



DO GOOD, BETTER

PARENT INFO PACK

# PARENT INFO PACK

For caregivers & guardians  
of young people





You're in  
**safe hands**





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# Safety, support and security





# Global leaders in safety

We won't sugarcoat it – travelling abroad is usually a complex process that carries an element of risk. But this is exactly why we're passionate about providing extensive support throughout the process as well as the highest safety standards during the in-country phase. We believe that travelling abroad should not only be impactful, but also an enjoyable experience that carries as little risk as possible.

This is exactly how we've been able to maintain our reputation as one of the most highly respected organisations in the sector over the past two decades through our ability to keep young people safe in remote and challenging environments.





# Support

## Pre-departure

### Complete an application

The first step in any participant's GVI journey is to complete an application. This form is used to assess a participant's interests so that we can find out how best to help them learn and make an impact abroad.

### Speak to an enrolment manager

Once we've received a participant's application, one of our enrolment managers gets in touch to find out more. Their role is to learn more about the participant's current knowledge and skills so that we can make sure the program they have selected is a good match.

### Join a program

The first step in any participant's GVI journey is to complete an application. This form is used to assess a participant's interests so that we can find out how best to help them learn and make an impact abroad.

### Meet your personal support coordinator

All participants who have secured their place are introduced to a personal support coordinator who oversees the pre-departure journey. They are there to guide participants through administrative tasks and answer any questions.

### Prepare for the trip

The support coordinator will send comprehensive orientation materials and guides, and give access to online orientation. Participants are required to read through these guides, in addition to packing, booking flights, arranging a visa, and checking in with a doctor about required vaccinations.

## Arrival

### Flights\*

We advise that under-18 participants should take advantage of their chosen airline's minor program. This involves an assigned chaperone travelling with the minor all the way to their destination.

\*Not included in program cost.

### In-country airport pick up

Participants will be met at the airport by a trained and vetted GVI staff member. From there they will be transported to their accommodation. All transport providers are audited to ensure they meet our safety standards.

### Welcome to your location

After settling into their new accommodation, all participants are required to complete health and safety training and attend a local orientation presentation. The training sets the expectation for the volunteer experience, guides the participants on safety and wellbeing, and creates awareness of the cultural context of the region.





# On program

## Project training

Before starting project work, participants are required to complete project training. This involves a course of presentations that prepare the participants to work safely and responsibly. GVI staff provide ongoing support throughout the project work phase.

## Project work

Once training is complete, participants engage in work that makes an impact. On all GVI projects, participants contribute to long-term local and global sustainable development efforts.

## Reflection sessions

Throughout their program participants will be asked to reflect on the issues they've engaged with during their service. Their final opportunity to discuss their experiences will be during the leaving presentation.

## Wellness training

Participants receive training that provides them with strategies to help manage any anxiety or stress about being in a new environment or situation, or around new people. They are offered any additional support they might need beyond this training.

## Leaving presentation

Participants will celebrate their achievements as part of the GVI leaving presentation. It's an opportunity to reflect on highlights from the program. This presentation also provides information on how to stay connected with GVI after the program, including our alumni and ambassador programs.

## Airport drop off

Upon completion of the project, GVI staff will transport participants from their accommodation to the airport. Staff will ensure participants arrive in time to check in, prepare for and board their flight.





# Safety protocols

## Our staff

### All in-country field staff are our own

The staff employed at all of our locations are our own. Each staff member is recruited, vetted and trained by GVI. In many cases, they are GVI alumni whose dedication, enthusiasm and skill particularly impressed us. We ensure GVI staff are well-trained to lead high-quality programs where participants feel safe and supported.

### All GVI staff have been background checked

All of our staff members, including office staff, have undergone a police background check. All participants must also undergo a police background check before joining a program. This includes our under-18 participants. If under 18s cannot access a background check, they must provide two professional references. For those under 18s who join one of our groups programs, background checks will be confirmed via the school – you don't need to worry about providing any additional documentation.

### All GVI field staff have completed child protection training

All GVI staff complete child protection training and agree to follow our best practice guidelines at all times. Standards are clearly outlined as part of our child protection policy and are part of training for all staff and participants. GVI has a child protection officer on the ground at each of our locations who manages a strict reporting process through which all issues or concerns are addressed.

### All GVI field staff are emergency first response certified

Each and every one of our in-country field staff is emergency first response (EFR) certified. Many are also certified EFR instructors. A fully stocked EFR medical kit is available on each base and all staff carry an emergency kit on them whenever they are working with participants. Each base has 24/7 access to a medical facility in case of an emergency.

### All GVI field staff have undergone off-site safety training

All staff complete safety management training to ensure they meet internationally accepted safety practices. Training ensures staff can respond confidently to an incident and that they can effectively manage risk. Health and safety is our priority at all times.

### Child and vulnerable adult protection

Our Child Protection Officers are trained up to Level 3 by ChildSafe, a global organisation that helps create awareness around proper child protection processes and appropriate responses to unsafe practices.

### We have a high staff to participant ratio

Our staff to participant ratio is one to six, although we have a ratio of one to three on marine bases. This helps ensure that no matter the situation, there will be sufficient staff members to manage all activities and participants safely.

### All services are provided by or directly supervised by GVI staff

GVI staff oversee every element of our programs. From airport pickup through project work, life on base, side trips and tours, and drop off back at the airport, participants are supervised every step of their journey with us.



# Personal safety

## Local support

As part of the preparation process, GVI teams are clear on where and how to access medical support including doctors and counsellors. Contact details are readily available to staff.

## Medical and dietary requirements

Participants and their parents/guardians complete documentation as part of the booking process. This information helps us cater to any medical and dietary requirements and to be well-prepared to support all participants.

## Personal safety training

After settling into their accommodation, all participants complete health and safety training. Safety training includes guidelines for being a responsible traveller and how to ensure personal safety and standards. Participants receive an emergency connect card that they are expected to keep with them at all times. The card has the phone numbers of in-country staff as well as GVI emergency contact details. Participants learn about all emergency action plans and how to follow them.

## Safety of personal belongings

As part of our health and safety training, participants will receive guidance on the safest way to store their valuables.

## GVI-specific travel insurance

All participants must have travel insurance. Our insurance partner CISI provides an insurance package that covers medical emergencies and the scope of GVI project work. A GVI enrolment manager can help you with information regarding the CISI policy.





# Risk mitigation



## Emergency action plans

All major foreseeable incidents have a corresponding Emergency Action Plan (EAP). Field and senior management teams are always on hand to implement any necessary action plan. Participants are trained on how to follow an EAP in the case of an emergency, including participating in drills.

## Crisis management plans

GVI has a Crisis Management Plan which outlines procedures in case of emergency. All staff have training on crisis management processes. All bases, no matter how remote, also have a medical and crisis evacuation plan in place.

## 24-Hour emergency line

GVI's 24-hour emergency line provides support for any emergency, in any part of the world, at any time.

## Medication

Parents can choose whether it is the responsibility of their child or GVI staff to administer medication prescribed by a licensed medical professional. Before departing for their project, parents or guardians of under 18s will be sent a form to complete detailing the specific medical information and who should be responsible for administration.

## Disciplinary procedures

All participants and staff are held to a formal disciplinary procedure in the event of either minor or major transgressions. Depending on the severity, processes can include a verbal warning, a written warning or dismissal. Our goal is to support the participant in improving behaviour and following the GVI standards.

## Zero tolerance policy

By signing onto a program, participants and their parent/guardian agree that the participant will follow GVI terms & conditions and health & safety standards. GVI does not allow drugs or alcohol on program and will not tolerate bullying or any form of aggression. If a participant engages in any of these, disciplinary action will be followed and the participant may be dismissed from the program. In the case of dismissal, parents/guardians are contacted to arrange transport for the participant to their home country as soon as possible.





# Support on teen programs

We provide additional support & resources on teen programs

Participants under the age of 18 are minors and therefore require additional support, such as greater staff and accommodation resources. Additional rules, over and above those required of over-18 participants, also apply to under 18s.

## General rules

Participants are required to follow our health and safety standards which are explained as part of the training process. There is also an expectation that all participants follow responsible travel guidelines such as wearing culturally appropriate clothing and following environmental protection guidelines. Under 18s must follow the guidance of GVI Staff and can not go anywhere unaccompanied.

## Chaperones

Under-18 participants are never left unsupervised. Chaperones are assigned to a group of three to six participants and are responsible for overseeing all participant activities.

## Accommodation & curfew

Teens sleep in lodgings that are completely separate from those occupied by participants that are over the age of 18. The number of teens in a room varies depending on the location, but boys and girls always sleep in separate dorms.

Lights out is usually 10pm, and is strictly enforced. During the adventure component of their trip, teens might be required to move from their primary location but all existing accommodation regulations will still apply.



# Preparing for flights

## Preparing your child for their first international flight

We recommend that teens make use of the unaccompanied minor program that most airlines offer. The program will assign a chaperone to meet your child at the boarding gate, travel with them on the flight and ensure they are met on the other side with an individual who can provide both personal identification and written parental consent to collect your child.

These programs are not overseen by GVI, but are usually offered by most flight providers.

## How to arrange group travel through GVI

If you would like your child to travel with other participants on their program simply let us know, and we will connect you with any other participants who might be travelling from your area. There is no additional cost for this service. Please note that there is no guarantee that there will be others travelling from your region at any given time.



# Communication while abroad

## How to stay in touch while abroad

Participants are usually kept very busy from the moment they arrive to the time they leave. They might be undergoing training, studying, engaging in community service, conducting biological surveys, or enjoying adventure activities. Additionally, a delay in response can result from time differences as well as limited WiFi and phone capabilities in some of our more remote locations. For personal safety and child protection reasons, participants are also often not allowed to take their phones with them onto a project. This means most participants often don't make much contact with people back home. This is not a cause for concern but is rather a sign that they are enjoying themselves, socialising and getting involved in the work at hand. If you would like to make contact from home, please note that this is dependent on whether or not your child is engaged in an activity, like diving, or in the middle of their regular sleep schedule.

## Your arrival email

Once your child has been picked up at the airport and has settled into their accommodation, our team will send over an email confirming that they have arrived safely.

## Your in-country contacts

Upon confirming your booking, your support coordinator will send over two in-country contacts, including the number of the project manager in your specific location, as well as their second-in-command. If requested, we can also provide the number of another GVI staff member on base. You're also still welcome to contact your support coordinator if you feel you need help, and will have access to our 24-hour emergency line.





# Follow along on Instagram

Each of our bases have dedicated Instagram accounts.

## Africa

-  GVI Ghana (@gvi\_ghana)
-  GVI Limpopo (@gvilimpopo)
-  GVI Seychelles, Mahe (@gvi\_mahe)  
GVI Seychelles, Curieuse (@gvi.curieuse)
-  GVI Madagascar (@gvi.madagascar)  
GVI Madagascar - People (@gvimadagascar\_people)



## Europe

-  GVI Greece, Giannitsochori (@gvi.giannitsochori)
-  GVI Spain, Tenerife (@gvitenerife)

## Australasia

-  GVI Cambodia, Siem Reap (@gvisiemreap)
-  GVI Fiji, Dawasamu (@gvidawasamu)
-  GVI Nepal, Pokhara (@gvinepal\_)
-  GVI Thailand, Chiang Mai (@gvichiangmai)  
GVI Thailand, Phang Nga (@gviphangnga)  
GVI Phang Nga - People (@gviphangnga.people)

## Latin America

-  GVI Mexico, Puerto Morelos (@gvimexico)
-  GVI Belize (@gvibelize\_)
-  GVI Costa Rica, Cimarrones (@gvicimarrones)  
GVI Costa Rica, Cahuita (@gvi\_cahuita)
-  GVI Peru, Oxapamba (@gvi.oxapamba)  
GVI Oxapampa - People (@gvi oxapampa\_people)



# Professional & personal benefits







# Equipped to thrive in tomorrow's world

## GVI programs go far beyond the basics

We follow a holistic approach to ensure students get the skills they need to be successful in their studies and careers – all while making a positive impact in the world.

We aim to equip them with personal skills such as leadership, teamwork and resilience, while at the same time helping them lead bold lives that will positively influence critical global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, food and water scarcity, gender equality, and human rights.





# Career & academic benefits

## Preparing the next generation

To prepare Gen Zs to thrive in a world that's constantly changing, we cannot continue doing the same things. That's why our mission is to equip the new generation with highly relevant skills, through fresh and innovative approaches.

For over two decades, we've been training the next generation of conservation and international sustainable development professionals. We've also hired and managed many more. We know what it takes to succeed at an impact-driven career. Our team and network is made up of hundreds of local and international experts in their fields. Their knowledge, experience and unique expertise have been used to inform the design of our programs and career services. We're also continuously improving our services according to our latest findings and new developments in research and practice.

## Employability

We're committed to ensuring that all our programs improve the employability of our participants. This includes ensuring that:

- All activities are enriching and impactful.
- All educational materials are easy-to-navigate and informative.
- All training is delivered by well-trained field staff.
- There are an increasing number of courses and certifications from external institutions available to participants.

## Leadership

Leaders come in many shapes and sizes, and discovering your own leadership style is a key component to future success. We encourage all our participants to explore their leadership potential by providing opportunities for many different kinds of leaders to step up in a safe and inclusive environment where their leadership skills and personal insights can naturally develop.

## Teamwork

Our program activities, itineraries, and life on base is focused on showing our participants the power of teamwork and community. We emphasise the need to work together to achieve a goal, share in success, and find common ground for the good of those around us.

## Resilience

An often overlooked but vital skill for success in the workplace is resilience. On base we often have robust discussions about how to manage and process setbacks, learn from mistakes, and see failure as an opportunity for personal growth and learning.







## Becoming a global citizen

Being a global citizen begins with taking an interest in the world around you, how you relate to others and the environment, and ultimately how you can best make a contribution.

### Climate change and conservation

You will gain a tangible, science-based understanding of what conservation includes, how travel and tourism affect the environment both positively and negatively, and have an opportunity to observe the effects of climate change on species biodiversity.

### Community development

In interacting with communities, learning about diverse cultures, traditions and histories, participants gain a more comprehensive understanding of other countries and cultures they will be travelling to. They will also be able to begin to understand the complex ways in which sustainable development work affects different cultures and communities, inspiring self-reflection about their own position in the world and how to maximise their own impact in a constructive and positive way.

### Cultural sensitivity

We all need to learn how to thrive in a multicultural world. Today, more than ever, diversity and inclusion are critical to achieving sustainable development and social justice.

### Inclusivity

All spaces should affirm, respect and welcome all individuals and groups. Through travelling and cultural exchange, you will gain a deeper understanding of diversity, and how privilege or unequal access to resources and opportunities can perpetuate the inequalities that make development interventions necessary.

### Communication and collaboration

You will work in teams made up of a number of cultures, and develop a keen understanding of the importance of teamwork, togetherness and empathy to create and sustain positive change.

### Making friends

Adventures should be shared.

An experience like this is transformative. Sharing it with other teens or students from across the world, provides an opportunity to meet new people, make new friends and explore new perspectives. Our participants become like family on base, supporting each other's personal development and creating lifelong connections.



# Our ethics & impact

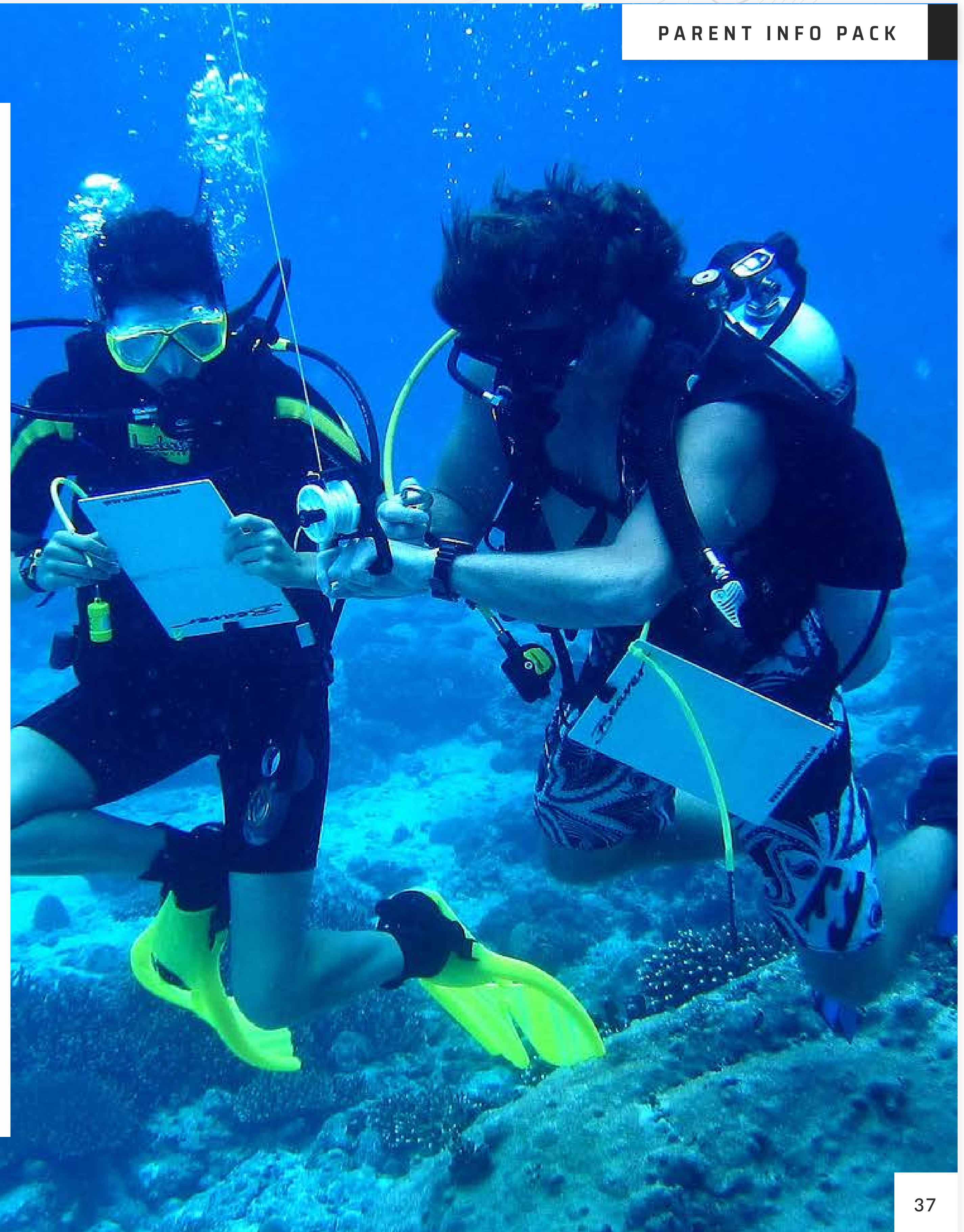




# Our commitment to long-term positive change

## United Nations sustainable development goals

The success of all our projects is measured against the objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). This means that all the short-, mid- and long-term objectives of all our sustainable development projects worldwide are designed to help us contribute toward achieving the 17 goals the United Nations has identified as achievable by 2030.





# Are you part of the **problem, or part of the solution?**



## Our badge of ethics

It's easy to pay lip-service to ethical practices. It's easy to think you are operating and conducting business ethically, when you aren't. At GVI, we don't want to be guilty of that. We want to be better and try harder. We want to constantly develop our understanding of ethical best practice. In doing so, we hope to help establish a new standard for international development organisations.



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# Our human **empowerment** principles

## Collaboration

Setting and achieving objectives must be done in a collaborative environment. Collaboration is between all stakeholders.

## Equitable partnerships

All stakeholders take on the role of both learner and teacher. All stakeholders have different and diverse skills and all have a part to play in setting and meeting objectives.

## Support

All stakeholders should support one another in an environment that fosters independence and self-empowerment.

## Sustainability

All collaboration should work towards a sustainable outcome in the long term.

## Representation

Stakeholders must be fairly represented in conceptualising and implementing our work. All stakeholders must be conscious and respectful of how they portray each other. This includes visual, written and verbal communications.

# Our 10 **ethical** commitments

1. Locally driven, collaborative projects
2. Clear objectives and sustainable outcomes
3. Do no harm
4. Working against dependency
5. Responsible exit strategies
6. Clear roles and specialised training
7. Respect for all
8. Local ownership
9. No orphanage volunteering
10. Child and vulnerable adult policy





# We're not just passing through

## Local partners

All of our programs and projects are created and implemented in partnership with local community organisations or governments. Our relationship with these organisations is an equitable partnership where we provide data collection and research, project design and implementation, and other support. All our activities align with partner objectives.

## What is positive impact?

Building a network of people united by their will and passion to positively impact our planet and communities means that we take a comprehensive view of the impact we aim to create. Our most important stakeholders – the environment, its ecosystems and species, the community members, and the local organisations we work with, as well as the participants who join us on our projects – should all benefit equally from our programs and projects.

## Impact & conservation

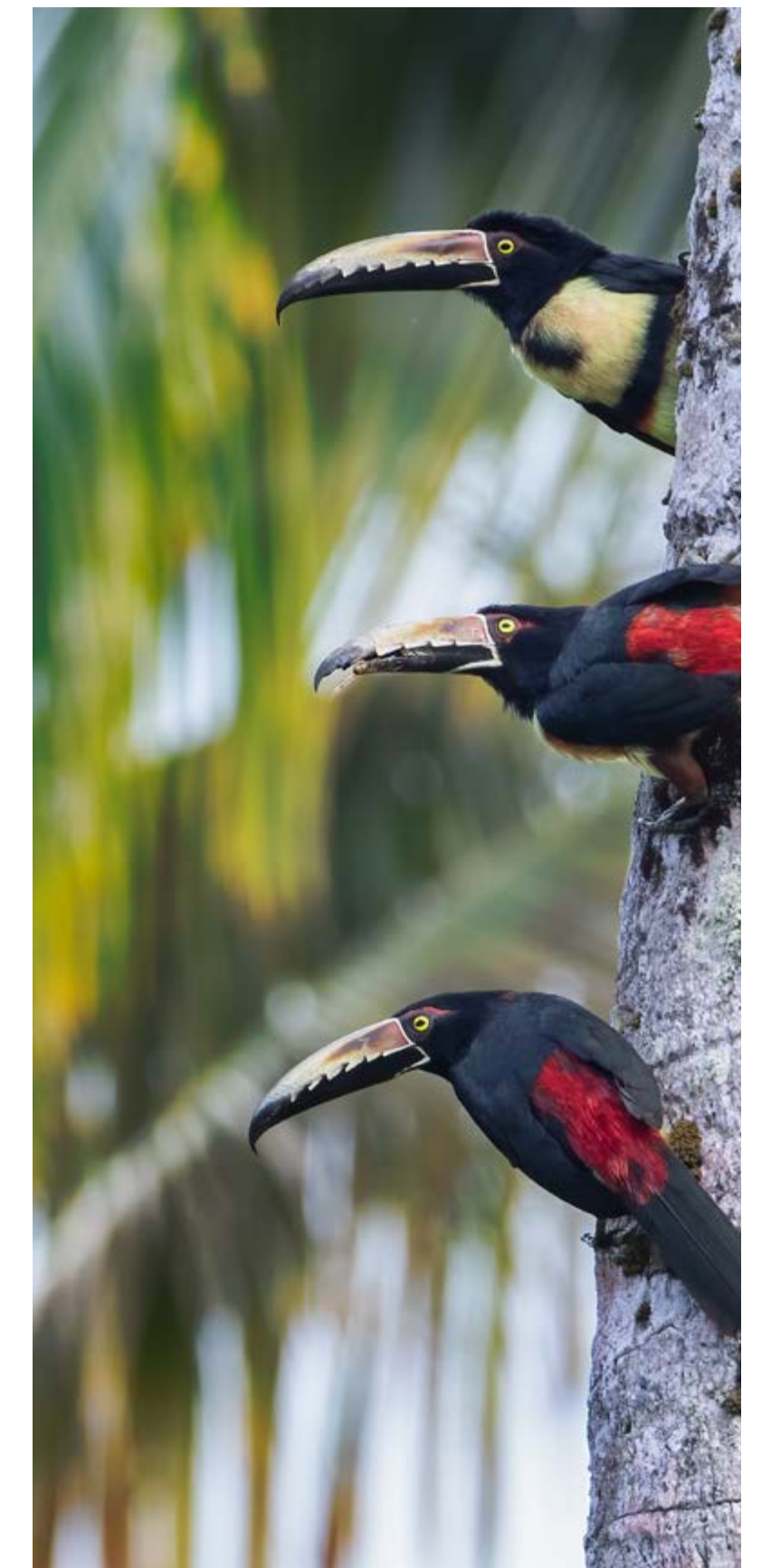
We are committed to:

- improved monitoring of marine and terrestrial ecosystems and species
- ethical species identification and animal handling
- better waste management practice and reduced waste
- contributing to global citizen science databases.

## Impact & community

We are committed to:

- contributing to improved community livelihoods
- contributing to improved community knowledge on sustainability
- ongoing education around heritage, culture and history
- respect for local customs and traditions
- awareness of privilege and unbalanced power dynamics, including language privilege.





# GVI parent consultations

What other parents have to say







# Speak to alumni & their parents

No one knows better than another parent what the experience of allowing your child to travel abroad is really like. The good news is that GVI alumni and their parents often love talking about their experiences. If you would like to speak to them, just let us know and we can set up a meeting. Depending on your location, it might be possible to meet face-to-face, otherwise, a phone or online chat can be arranged.

## Phone or online chat

Let us know that you'd like to speak to a GVI alumni and their parents and we will set you up with their contact details. Simply contact us to request a chat.

## Setting up a parent group

We highly recommend setting up a parent group as soon as possible after booking the trip. This can be done on secure personal messaging platforms and provides a support system throughout the process. To protect everyone's privacy, we can only share contact details between parents if both would like to contact one another. Simply ask your support coordinator to send out a request to other parents and they will get back to you with a list of details.



# Our parent testimonials

Sam first found out about GVI when my husband challenged him about doing something worthwhile with his life in the summer. As he was only 15 years old, I was calm initially, thinking that nothing would come of it.

Sam began some research and found that GVI was the only company who would take him because of his age. At first, I was concerned and even as the process continued, I remained unconvinced that it was a good idea.

I had huge concerns because of Sam's age, the fact that he would be unaccompanied and had never been abroad before! I remained deeply concerned up until the moment Sam left to go on the project.

Indeed, the weeks before were extremely difficult as I woke up in the middle of the night terrified that I had done the wrong thing in allowing this situation to develop. Contact with GVI in the run-up to the trip helped a little as I did a group chat between myself and other mums, but I was not relaxed at all.

As Sam was young and had never travelled alone, he flew as an unaccompanied minor. This helped alleviate some of my fears that he or his luggage would become lost in transit.

The day Sam left was difficult, but modern technology enabled us to communicate throughout his journey. Once he arrived in Thailand he was met by a GVI intern and from that point, I felt more relaxed and excited about the adventure he was undertaking.

Sam was supervised carefully throughout his time away and the trip was planned in detail to ensure those participating returned with wonderful memories of time spent in a worthwhile project, as well as some sightseeing. He has made lasting friendships and had a life-changing experience. He returned from Thailand more mature, more appreciative and more aware of the beautiful world in which we live.

This year, Sam is travelling to South Africa with GVI and I am confident and excited about this new adventure. I know that he is in safe and caring hands with GVI and I am thrilled that he is going to experience this amazing continent, within the safe environment of a GVI trip. I would not hesitate to recommend GVI to other families.

— Linda Jeffrey



*“I would not hesitate to recommend GVI to other families.”*



Kayley first introduced the concept of charitable work abroad to us after having investigated various charitable travel opportunities on the internet. She chose GVI due to the comprehensive opportunities being promoted.

Our initial feeling was of uncertainty due to organisational viability and risk to welfare. Our immediate reaction was to question the ability of an organisation to effectively arrange and deliver such a complex project. We were soon reassured through the efficient and effective communication with GVI staff members who were able to competently answer all questions that we posed. The information provided was clear and concise; the links to essential information were relevant and useful.

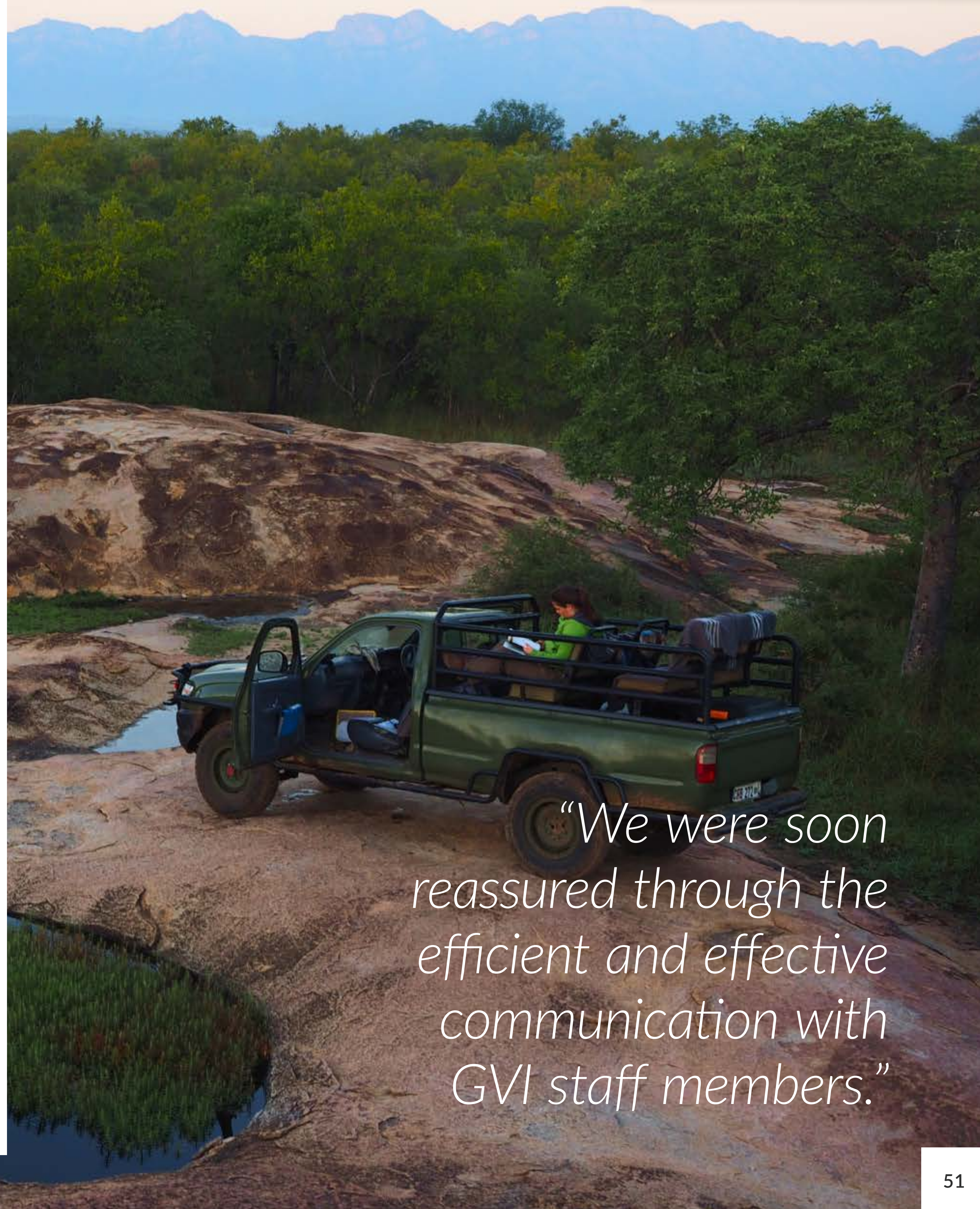
Probably the most difficult decision was making the initial commitment. However, as time progressed we became more confident that the project would be successful. As Kayley is mature and responsible we decided that no specific ground rules needed to be set. We were more concerned about overcoming her anxiety of travel. This was the first time she travelled without us and we were all very concerned.

GVI was able to put us in touch with some of the other participants on the project prior to the project dates, this allowed Kayley to establish contact with other girls with similar ambitions. This helped enormously. Kayley and another girl arranged to travel together on the same flight – the fact that she was travelling with someone else helped significantly. This was the longest time we were apart from Kayley, but social media permitted us to stay in touch. The separation was not as hard knowing that she was safe and having a great time.

It was a fantastic journey for her. As a consequence, she can confidently provide informed opinions whenever needed. She returned with a detailed account and a balanced view of the situation in South Africa, which was refreshing and something she will never forget. She intends to spread the word and continue supporting GVI due to the invaluable productive work they are doing throughout several countries.

Often parents have difficulty managing changing attitudes, ambition and vision of children during teen years. The GVI project brought all this together through an experience showing that teenagers can adapt and use their initiative when immersed in diverse environments. We would without a doubt recommend GVI as an organisation.

— Gill and Brian Williams



*“We were soon reassured through the efficient and effective communication with GVI staff members.”*



# GVI management





# We are a **parent-run organisation**



## **Richard Walton | Founder of GVI**

Parent of four – Jojo, Elspeth, Tallulah and Harry

'My wanderlust kicked in early, driving me from one continent to the next. Now, as a parent of four, I'm passionate about giving young people the opportunity to do the same – to explore safely, learn, grow, and have fun.'



## **Andrew Valentine | GVI CEO**

Parent of two – Annabel and Charlotte

'I believe our role as parents is to nurture and amplify the innate qualities, values and strengths of our children, and in many ways, GVI's role is similar: to nurture and amplify this generation's great desire to make the world a better place.'







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# Call us to chat

You have questions and we have answers. Submit an inquiry or send an email to [info@gviworld.com](mailto:info@gviworld.com) to start the conversation.



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