

Teaching, community and conservation, South Africa

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This summer I travelled to South Africa/Swaziland and Thailand in order to undergo volunteer trips that included anything from working with children to working upon a permaculture site.

South Africa (VESA www.vesabroad.co.uk) - Safaris to educate and support local wildlife and economy (I saw 2 poached rhinos in a day and a baby left without a mother whilst being hunted by lions, this has in fact changed my life and now I have a passion to fight against rhino poaching even more. In another park the horns had been cut off to protect the rhinos), teaching children ages 0-12 in an orphanage and helping the lady with meal preparation, construction of a crocodile pool for a rescued croc, construction of a home for a family of 12, visiting local craft markets to spread wealth particularly in Swaziland, worked within the Emdoneni Wild Cat and cheetah programme in order to care for the cats, learning how social media can help poachers to locate animals but also how it can be a positive way of sharing the voices of people who cannot be heard.

Thailand (Give www.givevolunteers.com) – Plant trees upon arrival to offset carbon emission from the plane, educating children ages 6-16, working on a permaculture site to help grow vegetables in a sustainable way and then share this knowledge with the children so they could continue when I left, painted schools, local cooking lessons with Thai people to embrace the culture, living in the village within the forest so remote tourists cannot go there- this was so we could appreciate how they live, educate ourselves and spend money on the crafts which in turn was supporting women which also means we are supporting their families too, working with elephants to bath, feed and trek for them- this was to help protect the elephant because they would not be abused or killed if money was being put into the sustainable tourism, learnt how to make bamboo into cups and straws rather than using plastic.

Personally, I believe these trips have changed my life because they have humbled me and I appreciate absolutely everything I have and how lucky we are in the UK. It has also given me a greater scope of what the world has to offer from beautiful sunsets, amazing wildlife to the kind people. The trips have lit a fire underneath me to do well in my degree so I can travel the world doing what I love, learning new cultures and seeing wildlife. I believe an employer would be very happy to see someone with this experience because it's truly once in a lifetime, I have lived with jungle tribes who, up until recently, have never seen an English person, I've seen horrendous scenes of wild animals poached, which has encouraged my passion towards protecting the beautiful creatures and it clearly shows how willing I am to learn and experience what our amazing planet has to offer.







This is a picture during the construction of the home for a family of 12 in South Africa and then when they were handed the keys to their first home.



This is the permaculture site I helped plant and construct with a Thai guide. There was no food here when I arrived and he send me this image yesterday to show how much the fruit and veg has grown and now the children have a sustainable food source!