



The Adventure of a Lifetime

Teens and young adults find that volunteering abroad is the most amazing thing they've ever done.



What is it Like to Volunteer Abroad?

When you volunteer abroad with United Planet, you work in a local project, live with a family, and forge real bonds with the community.

You learn a lot about a new culture and about yourself, develop greater independence, enhance your communications skills, and gain greater maturity. United Planet volunteers are adventurous, flexible, open minded, and willing to conquer any challenges that may arise during their time abroad

You will have a chance to change your life -- and to have a real impact on a community in need. Volunteering abroad is about giving of yourself, learning about the lives of others, and getting back a huge amount in return.

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.

Finding yourself in the joy of service

"Volunteering abroad was probably the best decision I've ever made. While I'm only 18, I feel like I've gained a lifetime of knowledge and experience. I definitely have the "travel bug" and will continue to travel and volunteer in the future. Thank you, United Planet, for getting me started!"

–Jennifer Hicks, United Planet Volunteer, Cambodia

"This was a great experience that allowed me to really become immersed in the Costa Rican culture. Not only did I teach in a real Costa Rica school, I also ate typical food, watched various Costa Rican TV programs, and did many other things that allowed me to feel as if I was really accepted there."

–Brian Leary, United Planet Volunteer, Costa Rica

"If you want the highest high you will ever have, go VOLUNTEER!"

–Sally Narramore, United Planet Volunteer, Chile



The Adventure of Immersion

Live in a home, work in a community.
From 1 week to 1 year in any of 40 countries.



How Does United Planet Choose Projects for Teenagers?

We take two major considerations into account when choosing whether or not a program is appropriate for someone under 18: proximity to the main office and the Country Coordinator, and the environment of the project.

How Does United Planet Ensure Safety?

Our volunteers' safety is very important to us, and we take many precautions to ensure they are in a safe environment.

Benefits of 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.

During a 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 environment on a deeper level, including the values and identity of the culture and how they differ from American or Western perspectives.

Find the joy of service while you travel, learn, and forge lasting relationships.

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

Who Can Participate

The minimum (unaccompanied) age is 16 in these countries: Chile, China, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Romania. In other countries, the minimum age is 18.

Short-term programs (1 to 12 weeks) are open to citizens of any country. Long-term programs (six months or a year) are open to citizens of the U.S. and Canada. 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.