

MAURITIUS ADDENDUM



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Note: all spelling and grammar is in American English, some British equivalents are noted in parentheses. Prices are listed in USD and GBP based on an exchange rate of 1 USD = 0.65 GBP or 1 GBP = 1.54 USD

I) PROGRAM INFORMATION

STAFF

Sindbad Fennimore, Program Director

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Skype name: sindbadfennimore

As the Mauritius Program Director, it is Sindbad's goal to ensure that the Mauritius program is as successful in 2009 as it has been in the past! He organizes host families, schools, and volunteers, as well as oversees the program while in Mauritius. He is extremely excited about this year's program! Sindbad will be with volunteers throughout their stay in Mauritius and will arrive in Mauritius early to ensure that affairs are in order. Outside of LE, Sindbad is a senior at Georgetown University, majoring in French and minoring in African Studies and Justice & Peace Studies. In his spare time, Sindbad likes to sail, canoe, read, cycle, explore, and travel.



Photo: Sindbad with his host family in Chamarel, 2009.

Village Coordinators:

Chamarel: Karine Quint

Case Noyale: Davesch Raggoo

Cascavelle: Brenda Bonne

Bambous: Fr. Michel Moura

Each of the village coordinators have worked with LE in the past, and will help coordinate host families and schools, and deal with anything and everything in-country. They cannot wait to show this year's volunteers their country!

PROGRAM HISTORY

Learning Enterprises first began its work in Mauritius in 1999 when it launched —Let's Use the Internet Programll (LUTIP). This was different from previous LE projects. Run

by Mauritians, the focus was on foreign volunteers teaching the children how to use the Internet. The following year LUTIP grew in size and the Mauritians decided to take full control of the program. In the last few years, LE has operated its English teaching program in Mauritius, where foreign volunteers live with host families and teach in their host village.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Important Dates

The Learning Enterprises Mauritius program runs for approximately 4 weeks, from mid-July to mid-August. The program is slightly shorter than other LE programs due to the fact that Mauritius is located in the southern hemisphere, where it is winter. Winter break from school runs through July and August. Estimated dates for 2010 are: July 15th 2010-August 14th, 2010.

- July 8th: Sindbad arrives in Mauritius
- July 15th: Volunteers arrive in Mauritius
- July 16th: Orientation officially starts
- July 18th: Volunteers move to villages and host families
- July 19th: Volunteers begin teaching
- August 13th: Last Day of teaching (volunteers can depart after this)

Orientation Details

Orientation will be held in a well touristed beach town called Flic-en-Flac during the weekend before teaching begins. Transportation from the airport to Flic-en-Flac will be provided and volunteers will live together in a guesthouse.

July 15th: Volunteers arrive in Mauritius, get to know one another, sightsee, and get adjusted to Mauritian time.

July 16th: Volunteers get extra time to sleep and adjust to time, and relax. Half-day session on education in Mauritius, Mauritian culture and history.

July 17th: Briefing and brainstorming on teaching, sessions in pairs, and meetings with Sindbad on teaching issues specific to each village.

July 18th: Volunteers go to host families!

Village Information

LE-Mauritius teaches in four villages. These villages include, from North to South:

Bambous: A small city of about 13,000, and the largest in which LE teaches. There are 30+ students, as well as teenagers who are interested in classes.

Casecavelle: A very close-knit residential community, with about 40 students. A small town, but close to Flic-en-Flac and other larger towns.

Case Noyale: Case Noyale is a medium-sized community, with about 20+ students. It is relatively accessible and located very near to the coast.

Chamarel: Chamarel is a small, rural village with about 20 students. It is beautiful, but relatively secluded.

Village life

The villages in which LE operates tend to be moderately developed with limited transportation links to other villages and towns. Not many people drive or have their own cars so you will have to rely on a limited bus service or hiring a car. Most families live on a rather low income and unemployment rates are high. Schools reflect this socioeconomic situation, leaving villagers with poor education and limited opportunities to get well-paid jobs. Families are large and it is common to find most of the extended family living in the same village or nearby.

Students/Teaching

Free English classes are advertised for children between ages 8 and 10. However, it is common to get students in your classes who are younger and older than this age group, so be prepared for an age range of about 6-13. The level of English proficiency will vary depending on their year in school. Almost all children will already know the very basics of English (greetings, alphabet, numbers, months, body parts, colors, etc). However, some may not and you should be prepared to revise this vocabulary. As you move on to new English vocabulary and grammar, it may be necessary to divide your students into ability groups and even run separate classes. This has been effective in the past, as it means that your students do not struggle to keep up or get too frustrated. Overall, students do not get adequate exposure to English language in their formal schooling environment. Our goal is to do exactly this through creative and interactive teaching styles.

Please bring plenty of teaching resources with you (see packing list). Your school is unlikely to have access to many books, so it is vital that you make that extra effort to bring some English picture books with you. Books are excellent for structuring lessons and provide great stimuli for reading, speaking, and writing. It should be easy to share books and other teaching supplies with your fellow volunteers so that one person does not have to bring them all. Please discuss this with each other before you leave. (More details to follow; I will schedule a conference, or remind you about materials, closer to our program).

Important:

Mauritian students are required to pass exams throughout their time in school. These exams focus strongly on and are administered entirely in English. They are extremely important to a student's success and many of your students will be preparing for the first one, taken at the end of primary school (age 11-12). Volunteers will be getting information about these exams to help discern what students should know by their grade level. Most teachers have no choice but to teach for the test, which is generally a boring and uninspiring way to teach. Therefore, you should not base your entire curriculum around these tests, though it is a useful guide if you are having difficulty finding continuity between your lessons.

Sample day:

7:30: Wake up

9:00: Go to school, teach first session
11:30: Start second session
1:00: School ends, lunch
1:00-5:00: Free time with host family, students, or volunteers
5:00-6:00: Lesson planning
6:00-8:00: Relaxation time
8:00: Dinner with host family
10:00: Bed

II) COUNTRY INFORMATION

WEATHER & CLIMATE

Mauritius has a beautiful, tropical maritime climate. Summer (November to April) is humid with occasional heavy rain, and temperatures vary from 25-35C (77-93F). Learning Enterprises volunteers teach during the Mauritian winter, which falls from May to October. It is significantly cooler, especially inland and after dark. Temperatures in winter range from 20-25C (68-77F). Mauritius experiences heavy rain inland during the winter.

FOOD & DRINK

The communities in which LE operates are mainly Creole. This means that the food is wonderful! Typically, Creole dishes are a spicy combination of Indian, Chinese, and French cuisine and rice is eaten with almost every meal. Typical dishes includes deer, beef, fish, lentils, beans, chou chou, or bredes (green vegetable). Families are likely to have three large meals a day with little or no eating between meals. You will find delicious homemade snacks and fruit to buy from street vendors. Tap water is completely safe to drink. Bottled water is also available.

LANGUAGE

The most commonly spoken language is Creole (also known as Kréol or Morisyen), officially spoken by about 80% of the population. Creole originated in African slave communities and became a mix of French, Indian, and African languages. Mauritian Creole is another example of the population's huge cultural mix. Creole is not recognized in the education system and it is not a standardized written language. Consequently, all children are taught in French and English, and most adults and some children speak, read, and write French fluently. Approximately 3.5% of the population officially speaks French at home, and French is the language of the media and pop culture. Creole is used in the informal sphere at home and with friends. Indian communities also speak Bhojpuri, an Indian dialect officially spoken by about 12% of the population.

English is the official language of Mauritius and officially spoken by less than 1% of the population. All official documents are printed in English and government meetings are conducted in English. Proficiency is necessary in school, as government examinations are administered in English; by the end of the fourth year, it is the official language of instruction. Children must pass a proficiency test in order to be admitted to higher levels of education. This is where Learning Enterprises comes in! It is important to keep these

things in mind when teaching.

It is highly suggested that you bring a French dictionary.

CULTURE/RELIGION

About 48% of the population is Hindu, 24% Roman Catholic, and around 17% are Muslim. Various eastern faiths are also practiced. Mauritians are quite religious, but also very tolerant of other religions. They are extremely fun, warm, and welcoming, and have a very relaxed sense of "island time."

POTENTIALLY UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATIONS

Discrimination/Racism – Mauritius prides itself on being a "melting pot" of ethnic communities. However, there are still some deep-rooted issues based on ethnic, religious, and economic differences. Overall, there is very little visible discrimination or race-based tension in Mauritius.

Women's roles – Although it is becoming more common for women to work in Mauritius, they are still responsible for child rearing and taking care of the home. In some communities, there is much more heckling and catcalling than one would find in the US/UK, or continental Europe. This is something that some female volunteers have had to deal with in the past and most likely will have to deal with in the future as well.

Gay/Lesbian – Homosexuality is still illegal in Mauritius, although there has been some movement for reform. The homosexual community is thought to make up about 10% of the population. It is a social taboo; known about, but generally not talked about.

Cultural differences (what you can and cannot talk about) – Most subjects are acceptable. Wait a few days and use your judgment before talking about any touchy topics like religion and politics. Just be aware that you are living in their culture and you must respect their views even if you do not agree with them. Go with an open mind and be willing to learn about their life and culture and share your own. Be polite and curious!

GUIDELINES FOR LIVING WITH A HOST FAMILY

The host families with which Learning Enterprises works are self-selecting and are excited to have foreign students live with them. They see it as an opportunity to learn about other countries and cultures as well as a chance to improve their own English skills. You will probably have host brothers or sisters, if not host parents, who are studying the language.

- Be kind, considerate, and gracious. Your host family will accommodate you as best they can, but remember that you are a guest in their house.
- Make an effort to communicate with your host parents and host siblings, even if the language barrier prevents you from having long philosophical conversations. Gestures and facial expressions are universal and usually get the message across. Your host family will greatly appreciate your attempts to understand their culture!

- Spend time with your host family. Although they will encourage you to get to know your students as well as your peers in the village, they will also want to get the chance to see you. Don't use your host family's house simply as the place where you eat and sleep.
- Follow the rules that your host family outlines for you. If they don't give you any, use common sense and ask. Do not challenge your host parents if they tell you that you cannot stay out past hour X or if you should avoid going to bar Y. Even if you think that something they tell you might be unreasonable, understand that disregarding their advice shows utmost disrespect to them.
- Make sure that your host family knows about your plans ahead of time. If you accept a student's invitation to dinner at her/his house or plan to spend the weekend traveling, let your host family know.
- If you have serious conflicts with your host family, contact Sindbad immediately.

Because they are responsible for you, host families are generally extra-protective, which can be difficult if you have been living on your own. Remember that your families are looking out for your best interests – they are experts on what is and is not safe or appropriate in their country. Unless you have specified that you are completely comfortable living with an exclusively French-speaking family, you will be living in a family that has at least one, if not many, proficient English speakers. Most families need your teaching skills, and would be thrilled if you offer to tutor or help them with their English. That said, many Mauritians have a wonderful command of English and want to take advantage of the opportunity to practice it with you. Typically, a Mauritian household will have indoor plumbing, TV, and possibly a computer. You will either stay in your own room or share a room with a host sibling. Mauritians are known for their warmth and hospitality, and will most gladly share their culture with you.

EXCURSIONS

You are expected to teach in your village every weekday morning, so you have the afternoons and weekends free to explore your surroundings. Don't use your family's home merely as a place to eat and sleep. It is important that you spend ample afternoons getting to know your family and of course giving them the opportunity to practice their English with you. You will find it very rewarding to get involved in your town if the opportunity presents itself. Your host family will be well-networked and happy to introduce you to friends and family.

You will find transport links are poor so it is not always easy to travel away from your village for day trips. With good planning it can be done—although buses are rare, they are very cheap and a great way to travel. Great places to visit near the village include the Seven Colored Earths and the waterfall in Chamarel, the Black River National Park, Alexandra Falls, and Le Morne. A quick drive to the east allows one to visit Grand Bassin, the largest Hindu pilgrimage site outside of India. The southern coast is famous for its poetic rocky cliffs, the Roche qui Pleure (The Crying Rock) and Le Gris Gris. The west coast is also known for great scuba diving, fishing, water sports, and hiking.

Due to the fact that it is possible to travel to almost anywhere in the island in less than 3 hours, it is not impossible to arrange to travel to see the sights in the north and east on the

island. Although these parts have been taken over by the tourist industry, which has built hundreds of luxury hotels and private beaches, there is still some natural beauty to be seen. Make sure you visit some of the main towns: Quatre Bornes (famous for its street markets), Curepipe (known for its almost constant rain) and the capital Port Louis, which although crowded has lots of shopping and restaurants that provide jobs for locals and entertainment for visitors. Be careful when visiting the towns, as pickpockets are always about. Hold your bags close and never carry around all your cards and passport.

All in all, you're in for a good time!

III) PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

FINDING A FLIGHT

Buy your ticket as early as possible, as prices tend to increase rapidly. Let your fellow volunteers know about any cheap flights you find. Few major airlines offer flights to Mauritius. The most common airlines to look at include:

Air France

Air Mauritius

British Airways

Emirates

Virgin Atlantic

Though there are probably as many sites as there are flights you can take, some good places to start looking for cheap flights include:

kayak.com

discountfares.com

mobissimo.com

studentuniverse.com

statravel.com

vayama.com

PASSPORTS & VISAS (IF APPLICABLE)

If you are from the EU, USA or any of the commonwealth countries you do not need a visa. Notify Sindbad if you are from another country, as you may need to apply for a visa. If you have any questions, research it and then ask Sindbad. This is not something to leave to the last minute and it is your responsibility to get this done.

Customs and entry requirements

Your passport must be valid for 6 months beyond your arrival date. **CUSTOMS WILL NOT LET YOU PASS IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE ADDRESS WHERE YOU WILL BE STAYING AND PROOF OF A RETURN TICKET.** You must also give a reason for your stay. Do not write that you are teaching or volunteering as this causes huge delays to pass through; Mauritians are rightfully wary of foreign scams, and think that "volunteering" might be one. Instead, write that you are in the country for tourism with friends. Sindbad will be giving the address of the hostel we will be staying at in Flic-en-Flac, which will suffice to get through customs.

American Embassy – 4th Floor, Rogers House, John Kennedy Street, Port Louis. Tel: 2024400

UK Embassy – 7th Floor, Les Cascades Building, Edith Cavell Street, Port Louis. Tel: 208 9850

HEALTH & SAFETY

Vaccinations

For additional information, consult the Center for Disease Control website and State Department Travel website.

The center for disease control suggests that those traveling to Mauritius get the following vaccinations:

Routine Vaccinations (must be up-to-date)

Typhoid

Hepatitis A

Hepatitis B

Important: Even if there are no implications regarding special shots or vaccines for your region, it is your responsibility to make sure that you are up to date on all of your normal shots and vaccinations (tetanus, measles, Hep B, Hep A, typhoid/etc). One of the easiest ways to obtain all your shots is to visit a travel clinic (usually available at your university) or see your primary care doctor. Talk to a doctor before you go, and consult the requirements on the CDC website.

Malaria: Mauritius is malaria-free so no vaccinations or tablets are necessary, but some doctors will recommend it if you will be in a rural area (which we will be). Additionally, you should be aware that many other extremely serious illnesses are transmitted by mosquitoes and exist in Mauritius. Most of these illnesses have no vaccines. Therefore, it is very important to take measures to avoid being bitten by using repellent creams and wearing long sleeves and pants after dark.

Rabies: Doctors recommend getting a rabies vaccination when traveling to any developing countries with lots of stray dogs, as suggested by the State Department. Rabies shots are extremely expensive, not always necessary, and take a considerable amount of time and preparation to administer.

Yellow Fever: If volunteers are coming directly from a country where Yellow Fever is an issue, volunteers **MUST** have proper documentation of a vaccination or volunteers will be **UNABLE** to enter Mauritius.

For additional information, consult the Center for Disease Control website and State Department Travel website.

Prescription Medications

Bring all of your prescription medications for the summer. It will be difficult to obtain refills. Additionally, we suggest that you ask your physician to prescribe a dosage of antibiotics ahead of time. Not all doctors will comply, but try to explain that you will be going to a rural area where pharmacies are not as easy to come by and where medicine brands may be unfamiliar. Zithromax is a common non-penicillin antibiotic that treats ear infections, strep throat, tonsillitis and other bacterial infections. Also, ask for an over-the-counter or prescription version of traveler's diarrhea meds (usually Cipro). Along with the prescription meds, it would be wise to bring TUMS and Imodium AD as well.

Insurance

Learning Enterprises requires that all participants have valid insurance coverage that will cover them in country. Check your existing plans and many of you will find that you already have international travel insurance, or at least an international coverage policy called airlift, or "international evacuation coverage." This policy means that you are covered should something serious happen to you and you need to be flown either back home or to a nearby hospital facility. If you do not have international coverage, good temporary travel insurance is STA international student travelers insurance (website) or CISI international student travelers insurance.

Most importantly, we don't want to see anyone stuck in a situation where they have no way of covering medical treatment. Let us know if you have any problems and we will be happy to provide whatever advice and answers we can. That being said it is not unheard of to be in a medical situation where you cannot activate your insurance coverage at the time of treatment. If you pay for these treatments yourself, keep the receipt, and then file for a reimbursement with your insurance company. As a result, be sure to bring a credit card with \$1000 of credit available to cover the initial expenses before reimbursement.

Communication

The easiest way to keep in touch with people is through e-mail. Internet cafes will be a bus ride away and are rather cheap (\$4 per hour). Some families may even have an Internet connection in their home.

If you want to call, international calling cards are the easiest, and can be purchased once you arrive in Mauritius. Most host families will have landlines and payphones are easily accessible. We do not require volunteers to have mobile phones. However, some volunteers (and parents) find comfort in ensured 24-7 contact. Learning Enterprises is not responsible for knowing where you are at all times and getting your parents this information. The ONLY way to ensure this kind of security is to have a mobile phone. Some of your phones may already be able to take international SIM cards or may have an international service that you can turn on before leaving. Talk to your mobile phone service provider to find out your exact options. If your phone does not have this feature, you would need to buy an international mobile phone or purchase a phone in Mauritius. Phones in Mauritius generally cost upwards of \$40 (£25) and are pay-as-you-go. Around 100 minutes of local calling will cost about \$10 (£7), which will equate to about 7 minutes of international calling.

PACKING LIST

We suggest that you pack in a large backpack or something that is easily mobile. Additionally, pack extra clothing and all prescriptions in your carry-on whenever traveling. Be aware of liquids in your carry-on and other regulated objects. For more information, check out the TSA (website).

Clothes

Let's Go has an excellent piece of advice: lay out only what you absolutely need and then take half the clothes. Take the kinds of clothes that you would be comfortable wearing for days on end: basic pants, t-shirts, and shorts. Do not take anything too fancy or anything that is not compact and easy to wash in a sink. Bring clothes that you would not mind giving or throwing away as you may need to make room in your suitcase for souvenirs!

Mauritians are generally casual and have no cultural issues with shorts, swimsuits, or the like. However, please realize that you will probably be viewed as a tourist and will stand out whether you like it or not. Do not draw attention to this fact by wearing clothing that is too revealing, too casual, or inappropriate. Men will not hesitate to catcall and stare women down if they are dressed inappropriately and even sometimes if they are not. Dress to avoid this.

What to bring:

- The basics: a sweatshirt, five or six t-shirts, a couple pairs of shorts, and a pair of pants/trousers, socks, underwear, and pajamas.
- Shoes: A pair of comfortable sneakers that can be worn daily and used for hiking or sports. A pair of flip-flops or sandals for the beach. A nicer pair of shoes for church, family parties, or more formal events that you may be invited to.
- A somewhat nice outfit: A button-down shirt to go with your pants for guys, a skirt for girls. You might have a formal occasion in the village, but you do not need anything very dressy – anything nicer than a t-shirt will do.
- Remember to bring something appropriate for a mass or service.
- A set of going out clothes (mainly for orientation, mid-point break).
- A light raincoat & umbrella.
- A swimsuit; bikinis are ok.
- Bring one towel for showering. If you are planning on significant beach time, it might be nice to bring a beach towel as well.

Hygiene/Medical Items

Keep in mind that most brands available at American or English pharmacies are also available in country, at least in the larger cities. Unless you have a very strong attachment to a specific kind of shampoo only sold at the salon near your grandmother's house, you do not have to (and should not) bring a supply of toiletries for the entire summer. Sample sizes will last you through orientation, and afterwards you can stock up at local stores.

What to bring:

- Toothbrush & toothpaste
- Razor & shaving cream

- Deodorant
- Shampoo, conditioner, soap
- Hand sanitizer
- A roll of toilet paper or pack of tissues for public restrooms (do not assume that toilet paper will be there)
- Feminine Products (Tampons can be hard to find)
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent with a high deet concentration
- Glasses, contact lenses & solution (as well as a copy of your prescription)

You should also put together a basic first aid kit that includes the following:

- Aspirin/Advil/Tylenol
- Neosporin
- Band-Aids (plasters)
- Dayquil (Day Nurse)
- Tums (Gaviscon)
- Diarrhea or upset-stomach medication
- Allergy medication

Teaching Material

You can buy most of your materials in-country and for cheap. Chalk and erasers are the only materials you can count on having in class. It is possible that your villages will have other supplies, but you should not count on it.

What to bring:

- Notebook (for lesson plans and other notes)
- Tape, markers and/or crayons.
- Map of the world and/or the US/UK
- Small ball, Frisbee or something else to throw: a new soccer ball (football) would be a great gift to the village.
- Something small to give away as prizes: students tend to love little things such as stickers with English phrases or American candy.
- Anything else from the local dollar store (the pound shop) or CVS that is fun, not bulky, and can be used in a lesson.
- Secondhand children's books
- Magazines: Try to get —youngerll magazines with pictures of celebrities (Tiger Beat, Teen People, etc.) (The Beano, Dandy, Twinkle etc). Of all the items on this list, you will probably get the most mileage out of these
- Photos from home: These can be used in class and can be shared with people in the village and with your host family.
- Read over the teaching manual and see if any of the games/activities you would like to do require additional materials.

General Items

- A small, school-sized backpack: This is nice for carrying teaching supplies and when

traveling.

- Gifts for your host families: Nothing shows gratitude better than a small gift, especially if it says something about who you are or where you are from. People LOVE stuff from the US/UK, especially if it is specific to your hometown or region, i.e. books with photographs, calendars, t-shirts, etc.
- If you want to operate anything electronic, you will need a converter. Outlets in Mauritius use both African and European style plugs. Buy a set of converters and have them on hand for whichever plug you need. They are quite hard to find in Mauritius, so get these at home.
- (optional) A journal
- (optional) A camera. You will want to record all of your wonderful memories from this summer! If you have a film camera, try to buy all your film in the US/UK. It is a lot cheaper, especially if you buy it bulk. If you have a digital camera, make sure that your memory chip has enough memory.
- (optional) A small travel pillow for traveling.
- (optional) A guidebook: The Lonely Planet, or Let's Go are good options. Culture Shock: Mauritius is highly recommended. Coordinate with other volunteers to share.
- (optional) A travel-sized dictionary/phrase book in French (and Creole if you can find one)

Documents

- Passport
- Student ID: Good for occasional discounts. If you have an ISIC (International Student Identity Card), bring it. If not, do not get it unless you have to.
- Insurance Card
- Itineraries: Make sure to print all of your itineraries, especially the hostel information.
- Make sure that your parents have copies of all the documents that you plan to take with you (in case they're lost or stolen). This includes: Passport, Social Security #, Driver's license. Put your passport number into your phone, if you have one. You should also have copies for yourself that travel with you in case the originals are lost or stolen. It is especially important to travel with a copy of your passport. If you can scan them and email them to yourself, you will always have a copy easily accessible and it is safer than carrying them around.

Things Not To Bring

DO NOT pack valuables. While danger of robbery exists in all countries, it can be particularly prevalent in poorer areas. Please do not bring anything that you would be devastated to lose or damage. You should not bring expensive jewelry or valuable clothing. Additionally, electricity is very expensive in many areas and extraneous electronics causes an unnecessary burden on hosts. Please leave all I-pods, laptops, and hair dryers at home. A battery-operated MP3 player is a nice way to combat homesickness and is easy on the power grid! Be careful about leaving valuable objects out in the open. Furthermore, do not carry valuable objects on your person outside or in back pockets, as they may be stolen when traveling in a city.

Money and Banking

The currency is the Mauritian Rupee. Notes come in 25, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000 and coins are R1, R5 and R10 and 2, 10, 20 and 50 cents. There are 100 cents in a rupee.

There is no restriction on the amount of money you can bring into the country. However, while staying with your host family you will not need to spend a lot of money as they provide your accommodation and all meals. You will need a maximum of 10,000 rupees for orientation, bus fares, van hire gas costs, occasional meals/drinks out and souvenirs. It is much easier and cheaper if you exchange your currency before you arrive.

- Alert your bank(s) that you will be traveling because some banks put a hold on accounts when cards are used abroad.
- Do not bring travelers checks. They are hard to cash (especially if you are outside of major metropolitan areas), and most places will charge you exorbitant fees to cash them.
- The best way to get local currency is through ATMs. You may be charged a fee of \$1 to \$5 per transaction, but the exchange rate is much better than what you would get from a currency exchange booth.
- It is a good idea to bring some cash as well (~\$100/£65). This can be your emergency back up money. If you get in a pinch, most people are willing to take dollars, euros, or pounds instead of the local currency. Make sure the notes are not torn, dirty, etc., or people will not take them. You might also want to buy a money belt from a travel store/agency in order to carry around some backup cash.
- Plan to spend at least \$200 (£130) at orientation: \$150 (£100) for lodging, materials, and transportation and about \$50 (£35) more for food and fun. See the budget sheet on the LE website for an itemized copy of estimated expenses.

In case of emergency, have an extra \$500-1000 (£325-650) available to you in a checking (current) account. If you don't have this kind of money, we encourage you to get a credit card for emergencies only. If you are caught in an emergency, it is better to have a means to buy a ticket out and deal with the costs when you get home than be stuck in-country. Better safe than sorry!

ADDITIONAL READINGS/LINKS

Practical Information on Mauritius

www.maurinet.com

Government of Mauritius

www.gov.mu

Ministry of Education

www.gov.mu/portal/site/education

US State Dept. page on Mauritius

www.state.gov/p/af/ci/mp/

CIA World Factbook, Mauritius

www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mp.html

Mauritian Creole – English Dictionary

www.freeweb.hu/etymological

CPE Test

www.gov.mu/portal/sites/msweb/index.htm