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History

Projects Abroad began in 1992 when a group of students in West Sussex wanted a break from study – known as a “gap year” – and approached their geography professor, Dr. Peter Slowe, about traveling and working in Eastern Europe. Dr. Slowe had difficulty finding any opportunities for this kind of travel combined with work experience, so he set about arranging for the students to teach English in Romania where he knew some fellow academics.

Until 1997 Projects Abroad was a small UK-based organization with just two part time staff sending university students to teach English in Eastern Europe. But as more and more students and professionals began to take academic and work-related breaks, and with many developing countries in need of self-funded volunteers, Projects Abroad’s organized volunteer programs began to grow around the world.

The UK-headquartered organization now has recruitment offices in Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Holland, Hong Kong, Norway, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and the United States. With more than 600 trained staff, 28 destinations, hundreds of project options and more than 60,000 volunteers from over 40 countries to date, Projects Abroad has become one of the leading international volunteer organizations.



Projects Abroad in the Global Economy

Projects Abroad helps create local employment wherever it sends volunteers. The organization directly employs many people who live in these areas and also indirectly creates work through the services provided for Projects Abroad volunteers. Projects Abroad has also devolved various “Head Office” functions, such as management accountancy in Mongolia and design work in Mexico.

Because Projects Abroad works with local colleagues at all levels, the organization’s extensive network of local knowledge enables Projects Abroad to channel the skills of its volunteers to places they are really needed.



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“There is a popular misconception that only students or people with a lot of free time are able to carry out volunteer work abroad, which is simply not the case. There are many projects available that run for just two weeks, which can still offer valuable help to developing countries but also provide a meaningful experience to the volunteer.”



Dr Peter Slowe,
Founder and director of Projects Abroad



FOX BUSINESS



“As an alternative to school, one way to get life experience and travel the world is by volunteering for an overseas or domestic organization. Getting a more global view of life can help students gain perspective about what they want to do. ‘By going abroad, you get the opportunity to step outside the insular world that you grew up in and put it in a greater context,’ says Tom Pastorius, vice president of Projects Abroad.”

Published April 21, 2011

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Flexibility and Variety

Projects Abroad volunteers can enjoy the flexibility of selecting a start date, end date, destination and project that best aligns with their schedule, interests and qualifications. With a presence in 28 destinations worldwide, offering hundreds of projects covering 15 different fields of interest, volunteers have a variety of options.



Support and Safety Overseas

Projects Abroad cares about the safety and comfort of its volunteers. All volunteers are provided with comprehensive travel and medical insurance, and offices with full-time, paid and trained staff are available in every destination to ensure that volunteers are looked after and that each volunteer's placement is running as it should. Projects Abroad staff is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The organization avoids placing volunteers in countries where there is likely to be political or social unrest, and remains in close contact with the State Department and with all embassies and high commissions abroad.



Personalized Advice

Interested volunteers will receive informative and helpful responses from Projects Abroad volunteer coordinators from the first time they inquire about a program. After being accepted into Projects Abroad, volunteers receive a personalized website called MyProjectsAbroad, which takes the guess work out of preparing for time overseas. In addition, Desk Officers contact each volunteer to discuss all details of their upcoming travels, and are always available by phone or email to answer questions.



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All-in-One Price

Projects Abroad volunteer positions are self-funded to ensure that organizations or individuals in the developing world don't have to incur any additional expenses. Projects Abroad is able to secure excellent work experience placements for volunteers because it does not ask partner-organizations to cover any costs for volunteers. Projects Abroad does not receive any government funding or other outside funding.

The all-in-one price to volunteers includes the following:

- Accommodation
- Food
- Full travel insurance
- Medical insurance
- In-country induction with a staff member upon arrival
- Support and 24 hour back-up from both local and US/Canada staff
- Personalized MyProjectsAbroad page
- Pre-departure support from desk officer by email and phone
- Visa support (if applicable)



“The rewarding feeling I got every day when making the children smile or doing something in the orphanage that was appreciated, spending time with my host family and making new friends from many different walks of life was worth every penny of my trip. I was able to give something back, experience a different culture and way of life and it is something that I would recommend to anyone.”



Lucy Parsons
Care, Tanzania



CNN Travel

“When the going gets tough, the compassionate get going. The January earthquake in Haiti prompted a spike in interest in service vacations, sometimes called “voluntourism,” several organizations report...Projects-Abroad.org reported it received 46 percent more applications than expected since the earthquake.”

Published March 5, 2010

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Part of the Global Community

By going on a Projects Abroad placement, volunteers are joining a community of fellow volunteers and local people in developing countries - working hard, traveling and having a good time while achieving worthwhile goals.

Volunteers have the unique opportunity to live with host families and have a genuinely authentic experience and appreciation of the local region's culture and people.



Continually Evolving and Growing Worldwide

Projects Abroad is truly global in its outlook, welcoming approaches from potential partners – schools, orphanages and hospitals for example – from across the developing world; wherever they are or whatever they do, Projects Abroad will try to meet their needs.

Similarly, Projects Abroad welcome ideas from potential volunteers. If a volunteer has an idea for a new program or destination, the organization will do everything it can to enable the volunteers to work in their own way.

Because of this, Projects Abroad is continually offering new opportunities, destinations and areas for volunteers to find a project that utilizes their talents to their greatest ability, while making a difference.

“I returned home with so much more going for me than when I had left. I had some real hands on journalism experience which really made me stand out from the crowd, and I had much more confidence in my abilities as a journalist, as well as a totally new outlook on life!”

Cassandra Zoro
Journalism, Ghana



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About Projects Abroad

Projects Abroad, which began operating in 1992, is among the leading international volunteer placement organizations. Headquartered in the United Kingdom, the organization has recruitment offices in Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Holland, Hong Kong, Norway, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden and the United States.

Global Presence

Projects Abroad offers hundreds of projects in 28 destinations: Argentina, Bolivia, Cambodia, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Peru, the Philippines, Romania, Samoa, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, and Vietnam.

Why choose Projects Abroad

Volunteers enjoy the flexibility of selecting a start date, end date, destination and project that best aligns with their schedule, interests and qualifications. Projects Abroad has offices in all of its destinations with full-time staff who offer unparalleled support. Plus, volunteers have the unique opportunity to live with host families and have a truly authentic experience and appreciation of the local region's culture and people.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers can get involved in a variety of programs: Teaching, IT Projects, Care & Community, Medicine & Healthcare, Conservation, Business, Inca Projects, Journalism, Veterinary Medicine, Physical Therapy, Animal Care, Sports, Law, Nomad Projects, Archaeology, Khmer Projects, Spanish, French and Russian. Volunteers may also choose to use the experience for Dissertation research. Most volunteers go for between four and twelve weeks.

Cost

As a private organization independent from government, partner or other funding, Projects Abroad volunteer positions are self-funded to ensure that organizations or individuals in the developing world don't have to incur any additional expenses. Projects Abroad is able to secure excellent work experience placements for volunteers because it does not ask partner-organizations to cover any costs for volunteers. Prices vary depending on the program.

What's Included

The cost includes accommodation, food, airport transfers, comprehensive travel and medical insurance, in-country induction with a staff member upon arrival, support and 24-hour back-up from both local and US/Canada staff, a personalized MyProjectsAbroad page, pre-departure support from a desk officer by email and phone, and visa support (if applicable).

Who can Volunteer

Volunteers are accepted from across the world, and no qualifications are necessary. Projects Abroad welcomes volunteers from the ages of 16 and up. Many are between 18 and 25 years old, but a rapidly increasing number of "career breakers" and retirees are now taking part, resulting in a stimulating mix of people in all destinations. Families can also volunteer together.

Why Volunteer

By going on a Projects Abroad placement, volunteers are joining a community of fellow volunteers and local people in developing countries - working hard, traveling and having a good time while achieving worthwhile goals. While gaining experience that looks impressive on a resume, volunteers will improve valuable skills such as team-work, presentation and communication. Above all, this is an unrivalled opportunity to gain insight into completely different cultures and ways of life, which is becoming increasingly important in the globalized world.

Achievements by the numbers

- 28** The number of developing countries that Projects Abroad works with across five continents.
- 600+** The number of trained staff located across each destination.
- 60,000+** The number of Projects Abroad volunteers to date.
- 40** The number of different nationalities of volunteers.
- 320** The number of schools, language centers and other organizations that have benefited from Teaching Projects. In addition to conversational English, volunteers have also taught French, German, Math, Art, Drama, Music and IT.
- 280** The number of orphanages, disabled centers and other organizations that have benefited from Care Projects.
- 22,000** The number of children our volunteers have helped to care for at 108 orphanages.
- 11** The number of Conservation & Environment destinations
- 600,000** The estimated number of Olive Ridley, Leatherback, Hawksbill, Loggerhead and Green Turtles protected on Conservation Projects in Mexico, Costa Rica and Peru.
- 476** The number of hectares of Amazon Rainforest granted for Projects Abroad to operate as an ecological reserve in Peru - the "Reserva Ecologica Taricaya".
- 137** The height (in feet) of the canopy walkway at "Taricaya".
- 8** The number of years the Green Village Conservation Project has worked to increase awareness and practice of organic agriculture and sustainable development in Southern India.
- 47** The number of areas in which Medicine volunteers work, from Acupuncture to X-ray.

Los Angeles Times

"From childcare to medical internships, Projects Abroad offers high school students an opportunity to travel and help nurture a community in another country. This year about 1,000 students from around the world will volunteer through Projects Abroad's High School Special program."

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