



people and places: responsible volunteering

WINTER
2009

"Truly accountable, ethical, responsible, sustainable volunteer travel"

Newsletter

EDITOR Nigel Pegler



we work with communities in
AFRICA; The Gambia, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland
ASIA; Indonesia, Nepal and India SOUTH AMERICA; Peru

From the Editor

I attended the **people and places** social at Faversham on Saturday and thoroughly enjoyed it.

It was a very tiring day having risen at 5am to travel to Faversham from Norfolk and arriving home at 9.15pm and of course I helped Sallie and Kate set up because as you know **people and places** do everything for as low a cost as possible, no paid labour here!

It was great to see so many volunteers, past, present and future and share our experiences. It is such a great idea for previous volunteers to talk to potential volunteers as you can share your volunteering experience and give a really good insight into what to expect.

I know that organising these events is a lot of work for Sallie and Kate but they are very worthwhile.

I did manage to persuade a few volunteers to send in their stories for the newsletter (hopefully!) but I am still not getting enough—Sallie and Kate still complain that there is too much from them in these newsletters!

So could I ask again for your story if you have volunteered or are about to do so, whether they be good, bad or indifferent.

Well the big news is that **people and places** have done it! They have won—yes WON the VIRGIN HOLIDAYS RESPONSIBLE TOURISM AWARD for Best Volunteering organisation. These awards are highly competitive and are the most highly regarded international responsible tourism awards in the world.

There—I have stolen Kate and Sallie`s thunder but take a look at page 6 for Sallie`s report of the awards.



Hope you enjoy this newsletter

Winners Virgin Responsible Tourism awards-Best volunteering organisation 2009

Visiting Nosi



Nosi was a valued carer, she was one the first carers at Emmanuel. She worked very hard and in addition she translated for Terry Myburg from the Do Ubuntu Orphan Bracelet Campaign when she talked to Xhosa women suffering from HIV/Aids about how the campaign could help them to help themselves: highlighting the way agencies can work successfully together for the good of the community.

Nosi translating for Terry



Nosi became ill; she was living in a shack in Kwanoxolo and was on the list for a 'smartie house' in Booyens Park, about 25 min drive away. This was a new housing development, the houses were not ready, there were no proper roads, buses, telephones, clinic, shops in fact it was just another shack area. The 'officials' decided that Nosi must move to a shack near to where her new house would be so she would be ready to move in at a moments notice, despite protests they pulled down her shack and moved her lock, stock and barrel away from her friends, family and church to this God forsaken place.

The carers were very worried about her, she had been ill for 6months and wouldn't go to the hospital; they wanted to see her but had no transport. Polly said she would arrange transport and we would all go ('all' meaning 35 people from the centre) The carers wanted to buy her flowers but Aunt Grace (another carer and the eldest so her opinion was valued) put her sensible hat on and asked 'why are we buying flowers when she is starving and cold? She knew that Nosi had no money for food or spirit for the primus stove she cooked on. Grace organised a 'whip round' out of their R500 (£ 40) per month pay and bought rice, maize meal, tea, sugar, spirit and 1 orange.

I was asked to see if I could help. I knew she was bed ridden so I decided to take a glide sheet, which I had brought from the UK, to help with moving and handling in bed and an old wheel chair that was without arms but would do the trick. I also took 'rubbing stuff' a toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and flannel and the precious Paracetamol.

The morning arrived and I went out with the carers as usual, we walked miles, the sun was high in the sky and so hot, my feet ached but what made me so happy was that because we all wore the blue polo shirts with the Emmanuel LOGO we were easily identified in the community. People stopped and asked us who we were, what we stood for, and some then asked for help or advice and where could they find us. Ebraim was due to pick us up in his bakkie at a specific place to take us to see Nosi but somehow we got our wires crossed and we ended up walking another mile or so (it felt like a marathon) Eventually we managed to meet up. The bakkie was full but we were unceremoniously hauled into the back to much laughter at my undignified attempts!

It was a good 1/2 hour drive over very rough terrain, the rest of the carers had gone in a mini bus. Polly had gone ahead



with Terry and her dog. As we approached the shack area my heart sank, it was truly terrible, wild dogs scavenging for food stared menacingly at us, goats and pigs jostled in the wasteland and then there was Nosi's shack the smart car and mini bus looked as if they belonged on another planet. It was suddenly very quiet; we walked to the shack, some people were queuing outside waiting to go in. Polly, Terry and me, as 'important guests', were taken to Nosi's bedside. I felt like an intruder, but she had such a sweet smile and beckoned me to sit next to her on the ramshackle bed. I talked to her for a while then the Pastors wife took over.

The tiny room was packed, the carers sat on the bed, the floor, the benches, others stood leaning against the wall. There was no air, no light, we were packed like sardines. Diane the pastors wife started off with prayers, she read from the bible then started to sing, everyone joined in, she encouraged us to sing louder and louder so the 'Lord' would know we were asking for his help. Then came the ululating, swaying, eyes closed, loud prayers but all I could think of was what a perfect place to contract TB! I desperately wanted to get out but didn't want to offend anyone and then miraculously Polly said she was going to faint with the heat, it was 38 degrees outside so who knows what the temperature was inside. I offered to take her out and we sat outside with Terry and decided what we could do. I was sure she had HIV/AIDS and TB but she needed a proper medical assessment. She had to go to hospital but how did we get her there? Eventually Ebraim agreed to take her in the bakkie, Aunt Grace would go with her to Dora Nginza a huge sprawling hospital with an appalling reputation, she would stay with her and look after her. The carers packed her few possessions and Ebraim lifted her in his arms and laid her in the back of the truck on some makeshift cushions. Aunt Grace climbed in the back with Nosi: my abiding memory is of Aunt Grace putting up her umbrella to shield Nosi from the blazing sun.

The end of the story? Nosi was diagnosed as end stage Aids and TB and sent home to die. The carers took it in turns to stay with her and nurse her as best they could. Terry emailed me 2 weeks after I had gone home to say she had passed away.

In Terry's words "Poor little kid, she was the best"

I was told that the shacks are pulled down because:-

- Some people refuse to move, but if their home is pulled down they are forced to.
- To stop people selling or renting out their shacks while living in the new `smartie` house
- To prevent squatters/ refugees moving in

There are rumours that the people like living in shacks, I was told categorically that they are actually desperate to enjoy a nice clean home with electricity, running water and sewage system **but** they want the house to be in the area where they live **now**, where their friends and families are not moved to another area.

Jean Eaton

The challenge of volunteering for the first time

Before I venture to Naxal, I have a small story for your newsletter:-

The idea to volunteer just landed in my head one day, and without too much pondering, I started the ball rolling. I knew this is what I wanted to do, as my love for the Far East has spanned four decades, ever since I met my late husband who was of Chinese origin.

Since my husband's death, I have travelled widely through Asia and the Orient; something of a personal pilgrimage I like to think. It comes as no surprise then that I chose the Naxal Orphanage in Kathmandu Nepal to offer my voluntary services.

There have been many reports to read from previous volunteers. For the most part, the reports were practical and detailed, but a few were contradictory and confusing. I guess I'll just have to keep an open mind and record my own experiences when I'm there, after all, we all see the world through different eyes.

Now that time is racing to the start of my assignment, my thoughts are racing too! I find myself asking, over and over, "What awaits me there?" and most importantly, "Will I be able to make a difference in such a short space of time?" Well, I will find out soon enough, and that is my challenge.

Gudrun Lye



Editor`s note

Since Gudrun wrote this she has had what she describes as a `silly accident` and can not at the moment go on her placement, Gudrun says

"Things do not always work out the way we plan. It was a mega-disappointment and looking at my packed suitcase and all the stuff I collected for the children left me with a very sad feeling. However, this is not the end and I will certainly take up my volunteering work next year when I am ready to carry on with my crazy life. Watch this space!"

TravelPledge

Toilet Blocks to Teacher Training

Kate and I never cease to be humbled and thrilled by the achievements of the volunteers. Whilst they often feel that they do not achieve much during their placements, we are luckily able to observe the progress in the projects over years.

And if the incredible dedication and commitment during their placement isn't enough 25% of them come home and continue to support their projects financially. Whilst **people and places** neither expects nor asks for this generosity – its real and its happening and it was causing us huge administrative challenges. We wanted to be efficient, transparent and ensure that donations were being used responsibly and sustainably. Little of **people and places** (and our local partners) were groaning with the demands of this wonderful generosity.

The solution www.travelpledge.org.

It is only nine months since TravelPledge was officially launched. In that time our volunteers and their friends and supporters achieved the fundraising targets for 7 targeted causes representing nearly £20,000 – take a look at <http://travelpledge.org/projects/achieved-projects/> to see details of the achieved targets.

In addition all, **people and places** volunteers who are tax payers pay the amount designated as their "project donation" (and any further sums they may raise before they leave) through TravelPledge – thus gaining the gift aid!!! So far targets reached include

- loos for a community HIV project in Port Elizabeth
- loos for school children in Kathmandu
- schooling and school books and uniforms for orphans in Nepal
- wages for a qualified pre school teacher for a community project in South Africa
- science Equipment for a school in Nepal

In addition, the target for training bike mechanics in South Africa and pre-school teacher training are nearly complete too!



The loo block at Emmanuel Care Centre is up and nearly finished-it is most certainly being used. Already local carers and volunteers are training children-many of whom do not have indoor plumbing in their own homes -how to use them and basic hygiene.



(Following the lavatorial theme. Building has started on the additional loos at Samata School this will double the number of WCs for the two thousand children from 12 to 24!)



From toilets to teachers. The local pre school teacher is in situ at Missonvale and her wage is funded for a year. As you can see from the picture, Loretta is very much ensconced in her work. Fund-raising is well on the way for paying for her second year's employment.



The computer/common room for the older children at Naxal orphanage is complete. This just in from Naxal....



"Here is the pictures of Computer room. They have put only one computer but in process to put other as soon as possible. OCCED is going to inaugurate the computer and library room on this Thursday 3rd December 2009 and this inauguration will be done by the Current volunteers as per information given by OCCED."



It has become clear to us in recent months that the major challenge we face is not harnessing volunteer generosity – oh no – it is far more difficult to gain information from the local projects. It has been a real challenge working on briefing documents and costings for the targets. I would like to extend a personal thank you to those volunteers who have helped me work on this. I am currently working on targeted causes with the projects in India, Indonesia and The Gambia – we will get there! It is not as if the need isn't there – simply the capacity to write a proposal document.

<http://travelpledge.org/> is a new concept in charitable giving. Only the 4% charge levied by the Charities Trust for bank charges is deducted from the targeted cause donations – EVERY other penny gets to the targeted cause. We are very proud to have been founding partners in TravelPledge.

All at *people and places* and the projects say a huge thank you to everyone – every pupil, grandmother, boss, soccer team- who has helped volunteers support their projects – you are all stars.

Sallie Grayson

Raising Funds for Samata School – Cleadon Village C. of E. Primary School

Children at Cleadon Village C. Of E. Primary School were really interested to learn about Samata School when their Head Teacher, informed them she would be working at Samata during October and November for 4 weeks.

Following, lessons, discussions and research the children embarked on a number of fundraising events to support the school.

The first event was on World Book Day in April. The children have been appalled at the lack of resources in the library at Samata School. They decided to hold a non-uniform day and came to school dressed up as their favourite storybook character and gave a donation for the privilege. Money raised this day was specifically to buy books for the library at Samata.



The children on School Council then organised a series of fundraising events scheduled over a six month period. This included;

- A garden party
- Weekly cake stalls
- A school calendar
- A Nepalese Day

In total the children raised a fantastic £3,000!! This money is being used to fully fund two projects

The Science Room project

Improvements to toilet facilities

A total of £500 was also spent on books for the library.

The remaining money will hopefully contribute to the provision of a computer room.

The children hope they can maintain links with Samata School and children from both schools have written letters to each other.

A big thank you to all the children – well done! We promise we will send you pictures once all the work is done.

Winners Virgin Responsible Tourism awards -Best volunteering organisation 2009



"A winners tale"

Starring Kate and Sallie with the invaluable support of local partners and volunteers

The Scene: Kate and Sallie are sitting with a glass of Tesco's cheapest Cava at Kate's kitchen table – the date is 11th November 2009.

Sallie – So can you believe we won?

Kate – It's not just that we won – it's the judges' citation that's so amazing.

Sallie – Read it again – I can't hear it too often!!!

Kate – "**people and places** has exercised leadership in a sector bedevilled by poor practice and established a replicable business model. Committed to reporting transparently on the money that volunteers pay, they ensure that the volunteers meet their full costs and are not a burden on the community; and carefully match the skills of volunteers to the needs of that community without replacing local labour. They have taken the ground breaking step of having their work externally audited and publishing it online. These four principles set not only a practicable standard for operators to aspire to, but offer valuable guidelines for tourists seeking legitimate and socially beneficial volunteering experiences."

Sallie – The Virgin Holidays Responsible Tourism awards are the most highly contested and most internationally recognised of their kind in the world. I am so proud. If only we could have had all our local partners and all our volunteers there to share the award with us ... this award is as much theirs as ours.

Kate – Well, we did have Nick Leader with us and that was so appropriate, since he was our first ever volunteer in 2006. It was great he could meet the local partners from India too – and so appropriate he will be their first volunteer on the education project in India in January.

Sallie – And we had a good number of local partners with us too: Marnie from South Africa, Raj from Nepal, Anita and Mandip from India. And supper with them all the night before, as well as with Matthew from Peru and Nick Chaffe from TravelPledge – our first opportunity to have so many partners sitting at a table together.

Kate – Yes, it was wonderful wasn't it? ... Anyway, enough of this relaxation and back slapping – back to work! We started **people and places** to campaign and prove that volunteering could be a win-win situation for local communities and for volunteers ... There's still a lot of work to do, this isn't a perfect science, and we'll have to work all the harder – and look, they spelt our name wrong on the award certificate! I'll ask for a new one!

Sallie – OK partner, up the stairs to the office – I'm right behind you. By the way, do you think an extra 5 hours a day come with the award?

Kate – If only ...

So back to work they went!

An article originally published in r:travel the official responsible awards magazine

Best volunteering organisation | winner

WINNER
People and
Places, UK

The right people in the right places

As the organisations featured over the next four pages happily confirm, volunteers are the lifeblood of their work. Nevertheless, volunteering is a potential minefield for the unwary and the unprepared. Our winning company, UK-based People and Places, offers a responsible way forward

Every year newspapers and social networking sites are filled with tales of gap year volunteering plans that ended in disappointment or disaster – both for the volunteers and the community they had hoped to serve.

It's not always about unscrupulous companies relieving our eager children of large sums of money, most of which find their way into the wrong pockets. Another potentially traumatic problem is managing expectations and matching people's skills with the right project. It's an issue all too familiar to Sallie Grayson, co-founder and programme director of People and Places. Now a Responsible Tourism Award winner, two years after getting a 'highly commended' nod, People and Places prides itself on offering fully transparent

programmes. The first volunteer organisation to be independently audited by the Responsible Tourism Partnership, it works with local partners – from respected responsible tour operators to international NGOs – to match volunteers' specific skills to local needs.

Since launching in March 2006, People and Places has placed around 250 volunteers and expects to place a further 200 in 2009. It currently works with eight partners, supporting 16 projects in the Gambia, South Africa, Nepal, India, Peru, Indonesia, Swaziland and Madagascar.

Explains Sallie: 'Most short-term volunteer travellers do not have an in-depth knowledge of all the nuances of the community they seek to serve. They are well meaning, intelligent, well read and optimistic. This optimism almost invariably

leads them to want to achieve more than may be practical or possible.

'We do not place volunteers without the informed consent of the project – this means that the project is privy to the skills of the volunteer well before they arrive. In many instances the volunteers will have far greater skills in an area they feel they are not qualified in than those of the people on the ground and in many instances local people have higher skills than volunteers – but the very nature of the volunteer being "foreign" leads the community to believe they will know more.

'Add to this the nuance of cultural mores – for example, communities where they would not dream of disagreeing with an honoured guest, and volunteers who are fearful of cultural disrespect – and misunderstandings can and do arise. It is imperative to have skilled facilitators on the ground with whom volunteers and project leaders can meet regularly.'

People and Places addresses this challenge in three ways, says Sallie.

- Detailed briefings before departure.
- Putting volunteers in touch with each other before they leave. People and Places

Winners Virgin Responsible Tourism awards -Best volunteering organisation 2009

encourages previous volunteers to brief future volunteers – warts and all.

- On the ground the company works with local partners who are in and of their communities and experienced in ensuring guest and host will work together.

A different, but welcome challenge has been the management of the generosity of returning volunteers. Over the two years to the end of 2008, volunteers have contributed at least £49,000 in mandatory donations to projects in the communities in which they work, but this total is doubled by further donations raised by the volunteers when they return.

'More than 20 per cent of our returning volunteers want to continue to support their projects when they return home,' says Sallie. 'Our challenge was how to manage this travel philanthropy – efficiently, effectively and openly. To be quite honest, as a tiny organisation, we were becoming overwhelmed by the reporting systems needed to ensure we were communicating properly with donors and monitoring efficacy – and the burden was equally

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

'People and Places has exercised leadership in a sector bedevilled by poor practice and established a replicable business model.

Committed to reporting transparently on the money that volunteers pay, they ensure that the volunteers meet their full costs and are not a burden on the community; and carefully match the skills of volunteers to the needs of that community without replacing local labour. They have taken the ground-breaking step of having their work externally audited and publishing it online. These four principles set not only a practicable standard for operators to aspire to, but offer valuable guidelines for tourists seeking legitimate and socially beneficial volunteering experiences.'

overwhelming for our local partners.'

People and Places solved that by becoming a founding partner of TravelPledge (www.travelpledge.org) a charity which channels donations to targeted causes, with donors able to see where money is going and how it is spent.

All in all, volunteering should be a satisfying process for everyone involved. 'Seeing the cumulative effect of volunteering in community development is especially rewarding,' adds Sallie. 'We are helping communities build the future they want for themselves. And, because we update previous volunteers on developments after their placement, they gain a growing understanding that their role was important and meaningful.'

www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

ANYONE looking to volunteer should do their homework to avoid disappointment – or worse. Here is People and Places' checklist of what you should ask of any volunteer organisation, before signing up. More details – and the right answers – are at www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

1. How can I be sure that what you're telling me is true and not just marketing hype?
2. How and where is my money spent?
3. How will my skills be used effectively?
4. I'm only going to be there for a few weeks – how can my input be of any real use?
5. Who decides what my role will be?
6. Who knows about me before I arrive and what do they know?
7. Whose idea was the project and who runs it?
8. Can I talk to previous volunteers?
9. Can I talk to local people before I go?
10. Will I be safe?
11. What's all this I hear about adequate insurance?
12. Is there any continuity?
13. What kind of support is there for me?

SPONSORED BY: Kenya Tourist Board

The Kenya Tourist Board has a commitment to Responsible Tourism and environmental and cultural preservation projects



have grown extensively over the past decade, spurred by a desire to maintain Africa's rich artistic and ecological treasures. From helping with community aid in remote villages and learning about animal conservation, to viewing and helping preserve ancient African rock art – there are now more options than ever for holidaymakers to explore and get involved.

With 'safari' coming from the Swahili for 'journey', Kenya prides itself on offering an unparalleled travel experience for everyone. From the depths of a coral reef to snow-capped mountains, from lush rainforests to vast trackless expanse of desert, from extinct volcanoes to geothermal springs and from rolling savannahs to freshwater lakes, Kenya's contrasts hold the promise of real adventure.

Its 39 National Parks and Reserves offer endless potential for the wildlife enthusiast, while those pushed for time can even have a taster with a one-day safari adventure in Nairobi national park – just 20mins from the capital!

The country has also drawn on its many historical influences to develop its own unique culture and boasts 42 ethnic groups, countless languages and dialects and one of the most richly diverse social tapestries on earth.

A great sporting nation, there's plenty to satisfy the amateur enthusiast and ultimate thrill seeker alike in Kenya, from golf to bike trekking, from marathon running to big game fishing and from paragliding to world-class diving.

Added to this are award-winning safari lodges and sophisticated tented camps, plus a fantastic range of both scheduled and charter flights from the UK. There has never been a better time to visit Kenya. Whichever safari option you choose, Kenya's charms inspire.

www.magicalkenya.com



Leeds road show

AVOIDING dodgy drivers on the M606 and rampant football fans on the Leeds ring road made facing rush hour in downtown Kathmandu a piece of cake.

With one eye on the clock, another on the location map and eyes three and four (there were two of us in the car) watching out for temporary diversions or jaywalkers, we headed for Leeds Metropolitan University where seasoned, not-so-seasoned and would-be volunteers were waiting. Would you risk the wrath of Kate or Sallie by turning up late? (no comment! Ed) Bravery is one thing; stupidity another.

They promised a relaxed atmosphere, and so it turned out. Professor Harold Goodwin said a few words – a very few words – before heading off to presumably write the words 'Must do better' on the work of some hapless student. Then it was the turn of Adama Bah, co-ordinator of the Travel Foundation projects in The Gambia, which includes the Gambia is Good demonstration farm. Adama founded Tourism Concern in The Gambia, went on to create ASSET (the Association of Small-Scale Enterprises in Tourism) and served as its secretary and then chairman. After this the assembled and lapel-labelled throng was left to do its own thing, albeit under the watchful eye of Kate and Sallie.



To date Carrie's and my first and only volunteering assignments had been to the Samata School and the Naxal Orphanage in Kathmandu. Our experiences in November 2008 were vastly different. I drew the long straw and at Samata enjoyed a life-changing month with 3,200 children - who decided I was 'Grandfather Peter' - and their inspirational guardian angel, Uttam; Carrie had a tear-inducing time at Naxal Orphanage where she and her two co-volunteers did their best to promote changes in what to them – and many others before them – was a totally unsatisfactory situation for the children in its care.



Since returning home Carrie had frequently wondered if matters had slipped back to their pre-November 2008 sub-standard state once those in charge had, with seemingly undisguised relief, seen the back of her and her friends.

The fear that it all had been for nothing was still there as we drove to Leeds. But a word with some volunteers who had followed us to Nepal showed they hadn't, and that Carrie's late-night calls to England, lengthy sessions with various parties in Kathmandu and much heel-digging to secure a better life for the children had not been a waste of time.

Show me a volunteer who doesn't care if he or she makes a difference and you show me a meaningless globe-trotter.



But the Leeds gathering was not merely an old chums' reunion. There was a job to be done – or rather a mission to help possible volunteers take the plunge. While brown-kneed volunteers told of their experiences in South Africa, Indonesia and other places where **People and Places** caring tentacles reach, we did a promotional for our beloved Nepal – and I don't use the adjective 'beloved' want-only.

There was the young woman brimming with good ideas and worthwhile intentions, but who feared a Tibet-style invasion from the Chinese dragon. True, with the Maoists' ever-expanding influence, there was that possibility, I confessed. But surely it was bordering on arrogance to think China would pour in its masses just because she was in town.

What about the water, asked another? How safe was it? The stuff came from the Himalaya so it was not purified by the holy rocks of the Dales or through the auspices of Yorkshire Water, but no-one went out of their way to poison anyone. That was bad for international relations as well as for tourism, which is Nepal's staff of life. Shops on the corner sold untainted stuff in bottles and by the wagon-load.

Snakes? We never saw one.

Poisonous spiders? They didn't risk biting us.

Raging rhinos? A rare sight in the city.

Thieves taking visitors' possessions - or even their blood? The greatest threat would come from the children overwhelming the volunteers with their unconditional love, and stealing their hearts. (Here I speak from experience!)

Another woman seemed to go through her own three-part conversion. It was evident from the first she had much to offer, but initially declared that volunteering was not really her cup of tea. (Why the blazes was she there, thought I?) She sought me out later clutching some of the information material and asked more questions, her heart warming to the subject in hand. Then just before 'throwing out time', she was back again, all excited, the gleam of the zealot in her eye. She was hooked.

Kate, Sallie and the Professor must be congratulated for assembling such an excellent mix of people. If the event at Favershams a week earlier had been as enjoyable, then the exercise was doubly successful. For our part, in spite of the Leeds ring road, the football fans and the jaywalkers, Carrie and I were simply delighted to be invited to be part of it. Now how do I persuade everyone that Samata needs its grandfather again...

PS – One of the delightful 'by-products' of my month at Samata School is that I regularly receive e-mails from some of the children telling me of their own and their friends' progress. They are usually written in that abbreviated 'text speak' style, something that was new to this unrepentant Luddite.

But I am learning – thanks to their tuition. Talk about role reversal! **Peter Unsworth**

News

Welcome to new members of the team: In The Gambia, Mariama Bah has returned home after completing her BA, and is working with her parents Adama & Lisong, in Faces & Places our local partners.



and in India, Himali Singh Soin joins her parents Mandip and Anita to work in the Ibex team – our local partners.



Congratulations to Nima and Ang Tassi Lama in Kathmandu on the birth of a lovely new daughter – Chhimi Rinjen Lama Hyolmo – a little sister for big brother Tshering.

Welcome new partners in Nepal. Marcus Cotton, Hari Adhikari (Sanu) and the team at Tiger Mountain – read about the new project in Pokhara Nepal here...

<http://www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/ProjectView.aspx?id=211>

people and places finally takes on the irresponsible GAP volunteer placements. Take a look at <http://www.travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/userfiles/RT%20awards%20GAP%20.pdf> to read all about our latest campaign! And our GAP projects for the alternatives we offer!



Can we hope that there is going to be a new approach to education in South Africa.....

<http://blogs.theherald.co.za/schoolsofshame/>

Zuma promises to address AIDs problem....

http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/health_and_hiv_aids/aids_zuma_committed_to_making_change_happen.html

....and snippets....

From Volunteers in Kathmandu – a trip to the local pharmacy provided interest and relief for the sore throats: 'We'd never have found it by ourselves as it was tucked away down a side alley with no proper sign – just a small notice if you knew where to look. The pharmacy was little more than a table, with some very rickety cupboards full of small drawers, but the pharmacist clearly knew his stuff and was able to provide me with strepsils and paracetamol.'

From Kate - It's a small world – an extraordinary co-incidence. When we introduced a couple of our Deogarh volunteers to each other, Dianne wrote to tell us that she and Bob have both previously worked in the same Dorset school, and that Dianne used his A Level history text books for years. They have friends and acquaintances in common – the British education network has already produced top flight volunteers for Chitardai school ... I wonder who will be next ...

From Kate - Winning the award has had interesting repercussions already – I've had dozens of cold calls from advertising companies, "the most recent was offering **people and places** advertising at major sports venues on those circulating hoardings at field level ... needless to say I turned down their generous offer for two reasons:

- Every time I go to watch the rugby, I find this particular form of advertising distracting and annoying,
- We've no budget for advertising – I told them that c£350 could build a pre-school in South Africa, so unless they could offer me a REAL deal at about tuppence-halfpenny, we're not interested!"

Needless to say, **people and places** won't be wasting money on advertising ...

Kate and Sallie with volunteers Carrie and Peter at Leeds road show



And finally – here's to 2010 everyone – thanks to all of you who have supported us in 2009 through the joys and the challenges .

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