

Update 6: 23rd March off coast of Namibia, en route to Ghana in Atlantic Ocean

I am on a new ocean and only 25 days from home! Since my last update we had a fuel stop in Mauritius, 10 days at sea and 6 days in South Africa. We sailed out of the Indian Ocean and into the Atlantic.

I went back to Mauritius for the first time since 2006. The development of the island since then is really apparent, with new road networks and lots of new buildings especially in and around Port Louis. Since we only stop for 12 hours you can only get off the ship if you are on some kind of field programme.

I went to the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation to see their work. We took a boat trip to the island and then a walk around seeing pink pigeons and tortoises. I saw 'Big Daddy' – a 100+ year old tortoise. Imagine the changes that have happened in his lifespan.



This is a good example of an income-generation project that supports ecosystem protection and biodiversity.

Then back to sea for 6 days and back to my sea routine. The temperature started to shift from the incredibly hot and humid in Mauritius to the cooler temperatures of Southern Africa. We had some pretty pink looking shipmates after the trips returned from Mauritius given the closeness to the Equator and strength of the sun. We sailed down the coast of South Africa, coming close to Port Elizabeth and all the coastal towns. It was strange after so long at sea seeing no other boats to see twinkling lights on the horizon.

The last few days before Cape Town were relatively rough; but I am sure our Captain saves the worse for when we are all asleep in bed! Thankfully I've had no seasickness – especially

since the patches seem to send everyone to sleep!

We arrived in Cape Town on the 18th and I decamped to Breakwater Lodge at the Graduate School of Business. I spent four days hanging out there seeing old friends and colleagues, discussing new projects and making plans for my South Africa PhD partnership programme funded by the NRF and ESRC.

On the fifth day I held a reception on the ship attended by social entrepreneurs, students, faculty and others involved in the social enterprise landscape in South Africa. We had a fabulous choir, great food, amazing conversations and a chance to show off our amazing ship to our visitors.



Students from my classes also attended this reception and were able to meet some of the people I have been talking about in my classes and bring their learning to life. This is the amazing part of semester at sea – the chance to experience what we talk about in the classroom in person. To see the business examples, meet the entrepreneurs and get a real sense of the context of the countries in which these mission-driven businesses, such as social enterprises, are based and the challenges they face.



No more so than on our final day when the students in my social and sustainable venturing class went on a field trip for the day. We visited a NGO project for young adults timing out of foster care called Fountain of Hope. Here they learn skills for employment and independence to make their transition out of the care system more successful.



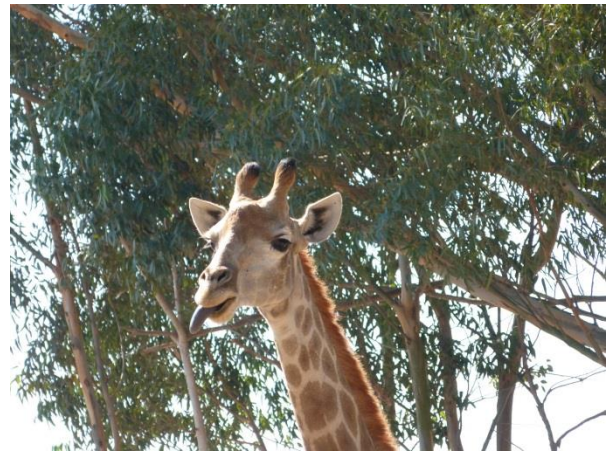
Then we went to Philippi Village to visit a business incubator, the new solution space impact hub on the Philippi campus of the University of Cape Town, and the shipping container walk that houses these embryonic small businesses.

During a lovely boxed lunch, sitting in the grounds of the facility, we also watched a group of school children (aged around 14-16) have an open air school assembly and peer talks about the challenges they face, interspersed with some amazing singing.

Then we headed off to Stellenbosch to visit Villiera Winery and learn about their sustainability initiatives and social programmes.



They have a nature reserve on site so we all drove around that to learn about all the things they do. This includes healthcare and education initiatives for their workforce and their families. The winery has rain water harvesting, solar panels, recycling, no pesticides and lots of clever sustainability practices.



It even has giraffe!

We finished with a small taste of wine – for those in the UK try the Crow's Fountain at M&S!



But it wouldn't be a proper field trip without a bit of drama. So we headed off to the ship as we were sailing that evening. On ship time was 6pm.

About 40 minutes outside Cape Town, in a traffic jam on the main highway, about 4.15pm we broke down! We had to wait for replacement bus to get to us; not easily in gridlocked traffic on a Friday evening. It was a bit worrying!

But we made it finally – with the last of our group of 27 getting through face-to-face immigration at about 6.40pm. Since we were the last to arrive at least we had no queues to navigate! We sailed at 8pm – so we cut it pretty fine!

Next is Ghana – one of my highlights for this voyage as I have never been to West Africa. I am fascinated to see whether there are contrasts between the areas we visit (Takoradi and Accra) and other places I have seen in Eastern and Southern Africa.

But before that, tonight in fact, we have the SAS talent show which promises to be a raucous, hysterically funny all-ship event!

Diane