

Travelling is the dream



"The world is an amazing place that can keep me busy for the next 200 years"

Travelling is a word that always made me dream. I started to understand this word on the day of my 18th birthday, when I left Belgium for a year in United States on an exchange program.

I then studied for three years but couldn't get my mind off of travelling. That's why I decided to volunteer on another program, this time in Costa Rica. What could be better than travelling, learning a new language, helping people in need or improving the environment?

After one month of intense Spanish classes in San Jose (Costa Rica's capital), I went to live on the beach for two months on a turtle conservation project.

Can you imagine anything better than being lulled by

the sound of the sea 24/7, carrying hundreds baby turtles (tortugitas) to the beach at night to be the only witness of their first step into the ocean and future life with only the moon and stars for light.

To be honest, at 23 years of age, I haven't found a better feeling. The only thing that could compete would be the three months post project backpacking in Guatemala,

Nicaragua, Panama and Peru.

I saw Tikal and learned about the Mayan civilisation, climbed Machu Picchu and met the descendants of the Incas, climbed the Chachani (6075m), hiked the Canyon de la Colca for four days (the world's deepest canyon), cruised on Lake Titicaca, sand boarded down a 2000m dune and enjoyed a Corona in Mancora after a day of surfing.

Valerian Derenne (pictured) is working with World Exchange Program in Melbourne and next year begins a job promoting volunteer programs in NY. Contact him at 1300 884733 or www.volunteerabroad.com.au to talk about the range of WEP international volunteer and work possibilities available to you.

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