

PLATFORM2

A unique
Opportunity
to volunteer
overseas/
and then
Come Back
and
Tell people
about your
Experience.

Platform2 is aimed at people who wouldn't normally have the opportunity to do something like this, so you don't have to pay. The funding is provided by the Government's Department for International Development.

During this three year project, over 2,500 18-25 year olds will volunteer in a developing country to make a real difference to the community, working on projects that are really worthwhile.

All of the work is locally operated and supervised, beneficial to the local community and sustainable, and offers you a structured placement.

Projects include the following kinds of work:

- Constructing community buildings like schools, toilet facilities and community centres with a local team; renovating existing buildings, developing new and existing gardens, play areas and sports pitches.
- Caring for and teaching children in orphanages, kindergartens and schools.
- Building infrastructure at ecological centres and going on residential trips with community school groups to learn about protecting the environment and how best to use natural resources.
- Assisting in HIV clinics and helping with peer education.

How Long For?

You'll be away for about ten weeks, and this period cannot be extended or shortened because you'll be travelling in groups and the flights will be booked for you to fly out and come back together.

Countries.

This year you could go to South Africa, Ghana, Peru, India, Malawi or Nepal. You can state your top three countries out of the options above, but you won't necessarily get your first choice.

You're Not Alone.

Groups of between 10-15 volunteers from the UK will travel and work together on a project. Once your placement has been agreed, we'll share your contact details with the other volunteers on that departure so you'll be able to get in touch with at least a few of those you are travelling with before the flight.

Can I take a Friend?

The programme is designed to give you a completely new and challenging experience, so we would encourage you to apply to travel on your own. However, we do understand that everyone's situation is different and if you do want to travel with someone else just let us know that when you apply.

Stay with Friends?

It is key to the programme that volunteers live and work closely in the local communities and with their fellow volunteers, so it will not be possible to live with family or friends whilst in a country. You may be able to visit local family or friends at the weekends depending on distance.

Accom- panied?

We'll have someone at the airport in London to meet you and help you with any last minute queries before you board the flight. You'll then fly with the other members of your group and, when you land, you'll be met at the airport by a local organisation that acts as our in-country partner who'll take you to where you're staying and support you throughout your placement.

- 3 - Visas.
- Taking Part.
- Your Return.

Visas!

For some countries you'll need a visa. If you do need one, we'll sort it out for you 6-8 weeks before you leave.

Therefore, you'll need to have your UK passport by then, if you don't have one already.

Taking Part.

To go on the scheme you must :

- Be 18-25 (at the time of travel)
- Either have a UK passport now or know that you're eligible for one
- Currently live in the UK
- Be available for a 10 week overseas experience
- Be prepared to follow our programme health advice and requirements
- Be willing to provide two verifiable written references
- Be willing to attend a pre-departure briefing
- Be willing to attend a residential workshop when you get back
- Be prepared to share your experiences with your community when you get home

When You Get Back.

Everyone's going to feel differently about their trip, but we'll support you in thinking about what you've experienced and how you can share it with others.

We'll ring you soon after you get back to chat to you about your time abroad and give you some details about your residential workshop. The workshop will give you a chance to meet other people who have just come back from various countries. You'll explore how you're going to express what you've seen and learnt with a wider audience and learn new skills to do that.

Express Yourself.

When you get home, you can make a real difference in your own community by making people aware of the truths you've learnt and the experiences you've gained. You'll be storytellers, through art, photography, song, poetry, blogs, journalism, sculpture and film; to name but a few, and we'll work with you and support you to tell people about your trip.

Before you travel, you'll have a pre-trip briefing to give you an idea of the kinds of stories you should look for and how to collect them. Then, as part of the three day residential you'll attend when you return, you'll work with others to create ways to share those stories. We'll encourage you to showcase what you've created using different avenues, from exhibitions to blogging.

4 - Your Return.

- Applying.

- Costs.

Give Back.

You'll have a chance to get involved in getting loads more people to go on the scheme - we'll give you opportunities to be part of the pre-departure briefings for future volunteers, residential workshops and events around the country to promote the scheme.

The Legacy.

Raising awareness of your trip and getting people in the UK interested in global issues will mean you can continue to make a difference to the country you visited and the people you met long after you get back.

Applications.

You need to go through a number of steps both before and after you are accepted onto the programme. These are relatively straightforward and are designed to make sure that this is the right programme for you. The whole selection and placement process can take 3-6 months. So, for example, if you apply in May and are successful, you can expect to travel somewhere between August and November.

The Form.

You need to fill in an application form. You can download it from the website www.myplatform2.com or phone 0800 988 6828 and we'll send you one.

You also need to ask two people to complete the reference forms for you. These must be people who have known you for some time but are not friends or family, like a teacher, sports coach, youth club leader, faith leader, employer or ex-employer, foster parent or social worker.

Any other written support you can get from your community may also help your application.

Interviews.

We will review your application and, if we think you're suitable, we'll invite you to an interview. These take place around the UK so you shouldn't have to travel too far. If we don't think you're suitable, we'll let you know as soon as possible.

Costs.

The experience is free but there are a few things you might need to pay for:

Any passport costs

Personal travel and entertainment costs in-country

Travel to and from your interview

Travel to and from the airport

- 5 - Costs.
- Funds.
- Other Info.

What's Included?

- Return economy flights from London
- Travel insurance
- Local food and accommodation at your project location
- Support from our local partners in-country
- A small allowance whilst in-country
- Health screening, all required vaccinations, a medical kit, and a mosquito net
- One day pre-departure briefing, in-country orientation, and a three day residential workshop, including travel to and from briefing and residential*
- Transfers in-country to and from the airport to your accommodation
- Transfers in-country from orientation to your project
- Development Education Pack
- A guide book for your destination country

*Travel by bus or coach and you must have a receipt

Fund Raising?

You don't have to raise any money for the experience but, if there are things you want to buy like a camera, you might want to do some fundraising for additional money.

Other Info.

We want you to get the most out of this amazing experience, so we will help you prepare and support you all the way through:

- Interview – You'll have a chance to talk through the programme one-to-one, and get an idea about what to expect, and what the programme expects from you.

- Pre-trip info – The country you'll go to will be totally different from the UK - different climate, culture, wildlife, insects, diseases and hazards - so we'll tell you how to take care of your health and security and provide you with a first aid kit. HIV/AIDS is a serious problem in many of the programme countries so you'll receive some important information about that.

- Pre-trip briefing day – A couple of weeks before you leave, you'll go to a briefing day where you'll find out what your placement will be like – things like your accommodation, the work, living with other volunteers and some information about the country itself. We'll give you ideas of what you'll need to take with you, things you might need to sort out before you go and how you'd like to record your experience to share it with others on your return.

- In-country orientation - Once you arrive in the country, you'll have a few days getting used to being abroad. You'll be given some more detailed information about the country and culture, your project and the kinds of things you'll be doing during your placement. There may also be some basic language training if necessary.

- Post-trip residential - On your return to the UK you'll attend a three day residential to give you the chance to reflect on your experience. There'll be workshops to help you create ways to tell your community about your trip.

Special Skills?

You don't need any specific skills but, if you have relevant skills or experience, we'll do our best to make sure you have the opportunity to use them.

What you do need is enthusiasm and an open mind. You'll experience a whole different world, living and working with local people in a developing country. Every single thing in your life will be different – weather, food, people, music, language, accommodation... and probably no TV! You'll need to be ready for how that will make you feel. You'll have to adapt to all of those changes and to living and working with a small group of young volunteers.

What do I Get?

It's difficult to know how much you can learn from this kind of experience, and how much it can change your outlook on life. You'll see some amazing things, and some things which might be difficult to deal with, and you'll learn a lot about yourself and what you're capable of, as well as about others.

You'll meet some extraordinary people – locals and volunteers – and you may well make some life-long friends.

The experience will undoubtedly impress any future employer or enhance any application for further study.

A global volunteering experience funded by the Department for International Development and run by Christian Aid, Islamic Relief and BUNAC

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PLATFORM2

Your platform to change your world