every weekend, highlights the importance of such visits.

"One of the biggest benefits of visiting the village is the opportunity to build and strengthen family relationships.

"My children get to spend time with their grandparents, learn from them, and understand the value of family connections," she says.

In an era where nuclear families often live far from extended relatives, village visits help children form bonds

with grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins.

Elders in the village also play a critical role in passing on wisdom. They share stories and life lessons that urban parents may not have the time or capacity to convey.

These interactions create cherished memories and deepen familial ties, making children more appreciative of their heritage and roots.

## CHALLENGES PARENTS MUST CONSIDER

While the benefits are significant, there are challenges that parents must address to ensure the well-being of their children during village visits. Safety is a primary concern.

Not all relatives or neighbours may have the children's best interests at heart, and parents must remain vigilant.

"It is essential to supervise children and maintain regular communication with them during their stay," Kiwanuka advises.

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# CONSIDER TAKING CHILDREN TO VILLAGES

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Another issue is the potential exposure to harmful or outdated practices. Some children may encounter corporal punishment or other disciplinary measures that urban families have moved away from. This could lead to confusion or resentment, especially if the child's values differ from those of the village.

Adjusting to the village environment can also be a challenge for urban-raised children.

The absence of modern conveniences may initially cause discomfort or frustration. Parents need to prepare their children for these changes and encourage them to see the experience as an adventure rather than a hardship.

Kiwanuka says some relatives in the village may view the children's visit as a burden, especially if they lack the resources to accommodate extra guests.

This can create tension within families, making it crucial for parents to communicate and plan the visits carefully.

## BALANCING ACADEMICS, VILLAGE LIFE

Long holidays spent in villages may also affect a child's progress. Without structured learning activities, children risk falling behind.

Kiwanuka suggests that parents provide educational materials or encourage children to read and write during their stay.

Some parents may even consider shorter visits to balance cultural exposure with academic priorities.

## BENEFITS FOR PARENTS, COMMUNITIES

Parents can also benefit from their children's village visits. By



PHOTO BY UMAR NSUBUGA

**Children tending to a goat at a rural homestead in Luwero district. Such activities make children appreciate nature and the true picture of their country**

## RURAL CHILDREN ARE DIFFERENT

While urban children may excel in intellectual and technical skills, they may lack patience and an appreciation for hard work due to the convenience of city life. On the other hand, village children, though industrious, may struggle to adapt to modern technology and global ideas, affecting their competitiveness in formal education or job markets.

Balancing these environments, as Lutaaya suggests, is essential. "Parents should ensure their children experience both worlds. This helps them develop a well-rounded character, appreciating the strengths of both rural and urban lifestyles," he says.

generation. These trips also serve as a reminder of the importance of

visits help to bridge the gap between

society as they grow.

## GOVERNMENT, EDUCATORS

Richard Kintu, a local leader, says the Government and education stakeholders have a role to play in promoting the value of village visits.

"By integrating cultural education into school curricula, children can develop an appreciation for their heritage, even if they cannot visit their ancestral villages regularly."

He says policymakers should also work to improve rural infrastructure, making villages more appealing and accessible for families. Better

## STRIKING THE BALANCE

Ultimately, the decision to take children to their parents' villages depends on individual circumstances. However, with proper planning and communication, parents can create meaningful experiences that benefit their children's development.

## BEHAVIOUR DIFFERENCES

Children raised in villages and those raised in towns often exhibit noticeable differences in behaviour due to their contrasting environments.

In villages, children experience a simple, communal lifestyle. They are usually involved in daily household chores, farming activities, or caring for animals.

This instills in them a sense of responsibility, teamwork and resilience. Without the distractions of television and smartphones, village children are more likely to engage with their peers in creative and physical activities, fostering strong social bonds.

Fred Lutaaya, a headteacher, counsellor and parent, explains: "Children in villages tend to develop a deep sense of community and responsibility. They grow up understanding the value of hard work because they are actively involved in activities that sustain their families."

In contrast, children in towns often grow up in structured and technology-driven environments. Urban life focuses on academics and extracurricular activities, which can limit their exposure to unstructured play or physical work.

Immaculate Namukasa, a grandparent and retired teacher, says: "Urban children are quick thinkers