



# Global Leadership Adventures

*CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF LIFE-CHANGING JOURNEYS FOR TEENS*





BE THE CHANGE



EST. 2004

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ADVENTURES



# The GLA Experience



**FRIENDSHIPS**

There's nothing like a shared experience that builds strong, lasting friendships. **GLA programs bring together curious students from all around the world**, all sharing a desire to explore, grow, and discover their role in a global community.



**ADVENTURE**

**Adventure is the secret ingredient that ties the whole GLA experience together.** It's the fun of tackling challenges, stepping out of your comfort zone and discovering just how much you're capable of that leaves you with new stories to tell and a deeper sense of confidence.



**CULTURAL IMMERSION**

Immersing yourself in another culture means seeing life from a new perspective. Whether you're sharing meals, working on community projects or learning local traditions, you'll **make connections that deepen your understanding of the world and yourself.**





# table of contents

<b>Letter From The Executive Director</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Our Beginnings</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Our Roots in Leadership</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Top 5 Reasons to Choose GLA</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Why Service Learning?</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Meaningful Local Partnerships</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5-Point Safety System</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>GLA Staff</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>20 Year Impact</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>GLA Map of Destinations</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>GLA Gamechangers</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Testimonials</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Sister Organizations</b>	<b>19</b>





**GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ADVENTURES**

*20 Years of Life-Changing Journeys*

# Dear Families,

Twenty years ago, GLA began with the idea to bring the spirit and mission of the Peace Corps to young leaders, creating immersive service-learning experiences that inspire a global perspective and empower meaningful impact. Since then, I'm proud to say that GLA has become a trusted leader in service learning, with relationships that span decades with communities and local partners who have become like family.

It's been an honor to share these transformative journeys with your families, inspiring a new generation of curious, empathetic global citizens. Over the years, many of our own children have set out on these adventures, deepening our pride in the safe, meaningful programs we design, and the impact they create. Together, we've built something incredible, and I'm excited for what we'll continue to achieve in the years ahead. Thank you for being part of it.

*Jessica Miller*

**Executive Director, Global Leadership Adventures**







# Beginnings in South Africa

Our story began in 2003 with Fred Swaniker, a Stanford graduate and TED Fellow from Ghana, who believed in the power of young people to shape their own futures.

Together with Chris Bradford and Peter Mombaur, he co-founded the **African Leadership Academy** in Johannesburg, a non-profit high school designed to inspire Africa's future leaders to create meaningful change.

ALA thrived, showing that when teens are immersed in leadership development and connect with diverse peers, they discover their potential to make a difference. Wanting to share this approach with the world, Fred, Chris, and Peter launched a summer program for teens, **and Global Leadership Adventures was born with our first program running in Summer 2005.**

By 2006, Andrew Motiwalla joined the team, bringing his Peace Corps experience to help design programs centered on immersive, hands-on learning and collaboration with local communities.

**Today, GLA has inspired more than 30,000 teens worldwide to lead with purpose and create meaningful change.**



*"Teenagers, more than anyone else, are the most open to change, and the most capable of seeing all the tremendous possibilities that we have to make a difference in this world.*

*And that's why that's the perfect time to begin developing young people as leaders."*

*- Fred Swaniker*





# Leadership at the root of our values.

At Global Leadership Adventures, leadership is more than a skill — it is the cornerstone of our mission to inspire the next generation of changemakers.

Since our beginning, we've believed that leaders are made, not born, and that the formative adolescent years are pivotal in shaping an individual's capacity for leadership. Our programs are designed not only to empower students to discover their unique leadership styles but also to equip them with the tools to enact meaningful, principled change in their communities and beyond.

**Leadership, to us, isn't confined to titles or positions — it's about vision, values and the ability to inspire others toward a shared goal.**

Our approach embraces the diversity of leadership styles, helping young leaders find their authentic voice — whether they are quiet thinkers or outspoken advocates. Leadership isn't just practiced in the moment; it's framed within a global context, fostering an open mind, a caring outlook and the courage to address complex issues.

Whether students are leading in their local communities or navigating a globally connected world, GLA's programs serve as a catalyst for them to become ethical, empathetic and effective leaders for the future.

**Read on and discover the insights and lessons we've gained from 20 years of empowering teens through service-learning programs worldwide—and why Global Leadership Adventures is the right choice for meaningful travel.**







# 01

## WHY SERVICE LEARNING?

**Service Learning is our learning-focused approach to community service rooted in mutual exchange. By working closely with communities to address real challenges, students discover new perspectives and deepen their understanding of global issues.**

Inspired by his years in the Peace Corps, GLA co-founder Andrew Motiwalla helped develop our model with principles of sustainable impact, cultural exchange and the belief that locally-led projects create the most enduring benefits, for both communities and students.

Service Learning is a shift from the idea of simply giving back to one of genuine collaboration. Students build meaningful connections with the community they're supporting, learning alongside them as they work together to make an impact.

By centering learning with service, students not only gain fresh perspectives on global issues but also discover their role in making a difference. This formula promotes mutual respect, breaks down power imbalances, and creates opportunities for shared growth and lasting change.



Hands-On  
Learning



Community  
Service



Once in a  
Lifetime  
Adventure



TRANSFORMATION  
GLOBE CITIZENSHIP  
LIFELONG IMPACT



# 02 | THE UNITED NATIONS' SDGS

*Our program themes are designed to align with local community needs and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. These goals address critical global issues like poverty, education, health and climate action. Through collaboration with local communities, students tackle real challenges and grow as leaders to create lasting change.*

## Medicine & Public Health



Health workshops, sanitation projects and medical outreach activities.

## Animal & Wildlife Conservation



Habitat restoration, biodiversity data collection and species protection.

## Environmental Stewardship



Reforestation, pollution cleanup and environmental education programs.

## Sciences & STEM



Implementing sustainable STEM solutions for local challenges.



## Language Immersion



Enhancing cross-cultural understanding and building global partnerships.

## Community Development



Building infrastructure like schools, water systems and fostering community resilience.

## Sports Leadership



Habitat restoration, biodiversity data collection and species protection.

## Youth & Education



Reforestation, pollution cleanup and environmental education programs.

## Leadership & Exploration



Leadership training for community impact and social justice advocacy.





## 03

MEANINGFUL  
LOCAL  
PARTNERSHIPS

Global  
Leadership  
Adventures

FOUNDATION

Meaningful partnerships are the foundation of our work with communities around the globe. Our local partners are more than collaborators — they're the heart of our service-learning programs. By working closely with community leaders, we ensure every project reflects their needs, vision and long-term goals.

Our commitment doesn't end when summer does. Through the **GLA International Foundation's Community Partner Fund**, we provide year-round support with resources and funding to sustain their incredible work. This helps ensure the impact of our programs lasts well beyond the time students spend on the ground.

The Community Partner Fund also gives alumni and families a way to stay connected, continuing to support the projects and organizations that made their GLA experience so impactful. By

maintaining these ties, we celebrate the collaborative spirit of our programs and offer alumni meaningful ways to give back, no matter where they are.

**With 100% of donations going directly to development work, we stand by our belief that authentic partnerships and community-driven service lead to lasting change.**

Together with our local partners and alumni, we're building a global network of impact.





# 04

## GLA'S 5-POINT SAFETY SYSTEM

*Safety is our first priority. While we believe in the transformative power of stepping outside comfort zones, we remain invested in managing the risks of doing so.*

*Backed by two decades of experience, we've carefully crafted and continue to enforce our **5-Point Safety System™**, a set of rigorous standards that support the safety, health and well-being of students on every travel program.*



### GLA HOME BASE: SAFE & SECURE LODGING

**Home Base is our home away from home**, a place to relax, the gathering place for meals and sanctuary for reflection, team building and leadership after active days.



### CARING SUPERVISION & EXPERT LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

GLA ensures students are always accompanied outside the Home Base, staying with staff, in groups, or with a buddy. **With a 6:1 student-to-staff ratio**, our local partners and on-site staff offer deep community knowledge and readiness for emergencies or itinerary changes.



### SAFE TRANSPORTATION

Students are met by GLA staff and transported to Home Base in approved vehicles. Staff adjust for delayed flights. **All transport is via GLA-approved vehicles** or reliable options, with taxis or rideshares only when staff-accompanied.



### HEALTHY FOOD & PURE WATER

Meals are prepared fresh daily by Home Base staff or vetted restaurants, and include a healthy mix of grains, protein, fruit and vegetables. **Students will enjoy a mix of local cuisine and common staples.**



### 24/7 SUPPORT & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**GLA offers 24/7 support and a hotline during programs, with plans for any emergency.** International students receive secondary medical and evacuation insurance, and professional medical guidance is available around the clock.





# 05

## LEADERS, MENTORS, AND GUIDES FOR TEENS

### What Sets GLA Apart

*Our dedicated team of Local Directors, International Directors and Mentors ensures a safe, enriching, and transformative experience for teens on every program.*

*More than just staff, they are trusted leaders and role models who inspire and guide students through life-changing journeys. Our staff that create our amazing programs, Program Managers, have firsthand experience in the field, provide critical support to field staff and families throughout each program.*

# 1

#### Extensive Qualifications

Our staff are highly qualified, with a bachelor's degree or equivalent experience in experiential education and at least two years working with teens in various settings. They bring international or regional expertise tailored to program locations and deep cultural knowledge to enhance students' global perspectives.

All staff are CPR and First Aid certified. Additionally, some staff have specialized certifications as the program necessitates, such as Wilderness First Responder for remote programs and lifeguard certifications for water-heavy programs. **Every team member undergoes thorough background checks to ensure safety and trustworthiness.**







# 2

## A Global Team with Local Roots

Our staff come from 23 countries across six continents, creating a vibrant and diverse community that enriches every program. Their varied cultural backgrounds and regional expertise provide students with authentic, localized insights and a broader perspective on the world making every program uniquely impactful.

# 3

## Who Are Our Staff?

Our team brings diverse professional backgrounds that uniquely position them to inspire and support teens. From schoolteachers to returned Peace Corps Volunteers, we search for the most qualified professionals to lead each program.



# 4

## The Numbers Behind the Team

Our numbers say it all about the quality of programs that GLA runs every summer. More than half of our staff return each year. Some have over 7 summers with GLA!

# 60%

of Directors and Mentors return year over year from their 2nd to their 7th year.

# 85%

of Local Directors return to help lead programs giving a local's touch to each program.



# 20 YEAR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

*At GLA, our mission is to create lasting impacts in communities while transforming students' lives. Through our service-learning methodology, students connect deeply with local cultures, gain leadership skills, and understand their ability to create change. Our programs go beyond volunteering, offering life-changing experiences that inspire a global perspective and a commitment to making a difference.*

**30,546** 

students have been sent abroad on life-changing journeys in 30 countries around the world.



**1,000,694** 

service hours have been completed helping communities around the world from marine conservation to local public health challenges.

**92%** 

of students have said that they have been inspired to become more involved in service projects at home or abroad.



**\$2 MILLION** 

has been awarded in scholarships to expand opportunities for students and raised to support partner communities through GLA and our nonprofit, the GLA International Foundation.

20 YEAR MAP INSERT



# THE GAMECHANGERS AT GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ADVENTURES



## LONDON VALLERY

**Transformational Experience:** Ghana: Children of Africa™ and Tanzania: Heart and Soul of Africa, 2016

**Her Impact:** **Co-founded The Welder (formerly Living for Living)**, a social movement aimed at creating a space where brilliant minds worldwide can collaborate within an interconnected community. The initiative also inspires teens to drive positive change in their communities through engineering projects. A Harvard graduate and now at Cambridge, London continues to make a change in the world.

## KENNETH WAH

**Transformational Experience:** Ghana: Children of Africa™, 2014 & 2015

**His Impact:** Starting a robotics education program – **Robo Ghana** – in Ghana through his organization, Walnut Valley Robotics. Now an engineer at NASA, **Wah also helped create GLA's Ghana Internship - Career Exploration in STEM With a Focus on Education & Robotics** in partnership with his nonprofit and continues to help make an impact around the world!



## RYAN LION

**Transformational Experience:** South Africa: One City, Two Worlds™, 2008

**His Impact:** Returned to South Africa as a graduate student studying Global Health, years after his first trip there with GLA. Now a clinical fellow at St. Jude's Hospital, Ryan firmly maintains a down-to-earth attitude and aligns his focus to giving back to the world—the qualities that got him to where he is now, and originally led him to GLA.

”

*"GLA has not only helped me to become more confident as a person, but also to grow in being a good listener and loving others well. The service work taught me that I can do hard things and come out stronger. I have a greater understanding of my global impact."*

**SCARLETT, STUDENT  
4-TIME GLA ALUMNI**



## TESTIMONIALS

”

*"This was absolutely a unique and once-in-a-lifetime experience that I feel not only worked towards my future aspirations, but also helped me to develop my communication and leadership skills. The staff and other participants were absolutely a highlight for me, meeting so many people from different background was so educational and by the end it really felt like a family."*

**LUCIE, STUDENT  
SOUTH AFRICA 2015**

”

*"Wow! Our 15 year old daughter had an extraordinary experience with GLA! It was her first time traveling on her own, so we were a little apprehensive to send her so far, but we felt good about GLA's commitment to safety, and we loved the range of experiences and service component of the trip. This is not just a teen travel program, but is so much more."*

**LAURA, PARENT  
THAILAND 2022**





[Read About Our B-Corp Certification Here](#)

# Travel Experts

As part of **Terra Education**, GLA is proud of its strong roots and unwavering commitment to creating a positive global impact. With 20 years of travel expertise, we've crafted transformative experiences that foster connection, growth, and meaningful change, leading to the creation of several sister organizations. In line with our mission to do good, **GLA has been a certified B-Corporation** since 2011, upholding the highest standards of social and environmental responsibility.

EST. 2010  
**BEYOND  
SPORTS**

## Connecting the World Through Sports!

Beyond Sports is committed to utilizing the power of sport to facilitate cross-cultural experiences. They work with individual athletes, high school and college sports teams to organize and operate foreign tours combining athletic conditioning and competitive play with meaningful, international travel.



## Explore A Major. Discover a Career Path. Enjoy College Life.

Founded with a similar mission to inspire and serve the next generation of high school students, Summer Springboard programs help prepare students prior to university.

Students experience hands-on learning through exceptional instructors, academic excursions and engaging guest speakers.



## Unforgettable Vacations With Purpose

Started by GLA co-founder and Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Andrew Motiwalla, Discover Corps is one of Global Leadership Adventures' sister organizations, inviting adults and families to travel together in a meaningful way. The vision? Spontaneous, authentic, and unforgettable experiences.



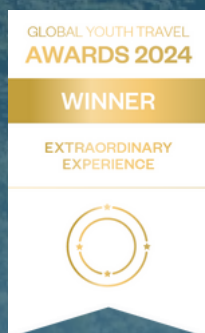
# THANK YOU!

*For two decades, Global Leadership Adventures has been more than just a travel experience—it's a transformative journey that shapes the leaders of tomorrow. Each GLA program fosters connection and adventure, inspiring students to step outside their comfort zones and embrace new cultures and perspectives.*

*Through thoughtfully designed itineraries, hands-on service projects, and immersive learning opportunities, GLA ignites a sense of purpose, resilience, and global awareness. These experiences don't just fill passports; they fill hearts and minds, creating lasting memories, lifelong friendships, and a deep commitment to making a difference.*

*Our dedication to creating impactful, life-changing travel has earned us recognition and awards in the travel industry, reaffirming our mission to lead the way in global education and service.*

*As we celebrate 20 years of empowering young leaders, we're grateful to the students, families, and communities who have joined us on this incredible journey. Together, we've built something far greater than travel—we've built a movement of changemakers ready to leave their mark on the world. Here's to the next 20 years of inspiring leadership, service, and global connection!*





*DRAFTS*



# Travel

## GUIDE

*CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF LIFE-CHANGING  
JOURNEYS FOR TEENS*



# 04

## GLA'S 5-POINT SAFETY SYSTEM

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## GLA HOME BASE: SAFE & SECURE LODGING

**Home Base is our home away from home**, a place to relax, the gathering place for meals and sanctuary for reflection, team building and leadership after active days.

The utmost care is taken to provide safe and secure lodging on every program. Accommodations vary based on location, but all include exclusive spaces reserved for GLA students and staff.



## CARING SUPERVISION & EXPERT LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

GLA ensures students are never alone outside the Home Base, always staying with staff, in groups or paired with a buddy.

**With an average 6:1 student-to-staff ratio**, our local partners and on-site staff bring deep knowledge of the community, medical facilities and are well-prepared for itinerary changes and emergencies.



## SAFE TRANSPORTATION

Upon arrival, students are greeted by GLA staff and transported to Home Base in approved vehicles with licensed drivers. If a flight is delayed, staff will wait or return to meet the student at the updated time.

**Transportation between Home Base and activities is always via GLA-approved vehicles or the most suitable local option.** In areas where public transit is less reliable, approved buses or vans are used, with taxis or rideshares only utilized when accompanied by staff.





## HEALTHY FOOD & PURE WATER

Meals are prepared fresh daily by Home Base staff or vetted restaurants, and include a healthy mix of grains, protein, fruit and vegetables.

**Students will enjoy a mix of local cuisine and common staples.**



## 24/7 SUPPORT & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

**GLA provides 24/7 support and a hotline while programs are in session.**

While incredibly rare in occurrence, GLA has a plan in place for all types of emergencies and situations that could arise.

We provide secondary medical and evacuation insurance to all students traveling internationally outside the United States, and professional medical support is also available to our teams 24/7 should specialized guidance be needed.



# 20 YEAR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

*At GLA, our mission is to create lasting impacts in communities while transforming students' lives. Through our service-learning methodology, students connect deeply with local cultures, gain leadership skills, and understand their ability to create change. Our programs go beyond volunteering, offering life-changing experiences that inspire a global perspective and a commitment to making a difference.*

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