

I am Emily and I'm in the third term of my DNA year.

When I was searching for a gap year programme to get involved with I wanted to find the one that suited me to best. I found out about DNA and was searching through the different gap year tracks they offered, I saw mission track and it was perfect. It was everything I wanted from a gap year - I got to work for a church for two terms checking out what it takes to run a church and learn from some amazing teachers, serve the church and the community around and see God breakthrough in that community, get theology teaching from various speakers around the country plus the DNA team, receive heavy discipleship to help me discover who I am and who God made me to be and go abroad for a term and serve a church in another country and experience God in a new culture.



So here I am in India in my third term - I am staying at an OM (Operation Mobilisation) base in Hyderabad which is in central India. I will be spending 3 months here serving the slum ministry, working mainly with the children and tutoring other children in English and various other subjects. It has been a whirlwind first month, what with getting used to the very different culture, the food, the pace of life, the people, the language, the new ministry and teaching, but what an incredible first month it has been as well! There has been a lot to take in, but I am loving every moment. It has been hard sometimes - understandably as I am a long way from home and everything is very unfamiliar but the support from back home has been incredible and my friends here are such a blessing from God. God has been and is being very faithful and good and has covered everything I have worried about.

The DNA team have been such a massive support in my preparation for this trip and throughout it so far. Included in the mission track is the preparation you need before coming away. This comes in the form of mission training days with missionaries around the UK and a brilliant mission-based training week called Kairos. These help you to get your head around mission, why we do it, why God thinks it's important, how to go about it in the right way and get you thinking and praying for different people groups and nations. Before I came I felt very prepared for my 3 months away, what with the training, the advice, love and prayer I just couldn't wait to get started. The support from the team hasn't stopped even though I'm in a different country either. I have had plenty of encouraging emails, Skype and phone conversations and even a birthday card which was very gratefully received! It is so lovely hearing a loving voice at the end of the phone when you are so far away! I feel very blessed by the DNA team!

Highlights so far have been working with the children in the slums. They are so cute and have such

great personalities, they are so happy and resourceful and I have learnt so much from the way they live their lives. I love how a smile, a hug or playing a game with them can make their week. Without realising it God is working through me to bless these children and help them just have fun like kids their age should.

It has been fascinating experiencing and learning about the culture. I will not know everything in 3 months but I'm trying to soak it all up and even learn some of the language.

A massive highlight has also been the food - you will never taste anything like it anywhere in the world. The curries here are phenomenal and the best thing is when Indian women invite you into their home and teach you how to make it yourself!

I am so happy I decided to do DNA mission track, I have grown so much this year into the women that God has made me to be - that is down to giving God the space to teach and reveal this to me, the team and the friends I have journeyed with. I hope to learn and grow more during my adventure in India.