



## **What to do before / after an overseas or volunteering experience:**

I am a long-term volunteer and worker in overseas development. I always find the hardest, least recognised and yet often most rewarding part of the journey, is returning to the home country after an overseas experience. This is why I created [Teaspoons of Change](#) - personal choices, decisions and actions that have a positive impact on people and the planet creating positive change.

The power and benefits of the overseas journey can, and should, continue beyond the in-country experience. I believe people can make the same, if not more impact for poverty alleviation upon return to their home country, including using the Teaspoons of Change concept.

After returning from a volunteer position in Ethiopia in 2008 I rode my bike 4000km around New Zealand sharing what I had learnt from my experience and promoting effective volunteering. The bike ride led to working with the Global Poverty Project and leading a program to deliver presentations about learning more, and taking action, to end extreme poverty. Today, I still spend half my time working with people in developing countries and the other half engaging people in developed countries on advocacy, education and action for global justice.

I have learnt my role, actions and participation in my own community and country are just as significant, powerful and effective as any time I have spent working with local people volunteering. I live by the rule of acting locally, impacting globally...

## **Actions after returning overseas will:**

- Utilise your experiences and learning once back from volunteering / overseas experiences
- Offer opportunities to share your experiences and learning
  - This will benefit the place and people you recently left and give you purpose and meaning to your experience in the context of your home country/culture
- Educate, inspire, advocate and activate others to take action and alleviate poverty
- Set a precedent and good practice of how to encourage effective overseas experiences

## **Benefits for returning person / volunteer and your home community:**

- Utilise your life-changing experiences and learning from your experience
- Allow you to share your experiences in a meaningful way with personal satisfaction
- Give you the opportunity to continue the projects, programs and initiatives from where you have come from with your local community
- Help you with the difficult process and challenges of reintegrating with your own culture again
- Ensure you reflect, flesh-out, summarise and communicate the essence of your time and learning from your overseas experience
- A great way to overcome the frustrations of your home country and people not changing with you!
- Satisfaction doing meaningful work with the experiences and learning received while abroad
- Local communities will benefit from your recent first-hand experiences and gain valuable insights and inspirations to be a part of the movement to alleviate poverty around the world

**On the next page are 25 suggestions of ideas, contributions and initiatives for people returning from overseas experiences and volunteering...**

Enjoy and share! Cheers, d'Arcy - Teaspoons of Change <http://teaspoonsofchange.org>



## 25 Ways to contribute after an overseas experience in your community!

1. **Present your experience** to anyone, even if it is 10 slides
  - This will force you to consolidate your top reflections / lessons learnt from the experience, then put it into an accessible format and make it relevant to an audience
2. **Presentations** - find other presentations and share them with others, you can use the [Teaspoons of Change presentation](#) on global citizenship if you like!
3. **Make an interactive online forum**, resource, blog, website, prezi
4. **Create an event** or day dedicated to the culture, community or organisation you have come from
5. **Intern upon return** with local NGOs making contributions related to your recent experience – huge benefits to the volunteer and local org
6. **Volunteer with community** organisations and groups
  - Church, school, not-for-profits, corporations, workplaces, universities, Lions, Rotary, or similar, local council, library, scouts,
7. **Join poverty alleviation orgs** such as [RESULTS](#), [Global Citizen](#), [Australian Aid](#), many others
8. **Survey people** about a topic or the country where you volunteered – collate the data and submit it to a university, org or campaign
9. **Create a report** on your experience and share it, it could be useful to a relevant org or university or in particular other volunteers – past / present / future
10. **Make a resource book**, pamphlet, other to support the org or country where you have come from
11. **Educate and advocate** for effective volunteering as a concept and action - share the great effective volunteering resource Learning Service - <http://learningservice.info/>
12. **Promote organised volunteering** like VSO (UK), Peace Corps (US), AVI (Australia), VSA (New Zealand) and increase community understanding of volunteering
13. **Take language course/sessions/workshop** or tutoring
14. **Campaign** - your own campaign idea or join a current or upcoming campaign that engages your passions and interests. There are many out there - Campaign for Australian Aid, Oxfam, etc.
15. **Fundraise** for the country, org or a program you have come from - huge advantage here as you have direct connections and can create direct support & relationships
16. **Dinner party** – featuring the food that was your staple while away
17. **Quiz night** – based on the country where you had your experience
18. **Friday Funday** – featuring games, activities, information, etc from the country you were in
19. **Walk and talk** – visit a place locally that has significance to the country you have been in, e.g. restaurant, street, monument, migrant centre, embassy, etc. meet and talk about your insights
20. **Shopping trip** or a day based on the country you volunteered in – similar to walk and talk
  - Adaptation of this in on a topic you are passionate about – fairtrade, art, etc.
21. **Gardening or workshop** of plants from the volunteer country or start a 'Fiji Garden'
22. **Media** – write an article, editorial, press release, similar about your experience and the country you were in – you have a good chance to be published in your local newspaper
23. **Social media** – start a group, write a blog, tweet for a week, other...
24. **Write or try to meet your local MP** and tell them the issues you think are important for your electorate and for them to possibly bring up in parliament – increase Australian Aid, etc...
25. **TRIPS!** Personal walk, bike, run, van, other... from 2 days, 2 weeks to 2 months – meet people share your passions and insights from your experience and enjoy it!

Many more! add your own and share <https://www.facebook.com/teaspoonsofchange/>!