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!