1 I came across the *Global Mamas* site while shopping online. The words 'Volunteer in Ghana' immediately caught my eye. That's because my friend Brenda and I had always dreamt of travelling to Africa. I started reading about *Global Mamas* and the more I read the more interested I became in the cause. It turned out that *Global Mamas* is a non-profit organisation that strives to help Ghanaian women earn a livelihood by helping them create and sell traditional handcrafted products. I was moved by the hardships they face and felt an overwhelming desire to contribute. Brenda didn't need much convincing to join me.

2 We soon found ourselves flying to Cape Coast, which is where we would be staying with some Ghanaian women and working with a team of 'mamas' on a design project for three months. Initially, both Brenda and I felt frustrated because the comforts that we take for granted are considered a luxury in places like Ghana. Nevertheless, we soon settled into a routine, one that we came to love. In those three months, we became totally immersed in Ghanaian culture. We took in all the sights, tastes, smells and sounds of this wonderful place. We lived and worked side by side with the Ghanaian women and developed a deep respect for them, and an appreciation of their courage, generosity and optimism. When the time came for us to leave we did so with a heavy heart!

3 My experience in Ghana made me realise that we all have a responsibility and a role to play in making the world a better place. Volunteering helped me step out of my comfort zone and embrace a totally new reality and perception of life. It taught me to keep an open mind, awakened my compassion and respect for people who persevere in the face of difficulties and increased my tolerance of cultural diversity. Whenever I think back to my experience, I am filled with a deep sense of gratitude. It helped carve a path for me, one that I intend to follow. I will, without a doubt, b[illegible]

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