

Parent & Guardian Information Pack



project
TRUST since 1967

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CEO's Introduction

There is nothing more rewarding than working with young people, to support them, encourage them and instil in them a belief that they can achieve whatever they set their mind to.

At Project Trust, we pride ourselves in working with young people to enable them to fulfil their potential. Our young people return from their international placements as true global citizens who have practiced independence, cultural sensitivity and who genuinely work to be positive influences in their communities.

There are hurdles that can discourage young people from applying to Project Trust. As an education charity, we are committed to minimising these barriers and provide appropriate support to help young people and their guardians embark on this incredible adventure.

Ingrid Emerson MBE



Project Trust: Who we Are

About Us

Since 1967, for over 57 years, Project Trust has supported over 8,000 young people in long-term volunteering placements internationally. Project Trust Volunteers develop new skills, learn from other cultures and contribute to a community abroad. We are the UK's most experienced educational charity specialising in ethical international volunteering.

Ethical Volunteering: What does it mean?

Ethical international volunteering means that Volunteers are placed in roles that are designed to support local communities and not take jobs away from local people.

The nature of our placements ensures that the young people our Volunteers work with experience a stable and supportive environment. It allows genuine, long-lasting connections to be made, and positive impacts to be authentically nurtured on both sides.

Volunteers leave their placement having learnt as much as they have taught. They return home as true global citizens.

Timeline of a Volunteer Journey

At Project Trust, we believe in the personal approach.

We want to foster engaged and transparent connections with our Volunteers throughout their Volunteer journey.

We make the effort to get to know each and every one of our Volunteers personally, throughout the Volunteer journey. Volunteers should feel comfortable to contact, ask and discuss any of their concerns with our team from their very first point of contact with Project Trust, right the way through to years after they return home.

Continued: Timeline of a Volunteer Journey

Application



Step 1 is the online application form. Volunteers list skills, qualifications and motivations for applying.

Selection



Step 2 is booking an online selection course. Volunteers prepare for short presentations, sessions and interviews.

Fundraising



Step 3 is starting to fundraise. Volunteers develop skills of event planning, budgeting and fundraising. Our team is on hand to support.

Training



Step 4 is attending a 4-day residential training course in Scotland. This is included in Volunteers fundraising targets.

Placement



Step 5 is the really exciting part as it's time for their international volunteering placement!

Debriefing



Step 6 is a return to Scotland for a 2-day reflective residential course. This is included in the fundraising target.

Community



Step 7 is remaining a part of our global network and being given opportunities to stay engaged through our Alumni community.

Professional & Personal Development Opportunities

Our placements are more than a Gap Year, they are an opportunity for our young people to develop key transferable skills to carry them forward in life.

Leadership

Leading activities, lessons and groups of young people, our Volunteers develop key leadership skills which are transferable across any career path.



Independence

Standing on their own two feet as they leave home, often for the first time, our Volunteers return with newfound independence and a sense of responsibility.



Communication

Engaging with people from a range of backgrounds, Volunteers start to appreciate the value of clear communication.



Resilience

Developing real-life problem-solving skills, Volunteers learn to juggle their work, cultural integration and new life internationally.



Teamwork

From planning lessons, to starting clubs, to looking after their Project Partners, teamwork grows as friendships solidify.



Languages

The best way to learn a language is to surround yourself within it. Volunteers often return fluent in their Placement Country's language.



Cultural Appreciation

An understanding and appreciation of difference is nurtured as Volunteers immerse themselves into a new culture.



International Experience

Spending several months living internationally is not only a great personal experience, but it also opens the door to future international careers.



Safety & Support

Risk Mitigation & Emergency Protocol

We have been keeping Volunteers safe on their placements for over 55 years, since our founding in 1967. We are therefore well versed in the potential risks associated with international travel and volunteering and do all we can to ensure the safety of our Volunteers.

Keeping Volunteers safe is at the heart of what we do. All project placements are risk assessed with an incident response plan in place should any issues arise. This includes gold-standard comprehensive travel and medical insurance for all Volunteers.

Both our Medical Assistance Partner and Project Trust operate a 24/7 emergency phone line so that we are always reachable in the event of an emergency.

We will ensure Guardians are also informed in case of emergency.

Volunteer Support: Pre-departure & on Placement

On Placement, Volunteers have access to our 3-tier system of support. First, they have a community based Project Host who is there to answer their day-to-day questions and help them settle into their new community. Secondly, they have an in-country International Representative who will meet Volunteers at the airport, take them to their Projects and be on hand to help with any Visa or other such requirements in-country. Finally, Volunteers have their UK-based Country Coordinator who will be the volunteer's main point of contact and will visit them on their Placement.

To find out more about these roles and their system of support, please see our FAQ section.

Whilst we want our Volunteers to become independent, resilient and positive members of their communities, we are always here should they need our support or guidance. The amount that Volunteers will draw on this varies young person to young person.

We will be supporting all our Volunteers throughout their Volunteer Journey to ensure they are kept safe and secure.

Parent and Guardian Support Network

Project Trust facilitates a support network where Parents and Guardians of Fundraising Volunteers can connect with Parents and Guardians of Returned Volunteers.

As Parents and Guardians, you can share your concerns and seek reassurance from others who know exactly how you feel.

Whilst we know that our Volunteers are heading off on the adventure of a lifetime, we also know how intimidating and nerve-wracking it can be for Parents and Guardians. The network provides an avenue to help quench those fears and build on the excitement.

Participation in the network means that as a Parent and/or Guardian of a Fundraising Volunteer, you would have access to the Parent and/or Guardian of a Returned Volunteer, by either phone or email, to share your experience and worries with. The Parent and/or Guardian of a Returned Volunteer would be there to talk you through their experiences; from selection to fundraising, training to saying goodbye at the airport, life internationally, and everything in between. Signing up to the network does not mean that you have to make use of it, it just means you have the contact details ready for it, if or when, you would like to use them.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Will my young person be met at the airport?

Yes! All our Volunteers are met in-country at their international airport by their International Representative. The International Representative will then ensure each Volunteer is taken to their Project and introduced to their Project Host.

What is a Country Coordinator, International Representative and Project Host?

The Country Coordinator, International Representative and Project Host are a part of our three-tier system of support

Project Hosts are members of the local community and are the Volunteers main point of contact for guidance on everyday matters and concerns, as well as being a good source of information on the local area and community.

International Representatives are someone who lives in the country, understands the culture, speaks the language, and can offer expert advice. The Representative arranges the logistics of Volunteers arrival in country, including a short induction, and assists Volunteers with onward travel to their placement. Representatives are also on hand to assist with an emergency or crisis.

Country Coordinators are members of the International Programme team based in the UK. They will work with Volunteers during their Training Course, provide pre-departure support, and offer guidance during the Placement. There is a 24/7 emergency phone line to our UK team who will manage an emergency or crisis.

How do I stay in contact with my young person?

We encourage all our Volunteers to get a local SIM card once they arrive in their Placement Country. This allows Volunteers to access the local mobile data network alongside any WiFi facilities that may be present at their Project. Volunteers are therefore able to keep in touch with friends, family and Project Trust via email, WhatsApp and other digital communication methods.

Can I visit my young person whilst they are on their placement?

We know that some of you may be so excited about the year ahead for your young person that you can't wait to get out and visit yourself! Whilst we do not object to friends, families or guardians visiting young people on their Placements, we do ask that this is coordinated once Volunteers have settled in and built up a routine at their Placement. This will allow any visits to be arranged within Project holiday times so as not to disrupt the vital work our Volunteers carry out.

How do I send money to my young person and how do they access their money whilst away?

It is essential that Volunteers are able to withdraw money whilst abroad, especially when conducting their own independent travel in holiday times. Whilst the best method of accessing money and taking cash out to Placements does vary country to country, we recommend following the guidance below. We will also provide more specific country information to Volunteers on training.

Debit/Credit Cards:

Many Volunteers take two credit or debit cards with them (Visa/MasterCard are usually best). Having two cards gives them security if one is stolen or blocked. A suggestion would be to take both a MasterCard and Visa card as some destinations may only accept one or the other. Online banks are often the best bet for avoiding international withdrawal fees and getting the best exchange rates. The most commonly used are Monzo, Starling, Revolut and/or Chase.

Online Banking/ Joint Accounts:

Online banking needs to be set up for all accounts Volunteers intend to use whilst away. However, there may be times when they don't have access to a secure internet connection. Therefore, many Volunteers find it helpful to set up a joint bank account with their Guardians or share their login details.

Cash:

If cash is taken, we recommend that this is either Bank of England notes or American Dollars as these are easiest to convert whilst away. We do not recommend obtaining local currency before departure.

More information on options available to Volunteers can be found on our [Money Matters](#) page, but all Volunteers are encouraged to do their own research as to what will work best for them.

Parent Testimonial

We visited Ghana at Easter. Martha had changed in the best of ways. She was more confident, capable, caring, engaged, and calmer. Deep down, clearly still the same Martha, but with a dial of positives turned up to the max, overriding the flaws and insecurities of being human.

Having seen her there allowed me to be happy when I knew she was so sad to be leaving, and to love that she had found a place which was home to her, but not to us. The most primal parental instinct is to protect their child, yet the strongest need of a child is to grow and develop the skills and resilience required to survive without the parental protection. Somewhere, sometime, somehow us parents need to learn to let go.

Letting go is so hard, but indefinitely easier when there is a safety net. From day one we had the utmost trust in Project Trust to provide essential support but hadn't anticipated how that solid foundation might nurture multiple safety nets. Lucy and Romilly, Martha's project partners, have been soul mates beyond extraordinaire, and the wider group of Ghana Project Trust Volunteers have been a fantastic and supportive network of friends, travel companions and social media commentators, keeping us connect to a home which isn't ours. Our gratitude to that big gang, to those nets which enabled us to give the hardest gift and to let go, is endless!

Eddy Pearce, Parent of Returned Volunteer 2023/24



Get in Touch

Still got questions? Give us a call or send us an email and we'll be more than happy to help!

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