

# Traveler Testimonial: Q & A

Part of what makes Better Globe a fulfilling experience is the potential to do better for the Earth, community, and individually. Incredible opportunities, such as purchasing trees for investment or participating in outreach, are available to any Better Globe customer.

We at Better Globe Media spoke with some of these inspiring individuals, Johan Pettersson and Tina Bjerke, about their experiences with Better Globe and the steps they to make a difference.

**BGM:** How and when did you get started with Better Globe?

**Johan:** In the beginning of 2014, I bought my first trees after hearing of Better Globe through a friend. I had recently been thinking about the inequalities in the world, and the fact that some are born into extreme poverty while others are extremely privileged. Better Globe was a great way for me to contribute and share the benefit I have by living in a wealthy country. Since I already was talking about and promoting Better Globe to people I met, I soon saw the benefit of becoming an ambassador.

**BGM:** Did you have any previous experience with environmental or humanitarian work?

**J:** Since I've gotten older and become aware of the impact our way of living has on the environment, I have made an effort in reducing harmful practices; I recycle household waste, think twice before shopping in excess, commute by bike, and choose organic when buying food. I had not been actively involved in any organization within the environmental or humanitarian fields before Better Globe. Now when I see the benefits for others, our environment, and for me personally, I wish I would have been introduced to this kind of work sooner.



**BGM:** What has been the most interesting part of participating with Better Globe?

**J:** The most interesting part is being part of something that changes lives for the better. It is really powerful to see the huge difference it is possible to make with relatively small amounts of money. I'm impressed with the work Better Globe does and the ability to make something out of nothing when it comes to creating forests in areas on the verge of desertification. The fact that Better Globe does that in a sustainable and profitable way is awesome.

**BGM:** Was your trip to Africa in 2015 your first trip? If so, what were your expectations and how did the trip meet or surpass those expectations?

**J:** The trip I made to Kenya and Uganda to take part in Better Globe's work was my first visit to Africa, besides a week vacation in Tunisia 10 years ago. The trip exceeded my expectations in many ways. I'm still astounded of how much we got to experience in those two weeks! We covered all aspects of the operation and got real insight in the different functions ranging from in-depth knowledge of the mukau tree, to discussing school curriculum with teachers, to learning about the cooperative structure of the micro finance bank.

**BGM:** What did you gain from the trip? How were your interactions with everyone with you as well as the natives?

**J:** From the trip, I gained a personal experience of how Better Globe's work benefits the lives of native people. I got to meet so many different people and get to know them in a way that is not possible without a unique trip like this. There are so many unforgettable moments from the trip. I also really appreciate the opportunity to get to know the company so much better by talking to the wide range of people involved: management, administration, plantation staff, tree experts, etc. The mood within our group was great and we really got to know each other. The age spanned from 18 to 70 years and we all had different backgrounds, but we were joined by our commitment and interest in doing good for others and our planet. I look forward to going back!



BGM: How and when did you get started with Better Globe?

Tina: I heard about it from friends, and I got really interested because Africa has always been very close to my heart since I was a kid. When other people asked me what I was going to do when I was an adult, I would mention going to Africa. At that time, I knew of the crises they were experiencing, especially starvation in Biafra. I talked about going to Africa, but things happen in life along the way and I lost track. When I heard about Better Globe, I thought it was my chance to do something I always wanted. I own 900 trees currently and I'm going to buy more. My goal is to buy a couple of hundred this year. But the trees are more than an investment. Doing this helps me see what the trees do for the people and the earth, as well as for my future.



BGM: Did you have any previous experience with environmental or humanitarian work?

T: Smaller actions here and there. I donated to UNICEF and Save the Children for a couple of years. I did a little bit where I could, but my commitment is bigger with Better Globe because I can actually get involved with heart and time, whereas before I only donated.

BGM: What has been the most interesting part of participating with Better Globe?

T: (Child Africa's) work with the schools and kids, and what we can do for women. When we spoke with people there about the microloans process for example, the group was mostly comprised of women. If we can help women to help themselves, it effects more people, it helps whole families and many children. With our schools, I enjoy thinking of how we work with kids there. What I could see was how we build self-confidence and integrity in the kids, which is a main goal of Child Africa. Our method of building integrity involves big change through small actions: we teach them to believe in themselves through teaching and performances, which also improves their self-esteem. In this way, Child Africa's teaching methods are different than schools that are already established in Kenya.



BGM: Was your trip to Africa in 2015 your first trip? If so, what were your expectations and how did the trip meet or surpass those expectations?

T: Yes, my first time with Better Globe and first time ever. I had been traveling a lot and visiting a lot of third-world countries in Asia and South America. In poor areas of Kenya and Uganda, especially Kenya, I couldn't see any TV or hear any radio. The world is so small for the people there. Where I had been before, even in the poor areas, people had some connection with the world around them. That hit me, because some of them have never even seen white people, which was a big realization for me. With everything I saw, I thought of how people could live with no food, water, or electricity, but they were still friendly and proud of the lives they had there. To respect them and understand what I was experiencing, I had to shift my perspective from feeling sorry to accepting their lifestyle. They are poor financially, but maybe they are richer in different ways, so what kind of life is the right life? They take care of each other and are more family-oriented. All of our different meetings, with women, children, and men, were so friendly and happy. Nothing is like it.



BGM: What did you gain from the trip? How were your interactions with everyone with you as well as the natives?

T: For the first time, I made a dream come true by going to Africa, and I met my sponsor child, Kelly. It was so emotional to meet him and see his family (his mother and sister). The only issue was our limited amount of time, but I was lucky he was there. We were both crying when I left, and I am looking forward to returning for a week through Child Africa for a sponsor trip and see him again. I am grateful for what I have and how easy my life is after seeing how they live. It's very easy to complain about nothing. The group from Better Globe was helpful; it was a challenge to travel together for two-and-a-half weeks, but the trip was well organized and we accomplished a lot. At times we were faced with some challenges, but that didn't distract from the rewarding experiences, from meeting people to making small differences. I'm looking forward to going back and seeing some women in the Sosoma area who were the first to apply for the outgrower program. I'm excited to know how things are going for them.

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