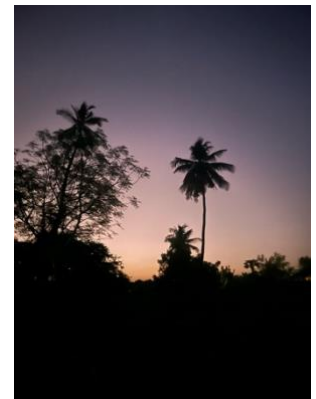


## WEEK 1 in Zanzibar – Coastal and Marine Conservation

Day 1 - Today we had a tour of the village, and it was a culture shock, so much I didn't know or expect. In Zanzibar, people live a very simple life with their children running around playing together and always waving and shouting energetically 'HUKAMBO!!' at every foreigner . We went to the turtle hatchery to learn how to correctly spot a turtle nest and how to pick up the eggs and in which order. I learnt that you could tell whether an egg will be female or male dependent on the temperature of the sand, for example 30 degrees means female whereas 28 degrees or less means male. We learnt about the different turtle types and the leatherback turtle and why it can dive deeper than any other turtle due to its soft shell not being affected by pressure increase with depth.



We had dinner with the village and the food was amazing!! Every meal I've had is just so flavourful, natural, and healthy and best of all, vegetarian so no issues there for me! We got to meet some of the residents in the village and hear their stories and it was such a lovely bonding time. Everyone has so much positive energy. It was also a shock to learn and hear about the life of the local women and the difference in culture, we went around the group to introduce ourselves and to hear younger

women than me talk about how many kids they have and how many wives their husband had was hard to listen to, 19 year old girls sitting with multiple kids around the age of 4/5 knowing very well their husbands are much older.

Day 2 - Today we had a class full of kids from the village and we were learning about recycling and sustainability and going through different materials and how they are disposed, it was so lovely being immersed in with the kids and getting to know them and be in the presence of their excited energy. They were awarded with playing balls and bracelets when they answered the questions correctly and it was a good way to teach them about plastics and biodegradable materials so that they have a better understanding of how to dispose of materials.



The local village is bombarded with trash because the villagers are not educated on the right ways to dispose of plastics and non-biodegradable material, and the government has not enforced any laws on mandatory recycling or proper disposal.

Day 3 and 4 – During the weekend, we went to visit some of the most beautiful parts of Zanzibar. As a group we decided to go on a ‘Safari Blue’ where we snorkeled and were able to see so much amazing aquatic life from thorned starfish to the deadliest fish in the world, the stonefish.



## WEEK 2 in Zanzibar – Coastal and Marine Conservation

Day 5 – On Monday we went snorkeling to monitor the reefs and the variety of coral, fish, and invertebrates to analyse the change in species due to an increase in tourism over the years and the increase in temperature of the sea. We also were able to see how many coral reefs had been affected due to this and have experienced bleaching, this was a sad sight because most of the coral was dead or dying. This is detrimental to the ecosystem as the corals provide safety and a home to many small fish and vulnerable aquatic life. Furthermore, reefs play an important role as a carbon sink (CaCO<sub>3</sub>), with rates of the order of 70 to 90 million tonnes of carbon per year.

We also went on a boat ride to look for turtle trails to find eggs and relocate them to our turtle hatchery to protect them from predators and from locals who hunt turtle eggs for food. We were unsuccessfully in finding any trails and eggs, but I will keep going on the boat lookouts and hope for the best.

We then went to an Eid al-Adha celebration in the village where we were able to witness the importance of community, generosity, and gratitude in Islam. The celebration involved communal prayers, feasts, and created a sense of belonging and shared joy. The village children took turns reading the Quran and were awarded with small toys and snacks. It provided a unique opportunity to learn about and appreciate Islamic traditions, values, and cultural practices first-hand, fostering a deeper understanding.

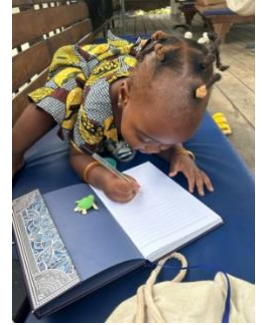
Day 6 – On Tuesday, I went to make banana jam with the local women in the village, it was a fun, engaging activity to do with the locals and the jam came out tasting soooo good and we left half for them to sell and the other half we took to the camp.



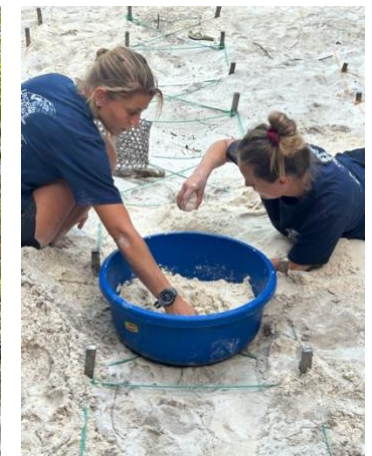
In the afternoon, I went to help out in a kids after school club at an international school, which had kids from all over the world; from Canada, Poland, Italy and many other places. It was a strange experience being in the presence of very rich and slightly spoiled children, all unaware of the poverty of the country they live in, hidden away from the reality. These kids have lived all their life in Tanzania because their parents are the owners of the hotels. It was a very interesting thing to be exposed to.



Day 7- On Wednesday, It was pouring down with rain so much that the activities were cancelled, the plan for the day was to do mangrove planting and reef monitoring but instead I just played with Salhya, who over the weeks became a big part of my experience.



Day 8 – Me and a group of volunteers were lucky enough to make soap with DADA woman’s cooperative. ‘Dada’ in Swahili means sister and is a term that is used for addressing an elder sister respectfully. It is a project set up as a socially responsible business network with women in the rural north of Unguja island.



Dada creates job opportunities by providing the women with training in food processing such as drying fruit and spices, cooking jams, condiments, and snacks as well as soaps and marketing their products locally and nationally.

We had also been alerted of a turtle nest finding so we travelling to the nesting spot to help relocate the eggs into the turtle hatchery and provide them with new cleaner soil etc. We were taught how to correctly place the eggs into the sand and the importance of the order, as the eggs located at the bottom, in the cooler sand are male turtles and those located near the surface in the warmer sand are female turtles. There was a total of 130 eggs! Which sounds hopeful for the turtle population but unfortunately only 1/1000 ever make it to adulthood.

Day 9 – I went to Otzi to facilitate a schools visit to the recycling ♻️ company.



Recycle @ OZTI is a non-profit CSR project of OZTI East Africa which upcycles HDPE and PP hard plastics, discarded tires and other waste materials into products. The waste plastics are collected, cleaned, cut, and separated by colour by the local women, who are otherwise incapable of getting jobs due to cultural norms. Ozti then upcycles this waste by shredding and melting it, which enables them to create various items from it.

In this school visit, we taught the local school children about how to identify HDPE and PP products by the bottom of the plastic as it has a line on it. This way the children can themselves get involved and help. We then played some educational games with them to teach them about the dangers of plastic in the ocean to marine life and it was a very enjoyable experience.

Day 10 – My favourite activity of all had to be reef monitoring. The chances to see the amazing coral reefs of the island and the aquatic life is something I won't forget. The reef monitoring involved calculating the number of invertebrates, sea urchins, and species of fish located within a marked section of 50m by 2.5m. The data collected will be analysed by a Marine Conservation Organisation, 'Under the Wave', with the aim of giving the data to the Tanzanian Government.



### **WEEK 3 in Zanzibar – Coastal Conservation**

Day 11- On Monday, I undertook a permaculture workshop and learnt about the different systems used in the camp itself for rainwater harvesting, water irrigation, grey water disposal and water collection for storage. It was fascinating to learn about all these simple natural methods that make all the difference and allow for a continuous cycle.

Day 12 – On Tuesday, I took part in the 'OceanKind' swop shop. Ozeankind is an association which mainly focuses on educational projects with children and plastic recycling. They have the Swop shops in Matemwe where children bring plastics to the Swop Shop in return receive

different kinds of gifts such as school supplies, school uniforms, school bags, Toothpastes,soaps ,shoes, balls etc.

Our task was to separate soft plastics from the plastic bottles that we receive from the children and remove the caps and wash them. It was such a fulfilling experience being able to see these children so excited with their plastic bottles ready to receive a little gift. This program was very successful as the children felt so rewarded while learning sustainable practices.

Day 13- I went to Recycle @ OZTI, a non-profit CSR project, which upcycles HDPE and PP hard plastics, discarded tires and other waste materials into products. The waste plastics are collected, cleaned, cut and separated by colour by the local women, who are otherwise incapable of getting jobs due to cultural norms.

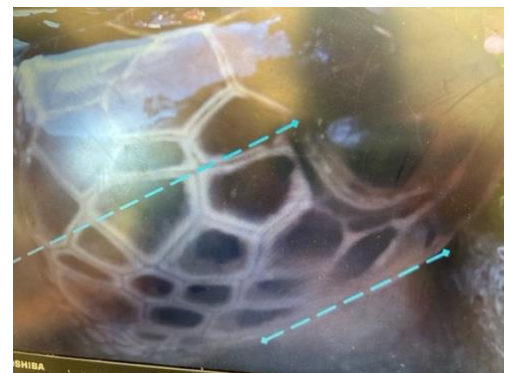
As volunteers, we helped in creating useful and decorative everyday items from plastic waste, such as keychains, baskets, and lamps.

We made 500 key chains in our visit and I couldn't resist to buy one for myself.



Day 14- On Thursday, I undertook a beach clean-up in the morning where we filled up 8kgs of trash each and then we had the opportunity to undertake another project with 'Under The Wave' where we were invited to work on a Government Sea Cucumber Farm sustainable livelihood project. A group of 7 of us joined to put a mesh up around the farm. The activity was conducted with UTW and village members and the project is to provide the villagers with another sustainable income through sea farming.

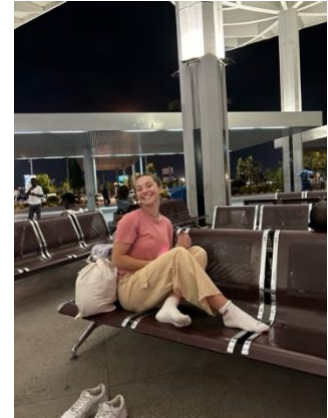
In the evening, I undertook Turtle ID coding which involved identifying turtles based on the pattern on the side of their face to remove the need for tagging and to have a database of all turtles found in Zanzibar. This is because tagging is invasive and unreliable as it often falls off the animal. Whereas, coding the sides of their faces only requires an image. We learnt how to code it which involves counting the rows and columns and the number of sides of each shape. It is trickier than it sounds. After learning and being tested to ensure we understood the correct way to do it,



we were given new photos to code and then write in the excel sheet for their database.

Day 15, 16, 17– While in Tanzania I knew there was one thing I would have to do, and that was a safari. I left the volunteering camp with a group of girls I had made friends with to undertake a 2-day safari on the mainland.

Now the first mistake we made was believe that we would be able to stay inside the airport during our 7-hour layover in the night. I guess some airports do not work like that in Tanzania because we spent the night outside with our fellow friends the mosquitos and slept on the benches. All I can say is, lesson learnt.



We went to Tarangire National Park and saw an array of animals including, lions, giraffes, elephants, a rhino. One thing I learnt on that trip was that lions are very lazy and don't move for 20 hours a day, so you can guess what state we saw them in.



We spent the night in the mountains in beautiful igloos with one of the prettiest views ever of Lake Manyara. The next day we went to Ngorongoro Crater and we ate our lunch with the hippos in the lake next to us in their natural habitat, the coolest moment of the trip.



## WEEK 4 in Zanzibar – Coastal Conservation

Day 18 – Another crucial project was the Dolphin behaviour study. This study is part of a bigger project that will be brought forth to the Tanzanian Government, if evidence suggested changes in dolphin behaviours due to tourists. So the story begins with the fact that tourists pay good money to see the dolphins and swim with them. But this entails following pods of dolphins, running over them with an engine and jumping onto them as they are circled by 40-50 boats. The first time I was on the boat helping in this project, I nearly cried. Watching these pods of dolphins being chased for 30-40 min at a time and then new boats come and then the process repeats. It just takes one out of fifty boats to see the dolphin for all of them to chase them.



We are monitoring the changes in the number of pods found in Zanzibar to see how the number is changing and whether it is reducing due to this. And this way this information can be bought and changed can be made to this section of tourism to make it more sustainable , for the sake of both the local businesses and the dolphins, if the numbers start reducing.

Day 19 – On Tuesday, I undertook in eco snorkelling, identify the different fish and invertebrates, collecting trash under the sea in corals and on top of sea by boat.

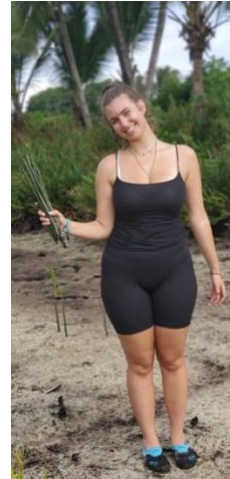
I then listened to an Ocean Talk held by a Conservationist who came from Italy to Africa to do marine conservation in Madagascar, Tanzania and more. This talk allowed me to better understand the steps taken to achieve work in conservation by people who have already done it and to better understand the realistic day to day work undertaken.



I then went to the international school in Matemwe to teach the kids more about recycling and its importance for the ocean and what steps they can take at home to helps.

Day 20 – I undertook mangrove planting, which was an intensive process of working under the sun for nearly 4 hours collecting Mangrove seeds (we collected 647 !) and then replanted the

them across the area to aid the growth as they are very important to the island, especially when it comes to soil erosion from the sea.



Mangrove forests are critical ecosystems, both for biodiversity and for humanity. They store carbon, are breeding grounds for many marine creatures, and have immense importance to protect coastal areas and the sweet water lens below Unguja island.

While most people think of forests when it comes to carbon storage, the ecosystems storing the most carbon per area are tundra, followed by seagrass meadows, mangrove forests, and salt marshes!

After we were rewarded with fresh coconuts from the palm tree next to us, it was amazing.



In the evening, I was part of the hotel visit waste program where we spent the time identifying all of the hotels in the area and calculating the amount of donation we would need to ask from them to run this project of paying locals to clean up the waste in Matemwe as a full-time job to make the village completely free of waste. So we started writing a draft letter to drop off at all the hotels and this is all part of a bigger project to keep Zanzibar clean!

Day 21 – I was part of ‘seagrass mapping assistance’ where we joined the local team of marine biologists and aided them as we snorkelled and helped with equipment and dived down to hold the instruments in place for them. The project aim is to calculate the amount of seagrass in a given area to determine whether there is a need to plant more.

Day 22 - Seaweed farming is an alternative source of income for women to fishing, which women usually do not engage in. Zanzibar is one of the largest exporters of seaweed globally, and seaweed is Zanzibar’s largest foreign exchange earner after tourism and cloves. However, the sale of the dried seaweed only brings a low income. We were working on designing a tourist activity to learn about seaweed, the local culture and meet the village to increase the income for the local women of the villages.

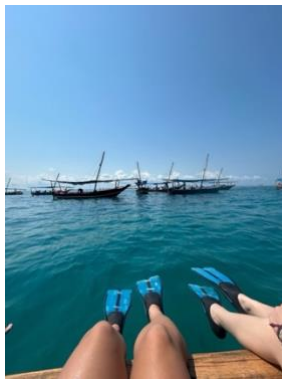
Day 23 – On Friday I was put on a ‘secret mission’ with 3 other volunteers – we had all been there the longest. And the mission involved going to two ‘turtle conservations’ where people

could swim with the turtles and feed them and our aim was to take photos of the sides of the faces of the turtles to then be able to identify them. The aim was , the conservations aim that every year these ‘injured turtles’ are released back into the ocean and that none stay over a year and our aim was to



code as many of their faces as we could so that that we could then see if any of the coding’s match up to turtles from the years before, which would imply that these turtles are in fact not being released and then this project could be raised with the government.

Day 24 and 25 – During the weekend, I went and did my favourite thing, snorkelling, and I wasn’t disappointed.



## **WEEK 5 in Zanzibar – Coastal and Marine Conservation**

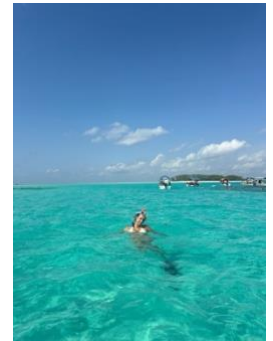
Day 26 – By week 5 I had completed all the tasks possible and had already repeated most of them a couple times so I was getting to a point of looking at my options. Therefore I took the initiative to ask to move to the Rainforest Conservation Camp in the south of the island. This was successful so I was able to move for my sixth week, therefore this was my last week at this camp.

During the day I took part in a fun arts and crafts activity of making mats out of old flip flops we had found washed up on the beach. These mats will be given to local houses as shower mats.





I also saw a really cool luminous spider known as a crab spider.



Day 27,28, 29 – Tuesday I took part in a clean clean-up and eco snorkelling. Wednesday, I did Reef Monitoring and Thursday I went to help out at the international school.

Day 30 – On Friday, a group of us went to the local daycare in the village and helped out with the kids, teaching them to count to 10 and learn colours in English. We then played games with them and they were honestly so adorable and happy. We learnt the sad truth that so many kids don't show up to day-care as their parents don't take it seriously and that the children sometimes don't show up for weeks at a time.



In the evening, I took part in Makuti Weaving, which was fun to learn and immersed me more into the Tanzanian culture, as a lot of the time houses are made with woven coconut leaves like this. The leaves we wove were to be used to protect the village plants from the goats and cows that just roam freely in the streets.

Day 31 and 32 – During the weekend, I took the local mode of public transport known as a 'dala dala' to the centre of the island to do some exploring and find a spice farm tour to take part in. Nothing booked, just a pure adventure. I came across this local spice tour, away from the tourism so it cost me 3 pounds, compared to the advertised tourists one which start at 35 dollars.



I was able to see so many spices and where they grow from cinnamon trees to vanilla to henna plants, star fruit and a lot more. I also lucky enough to smell the plant used to make Chanel 5 and

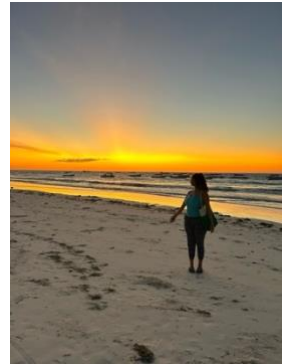
then purchase the local version known as ‘Chanel zero’, which honestly smelt like a complete replica!



Day 33 – Monday, I took part in a 5am boat patrol to search for turtle trails along the coast, the evening planned activities took a turn.

On the way back from the turtle patrol, in the village we were staying, a house had set on fire, we were quick to join the locals providing buckets of water.

Luckily no one had been inside during the fire, but you could hear the cries of the people who had just lost their whole livelihoods. The small houses house up to 10 people, that was 10 people who had lost all their clothes, their food, their belongings to the fire. After the fire was out, I started sweeping out the water from inside the house alongside the locals, I was shocked to see only one other volunteer with me the whole time.



After returning to the camp, it was clear that everyone had known the fire was happening but didn't want to do anything to help. This was so infuriating to see and hear, people more bothered about their plans for the night rather than these 10 people who just lost everything.

After speaking with the co-ordinators, I was given heads up on setting up a donation system to collect money to help repair and provide equipment, clothes, and food for the house. The donations were somewhat of a success with a total of approximately 130,000 shillings collected, equivalent to 50 dollars collected. They had lost ALL their clothes so for immediate support, we went to the house and dropped off some of our clothes, pillows and mattresses from the camp.

In the evening, I took part in a ‘Trash Parade’ where we went around the village picking up rubbish and plastic. It was so sad to see the number of wine bottles, eye contacts, diapers we found, which made it very clear that most of the rubbish being thrown here is from the hotels and not the locals. This is due to the fact there are no restrictions on waste disposal and hotels avoid paying for correct removal of waste by dunning them in the villages instead.



After the trash parade, the local village kids joined us in separating the trash which led to everyone dancing together with music. I was taught a variety of dances.

Day 34 – On Tuesday, I went on a fieldtrip with the local primary school in Matemwe to the beach where they were taught about turtles and turtle eggs in attempt to change the mindset of the villagers on the consumption of turtle eggs as food.

They were taught about the risk of injury to the turtles by fishermen and how many are wounded and how only 0.1% of all turtles survive till adulthood, to help emphasizes the need to protect them.



In the evening, I took part in another arts and crafts activity, which involved designing bottle cap curtains for the village houses as they had requested some after seeing the ones at the volunteering camp.

Day 35 – My last day in the Matemwe Coastal Camp, I did Dolphin Research for one last time and then said my goodbyes and left my handprint outside by tent. Leaving was hard because I had made some strong connections in there but I was ready for something different.



## WEEK 6 – Rainforest Conservation



Day 35- Wednesday, I arrived at the new forest camp and was introduced to a whole different atmosphere and a much more slow and chill way of life. I was also introduced to this game called ‘Crokinole’ which is like Pool, but you hit it with your finger and it is a very, very competitive game. I also learnt that cycling was the mode of transport here for volunteers to go to their activities, which scared me because the main roads were filled with reckless drivers and pot holes everywhere.

Day 36 – Thursday, We did cooking with the local ladies and cooked with this tasty fruit known as ‘bread fruit’ and I understand why, it tastes more like potatoes or bread than a fruit.

In the evening did weaving with coconut skin, which was very difficult, most definitely not one of my skills. We learnt how the skin of the coconut is left underground for up to 8-9 months until it has

dried up and then it is unburied and woven to make rope used for beds, benches and as a bag strap, etc.



Day 37 – Friday, We went to CHAKO, a recycling facility that recycles glass bottles from wine, alcohol and juice to make new glasses, candles and containers. The work CHAKO does is amazing and the products it creates are such high quality and beautiful. It provides jobs for women and allows for more income to come into homes.

We were lucky enough to be able to make our own glasses from step 1 which was a very fun experience. As well as this we joined the ladies in removing the labels on all the wine bottles.





Step 1: Soak bottles in Water



Step 2 : Peel bottle labels



Step 3: Use sharp tool to engrain mark into glass



Step 4: Put fire over engraving and rotate, then blow into bottle, causing it to separate into two parts



Step 5: Use sanding disc to smooth out edges and top of glass.

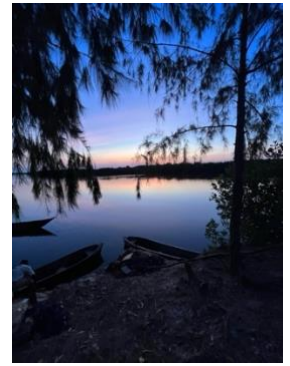


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Day 38 and 39 – During the weekend we took a ‘dala dala’ to the closest beach, it was so packed I was sitting on the floor on another volunteer’s lap but it was a fun experience. We enjoyed ourselves to some drinks and went for a swim. The sugar pot for my coffee from the hotel was actually from CHAKO too, funnily.



We also did a mangrove tour in canoes and it was amazing, no tourists, just us and Jeff (the sea snail).



Day 40 - I got bit by a stray cat and my dramatic self-took myself to the hospital to get a rabies shot.

Day 41 – Farming families on Zanzibar generally make a living from farming, raising livestock, hunting, and piling coal. However, this has devastating effects on the mangrove forest.

Uwemajo is a project that is creating alternative income so that the 118 farming families in the 56 square kilometer national park are not simply prohibited from doing their activities. The NGO has been given an area of 4 hectares for the new basis of life. A fish farm is operated there, greenhouses are being built so that the monkeys cannot do any harm and a reptile park has been opened for tourist purposes, for added income.

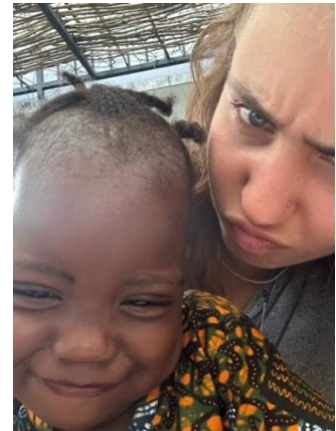
As volunteers we were there to clean the animal enclosures and remove dirt, faeces and leaves, and the fun part – we got to hold some baby tortoises (my favourite animal).



Day 42 – I had the morning free to pack and get ready to leave for my flight. It allowed me to reflect on my last 6 weeks and think about what I learnt and what I would take back with me in the UK, unfortunately the weather didn't make it.



Volunteering abroad for six weeks in coastal conservation offered me a unique blend of personal growth and environmental impact. I was able to gain hands-on experience in marine ecosystems, learning about biodiversity, sustainable practices, and the challenges of climate change. This immersive experience allowed me to foster a deep connection with nature and a commitment to preserving it. I developed valuable skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and cross-cultural communication, broadening my global perspectives. Moreover, it allowed me gain more understanding on what I want from my future and how I want to be able to continue helping to protect and restore fragile coastal



environments, supporting local communities, and promoting global ecological health.

11/06/24 – 24/07/24