

ETHICAL VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Expectations of the Volunteer

The expectations of individual volunteers are explained in detail in the volunteer policy and project specific induction packs. Volunteers are expected to support L.I.F.E. and our partners in achieving our goals of decreasing suffering and hardship amongst people in need, and increasing well-being through social, educational, therapeutic and medical interventions. Behaviour the organisation will not accept from volunteers is explained in the Disciplinary Policy and Code of Conduct.

Partner Organisations

In order to be of value to local communities, L.I.F.E. partners with local organisations and develops projects based on the needs they identify. We combine knowledge, skills and resources to achieve shared goals. Details about our partners can be seen on the *Partners* page of the CAST website, project specific induction packs, or by contacting the Project Co-ordinators. Details of how the projects benefit local communities, local people, and the direct beneficiaries can be found in the project specific induction packs or by contacting the Project Co-ordinators.

Financial and Material Contributions

A key component of the work of L.I.F.E. volunteers do is fundraising. Many volunteers also take materials to the projects they work on such as clothes, vitamins, and craft materials. Details of suitable items to be taken to projects can be found in the induction packs. L.I.F.E. releases the details of financial funds provided to our partners at the end of each year.

Volunteer Programme

The volunteer programme is well structured throughout the year as we try to plan the exact programmes we will undertake ten to twelve months before we provide volunteer support. When possible, we encourage and provide resources for local volunteers or staff to continue the work of the volunteers between trips to ensure continuity and sustainability. This system ensures quality and value for our volunteers, partners, and the beneficiaries of the projects.

Contact Details for Volunteers

Because we match volunteers to existing placements according to mutual suitability, contact details are provided by Project Co-ordinators at an early stage of the volunteer process in the project specific induction packs.

Support and Training

Through our experience of working as volunteers across projects and co-ordinating further support, we have learnt that training is most effective when delivered in the UK and followed up while volunteers are working on projects abroad. Most volunteers want to be as useful to their projects as possible and as such make the most of their time. As a result, most take advantage of all relevant training which is usually organised at least six months in advance to provide volunteers with suitable preparation time and notice.

Training and support covers learning new skills, understanding the culture of the country volunteers are travelling to, and understanding the work volunteers will undertake. A wide range of training material is available on the CAST website for home learning and pre-trip preparation. It is the responsibility of each individual volunteer to attend designated training events and undertake home study.

Local support is available from Project Managers and staff, and further support from L.I.F.E. and CAST is available at all times from Project Co-ordinators and Team Leaders. Interview, induction, and training events provide opportunities for volunteers to discuss concerns or difficulties with members of the organisation; and post-trip events are arranged for further support.

Mutual Benefits

Our organisation was designed to help people in need. However, we also recognise that volunteering with our organisation delivers many benefits to the volunteer also. It is the responsibility of the organisation, our partners, and all volunteers to ensure the beneficiaries are benefitting from volunteer support, and that volunteers are supported in delivering that support.