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Empowering the Next Generation of Changemakers

ESTABLISHED 2004

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ADVENTURES IMPACT REPORT 2026

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A MESSAGE TO OUR GLA COMMUNITY

Reflecting on 2026 | Honoring Our Legacy, Embracing Our Future

Dear GLA Community,

As I reflect on 2026, I find myself thinking less about the milestones we've reached and more about the people and moments that make GLA so extraordinary. After nearly two decades of being part of this journey, I am still inspired by the courage of a student stepping into the unknown, the dedication of our teams around the world, and the connections that remind us just how powerful these experiences can be. It is both humbling and energizing to see how far we have come, and to imagine all that lies ahead.

When I first joined GLA, I was drawn to a bold and simple belief: that meaningful experiences have the power to transform young people and, through them, the world. What began in Africa as a pioneering vision has grown into a global community spanning generations, cultures, and continents. Through all that growth and change, the heart of GLA has remained the same:

To inspire the next generation to realize their potential to transform the world and their unique role in it.

Today, that mission feels more relevant than ever. The world our students are inheriting is changing at an extraordinary pace. Technology is reshaping industries, global challenges demand new ways of thinking, and the paths young people will take into adulthood are more diverse and dynamic than ever before. We believe experiential education must evolve alongside this changing world, preparing students not only to navigate the future, but to help shape it.

That belief is driving an exciting new chapter for GLA.

As we look toward 2027, we are reimagining what GLA can be for the next generation. Building on our legacy of international service-learning and leadership, we are expanding our vision to offer a broader range of transformative experiences for middle school, high school, and college students. Our goal is to meet young people at different stages of their development, helping them discover their passions, challenge their limits, explore future possibilities, and find their own unique paths to making an impact.

Our future will continue to include the extraordinary service experiences in Africa where our story began, while opening new doors through artificial intelligence and robotics in Asia, marine exploration in Belize, outdoor adventure in California, and career-focused experiences for students exploring their professional futures. Through new opportunities in independent research and expert mentorship, we are also empowering students to pursue their own questions, develop original ideas, and turn curiosity into meaningful action.

We are evolving from a legacy of transformative global travel into a broader world of experiential learning, exploration, and discovery. What unites these experiences is not a destination or discipline, but a shared purpose: to help young people discover who they are, what inspires them, and what they are capable of contributing to the world.

And as we embrace this evolution, we remain grounded in the commitments that have always defined GLA: People, Planet, and Partnerships. We will continue to prioritize meaningful human connection, responsible engagement with our world, and the extraordinary local relationships that make authentic learning and lasting impact possible.

None of this would be possible without the community that has carried GLA forward for more than two decades. To our students, thank you for your courage and curiosity. To our families, thank you for your trust. To our staff, educators, and partners around the world, thank you for the passion, dedication, and care you bring to this mission. And to our alumni, thank you for continuing to carry the GLA spirit into the world.

As we close 2026, I feel an incredible sense of pride in our legacy and even greater optimism for our future. We have always believed that young people are capable of extraordinary things when given the opportunity to step beyond what they know and discover what is possible.

The world is changing, and so are we. But our belief in the potential of the next generation has never been stronger.

We enter 2027 with the same pioneering spirit that launched GLA more than two decades ago, a renewed sense of possibility, and an unwavering commitment to inspiring the leaders, thinkers, explorers, and changemakers of tomorrow.

Our next chapter is just beginning, and I truly believe the best of GLA is still ahead.

With gratitude and optimism,



Jessica Miller

Jessica Miller
Executive Director
Global Leadership Adventures
Terra Education

22| YEARS OF PURPOSE: OUR MISSION



THE GLA IMPACT

PEOPLE

Through our focus on People, we champion the growth of young leaders while working hand-in-hand with communities to address their most pressing challenges.



PLANET

Our commitment to the Planet drives impactful projects like reforestation, community gardens, clean water initiatives, and conservation efforts to safeguard ecosystems for future generations.



PARTNERSHIPS

By fostering authentic Partnerships with local organizations, we ensure that every project is rooted in respect, sustainability, and shared goals.

Our mission is to inspire the next generation to realize their potential to transform the world and their unique role in it.

PEOPLE: OUR STUDENTS

Our students are at the heart of our mission—the next generation of changemakers who bring curiosity, compassion, and energy to every corner of the globe. Our end-of-program evaluations across programs reflect deep personal growth, heightened global awareness, and high overall satisfaction among students.

96%+

overall satisfaction across all programs.





96%+

of students reported that their program helped them recognize their potential to make a meaningful impact.

96%+

of our students felt more confident in their ability to create change within themselves or the broader world post-program.





OVER 94%

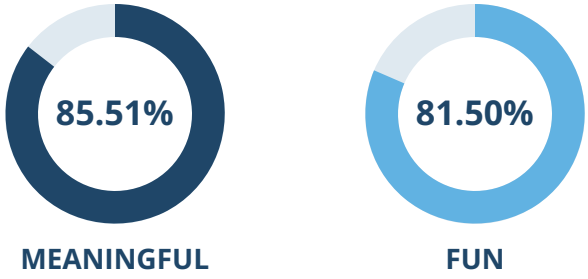
of students noted that the experience directly influenced how they view their role in the global community.

35,643

TOTAL SERVICE HOURS



Most of our students describe their experience as Meaningful and Fun.





Through their hands-on work in community-led service projects, they contribute not only their time but also their creativity, determination and hope. In turn, their commitment to making a difference inspires us to continue offering opportunities for leadership and global impact. This year, GLA students completed an extraordinary number of service hours, leaving lasting impacts in regions where we operate across the world.



35,643
total service hours for Spring & Summer Programs & Internships



"GLA has revealed parts of myself I wasn't sure was there. It brought me a concrete goal that I can work towards in the future and this experience will stick with me the rest of my life."

Peru Internship: Career Exploration in STEM with Focus on Engineering & Sustainable Development, Hanna S., first-time GLA Student



PEOPLE: OUR STAFF

Our programs are only as extraordinary as the people who lead them.

Behind every successful service project, cultural exchange and meaningful student experience are dedicated staff members who bring passion, expertise and care to their work.

Our program staff are educators, mentors and role models who create a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for students to learn and grow. With backgrounds ranging from education and youth development to international travel and cultural exchange, GLA staff bring a wealth of experience and perspective to each program.

They also lead by example, putting GLA's mission and values into practice throughout each program. Working closely with local organizations, they build strong relationships and help ensure that our projects and activities contribute positively to the communities we visit. We are proud to share that:

67%

of our staff return season after season, ensuring continuity and expertise.

Our team includes alumni of programs like the Peace Corps, as well as educators from renowned institutions. Over the last three seasons, an increasing number of former GLA students have become seasonal GLA summer staff.



PLANET: EVERY PROGRAM TYPE TIED TO THE GLOBAL GOALS



Global Leadership Adventures program types are designed to address important challenges facing communities and ecosystems worldwide. Students not only develop a global perspective, but also return home inspired to make positive changes in their own communities. These programs also encourage students to explore potential career paths and/or discover passions that align with their values and interests.

The hope is that their experiences ignite a lifelong commitment to service, leadership and creating a better world.

We strive to help them develop an understanding that everyone must do their part in protecting the planet.

Through service projects, cultural immersion, and leadership development, students gain the opportunity to make meaningful contributions that align with the spirit of the **United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

These global priorities are intentionally woven into our curriculum and everyday learning, fostering environmental conservation, promoting social equity, and advancing community well-being across all GLA programs.

The following page highlights how each of our program types intersects with key SDGs, underscoring the broader impact of our efforts.





All GLA program types are designed around the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Below are several examples of some specific goals each program supports.

SERVICE LEARNING



OUR SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAMS SUPPORT







LANGUAGE IMMERSION



OUR LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAMS SUPPORT







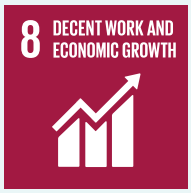
CAREER EXPLORATION & INTERNSHIPS



OUR CAREER EXPLORATION PROGRAMS & INTERNSHIPS SUPPORT







OUTDOOR ADVENTURE



OUR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAMS SUPPORT







EXPLORATORY TRAVEL



OUR EXPLORATORY TRAVEL PROGRAMS SUPPORT







PARTNERSHIPS: COMMUNITY-LED CHANGE



Partnerships pave the path to sustainable development. At GLA, we recognize that working with local partners is a fundamental part of effective community service and responsible travel. Our partners provide critical context that only a resident can give, and grant our students locals-only access to authentic experiences. GLA's local partners are a core part of our global family, and many have been working with us for years. Students interact with and learn from partners, who range from founders of NGOs to local educators, host families, and area experts.



At the heart of every GLA program are the extraordinary local partners and organizations who welcome our students and staff into their communities. These partnerships are the cornerstone of our mission, allowing us to align our efforts with the goals and needs identified by the communities themselves. Together, we work hand-in-hand to ensure that the service projects our students contribute to are impactful, culturally respectful, and sustainable.



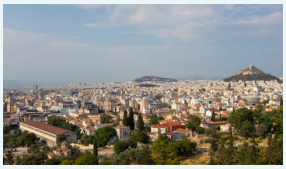
Our local partners are the stewards of their communities and the changemakers driving progress on the ground. They inspire our students to become global citizens, connecting them to the reality of grassroots efforts to address challenges ranging from access to education to environmental conservation.

The impact of these collaborations is best reflected in our collective work. From building infrastructure that improves daily living conditions to fostering public health initiatives in rural towns, the contributions of GLA programs supported communities around the world.

In 2026 alone, GLA's service hours directly benefited thousands of individuals. Together, these efforts directly supported more than 7,100 people and touched more than 37,500 lives across 71 communities worldwide.







COMMUNITIES REACHED

In 2026 alone, GLA's service hours directly benefited thousands of individuals.



Central America

15 communities

2,000+
people directly

10,000
more indirectly (estimated)



Caribbean

6 communities

440
people received direct medical care

500+
with improved health access



South America

21 communities

1,700+
people directly

nearly 5,000
indirectly



Africa

6 communities

1,000+
people directly

11,500+
indirectly

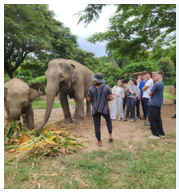


Europe

8 communities

440+
people directly

3,500+
indirectly



Asia & the Pacific

11 communities

670+
people directly

3,200+
indirectly



United States

4 communities & natural reserves

3,900
indirectly (estimated)

71
communities worldwide

=

7,100+
people directly supported

=

37,500+
lives touched

PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

Every number represents a story: a student receiving their first pair of prescription glasses, a family gathering in a newly constructed community hall or a patient receiving care at a medical brigade. The number of beneficiaries reflects the strength of our local partnerships and the shared commitment of our GLA team. The following insights are drawn from partner feedback collected at the end of the summer.

100%

of our partners agree that the 2026 service projects were connected to the program theme (85.29% extremely connected, up from 79% in 2025).





97%

of partners said community members were involved in deciding this year's service projects (76.47% extremely involved, up from 59% in 2025).

91%

of partners said GLA students completed the amount of work they expected or more (43.75% more than expected).





65%

of partners rated the quality of work completed by GLA participants as better than expected, up from 62% in 2025. The rest said it was as expected, and none rated it lower.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHTS

Spotlight on a few of our longstanding partners whose dedication and vision have been instrumental in shaping the success of our programs over the last 22 years, and the continued growth and positive transformation within their own communities.



HENRY DJABANOR

LOCAL DIRECTOR & GLA GHANA PARTNER

"COVID taught us that what we do cannot be replaced by Artificial Intelligence. We shall continue to be the change."

Henry Djabanor, Local Director & GLA Ghana Partner

Henry has GLA running through his veins. Born in Accra, he enjoyed a privileged upbringing and has been involved with GLA Ghana since its inception. A 2012 visit to the headquarters in San Diego left a lasting impression, instilling a deep appreciation for the organization's culture, work ethic, shared purpose and mission.

As Local Director, Henry manages the Home Base as a close-knit family, treating every member as an integral part of the Children of Africa Krobo Team. He leads by example, taking pride in handling on-the-ground errands for both local and international teams to ease their workload while maintaining high expectations for everyone.

Henry is deeply dedicated to developing local facilitators and service providers year-round. His work in the Asitey community is closely connected to local children, parents, service initiatives and the broader village community, with a particular focus on youth engagement and community service projects.

Recognizing that engaging with local children only during the summer limited opportunities to build lasting relationships and trust, Henry established a year-round youth club that meets regularly at the Home Base or Asitey Park. Drawing on his previous experience running youth centers in Kent, England, he engages children through sports and a reading club, with future plans to develop farming projects and a dedicated playground.

Through these ongoing efforts, Henry and his team regularly bring together 50 to 200 children throughout the year, with gatherings reaching up to 300 children during the summer months. Additionally, the team purchases clothing from local markets to supplement donations from GLA students and hosts biannual clothing distributions for children in the community.

Henry's dedication reflects our shared values: Community Leadership, Authentic Cultural Immersion, Community Empowerment and Trusting and Empowering the Next Generation. We are honored to partner with Henry and have his leadership guiding our programs in Ghana.

IN HENRY'S WORDS

HENRY DJABANOR
LOCAL DIRECTOR & GLA GHANA PARTNER



"Our impact within the community has been phenomenal. … Through the supervision of GLAIF, there was a massive donation of school supplies to the Asitey Presbyterian School. Every child received a quantity of books, pens, pencils, and even the teachers also had supplies to aid in their work.

There is an opportunity to make a greater impact for the future. A dilapidated building at the Presbyterian School was meant to be a Library but is stalled due to a lack of funding. GLA can complete the building to add value to our community engagement with them."





"The GLA Children of the Africa Krobo program has been a wonderful success story for even our GLA Students. The Home Base was purpose-built to give our students an authentic look at how Ghanaian teens grow up in our boarding schools. They leave Krobo more socially engaged and more empathetic toward teachers. … I have a very capable team that is passionate about making the home base comfortable yet authentic for staff and students."

PARTNER SPOTLIGHTS

JUAN YUPANQUI

QUECHUA COMMUNITY LEADER & LOCAL PARTNER, PATACANCHA



"What was built in Patacancha is more than a house. It is a bridge between cultures and a lasting space for cultural preservation, community strength, and shared humanity"

Juan Yupanqui, Quechua Community Leader & Local Partner, Patacancha

Juan Yupanqui Quispe is a master weaver, Quechua leader, and tourism pioneer born and raised in Patacancha, a high-Andean village of 350 people at 3,800 meters. After two decades as an Inca Trail porter, he co-founded the Association of Agricultural Producers and Weavers of Patacancha and now runs rural homestays with his wife, renowned textile artist Mama Elena, in partnership with Awamaki and Andean Walk. Grounded in his love for the earth, his alpacas, and his people, Juan helped champion the Association's 35 families' shared dream: building a traditional thatched Andean house to gather, showcase ancestral weaving, and host cultural exchanges.

Beginning his partnership with GLA in 2024 as a seasonal Community Service Partner and Leader, Juan led the co-construction of the Patacancha Community House.

- **Hands-on Collaboration:** Over three summers, Juan and the Patacancha Association hosted and worked side-by-side with 155 GLA students and over a dozen local and international staff members.
- **Organic Andean Architecture:** Designed to serve all common interests of the community, the house was built stone by stone and brick by brick through the joint effort of two cultures working toward a single goal.

For Juan and the community, the true achievement lies far beyond the physical structure. The initiative stands as a living demonstration of what can be accomplished when international volunteers and the Quechua community collaborate with mutual respect and shared purpose.

- **Cultural Exchange & Learning:** Both cultures benefit deeply from direct interaction, proving that meaningful, positive change transcends age, background, and origin.
- **Sustaining Local Traditions:** The project ensures ancestral weaving practices and living Andean traditions are preserved and passed down to future generations while supporting the local economy.



Juan's life and work reflect our shared core values:

- **Community Leadership**
- **Ancestral Preservation**
- **Experiential Learning**
- **Mutual Respect Across Cultures.**

We are honored to partner with Juan, Mama Elena, and the people of Patacancha as we continue building bridges that connect global students with living Andean traditions.

CONTRIBUTIONS: OPENING DOORS

At Global Leadership Adventures, we believe that the opportunity to travel, engage in meaningful service and grow as a global leader should be accessible to as many students as possible. We recognize that financial barriers can prevent students from participating in these life-changing experiences, and we are committed to reducing those barriers through a variety of scholarship opportunities. These contributions reflect our commitment to helping students from all backgrounds experience personal growth, cultural immersion and meaningful service. By expanding access to our programs, we aim to inspire a generation of leaders who will create positive change in their communities and beyond.

$494,079

in scholarships, tuition assistance, and fee waivers in 2026, up from $410,000+ in 2025.





61% NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

More than half of all financial assistance awarded went to students with financial need, reflecting GLA's continued commitment to making its programs accessible to students from a wide range of financial backgrounds.

30% TUITION SUPPORT

through GLA's need-based scholarships for qualifying students, helping to make our programs more affordable for families.





1 FULL SCHOLARSHIP

Every year, we grant one full IDEA Scholarship (covering tuition, airfare, passports, visas and other program costs) to a student, alongside GLA Ambassador Scholarships for alumni spreading the GLA spirit back home.

GLA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION: BE PART OF THE CHANGE

Global Leadership Adventures

FOUNDATION







The Global Leadership Adventures (GLA) International Foundation supports grassroots projects to empower communities and provide young people with opportunities to create positive change through three mission-driven funds:

The Learning AFAR Fund: Enables underserved students to experience life-changing, immersive travel programs that open doors and foster growth through service.

The Community Partner Fund: Supports our local partners to ensure they have the resources needed to continue their vital, year-round work and sustain their impact.

The Need-Based Scholarship Fund: Provides financial assistance for students to participate in GLA service-learning programs, regardless of their financial background, breaking down barriers to leadership and service.

GLA covers all administrative costs, ensuring that

100%

of donations go directly to these funds.

BE PART OF THE CHANGE

We invite you to join us in supporting these meaningful efforts. Whether you choose to donate to a specific fund, spread the word, or connect with us to learn more, your involvement helps ensure these funds can continue to empower students, sustain our community partnerships, and create positive change.

Give today: glaif.org

Certified B Corporation

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“This experience was life changing! I had the opportunity to help remove trash from beaches, promote cleaning trash by making and hanging beautiful signs, and help repaint a daycare. Using Spanish to communicate opened gateways I never thought of before. Hearing what is happening to the beaches because of climate change and the conditions of the schools inspires me to take on service projects in the future and commit myself to educating others about these important topics. This was such a great trip and I couldn’t recommend it more!”

MAX Y., FIRST-TIME GLA STUDENT
COSTA RICA: BEACHSIDE SERVICE ADVENTURE



VOICES OF GLA

”

“Working at GLA, I feel respected, supported, and valued as an employee while having the opportunity to work with young people and share incredible experiences. What more could I ask for?”

MARGARIDA M., FIFTH-YEAR ALUM STAFF
INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISOR, COSTA RICA 2026

”

“GLA makes the promises, and it’s my job to keep them.”

HENRY DJABANOR
LOCAL DIRECTOR & GLA GHANA PARTNER



2026 BY THE NUMBERS

A year of service, partnership and people, at a glance.

35,643
total service hours

71
communities worldwide

7,100+
people directly supported

37,500+
lives touched

SERVICE HOURS BY REGION



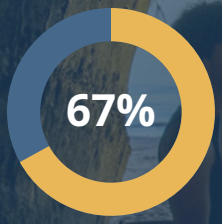






Central America	15,150	15 communities
South America	5,557	21 communities
Asia & the Pacific	4,926	11 communities
Africa	4,450	6 communities
Europe	2,710	8 communities
The Caribbean	2,450	6 communities
United States	400	4 communities

OUR STAFF



of staff return season after season, up from 60% in 2025

26 countries our staff were hired from



62% female
37% male
1% self-described



"GLA is a great organization that positively impacts youth. Guiding them in their process was also a great challenge for me to become a better leader."
PAULINA P., INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC 2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & GRATITUDE

As we celebrate more than two decades of fostering leadership, service and cross-cultural connections, we are filled with immense gratitude for the incredible individuals and organizations that have made this journey possible.

To our students: You are the heart of GLA. Your passion, curiosity and courage to step out of your comfort zones inspire us daily. Watching you grow as leaders and changemakers fuels our commitment to creating transformative experiences.

To our staff: Your dedication and expertise make the magic of GLA possible. From guiding students through challenges to forging deep connections with local communities, you embody our mission and values in every way.

To our local partners: Your vision and collaboration ground our programs in authenticity and sustainability. Thank you for welcoming us into your communities and working hand-in-hand to create meaningful change.

To our alumni and supporters: Your ongoing enthusiasm, advocacy and contributions help us expand our reach and impact. We are grateful for your belief in the power of youth to shape a better world.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look to the future, we remain committed to evolving and expanding our programs to meet the ever-changing needs of our global community. Our vision is to inspire more young leaders, deepen the impact of our service projects, and continue building meaningful partnerships worldwide. Together, we can amplify the ripple effect of these experiences, creating a world that is more connected, compassionate and sustainable.

BE THE CHANGE!