

## Press Release

For Immediate Release: 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017

### **Animal Welfare: UK volunteer organisation bans all unethical volunteer projects**

In 2015, the UK based volunteer organisation, Working Abroad Projects decided to remove any projects from their own volunteer database at facilities which offered predator breeding, predator interaction or walks with predators because of animal welfare issues and the possible links to the canned hunting industry in South Africa.

They, however, decided this was not enough and have now taken an even more active stance by removing any links on their website to other volunteer companies, which are engaged with:

- **Predator interaction such as cub petting or walks with predators**
- **Predator breeding facilities**
- **Elephant rides or camps that are involved with working elephants for tourists**

The Working Abroad Projects volunteer database includes more than 2,000 volunteer projects with partner organisations from around the World and they have gone through every one to check what projects were being offered.

A great deal of volunteer companies on the WorkingAbroad online database were found to be offering either unethical predator interaction projects or supporting elephant ride facilities on their websites. These companies have now been removed from the Working Abroad database. All of the companies have been offered to have their listings renewed, if they end their links to the particular project(s). None, except one, thus far have considered this option, but preferred to keep offering their unethical project(s) to volunteers on their websites (and obtaining the associated income they bring), at the expense of animal welfare.

*Vicky McNeil, Founder of the organisation states "When I co-founded this organisation in 1997, I volunteered with many charities around the world, and it led to setting up a volunteer database to offer others the ability to take action for nature and society. Over the years, the volunteering sector has grown in size and it saddens me to see how many organisations today are directly or indirectly involved with unethical animal welfare practices. I am so relieved that we have been able to identify the organisations in question and have the opportunity to remove them from our database and from our website, visited by over 40,000 people a month. We hope that this can be a step forward in removing these projects for good".*

## About Working Abroad Projects

Working Abroad Projects is a non-profit company that was first established in 1997 by Vicky McNeil and Andreas Kornevall. Its database of volunteer projects and own projects have since grown steadily, offering students, workers and families alike the opportunity to volunteer and work abroad.

You can find Working Abroad Projects' full [policy on ethical volunteering here](#). Any company or organisation that wants to be listed in the database will have to adhere to the policy.

If you want to know more about the issues surrounding canned hunting and how to volunteer ethically, then go to the [Campaign Against Canned Hunting \(CACH\) website](#)

It is recommended that you do extensive research on any organisation when planning to volunteer with wildlife abroad, to make sure they are not partaking in unethical activities such as predator interactions, elephant rides or canned hunting.

It is also important to note that there are still many websites and British/International bodies that have not done proper research and are awarding "Sustainable" and "Best Volunteer Project" awards to some of these organisations which are undertaking unethical activities, which further exacerbates the problem.

### For more information, please contact:

Vicky McNeil  
[Victoria.McNeil@workingabroad.com](mailto:Victoria.McNeil@workingabroad.com)

Sarah Dyer (CACH)  
[cachuksd1@gmail.com](mailto:cachuksd1@gmail.com)

Tel. +44 (0) 1273 479 047

Follow us

[www.workingabroad.com](http://www.workingabroad.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WorkingAbroadProjects>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/workingabroad>