

Volunteering Overseas

There are around 100 agencies in Britain that place volunteers abroad on work projects. At the end of this information sheet are details of websites and directories that can help you find an opportunity that is right for you. Volunteering overseas can be an extremely rewarding experience, but is not something that should be entered into lightly. Below are some of the things you need to think about before parting with any money.

Practical points to consider

- Length of time is a critical factor, as projects vary from short-term placements of a few weeks to longer-term projects of two years or more.
- Most organisations will ask you to pay an administration fee for arranging the trip for you.
- It is important to check whether the project provides for travel, accommodation, food and pocket money.
- Most projects ask for people with particular skills or experience.
- Many agencies are small and will place a limited number of volunteers.
- Some organisations are aimed at those of a particular religious creed.
- Applications to do overseas voluntary work should be made well in advance.

Checking out Organisations

It is important that you check out an organisation thoroughly before handing over any money or leaving the country. Ask if you can be put in touch with people who have been on their projects before. If possible, try to speak to someone who has volunteered with them in person rather than trusting testimonials. Look at insurance very carefully: will you need your own travel insurance, does their insurance cover you for the kind of work that you will be doing, what would happen if you needed to get back to the UK? Think carefully about the kind of work that you will be doing: is there a genuine need for volunteers to do this, or has the opportunity been created as an adventure holiday? Spend some time researching the country that you want to go to, check out the political situation, climate etc.

Finding voluntary work overseas

The Overseas Directory

www.timebank.org.uk

Timebank has set up a free online directory of organisations looking for volunteers to work abroad. You can search by category and find details of organisations with a brief explanation of their work and a list of the areas they have operate in.

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Other resources

Information on agencies that place volunteers abroad can also be obtained from the directories listed below. Copies of these directories should be obtainable from:

- Your local public library
- Any major book store
- A careers library
- Direct from the publisher

International Directory of Voluntary Work

Ed: Victoria Pybus, £10.99 (2000)

Vacation Work, 9 Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1HJ. Tel: 01865 241978. Website:

www.vacationwork.co.uk

By the same publisher:

Directory of Work & Study in Developing Countries

Toby Milner, £9.99 (3rd edition)

A handbook on opportunities in over 400 organisations in over 100 countries.

Kibbutz Volunteer

Ed. Victoria Pybus. £10.99.

A guide listing full details of 200 Kibbutzim.

Other publications

Finding Voluntary Work Abroad

Mark Hempshell, £9.99 (1999)

How to Books Ltd, 3 Newtec Place, Magdalen Road, Oxford OX4 1RE. Tel: 01865 793806.

Website: www.howtobooks.co.uk.

email: info@howtobooks.co.uk

A beginner's guide to doing voluntary work overseas.

Thinking About Volunteering Overseas

Volunteering and Overseas Development: A Guide to Opportunities

Both produced by: Returned Volunteer Action (RVA), 1 Amwell Street, London EC1R 1TH.

Tel: 020 7278 0804

RVA is an organisation for serving and returned overseas development workers.

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Other Publications:

A Year Between: The Complete Guide to Taking a Gap Year

Central Bureau

10 Spring Gardens

London

SW1A 2BN Tel: 020 7389 4004

Website: www.britishcouncil.org/cbeve

A directory and guidebook for people considering a gap year after school, college or university. 1999. £9.99.

The Internet

Volunteering England lists some organisations that accept volunteers for overseas work on its website: www.volunteering.org.uk/volunteer

For information of relevant agencies for gap year activities visit www.gapyear.com

www.peridot.co.uk will take you to the 'Gap Year Handbook' which includes a section on volunteering abroad

www.oneworld.org has a short list of voluntary opportunities overseas.

General information www.idealists.org

Working Abroad www.workingabroad.com hosts information about organisations recruiting volunteers and has previous volunteer feedback stories

The Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) also provides information about short term jobs abroad, internships (stages), international university information to students and recent graduates www.ciee.org

For further information contact:

Volunteering Pembrokeshire

PAVS

Email: volunteering@pavs.org.uk

