

FEQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I. DATES AND FINANCES

I.1 What are the dates of the ThinkImpact Institute?

The 2013 ThinkImpact Institute runs from mid June to mid August. This includes an in country training called ThinkImpact University (TIU), 7 weeks in your rural community and a short debrief in country at the end of the program, ThinkImpact Graduation (TIG).

Every day on the ThinkImpact Institute is precious. ThinkImpact very rarely makes exceptions for participants or staff to arrive late or leave early. A lot of the work is completed in teams and this disrupts the flow of the experience.

I.2 What does the ThinkImpact Institute Include?

- Pre-Departure preparation including, online learning and a program Reader
- ThinkImpact University (TIU) pre-institute training program for scholars
- In-country travel (transfer to rural communities and within communities) expenses including privately hired drives, buses and vans
- Breakfast, lunch, dinner in rural communities
- Clean drinking water throughout the Institute
- All accommodations and appropriate bedding
- Innovator Kits (ThinkImpact curriculum, t-shirt, bag and necessary materials)
- Mosquito Nets, Toilet Paper and other household supplies
- One ThinkImpact advisor (personnel) living in the village per each group of six scholars
- Country/region specific language lessons
- Community translators for the duration of the program
- Weekly newsletter and blog with pictures, video and thoughts from the Institute to be sent to friends and family while scholars are in Africa
- Post-Institute support and Alumni network opportunities
- Language and cross-cultural training
- 24-hour emergency access

I.3 What does the Innovation Institute Not include?

- International air travel
- Visa fees
- Pre-departure medications and vaccinations
- Travel health insurance
- Personal spending in country
- Optional excursions offered 2-3 per Institute

I.4 How much spending money does ThinkImpact Recommend for the summer?

ThinkImpact recommends bringing \$400 spending money for your summer in Africa. Some past students have spent much less and others have spent more than the recommended amount. It depends on your own personal spending habits.

2.1 Do I need a passport or visa for South Africa, Ghana, Rwanda or Kenya?

All participants need a passport with at least 2 blank pages to enter South Africa, Rwanda, Ghana and Kenya. All students are responsible for obtaining and covering the costs of tourist visas. Please visit the country-specific State Department [site](#) for exact information on if you need one and how to obtain your visas.

3. PRE-DEPARTURE PREPARATION

3.1 Is anti-malaria medication recommended?

Anti-malaria medication is required for Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda. It is recommended for South Africa. ThinkImpact does not offer any formal medical advice to participants. Please consult a travel clinic or personal physician before leaving for Africa. Malaria medication can have different side effects on different people. Please discuss options with your doctor.

4. DAY-TO-DAY EXPECTATIONS AND CONCERNS

4.1 What is transportation like in country?

In Kenya, the roads from Mombasa to Kilifi were repaved within the last 3 years, but there are unpaved roads within the communities. Similarly, in Ghana and Rwanda, the main roads are paved but off the path, all roads are unpaved. In South Africa, the highways are much like the United States, while village roads are unpaved.

ThinkImpact hires professional car companies with certified drivers to transport scholars in-country. *It is ThinkImpact policy that scholars are never to take public transportation on their own for the duration of the Institute.*

4.2 What do scholars do on the weekends?

Scholars will have free time on the weekends, but will be together. Some activities including reflection sessions and language lessons are held on weekends, and occasionally, an excursion may fall over a weekend.

4.3 Where do scholars stay when in the cities?

Scholars stay in hotels. All accommodations for scholars have been selected for their attention to health and safety, as well as their convenient locations. Scholars share rooms with one another in the hotels.

4.4 Is there safe drinking water, as well as water for cooking and washing? Are dishes safe to use?

Bottled or filtered water is provided for scholars, as well as water-purifying tablets for scholars to bring to their homestays where necessary. ThinkImpact provides all scholars with sufficient water for bathing and bottled water for drinking and cooking. The dishes are also washed with treated water. In all country locations, it is not suggested for foreigners to drink water from the tap, but the water is safe for showering.

4.5 What are the bathroom facilities like? Where and how do scholars bathe/shower?

All homestays have a functional pit latrine equipped with toilet paper. Showering is done in a private outdoor shower using a bucket or inside a designated room within a homestay.

4.6 Will scholars have their own bed in their homestays? Do they need to bring mosquito nets for sleeping?

Mosquito netting is provided for Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda scholars; nets are not necessary in South Africa. Scholars should bring a sheet to sleep with in the homestay. During the homestay, scholars may share a bed with another scholar of their own gender.

4.7 Will scholars be able to use cell phones and/or email to communicate home during their stay?

All scholars are encouraged to buy a cell phone. Email access will only be available every couple weeks at best.

4.8 How many prior “village trip” stays has ThinkImpact made to Kenya, Rwanda, Ghana and South Africa?

The 2012 Innovation Institute will be the sixth such ThinkImpact trip to South Africa, the fourth to Kenya and the first to Ghana and Rwanda. ThinkImpact has experienced Country Coordinators and Country Associates in Kenya, Ghana, Rwanda, and South Africa who implement and manage the Institute on the ground. Staff are highly vetted and trained prior to the Institute.

4.9 What is the crime situation in the rural communities where scholars live and work?

Although there are notably high crime rates in all of the countries' major cities, crime rates tend to be much lower in the rural areas where scholars live and work. The communities are small and nearly everyone knows each other, making community members accountable to one another. Violent crime within the communities towards Americans has never been reported. We do not lead students to communities with any record of risk for Americans.

While we are in cities we travel in groups and stay at vetted locations that are safe. We

continue to take every precaution against random crime.

Scholar safety is paramount. While no one can guarantee safety, ThinkImpact has several health and safety measures in place. Our staff monitors political, social and economic conditions in the regions where we work. ThinkImpact educates and prepares scholars for travel through conference calls, emails, and pre-departure informational mailings. Prior to departure, scholars receive health and safety information about the Institute. ThinkImpact registers all scholars with the local U.S. Embassy in the country they are working.

4.10 Is walking alone at night the only concern in the villages and nearby communities? Are there any additional personal safety and/or sexual assault concerns for the female students on the trip?

The Institute is set up to ensure that no scholar feels alone, outside of their private quarters. Safety precautions are emphasized daily, concerns are responded to immediately by a staff member, and emergency contacts are distributed before the trip departs. Sexual assault and personal safety for both males and females on the trips is an important concern and though we do not anticipate any such emergencies we will provide students necessary information for them to protect themselves and steps to take should any problems arise.

4.11 Are advisors always available to escort and supervise?

Yes, advisors are available to scholars at all times. There is 1 advisor for every 6 scholars, and trips are organized in groups of 14 (two advisors and two teams of six scholars). Advisors live in homestays, just as scholars do. All homestays are within a close proximity of each other, allowing for quick visits or meetings should a scholar have any issues or concerns. Moreover, two ThinkImpact staff members – the Country Coordinator and the Country Associate – manage the Institute on the ground and are always available to scholars.

4.12 What is the difference between the Country Coordinator and the Country Associate?

Country Coordinator's are hired in country and they oversee the logistics of all groups in country, while working diligently to maintain wonderful relationships with the communities we work with in Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa.

The Country Associates work with the Country Coordinator to manage logistics during the summer. They are most often American professionals who have extensive experience working in their select country of hire.

4.13 What is the role of the Advisor?

The Advisors are available to scholars at all times. There is 1 advisor for every 6 scholars. Advisors live in homestays, just as scholars do, taking part in similar immersion activities. The Advisors responsibilities are to guide the scholars through the different phases of the Institute. Daily responsibilities include facilitating discussions, brainstorming with scholars, connecting scholars to

"...it is the most humbling, empowering experience one can have as a student."

- Alicia Lee, Kenya 2009

community members and ensuring health, comfort and safety throughout the program.

All homestays are within a close proximity of each other, allowing for quick visits or meetings should a scholar have any issues or concerns. It is uncommon for a scholar to go more than a day or two without seeing their Advisor.

4.14 What safety/health precautions are taken? Will there be hospital access and emergency/first aid care?

ThinkImpact has developed a comprehensive list of criteria that communities within which we live and work must meet. The villages are small and quiet. The nearest modern hospital is 30 miles away from the communities in which ThinkImpact works. There will be a local clinic for minor injuries that is closer in proximity.

4.15 Are students required to sign any kind of liability waiver to participate in the Innovation Institute?

Yes, scholars are required to sign a liability waiver as well as a behavior policy form in order to participate. The policies are designed for the safety of the scholars and the community. ThinkImpact is not liable for any illnesses or injuries sustained during the course of this trip. Scholars are responsible for receiving the recommended vaccinations and medications before their departure. Visit a doctor or travel clinic before participation and also visit the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website, at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel> for more information.