

**UW Global Health, Community Health &
Asset-Based Community Development in Sri Lanka
Winter Intersession 2023-24
Program Handbook**



UW Global Health Community Health & Asset-Based Community Development in Sri Lanka is offered by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences (CALS) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in partnership with International Academic Programs (IAP). This Program Handbook supplements handbook(s) or materials you receive from your field instructor as well as the Study Abroad Handbook and provides you with the most up-to-date information and advice available at the time of printing. Changes may occur before your departure or while you are abroad.

Questions about your program abroad (housing options, facilities abroad, etc.) as well as questions relating to your relationship with your host university or academics (e.g. course credit and equivalents, registration deadlines, etc.) should be directed to your CALS Study Abroad Advisor at UW-Madison.

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Contact Information

On-Site Program Leader Information

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UW-Madison Information

International Academic Programs (IAP)

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CALS Study Abroad

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Tel: 608-265-0673

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Web: studyabroad.wisc.edu

For Program Advising & Grades:

Kim Kroeger

CALS Study Abroad Advisor

Tel: 608-265-6329

E-mail: kim.kroeger@wisc.edu

For Financial Matters:

Ruben Kahvedjian

IAP Accountant

E-mail: kahvedjian@wisc.edu

Emergency Contact Information

In case of an emergency, contact your on-site staff first using the emergency contact information provided on-site. For the IAP emergency contact, call the main IAP number **(608) 265-6329** between 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; after-hours or on weekends call the IAP staff on call at **(608) 516-9440**. If you call the main number after hours, the message will direct you to call the emergency number, so it's a good place to start if you're not sure about the time difference.

Embassy Registration

All program participants who are U.S. citizens must register at the U.S. Embassy before departure as this will help in case of a lost passport or other mishap. You can register on-line at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. If you are not a U.S. citizen, register at your home country's embassy or consulate.

U.S. Embassy in Sri Lanka

210 Galle Road

Colombo 00300, Sri Lanka

Phone: 011-249-8500 (Calling from within Sri Lanka)
Phone: +94 (11)-249-8500 (Calling from outside Sri Lanka)
Emergency calls: 011-249-8686 (M-Th 8:00am-4:30pm; F 8:00am-12:00pm)
Emergency calls: 077-725-6307 (after business hours)
E-mail: consularcolombo@state.gov

Program Dates

Arrival Date: Tuesday, January 2, 2024

Departure Date: Monday, January 15, 2024

The Program Leaders will provide more detailed travel information, including instructions for buying plane tickets, during the fall pre-departure course. Please do not purchase plane tickets without contacting them first.

Preparation Before Leaving

Your Program Leaders, Sumudu Atapattu and Cait McCrory, will share important pre-departure information during the fall semester course. General information about handling money abroad, cultural considerations, personal logistics, and more can be found in the [UW Study Abroad Handbook](#).

Passport

A passport is needed to travel to Sri Lanka and to obtain your visa. Apply **immediately** for a passport if you do not already have one. Passport information and application forms can be found on the U.S. State Department website (travel.state.gov/passport). If you already have your passport, make sure it will be valid for at least 6 months beyond the end date of your study abroad program.

Visa

All students must acquire an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) before leaving for Sri Lanka. This can be completed online at: eta.gov.lk/slvisa/. You need to apply at least 3 days prior to arrival but do not apply too early as the visa might expire. A helpful document on this process is provided for you in the “Travel, Passport & Visa” section of your MyStudyAbroad account.

Packing

You will be moving frequently throughout the country and into rural locations. It is recommended you pack LIGHT. You will also want to consider a backpack as opposed to wheeled luggage for ease of movement in areas without paved sidewalks. Women should plan to dress modestly, especially when visiting religious sites.

- Important documents (passport, emergency contact information, insurance card, ATM card, money, etc.) should be in your carry-on luggage. Also, make sure that you make a copy of important documents and leave them with a friend or family member back home to access in the case of an emergency.

- Take enough prescription medication to last the duration of the program. Keep prescription medication in their original packaging and carry a letter/prescription from your doctor explaining your condition and use of medication. Prescriptions should be packed in your carry-on luggage.
- Bring gift(s) for family. These can include handmade soaps, small toys for kids, deck of cards, house hold items, nice cookies, UW t-shirts or mugs, bubbles for kids, Bucky magnets, crayons and coloring books for kids, flash drives for adults, etc.
- Work Clothes. These must include: covered shoulders at all times and longer skirts/pants for women. Jeans are also acceptable. No leggings or tank tops.

Other Things to Pack:

- Leisure clothes (long skirts, loose long pants, t-shirts, casual shoes, comfortable shoes for walking and rain shoes)
- Work Gloves (ask Program Leader for recommendations)
- Sleeping bag liner/ small blanket
- Small Towel
- Headlamp and extra batteries
- Mosquito spray and wipes
- Ear plugs
- Easy-to-remove shoes (for temples)
- White shirt(s)/ clothing (for temples)
- Toilet paper
- Small plastic bags and zip locks for trash
- Reusable water bottle
- Swim suit
- Small first aid kit
- Sunblock, hat and sunglasses for protection from harmful effects of UV sun rays.
- Antibacterial hand wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Camera
- Luggage lock *must be TSA approved): [tsa.gov/blog/tags/locks](https://www.tsa.gov/blog/tags/locks)
- Electricity adapter/converter (see below)

Things not to Pack:

- Valuable/ expensive items such as jewelry
- Laptop

Electronics

A plug adapter and voltage transformer will be needed in order to use electronics abroad. The electricity current in Sri Lanka is 230 volts, whereas the U.S. is 120 volts. Note that many electronic items such as hairdryers or flat/curling irons do not operate with the same voltage and will likely short circuit if you use them abroad, even with a plug/voltage adapter.

Budget

In country transportation, housing, most meals, excursion fees and lectures are included in your program fee. The only things you will need to budget for during your program are airfare, visa fee, a few meals, and spending money.

The Academic Program**Course Information & Registration**

Participants will earn 1 credit of Inter-Ag 321 - Study Abroad Pre-Departure Seminar for the pre-departure course and 2 credits of Nutritional Sciences 421 for the study abroad portion. This program is approved as a field experience for the Global Health Certificate. The pre-departure course and study abroad program also fulfills the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences International Studies requirement.

Registration

IAP will automatically register all students for the 2-credit study abroad program. Students will be given permission and instructions for how to enroll in the Pre-Departure Seminar after they are accepted onto the program.

General Information

Classroom presentations by community health and social services personnel will be integrated with short-term stays in rural villages. Using the framework of asset-based community development as well as Gandhian and Buddhist philosophy, students will explore topics such as nutrition, maternal and child health, infectious diseases, prevention and treatment of violence, psychosocial rehabilitation, traditional healing and meditation in the context of ethnic and religious diversity, poverty, recovery from natural disaster and civil war. Readings and interviews with the leaders of Sarvodaya, Sri Lanka's largest non-government organization (in 15,000 villages), will provide background.

Individual participants will be expected to participate in all pre-departure meetings and in-country activities and projects. They will also be expected to complete all required readings and produce a geo-journal, annotated bibliography, two short reflection papers and a final paper.

For more information, please refer to the course syllabus.

Language

Teaching will be conducted in English. For the field work in the villages, there will be Sri Lankan partners who will aid with translations.

Shramadana = shared labor, not from a position of privileged people helping out poor people. Getting to know each other, working together with villages on a project, engagement, communication and socializing, sharing meals, are important aspects of the Shramadana.

Field Study

Be aware that a field study can be stressful for many reasons. Students are away from the comfort and familiarity of home/campus and this might be uncomfortable. Students will meet local individuals and will face language barriers and cultural differences. As a field study participant, students will be expected to be a team member. Students will be with the same travel mates for days, evenings, and even nights as they share bus rides, meals in restaurants, and overnights in hotels or local homestays. It is a 24-hour job to be a field study participant. Please anticipate these challenges and be ready to address them with respect and grace. On-site staff and leaders are there to help students with difficult situations, to encourage open conversations, and to build greater understanding.

During a field study, students visit many sites, oftentimes multiple in one day. At many of these sites, the people students interact with have typically volunteered their time to teach about their business / culture / country. It is essential to remain respectful and considerate with everyone you meet throughout the program. Keep in mind that each site offers firsthand experiences and opportunities to learn about the local people, their culture, and programs.

Most importantly, though, a field study provides opportunities to build connections between both participants and locals. Students are challenged to think outside the box and oftentimes quickly make decisions. Being proactive and deliberate during site visits can help students feel more connected to their program and local culture, especially considering the short duration. The rewards of a field study are only limited by what the student can achieve, so we encourage every participant to embrace their unique experience.

Living Abroad

Sri Lanka

Your experience will be more rewarding if you are educated about the country you are living in. Before departure, try your hardest to learn as much as you can about Sri Lanka. Also, read the Preparing to Live in Another Culture section of the IAP Study Abroad Handbook. Consult the following resources as well as travel books in the Study Abroad Resource Center (Red Gym, 3rd Floor). Remember- it won't be possible to prepare yourself completely. There will be situations you will not have anticipated, and your flexibility will determine in great part the kind of experience you will have while abroad.

Official Sri Lankan Tourism site: srilankatourism.org/

Wikitravel: wikitravel.org/en/Sri_Lanka

Department of State: travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/SriLanka.html

Sarvodaya Movement: sarvodaya.org/

Lonely Planet: lonelyplanet.com/sri-lanka

More information on Sri Lanka and the Sarvodaya Movement is available in "From A to Z: A Student's Informal Field Guide to Sarvodaya and Sri Lanka".

Housing

Students will stay in a combination of hotels, hostels and home stays for the duration of the program, so please plan accordingly. At home stays you will have to share bathrooms and occasionally, bathing facilities may be outdoors.

Transportation

Transportation in country will be provided by Sarvodaya Movement. Road conditions in Sri Lanka are very different from Madison. Please take extreme caution when near busy roads. Traffic can be pretty heavy at times and while we will try to avoid heavy traffic times, there will be times when we will be stuck in traffic so be prepared to deal with that.

Health & Safety

UW Study Abroad is dedicated to maintaining the personal safety and security for each of our study abroad participants. As part of the pre-departure tasks in your MyStudyAbroad account, you are required to complete the [UW Study Abroad Health and Safety Canvas course](#), review a Health & Safety Tip Sheet, and fill out a form regarding your health and wellness. General health and safety information can also be found in the [UW Study Abroad Handbook](#). Your program leader will provide any specific recommendations for traveling safely in Sri Lanka both prior to and during the program.

Violent crime is not a serious problem for travelers in Sri Lanka, but some tourists find themselves the victims of scams. Stay with the group, or at least with a friend, during down time. If something doesn't feel right, don't be afraid to walk away. Be cautious around someone who actively seeks your business on the street. This regularly results in a scam.

The violent civil war in Sri Lanka ended in 2009 and while the country has been relatively peaceful since, be aware that the conflict may be still fresh in people's minds. While some parts of the country may still be re-building after the war, the conflict is over for most part, although no formal reconciliation process ever took place. In July 2022 Sri Lanka faced upheaval and protests over a deepening economic crisis, nepotism, and political corruption that eventually led to the President and Prime Minister's resignation. The turmoil has subsided but it is important to be aware that many Sri Lankans are still facing economic hardships and severe inflation.

You will be with the group for the majority of your stay in Sri Lanka and should not encounter any problems from lingering conflicts in the country. Regardless, you should take advice from your Program Leaders and the Sarvodaya Movement very seriously and follow directions closely.

It is recommended that you read through the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations for travel to Sri Lanka [cdc.gov/travel/destinations/sri-lanka.aspx](https://www.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/sri-lanka.aspx) as well as meet with your doctor or a travel doctor at least 4-6 weeks prior to departure. Your doctor or health-care provider will determine what you will need, depending on factors such as your health and immunization history, areas of the country you will be visiting, and planned activities.

The local equivalent to the "911" emergency line in Sri Lanka is 119. This number only contacts the police and does not provide access to emergency medical services. Although the number is answered 24 hours a day, police responsiveness may vary.

ATM/Debit cards

It is possible to withdraw money across the island at ATMs using your bank debit and credit cards. You can also withdraw money using your ATM card at the airport when you arrive. ATM machines usually support MasterCard, Visa, Plus and Cirrus international networks. Be aware that you might not have access to an ATM in smaller towns and villages. You should inform your bank in advance of your travel to facilitate international use.

Safety with Money

Use the same precautions with money abroad that you would when traveling in any large city in the United States. Be aware of pickpockets in crowded areas and on public transportation. Carry your money and other documents in a money pouch worn inside your clothing. Use the same precautions you take at home when using an ATM; keep your pin number separate from your ATM/debit card and use machines inside banks or other buildings. Maintain a copy of all credit card numbers, traveler check numbers, and any PIN numbers in a safe place, and do not carry these with you at any time. Leave a copy of these documents with your Financial Representative in the United States.

Food and Water

Safe water will be provided at program sites and home stays. Diseases from food and water are the leading cause of illness in travelers. Follow these tips for safe eating and drinking:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before eating. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.
- Do not eat food purchased from street vendors.
- Make sure food is fully cooked.
- Avoid dairy products, unless you know they have been pasteurized.

Diseases from food and water often cause vomiting and diarrhea. Make sure to bring diarrhea medicine with you so that you can treat mild cases yourself.

Alcohol and drug use

Cross-cultural differences exist in the consumption of alcohol. Depending on your host country, you may find the availability and public consumption of alcohol greatly increased or decreased. Often, rules about the acceptability of alcohol use in certain situations or contexts are very different than in the United States.

Excessive drinking can impact your health during the program, impair judgment, lead to risk or harm to yourself or others and have an effect on your academic performance.

Penalties for use or possession of illegal drugs can include jail terms, hard labor, and even the death penalty. Neither the U.S. Embassy nor the program offices are able to exercise effective pressure to moderate these penalties. If you are arrested, you are subject to the host country's laws and neither UW-Madison nor the U.S. Embassy can protect you from the local legal

consequences. While on a study abroad program, you are responsible for obeying all local laws. If the study abroad office learns that program participants are using drugs or breaking other local laws, participants will be confronted and may be asked to leave the program.

Communication

You will want to check with your cellphone carrier to ask about international calling and data capabilities and how to avoid extra charges while abroad.

Skype, WhatsApp, Google Hangouts, FaceTime, or other online/app-based communication methods may be the best option for communication when connected to Wi-Fi.

If you do need to make a phone call while abroad, keep in mind time zone differences: (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock).

Country and city codes can be found online (www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/dialing.html). Some of the following steps can vary if you are using a calling card, landline, or cell phone.

To call *from* an international country *to* the United States:

- Dial the country *exit* code for the country you are in. Oftentimes this is “00.”
- Dial the country *access* code for the country you want to reach. For the United States it is “+1” or “011.”
- Follow with the area code and the local number as normal.

ADDITIONAL RELEVANT INFORMATION/WEBSITES OF INTEREST

U.S. State Department Students Abroad site:
studentsabroad.state.gov/

UW-Madison International Academic Programs
studyabroad.wisc.edu

U.S. State Department:
travel.state.gov

Center for Disease Control
cdc.gov/travel/

Current exchange rates
oanda.com

Lonely Planet
lonelyplanet.com

Student Testimonials

Language Learning: "I wish we would have been prompted to learn more Sinhalese. I would definitely tell new students to focus more on their language before they go."

Cultural adjustment: "To adjust to the new culture, being uncomfortable should be expected and is completely normal. Learning about the culture from these uncomfortable situations is worth it."

Personal Growth: "In about 2 weeks, I feel more confident as a traveler and more able to handle difficult or uncomfortable tasks."

"I learned so much during this program, experienced a lot, and made great friends!"

"I would recommend this program to other students because it has the ability to teach much more than what is found in a classroom. I learned a lot about myself as a person and improved in many different aspects of my life. It is also a great way to meet new people who share similar interests, but are not necessarily in the same major as you. Through participating in this program, I learned a lot about the health system in Sri Lanka and some challenges they may be facing, the importance of religion and spirituality in their culture, and how community can play a significant role in the health and well-being of an individual."

Engaging with host family: Use card games, learn a few words in their language, and bring photos from home for non-verbal communication. Bring small gifts for host family such as a deck of cards, small soaps, toys, household items, chocolates or cookies or something "Wisconsin" (example drawstring backpacks with UW).

Health: "For my specific program motion sickness was an issue for many of us as we traveled through the mountains. Medications we found to be helpful to have was pepto bismol, emergency, allergy medications, and anti-itch cream for bug bites."

Money: Take out bigger amounts of the local currency rather than small amounts so you don't have to do it multiple times. This way you don't get a lot of atm charges and don't have to worry about running out of money when you need it and can't use a card."

"Go into your trip with an idea of how much you want to spend, and convert that to the currency in the visiting country so you do not over-spend on personal things."

Packing: "Be prepared to walk a lot, [bring] comfortable shoes, comfortable clothes, long skirts, white shirt and pants or long skirt for the temple visits, snacks (optional), sunscreen, and a hat to protect head and face in the sun and from mosquitos."

Flights: "It's nice to fly with others in your group, especially if you haven't flown internationally before, but it's also a good idea to check other flight plans and get cheaper flights if available."