



It's not just a gap. It's an opportunity!

Volunteer Abroad During Gap Year

You can change your life, and a little piece of the world.



Why Volunteer on a Gap Year?

A gap in your life – between jobs, between semesters, between cities – offers an exciting opportunity to change your life – and the lives of others. Seize the chance to give of yourself and gain back so much more.

Live and work in another country, and serve people who need you. You will hone your skills, learn a language, immerse in another culture, forge lasting bonds, and provide vital services to a local community.

You can spend from one week to one year in any of 40 countries all over the world. You will emerge from this experience with a new understanding of the world, and of yourself.

United Planet and ICYE

As an international non-profit organization (501c3), United Planet strives to create a world in which all people understand, respect, and support one another. For the past decade, United Planet has been providing services to communities and building cross-cultural understanding.

United Planet is the U.S. and Canadian member of the International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) Federation. Founded in 1949 after World War II as part of an international reconciliation program, ICYE is well established in the field of cultural exchange.

Open your mind, your heart, your world.

“Living and working in the community of Putubiw truly broadened every idea and value that I hold in the most positive of ways. My time in Ghana changed my outlook of the world, and I believe that my presence there also enriched the lives of the people. The experience was overwhelming and challenging at moments, which was exactly what allowed the cultural exchange that occurred to affect me in such a deep way.”

–Margaret Adams, United Planet Volunteer, Ghana

“Tonight showed me how much of a difference that I and all the other guests and volunteers make... I wish I could bring a piece of everything that is good, happy & enjoyable home with me... This is really an experience that has to be lived for one to truly understand the magnitude of realization, appreciation and gratitude that it instills in someone. This has not, in the least, been a depressing experience... I loved every minute of it.”

–Michelle Haywood, United Planet Volunteer, Cambodia



Volunteer Abroad

From 1 week to 1 year
Choose from over 40 countries

Benefits of a Gap Year Volunteering Abroad

In a few weeks or months, you will learn more about the world and yourself than you ever thought possible. Many volunteers find that they return more mature and independent, and with greater drive, focus, and appreciation of the world and our neighbors abroad.

A long-term volunteer experience is vastly different from a structured study abroad program or a backpackers' tour of distant continents. During a long-term volunteer program, you become deeply involved in a host community, immersed in a new culture and a different way of life. Volunteers come to understand the host environment on a deeper level, including the values and identity of the culture and how they differ from American or Western perspectives.

Life Lessons

You will find yourself in unfamiliar situations nearly every day. While this may be unsettling at first, it will prompt you to make decisions independently and think and act within the framework of a different set of values.

Learning to make decisions without the comfort of falling back on your usual support network can be empowering, building strong leadership skills. This process allows for real, personal growth. Returned volunteers often find that they no longer take what they have for granted now that they have gained a new outlook on life.

Investing in Your Future

Fees for United Planet programs cover nearly all your expenses abroad.

Long-term program fees include:

- > Extensive pre-departure preparation, including a training weekend
- > Food and lodging in your host country (host family or residence)
- > Airport transfers in country
- > Emergency medical insurance
- > In-country orientation, language training, mid-year camp, final camp
- > On-going support and supervision
- > Monthly stipend for incidental expenses

**Contact us for more information
about volunteering abroad.**



Oscar winner Hilary Swank on a United Planet Volunteer Abroad Program in India.

Who Can Participate

Long-term programs (six months or a year) are open to citizens of the U.S. and Canada; short-term programs are open to citizens of any country.

The minimum (unaccompanied) age for the long-term program is 18. Some knowledge of a language is helpful, but not necessary.

What You Can Do

Teach. Care for orphans, street children, or the elderly. Participate in programs to empower women and girls. Conserve and protect the environment. Build and renovate homes and schools. And much more!

Where You Can Go

Choose from over 40 countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific. See the website for a full list.