

Award winning ethical, responsible, sustainable volunteer travel



Winter newsletter 2017

Editorial



Welcome to the Winter edition of our newsletter

We have a volunteer social in Leicester on the 24th March 2018 and I hope as many of you as possible can attend, I always love our get - togethers, there is such a buzz with volunteers swapping experiences and sharing their excitement about their next placement. The exact location in Leicester hasn't been decided yet so keep an eye on our [blog page](#) if you are thinking of attending, you can also follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

Really exciting news volunteer Jenny has written a book about her experiences, check it out here

[Mrs Jenny Welcome](#)

Nigel Pegler

Any comments and volunteer experiences welcome at newsletter@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

time to get together again - Saturday 24th March - Leicester

... we're delighted that we'll be holding our next volunteers' social meeting in central Leicester ... more accessible for more people, whether travelling by road or rail !

Saturday 24th March - 1.00 to 5.00 p.m.

Come and meet previous, present and co-volunteers, as well as the [people and places team](#), of course !

This is a great opportunity to learn more about the projects if you're planning to volunteer, and to meet old friends if you've volunteered with us before.

We haven't confirmed our exact Leicester location yet – and we appreciate that this is important - but we wanted you to get the date in your diaries as soon as possible. (we know you are busy people!)

Please [email Kate](#) if you would like to come and join us for the afternoon - and don't be shy: the more, the merrier !

Full details to follow early in the New Year.



Dianne's travels in southern Africa continued . . . on to Port Elizabeth

My recent trip to South Africa culminated in two thoroughly enjoyable weeks spent in Port Elizabeth, working with [Calabash](#), our wonderful local partners. As always, they could not have been more friendly and welcoming –

I immediately felt part of the team and we had a really great time working together. Port Elizabeth is a fantastic place to volunteer – really worthwhile projects where you will spend your working day, a very supportive team to take an interest in what you are doing, look after you and make sure you have a good time, and lots to do in your free time.

The first project we visited was [Emmanuel Advice and Care Centre](#). At Emmanuel there is a small team of dedicated local people, providing community care in a variety of forms for people in their local township.



This is a very poor area, with a high incidence of HIV/Aids and TB, and the team provide community-based social care, going out regularly into their community to visit their clients and provide advice and support in whatever form is needed.



They also provide pre-school care for up to 60 local children. If there is money available, they provide meals - not only for these 60 children but also for about 90 more from the local community. They are extremely resourceful - I was amazed to learn that when they have 2000 rand (just over £100) they buy rice, flour, vegetables (supplemented from their own garden), and a little meat and fish and feed 150 children three times - so 450 nutritious meals for around 24p a head! Many volunteers from *people and places* have spent time at Emmanuel over the years, sharing their skills with the local team. Some have helped with community

care and shared skills in areas such as counselling. One previous volunteer recently provided the money to build playground equipment, and it was lovely to see the children enjoying themselves playing on the swings and climbing frame. Another helps them write a regular newsletter, while others have helped with financial planning and set up donation systems to provide regular support. However it is the local team, led by Thembeke and Anita, who keep Emmanuel going - they, like the rest of the team, are unpaid but work tirelessly to support their local community. It was a privilege to meet them again and to feel that we at *people and places* are able to provide support, in however small a way, to such a dedicated team.

Together with Nelson from Calabash, I also visited a number of township schools. Calabash currently supports six township schools and we visited all of them. We were shown round the schools and spent time talking to the Principals about how volunteer support has helped them in the past and the sort of volunteer support they would welcome in the future. This varied school to school, but the most commonly expressed needs were for support in English conversation and reading (remember all education is in English from grade 4, and English is not the first language for any of these children);



also Maths, Science and Creative Arts - you can see videos of some of the Principals talking about the support they would welcome elsewhere in this newsletter. I particularly enjoyed the visit to W. B. Tshume School - the teachers there were so excited because the previous week their students had entered a public speaking competition against 18 other local schools and they had won in every category. They brought all the prize-winners down so we could listen to their speeches and I could certainly understand why they had won - it was a real pleasure to see such confident and polite young people expressing themselves so fluently. I also very much enjoyed my visit to Lavela, a pre-school attached to Joe Slovo School. They only have a container classroom so it was hot and over-crowded, but the children were engaged in their work and really enjoying learning - a group of 4 year olds tried to teach me how to say 'hello' in the eleven different South African languages but I'm afraid I wasn't a very good learner! (For information about volunteering in one of these schools [click here](#)).



I also took advantage of my two weeks in Port Elizabeth to experience some of the interesting things tourists can do in this area. Port Elizabeth is in a fantastic location, at the end of the Garden Route, with a beautiful coastline with spectacular coastal walks and lovely sandy beaches, near to wildlife parks and with a very interesting history. I was only there for two weeks but I managed to squeeze quite a lot in. I filled a space on a trip Xolani was taking to Addo Elephant Park where we saw zebras, warthogs, buffalo, kudu, leopard tortoises, ostriches, beautiful birds and lots and lots of elephants. Another day Nelson took me on

the Real City township tour (provided to volunteers as part of their orientation tour) which is a really good introduction to the history of the city and to the townships – lots of interesting historical facts but more importantly lots of anecdotes and stories from a guide who was brought up and lives in the townships. The tour includes part of Route 67, an Arts Culture Heritage Route depicting 67 public works of art symbolizing Nelson Mandela's 67 years working towards freedom for all the people of South Africa.

I wasn't there long enough to go whale watching or on a penguin island cruise, or to arrange a trip to Nelson Mandela's birthplace – never mind, I'll just have to go back again!

"passing the baton" - volunteers and projects working together

When any new volunteer placement is accepted and agreed, we send previous volunteers' reports and encourage our new volunteers to get in touch with those who have been to the same project before. This is a vital in enabling continuity of project support and placement roles – and also avoids volunteers "re-inventing the wheel".

Individual placement roles differ according to volunteers' individual skills and experience – whether in education, training, practical skills, social care, nutrition, health care, social work – but the fundamental skills-share approach applies with each and every placement.



The following extracts, from several volunteers as well as from the projects in Cambodia, demonstrate the interconnected nature of placements and "passing the baton" ...

[... so, Cambodia projects ... teaching, training & education, practical skills, horticulture, health & social care](#) (click on the link to find out more)

Tina

I worked in the Nursery K1 with 3 and 4 year olds, some of whom were in their first week at "school". The children do not start state school until they are 6 so the Community Centre is their training ground for school. My remit was to support and encourage their new teacher, Chenda, in her use of English. The 3 hour session with the children involved learning the routine of school and how to sit still and be involved with others in the lesson. It started with learning to answer the question "What is your name?" It was very satisfying that at the end of week one, most of the children could do this.

There is a syllabus that the teacher can follow that leads to the work that will be done in K2 and K3. Mid-morning, there was a free play session with the toys and puzzles that were in the classroom. I sat among the children and was involved in the play which generated all sorts of English learning possibilities from colours to numbers and shapes. Then after outside play, we finished with recapping the earlier words and pictures and songs. The morning session ended with the traditional lining up and farewell to the teacher and each child was given a vitamin sweet on leaving.

In the afternoon, I worked in a class of 7- 8 year olds (K3) who were learning English using phonics. They had reached the fifth group of phonics, having covered groups 1 – 4 the previous year in K2. I was more of a classroom assistant here.



The initial learning style was group “shouting” of answers but the children really loved this and the teacher made it competitive by creating teams and awarding points and stickers. We did test individual understanding through games and by the use of individual whiteboards.

The other job that I had been asked to do was to create some basic geography lessons that could be used by the teachers as part of the emerging General Studies programme. Initially, my thoughts had been about doing some simple mapping of a room in a house, or a room at school or an area of the village. However, once I was in situ, I could see that this would be too complex. Many of the teachers could not make sense of a paper map although they were very proficient with Google Maps on their phones!! After discussion, we decided to focus on 3 lessons.

1. Why we have day and night, and why we have winter and summer – using a globe and a large orange space hopper for the sun and moving the globe around the sun. The UK and Cambodia were marked with playdough on the globe. I created 2 worksheets which could be used in full or which could have labels with missing words for the students to fill in.

2. Latitude and Longitude. The world maps used in Cambodia are pacific centred with Australia in the middle – very weird to us!! I created a pacific centred world map with the key lines of latitude and longitude. Again, this could be used for the students in full or with parts of words missing. The lesson also briefly touched on why latitude and longitude were “invented”. I also created a word search of key words connected with latitude and longitude, and explained how I had done it and which website I had to create free printable word search puzzles. That was a very popular resource.

3. Lesson 3 introduced different sizes and scales of maps and asked the teachers to find places on them. Map 1 was a road map of Cambodia. Map 2 was a tourist map of Siem Reap. I asked the teachers to find various places from a single starting point of the Hard Rock Café in the centre of Siem Reap. Some found this easier than others and some used Google Maps!! Map 3 was a map that I had drawn of the route from the hard rock Café to Treak Village with various local landmarks shown that they had to identify. This map could be used with the smaller children to locate places in the village and with the older evening class students to map read their route from town to their homes.

and from the project:

Tina helped with teaching, prepared resources and materials, helped with classroom management, encouraged learning through playing. In the evening classes she helped teach English and helped the teacher to find resources to use as examples.

Penny

The preparation with regards to People and Places was very smooth ... I liked their friendly approach and the support was always there. I think the induction day on arrival was very important and the actual placement experience was brilliant! Initially, I was very out of my comfort zone but I surprised myself at my ability to slot into the programme very quickly. I also learnt a lot about myself! It was a very positive and fulfilling experience. I was fortunate enough to work with children of all different ages rather than just one age group. I met some wonderful people and would not hesitate in volunteering again.

and from the project:

Penny worked in the nursery on most days and then stayed on to help with the evening class! She helped with teaching, prepared resources and materials, helped with classroom management, encouraged learning through playing. In the evening classes she helped teach English and helped the teacher to find resources to use as examples. Mr Dara says, "I would like to thank her for everything she has done or suggested in my class for keeping the students' learning moving forward". Mr Chhlat says, "I want to say thanks for the big help in my class"

Janet

I was fortunate to have met with Dianne Ashman from People and Places on a number of occasions who was able to give me excellent advice re the project etc. I was also in email communication with (*a previous volunteer*) Nikki Clive who I later met in Siem Reap (*when she was volunteering again!*).

As soon as I arrived I knew the choice was right for me; the centre is a thriving though peaceful place where children of all ages enjoy learning and are encouraged to develop their language skills as well as to respect each other.



Volunteer Nikki

My role was to work with the Teacher Sophea in the pre-school class – Ducklings and Kittens. My time in the classroom was spent helping the teacher with pronunciation of English and devising learning games for the children, as well as simple PE and ball games. I had taken resources with me - some colour and number resources of different shapes to help with counting as well as several large print story books.

There is no doubt that this is an inspiring place, with a Khmer project manager. I enjoyed the placement; the children were delightful; the teachers quietly efficient; an atmosphere of care and support prevailed ... a place of learning and fun.

... and from the project:

Janet was so helpful to us sharing and teaching basic skills like listening, gross and fine motor skills, and discussing alternative teaching methods. Janet also helped by organising the library in a logical way which will help us to use it better.

... practical skills, horticulture, training, health & social care:

Rob

I was teaching on a one to one basis, developing the skills of an individual to pass on in an adult training context. I was asked to develop a horticulture cropping programme for the Community Centre showing how to propagate plants and design and construct a raised bed vegetable garden which was successfully completed in my three week stay. Hopefully I left behind a lot of enthusiasm to continue exploring alternative crops to grow leading to a useful learning project.



The work I have been doing is just the start in Cambodia to educate the population in growing food for nutrition, self-consumption and profit which is harder than it appears due to the local culture of pride and independence that has used an agrarian system that has not changed for a 1000 years.



There is the desire for food self-sufficiency and there is a lot of underlying knowledge available. The opportunities are immense for volunteers to change attitudes particularly with the young.

... from the project:

Rob worked with Salin, the project manager, who is keen to develop the horticulture skills of local people. Rob particularly helped with methods of seed germination and established some raised beds for growing vegetables. He also explained about planting schedules and was very interested in the whole gardening programme. This was very helpful, especially the germination techniques, which Salin wants to pass on to local people. There is potential for people to sell produce into the local tourism market. Rob also visited a local commercial nursery so he could see a range of existing activities.

Stephanie

During my time there, I assisted the head teacher with English classes, completed Interviews regarding housing and education in the local community, and developed the framework for a nutrition program.

I believe the nutrition education program could continue to be developed and implemented within the school. The work I completed merely provided a beginning framework. On my last day, I completed a workshop with all of the staff members about adequate nutrition and provided classroom ideas.

However future volunteers could expand by developing lessons for each level of class (nursery through advanced) that the teachers could use to teach the subject. The teachers at the school were interested in the subject.

I enjoyed participating in a variety of activities at the community centre with the local staff and community and although my time was limited, I was able to provide at least a basic framework for the two research areas I came to work on.

Sophie – *we don't yet have Sophie's report as her placement ended only recently, but the following comments from the project give a good indication of the work she did, including the continuation of the work begun by Rob and Stephanie.*



Stephanie with local staff, Dara & Pechey

Sophie looked at the First Aid arrangements at the Centre, reviewed Health and Safety, helped in the nursery and English classes, and added to the work done by Stephanie on Nutrition. With first aid she discussed the situation and local requirements with staff, established and equipped a new first aid post, wrote a first aid handbook, trained one key member of staff, and ran 2 workshops for the remaining staff. She assessed the health and safety situation and produced a health and safety handbook, check list, and action plan. She took small groups of children with extra learning challenges out of the main class for extra lessons. She also spent time following up on Stephanie's work. Using her expertise she produced a very professional, comprehensive, and appropriate first aid station and a set of training materials and sessions for our staff. She produced similar materials for health and safety, bringing a professional and objective fresh pair of eyes to the situation. Sophie got on well with everyone at the centre and is a great team worker. She showed great maturity, patience and persistence with the extremely challenging children she worked with, especially those in the nursery classes, and gave some new suggestions for strategies on how to deal with challenging children.

***Want to share YOUR skills with community support projects ?
Please get in touch !***

Fatima's journey to school in Morocco

When you watch this short video about one girl's journey from school to her village, you will understand why we support this life changing initiative. The boarding houses are so important. (**switch on subtitles**).



no more words ... we will let Fatima explain

but if you want to learn more about how you can support girls like Fatima [take a look here.](#)

so proud of our partners -Tiger Mountain, Nepal

We are thrilled to announce that our partners at Tiger Mountain Nepal have just won a prestigious award that recognises their commitment to the environment and the communities they work with and in.





Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge

PO BOX 2018, Pokhara, Nepal

has successfully met the requirements of the GSTC-Recognised Travelife for Hotels & Accommodations Standard, therefore, achieving Travelife Gold Certification. By achieving Gold Certification, the hotel/accommodation has demonstrated their commitment to sustainability, including:

- Protecting the environment
- Respecting and treating their employees fairly
- Respecting the local community, including its residents and the safeguarding of children
- Protecting the local culture, heritage and wildlife of the destination
- Supporting the local economy and its businesses.

This certificate is valid between

Sep 2017-Sep 2019



Nicola White

Authorised by: Nicola White (Managing Director, Travelife Ltd)
Travelife Ltd, 30 Park Street, London, SE1 9EQ



22/09/2017 - 22/09/2019
Certificate Number: 00000702

Travelife for Hotels & Accommodations' standard is recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC).
GSTC Recognition acknowledges robust certification criteria in sustainable tourism.

Well done and well deserved all at Tiger Mountain

To learn more about the volunteer programme we work on in partnership with Tiger Mountain - [take a look here](#)

orphanages-why are we asking you to rethink volunteering or donating?

We want to start this post by saying very clearly that we know that some of you support orphanages - and we are not, for a moment, suggesting that you should immediately stop supporting those orphanages. We want to encourage people to look at alternatives and encourage the organisations they support to seek alternatives. We want to encourage people who are thinking about supporting an orphanage for the first time to consider the alternatives - we want to warn people that many orphanages - not all- are commercial enterprises where children are trafficked.



We are asking everyone to rethink the way we support children in poverty - children who are very often separated from their families because of poverty.

We at *people and places* made the decision nearly 10 years ago to work with programmes that work to keep children in their families not in orphanages - why?

More than [80% of the estimated 8 million](#) children living in "orphanages" are not orphans **[Sixty years of research demonstrates that institutionalisation seriously harms the health, development and future life chances of children.](#)**

Research shows that in a majority of cases in developing countries, [poverty is a driving factor](#).

The more funding that goes toward residential care centres, the more appealing they become for struggling families, who become convinced their child will have a better future in the centre than at home.

Trafficking fuelled by misplaced good intentions

Volunteering in orphanages has become a hugely popular way to "give back" when travelling abroad. Placements can be organised in many ways – including through travel agencies, NGOs, churches and missions groups, schools and universities, as well as directly with orphanages themselves. [Many children's organisations are campaigning against this practice.](#)

Nobody doubts the good intention of the donors, travellers, and volunteers who give time or money to orphanages. It is natural and right to care about poor and vulnerable children, wherever they are in the world. But is this support part of the problem rather the solution? Child protection practitioners believe orphanage tourism, volunteering, voluntourism and donations instead of being part of the solution, are in fact part of the problem. How? By both [creating and fuelling](#) the demand for "[orphans](#)" which in turn drives the unnecessary separation of children from their families as well as making them [vulnerable to potential abuse](#) and even [trafficking and slavery](#).

What are the alternatives?

To help children, support their families and communities.

Our aim is to harness the generosity of well-intentioned donors and volunteers, and to redirect support away from Residential Care Institutions – Orphanages, towards organisations who are working to keep children in families. By doing this, we can ensure that vulnerable children have what all children need and deserve – a family.

Halting the exploitation of children, donors and volunteers requires collaboration and cooperation between national governments, the tourism industry, charities, faith organisations and other non-government organisations as well as travellers and volunteers themselves. Cross-border cooperation and a commitment from both the supply and demand sides are vital.

We all bear responsibility. While there remains a demand for orphanage visits and philanthropy in developing countries and little is done to stop it, [new, unscrupulous suppliers will continue to emerge.](#)

For information about volunteer projects that seek to keep children in families please email kate@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

If you are interested in a free presentation to a school or organisation you work with about the dangers of and alternatives to supporting orphanages please email dianne@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

If you would like to learn more about organisations working to keep children in families - that need your financial support - please email sallie@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

teachers explain why they want to work with volunteers

(Click on each picture to watch the video)

Mrs Rita Dyantyi from Tshume school explains why they welcome volunteers watch to the end - the children are epic!



Mrs Thembekha Klaasen and Mrs Anita Hutton from Emmanuel Advice and Care Centre



Mr Thembaletu Hopa of Mboniselo school welcomes volunteers



Mr Thambo of AV Bukani School talks about how volunteers have helped his children become the NO1 readers in his area



If you haven't already spotted our YouTube channel it's worth a look. There are video interviews from volunteers and if you have videos of your time volunteering or one of the talks you have done – we know many of you talk to groups on your return from volunteering – please send them to us so we can share them.

click the logo



meet the *people and places* team [here](#)



[Take a look here at slideshare for slide shows from volunteers](#) – if you have a slide show to share please do send it to us, thanks so much to all the volunteers who have contributed to date.

Remember we are on facebook too - [follow us here](#) – in the blog and on facebook are where we tend to post our latest news.

If you like beautiful pictures and funny visuals we are also on [pinterest – follow us here](#)

and finally we are tweeting too – [follow us here](#)