

Isobel Roberts

My Internship Experience, Summer 2019

I first started volunteering with Zimbabwe Educational Trust in my second year of uni. As an International Development student, the objectives of the organisation aligned perfectly with my interests, studies, and passion to make a positive difference. I began working on developing a database containing information of potential trusts that might fund ZET's activities, and I also helped to write our quarterly reports for Global Giving, one of our main fundraising platforms. It was during this period that I began to learn more and more about ZET's partner projects. I became inspired by both the work that takes place on the ground in Zimbabwe, and the dedication of ZET staff and volunteers here in Leeds to make the ground work possible. Not only this, but I saw the potential difference my contribution as a volunteer could have to the organisation and their beneficiaries. So, I chose to dedicate three weeks during Summer working full time for ZET as an intern....Here's what I got up to!

In three words:

- Fun
- Flexible
- Rewarding

Tasks and Responsibilities

1. **Research for and analysis of grant making trusts viable for ZET funding:** Entered potential funders into a database to record essential criteria and contact information via MS Excel.
2. **Development of grant proposals for funding applications:** Drafted funding applications detailing partners' ground work, case studies and budgetary information.
3. **Management of social media platforms:** Provided up-to-date content and media on Facebook and Twitter. Worked to increase our base and expand our social media audience. Advertised volunteer opportunities via socials.
4. **Updating and expanding fundraising platforms:** Completed [Global Giving](#) rewards exercises to improve our position in their rankings. Promoted our links to [Give as You Live](#). Set up ZET on new fundraising platforms e.g. [Givey](#).
5. **Correspondence with third parties via email and telephone:** Managed email account and made numerous fundraising enquiries over the telephone.
6. **ICT:** Updated website content. Drafted new volunteer opportunities information. Advertised new volunteer opportunities by different means including various university portals, ZET website and volunteer matching sites.

Personal benefits & most enjoyable aspects

1. **Internship tailored to my interests:** At ZET I was lucky enough to have a huge say in the work that I did. Before starting, my Operations Manager made sure he understood what I wanted to get out of the internship. He then translated this into tasks relevant and useful to both me and the organisation. This meant that I never found my work boring!
2. **Big responsibilities, big impact:** Interning at ZET was a unique experience because I was given the responsibility to work on tasks that had a considerable impact. Unlike working at a larger organisation, I was not limited to mundane administrative tasks. I got right to the heart of ZET. I was actively involved in numerous aspects of running a non-profit organisation. Thus, I knew my efforts were worthwhile and I was made to feel as though they were appreciated. Not only was I able to gain practical work experience that will be relevant to my future career, but I can be proud that my work has made a genuine difference to the organisation.
3. **Flexibility:** As an intern at ZET, I was afforded a great deal of flexibility. I was given the choice to work in the office, university library, and even from home. In the end, I chose to do a combination of the three. This degree of flexibility is rare, and one of the things that makes working for ZET special.
4. **Fantastic oversight by Operations manager:** One thing that made my internship particularly enjoyable was the

amicable relationship that I developed with my Operations Manager. As well as engaging in structured discussions about what needed to be done and by when, we had conversations about Zimbabwe, current affairs, informal chats and some banter. On top of this, I was provided with 10/10 support; any questions or uncertainties I had were met with patience and a willingness to help. This created a positive work environment and made it a pleasure to work alongside my Operations Manager.

Finally... I would recommend this experience to anybody!

Regardless of what you are studying I would recommend taking on an internship with ZET. I believe the skills and experience that I have taken away are invaluable for any young person and, importantly, transferable across disciplines. Moreover, because an internship with ZET is tailored to your interests, you will be able to choose tasks appropriate to your needs and develop the skills that *you* think will benefit you. An internship at ZET is suitable to anybody with the desire to make a positive change, and to those who are looking to gain professional experience in a fun, flexible and rewarding way!

If you have any questions about how to make this possible for you, or would like me to go into further detail about my experience as an intern, feel free to get in touch using the details below.