



Travel and work during your gap year

DELIA O'MEARA
Systems Administrator

Final exams are over and school's out. Some school leavers will be starting work in the New Year, while others will be taking a rest before starting their studies at university, college or technikon.

There are, however, many school leavers who are still undecided about the field of study they wish to pursue. Perhaps taking a gap year to experience life, find out more about oneself and see what is out there is a good idea. Using the opportunity to acquire a little experience in various work environments could make all the difference when deciding on a career. At the same time, it affords one time to travel and to open oneself up to new experiences.

Most young people are not in the fortunate position to be able to travel abroad for a year; all expenses paid by Mom and Dad. At most they may be able to depend on their parents to foot the bill for a return flight to wherever it is they intend travelling to. Most will need to subsidise their gap year by finding work in the countries that they are visiting.

So just how does one go about finding a temporary job in a foreign country?

Using a Google keyword search, 'gap year', I found a vast number of sites. I was amazed at what types of jobs are on offer to young people between the ages of 18-30 on a temporary basis. There are positions in every type of organisation and industry all over the world. Use a keyword search for the type of job that you are interested in and access the web sites to obtain more detailed information.

Here are just a few of the job types that I researched:

Au pair work



This type of work is usually only available to women, but some countries do employ male au pairs. In exchange for looking after the children, the au pair receives free meals and accommodation, as well as a weekly

stipend. In some cases the host family even pays for the return airfare.

The advantage of this type of job is that one is usually treated as part of the family. For those leaving the nest for the first time to venture out on their own, it feels like a safe environment - going from one home to another. As an au pair usually has the weekend off, there is time to do a bit of travelling.

<http://www.ovc.co.za>

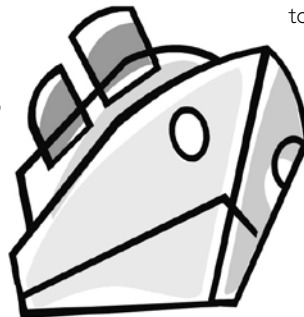
The Overseas Visitors Club has 23 offices in South Africa. They arrange au pair work in the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA). The requirements and costs are set out on the web site.

<http://www.aupairanywhere.co.za>

Aupair Anywhere is based in Johannesburg. They provide employment both in South Africa and abroad. A clear set of rules for au pairs is available on their site.

Working on a cruise ship

How would you like to spend your gap year working on a cruise ship? The hours are long, 10-16 hours per day, and working on a cruise ship can be



very hard, but one does get to visit exotic places. Experience in hotel and hospitality industry type jobs is usually required for jobs aboard a cruise ship and job seekers need to be at least 21 years of age.

<http://www.virginfieldtourism.com>

Virginfield is one of the leading cruise job recruitment agencies in South Africa. Their web site provides useful information regarding the pros and cons of this type of work.

<http://www.cruisealternatives.com>

Cruise Alternative CC is a cruise ship recruitment agency in South Africa which handles all aspects of recruitment.

<http://cruiselinesjobs.com>

One can obtain links to recruitment agents in South Africa, as well as current job vacancies, on this web site. There is a very useful section on how to go about applying for a cruise ship job.

Teaching English as a foreign language

Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) is becoming a popular way of seeing the world, while earning money at the same time. It is not necessary to be a univer-



sity graduate to become a certified TEFL teacher. However, most countries expect one to have a tertiary degree of some sort. The Boston Language School in Cape Town offers a TEFL certification course, as do a number of other language schools around the country.

With a TEFL certificate, the world is your oyster and you can find a teaching position in almost every country.

<http://www.islandtefl.com>

Island TEFL is located on the island of Koh Samui, Thailand. They offer various packages. Their web site also provides information on job opportunities worldwide.

<http://www.bostonlanguagecollege.co.za>

The web site provides details of the TEFL and Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) courses offered at Boston Language School in Cape Town.

<http://www.worldlinkedu.com/teach-in-china/>

This is the web site for Worlds Link Education's Teach in China Programs. Successful candidates receive attractive salaries, which include accommodation, as well as other benefits - pre-paid flights, performance bonuses, et cetera.

Summer camp jobs in America



Every year thousands of American children attend summer camp. Not all summer camps are alike. There are camps that cater for children with special needs, camps that focus on a specific field - sport, music, et cetera, camps for poor children from the inner cities and even day camps. If you enjoy working with children, this may be just the job for you. The camp jobs last up to eight weeks and thereafter you can spend a month travelling around America. The following organisations will assist with arrangements and placements:

<http://www.sasts.org>

South African Students' Travel Services is able to assist students with travel and working opportunities abroad. There is a section on their web site which deals with

job opportunities at summer camp in the USA.

<http://www.ccusa.com>

Camp Counsellors USA recruits staff for more than 1000 camps in the USA, as well as in various other countries. They will assist with all aspects of the programme, including flights, placements, training, et cetera.

There are so many different types of temporary jobs available to students wanting to travel and work abroad. One can work on a Kibbutz in Israel; go fruit picking in England; work on organic farms in Europe; at ski resorts in Europe; in hotels, clubs and bars anywhere in the world; and even work on a sheep farm or cattle station in Australia. Just do a keyword search of the type of job you are interested in and have a look at what is available.

There are organisations in South Africa which can assist with travel arrangements, visas, accommodation and jobs. They do charge a fee, but then one is assured that all the requirements have been met in order to be able to work abroad.

You may find some of the following sites helpful:

<http://www.cosmorecruit.co.za>

Provides information on the following:

- job availability and what one can expect to be paid for various jobs in the UK, USA and Canada
- documentation requirements
- accommodation and costs
- travel arrangements.

<http://www.ukworkingholidays.co.za>

Assists with:

- planning working holidays
- visa applications
- travel arrangements
- medical cover
- answering FAQs regarding working holidays.

<http://www.workawayinternational.co.za>

Workaway International specialises in recruitment and placement of South Africans at country clubs in the USA.

<http://www.awesometravel.co.za>

Assists with work abroad in the UK and USA.

<http://www.statravel.co.za>

Offers various packages, which includes a bank account in the UK, Internet access at the Smoothie Lounge, access to a designated work agency for temporary job location, and much more.

Internships and volunteer work

And what about those school leavers who need to find a job, but keep getting turned down because they have no experience? They don't have to mope around the house day in and day out, while they apply for



jobs and go for interviews. Consider using your time productively by volunteering, or apply for an internship. Volunteers aren't usually paid for their services and not all internships include payment, but either of these experiences can be added to your CV and will be considered 'experience' by a prospective employer. Use keyword searches - 'Internships' and 'Volunteering'. There is sure to be something available that you would be interested in doing. It might open up a whole new area of interest and lead to a career in a whole different field from the one that you originally envisaged.

I've given you some ideas and now it's up to you to get 'googling' and find out more about what you want to do with your Gap Year, or what you can do until you land the job of your dreams.

