

# Voluntary Opportunities Overseas



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This Factsheet is designed to help anyone who is considering giving up some of their time to carry out voluntary work abroad. You may be contemplating taking a year off before, during, or after University. Perhaps you are between jobs and have decided to donate some time to worthy causes before committing yourself to paid employment again.

There are short-term opportunities through Scouting. However, for more long-term positions it is worthwhile exploring the many opportunities available outside Scouting. Remember that links can still be made with local Scouts during your time abroad!

## 1. Opportunities within Scouting

The chances for long-term voluntary positions through Scouting in another country are limited. This is because many Associations do not have the money to finance any volunteers. It is more likely that while you are abroad you will link up with local Scouts and get involved in their activities. They will no doubt welcome you warmly and be able to introduce you to the local community in ways which otherwise would not be possible. Remember as a Scout/Scout Leader going abroad you should talk to your Assistant County/ Area Commissioner (International) well before your planned departure, to obtain any addresses and an International Letter of Introduction.

### 1.1 International Camp Staff Programme (ICSP)

The Boy Scouts of America invite Scout Network Members (aged over 18) and Leaders (under 30)

to join the temporary staff of their summer camps throughout the USA, with general or more specific responsibilities. Volunteer staff act as instructors in badge work and therefore must be competent. They will also run many other camp activities such as large campfires and should be adaptable with a good sense of humour. The work is hard, but ICSP provides a very rewarding experience and a superb opportunity to spend a summer in America, discovering both the country and its Scouting. All accommodation and meals are provided, and you receive an average salary of \$800 for the whole period to cover some of your travelling expenses. The registration fee is £30, and you need to be available for six weeks, beginning sometime from late May to early July. Applications should be received by January for the following summer.

Details for ICSP can be found at

[www.scoutbase.org.uk/ps/inter/going/ics/index.htm](http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/ps/inter/going/ics/index.htm)

### 1.2 Kandersteg Volunteer Staff

Kandersteg International Scout Centre is a chalet and campsite set in the Swiss Alps, providing a "permanent mini-Jamboree" for Scouts from all over the world. In the summer, volunteer staff are needed to run programme activities, administration, the shop, reception, site services. Winter staff also help to run skiing courses. Staff pay their own travel, but accommodation and meals are provided at the Centre. The summer period runs from June to August or from July to September, and applications have to be received by the end of January.

Further details and an application form from the International Office or [www.kisc.ch](http://www.kisc.ch)

### 1.3 European Scout Voluntary Programme

This scheme is offered by the European Scout Region and placements are organized at camp sites and centres around Europe. Registration is co-ordinated by the Region and small travel grants are provided. Accommodation and food are provided by the host centre.

All the information, including registration forms, is provided online at [www.scout.org/europe](http://www.scout.org/europe) in the section headed European Scout Voluntary Programme.

Also check on Factsheet FS260027 on the Europe for You! Programme.

## 2. Opportunities with other Organisations

The list of positions and types of voluntary work available today is almost never ending. Because of this, simply providing a list of organisations which place volunteers would not be appropriate. What this paper gives are addresses, with summary information, of "umbrella" organisations which will point you in the right direction. Much more detailed information is obtainable from the organisations themselves, for example exactly what qualifications are necessary for which jobs, exactly where you would live and what you would do whilst in the country.

First of all, it should be made quite clear that "voluntary" does not mean "unprofessional". A large proportion of the opportunities available require professional qualifications, such as medicine or engineering. Many developing countries have a shortage of qualified professionals, so there is a desperate need for people with a particular skill or profession. Many posts will be salaried, some will be semi-professional, and some will be unpaid. Due to the tremendous choice of voluntary positions available, though, there will undoubtedly be something to suit you. However, before embarking on time consuming research, perhaps you could analyse the talents and skills which you

can bring to a voluntary position. It is better to realise early on that your skills may not especially be suited to an overseas environment rather than find out "on the job" and have a less rewarding experience. Many development agencies recommend that potential volunteers carry out projects in their own communities to give them experience before applying for an overseas opportunity.

Another major difference between opportunities is the time scale involved. Some positions can only be taken if you are prepared to work for a minimum of two years. These will generally be a professional post, with a definite objective to be achieved over the long term. Other positions will require you to work for at least a year. Some will be for the relatively short period of a few weeks. What is emphasised again here is the huge variety of opportunities available. These will become more apparent when you begin to look in more detail at the individual organisations.

A selection of positions which shows this variety is given later. Hopefully this introduction has begun to whet your appetite, and you are now eager to learn more. So here are those important addresses.

### 2.1 Returned Volunteer Action (RVA)

1 Amwell Street, London EC1R 1TH  
020 7278 0804

[www.voluntaryaction.org.uk/overseas.doc](http://www.voluntaryaction.org.uk/overseas.doc)

RVA is the British organisation for current and returned overseas development workers, and those active or interested in development work. They provide a critical perspective on overseas development work, through their many publications and training days, to guide people who are considering volunteering overseas.

The publications available from RVA are vital to anyone thinking of becoming involved in voluntary employment overseas. These include:

"Volunteering and Overseas Development - A Guide to Opportunities "

A directory of opportunities, containing professional sending agencies, (British Red Cross etc.), aid agencies, (Oxfam, Save the Children, etc.), workcamps, year out schemes (Gap, Project Trust), and environmental agencies (Friends of the Earth etc.). This is essential reading and gives the full range of current opportunities. Price £3.50 + p&p & S.A.E.

"Thinking about Volunteering Overseas"

The main aim is to help those who are considering development volunteering. It explores the North/ South relationship at all levels, and offers advice to those questioning the worth of their involvement in this area of work. Price £3.50 + p&p.

The above is just a sample of the range of books that RVA stock. They can also give information on books they do not publish but which are highly relevant to the field. Among these is "The Directory of Voluntary and Employment Opportunities", an annual publication providing information on volunteering positions in both the UK and Overseas. This should be available for consultation at main reference libraries.

Contact the RVA directly for more information on this and other literature.

## 2.2 Christians Abroad

Room 237, Bon Marché Centre  
241-251 Ferndale Road  
London SW9 8BJ  
Tel: 0870 770 7991  
[www.cabroad.org.uk](http://www.cabroad.org.uk)

This organisation holds information about full time work in the UK, development education and opportunities to work overseas. They provide an information and counselling service for anyone who is seeking to know more about volunteering overseas.

For those who already have experience of this type of work, Christians Abroad runs a register which lists candidates available to fill certain posts

requiring specialist knowledge. This helps people who are finding it difficult to become active when returning home to the UK. Agencies with urgent vacancies to fill consult this register for suitable candidates.

## 2.3 Support 4 Learning

Information on voluntary work and organizations, paid and unpaid, Gap year activities, conservation, working abroad, field work, expeditions.

Contact: [www.support4learning.org.uk](http://www.support4learning.org.uk)

## 2.4 Connect Youth

European Voluntary service (EVS), Action II of the European YOUTH Programme, encourages the concept of lifelong learning and the development of skills and competencies, which promote active citizenship.

*What is the European Voluntary Service (EVS)?*

EVS allows young people (aged 18-25) to volunteer in other countries and engage in cultural, educational and training opportunities for a specified period of time.

Secondly, volunteers will make valuable contributions to the activities of the host organization offering their time and enthusiasm, as well as exchanging ideas and experiences. The following general principles apply:

- Take place in another country.
- Be non-profit making and unpaid.
- Be planned, implemented and then followed up as a partnership between the volunteer and their Sending and Host Organisations.
- Bring added value to the Host Organisation and their local community
- Not involve job substitution or be a replacement for military service or a community service alternative.
- Last for a limited period:
  - Long-term – 6-12 months

- Short-term – 3weeks to 6 months ( specifically for young people with fewer opportunities).
- Must involve at least one other EU Member country.

The European Commission YOUTH programme is a co-funded programme financed partly by grant awards administered by National Agencies and EVS applicant organisations.

#### *What's in it for the Hosting Organisation?*

As an EVS Host Organisation you will add a European dimension to the regular activities of your organization. This will be achieved through the work that the EVS volunteers will undertake in your local community, as well as via the relationships you will establish with their Sending Organisations.

Benefits of the EVS Programme:

- Having the assistance of committed volunteers within your organization, as well as in your local community.
- Increased opportunities for volunteers and members of your local community to learn more about the lives of young adults from other countries.
- The establishment of good working practices with Sending Organisations.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of international youth work.
- You will receive a significant contribution towards administration costs, board and lodgings, volunteer allowance and transport.

#### *What's in it for the Sending Organisation?*

As an EVS Sending Organisation you will be interested in offering European volunteering opportunities to young people in other countries. You will be expected to make initial contact with Host placements that can offer appropriate voluntary work for your volunteers, and you will support them throughout their period of service.

Benefits of the EVS Programme:

- Establishment of good working relationships with approved EVS organizations.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of international youth work.
- Increased employability of young people from within your local community.
- You will receive a contribution towards administration, 100% of your volunteer's international travel and (where appropriate) visa and vaccination costs.
- All volunteers are also provided with full medical insurance cover.
- Funding available for Advance Planning Visit.

For further information, contact:

Connect Youth  
Education and Training Group  
British Council  
10 Spring Gardens  
London SW1A 2BN  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7389 4030  
Fax: +44 (0) 207389 4033  
Email: [connectyouthenquiries@britishcouncil.org](mailto:connectyouthenquiries@britishcouncil.org)  
Web: [www.connectyouthinternational.com](http://www.connectyouthinternational.com)

## **2.5 Volunteering / exchanges – European (EU)**

Interested in learning new skills while helping others? Volunteering introduces you to new people, and sometimes even new cultures, and you gain invaluable experience to enhance or influence your future career. Choose a voluntary activity in another country, or one nearer to home. The following will open your eyes to the many European voluntary opportunities that exist: European Voluntary Service (EVS), Youth Exchanges and Work Camps. They are on [www.europa.eu/youth](http://www.europa.eu/youth)

- *Alliance of European Voluntary Service Organisations*

This group represents national organisations running international voluntary service projects. Includes a detailed presentation of the network and a useful list of its members.

<http://www.alliance-network.org> [EN]

- *Association of Voluntary Service Organisations*

Interested in volunteering abroad? Information on all the member organisations dealing with voluntary service programmes in Europe.

<http://www.avso.org> [EN]

- *Cross-Cultural Organisation*

An independent non-profit organisation coordinating volunteer programmes in Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Peru, Russia, Tanzania and Thailand.

<http://www.crossculturalsolutions.org/> [EN]

- *European Volunteer Centre*

A European umbrella organisation of National and Regional Volunteer Centres across Europe, which promotes volunteering on a European level. It provides information on developments within the EU.

<http://www.cev.be/index.htm> [EN][FR]

- *Global Volunteer Network*

Volunteer positions available through its partner organisations in China, Ecuador, Ghana, Nepal, Romania, Russia, Thailand and Uganda. You can apply via the online application form. Don't miss the photos!

<http://www.volunteer.org.nz/> [EN]

- *Greenpeace*

Here volunteers are always welcomed! Take action in its campaigns via your computer by signing up as a cyber-activist. Information about the group's activities.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/international/about/volunteers> [EN]

- *International Cultural Youth Exchange*

Non-profit international youth organisation coordinating youth exchange and voluntary service programmes in 34 countries worldwide. Volunteering placements are usually in the fields of social work, education, youth work, health education and environment.

Search the database for placements and try the useful links.

<http://www.icye.org> [EN]

- *International Relief Friendship Foundation*

Volunteering vacancies available in several countries in the field of sustainable long-term development. For more information on a certain project, fill in the form.

<http://www.irff-europe.org> [EN]

- *International Volunteer Programs Association*

Search for opportunities online and read the practical information and advice on volunteering in general. Subscribe to the bi-monthly newsletter or check out the FAQs.

<http://www.volunteerinternational.org/> [EN]

- *OXFAM*

Practical information on how to get involved, through voluntary opportunities with Oxfam International or one of its affiliates.

<http://www.oxfam.org/en/getinvolved/volunteer> [EN][FR][ES]

- *One World Action*

This organisation is working for a world free from poverty and oppression. Visit the volunteering part of the website to see the latest opportunities. The newsletters are available in pdf format.

<http://www.oneworldaction.org/> [EN]

- *Oneworld*

Volunteer opportunities in human rights, the environment and sustainable development. Register to receive the latest opportunities by email.

<http://www.oneworld.net/article/archive/4408> [EN]

- *Online Volunteering Service*

This site is for volunteers who want to get involved in a development project without leaving home, as well as for organisations looking for support from online volunteers around the world. Here you will

find translated documents, articles, data and projects for helping people and communities in the developing world.

<http://www.onlinevolunteering.org>  
[EN][FR][ES]

- *Peace Corps*

Everything you should know about serving as a volunteer: applicant kit, online application, countries where you can work, programme descriptions and much more.

<http://www.peacecorps.org> [EN][FR][ES]

- *Service Civil International*

Voluntary short- and long-term projects worldwide, information on organisations dealing with them, and many useful links and documents. Subscribe to one of the email lists according to the programme you are interested in.

<http://www.sciint.org> [EN]

- *Toolkit: Measuring volunteering*

A resource designed to assist countries in conducting surveys assessing their national, regional and local volunteer levels. A pdf document is available in English, French, Spanish and Korean.

<http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/toolkit/default.html> [EN]

- Training information - International voluntary service

A training kit in pdf version for trainers and young people interested and/or involved in international voluntary service activities and projects. Choose between downloading the entire kit or chapter by chapter.

<http://www.training-youth.net/INTEGRATION/TY/Publications/tkits/tkit5/index> [EN]

- *United Nations Volunteers*

An open door for several opportunities with UN Volunteers and like-minded organisations around the world. Learn more about your

volunteer options and how to apply. Read the experiences of former volunteers!

<http://www.unv.org/volunteers/index.htm>  
[EN][FR][ES]

- *Volunteer Abroad*

Interested in volunteering? All you need to know about volunteering including how to get started. Connects you to more links with useful information.

<http://www.volunteerabroad.com/> [EN]

- *WorkingAbroad*

An independent organisation offering volunteering opportunities around the world. Visit the volunteer part of the website for details, fill in the online application form or read volunteers' stories.

<http://www.workingabroad.com> [EN][FR]

- *World volunteers*

A resource for students or people with no previous experience who are interested in volunteering in a developing country for an interesting vacation or unique gap year. Here you can find useful guides listing hundred of projects throughout the world in different fields. If you want to get involved just choose from among the archaeological, heritage conservation and green projects or the humanitarian work camps.

<http://www.worldvolunteers.org> [EN][FR][IT]

- *Worldwide volunteer directory*

A directory that presents you with current voluntary opportunities in different countries.

<http://www.planetedu.com/category/volunteer/>  
[EN]

- *Youth Action for Peace*

Interesting links and addresses of organisations dealing with international youth movements involved in the exchanging of volunteers worldwide.

<http://www.yap.org> [EN]

- *Youth Challenge International*

Looking for a challenge? Take part in one of the adventurous projects carried out by teams of volunteers aged 18-30 years. They combine community development, health work and environmental research.

<http://www.yci.org> [EN]