

## Environmental conservation, Madagascar

Georgia Tranter, *Geography & Planning*

I heard about this opportunity through Plan My Gap Year (), an organisation which I have planned trips in the past with. The programme was advertised as environmental conservation within the bush at a small reserve in the South Madagascar, but the trip enabled me to see a lot more than just the reserve, by visiting less well managed forests, and visiting local communities who somewhat rely on the rainforest for their livelihoods.

It was good to get involved in something that both helped the community and the local environment. Besides from general building work at the camp, lemur follows, reforestation, beach cleaning, and learning about the future of conservation there, one of the most interesting experiences for me was definitely the pandanus relocation project. The Antanosy Gecko, which was endemic to that particular region, was about to become extinct due to mining, so moving and replanting their specific habitat will hopefully help them to relocate the gecko before the deforestation occurs. It was the Malagasy independence day whilst I was there too, so experiencing the biggest day of celebration of the year was an amazing experience which I probably won't get the chance to see again.

This experience has definitely helped me in many ways as a geography student; besides from the independence and confidence you gain, it's a great opportunity to meet new people of different cultures and learn about a place so different from home. Hopefully it will help employability in the future too as it's something different to bring to a job role, which shows you can make connections and aren't afraid to do something out of your comfort zone.

