

Travel and Help – Go for Volunteer Programs

Volunteer travel is one of the most rewarding and enlightening travel experiences. You get to meet people from different cultures, interact with them and help them through their hardships. Most people shy away from volunteer traveling simply because they are not aware of what it is all about.

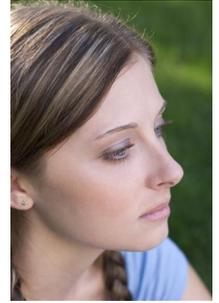


How to Register

Once you realize that you want to spend some time volunteering, the first step is usually getting a suitable volunteer program to work with. Different programs will have different volunteering options. There are people that decide to go out there as independent volunteers. However, that involves many risks. Here, is a list of common volunteer opportunities available:

- a. Volunteer building projects
- b. Orphanage volunteer
- c. Wildlife volunteer
- d. Conservation volunteer
- e. Medical volunteer

In order to decide what type of volunteer activity you want to do, you have to look at the skills that you have. These are what will make you a useful addition to the community you chose to volunteer with. For instance, if you are a trained Doctor, Nurse or Community health worker, you will be best suited for medical volunteering. Similarly, a trained teacher will have a great time doing orphanage volunteering. Once you have selected the type of volunteer activity you want to do, you can look for programs that support it.



Deciding Where to Go

It is important to note that most volunteer programs are focusing on the less developed world. You should be thus ready to travel to places such as Asia, Africa and parts of South America.

African volunteer programs are usually about helping the poor underprivileged kids to get an education. Due to the fact that several African countries are constantly engaging in civil wars, medical volunteer at refugee camps is also common.

Asia and South America is generally about but not limited to teaching languages especially English. If you have great teaching skills, you will fit well in these two places.

There are also local conservation and wildlife volunteering programs for people that want to help but do not want to leave the country.

Most programs will ask you to choose where you want to go and volunteer in. You just need to take time and select the location you find suitable.



The Requirements

Most organizations that support volunteer travel are very strict. Here are some general guidelines that most of the groups put up to make sure only sincere volunteers register.

To start with, there is a fee you have to pay. The fee will vary depending on the organization, the length of time you want to volunteer and the place you will go to. However, the fee is quite affordable. As a matter of fact, you can register for a program with as little as \$180. In addition to that, you have to be able to support yourself financially throughout the trip. The organizations might cover food and transport, but for the biggest part you are on your own.

As said earlier, you have to be sincere about helping. There are people that sign up as volunteers

thinking it will be a fun trip or some tourism opportunity. Most organizations will have you sign a contract to ensure that you stay committed to the project throughout.

Most of the programs require you to be above 18 years of age. If you are not, there has to be consent from parents or a guardian.

You have to be a person of good morals. Generally, if you are struggling with issues like drugs or alcohol, the organizations prefer that you deal with it before you sign up with them.

What You Gain

The benefits of volunteering and helping people are countless. To start with, once you step outside the comfort zone and meet people who have real problems, you are able to appreciate life. In addition to that there are many lessons poor people or people in hard life situations may teach you.

Volunteers on the other hand can make big differences in the communities they visit. They build houses, plant trees, care for the wildlife, teach the locals, and hundreds more things.

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