

## A change for the better; Learning outside the classroom



The geography classroom has come a long way since I left school over a decade ago (which really was not that long ago!). More students are being offered the opportunity of school expeditions to not only travel and understand the world we live in, or meet people from different cultures, or even getting involved in projects abroad but actually learning what it means to be a global citizen in a hyper-globalised world.

More students than ever before are also gaining real employable skills from group volunteering trips in Africa; from running their own fundraising campaigns, raising awareness of their travels or fundraising for charitable causes, which is something that we see here at African Adventures all the time. If anything, the rise in social media over the past decade, the numerous charity fundraising websites that are now available and the fact that young adults are becoming 'cleverer' with modern technology/communication portals all helps with fundraising and putting the word out there. This is also exactly what a lot of employers look for today. Young workers who use their initiative and find ways to meet objectives and targets.

During the past two years of my working in this sector and volunteering in Ghana, Kenya and Zanzibar with school groups, I have seen students bag-pack in supermarkets, jump out of airplanes, abseil off buildings, and hold disco, quiz and curry nights, to name just a few.

These invaluable skills are not only accessible for the rich or middle-class kids that it seemed to be when I was at school. More students from perceived 'less well-off' areas or backgrounds are seizing the opportunity to volunteer now. Not at twenty when I could first afford to travel abroad without my parents and volunteer for long periods of time!

The knock-on effects from students travelling and volunteering abroad also has a massive impact on the children that we work with in project schools in Africa. Aside from the obvious physical work that these student volunteers carry out on building new classrooms, renovating structures or teaching mathematics and English, our student volunteers are also choosing to continue their support of our charitable causes. In essence, student volunteers are seeing the support process all the way through. From meeting the children that are directly benefited through our work to actually propping up and supporting that process by volunteering, fundraising and donating towards the further development

of these communities. In some cases, our volunteers even come back for family volunteering trips in Africa. We're witnesses to a paradigm shift, the concept of the traditional 'family package holiday' is also changing and, in my mind, for the better!

If more of our young adults took up this calling, or were presented with this opportunity, our country's young adults would be even more fit to live in a constantly globalised world where it is not uncommon to talk to someone across the other side of the world on a daily basis or live next door to someone who fifty years ago would be described as 'foreign'.

One of the biggest things I love seeing is this breaking down of barriers, the understanding students obtain that despite the different way of life, the different cultures, tastes, sights and smells, we are all the same in this world and we all should continue to promote this way of life, for cultural discoveries at a young age and for the act of giving a helping hand to those in need.

Tom Waugh

Foundation Co-ordinator

African Adventures

Email: [joe@african-adventures.co.uk](mailto:joe@african-adventures.co.uk)

Website: [african-adventures.co.uk](http://african-adventures.co.uk)