

AFRICAN INSIGHT

EXPERIENCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ZONYAMA EXPERIENCE



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT: ZONYAMA EXPERIENCE

Zonyama is a rural community, in the Zululand region of KwaZulu Natal province of South Africa, under the traditional leadership of Chief Gumbi and neighbours onto Somkhanda Game Reserve, which is owned by the Gumbi Community. The Zonyama Experience is an integrated, authentic cultural immersion and community volunteer work experience.



There is no better way of really getting to know a community than living with and working alongside them. This is what this life changing experience achieves. It is not a sanitized commercial tourist experience – it is the real deal. By day you work alongside the community on a project that you and the community have jointly had input into selecting. By night, participants are 'billeted' out in small groups of 2-4 to host families. This structured programme ensures a meaningful involved authentic cultural experience and a real opportunity to make a difference.

The community pledges 'sweat equity' whilst you pledge to fund raise for the project, together the project is undertaken and completed. The goal is for projects to be completed during your stay and if applicable are self-sustainable going forward. There is scope for projects that can be integrated into an annual visitation regime.



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Mornings are set aside for work on the project and after lunch you are accompanied by community chaperones to explore and engage with the community as it goes about its daily life. The afternoon social/cultural programme is not contrived in any way and is an opportunity for you to engage, through your chaperones, with the community. Although chaperones have had basic training in hosting they are intentionally not professional guides so that you have to use your communication and social skills to get the most out of it according to your interests. This may be expressing interest in meeting village elders, working in a vegetable garden, learning a traditional handcraft, kicking a ball with the village kids, herding cows, collecting firewood or water etc.

It is a valuable opportunity for those interested in (and respectful of) indigenous cultures to learn about local traditions. You are welcome to express interest in spending time with a traditional herbalist (Nyanga) or a spiritual healer (Sangoma) or even attend a traditional ceremony if one is happening during your stay.

In addition to the cost of this programme participants are required to raise funds, which will be used to buy the materials for the volunteer project.

In addition to a unique insight to one of Africa's most enigmatic tribes there is a more serious objective to the programme, which aims to encourage participants to:

- Appreciate all people irrespective of race, wealth and status.
- Respect culture as something that enriches our lives and the planet.
- Reflect on life - where you are at this point in time and where is the path you are on taking you?
- Not matter where or who you are, you can make a real difference to the lives of others.
- There is no correlation between wealth and happiness and respect
- Use your communication and social skills to get the most out of this valuable opportunity

African Insight, over a period of 15 years', has facilitated the hosting of over 1000 visitors (approximately 4000 nights) on authentic cultural programmes and this model has been implemented with three other communities. Families and homesteads are handpicked, the "house mothers" are trained according to a tried and tested programme that covers: hosting, comprehensive house rules (designed to enforce health and safety), standard menu, safety and hygiene. Participants are comprehensively briefed before arriving at the community and there is an African Insight staff member staying in the community at all times.

