



# Botswana

## Community-Based Natural Resource Management

**Credits** 16

**Program Base** Gaborone

**Language Study** Setswana

**Homestays** Gaborone, Mogobane, 2 weeks each

**Rural Visit/Homestay** Sexaxa, on the fringes of the Okavango Delta, 2 weeks

**Educational Excursions** Okavango Delta, Moremi Game Reserve, Central Kalahari Game Reserve, the Tsodilo Hills, Chobe National Park, and Makgadikgadi salt pans

**Environmental Components** Conservation practices in wildlife reserves, rangeland management issues in southern Botswana, Okavango Delta ecosystems, ecotourism and community development

**Field Practicum** 4 weeks

**Prerequisites** Previous college-level coursework in ecology, biology, environmental studies, and/or equivalent related coursework as assessed by SIT.

### Community-Based Natural Resource Management Seminar

ENVI 3000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours

An interdisciplinary course, conducted in English, examining the long-term conservation objectives and development needs of local populations in Botswana, with the opportunity to study contemporary environmental challenges in wilderness areas. Resources utilized in the delivery of course content include the Harry Oppenheimer Okavango Research Center, the University of Botswana, the Mokolodi Nature Reserve's education center, and leading nongovernmental organizations such as the Kalahari Conservation Society, CARACAL, and Environmental Watch Botswana. Lectures and discussions for this course generally include the following topics:

#### *Botswana Culture and Society*

Ancient and modern history; contemporary political and economic issues; rural development and appropriate technology; social anthropology; human and physical geography.

#### *Ecology and Conservation*

An introduction to Kalahari Desert and Okavango Delta ecology; wildlife diversity and management; deforestation; issues of wetland ecology in Botswana; water conservation; management of national parks and reserves; animal behavior and ecology; effects of economic development and tourism on the natural environment and human settlements; conservation education; environmental law and policymaking.

#### *Educational Excursions*

The Botswana program includes educational excursions designed to complement classroom study and other field-based activities. Researching and living in diverse locations from urban Gaborone, to the Tsodilo Hills, to wilderness areas of the Okavango Delta, students develop an awareness of the intricate ecology of the region and the challenges faced in maintaining its delicate

environmental balance. Students often have the opportunity to conduct fieldwork in wildlife management areas and private nature reserves.

#### *Rural Visit*

To afford direct knowledge of rural life, participants live for two weeks in a rural setting outside of Gaborone and another two weeks in Sexaxa, a village in northern Botswana. Village conditions are basic, frequently with no electricity or running water, and provide an invaluable opportunity to learn from people in rural Botswana.

#### **Environmental Field Study Seminar**

ENVI 3500 / 4 credits / 60 class hours

A course in research methods in both the social and natural sciences. The main focus is on learning how to collect, analyze, integrate, and report social and ecological data to critically understand and evaluate program-related environmental issues. Introduction to the Independent Study Project. Field study ethics and the World Learning/SIT Human Subjects Review Policy. Field studies, depending on program site and focus, may include designing a research project; writing a research proposal; interviewing; surveys; maintaining a field journal. Specific ecological field study methods may include micro- and macrohabitat analysis; biotic sampling and analysis; fauna and flora identification; biodiversity monitoring; population analysis; and animal behavior.

#### **Intensive Language Study: Setswana**

SETS 1000 / 4 credits / 60 class hours

Emphasis on beginning speaking and comprehension skills through classroom and field instruction. Classes are taught three to five hours daily in Mogobane, with further language practice during the other homestays.

#### **Field Practicum**

ISPR 3000 / 4 credits / 120 class hours

The Field Practicum offers students an opportunity for in-depth field study on a topic of particular

interest, and to practice field study techniques under the guidance of a mentor researcher. Working closely with the academic director, students are assigned to an advisor, who oversees and guides student field study on a particular project. Students are able to participate in important, and often longitudinal, studies of ecology and conservation in Botswana, while simultaneously gaining field study experience under the guidance and supervision of leading environmental researchers.

#### **Homestay**

Three two-week homestays: one in Botswana's capital city, Gaborone, the second in the nearby village of Mogobane, and the third in Sexaxa, a rural village in northern Botswana. Other accommodations during the program include hostels, campsites, private homes, or small hotels.

### Conflicting Perspectives on Elephants

Botswana, home to the highest population of elephants in southern Africa, faces a delicate balance between the conflicting needs of its human population and its elephant population. Students experience diverse perspectives in a visit to Mochaba Development, a safari company that promotes sustainable commercial hunting in Botswana. After explaining their work, Mochaba staff engage students in a discussion of the costs and benefits of hunting. Later, in a national park, students see firsthand the impact of the elephant population on vegetation, and the ongoing issues related to human populations, ecological impact, and the government's role in mediating the conflict.