



16 Reasons To Volunteer Internationally

Introduction

International volunteering provides a meaningful travel experience, in which both volunteers & local communities are able to benefit from one another. The following focuses on the benefits that can be gained by both by the volunteers & the local community.

Our goal is to inspire people from all walks of life to dedicate themselves to the service of others by participating in a volunteering abroad adventure. In addition, we desire to create a sense of shared power and purpose between local communities & volunteers.

How The Volunteers Benefit

Benefit #1: Add Volunteer Experience to Your Resume

Volunteering overseas is a great way of making your resume stand out from the rest. It shows that you are willing to step outside your comfort zone to make a difference to the lives of others. Employers appreciate this and they value the life experience and cultural understanding that you gain through volunteering. Also, being multilingual is a great asset to any company or organization. Additionally, colleges & universities increasingly look for candidates with volunteer & international travel experience. Also, the connections you make while volunteering can be a great asset to you in the future!

Benefit #2: Find Your Calling

An international volunteer experience can be a life changing adventure! It exposes you to a different way of life & being and can awake a passion that lies inside of you. It gives you the opportunity to take time out of your regular routine and think about what it is you really want to do with your life. By volunteering in an area you are interested in pursuing, you will have the opportunity to solidify your goals and career path and gain personal & professional clarification.

Benefit #3: Personal Growth

By volunteering abroad you will have the opportunity to experience personal growth & development, which can take the form of improved self-esteem, self-confidence and life satisfaction. By pushing yourself out of your comfort zone and immersing yourself into a different culture, you are likely to feel a sense of empowerment and also begin to reflect on what you want from life. This also gives you the opportunity to overcome personal fears. By being an international volunteer, you become an example and leader for others!

Benefit #4: Take A Break & Avoid Burnout

One of the reasons why universities are so in favor of a gap year is that they recognize the benefits of rest & reflection. Before you embark on a major and pursue a degree program, it may be time for a break. Taking a year off before returning to study will afford you the opportunity to approach the next phase of your education with a fresh start & renewed vigor .

Employers are also aware that taking time out to volunteer can recharge your batteries and give you the time to reassess your priorities in life which can be incredibly beneficial for both the employer and employee. Volunteering is therefore becoming increasingly popular amongst professionals seeking a break from their careers.

Benefit #5: Gain New Knowledge & Work Experience

Working in another country will provide you with the opportunity to gain knowledge, experience and skills which you may not have been able to acquire at home. The obvious example is learning a foreign language much faster than you could at home by immersing yourself into the language & culture. In addition, by volunteering in your field of interest you will have the opportunity to learn new ways to approach different problems, and you will gain valuable work experience in a new environment.

Benefit #6: Learn From A Different Culture

Volunteering is very different to being a tourist because you will spend a significant amount of time in one place and you will be working on a daily basis with local people. This provides an invaluable opportunity to learn about different cultures, develop an understanding of the issues facing the local communities and develop a sense of global citizenship.

Benefit #7: Meet Like-Minded People

One of the most long-lasting benefits of volunteering is the friendships you will make. You will meet people from all backgrounds and all walks of life. The special moments you will share and the challenges you will overcome together will often create life-long bonds.

Benefit #8: Have An Incredibly Rewarding Experience

Perhaps most importantly of all, volunteering overseas gives you a chance to give back and gives one an incredible sense of personal fulfillment. The experience in its entirety is magical and something that can only be experienced. You cannot learn these type of lessons from any book. The personal growth that can take place during a volunteer adventure is priceless. You are giving, but you are actually getting much much more in return... and that is something money cannot buy.



How The Local Communities Benefit

Benefit #1: Minimize Cultural Differences

We can avoid or minimize cultural differences only if we have greater mutual understanding, empathy and a willingness to respect and accommodate diverse cultural values. This is gained by the interaction with the volunteers and the local community. By experiencing other culture we learn more about each other's values and customs, including proper social and business protocol. It gives the opportunity to see, accept and value the divergent values in each other's culture.

Benefit #2: Volunteers Bring New Ideas To The Local Community

International volunteers bring new ideas, knowledge, skills and special talents that may be difficult to find in the local communities due to the lack of advanced and specialized training that first world countries offer. This sharing of ideas can truly impact the lives of the local communities.

Benefit #3: Volunteer Tourism Reduces Poverty

Tourism is one of the most effective ways of redistributing wealth, by moving money into local economies from other parts of the country and overseas. It brings income into a community that would otherwise not be earned. Economic benefits resulting from tourism include:

- Increased spending in the community generated from visitors or tourism businesses can directly and indirectly promote the viability of local businesses.
- Tourism operators can play a role in highlighting the broad prosperity that tourism can bring to a community and will contribute to a greater understanding and respect for the value of tourism.
- Economic diversification is, for many communities, an insurance policy against hard times. By offering an additional means of income, tourism can support a community when a traditional industry is under financial pressure, particularly when that community relies heavily on a single industry.
- Infrastructure including roads, parks, and other public spaces can be developed and improved both for visitors and local residents through increased tourism activity in a region.

Benefit #4: Volunteers Impact Social Development

Imagine the impact volunteers have made on the social development for communities all over the world! There are several social service organizations and non governmental organizations (NGO) expanding & growing in their services everyday in Panama, fulfilling their missions and impacting the local communities whether they are focused on education, environment, gender equality, human and animal rights, and many more.

Benefit #5: Volunteer Donations Impact Local Organizations

Volunteers bring in a plethora of donations, both in-kind & financial to the local organizations empowering them to better fulfill their missions at a local level. Local organizations lacking in funds also receive great benefit from the helping hands of non-paid volunteers.

Benefit #6: Volunteers Spread The Word

After volunteering with a local organization, you become a voice for them at an international level. This a great marketing tool for the local organizations! The more people know about the mission and services of the organization, the more they want to help support them in their cause!

Benefit #7: Environmental Benefits

Volunteers can provide financial & in-kind support for the conservation of the local environment and natural resources. Tourism, particularly ecotourism, can place a greater focus on the conservation of natural resources through the recognition of their importance to visitor experiences and their economic value to the local community.

Benefit #8: Volunteers Can Create Local Jobs

The more people there are to serve in all areas of tourism, the more jobs become available for the local population. Employment may be associated directly, such as tour guides or managerial positions; or in supporting industries like food production or retail suppliers.



The benefits of volunteering can only be experienced, you cannot learn these lessons in any class or book. Commit to be the difference by signing up to volunteer today! If not now, when?