

Career Break, Career Kick Start: Volunteer Abroad Fills in the Gap for Recent Graduates and Laid Off Workers

Over 2.6 million Americans have lost their jobs in 2008 -- the highest level in more than six decades. On average, during a recession, it takes at least two and a half years for jobs to recover. Organizations like United Planet, an international non-profit organization, are helping job seekers to add value to their unemployed days and effect meaningful change through career break volunteering stints worldwide.

Boston, MA ([PRWEB](#)) February 27, 2009 -- A record more than 1.4 million college graduates are currently unemployed, according to [CNNMoney.com](#). To stay ahead of the curve, many [recent graduates](#) and working professionals are using this time to add international experience to their repertoire of skills. "This is an excellent time for people to strengthen their resumes and expand their international expertise while making a vital contribution to the world community," said Mr. David Santulli, Executive Director of United Planet. "When the job market is tight, it's an outstanding opportunity to think outside the box."

International experience sends resumes to the top of the pile and demonstrates to employers that candidates are flexible, independent, culturally competent, multilingual and adaptable. The global economy may be in a recession, but globally-minded workers are still essential to successful businesses.

A day before the inauguration, Obama called on all Americans to volunteer. It will be a vital part of solving the global financial crisis, he said. While the credit crunch is changing career trajectories in the U.S., aid, trade and support for debt-ridden countries is shrinking when it's most needed. Almost half the world -- over 3 billion people -- live on less than \$2.50 a day. A widespread donation of hours strengthens both communities and volunteers, who gain new language skills, cross-cultural competencies, and broadened global perspectives in preparation for the job market ahead. And with thousands of Americans volunteering abroad, America can begin to build bridges of friendship and diverse trade routes of mutual economic prosperity. Change can happen.

United Planet career break volunteers can be a part of the service sea change. Areas of focus include global education, health care, women's issues, micro-empowerment and the environment. On six month placements, volunteers can support immigrants from Latin America smooth the transition of moving to Switzerland through a wide range of programs and activities; live with a Swiss host family and work in Zurich while immersing in German. Or they can develop public awareness campaigns about HIV/AIDS in Maputo, Mozambique while working with a local NGO. Long-term volunteer and intern abroad programs are available in locations such as Nepal, Spain, Taiwan and New Zealand. Long-term career break program fees cover all aspects of daily life: full lodging and meals for length of stay; two to three weeks of intensive in-country training; monthly stipend (varies per country); insurance; comprehensive in-country program support and coordination; and visa processing. Programs start in August and January.

Short-term career break and intern abroad programs (1 to 12 weeks) allow volunteers to take language classes and immerse in daily life in locations such as Amman, Jordan or Quetzaltenango, Guatemala. In Amman, volunteers work in the development office of a local NGO, while improving Arabic language skills. In Guatemala, United Planet volunteers are helping to develop a micro-enterprise Laundromat which brings in



revenue and provides vocational training for a battered women's shelter.

When convergence meets crisis, opportunities arise. In other words, if we truly work together as a global community -- a united planet -- we can overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges.

For more information on career break volunteering, please see <http://www.unitedplanet.org/career-break-volunteer-abroad>, call 1 800 292 2316 or contact Amanda Massello.

About United Planet:

United Planet is an international non-profit organization with 501(c) 3 status, based in Boston, MA, which offers career break and volunteer abroad programs from one week to one year in 50 countries worldwide. In 2008, United Planet was selected by CNN as one of only ten organizations for its "Be the Change" initiative. Visit us at: <http://www.unitedplanet.org>

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