

Personal Development Case Study



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**VSO - ICS (Volunteer Service Overseas
- International Citizen Service)**

Cycle One

**Machakos, Kenya
Terry Child Support and Youth
Resource Centre**

Learning

There is a lot that I have learned in my ten weeks in Machakos. Being part of the first cycle in this area of Kenya I was not sure what to expect and so was unsure as to how to prepare myself. Before the program I was much more focused on my needs and if I were to do something what would I get out of it. I don't think that is necessarily a bad thing but it does show a lack of perspective I think I have now gained.

Something I have learned a lot about since I got out here is the art of patience. Coming from the UK and London especially I am used to everything happening quickly and on time. Kenyan Time as it has come to be called, is the opposite to that. It's not that things don't get done it's just that people are far more relaxed about when it's done. If you organise a meeting for 10 it's not unusual for nothing to happen until 2 at the earliest. Shifting my whole attitude towards timing was difficult

at the start but I have definitely learned to be more patient and not get agitated that nothing is happening.



I have always been a team player and enjoyed being part of a group which means I understand how difficult it can be to get a large team of people working together on the same wave length. Despite all this I have previously been someone reluctant to compromise and have a bad tendency to think that my idea is best. This trip has definitely taught me the benefit of listening to the group and allowing ideas to be thrown around rather than just trying to push mine through. I have also learned the value of communication especially when working in a group with a cross cultural link where things are much more likely to be lost in translation.

This trip and the whole VSO - ICS program has shown me a lot about myself. By testing my tolerance at times it has shown me that I can achieve so much more by reasoned conversation than by arguments. By thrusting me into a group of people I have never met and making me work and live together it has increased my confidence in myself and my ability to adapt to situations as they are given to me,

Change

It's cliché but this trip has shown me I should be thankful for what I have and to not pre judge situations or people. It's a valuable skill to be able to take forward to my next trips.

My Story

One of the moments that really sticks in my mind is our first family visit to Peoples Park. We were only about a week into our time with the host family and the Sunday evening after dinner all five of us piled into the car for our first evening out as a family. I think it was right at the point when we were sitting on the stage in the amphitheatre just Peter, Tatch and I singing Disney songs at the top of our voices at 10 at night that it finally really hit me that I was in Kenya that all of this was real and these people that I already got along with so well we're going to be my family for the next three months.

