

Note from *people and places*: this volunteer's placement was designed specifically for them – they went through our full matching process, as we've been doing with you. The placement report indicates their particular skills and experience – yours may be similar or completely different – your own placement will make best use of **your** experience and skills. Every volunteer is different – in what they give and what they gain. Reports from previous volunteers serve to give you as good a picture as possible about the project. If you have any questions about any of the detail in this report please do not hesitate to contact me at kate@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

Claire Djali – Good Work Foundation (GWF) in Hazyview, South Africa - Oct 15th to Nov 9th 2018

Placement dates and Project

Friday 1st March – Thursday 28th February 2019

Working as a Teacher Assistant in Charles Duna School

Pre-departure Information and Preparation

- I received all relevant information ahead of time.
- It was great to attend the Volunteer Social event.
- Meeting both the People and Places team and previous volunteers helped me feel confident about the organization I was signing up with and I was also able to hear these people's experiences and to benefit from their knowledge and insights.

Additional information that might be helpful for volunteers

- When making my international payment to Calabash, my bank was asking for a 'clearing code' as opposed to a 'branch code', it turns out they are the same thing.

Summary of my work at Charles Duna

I was first asked to assess comprehension levels of Grades 4 to 7 as Ms Sume had concern that children were reading without understanding.

I discussed with Miss Sume how English is introduced to the children who are all Xhosa speaking when they start school.

To obtain as full a picture as possible I spent time with all Grades, from Reception through to Grade 7. I observed, but also took part at all levels. We discussed whether fully immersion into English in the earlier grades would be helpful.

I spoke on the phone to my daughter who has 20 years experience working in TEFL (teaching English as a foreign language), and she told me, as I instinctively felt, that full immersion, particularly under the age of 6 years, would lead to full bilingualism.

This, however, is not a genuine option as all teachers are native Xhosa speakers and even those who do speak English well are not native speakers and this is often evident in literacy also.

Ms Sume also told me that it is impossible to recruit white South African teachers, whose first language is English, to the school.

Seeing that my remit was fairly open-ended I decided to concentrate on Numeracy and Literacy, and although I worked with all Grades, I focused on Grades 4 – 7.

Mostly I worked with groups outside of the classroom, individuals within the classroom, and whole class teachers when it seemed it would be helpful in supporting the classteacher, or when the class teacher was absent.

Resources I left

Many children had broken pens and unsharpened pencils. Others were squabbling over who a pen/pencil belonged to.

I left individual teachers, pens, pencils and pencil sharpeners. I wasn't keen to leave rubbers as there is a 'rub it out' and copy down the right answer mentality which is not very conducive to learning, or for a teacher to see the process the child has gone through in their learning.

Follow-on Work

- I think the key work that needs to be done is with individuals who have got left behind, and for whom it becomes increasingly difficult to get a foothold back on to the learning ladder.
- Taking small groups of children for computer work, both word processing and internet use
- It would be great if TEFL teachers could be recruited for the volunteer program. (I tried to instigate something of this sort via my daughter's academy which has over 60 teachers. However TEFL teachers are not paid well, and it would have been beyond them to pay for both their flights and accommodation.)

The highlight of my volunteer experience

The month in South Africa was one of fascination and learning for me.

The highlight was having the opportunity to help children understand what they thought they could not understand. Nothing like the delight of a child who finally feels 'I can do it' or 'I get it' or 'I am not stupid after all'!

Would I recommend volunteering to other people or not?

I would definitely recommend volunteering to other people, and would specifically recommend People and Places, and if South Africa, Calabash Tours as well.

There was a very helpful and friendly professionalism from both organisations which helped the experience to run smoothly.

Knowing that both People and Places and Calabash Tours are keen to be ethical in their work means a lot to me.

How did I spend my leisure time?

I found it difficult to use my leisure time

Before going out to South Africa I had envisaged going out on some day trips over the weekends. I did do one day trip to Addo Elephant Park. This was a lot of fun, thoroughly enjoyable, but also quite expensive. There were limited other options. I had somehow imagined there would be more things nearby, and that perhaps the cost of day trips or weekends away would not be so high.

Although I have travelled on my own extensively, I have not been in a situation before where I was advised not just to wander the streets.

I walked the extent of the beach, on the beach and along the beach front every day.

I also went to the local shops most days.

I spent time by the pool, reading and embroidering, but I still had too much time for leisure given the options. (and my lack of creativity, if I was a painter or a drawer for example I could have used the time to better effect, but I am a Londoner, a doer rather than a sitter most off the time!!)

Note from people and places: when we put volunteers in touch with our local partners, in this case, Calabash, we shall recommend volunteers and local partners discuss their options for leisure time activities

How was my accommodation?

The accommodation at 5th Avenue was lovely. I enjoyed my time there. Staff were all helpful and very friendly, and the accommodation itself was a very good standard.

I did leave a note on the feedback form to 5th Avenue, that a small armchair in the room would have been great.

When you stay in a place for a month and only have the choice of an upright chair or the bed, it can be difficult.

While there, it would have been great to have something like an armchair.

Note: which we shall follow-up !

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Thank you.