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Celebrate The Power Of Volunteering Worldwide With BUNAC

On the eve of Volunteers' Week (1-7 June), specialist work abroad organisation, BUNAC is celebrating the positive impact its volunteers are making around the world. Teaching in India, repairing schools in Nepal, sports coaching in South Africa and coastal conservation work in Thailand are just some of the projects providing long-term benefits to the communities in which they are being undertaken.

These low-cost, ethical and often life-changing opportunities, lasting from one week to six months, are available to students, graduates and anyone planning a gap year or career break, who wants to do something worthwhile whilst travelling.

Comments BUNAC spokesperson Emma Beynon: "A typical volunteer will be someone who is proactive and flexible, prepared to throw themselves into their chosen project, and who really wants to make a positive difference."

She continues: "Volunteers return to the UK feeling rewarded and enriched by the experience of contributing much-needed skills and manpower, while the overseas communities benefit from very real, lasting improvements in the quality of their lives. It really is a win-win situation. "

BUNAC currently has availability on a wide range of volunteer programmes throughout Africa, Asia, Australasia and South America, including the successful projects detailed below. Here are some recent achievements:

VOLUNTEER NEPAL: In addition to many teaching and nurturing roles in schools and children's homes, such as teaching English, running arts, crafts and sports clubs, educating on hygiene and nutrition and offering homework support and pastoral care, there are a number of construction projects available to volunteers in Nepal. In the past year, these have included building a tank at a school to provide clean water for more than 400 children; constructing two greenhouses made from over 3000 recycled plastic water bottles, rebuilding a wall around a temple and adding a kitchen at a village community centre. In addition, volunteers have repainted two schools, repaired every chair and table in a school and started work on a new home for street children.

VOLUNTEER KRUGER NATIONAL PARK: The Kruger National Park has experienced one of the driest years for a century, making the work of volunteers all the more important. Camera trapping and predator monitoring projects have seen the addition of 20 new cameras in the past year (eight of which

were eaten by hyenas!), which has made it possible for volunteers to process over 30,000 images and witness activity that is rarely seen by humans. For example, Caracal, only seen previously by individuals who had stayed on the reserve for a number of years, are now spotted regularly on camera. Other highlights have included more frequent sightings of wild dogs, a number of new bird species visiting the area, plus two new leopards being positively identified, along with another litter of cubs fathered by resident big male, Matimba. While rhino poaching remains a constant threat, due to the dedication of many individuals, including volunteers, not one single rhino was lost to poaching in the Park during the past year.

VOLUNTEER THAILAND COASTAL CONSERVATION: Volunteers have been helping to protect green turtles at the Sea Turtle Conservation Centre at Phang Nga naval base, where they assist with feeding, cleaning and maintaining turtle enclosures, as well as conducting behaviour enrichment studies and participating in data collection. More than 100 hours of cleaning, and 40 hours of monitoring and collecting data have been undertaken in order to better understand the health and body condition of the turtles, over 300 of which having been cleaned and treated. In addition, in the Khao Lak and Ban Nam Khem coastal region, around 350kg of rubbish has been collected from trails and beaches, covering an area measuring more than 35km.

SPORTS COACHING SOUTH AFRICA: Adventurous, self-motivated volunteers aged 18 years or over, who enjoy playing or coaching sports, will receive a warm welcome in the primary schools of Port Elizabeth's deprived Nelson Mandela Bay area. To date almost 40,000 disadvantaged children from more than 100 schools have been given sports and life coaching, completing an 18-hour curriculum, with the majority reporting that they felt more positive about life, and performing better in fitness tests.

Programme costs start from £525 per person for transfers, accommodation, meals and support whilst overseas.

If you are inspired to step out of your comfort zone to help others in need, visit www.bunac.org/uk/volunteer-abroad for more details about volunteering or speak with a member of the BUNAC team, tel 0333 999 7516.

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Note to Editors: BUNAC has been organising life-changing working adventures worldwide since 1962. Current programmes include working holidays of up to two years in Australia, Canada and New Zealand; summer jobs in the States on Summer Camp USA or Work America; teaching and professional



internships in Asia, Australasia, Canada and the USA, plus myriad volunteer opportunities and expeditions in Africa, Asia, Australasia and South America.

Media: Visit the website at www.bunac.org/uk

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