

# Travelling to GIVE

Would volunteering overseas appeal to you?



Left: Ursula in Nepali dress Above: Playtime at Naxal orphanage, Kathmandu

With winter upon us, the annual barrage of holiday brochures begins to land on our doormats and we dream about where our travels will take us next. This is the story of two Wiltshire women who found themselves thinking about different ways to travel – and how that travel led to their meeting for the first time in November at a volunteers' social in Chippenham, arranged by award-winning volunteer organisation people and places.

Ursula and Diana knew that they wanted a more meaningful experience and understanding of the people and places they could visit, and over time, they arrived at the same decision: to travel overseas and work with local people as volunteers.

Ursula, who loves singing and cooking, lives in Marlborough, is a retired nursing sister and registered play-group leader. She regularly volunteers with a local toddler group. Diana, who loves walking and painting, lives near Chippenham and is a retired teacher and youth worker. Both share a love of travel.

These two women, with different skills, each worked with volunteer organisation people and places to find the right volunteer experience. "We pride ourselves on putting the right people in the right

places, at the right time!" says Kate Stefanko, Placements Director at people and places.

Ursula travelled to Kathmandu in Nepal, where she stayed in a comfortable hotel and worked for four weeks in an orphanage, sharing her child-care skills and supporting the work of the local staff.

"This has been a very rewarding and thought-provoking experience, which I will remember with great fondness," says Ursula. "I have been reminded of how much we take for granted and how much we could learn from other cultures where people have so little. The children are so happy with so few material possessions that it makes me question whether we need quite so many to achieve contentment. My grateful thanks go to all who made this adventure possible."

Diana spent four weeks living with a local family and working in a rural

school in Nomathamsanqa, on the boundary of Addo Elephant Park in South Africa's Eastern Cape.

"It was an amazing experience to live in the township and see the strong community spirit and to get to know such amazing and well-respected people as my host family," says Diana. "I loved the idea that all the doors and windows were left open as opposed to the electric fencing and gates in nearby towns! The school is amazing! The children are so warm, friendly and well-behaved, and the staff made me feel so welcome."

These different journeys in very different corners of the world brought these two Wiltshire women together in November, when Ursula and Diana attended a social in Chippenham, organised by people and places.

"Our socials provide opportunities for volunteers to share their experiences," says Kate. "We'd love to meet more local people who may be thinking about volunteering overseas. Talking with our volunteers is a great way for them to learn about the joys and challenges of volunteering – whether with us or any other organisation!" ■

To find out more about **voluntary work overseas**, contact [kate@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk](mailto:kate@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk) or call 01795 535 718.



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