

## ETHICAL SERVICE & TRAVEL STATEMENT

The opportunity to give back, learn about global issues, and make an impact are often key aspects of gap year. Unfortunately, it isn't as simple as just signing up for a project, particularly if you are interested in working with children, animals, or in health care. Without careful thought it is easy to fall prey to the idea that you are helping when you may in fact be serving yourself (or an organization) instead of the intended community/need.

A Gap Away requires a mindset of intentional focus on ethics and impact when engaging in service and travel. It is our expectation that clients will adhere to the following.

- ▶ **Environmental impact.** Practice the ethos of *leave no trace*. Be mindful of your carbon footprint and offset the impact of your gap year travels. Model respect for the global climate and environment in your choices and behavior.
- ▶ **Vulnerable peoples.** Your training and certification must match the qualifications of any role you undertake when working with children, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, or similarly vulnerable peoples.
- ▶ **Medical service work.** Your training and certification must match the qualifications of any role you undertake. We support medical placements that encourage observation, basic support in non-invasive tasks, data collection, and the like.
- ▶ **Wildlife.** Refrain from engaging in activities that involve unnatural interactions with wildlife for the purpose of your pleasure or entertainment. This includes sedation, circus type acts, and contact with dangerous animals such as large cats. We support volunteer involvement in protecting natural habitats, education efforts, data collection, and, when properly trained, animal protection efforts.