

## **Three Things I Learned from Living in a Village in Zambia, Africa**

I spent over a year living in a rural village in Zambia as a **Peace Corps volunteer**. This experience transformed my perspective on life, offering lessons that stand in stark contrast to the fast-paced urban lifestyle of my hometown, Philadelphia. Here are three profound lessons I learned during my time there.

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### **1. Family Is Government**

In the village, **family is the central unit of governance**. The man of the house plays a pivotal role in maintaining and expanding the household. As families grow, he builds new homes and clears additional land for crops. Each family member has a distinct responsibility:

- The mother gathers firewood, often with a baby on her back.
- The girls prepare food and clean the house.
- The boys make bricks and work the fields.

Meals are shared collectively from a single large plate, emphasizing unity. **The family functions as a self-contained system of governance**, ensuring everyone contributes to maintaining order and stability.

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### **2. Everybody Is an Entrepreneur**

Life in the village revolves around **self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship**. Unlike in modern societies where jobs are defined by institutions, villagers work directly with the land and their environment to meet their needs.

*“Whether it’s opening a shop or selling crops from their farms, everyone embodies an entrepreneurial spirit.”*

This approach fosters resilience and independence. Each person becomes the master of their trade, finding creative ways to sustain themselves and their families.

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### **3. Community Is Happiness**

One of the most striking differences I observed was the profound sense of **community and interconnectedness**. In the village, roles are deeply intertwined with the well-being of others:

- Teachers educate their neighbor’s children and maintain close ties with their families.
- Church gatherings reinforce shared values of **faith, family, and connection to the land**.

*“The community becomes one big family, thriving together, sharing land, under God.”*

In contrast to the disconnection often found in urban environments, **village life prioritizes collective happiness**. This unity fosters a sense of purpose and fulfillment, where everyone’s contributions directly impact the community’s success.

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### **Final Thoughts**

Living in a Zambian village taught me invaluable lessons about family, self-sufficiency, and the true meaning of community. **Happiness thrives in simplicity, shared purpose, and deep connections with those around you.** These lessons

continue to shape how I view life, work, and relationships.