

During these difficult times please be assured *people and places* are doing all they can to support our projects, partners and volunteers, this newsletter is all about what we can all do to offer support.

Nigel Pegler

Our volunteers haven't let the pandemic stop them supporting our work - thank you

We have been very busy here at people and places developing ways we can continue to support the projects we work with and more importantly - how we help our volunteers contribute during the pandemic.



Our work is about putting the right people in the right places to support the programmes we work with - we match volunteers with skills and experience to previously agreed need. This is normally achieved by sending volunteers to work with the projects we work with around the world.

We haven't been able to do that for most of this year - and it's pretty sure we won't be able to do it, with a few exceptions, until next year.

BUT

We have been working hard with our local partners and past and new volunteers to find a way to support the programmes we work with even if none of us are able to travel. We are calling this initiative e-volunteering.



[Click here for an update of all the work that has been done to date](#)

[Follow our FaceBook page here](#) to get the latest news as it happens from volunteers and the local communities we work with.

In the next few days we will be launching a brand new site detailing our " e- volunteer" work and how you could help - and if you are an early joiner you can do this for FREE! We will send out a separate news alert as soon as the e-volunteer site is live. If you would like to learn more please email dianne@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

In the meantime we want to say thank you to all the volunteers who have helped so far.

For The Gambia

Joanne - for all her work with Lisong from Mary's Little Lambs Nursery to produce a training manual and associated training materials for the new Gambian ECD curriculum for [the early childhood education programme](#)

Yvonne, Ellie and Joanne have sent videos to the team at [Mary's Little Lambs](#).

For Morocco

Tina, Linda and Wendy for participating in regular video sessions with the house mothers from [the education programme we work with in Morocco](#) - these sessions are designed to help the house mothers improve their spoken English - a skill they need to support the girls in their English studies. They all made videos as well.

For Cambodia

Andy for working with Dara (head teacher) on teaching materials

Carole, Lynne, Zara, Janet and Yvonne for researching teaching and learning resources (we will be able to use these on other programmes too)

Kate for working with Michael (our local partner) on ideas for fund-raising which aren't dependent on tourism

Kate, Fiona, Paul and Lynne for sending videos

To learn more about how you can help from home [click here](#)

For Saint Lucia

Aisha for sending a video

For South Africa

Jacky for creating and sending a mindfulness video

Reading stories

Literacy and spoken English is a very important part of our work. All the education programmes we are working with remotely have asked us if volunteers could make videos where they are reading from a selected booklist - this will help teachers with correct pronunciation as well as encourage the children to read (if you would like to do this please contact dianne@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk)

Thanks to Peter, Aisha, Ben, Suzanne, Laura, Yvonne, Zara and Kate who are all in the process of recording their story reading

BUT where are the opportunities with the programme I worked with or hope to work with I hear you cry...well...we hope as time goes on to add other opportunities but the sad reality is that many of the programmes we work with just do not have the capacity to work remotely - many have other priorities - we promise we will let you know when and as other opportunities arise - and PLEASE let us know if you plan to work with your project and you haven't yet shared it with us - we can share and promote it and try to support you.

Finally - again we say thankyou - this may sound trite - but there is no other way of saying it - we are humbled by how many people are taking the time to support us in our work - we know that all of you face challenges of your own.

Stay safe and stay in touch

Sallie, Dianne and the people and places team

Volunteering remotely during lockdown – a new way to volunteer

As the coronavirus pandemic took hold everything changed - all around the world businesses, schools and individuals turned to online communication. Could we do the same for international volunteering?

As international travel ground to a halt and all the projects we support around the world were forced to close their doors, we began to think long and hard about whether and how we could continue to offer support to our local partners during the pandemic.

people and places volunteer support has always been based on skills-sharing not financial support and we wanted to work with those of our partners who could still make use of volunteers' skills, albeit in a very different way. So over the last three months we have started to develop the concept of **e-volunteering** with three of the countries where we work – Morocco, the Gambia and Cambodia. (We are working with other partners to develop this model for the future – it was not an appropriate model for all of them immediately – they were and still are busy supporting their local communities, sometimes in desperate situations due to the economic impact of the pandemic).

A number of volunteers were keen to help – some had previously volunteered and were eager to offer continuing support to their projects, others have volunteer placements planned but haven't yet been able to travel and are keen to start work in advance of their placement. We have matched their skills to project needs as we always do, and a number of initiatives are now under way.

At this stage we are still developing ideas so this is very much a work in progress – the e-volunteering opportunities we offer will be updated regularly as we and our local partners identify needs and ways in which our volunteers can offer remote support. If you would like to be involved or have any other ideas for developing remote volunteering we would love to hear from you – please contact us at dianne@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk.

What follows is an update on the e-volunteer work we are doing now.

Video-conferencing

Three people who had volunteered in 2019/2020 in Morocco at the girls' boarding houses run by our local partners Education for All, which provide the opportunity for girls from the High Atlas Mountains to access secondary school education, offered their on-going support for the project. The boarding houses are closed, as are schools in Morocco, until the start of the new school year in September – however one of the aims of this volunteer programme is to help the house-mothers improve their spoken English. So English conversation sessions are now taking place fortnightly on Zoom between the house-mothers and the three volunteers.

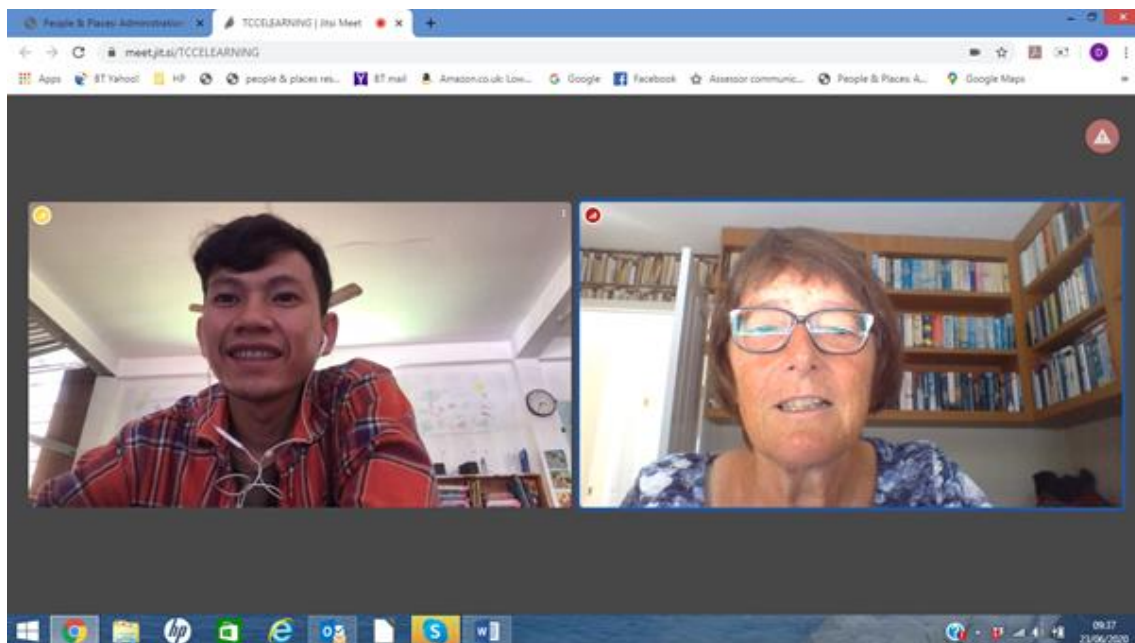
We hope these sessions can continue throughout the time while the houses are closed, and when they re-open in September we have plans to expand these sessions to include some of the older girls. To find out more about volunteering in Morocco follow this link [peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/353/e-volunteer---Education-Support-for-Girls-in-Morocco-\(EV\)](https://peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/353/e-volunteer---Education-Support-for-Girls-in-Morocco-(EV))



Similarly, regular online meetings are taking place between myself (Dianne) and Dara, the head-teacher of Treak Community Centre in Cambodia.

These were intended to be mentoring sessions to help Dara as he set up online teaching for his students, though in truth he helps me as much as I help him – he knows so much more about using video-conferencing platforms than I do! Dara has been appointed as head-teacher at Treak since I last visited Cambodia so we did not know each other well until we began our regular online meetings – however I would say we have built up just as good a working relationship online as we would have done if I had travelled to Cambodia and we shall continue to work together in this way until Treak is able to re-open at the end of the year. We have not yet followed through on Dara's suggestion that I teach one of his online classes but only because of the 6 hour time difference – I can't quite face the thought of teaching at 5.00 am! However **online teaching** may well be another category we add to our e-volunteering initiative in the future, particularly for countries in a closer time zone to our own!

To find out more about e-volunteering at Treak Community Centre follow this link [https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/352/e-volunteer---education-%26-community-support---Treak%2c-Cambodia-\(EV\)](https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/352/e-volunteer---education-%26-community-support---Treak%2c-Cambodia-(EV))

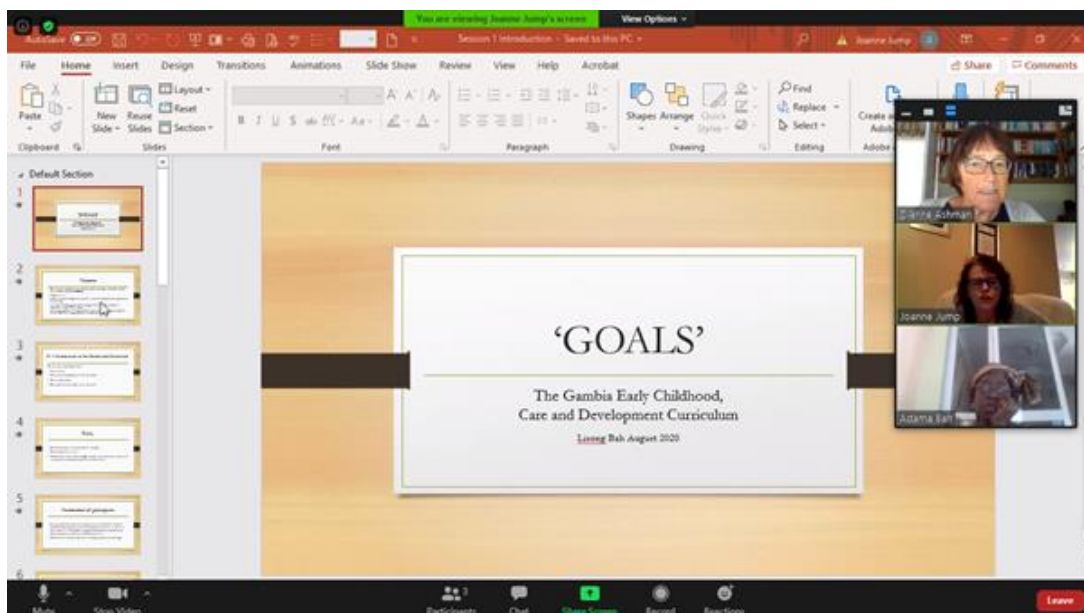


Working together to produce training materials

The Gambia has a new early years' curriculum due to be introduced at the start of the new school year in September and we had hoped to send a volunteer in July or August to help Lisong, Principal of Mary's Little Lambs Nursery, run the training sessions for MLL staff. That of course cannot now happen – however Lisong and a volunteer who did her placement at Mary's Little Lambs last year are working closely together to write a training manual and accompanying Powerpoint presentations. Weekly meetings take place online and emails go backwards and forwards between them most days sharing ideas, developing new sections of the training and providing feedback. The online sessions are enabling them to ask each other questions and discuss ideas, and also to share resources and go through the presentations together.

Although very slow Internet speeds and irregular power supplies in the Gambia have caused some problems in communication this has not stopped them! Their aim is that the training will be delivered in August as planned so that MLL staff and those from neighbouring schools will be fully trained when their schools are allowed to reopen in September – Lisong will then use the training materials to deliver further training sessions to teachers and trainers across the country. Lisong tells us that she enjoys the online sessions very much – she knows that we are on the same page with our plans as we can discuss ideas together. She is very happy that we have been able to plan something new even though we cannot meet, and she thanks us for helping her to get into the digital world!

To find out more about volunteering at Mary's Little Lambs follow this link
[https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/354/e-volunteer---early-childhood-development-and-teacher-training-in-The-Gambia-\(EV\)](https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/354/e-volunteer---early-childhood-development-and-teacher-training-in-The-Gambia-(EV))



Sharing online materials for teaching and learning

A number of volunteers have offered their help in researching resources which can be used by our local partners in any of the education projects we support. We sent them a list of topics relevant to the school curriculum in these countries – volunteers are sending in links to youtube videos and other online learning resources which can be shared with teachers and students at these schools. They are being used already by Dara at Treak for his online learning programme and sent out to students via their Facebook group but we shall also be able to offer these to the other schools we support when they re-open.

Creating online teaching materials and support materials

The idea of finding or making resources which projects can access online has a lot of scope for the future. We are in the early stages of an initiative involving quite a lot of volunteers making videos of themselves reading stories – these stories will be shared online and made available to schools and similar organisations we support, giving children and teachers access to many stories not easily accessible in their countries and enabling them to hear stories read in English by English speakers. Look out for more about this in future newsletters.

Developing practical activities

A new volunteer is planning a placement in Cambodia – he had hoped to be there now but instead is spending some time while furloughed from his job to do some work with the project prior to his placement which will now take place in 2021. His skills have been matched to their needs – he has experience of organising STEM activities for children to encourage an interest in science and technology; in Cambodia he will be organising similar activities to encourage an interest in these subjects which do not form part of their normal school curriculum. So, following online discussions on Zoom with the project leader in Cambodia and with a former volunteer who had done similar work, he is going to plan some designs for simple models which the children in Cambodia can build at home using local materials – they will photograph their models to send to him, and this will provide an alternative to their regular academic learning. This initiative is in its early days – hopefully we can publish pictures of the best models in our next newsletter! In the future there is lots of scope for other volunteers to set up similar projects in their own areas of interest – arts and crafts might be obvious examples.



Fund-raising

As the pandemic struck many of our partners launched fund-raising appeals – ranging from appeals to raise money for computers so that students could access online learning to appeals to raise money for food to feed the local community as supply chains dried up and places where food could normally be accessed were closed down. We at *people and places* contributed as individuals to all financial appeals by our local partners but decided early on not to put pressure on our volunteers to contribute money at a time when so many people in our own countries were also suffering financial hardship, although we know some individual volunteers have contributed to various appeals.

However we actively support initiatives to promote understanding of long-term fundraising strategies for the projects we support. One volunteer's background is in business – she volunteered in Cambodia in 2019. She offered her skills in business and fundraising, and as well as raising immediate funds she has been working alongside Michael, one of our local partners, to help develop alternative ideas for raising an income which do not rely on tourism. I know Michael is very grateful for her input. For many of the countries where we work tourism is an important source of income - matching them to volunteers with fund-raising experience is certainly something we shall explore further.

Business and marketing support

There is certainly scope for volunteers with experience of business and marketing to work digitally alongside people from any of the business projects we support. Just before the pandemic struck we were in the middle of creating a placement for a prospective volunteer who owns her own business. She had been matched to a project and still hopes to travel there in future – in the meantime she is using her skills in marketing to work with us at *people and places* (remotely of course as we have all been in lockdown) to promote our new e-volunteering initiative – and we are very grateful for her support!

So we have already found a number of ways to volunteer digitally and are enjoying the challenge this provides – thank you so much to all our e-volunteers! We anticipate that there will be even more opportunities in the coming months when the projects re-open but international travel remains difficult. E-volunteering has already provided a useful means for previous volunteers to continue to support their projects and for new volunteers to provide support before they go – we hope it will also be a way for people who do not want to travel to connect meaningfully with one of our projects and share their skills from home. Many people in all walks of life are saying they will continue with some of the digital meetings they have become used to in recent weeks – it seems there is scope for useful digital connections in international volunteering too! Keep your eye on our blog for further updates and do contact us if you would like to be involved – we would love to hear from you.

We have a volunteer in South Africa!

We are delighted to report that we have a volunteer currently on placement at Hazyview in South Africa. Having feared that we would be unable to place anyone at all during the pandemic and with no idea when long-haul international travel will start up again, we were delighted when Richard approached us to say that he was actually in South Africa and could we create a placement for him. As the Digital Learning Centres run by our partners Good Work Foundation were just starting to reopen and as Richard has appropriate skills to support them, we were delighted to set this up for him.

Richard says: "I'm really pleased to be here and to have the opportunity to contribute to this wonderful project! The lockdown has done me a favour!

I will be getting involved in as much as I can. So far I'm engaged with the Conservation Academy, Careers Guidance Team and creating some training material for the Living Dynamics professional skills platform. I'm looking forward to some real face to face time with the students. It's interesting!"



To learn more about volunteering on this project follow this link

[https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/323/business-development-support-for-young-adults-in-a-learning-centre-near-Kruger-Park-\(BA\)](https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/323/business-development-support-for-young-adults-in-a-learning-centre-near-Kruger-Park-(BA))



Keeping in touch by Video

Want to say hello the project you worked with or hope to work with someday soon? They would love to hear from you and give you their news

[Take a look here - many of our volunteers have already sent messages to the people they worked with or hope to work with](#)

News from our local partners – supporting their communities during the pandemic

Article written by Dianne

During the last few months we have been working closely with all our local partners as they have found ways to support their communities in these unprecedented times. Here is my update on the work they have been doing.

The Gambia

Our local partner in The Gambia, Adama Bah, has co-written an article to highlight the serious impact the coronavirus pandemic on tourism in Africa and what some countries are doing to combat it. You can read the full article here

<https://theconversation.com/african-tourism-has-been-put-on-ice-by-coronavirus-heres-how-some-countries-are-reviving-it-140508>

The article details how tourist guides in a key tourist destination in The Gambia, Janjanbureh, have been retrained and redeployed to act as coronavirus guides for their local community. *'Bringing their leadership skills into use, youth trained in community-based tourism and tour guiding have sprung into action as first responders to protect their communities and build resilience against further impacts to the vulnerable tourism industry. International Trade Centre in The Gambia engaged these young leaders from its community based tourism initiative and mobilized them with funding and resources to undertake an awareness campaign across the rural region of Janjanbureh, initiating the first critical step towards prevention.*

They are placing informational posters on the virus and safety guidelines at prominent places, campaigning across social media platforms and installing hand-washing stations in markets and across town, helping provide practical solutions to the lack of hygiene check-points in the area.

These efforts will go a long way in containing the infection and building resilience in beautiful Janjanbureh.'



To find out more about volunteering in The Gambia follow this link

[https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/192/building-livelihoods-in-The-Gambia-\(BA\)](https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/192/building-livelihoods-in-The-Gambia-(BA))

Madagascar

Our partners in Madagascar, SEED Madagascar, have set up a number of initiatives to support their local community. You can read their full response [here](#):

Some of their recent posts on Facebook and on their blog tell us:

Our current projects immediately adapted with staff providing COVID 19 information sessions and masks before meetings. Most notably SEEDs Rural CLTS work funded through UNICEF gave messages on handwashing to 7,742 people and taught 7,183 people how to build a simple household handwashing station.

Radio messages in national and Anosy dialects on handwashing, social distancing, avoiding touching your face, coughing, and COVID-19 symptoms were developed and broadcast 160 times. 175 posters in accessible graphics and local language, covering preventative measures, were distributed to churches, schools, water points, and other key community hubs. SEED also ran a Malagasy-language social media campaign, publishing clear and concise public health messages, for example on preventative measures, COVID-19 symptoms and correct mask usage. SEED also provided a total of 33 handwashing stations to the rural communities of Sainte Luce and Mahatalaky, and in Fort Dauphin.

The coronavirus pandemic has made going to school difficult for many children and young people around the world. At SEED we are doing everything we can to ensure that pupils in Madagascar have a safe learning environment in which to receive and complete their education. At Ranomafana High School, this commitment began long before the pandemic, when SEED undertook its largest construction project to date. The new school, which is the only upper secondary school in an 80km radius - has three classrooms, administrative offices, toilets and a water supply. Last month, the SEED team distributed 97 face masks to pupils and teachers so that they can safely go to lessons before this year's final exams.

Madagascar reinstated lock down in Antananarivo after 216 people tested positive across the country in early July. Whilst this has temporarily closed SEED's Tana office, teams across Anosy continue talking with people about COVID prevention. Over the past few months 9,365 people have attended these information sessions, 252 radio broadcasts have been made and 7,412 masks have been distributed. It will never feel enough, but we hope that this helps families across Anosy prepare for COVID.

A recent initiative is 'Masks for Madagascar'. This is a mask exchange programme – participants buy a mask for £5 and this funds 5 masks for distribution in Madagascar. In its first three weeks more than £950 was raised through this initiative – this income stream funds masks made by Stitch Ste Luce and distributed in the village of Ste Luce, as well as schools, clinics and Government workers in the 9 village clusters and in support of SEEDs rural work. If you would like to buy a mask to support SEED's work in Madagascar follow [this link](#)



To find out more about volunteering in Madagascar follow this link [https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/183/conservation-research-programme-in-Madagascar-\(Con\)](https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/183/conservation-research-programme-in-Madagascar-(Con))

Eswatini (Swaziland)

In Eswatini efforts have been mainly focused on food distribution. The Neighbourhood Care Points supported by our volunteer programme provide two meals a day for the children who attend, and without this source of food families are struggling. In addition COVID-19 has devastated economies in Africa leaving many jobless & hungry - many vulnerable people lost their livelihoods as tourism crashed & their future is bleak. All Out Africa (our local partner) has been sourcing and delivering food parcels, sanitizer & poverty relief stipends to vulnerable families most impacted.



The Sports Development Coordinator has also been holding fitness sessions to make sure children are as fit as possible and are aware of how to keep themselves safe from the virus.



To find out more about volunteering in Eswatini follow this link
[https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/316/childcare-support-in-Swaziland-\(CDS\)](https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/316/childcare-support-in-Swaziland-(CDS))

Morocco

For our partners in Morocco, Education For All, the priority was to make sure the girls from their boarding houses could continue their education. Although the schools closed in March and the girls were sent home to their villages, the Baccalaureate exams were to take place as scheduled in July. Whilst many students from cities such as Rabat and Casablanca were able to continue their studies at home online, for most of the girls at EFA, remote learning was impossible – most of them either did not have a device or could not afford the internet data charges needed to access the vital lessons and resources available online. The lockdown very much highlighted the huge digital divide faced by girls living in remote, rural areas.

For EFA, it is essential that young people do not miss out on education, whether due to geography, poverty, or pandemics. The girls have already overcome incredible obstacles to get the chance to continue their high school studies, and they did not want to let all their hard work go to waste so close to the end of their studies. So a fundraising campaign was launched to buy and distribute tablets and SIM cards with internet data to the girls due to sit their high school leaving exams this summer.

June 3 marked the delivery of the first tablets to the girls. It was not easy to purchase or deliver these during the ongoing lockdown, but EFA was able to purchase and get the authorization to deliver them.



The smiles on the girls' faces says it all! They received the tablets just a few weeks before their final Baccalaureate exams and had been working as hard as they could in their remote villages, but were so worried about the work they had missed and are delighted that they can now catch up with the online lessons and resources provided by the Moroccan government.



Jamila is one of EFA's final year students. A few days after she received her tablet she made this video on her new tablet – a touching expression of what this device means to her, and also what her access to technology has the power to convey. To watch her video [click here](#)

To find out more about volunteering in Morocco follow this link
[https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/257/Education-Support-for-Girls-in-Morocco-\(ED\)](https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/257/Education-Support-for-Girls-in-Morocco-(ED))

Cambodia

Ever since the lockdown started in March the team at Treak Community Centre have continued to provide education for their students. They continue to distribute work-sheets and other learning materials, including pencils, crayons and paper, twice a week - about 60% of students call in to collect the work which shows how eager they are to learn and parents and community leaders have told Dara (the head-teacher) how much they value the help that Treak Community Centre provides.



In the last two months, in addition to distributing the very popular work books and activity sheets each Monday and Tuesday, Dara and his team have worked hard to develop and deliver online learning sessions for the students. Work is coordinated through messages sent out on Facebook Messenger, links are sent to carefully selected videos and other learning materials available online such as youtube videos, and three times a week students log on for an online lesson using the video-conferencing platform Jitsi Meet. Setting up an online teaching programme in a country with comparatively poor Internet access has been a challenge, but Dara and his team have met the challenge with commitment and resourcefulness. Online staff meetings every Friday enable Dara to provide staff training and any challenges can quickly be addressed. He has also provided training for teachers from other educational institutions in Cambodia – as schools will not now reopen until the end of the year there is a growing awareness of the need to provide a variety of learning methods for students.



The development of the new garden at Treak had to be put on hold to conserve funds, so Salin has been busy growing fruit and vegetables in her own garden and then collecting and drying seeds. These were distributed to 30 families in Treak village so they too can grow their own food – they proved so popular that Salin had to buy some extra from the market! The seed types include eggplant, wing bean, long bean, gourd and bitter gourd, morning glory, lettuce, chilli, plus various flowers including sunflower. Seeds are relatively expensive in Cambodia and, once the school reopens, Salin will run demonstration sessions on how to save seeds and propagate plants and seedlings as she is very concerned that traditional skills are being lost.



Salin has also been working with Ra, the sewing teacher, to design and produce clothes patterns for students to use once the vocational training sessions can resume. They have also been thinking about new items that could be sold as souvenirs.

To find out more about volunteering in Cambodia follow this link

[https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/278/children-belong-in-families---community-support-in-Treak%2c-Cambodia-\(CW\)](https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/278/children-belong-in-families---community-support-in-Treak%2c-Cambodia-(CW))

South Africa

Updates from our partners Good Work Foundation at Hazyview:

Once we realised the lockdown was going to continue for a while, it was time to get innovative:

How can we move our Careers Academy courses online?

We quickly began to do lectures and conversations using WhatsApp, with our GWF team quickly adapting to a new way of connecting with their students.

We also managed to get workbooks to all the students so they were keeping up with their courses.

In rural South Africa, not everyone has a Smart Device, and data availability can be an issue. So we decided to deploy some of our new Open Learning (children program) Tablets to our adult students, and with one of our partners, The Click Foundation, we organised unlimited data for each student.

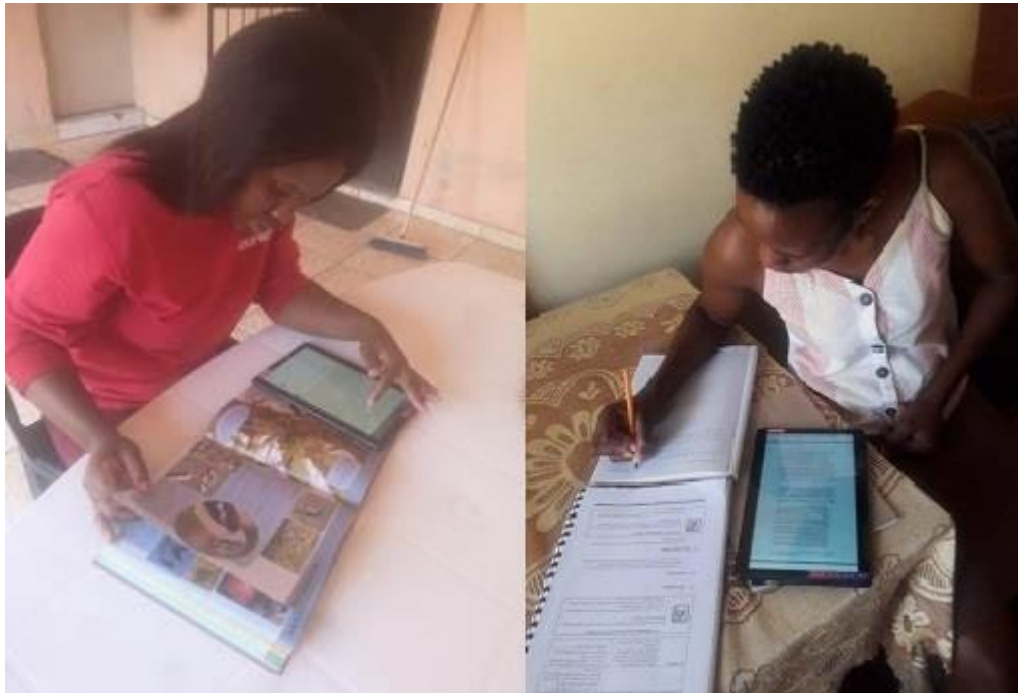


With devices and data in place, we continued to evolve our standard contact courses into a more online format. This has meant a lot of trial and error as well as adaptation from our team.

It is not perfect yet, but we continue to improve it!

We have now moved to lockdown level 3 in South Africa, and so are able to open up the campuses to a limited extent: one third of students can be on campus at any time, less than 50 together. The adult students are now blending contact sessions with online connections.

It has been an interesting time, but we have learnt a lot in the process. We hope to continue with some of the changes we have made after we open up again more fully.



Our School program have not yet been able to open up, however we hope to be deploying our facilitators to support learners as they return to the local schools. We will be using the time to really evaluate, change, train and be ready to implement our open learning program when we are able to move children around again.

To find out more about volunteering in South Africa follow this link
[https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/322/education-support-for-children-%26-young-adults-in-a-learning-centre-near-Kruger-Park-\(ED\)](https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/projects/322/education-support-for-children-%26-young-adults-in-a-learning-centre-near-Kruger-Park-(ED))

Penguin Random House partners with people and places

We are so pleased to announce that we are working closely with Transworld - a division of Penguin Random House - what a perfect match - literacy is a priority in just about every programme we work with and now we are working with the best! This programme has been created in memory of Sophie Christopher.... Sophie's passions reflected her belief in the power of literacy and literature to change lives. Good luck Zara with your work with our partners in Cambodia.



Sophie

SOPHIE CHRISTOPHER VOLUNTEER AWARD

Transworld has announced that Zara Sekhavati, travel editor at Rough Guides, Berlitz Guides and Insight Guides (APA Publications) is the first recipient of The Sophie Christopher Volunteer Award. Earlier this year, Transworld announced that it was setting up the award, a sponsored volunteering scheme to honour the memory of the company's former Senior Publicity Manager, who died of a pulmonary embolism at the age of 28 in June 2019. In addition to her outstanding work as a publicist, Sophie made it her mission to improve the lives of others, from co-founding The FLIP, an interview series showcasing exceptional women working in the publishing industry, through to her work with Beyond the Streets, a UK charity working to end sexual exploitation. Sophie's passions reflected her belief in the power of literacy and literature to change lives. It was with those interests in mind, along with her love of travel, that Penguin Random House decided to partner with the award-winning responsible volunteering organisation [people and places](#) to sponsor a two-week programme – open to anyone working in publishing and bookselling – in support of the work of the [Treak Community Centre](#) close to Siem Reap in Cambodia. The Centre is committed to creating opportunity, not dependency, and provides free, non-formal education and training that supplements and complements the Cambodian state system, offering a nursery, school, library, computer classes and a wide range of skills training. The aim is to help the local people learn new skills and increase their confidence so that they are better equipped to take control of their futures. Penguin Random House wants to build and develop a sustainable relationship with the community and plans to sponsor an annual placement to offer consistency and continuity. The entries were assessed by a team from Penguin Random House, Sophie's family and friends, leaders from the Treak Community Centre and author and broadcaster Simon Mayo who worked closely with Sophie. Larry Finlay, Transworld MD said 'We were all so impressed by the applications we received, every one of which was humbling, thoughtful and accomplished. I wish we could send everyone who applied. I warmly congratulate Zara on being the recipient of this inaugural award in honour of our greatly-missed friend and colleague, Sophie Christopher.' The leaders from the Treak Community Centre said 'Zara stood out from our first reading of her application form. Her passion for women's rights resonates with us here in Cambodia, as do her interests in education and children, her CELTA qualification, her technical knowledge of teaching English as a foreign language and her appreciation that learning is much more effective if it is enjoyable. 'All of these indicate that Zara will be able to help, not only the children who attend Treak Community Centre, but that she will also be able to work with our Cambodian teachers to develop their skills and thus leave something tangible behind after she leaves.' Zara Sekhavati says 'I'm elated to have been selected for the first Sophie Christopher Volunteer Award. Thank you again to everyone involved and to Sophie's family and friends. I'm delighted to be part of such an important cause in honour of such an incredible woman.'

Fundraising - we won't ask for money but we will promote your initiative



From the beginning of the pandemic - we, at people and places, made the difficult decision that we would not ask our volunteers and friends for donations. We made this decision because we are aware funds are tight for nearly everyone - our concentration is on

[how to share our skills remotely](#)

BUT

We are hearing from many volunteers that they want to help financially, the projects they care about.

So we have decided that we will promote individual volunteer-led fundraising initiatives

[Here is an example](#) of a volunteer initiative for our partners in Cambodia

So if you have an initiative you would like us to promote - please email

sallie@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk and we will do what we can to promote it



Covid-19 advice from The Gambia (updated post advice on social distancing)

there are loads of new video interviews and stories from volunteers and projects

If you haven't already spotted our [YouTube channel](#) it's worth a look.

If you have videos of your time volunteering or one of the talks you have done – we know many of you talk to groups on your return from volunteering – please send them to us so we can share them.

Many of you will be aware that there have been important changes to the data protection act recently - we at people and places welcome them - we have already emailed you about this but please take a look at our policy here

<https://travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk/privacy.aspx?category=14#.WyfOcdR95pg>

[Take a look here at slideshare for slide shows from volunteers](#) – if you have a slide show to share please do send it to us thanks so much to all the volunteers who have contributed to date.

Remember we are on facebook too – [follow us here](#) – [in the blog](#) and on facebook are where we tend to post our latest news.

So there's lots of info out there from us – please follow us where ever you choose. Remember if you want notifications when a new story is posted on the blog you will need to register up in the top left hand corner.



meet the people and places team [here](#)

If you have any comments on this newsletter or anything you could add to the next one please email me at

newsletter@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk