



Press release

October 2008

Make Redundancy a Benefit in Tough Times

As the economic situation worsens and people find themselves out of work, short term volunteering abroad is becoming an increasingly popular way to reassess long term aims and objectives, while also contributing worthwhile skills to local communities in developing countries.

Perhaps less commonly known are the professional benefits that a spell abroad can bring. Obtaining a better understanding of people and cultures can be of enormous value in our increasingly inter-dependent world and equally valuable is the opportunity to challenge yourself in new ways. Teaching English to children in the Himalayas or helping to run a computer centre in the Maasai region of Tanzania, can reawaken the creative senses after years of sitting in offices back home, and for many, it's an opportunity to give something back.

The chance to feel both useful and valued by local communities in some of the world's poorer countries is a powerful antidote to the depression and demoralisation that redundancy can bring. Anthony Lunch, founder of international development specialist MondoChallenge, has seen the effect that over 600 career break and early retired volunteers have had over the past seven years:

'Simply by improving the standard of English of children and adults in the programmes we run across India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, helping autistic children, or providing business advice to beekeepers in The Gambia, volunteers almost always achieve far more than they believed possible at the outset and many see it as one of the most valuable experiences of their lives.'

MondoChallenge programmes start from one month and can extend to six or more. Skills of all kinds are valuable and no special training is required but enthusiasm and commitment are essential. To find out more, call Ben Szreider on 01635 39142 or visit the web site, www.mondochallenge.org.

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Editors Notes:

Recent reports and research suggest that globally, a million people take a gap year or career break every year, with the UK making up half of this growing market.

Valued at around £2.5 billion* the UK market for gap travel is estimated to account for 10% of the long haul travel market and is considered one of the fastest growth segments of the market.

MondoChallenge was established in 2001 by Anthony Lunch in order to carry on the development work he started during a stint with VSO.

MondoChallenge is now part of the FutureSense group that specialises in offering programmes for people taking time out from their studies or work. The group operates across 9 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe and works with over a 100 partners and local communities abroad, focusing on education, business development and medical programmes, with flexible timescales from a few weeks to six months or more.

The average age of participants on the MondoChallenge programme is 42 years.

*Intel report 2005

www.mondochallenge.org