



Today we interview [World Endeavors](#) on their volunteer abroad programs.

Background

[World Endeavors](#)' mission is to be a catalyst for positive change in the world and in the lives of our participants. The participants of our programs have the opportunity to change their world through participation in unique and affordable volunteer, internship, and study abroad programs in more than 20 countries.

1. What are some volunteer opportunities you offer? Do you have any volunteer opportunities you are particularly proud of?

Volunteers can choose to work in a variety of projects offered year round including orphanage assistance, street children assistance, teaching, environmental conservation, community development, and wildlife conservation. We are proud of all our volunteer placements as we have seen local communities positively impacted by the experience and volunteers returning changed in a positive way.

2. What kind of daily life should prospective volunteers expect? (Food, Lodging, Entertainment etc...)

We design our programs to be as culturally-immersive as possible. Volunteers stay with a local family, eat the local food, and spend their days working side-by-side with local people. Most of our volunteer programs offer opportunities for volunteers to study the local language as well as participant in cultural activities and excursions.

3. What is the most important piece of advice you can offer future volunteers?

As a volunteer abroad, you become an ambassador for the program, your country, and perhaps "foreigners" in general. It is important that volunteers approach their assignments with a positive and flexible attitude. Volunteers should be open-minded, with a willingness to learn about a new culture that may be very different from their own. Volunteers should be prepared to recognize challenges as learning opportunities. Above all, volunteers must be flexible.

4. What is the biggest challenge while volunteering abroad?

Whether a volunteer is a seasoned traveler or it's their first-time out of the country, every volunteer goes through culture shock. This is a natural process that impacts everyone to varying degrees. In the end, there is no way to prevent this, but a volunteer can lessen the effects of culture shock by embracing every new challenge as a learning experience and maintaining a positive attitude.

5. On the flip side, what is the biggest reward?

At [World Endeavors](#), our motto is “Change Your World”. The world that we are referring to is not only the local village where we send a volunteer, it is also the personal “world” of the volunteer. Volunteering abroad often provides us with an opportunity to learn about our values, goals, and life path in a way that is just not possible at home. So the biggest reward of volunteering abroad is the change that we experience inside ourselves when we volunteer abroad.

6. Why should they pay to volunteer with your organization? How is the money used?

There are always inherent costs in volunteering abroad, such as food, accommodations, travel, support, and coordination. Out of all of the volunteer programs available today, from the extremely expensive to the very cheap, we are confident that we provide the best level of service at the most affordable cost.

In addition, the majority of the program fee goes towards program related expenses. Up to 80% of the program fee is budgeted for volunteer program and field expenses, which includes program development and management, volunteer food, lodging, transportation, local staff salaries, volunteer excursions, volunteer coordination, charitable donations, and outreach. The rest is budgeted to cover general and administrative costs such as office expenses, accounting, and legal services.

7. How does volunteering abroad fit into the bigger picture of aid and development?

At a local scale, volunteer programs help to address issues that a developing country is facing as a whole. For example, deforestation is a huge problem in many of the countries in which we work. Not only does it have an impact on the environment, it also significantly impacts the local people and their economy. A volunteer can work to educate local communities on methods of agro-forestry and reforestation as well as work with local community members to plant trees and prevent erosion and the loss of biodiversity. Over time, other volunteers can build on these efforts and reinforce these principles in the local community. Volunteers also become critical links in a chain of sustainable support for local communities.

8. Why should someone volunteer with your organization?

When it comes to going abroad, volunteers have a lot of choices. Through the years, we have asked hundreds of volunteers why they chose World Endeavors over other programs available. This gave us valuable insight into what is important to our volunteers. Our volunteers told us that a volunteer program must be affordable, it must be culturally-immersive, and it must provide the volunteer with an opportunity to make a difference. We have built our programs based on these three principals.

Affordability

Many of our volunteers are on a budget. While there is always going to be a cost to volunteering abroad, we try to keep our prices as low as possible. In fact, most of our programs cost less than a typical cost of vacationing in the same country. We don't want money to be an obstacle that prevents someone from this incredible experience. For students who lack the funds, we also provide fundraising assistance.

Cultural Immersion

Our volunteers don't want to live in a dorm with a group of other Americans. They prefer to be immersed in the culture, learning first-hand what life is like in that country. Instead of working with a large group of other Americans, they prefer to work side-by-side with local community members. According to our volunteers, their strong desire to become immersed in another culture is one of the main reasons they chose to volunteer abroad instead of volunteering at home.

Making a Difference

Volunteers that join our programs aren't looking for a vacation. They chose our program because of their desire to make a meaningful contribution to the world. What is amazing to us is that sometimes the volunteer is the biggest beneficiary of this positive experience. Volunteers return from our programs as ambassadors, forever transformed by the experience of volunteering abroad.

10. How can someone get in contact with your organization and learn more about your volunteer abroad opportunities?

Volunteers can visit our website at www.worldendeavors.com, email us at info@worldendeavors.com or contact us by phone at 1-800-605-0369 (toll-free in the US).

11. Do you have any advice on funding a volunteer experience abroad? (Fundraising, Budgeting, Scholarships etc...)

Fundraising is a great tool for making the dream of volunteering abroad a reality. We are always amazed at the creativity of our volunteers who have done everything from selling home-made candy to performing concerts.

We recommend that volunteers start by writing a letter about their goals. The letter should be sent to family, friends, classmates, faculty members, community groups, and coworkers.

People give donations to charity every day. By making a small contribution to a volunteer they know, they will see the direct results of their gift when the volunteer returns with photos and stories from his or her experience abroad. Our program director raised money to pay for his volunteer abroad experience in college. It is interesting that he does not remember the cost of the program but his life has been forever changed by the

experience. Clearly, volunteering abroad is an investment in a community in some other part of the world, but it is also an investment in yourself and your own personal development.