



VOLUNTEER LATIN AMERICA REVIEWS

Fabulous website providing a great service for volunteers. Lots of various projects to suit everyone. Thank you very much for all your help!

Dominique Tolliver

Your projects are just the best. Wow. I have registered and look forward to volunteering through you guys! Keep up the brilliant work you're doing.

Best wishes

Patricia Sifuentes

Great website guys! Found some amazing projects to do. Big thumbs-up!!

Frances Welch

We absolutely love your site and have gotten wonderful volunteers through it:)

Thank you so much!

Samantha Reguieg

Thank you guys so much for your time and energy to put this together for me. I am excited to start exploring these projects and begin this journey.

Sincerest thanks

Aaron Gravelle

A special thanks to Volunteer Latin America. I registered with them a few years ago in search of an internship to work with animals in South America after completing a Masters in Animal Welfare. I came across an opportunity in Bolivia at an animal sanctuary and I learnt a lot during my time there. It was immense. I gained experience with several different species, could use skills I had learnt during my education and other courses attended and helped educate locals on the trafficking of wild animals. I felt I had improved the lives of many animals and I met lots of like minded people. I even fell in love with a Chilean who was volunteering for the same organisation. We're now married and have started our own project here in Chile. We've opened up a 100% vegan cafe in Puerto Varas in the hope to encourage locals to eat less meat, to educate others on using less plastic and to live a more peaceful and environmentally friendly life.

Thanks for sending me on this path guys. And good luck to all the others on their search to provide help to ethical organisations too.

All the best

Amber

We found two projects in Costa Rica through your website and both were fabulous. Couldn't have wished for more. Already planning another trip at the end of the year with you guys!

Keep up the good work.

Virginia Martin

Thank you very much! You have been a great help choosing my volunteering option!

Thanks and regards

Kristin Saar

I spent 3 weeks at the Sansara Surf & Yoga Resort in Cambutal, Panama. I was working in the restaurant as a waiter and bartender, mostly working afternoon shifts. Working hours varied depending on hotel occupation. In exchange to work i was offered free accomodation and 1 staff meal per day. Additionally, I was allowed to join yoga and surf classes for free. I learned so much in this 3 weeks, not only about working in the hotel but also about surfing, yoga and mostly about myself. I met the most incredible people, everyone welcomed me so warmly and made my stay even more amazing. Thank you Volunteer Latin America for connecting me to Sansara Surf and Yoga Resort!

Best Regards

Celine Haghofer

I would thank you for helping me find an excellent project in Brazil, I never thought I'd spend four months working with bioluminescent mushrooms or living in the Atlantic Rainforest!

Thank you!

Jane Forde

Just wanted to say thank you for all you input and helping me find a wonderful volunteer opportunity. You are an amazing organisation!

Thanks again

Lucy Reid

Hello Volunteer Latin America Team

Thank you so much for the recommendations for Panama. I ended up working at one of the hotels and it was amazing! I will be traveling to Costa Rica in October and it would be awesome if you could help me find suitable projects again :)

Best regards

Celine Haghofer

I recently volunteered with my nephew at Reserve Mundo Verde in Ecuador. Volunteer Latin America was such a great help in finding a program that was child-friendly and that provided a great opportunity to help the local community and immerse ourselves in the culture and daily life of the village. Thank you again to you and your team for helping facilitate a great experience for my nephew and me.

All the Best

Jackie Sills-Dellegrazie

You have a great site - very helpful to those of us who want to volunteer, but can't afford to pay a lot. Keep it going!

Best regards

Sharon Larkin

As an environmental scientist searching for affordable conservation work in Latin America, Volunteer Latin America has been an amazing tool. There is a diverse range of opportunities, and I recommend checking all of them because you might find something you didn't even realize you were looking for. It is updated regularly, so there is always something new and interesting to consider. I had great success with the applications I made through the site and I will continue to use it in the future. The premium membership is well worth it. Through Stephen's recommendations, I was alerted to opportunities that I would have otherwise missed, and having an outside view helps to open your mind. Volunteer Latin America has set my life on an exciting trajectory, and for that I am very grateful.

Steven Sande

For the past four months, I have been living my dream working for Abriendo Mentes in Costa Rica. As a recent college graduate, who studied International Relations and Human Rights, I was eager to do some field work and to learn about small, grassroots NGOs. Volunteer Latin America helped me find the perfect position. I gave Stephen Knight my resume and filled out a short Q&A. In return, he sent me an extensive list of volunteer positions that seemed tailored to my interests. Ultimately, I decided to apply to Abriendo Mentes, an NGO focused on empowering individuals from underserved rural communities in Guanacaste, Costa Rica. I like Abriendo Mentes because all their programs run at community request. No outsider is going into the villages and dictating what is best for the locals. Instead, the locals decide the Abriendo Mentes programs. In the past few decades, Guanacaste has changed dramatically. The influx of tourists and expatriates have turned the agricultural economy into a service based economy. Farmlands are being developed at accelerating rates leaving people without their livelihoods. Meanwhile, Costa Ricans from outside Guanacaste are swooping in to take advantage of the new jobs. This is because, though Costa Rica is focusing on education,

indigenous and rural communities are being left behind. In our region, kids go to school an average of 3 hours per day, 85 days per year. The unemployment rate is a whopping 40% and the poverty rate is 29%. For this reason, the communities have asked Abriendo Mentes to supplement education and to specifically teach English and computation, two skills that are valuable in the new tourist based economy. Right now, Abriendo Mentes holds classes for English, computation, volleyball, zumba, lacrosse, and environmental science. However, I do not teach. Though I enjoy working with the students, my interests lie in the administrative side of the NGO. At Abriendo Mentes, I work as the Social Media Coordinator. I update all social media outlets, write monthly newsletters, lead communications campaigns, create and distribute marketing materials for the Abriendo Mentes community, and write for local Costa Rican publications. Because the organization is so small, I also get to act as a sort of Development Associate, sourcing and writing grants, helping to plan fundraisers, and communicating with donors. This position has been perfect for me. I was able to hit the ground running and gain skills necessary to move forward in my career. University taught me the complex sensitivities of international development work, but this position is teaching me how NGOs are run. I'm so grateful to Volunteer Latin America for helping me to find this position.

All my best

Alex Mayer

I just returned from my volunteer experience in Parismina, Costa Rica. I volunteered for 2 weeks (March 30 to April 12) to help Leatherback Turtles to nest through the organization ASTOP. The experience was marvellous. Beach patrols would be conducted at night, in which a group of volunteers and 1 or 2 guides would walk along a survey route on the beaches of Parismina looking for turtles about to nest or nesting. When we found a nesting female, we would quietly wait for her to begin laying eggs before we moved closer to her. The turtles apparently enter a trance-like state as they lay eggs. Once they are doing so, we would move closer to her and collect the eggs, measure the turtle, record her tags or tag her. We would bring the collected eggs to a "hatchery," a prepared part of the beach where ASTOP had arranged for 24 hour protection of the eggs. As I was leaving my 2 week volunteer effort, there were 15 nests of eggs being protected, approximately 1,200 eggs (at about 80 eggs per nest). The effort will continue through the nesting period of the Leatherback Turtle. Many thousands of eggs will be protected to help to ensure this endangered species' survival into the future.

Before we went on our first patrol, we were trained regarding turtle biology and natural history, and techniques of turtle patrols. Everyone on a patrol had an opportunity to do each job from collecting the leathery eggs, to recoding data, making the "nest" in the hatchery, and burying the eggs in the new man-made "nest." Many people also volunteered to serve as hatchery guards, ensuring that the eggs remain undisturbed from when the new "nest" is created until the eggs hatch and the young turtles leave for the ocean.

I chose the homestay program because I wanted to get to know the local people and to get to practice speaking Spanish. I enjoyed the homestay program immensely. My hostess, Evelyn Betencourt Herrera, and her three sons were friendly, thoughtful and considerate. Evelyn made a different classic Costa Rican for each lunch and dinner during my stay with her. She is an excellent cook and I truly believe that I experienced a great "tour" of the cuisine of Costa Rica. If you are considering volunteering in Parismina, I would highly recommend that you stay with Evelyn.

Sincerely yours

Jerry Rasmussen

Volunteer Latin America enabled me to volunteer in Mexico for 5 months in 2016. Their website provided pertinent information about the projects and allowed me to contact the organisations that I was interested in working with. I had an amazing time at my placement and the institution provides a great support for all of the boys living there. I would definitely recommend having at least intermediate Spanish skills when you arrive though! Thanks Volunteer Latin America, you were quick to respond and able to chase up organisations when I didn't get a response.

Madeleine Ford

Hands down the best experience I had in South America. The team at Volunteer Latin America are extremely knowledgeable and helpful. Highly recommend them! Can't wait to go back and volunteer through them again!!

Dominique Tolliver

I first used Volunteer Latin America in 2011. At the time I knew I wanted to go to South America, but had no idea where. They helpfully sent me a big list of potential projects, and even sent on more specific Peruvian ones when I narrowed down my options. I ended up having a great time volunteering in northern Peru for a few months - kind of off the beaten track in a little surfing village near Trujillo. Now I am on sabbatical in 2016 and looking forward to seeing how their new system works and what projects are on offer today.

Matt Haikin

Hello to all the team of Volunteer Latin America! I thought you might be interested to know thanks to your help I volunteered from two months with Makitia, Huancayo, Peru. I had an absolutely fantastic experience. The director is exemplary: she manages to take care of the children of the community centre to do her work with incredible dedication while being still available for the volunteers. Being a small organisation, it is easy to figure out where the money goes and to figure out it's all used for the kids. On top of this I met incredible people (both volunteers and locals). In brief, it was an amazing experience, thanks for your help!

Bernard Landon

I wish to thank all the team at Volunteer Latin America who have been exceptional in helping out when needed. I did two placements that I had found through their website and this gave me the opportunity to work with fantastic children who were so willing to learn. The organisation I first volunteered with in Guatemala was very well run and gave me a lot both humanly and professionally. A fantastic experience. Through the second one, in Peru, I learned many things about international volunteering and the issues that can arise. After experiencing a problem with the organisation, the team at Volunteer Latin America did all they could and beyond to help out and make sure that the issue was dealt with. Even months after, the team offered their support when I needed it. You don't get this kind of empathy in online organisations very often. A big thank you to them for making international volunteering possible and to do what they can to ensure that it all runs smoothly!

Thanks again. All the very best.

Sara Imperatori

I spent 2 weeks working in the beautiful surroundings of El Limonal with several other volunteers. It was very interesting to see an established Permaculture site. I was especially impressed by the degree of ecological restoration which had been achieved there, in comparison with the degraded hills resulting from conventional agriculture and deforestation. We worked on several different projects including planting, composting and routine maintenance, along with other jobs involving irrigation systems. Piatt is a hard working man with a vision and any volunteer will gain a lot from his knowledge and experience.

Peter Cullen

Volunteer Latin America is a great resource for those looking for opportunities abroad. I first discovered Mayatan through your site almost 4 years ago, and hope to continue working with them well into the future. For this, I am very grateful for your site!

Many thanks

Stephen Evans

Thank you so much for all that you and your organisation does - the majority of our program's volunteers find out about us through your website. Without your work we would be really struggling to take the steps that we are to re-vegetate cleared areas of the cloud forest, protect what is left and provide the community with alternative sources of revenue from eco-tourism.

With heartfelt thanks and best wishes

Emma Swann

Thank you so much for all these proposals! They all look amazing!

Best regards

Sylvia Rochat

Hi, I've recently got back from volunteering in Peru for 6 months and Ecuador for 1 month. The children's homes I was volunteering at in Cusco have been having a bad time financially. I have just redone their website as it had gone offline, and they are not getting a lot of volunteers coming through at the moment who they rely on for funds. They use Original Volunteers but the manager had been unaware how much of the money they keep. I was wondering if/how he would be able to get the homes registered on your site, they really are a great place to go and the children are wonderful. The Reserva Mundo Verde Cloud forest reserve that I found through your site and went to in Ecuador was great and the couple who run it are lovely.

Thank you

Rowena Jackson

Thank you very much for getting back to me so quickly. I have to be honest, you guys have been by far the most efficient company I have dealt with for a long time.

Many thanks

Jonay Marrero

I just wanted to say a big thanks to you and your site for inspiring me to go for it! This will be my first trip to South America and now feel a whole lot better about travelling on my own. You have helped me a lot.

Thanks again Stephen

Megan Fredericks

I've just finished up with the Manu Tropical Bird Research Program. I had an amazing time, met some wonderful people, and gained some invaluable experience. I cannot thank yourself and the Volunteer Latin America team enough for all your work in making such fantastic opportunities known and for gathering them all in one convenient place. I'll be keeping close watch on the website for more of your 100% legitimate, volunteer projects where I can really make a difference without paying an arm and a leg for the privilege. I attach a photo of myself halfway up a tree, about to return a tawny bellied screech owl nestling to his hollow. Just one of the many incredible moments I enjoyed with this project.

Pauline Pearse

After failing to secure a project on my own accord, the helpful people at Volunteer Latin America saved me many hours of research by promptly providing a tailor made brochure of voluntary schemes that suited my requirements perfectly. Realizing my lifelong dream; the result has been 5 unforgettable months living in the Peruvian Amazon where I've been monitoring the behaviour of endangered Caimans, giant river otters and macaws. VLA favours voluntary programmes that are truly voluntary (for free or at reasonable cost). In this day and age most of the so called "voluntary" schemes charge exorbitant fees. The demand for experience has created a market which is out-pricing many volunteers who have plenty of skill and good intention, but simply not enough cash. To the prospective volunteer it is not always obvious where this money goes and what the end result will be. Investing in a VLA guide has been the best investment I have made yet.

Stefan Harrison

I volunteer in Costa Rica at Ocean Ranch Park Eco Adventure Tours. I really enjoyed this experience as I learned about the flora and fauna of Costa Rica, its people, lifestyle and I learned about myself as well. I lived with three Costa Rican girls, who were doing their work placement, in dorms at the Ranch. This dorm was in the rainforest what made the place very magical. (Every morning when the rainforest wakes up and the birds start to fly and sing the place, indeed, felt like paradise.) The rest of the crew was from Costa Rica as well what enabled me to learn about their culture and traditions. It made my stay very special. They made me feel very welcome and treated me as one of them. I did not speak any Spanish when I came over but the guys were helping me to learn and I had my Spanish lesson in the town once a week. The Ranch offered horse riding, zip lines canopy tours, quad tours and waterfall rappel tour. My responsibility was to help the tour guides with different activities, sometimes

we looked after the horses, other day I would be on the zip lines or assisting at the waterfalls. I enjoyed every moment of it. In the evening when everybody left the Ranch went quite again. We tidied up with the girls and had the evening for us. Sometimes we went to the city, or went to a local restaurant and the girls would teach me how to dance salsa, or just relax, cook and watch a movie (in Spanish of course). The girls didn't speak any English. When I had time off I went to explore the other parts of Costa Rica and there is a lot to explore. Volunteering was a very special way of learning and exploring a different part of the world. I was excited and nervous at the beginning from the unknown. But as soon as I adjusted to the different life style, culture and approach to work I had a time of my life. Volunteering taught me to live in the moment and appreciate everything and everyone around me. Because of the people I worked with I didn't feel like a tourist or outsider. I had the opportunity to enjoy Costa Rica with local people who welcomed me very warmly and made my stay unforgettable.

Eva Kliestikova

I just wanted to follow up on a success story from buying your volunteer guide. I have just finished a 3 month stint volunteering with Akazul, a sea turtle conservation organisation based in Guatemala who is listed with you guys. I have had such a wonderful time that I am going back in May for another 3 month stint. I just thought I would let you know, like you asked, that it went really well! Here is a photo of me working with hawksbill turtles.

Felicity Shapland

I found my volunteer project through the very helpful and informative guide from VolunteerLatinAmerica.com. My experience ended last November after six months of hard, but incredibly rewarding volunteer work with Sustainable Roots in Cosanga, Ecuador. Cosanga is a very small, inviting town and I was immediately welcomed with big, radiant smiles despite the semi constant downpour of rain. Many of the students in the town (first grade to post high school) knew who I was before I arrived due to widespread social media outlets, and I quickly got to know them whether it was in the classroom, around town, or in their gymnasium where I had my ankles broken several times by their dominant soccer skills. I taught English, alone and with other volunteers, in the small elementary school in Cosanga which consisted of four classrooms ranging from first grade to seventh grade, and the same ages in the neighbouring town of Baeza. We ran an after school program in the classroom in the volunteer housing in Cosanga and a volunteer night class for sixth grade to post high school age. The weekends were spent working on projects in the house and the town, camping with the high school kids and travelling to the cities of Tena and Quito. Despite meeting and becoming friends with many of the children, high schoolers and adults in the town, my experience wouldn't have been as rewarding as it was if Sustainable Roots was founded by anybody other than Toni Walters. She has poured her heart and wallet into Sustainable Roots because, like anybody reading this, she wants to make a difference and she continues to change the lives of the children, adults and of course, the volunteers who were and are lucky enough to be a part of Sustainable Roots.

Robert Porter

I just got back home from my gap year and wanted to drop you a quick thank you e-mail. Your volunteer guide was awesome (and very well put together). I found some very cool volunteering options thanks to you. I was volunteering in Chile (at Mallin Colorado Ecolodge) and Costa Rica (Monteverde Butterfly Gardens) as a tour guide. Once again, thank you for making this awesome year possible.

Maarja Nomme

In 2011 my girlfriend and I went to South and Middle America for about a year. We had a volunteering guide made by your organisation with around 50 projects we could choose from. We have worked at 6 projects throughout the year in different countries. We had a really good time and your guide helped us a lot. We became particularly aware of volunteering organisations that mediate between volunteers and the projects, increasing the price enormously. We are very much against this practice. Now we are planning to go to Indonesia for a couple of months this year. Do you know of an organisation similar to yours for this region? We would like to have a new guide for Indonesia.

Kind Regards

Martijn Van Graafeiland

In October 2013 I have been sent a volunteer guide from Volunteer Latin America and I therefore just wanted to give you a feedback. Well, I applied to the Monitoring and research subprogram at the CEA (Centro Ecologico Akumal) in Mexico and was accepted to join them in March for 4 months :)

So thank you a lot for your service!

Best regards

Lovina Fullgrabe

Thanks so much for sending me the guide for free! It's much appreciated - not to mention absolutely inspiring. In the few minutes I've had to glance over it this morning I'm pretty certain I'll be wending my way throughout the continent based on a collection of these projects, which I'm really excited about doing. I'll also certainly be mentioning your organisation on my various social media channels (blog included) when I start various projects.

Flora Baker

Thank you for your kindness and for maintaining this amazing website! It helped having an amazing time in the last years.

Best wishes

Tamina Jeschonnek

Thanks for your help! Your volunteer guide is a great opportunity to find a project in Latin America. Your organisation is doing a great job! Looking forward to my time in Latin America.

Yours

Lydia Goller

Thanks for the volunteer guide! Lots of exciting and interesting projects to consider!

Have a great day

Sarah Fisher

Hey sorry about the late response but I have been away for a few days. The package looks incredible, thank you so much.

Regards

Lyndon Jones

Thank you very much for your quick reply. I believe I will find some great volunteering opportunity.

Kind regards

Eva Kliestikova

I just wanted to send you a big Thank you! I ordered a volunteer guide from you in December 2012 and spent May-July 2013 travelling and working in Costa Rica and Ecuador. I think you're doing a fantastic job with your website and especially the very comprehensive and informative volunteer guide which helped me to select three projects all of which I enjoyed a lot! I owe you a great deal - volunteering in Latin America made for the best summer of my life!

Thank you once again! I've already recommended your website to a lot of people and will definitely continue to do so in the future!

Best regards

Hanna Büchler

Thank you Dawn for the prompt reply! I'm sure my partner and I will make inquiries to a few projects. Keep up the great work and good luck with the new website :)

Have a fabulous day

Rina Pattullo

Thank you so much! I will definitely send you pictures and a report of my stay in Latin America!

Susanna Karjalainen

Thanks very much, this looks fantastic! I really like the ones that have a mixture of social and environmental aims. We're planning on leaving in about a year's time, so a little way away yet, but I imagine it will be good to contact these places with good time, anyway.

Thanks very much!

Georgia Amson-Bradshaw

Thank you for the guide, it is superb.

I was going to volunteer through Original Volunteers so are now over £100 in pocket! It was also very interesting to read that post about what goes on behind the scenes on the gap year website. Absolute disgrace!!!

Thanks again for your great service.

Rachel Crosier

Thank you so much for taking that short time in sending me the guide. I'm so grateful. Thanks a lot.

Kind regards

Sara Fernández González

So glad to have found a sound alternative to companies charging gap year students an absolute fortune to volunteer. The volunteer guide you sent me was perfect in terms of the variety of projects and of course the cost.

Thank you for your wonderful service.

Amy Jackson

Thank you very much for the Volunteer Guide you sent over to me. It is very helpful, thank you.

Kirsty Hunt

Thank you for a great service. Will be sure to recommend you.

Andy Kulesza

Thanks so much for putting together this volunteer packet for us.

Thanks so much

Eliza and Justin

This guide is really good. It is a little short for the panama and a little heavy on Argentina but overall it is very motivating for me to see what's possible to do, and very helpful to have it compiled.

Thank you

Florian Pellet

Great! Thank you so much. I have just begun to go over all of the options you have included and are very excited with some of them.

Thank you so much

Molly Parren

I wanted to let your know that your information was totally invaluable to us. We followed up on many of the Latin America opportunities you identified, and ended up getting into the ASVOCR program. Now we are just finalizing the exact location within their choices to pick (we are leaning towards Buena Vista turtle research because of my son's interest in math and science). And they are able to accommodate his April 8 arrival date.

Thank you!

David Kulbarsh

Thank you very much, looks like there are some great projects available.

I'll be sure to recommend you.

Best wishes

Kerry Orla Jackson

I looked through the list you set up for me and a few definitely caught my eye.

Thank you once again for your time. I do really appreciate what you guys are doing for the volunteer community of the world.

Dusty Orrantia

Thank you so much for both the guide and the web sites for other volunteer info.

I will take a look - thank you once again :)

Lauren Buglisi

Volunteer Latina America has been a great resource for me!

Thank you

Jessica Gailey

I have set up a placement for my gap year and it wouldn't have been possible without the help of Volunteer Latin America, so a big thank you for your excellent service.

You've saved me hundreds of Euros!

Simone Büchler

Thank you for compiling this list! I shall be emailing some of them in the next few days.

Cheers

Thomas Vogel

Thank you for the volunteer guide, it is really helpful.

All the best

Mark Doherty

Thanks very much for my volunteer guide, it has been really useful and there are a few projects on there I am interested in.

Many thanks

Natasha Bailey

Thanks again for sending us this guide, its been very helpful and through it we have arranged some volunteering with the Fundacon Pro-Bosque in Ecuador who seem like an excellent organisation.

Many thanks and kind regards

Carys and Stewart

Thank you for the volunteer guide. It is a huge help in starting me off.

Best

Caleb Rightford

Thank you for sending me the volunteer guide, it's amazing, and I have booked to volunteer in Nicaragua next month with Building New Hope.

Many thanks!

Sally Parker

Thanks so much Stephen. Will have a look at the guide proper this evening. Thank you for all your help. You have been absolutely stellar and I'm stoked to have made contact with you.

Natasha Johnson

Many thanks for sending me the volunteer guide so rapidly! I really appreciate it!

Many thanks

Delyth Williams

Thank you so much for the guide. It is awesome!

Eve Labrecque

Wow ... Stephen, this is awesome! Thank you very much for helping me on this and thanks for your support. I really appreciate this!!!

Thanks

Juliane Back

Love what you guys are doing and amazing website. Keep it up!!

Lee Mascarenhas

Thank you very much indeed for sending me a guide in short time. Very impressed by the service of your team.

Regards

Myagmartogtokh Tumennasan

Thank you, Stephen, for such a quick turn around on the guide.

Best wishes

Sarah Shute

Thank you for your prompt reply with the guide.

Wish you all the best in 2013 and that you have the perfect NYE.

Nuno Barreto

Thank you so much for the information provided.

Best wishes

Gema Pérez

Hello Stephan. This is wonderful, thank you.

Kind regards

Aurora Hogden

Thank you so much, what a great resource!

Cheers

Bevan Yiu

Thanks a lot Stephen! Sorry for not specifying and thanks for the quick and great service, really appreciate it!

Many thanks

Sarah Brompton

Thank you so much for all the great information.

Kindest regards

Alice Brooks

Thank you so much for the information guide and how quickly it came. I have found the most ideal placement that I would have never found otherwise.

Thank you!!

Shelley Urbanowicz

Thank you so much for the volunteer guide. I will be contacting a few programs in Peru and Guatemala.

Appreciate all your assistance

Ana Skarakis

Thanks for sending me the wonderful volunteer guide with a superb variety of projects in South America, exactly the right mix of tourism, child welfare, community development and miscellaneous. I have already selected three in which I'm very interested.

Kind Regards

Yoah Kerkvliet

Thanks so much for this and for the quick turnaround. A quick scan through has got me very excited about all the opportunities on offer!!!!

All the best

Elinor Unwin

Thanks very much for the volunteer guide you sent - It is exciting and I am looking into projects at the moment.

Thanks

Robin Mussell

Thank you for the volunteer guide you sent me, it contained lots of projects that look really interesting.

Many thanks

Sarah Carson

Thanks again very much for your help. I received the volunteer guide today and everything is fine.

Best wishes

Martin Häring

I am writing to let you know about my experiences in Belize and Honduras, which were better than I would have ever imagined.

I especially recommend the organisation Honduras Children, where I spent 2 months volunteering with children. I met incredible volunteers from all over the world and was involved in a very fun vacation activities program. The town I lived in was so friendly and welcoming and despite the atrocities and violence that plague Honduras, I never felt unsafe and never had any issues. I enjoyed living on the beach and discovering some beautiful spots and trying out adventurous activities such as zip lining and white water rafting.

Belize was very beautiful and I enjoyed being able to discover a lot of the country due to good infrastructure and its small size. I enjoyed working with the organisation (The Cornerstone Foundation) but found the heat and humidity hard to cope with sometimes.

The food was delicious in both countries-what I would do for a plate of rice and beans or a baleada right now :) And I was amazed by how friendly, helpful and kind people were in both countries.

I would like to thank the Volunteer Latin America team for sending me my guide so quickly and providing me with far too many great organisations to volunteer with. I definitely struggled trying to pick which organisation(s) to work for and will definitely be trying to head to the organisations I couldn't work for this last trip.

Thank you for your help

Kind wishes

Anna Blyth

Many thanks for my Volunteer Guide, it is interesting and inspiring....the difficult part is now deciding which project to volunteer with!!

Kind regards

Sarah Jones

Thank you for my personalized volunteer guide. I have thoroughly read through it and found many placements I thought would suit me quite well.

Thank you

Bethany Heintz

Many thanks for sending my guide so quickly.

Kind regards

Claire Salisbury

Thank you for your prompt reply, it is much appreciated.

Thanks again

Tom Alterman

Thank you so much for compiling such a wonderful list for me! There are so many options to choose from and I'm looking forward to looking into all the possibilities.

Thank you so much for your assistance, it has been greatly appreciated.

Shawn Morgan

Thanks so much for the guide. There are so many useful information about organizations and projects and the requirements for the projects! I'm sure I will be in contact with one of them very soon!

Thanks again for sending me the guide so fast!

Gabriela Urbas

Thank you very much indeed. Shall be in touch if I have any further questions.

Best Wishes

Katie Francis

I think the service you offer assisting people to find a volunteer placement in Latin America is admirable, especially endorsing real volunteering rather than companies exploiting naive travellers.

Best wishes

Jack Richardson

I just quickly wanted to send you a feedback on a volunteer project. I am currently in Central America visiting my second volunteer project ("The Ara Project" in Costa Rica, Alajuela). The accommodation is a warm friendly homestay with a lovely host, you do feel very welcome. The project itself is as described in the guide with a very professional team - the animals come first, all is well done and organized and your help is truly appreciated. Thumbs up and I can recommend it. Your work and money goes for a good purpose!

Kind regards

Julia Grenz

Hey Stephen, the guide you sent us is absolutely fantastic and the projects sound amazing. This is such an enormous help and well worth the money.

Thank you so much

Zarah Hernandez

I am planning to travel to Lima, Peru this September and am in the process of looking for a language school and/or private tutor in order to learn Spanish. I am also interested in finding a volunteer opportunity. I have done a lot of research and was impressed when I came across your website. I have become a bit discouraged by other organizations & placement agencies that charge a ton of money and don't seem to be ethical. As mentioned, when I came across your site I was impressed and felt relieved to find an independent, ethical organization that seems to be genuinely interested in the well being of Latin America. Thank you in advance for your help.

Best regards

Matthew Bastone

I have been to Mexico, with "Centro Ecologico Akumal" with your guide. It was among the best experience of my life, for sure!!!!

Thank you!!!

Clémence Tranchand

I used one of your guides three years ago, using my maiden name Poulsen. I went to Costa Rica with the ASVO program. I had an amazing time working at the sea turtle hatchery and taking surfing lessons while living on the beach. I met some wonderful people while I was there, and most of them mentioned how much they spent using companies like i-to-i. The people I met that used i-to-i stick out in my memory because they spent triple what I spent since they used a full service company instead of just ordering a guide from you guys. So thanks again.

Best

Amanda Dix

Thanks very much for the information Stephen, I have had a look and it will be very helpful.

Thanks again

Gabe Gilmour

I have recently finished volunteering in a project that you suggested, Honduras Children. I have been there for 6 months now and really enjoyed it.

Thanks for your help

Emma Cowie

Thank you for sending through the projects. I have definitely found some that I would like to do. Thanks again.

Regards

Simran Choudhary

Thanks for the guide, very complete.

Barbara Pavie

I purchased a volunteer guide from you in 2009 and then went to work on the REGUA reserve in Brazil in 2010. It was one of the best experiences of my life!

I think your website and information service is a great alternative to finding volunteer programmes rather than going through most gap year specialist companies who charge a fortune for very little. Much more ethical, gives you the information you need to organise your trip and allows you to deal directly with the charity.

Kind Regards

Victoria Lownes

Thank you so much!! Everything looks very interesting indeed! I will definitely contact several of the organizations. I am going to start travelling in October/November.

Kind regards

Lynn Ruyssinck

Thank you for the volunteer guide you sent me, it is very informative.

Many thanks

Nicola Campbell

Thank you very much. If everything works out, I will be advertising you BIG TIMES :)

Sorry, I'm just really excited.

Thank you very much again. Have a nice rest of the day.

Martin Mlaka

I ordered and received a volunteer packet from you last summer and ended up volunteering at the Hummingbird Center in Peru for 3 months. The experience was wonderful.

Thank you

Dhyan Jayananda Martial Purdy

Thank you for providing the extremely helpful guide. It does have a number of interesting opportunities.

Yours sincerely

Nick Morris

Thank you so much for this, I can't wait to start finding a project to go to.

I'm really impressed with the work you guys do, because I've been doing a lot of research about volunteering opportunities and I didn't think you can get some as affordable as these.

Thanks again!

Adél Groenewald

My friend and I have ordered in total 3 booklets from your organisation for volunteering in South America. They have been extremely useful and I have already spent a year in South America, half of that time volunteering at wildlife refuges in Bolivia and organic farms in Ecuador.

Kind Regards

Melissa Parish

Your guide thus far is awesomely wonderful!!!! Are you able to do the same for the UK? Thank you again. If you ever need any kind of glowing reference to put on a website, I am happy to do it for you.

Amy Love

Thank you very much for the prompt and informative replies! I was a little confused with what "other requests" shall be and thought what I was interested is gearing towards conservation and areas I've checked. I apologize for not filling the application properly and greatly appreciate your help.

Thanks again for providing such useful information in minutes.

Helane Chan

I want to thank you for your fantastic and invaluable blog. I really love it, and use it all the time. Thank you for a great resource.

Lorna Houlden

Thank you very much for my volunteer guide, I am finding it extremely useful!

Thank you for your help

Lauren Abbott

Thank you very much for the guidebook. It has been very useful and I am starting to get in touch with different organisations.

Best

Sarine Arslanian

Thank you very much for sending the guide within such a short period of time - this is very much appreciated. I'll have a look through it over the weekend and will be back in touch next week if I have any questions.

Have a lovely weekend.

Best wishes

Larissa Webster

I am writing for two reasons. Firstly I just wanted to thank you for your recommendation to study Spanish with Mariana Gonzalez in Quito Ecuador in your Spanish school guide. I studied with her for two months and she is an amazing teacher. Unfortunately, however she has been having technical problems with her old website and has to create a new one so I just wanted to inform you of that change so that you can update it in your guide as I would hate to think that others may not be able to contact her now. Her new web address is the same as the last but with com instead of net.

Kind Regards

Sarah Wordsworth

Thank you for compiling my guide. There are so many choices that appeal to me, I can't wait to investigate them further and become a part of one or more of them! I'll be sure to mention you guys when I apply.

Thanks again

Matt Prowd

I expect that you're busy but just wanted to say that you do great things, particularly your efforts in championing the good work of nonprofits outside of the Latin American region. I think you can congratulate yourself on a job well done with regards to your sister organization.

You have my total respect

Emma Hurd

A little over three years ago your company put a guide together for me for volunteer opportunities in Central America. It was very extensive and what I thought to be an excellent service. I spent 5 lovely months at La Cambalacha in San Marcos La Laguna Guatemala. I then continued to return to San Marcos for six months of the year for the last three years, completely enchanted by the place.

I am now starting a project of my own there called The Yoga Forest; it is a Permaculture and yoga centre for people seeking to reconnect with themselves and with their environment. We hope to begin to help re-educate the local people in organic farming practices and biodiversification in order to help the local landscape and the destruction of Lago Atitlan, one of the world's most beautiful lakes, which is slowly becoming more and more polluted, largely due to use of chemical pesticides and fertilisers.

We are beginning to build our community and would like to invite volunteers to come and stay with us and as such I thought it would be best to start by contacting the company which put me in touch with this beautiful part of the world. Our website is under construction, but for now, you can see the project at our facebook page.

I would love the opportunity to discuss the possibility of collaborating our project with your list of projects in Guatemala.

Kind Regards

Hayley Tennyson

Thank you very much for the project pack; it is a fantastic source of information. I am very happy with many of the projects you have suggested.

Many thanks and kind regards

Nathan Blair

Thanks a lot for the volunteer guide! We were able to find a position that sounds ideal. We will be volunteering at Barton Creek Outpost in Belize from August 29th - November 26th. The guide you put together was a great resource which made choosing an experience much less overwhelming than if we had been searching online on our own.

Thanks again for your service

Joy and Josh Leisen

Thank you so much for such an awesome guide! My boyfriend and I decided on the farm that feels perfect for us.

Thank you so much for your time.

Samantha Lopez

Thank you so much - the Guide is fantastic. I am at present extremely excited about opportunities for us both in Guatemala. Thank you for all your help Stephen, it is hugely appreciated.

Wonderful thing you've got going here.

Tessa Snelgar

I recently used your services to find a volunteering position in South America. I was very impressed with the results and so far, the project I have attached myself to is currently going very well. I am writing to ask if you know of any comparable service for North America or, more specifically, Canada?

Many thanks

Sam Pearce

I am extremely satisfied and impressed by the guide I have received from you. I will definitely be recommending to everyone I can. I have already lined up first volunteer position. I am particularly pleased with the selection of programs you provided that seemed to be tailored to my interests and background as I detailed in my order form.

Thank you again for your service

Jeffrey Driskell

Thank you so much for your help Stephen! You really did a wonderful job and saved me a lot of headache!

Amanda Frye

Thank you very much for putting this together so quickly. I will be in contact if I have any further questions.

Andrea Fullagar

Thank you for your email and the volunteer guide, which was very helpful.

Thank you very much for your help.

Lyane Rochat

Thank you so much for your speedy response with the guide. I've just had a peek at the first 6 and I know I'm going to find it difficult to decide but one is feeling right already.

I look forward to reading your articles. I was having a read yesterday - it's a fantastic blog.

Thanks so much so far and I'm sure I'll be in touch with some questions.

Kind regards

Kim Burnell

WOW - I just had a look at the information on the blog - fantastic, thank you so much.

Tessa Snelgar

I must just write and thank you for your help and amazing booklet of opportunities sent to me. We have contacted several and are ready to leave for a 4 month trip next week. All the opportunities were just wonderful to read about. We are now looking forward to our trip and volunteering greatly. Since receiving your booklet I have given your details to several people, who will be contacting you.

Kindest regards to you

Cherie and Dave

Many thanks for the guide, it's extremely helpful. I'll be sure to recommend VLA to my friends.

Thomas Rees

Thank you so much for getting back to me so quickly, and with great information! I will definitely be applying to some of these projects. Again, thanks for the great service.

Best wishes

Leah Heaton-Jones

Thanks for getting back to me so quickly. I'm really happy with the information you have provided.

Thanks for all your help

Eleanor King

Wow, that was fast! I look forward to looking through the programs. :)

Thanks again

Becky Rivard

Thank you very much for the guide. It seems very interesting and I think it will help us a lot.

Yours sincerely

Tom Creten

This is absolutely wonderful; thank you again. I will be sure to write you after our year abroad with extensive feedback on the people, places, and projects.

Best

Cortney Kendall

I just wanted to thank you again for the assistance with my research into volunteering in South America. From your guide I have now sourced and booked an amazing horse internship in Costa Rica starting in January. I am so looking forward to it!

Kindest regards and a massive thank you!

Tiffany Chuck

Many thanks for compiling our guide. We look forward to reading about the projects you have selected for us.

Kind regards

Rosanna & Romana

Many thanks for your quick response. The collection is quite impressive and contains some projects which I have already shortlisted.

Thank you

Frederik Vath

Volunteer Latin America was very helpful in finding programs that satisfied my interests. I am currently participating in a program that I discovered through this service (Carisma Peru). As it turns out, one of my fellow volunteers also found this program through VLA. I have been here a week and am enjoying it so far. It is a very relaxed atmosphere and I felt at home immediately. I plan to stay here for three months, and then hope to participate in a new program with a different focus afterwards.

Rebecca Gordon

The service was great, especially as some clarification was required regarding our travel plans at the beginning. The information provided was detailed and allowed us to select something that would suit our plans. We now have one placement organised and are working on another. I will let you know how we find them.

Kind regards

Allanah Berry

We had some concerns about getting one of your guides but the information received has been extremely useful. The choice of projects was fantastic and after some deliberation we've set up a three week voluntary placement in Mexico, helping to save sea turtles! We really appreciate your help and for inspiring us!

Keep up the good work

Ben and Charlotte

Thank you very much Stephen. This looks awesome! I really appreciate it.

Kind regards

Brandon van Niekerk

Thank you so much for all the volunteer ideas for South America. This will greatly help us on our trip.

Jade Bartoletti

Just so you know, I have been a volunteer with Amanecer for the last year (just finishing up now) having found the organisation in a guide you did for me. It's been a great experience and Amanecer is a wonderful organisation to work for. They do an amazing job and have a wide variety of things volunteers can do to help, so it keeps it interesting!

Jennifer Byrne

Thank you very much for the personalised guide. It is helpful and straight-forward.

Thanking you again

Brendan Mulcahy

I recently came back from a 10-week volunteering trip, I worked in 2 organisations that I had found thanks to you, and so I'm writing to give some feedback.

First of all thank you very much for compiling the volunteer guide, it was very complete and made my search so much easier!

Both of my experiences were great, I really only have praises for those organisations.

I first worked with the Valley of the Moon Children's Center in Bolivia (mid-June to mid-July). My stay had been very well prepared before the arrival, with the contact person (Emma Donlan) answering all my questions and giving me all the info I needed. Once on the spot, everything flowed smoothly, I felt very safe and welcome. Since Emma has been a volunteer herself and has welcomed many people over the years, she knows exactly how to handle volunteers and which advice to give. The work with the children and the women from the community was very challenging at the beginning, but I quickly got into it, it was exhausting (little kids are so full of energy!) but also extremely rewarding. I grew very attached to all of

them and was very sad to leave. I'd highly recommend this organisation to anyone wishing to work with small children.

After that I worked in Peru at Pilpintuwasi Butterfly Farm and Animal Orphanage in Iquitos (mid-July to end of August). There the contact was a bit less "sustained" before arrival, given the lack of internet connexion in the village. But Gudrun Sperrer always answers emails and questions, even if it takes a little while. My stay at Pilpintuwasi was amazing as well, although less supervised and -let's say- a bit more "rough" (it's the jungle after all), I had to trust my instincts and take initiatives much more, because volunteers were not often told what to do or how to do it. I was glad I spoke some Spanish already by that point; otherwise it would have been hard. Pilpintuwasi makes for a much more adventurous experience, given the isolation and the lack of comfort in the jungle, but working there is fascinating, you learn so much about butterflies and animals! One advice to future volunteers: plan it in advance, because Gudrun doesn't take more than 4 people at one time and there are always plenty of candidates.

Best regards

Nathalie Chiêm

I just wanted to let you know that the guide was very helpful and I've found the perfect placement at Cloudbridge in Costa Rica. So thank you.

All the best

Luke Metelerkamp

I bought a volunteer guide from VLA before I came travelling and it has been a very useful resource. I am currently volunteering for a fantastic NGO based in Peru.

Thank you very much

Scott Unwin

I purchased a volunteer guide in January of this year and completed a project in Peru during the month of April which I thoroughly enjoyed. It's hard to describe my time out there as it was unlike anything I've ever done before. I participated in shamanic ceremonies that used medicine plants to heal people's inner problems and I had to look after the retreat groups that came to the centre looking for help. The centre was located in a beautiful part of the Amazon rainforest so was the ideal setting for relaxation and meditation and the amount of stars at night was breath-taking. It was one of the best experiences I've ever done and I'm looking forward to returning to South America as I still have so much to see and do! Thank you for giving me the opportunity to take part in something so amazingly life-changing.

Yours Sincerely

Nia Hooper

I purchased your Volunteer Guide 2 years ago and have spent 2 winters in several of the places you sent me. All my experiences were wonderful.

Thank you

Donna Pieracini

I feel quite depressed now I'm back home and all I can think of is the magical time I had in Central America. I met so many nice and interesting people, and the project at the environmental resource centre in Costa Rica was amazing. I can't thank you enough for giving me that great opportunity. It's really changed my outlook on life and I've learnt more than I could ever have imagined.

Good luck with your organisation and thank you again.

Rachel Cowan

Thank you very much for your quick response in delivering my request. I am especially grateful as I am eager to volunteer abroad as soon as possible.

Paula Clarke

Thank you very much for the volunteer guide. It has been a great help in terms of finding something that suites us.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Blair

Just a brief but immense thank-you for the info pack. My world has been turned up-side down by the opportunities and life changing experiences that await me. I will of course follow up at a later stage once I've enrolled in some of the projects but I just had to say thank-you, for now, from the very depth of my soul.

Cheers

Paul Nel

Thank you very much for the guide. It looks very interesting and there are several opportunities that fit the bill quite well.

Adrian Jankowiak

Thank you very much for creating the guide so quickly. I do appreciate your help.

All the best

Christine Bouquin

Thank you for informing me about some really interesting and affordable grassroots volunteering opportunities. I don't understand why anyone would work through a gap agency when all you really receive for an excessive mark-up in cost is a 24-hour helpline and a t-shirt. Most of these agencies are in the business to make profit, not to help the developing world. I thank my luck starts for stumbling upon Volunteer Latin America.

Keep up the great work

Brenda Young

Thank you very much for the guide. There is a lot of useful information and some interesting projects!

Lina Schumacher

I'm Goran Horvat and I bought the volunteer guide from you a few months ago. I just wanted to thank you because with your help I was able to find a few volunteering organisations in Central and South America which are a perfect match for me. Be sure to expect a postcard from me...that's the least I can do.

Thanks again

Goran Horvat

Wow - this is amazing. Thank you so much! I can't wait to read through this.... I'll definitely be in touch with feedback.

Rachel Thiet

I absolutely love the guide that you sent me and I am pretty sure that I have found where I want to go.

Thanks

Danielle Woodhouse

Thanks a million Stephen - a couple of the permaculture-based projects in the Amazon are exactly what I was hoping to get involved in!! Cheers and I'll be sure to provide feedback when I get involved.

Many thanks

Mark Donohoe

Awesome! Thanks for this guide. Now I feel confident that I can make this trip happen.

Kind & Best Regards

Jennifer Farr

I just wanted to say thank you for your help and the prompt, efficient service. I really appreciate it. I have my volunteer guide now and am very happy with it. Thank you again.

Best regards

Gemma Parkinson

I received my volunteer package last week, and was impressed by the fast and well organized service.

Thanks

Aliyah Sadehu

Thank you so much for the Volunteer Guide. It's fantastic.

Best regards

Amanda Webb

Thank you greatly for all the interesting and detailed information on the varied volunteer projects.

Carly Holmes

I wanted to thank you for the awesome volunteer packet that you sent to me almost a year ago. I decided to travel to Guatemala and attend a Spanish school and volunteer there as well. The school is called "El Nahual" and of course it was found in the awesome volunteer packet you guys sent me. Thank you for putting so much time into these information guides.

Troy Johnson

Thank you so much for sending that through so quickly! Wow... So much to choose from... So little time! I wish I could do them all. It will be tough making a decision.

Kind regards

Isabelle Pury

Many thanks for putting the guide together for me I am enjoying looking at all the different opportunities!

With regards

Alisha Kaliciak

Thank you very much. Such a pile of projects....wow! I cannot wait to sit down and find out more about them.

Anna Lengyel

Thanks so much for sending the guide so quickly. All the projects look fantastic which has given me the problem of too much choice :)

Thanks again for your help

Beverley Redmond

Thank you so much for your fast delivery of the volunteer guide. The amount of information and variety of jobs is fantastic.

Gabrielle Goodin

Thank you very much for this. It looks great! We'll keep you posted as to where we decide to go and our experience.

Pablo Pastor

That list was very helpful and we have already found some very interesting projects for application.

Thanks for all your help

Elias Spinn

Thank you so much! I will have a good long read this evening - really excited about all the options available.

Thanks again

Vicky Osman

Thank you very much! I've only looked over it just briefly so far, and it looks like there are tons of great projects!

Sincerely

Stephanie Thornton

Thank you very much for the quick response and the projects you provided, at least 2-3 of them sound exactly like what we want. We will provide you with as much detailed feedback about any places you've recommended after our visits there.

Thank you again

Schuyler Tunaley

I found the packet you put together very helpful for our planning in Latin America.

Thank you

Jonathan Osteen

About a fortnight ago I received the Volunteer Guide I ordered. I must admit, I'm very pleased with my deal. The guide directs me to amazing, yet affordable projects, which I wasn't able to find on my own. I recommended your service to my friends already. Thank you!

Best wishes

Ziva Justinek

I have just finished a three week stay at Proyecto Caraya a project that you suggested in your information pack and I thought I would email you to let you know how it went.

Firstly it was an absolutely incredible experience working with the monkeys. My main job was to take care of a group of babies who needed special attention. This included cleaning their living area feeding and general baby-sitting duties as well as giving out the occasional cuddle (well maybe more than occasional). I also helped out with the release of some monkeys into the free living space in the forest, an endearing task to watch a new monkey become part of a group and no longer want human contact.

The project is an amazing venture that needs as much support as it can get, particularly during the winter months as there are very few full-time staff members (actually only one if you don't count Alejandra the director).

I highly recommend a solid grasp of Spanish, more than just basic level as you will be a lot more use to them when you can understand instructions the first time around. Living conditions are very basic and you should be prepared for that - no hot water on tap and no running water or electricity in the volunteer's quarters. There is limited cellular reception and no internet access at the centre and the closest village is 11km away. If you wanted to help more than giving your time, they can always use donations of cleaning products, fruit and vegetables, as well as old clothes and blankets too. I wish I'd known that before as I would have done a big shop in town before heading out there.

I thoroughly enjoyed my stay there and could have easily stayed longer, those young monkeys were just adorable.

Thank you Volunteer Latin America for making me aware of their existence. I am planning to help out at least one more project here in South America and appreciate your help in finding cost effective places to go where my money will clearly help the project and not some agency in the middle.

Thanks again

Christina Williamson

Thank you for your prompt service. The volunteer guide looks great! Appreciate your advice given as well.

Have a good weekend ahead

Wanru Wong

Thank you so much for sending me the volunteer guide in lightening speed! Thank you very much for your kind help.

Happy New Year

Priscilla Stephan

Thank you very much for our volunteer guide! It has really helped Sophie and me to narrow down our options in what we want to do on our gap year.

Darcy O'Connell-Bristow

Thank you for the list of so many great volunteer opportunities! Thank you for all your help.

Katie Horch

Thank you so much for my brochure, it's extremely informative and has got me excited about which project I could be doing.

Thank you and best wishes

Nicola Twiston Davies

Thank you so very much for my guide. Stacks of exciting opportunities to undertake volunteering in Permaculture workshops and sustainable living. I really appreciate your time for putting together such a comprehensive volunteer guide.

Kind Regards

Melissa Parish

Many thanks for sending this through - makes for some exciting reading!

Kind regards

Kimberly Gilmour

I completely forgot to send you an email sometime ago to thank you for pointing me towards BA English House in Buenos Aires. It was an excellent experience and a great way to learn more about Argentina and meet some fantastic people. It's a well run institute with some great teachers and was immensely useful for me to greatly improve my Spanish as well as experience more of Buenos Aires. I would not have found them without use of your site.

Many thanks

Barney Lyons

Volunteer Latin America has been an invaluable resource in helping me prepare for my trip. Your information service was extremely quick and efficient, and the guide you sent me contained a host of projects to choose from. The diversity of the work and study opportunity contacts you sent me really is in keeping with your organisation's mission statement. You have made my plans possible and affordable and I would highly recommend you to anybody thinking of volunteering in Central and South America.

Vivienne Lydon

Thank you for sending me the guide – it's full of interesting possibilities!

Kind regards

Sarah de Mas

Thanks so much for the guide, it's brilliant and I'm very excited!

Jo Driver

I just wanted to say thanks for the opportunities included in my pack and let you know I've have already set up a job with the backpackers place in Nicaragua.

Thanks again for your fantastic service.

Paul Sturgeon

Thank you for a great and completely nice volunteer guide that you have made for me. I most definitely find it useful.

Kind regards

Kristian Salomonsen

Thanks very much for this. Hopefully I will find the perfect project soon.

Best

Aleksandra Gojkovic

I really appreciate your efforts. You have exceeded your responsibility by helping me. I have no doubt that I will find a good match for myself and my skills. Volunteers and the organizations are indebted to you as this information changes lives.

Cheers

Jocelyn R James

Thanks so much. This guide looks fantastic. We look forward to looking into some of these fantastic opportunities.

Thanks again

Martha Biasi

Thank you for the volunteer guide you prepared for me. It looks very exciting and I am looking forward to exploring all the opportunities. I know I will find several that will work beautifully for me and the problem will be choosing. I will let you know what happens.

Warm regards

Betty Hart

Holy shit! This is a great guide. Wonder if it's the largest one you have put together before, considering all our potential interests. Will look into it in more detail for sure.

Ryan Brown

Thank you very much for the volunteer guide! Indeed, you offer a great service!

Yours sincerely

Annika Putz

Thank you for the wonderful guide. After looking through it, I may have found a project I would love to join in Guatemala. I'll keep you guys updated with everything.

Once again, thank you for everything

Troy Jones

Thank you for sending me the guidebook so quickly, there are so many amazing opportunities I cannot wait to start applying for.

Colleen Del Vecchio

Many thanks for sending the guide through. It is very informative and has certainly helped us to narrow down our options.

Peter Hall

Many thanks for the guide, it looks fantastic.

Maryanne Hall

Thank-you very much for my guide-it is very comprehensive and extremely useful.

Molly Clifford

Thank you very much for the information you sent through, it has been very helpful.

Holly Holder

Such a fantastic organisation! So prompt in sending the information, quick and helpful with any questions and queries I had after sending the guide. Thank you very much and would definitely recommend to anyone interested in volunteering in South America!

Take care and thanks again

Esther Sowa

I ordered your guide some months ago and now am back from my volunteering experience and it was a really amazing time in Nicaragua. So, thanks a lot for proving that good piece of information!!!

Kindest regards from San Francisco

Johanna Schlereth

Thank you very much for your very insightful guide, it helps a lot to see that there are many volunteering projects all over Latin America.

All the best

Douglas Bigaignon

Your guide has been most helpful for me in deciding where to volunteer on my trip.

Hanna Alder

I have not yet finished reading it but I think it's very well done and useful for me.

Thank you very much

Loris Negro

I would like to thank you for the wonderful information you have supplied for me. I am now doing three of your projects, starting in a week's time. I have recommended you to everyone who is interested in volunteering in Latin America.

Danni

I just wanted to say a mighty thank you for my guide. You have given me the ammunition to make the year ahead incredibly exciting. I should have done this years ago!

Charles Cook

Thank you so much for sending me my travel guide so quickly. The projects that you picked for my package are great and meet the criteria I requested.

Thank you for your time

Trishna Patel

English House is a private language school in the suburb of Lugano, Buenos Aires. Students take classes here to supplement their language learning at school or to improve their employment prospects. The school offers some scholarships and is about to introduce a free class for 8-10 year olds.

Stella, Director of Studies, and her team, have made me feel very welcome whilst volunteering at the school. I've met students ranging in age from 5 to 65 and have participated in classes from beginner to advanced. My contribution in the classroom consisted of assisting the teacher by giving presentations about my hometown, discussions, reading texts aloud and checking answers to comprehension exercises. I've enjoyed English-Spanish conversation exchanges (a great opportunity to practice my Spanish), and ran a cultural activity workshop with 40 enthusiastic children. Students also gave me a city tour, another occasion to practice their English and my Spanish.

Being able to choose my volunteering hours has enabled me to explore the city, study Spanish and help others, all at the same time. If you are staying in Buenos Aires for a month or more, and would like to meet some local people in a welcoming environment, whilst contributing to their language acquisition, I'd recommend volunteering at English House.

Helen Gunn

Thanks very much for the guide. It saves me a lot of time and money! I've already gone through and selected 3 projects in 3 countries.

Dennesha Ferguson

We almost finalized organising our volunteering work in Ecuador. Your guide was very useful.

Many thanks again

Martijn & Irina

Thanks so much for my volunteer guide! It will be extremely useful as I try and pinpoint where to serve this summer.

Jamie Durbin

Because your guide exists, I was able to find an incredible organization that had a large impact on how I want to direct my energies in my future. I spent three months in Granada, Nicaragua working with La Esperanza Granada last year and it was the best thing I have ever done. I am so grateful that you all do what you do! Finally, a collection of low to no-cost volunteer opportunities! Because this organization is small I felt I was really able to have a real impact. Also, because an organization like this doesn't offer the kind of hand-holding that expensive volunteer placements provide, I felt like the dedication of other volunteers was very high. One had to search to find the right place, it was clearly not an afterthought second to travelling; the people that came there were highly motivated. I am looking for another organization with which to work and even before consulting the internet, I reach for your guide.

Thank you

Emma Reuss

Thank you for the volunteer guide and all the precious organizations in it.

All the best to Volunteer Latin America

Alban Jagueneau

Thanks very much for the guide. Myself and my girlfriend spent 3 months at a sea turtle programme you recommended in Guatemala and we loved it!

Thank you

Alwyn Lubbe

Thanks for the PDF, it is most helpful. I greatly appreciate all your help.

Many thanks

Emily Jane Hay

Thanks so much for sending through all of this information, it looks great! We are currently applying for a couple of the positions and will let you know how we get on with any feedback or information that may be of use to you!

Kind regards

Elizabeth Walters

Thanks for elaborating a volunteer guide for us, we've been reading through the projects and we find them very interesting, we have already picked our favourite ones, specially the ecotourism ones are excellent!

Thanks so much for your time, advice and expertise.

Jimena Schermer & Guillaume Beaulieu

I would like to thank you for the speedy delivery of my guide which I am finding very inspiring, informative and straightforward and I would recommend them to anyone thinking of volunteering.

Gary Morrison

Thank you very much for my guide it is absolutely brilliant and I am so grateful for your service after spending the last 3 weeks searching the web looking at company after company feeling £2000 is too much to spend for a week anywhere!

Thank you very much and a Happy New Year

Elsbeth Alexander

Thank you very much for this helpful guide! It is an enormously time saving to "just" read this guide than to browse the internet for hours.

Jessica Reiss

Thank you Stephen, for my wonderful volunteer guide! The projects look brilliant.

Best wishes

Pipa Frederiksen

Thank you guys for the wonderful job you did in putting together this comprehensive guide, with so much info on the net, the mind can boggle. I'm off to Hogar Amor orphanage in La Ceiba, Honduras, mid December for 2 weeks.

Have a great Christmas and New Year

Glenda Ingram

Thank you for your ethical, fascinating, comprehensive and professional guide.

Rhona Johnston

I recently received a volunteer guide from you which is great - thank you.

Sophie Bennett

Thank you for sending me my customized guide so quickly. It looks brilliant and I definitely will be able to find a suitable project now. Have an excellent week.

Kind regards

Daniel Spiess

Thank you Stephen, this is a really nice service and a very comprehensive guide.

Cheers

Eileen Senyk

Thank you very much for this guide. I was not expecting so many possibilities to volunteer in South America.

This is just great!

Sylvie Ramseier

Thank you for the volunteer guide that you have put together for me, it is very helpful.

Willeke Adriaanse

I recently gained a volunteer guide through you and I found all of the information very useful.

Thank you

Anna Holness

Thank you very very much for your fast answer! It is great, I had a look on the guide and I am on my way to contact some associations.

Once again, many thanks for your help

Jessica Raimant

Thank you for the brilliant guide. I am very happy with the choice of projects you have provided me with.

Thank you for your time and all the best

Olga Michalik

Thanks so much for the guide, it was exactly what I wanted and so unbelievably helpful.

Eliza Sherpa

Thanks heaps for the guide, there are many inspiring opportunities that I probably wouldn't have found without this guide so thank you very much.

Robert Grover

Thank you very much for my guide. I've found five organizations in your list that I am interested in and that I will contact. Thank you for making yourselves available for any questions regarding organization contact information and for recommending how to make contact.

Best regards

Marie-Laure Couet

This is wonderful, thank you very much. I am very interested in participating in a project.

Lindsay Robinson

Thank you so much, my guide looks so exciting and I can't wait to get involved.

Thank you again!

Annabelle Acton-Bond

Thank you for sending me the volunteer guide, I am very happy with the offers you have included in my guide.

Regards from Switzerland

Sarah Zaugg

Thanks very much for the guide, it is fantastic! All the projects look wonderful.

Zephie Begolo

We received our guide and it is great!

Thank you

Peter Krige

Thank you very much for your help. The guide has allowed me to contact many organisations I may otherwise have missed and also avoid some I had contacted (Eco Volunteer UP).

Thank you once again

Robert Sanzogni

Thank you very much for this very fast service. I took a look at the guide and already found a couple of very interesting projects so I feel positive about finding the right one for me.

Thanks again

Eva Maria Fischer

Thanks so much for your incredibly quick service. I am genuinely surprised but glad. I can't wait to apply for some of these positions and will certainly give you some feedback once I've completed a project.

Keep up the outstanding work

Mark Lee

I just want to say a HUGE thank you for the volunteer guide. I've chosen to do a placement with LIFE in Argentina next month. Thanks again for all your help. I will definitely recommend this to anyone thinking of going to Latin America.

Many thanks

Petrina Maynard

Thank you for your prompt delivering of the volunteer guide, thanks to you I am now volunteering in a cloud forest of Costa Rica, doing a study on bats. I will certainly be recommending this to all interested.

Christopher Hedger

Thank you for this guide - I've found it very useful in researching volunteer work in South America.

Rob Devas

Thank you very much for the guide. There are many interesting projects, I am very excited!

Elena Loveless

Thank you so much - both for my packet and the important work you do in the world.

Take care

Lisette Johnson

I have not even fully looked over the guide, but it is amazing so far! Thank you so much!!! I could see myself doing every project so far, and I actually teach nutrition right now, so it is great.

Jennifer Thomas

Thank you so much, brilliant projects, I can't wait to get started.

Lisl Bennett

We are excited to have received the guide! All the organizations sound wonderful and I am confident that we will find exactly what we are looking for. You have been extremely helpful with this process and for that we sincerely thank you.

Mammoth thanks

Ili Pemberton

Many thanks for the guide it is very good indeed! From what I've read so far I'm definitely interested and may even volunteer in Peru!

Best wishes, and thanks again

Tracey Stemarthe

Wow - so many of these programs sound truly special. Thank you so much for the information.

Matthew Hecht

Thanks for getting back to me with my customised guide, its excellent. There are some really great looking projects in the guide.

Alex Schoelcher

I just wanted to say thanks again for putting me in touch with LIFE. It was a great experience and I am so glad that my money went straight to the charity that needed it! Thanks again for your help and if I manage to get some time to do some more volunteering in South America I will definitely contact you first!

Cheers

Wendy Jayne Quarrie

It is over a year ago that I used your information to go on my life changing experience to Peru to volunteer with children. I firstly wanted to thank you for providing the contacts I needed to find local organisations in Latin America, It definitely made things a lot easier.

Your service is brilliant

Rita Platts

Thank you so much for the guide. It was exactly what I needed.

David Schlifka

I just received my personalized guide, and it looks awesome! Thanks so much, I'm already looking through it! This is exactly what I needed to find good inexpensive volunteer opportunities.

Emily Perkins

Thank you so much for all the information provided in the guide - I am going through it now and already seeing lots of projects I would love to get involved in!

Thank you very much

Elena Rosini

Thank you so much for planning this wonderful volunteer guide that fitted my needs. Everything was outstanding. Most information I needed was included along with the appropriate website for each project.

Great volunteer guide, keep up the good work

Brett Lewis

WOW, it looks awesome! I look forward to really combing through it these next few days.

Thank you for your help and time

Anne Townsend

Thank you for emailing the guide over so quickly - it's really helpful.

Antonia MacKinney

Thank you very much for the guide, we've found it very useful and interesting! We've decided to go to a few of the projects and travel around the continent to see as much as we can while we are there.

Verity and Chris Bland

I just wanted to say thank you very much for my volunteer guide its great! There are many projects of interest to me and I will certainly report back to you how it goes.

Cheers

Lisa Horner

Thank you for the great guide - I really appreciate all the time and effort you put into tailoring it for me.

Thanks for your help

Yvonne Yeh

Thanks, Stephen. I'm impressed already and have found plenty of organizations that I want to spend time with.

Cheri Mann

Thank you very much for sending the volunteer guide so quickly. I've just had a quick look through and can see that there are lots of projects which will be of interest.

Best wishes

Mark Turner

Just a brief note of thanks for the time you've taken to assemble this website, certainly the best in its class I've seen. I will likely be using the site to triangulate on some volunteer missions. You've saved me hours and brought groups to my attention I probably would have missed. Thorough, professional. This is a big life decision for me and you've made a positive difference.

Thank you

Roman Robinson

Thank you for the guide. It looks fantastic, and even though at this stage I am yet to contact one of the projects, because I have only just skimmed through, I'm sure it will serve as an invaluable guide as I travel through South America these upcoming next few months. I was pleased to receive this guide as a certainly high value for money product, and would recommend your service to anyone that asks.

Many thanks

George Perry

I purchased one of your guides last summer and just wanted to give you some feedback on how they went.

I chose two volunteer projects, my first being Santa Martha animal Refuge in Tambillo, Ecuador. I organised to work there for the whole month of October last year and I thoroughly enjoyed the work. It was extremely hard physical work at times, but it really made you feel like every effort you put into it was all worthwhile. The other volunteers I met were great; I've made some really close friends from my experience.

Leon, the volunteer coordinator is great, he really gets the best out of the volunteers and works so hard himself.

Party nights are great, so there is always time in the week to let your hair down too. All in all, the whole project was fantastic. And the other volunteers that went on to the other Santa Martha Centre in Puyo, Ecuador, in the Amazon, have all raved on about how brilliant that one is too!

My second volunteer project was with the Karumbe turtle project in La Coronilla, Uruguay. I organised to do turtle monitoring for the last 3 weeks in March, the last 3 weeks of the season. This was also a fantastic project. I found it incredibly interesting, especially collecting the biological data and doing surveys, etc. The turtles are in such a dangerous situation around Uruguay and this project is persuading the Uruguayan government to put more restrictions in place for fishermen and others who may be unintentionally harming the turtles. The coordinators for this project are absolutely fantastic and have a great team of volunteers that love to come back again and again. I can see why, I would love to do this again!

In both voluntary placements, the accommodation is very basic, especially at Karumbe, but the fab work, the great people and the wonderful scenery at both certainly outweigh that. The

Ecuadorian mountains are so peaceful and unspoilt and the Uruguayan beaches are all yours and just so beautiful and peaceful. I loved all of it!

And as for South America as a whole, it's the best, such diversity in every aspect, the scenery, the wildlife, the people, the activities, it's all unmissable!!!

Thank you for providing me with these opportunities, it was great!

Marie Robertson

Thank you for sending me the volunteer guide. It contains a great deal of interesting and useful material.

Thanks for your help

Robert Skene

The guide is amazing! Thank you so much, I am definitely going to set up at least 3 programmes. The information contained is brilliant and exactly the sort of volunteering projects I wanted to be involved with.

Thank you for your time

Alice Ward-Francis

Thank you so much for sending me my volunteer guide so quickly. I am so glad I came across Volunteer Latin America in the Big Issue and then through the internet.

Thanks again

Richard Johnson

I have had a look through the volunteer guide that you have sent and it is absolutely wonderful. Thank you so much. The information you have provided is extremely helpful, at this rate I won't be coming back to the UK at all. I think I could be kept busy for a few years if I participated in all the volunteer work I wanted to do!!

Many thanks again for you time spent collating this guide

Rebecca Bolton

Woohoo! Thanks so much Stephen - love your site and your concept, and can't wait to sit down with a glass of wine tonight and look through my guide!

Cheers & keep up the awesome work!

Kim Giffin

I just wanted to let you know that I found a volunteer project through Volunteer Latin America last December 2006, and went to volunteer for Bruce Peru in January 2007. I wanted to let you know what an amazing experience it was. I was planning on being there from 3-6 months, but I loved it so much I stayed for a year, and ended up being a volunteer Project Director on another Bruce project in Ecuador!

My experiences with Bruce Peru and Bruce Ecuador meant that I was able to use my experiences to arrive back in the UK, and within 2 days I had attended an interview and got my dream job working for CARE International, a job which I'm still doing and really love. I can't believe how great it's been, my life has been turned around from working in an unfulfilling office job to having a year of amazing memories and a new career working for an amazing NGO.

So I wanted to thank you very much, and as well as this, recommend the Bruce Organisation very highly for a fantastic volunteering experience where I felt that my contributions were very valuable and worthwhile, and they gave me a fantastic reference when I left.

I have recommended Volunteer Latin America and the Bruce Organisation to many people over the past year and will continue to do so.

Thank you once again!

Jo Broughton

I just wanted to let you know that I have found your volunteer guide extremely useful and I'm really looking forward to my trip!

Thanks so much

Andrea Cowan

Thank you so much, I am very happy with your project guide. Thank you for being so fast with your delivery!

Kind regards

Noemi Bertel

Thank you very much for the project guide! It's an amazing guide which helps me a lot to figure out what I'm actually going to do in Latin America. Thank you very much for your efforts.

Kind regards

Alexander Sommer

Thank you again for the VLA guide. Due to this guide I was able to organize my volunteer work within 2 weeks. It was a great turtle experience; I wouldn't have wanted to miss it!

Kind regards

Mieke Eppink

Thank you Stephen for the exceptionally fast service. I'm impressed!

Keith Williams

I have just returned from four months as a conservation volunteer in Ecuador. I would like to thank your organisation for raising my awareness of the voluntary opportunities available.

Many Thanks

Tom Dolan

Thank you so much for the brilliant service!!! Travelling is what I love, and it's invaluable to me that I don't have to pay £2000 a month just for someone on the end of a phone line in Bristol in case of emergencies, like all these 'gap year companies.'

Fran Wyld

Just a quick email to thank you for my time at Cahuita turtle project, it was a lovely area and I enjoyed my time there and met lots of great people. Also getting to help with the hatchlings and female turtles was great. What I learnt there will hopefully help me in my veterinary nursing of reptiles and make me a better nurse.

Thank you

Tina Kemp

Thank you so much for the quick response with my volunteering package. The choices you have sent me sound great - some of them are just what I was looking for in regards to using my Degree within the work.

Amber van den Broek

Thanks for this, some of these look great, I appreciate you getting this information for me in such a short time.

Louise Boronyak

Thank you so much for all of your help. The guide looks amazing.

Bridgid Kelly

THANKS!!!!!! I'm so excited to read through this!!!!!! Thanks for including my favourite project first. Everything looks great.

Jenn Wheeler

Many thanks for the volunteer guide; that was exactly what I was looking for. I saw that at the end you found lot's of places with excellent surf conditions, thanks.

Best regards

Armando Sasselli

Many thanks for your prompt and comprehensive service. I found the guide very helpful and will definately let you know how my time abroad goes via an email.

Keep up the good work

Dharmender Dhillon

I would like to take this opportunity to say how grateful I am my friend told me about this site. This is what volunteering should be - I have paid a deposit to ***** for 7 months but am about to forsake the deposit and cancel my expedition due to, among other factors, escalating costs: I wish to protect the environment not pay them to destroy forests for paperwork!! So it really is heart-warming to know that it is possible to support such causes without exorbitant price tags and causing more unnecessary damage to the environment.

Thanks again

Jennifer Sharp

The bus from Quito to Arutam was about 5 hours, straight into the Amazon. Blasting from the speakers was MC Hammer. This ironic conflict of indigenous people and their way of life and the modern world seeps in regularly here.

So far I have spent almost 5 days here, but it feels like much more. Arutam is a community of Shuar people. The Shuar are scattered throughout the rainforest and were once known for being the most violent of people. No worries now though, I feel quite safe.

When we arrived on the first day, we were greeted with a small soccer game and friendly faces, and told to put on our boots. Anders and I live on top of a hill. A very muddy hill. Imagine wet ankle deep mud that never quite dries. It is a five year old boys dream. We now live in these rubber 6 dollar boots, which make the trek a little less intimidating and dirty.

Everyday we wake for breakfast at 7.30, and meet at the volunteer house at 8.30 for work. Thus far we have done some trail clearing, some tree planting, and some grass cutting with the sharp blade of a machete. My triceps are loving it. I am also working with the women's group. I recently the painted the women's centre. It was a storage area, dirty and not being used. Today, the group is meeting with freshly painted walls and new benches, a washed floor and a makeshift closet. It feels great to leave a tangible mark on the community that is helping to revitalize their work. The women here really are quite impressive. Although Ernesto

takes the prize. He is the tribe leader, with 11 children from one wife, and 11 from another. Ernesto's little guys can swim that's for sure.

In Arutam I am learning much about jungle medicine. Jeremy sniffed some juice from leaves and cleared his sinuses. You can pick some leaves and put it on a cut to immediately stop bleeding. Use Tagua leaves for brooms, and the barks for spears. The sap from a tree works as an itch reliever. And you can paint your nails with a brown leaf. Who needs a manicure?

My world has completely shifted since being here, and I am quite enjoying the uncomfortable friction of movement.

Kristen Berman

Your website was so wonderful to find. I had been discouraged that all of the volunteer opportunities abroad that I had found before seemed to cost so much!

Thank you again. This is an invaluable service!

Jessica Simmons

Thanks for this awesome service, and much respect for the values you practice.

Susie Scherf

Thank you very much for putting together this volunteer program information, it has a lot of options and I'm very excited to get started!

Many thanks

Diana Ochoa

Thank you very much for your help. I have booked myself on a flight to Costa Rica this July to go and teach English. I really appreciate you getting back to me with the volunteer guide so quickly.

Kind Regards

Emma Cowan

Thanks heaps for your info, we have passed your details onto many, really impressed with you guys.

Rick Benson

Thank you very much for the guide you sent me. There are so many exciting organisations I never would have known existed if it hadn't have been for Volunteer Latin America!! Thank you so much and keep up the good work.

Regards

Rachel Bainbridge

I wanted to let you know that I'm leaving tomorrow for Costa Rica, thanks to your Volunteer Guide! I'm going to be helping the Chumu Volunteer Project with their marketing needs. I will be going for approximately three months. I'm very excited, and I can't thank you enough for putting together such an extensive volunteer guide.

Thanks again!

Landa Buchkowski

I have just returned home from South America after spending one month volunteering in Peru with street children and orphans and 2 months volunteering in Ecuador at an animal sanctuary. This has been such an amazing and eye opening experience which I believe would not have been possible without the help of VLA in assisting me to find placements in grassroots projects without charging unreasonable fees which I could not have afforded.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to VLA for providing a genuine service to people who want to make a positive contribution to the cause of conservation, rather than trying to make a business out of charging unreasonable sky high fees like many organisations currently are. It's good to know that there are still volunteer placement organisations like VLA out there that have a genuine interest in conservation rather than making profits out of volunteers!

Keep up your fantastic work and thanks again!

Rhiannon Poole

I was interested in volunteer work in South America but was becoming frustrated at how much money a lot of organisations charged. Having never looked into it before, this came as something of a shock. I found Volunteer Latin America by chance on the internet, and it was by far and away the best source of information and definitely at a very reasonable cost. When I received the personalised booklet with various placements, I was really excited with the possibilities. So many of the placements sounded interesting but the Voluntarios de la Esperanza stood out for me. I have passed the details of Volunteer Latin America onto a few other people, and wouldn't hesitate in recommending people to use the website.

I arrived in Santiago on 12 March 2006 for a 3 month voluntary placement with Voluntarios de la Esperanza (I ended up staying an extra month as I loved it so much). The application process involved initially sending your CV, references and completing a questionnaire. I then had a telephone interview with a previous volunteer that lasted about 45 minutes. This was particularly useful as I could ask someone questions who had 'been there and done it.' Being informed by email that I had a place was wonderful, as it meant I could hand my notice in at work and start all the preparations for heading to Santiago.

I was placed at a day-care centre in Campamento Nesur. A campamento is a shanty town and Campamento Nesur was located on the outskirts of eastern Santiago. A community of 13,000 people living in very poor conditions. The day-care centre I worked at was to provide childcare for children aged between 2-5 years. My role was to help the Tias (local women who were in charge of the children). So I supervised (and joined in) playtime in the outside area, and helped with the activities in the wooden classrooms. This might be encouraging the older children to read (required an abundance of patience), helping with painting and art sessions or

clearing the classroom up at the end of the day. It was also meant helping the younger children with their lunch, changing nappies. The children could be quite aggressive to one another so I spent quite a lot of time pulling them apart and explaining why they shouldn't hit each other.

It was emotionally quite difficult at times, but I learned so much and found it hard to say goodbye to both the children and the Tias. My Spanish wasn't very good when I arrived, but did improve during my time there. My patience and awareness of other people's lives grew dramatically.

Away from my placement, I lived with a Chilean family which for the most part worked very well. Just make sure if you have any problems or questions, they are addressed as soon as possible, so they can be resolved.

Santiago as a city has much to offer. The usual city attractions, museums, theatres, cinemas, shops, bars, restaurants, music, sport. It is cold during the winter but between the months of November and April is hot and sunny. The smog is a disadvantage and it is one of the most expensive cities in South America, although still cheap compared to London and England.

Now I'm back in England I am still helping the organisation, by conducting telephone interviews with new applicants and also some administrative work. I would recommend a voluntary placement with VE. I would advise you to take as many Spanish classes as possible before arriving at the project, as it means you can concentrate on helping the children from day one, rather than worrying about what you can or can't understand.

Kind regards

Louise Seaman

We have just finished a volunteer project that we found through your service. We spent four weeks with the Andean Bear project in Northern Ecuador and thoroughly enjoyed it. Thanks again for your help finding this project.

Best wishes

Amy Cowen

Thanks a lot for the volunteer guide. I've had a quick look through and there are plenty of projects that I might be interested in. Very impressed!

Thanks again

Alistair Stewart

Thanks very much for your prompt response and wide range of very interesting projects - I don't know how I'm going to choose, there are so many I'd like to do!

Kind regards

Alison Broom

I recently volunteered with VLA in Costa Rica, and found it very refreshing that, as an organisation, VLA are not trying to make a lot of money out of volunteers in order to keep a large profit for themselves. I previously volunteered in Australia with I-to-I, and was appalled to discover that I was paying approximately £900 for a project that cost just £350 just because I chose to book with that company. I have to say that finding out about VLA restored my faith in volunteer organisations after that bad experience, so thank you!

Susanne Frost

Thanks for all your help in organising our trip to Cahuita - we had a fantastic week in a setting that was far, far better than I'd imagined. The project was interesting, fun and well organised and both the people running it and the other volunteers were all great. I want to return next year and am recommending your organisation to all my students here at Bristol University.

Thanks again

Dr Jan Frayne

I have to say that finding out about so many positive voluntary initiatives has given me hope. I also am pleased that VLA suggests ways of helping my flight to be carbon neutral, as this is a concern of mine, especially considering my interest in permaculture.

All the best

Jenna Higgins

My volunteer guide is probably the best £20 I have ever spent. Your travels in the region are evident as some of the projects you listed are amazing. I would never have found out about them anywhere else. So a big thank you and keep up the good work!

Best wishes

Richard Williams

Thank you so much for the information. Both myself and my wife are extremely impressed with both the brochure and your help. We are going to have a good look at all the opportunities in the brochure and hopefully be successful in one or more.

Once again, thank you so much for your help

Mick & Sarah White

Your suggestion worked and I've managed to access the brochure, but I've been so engrossed in it I forgot to email you back! There's a fantastic array of projects, the problem now is which one to choose! Thanks for all your help and making the brochure fit my needs, I'll definitely be recommending your website to others!

Kind regards

Laura Emmerson

Just wanted to write one last time and express my thanks and appreciation for your great help with my volunteer search. I have gone to the websites you listed and contacted these organizations and will hopefully begin my work soon! Best of luck to you and Volunteer Latin America...I will surely put others in contact with your organization for volunteering opportunities in the future.

Katie Murphy

I received your email with the volunteer guide attached, which I appreciate very much. Very valuable information, and very interesting placements, thank you for your help!

Thanks

Ricardo Barbosa

Thank you very much for coming back to me so promptly, the selection is a lot more extensive and appropriate than I was even hoping! It should make my trip (and more in future) one to remember.

Kind regards and many thanks

Gareth Bennell

Thanks very much for promptly sending me so much spot-on information! I can't wait to get in touch with some of the organisations described!

Margaret Clotworthy

I received the volunteer guide yesterday. I must say I found it very very good and extremely helpful. Thank you very much for the quick response and all the effort put into it. This is definitely the best guide I have received since I started researching for volunteering work, which is a good while ago.

Thanks

Gaizkane Loinaz

I have now received the package and it looks excellent. I'm sure to find a project amongst those you have included.

Thanks for the service you provide

Maria Hilliard

Thank you very much for your prompt action in getting a Guide book to me. It is very useful, and I certainly wouldn't have been able to find such good projects without it. I will definitely be using one of the contacts to find a placement in Latin America next year. I am very much looking forward to my trip.

Michael Whitesmith

Thank you very much for the time and effort put into compiling my volunteer guide. It is such a relief to have found a way of volunteering overseas without having to pay the extortionate rates asked by the large commercial companies. The guide was well worth the money spent, and I have found it incredibly useful. I hope to find a position soon and start volunteering.

Thanks a million Stephen

Mike Walsh

This is a bit of a random email really. I just want to commend you on Volunteer Latin America! I think the whole thing that you do, promoting these projects is amazing. I think it is especially brilliant because I know so many people who have paid £3000 or similar for 2 month 'gap year' projects around the world and frankly they just strike me expensive day care schools for 18 year olds! Maybe I'm being cynical as I know they do lots of positive work but you understand where I'm coming from! Keep up the great work and I wish you the best of luck with everything VLA related.

Kind regards

Alex Truelove

Thanks heaps for the information and contacts you have sent. They all sound like amazing projects and I can't wait to get emailing them to find out more.

Amy Gregory

I would just like to thank you again for everything you did; I have finalized my trip to Ecuador to work for 6 weeks at an Animal Rescue Centre. I am very excited and could have not done this without your help. I just want to let you know your work doesn't go unappreciated.

Steven Kruzeniski

I have been thinking about doing something like this for a while and until I saw your website I had been focusing on organisations like i-to-i but was a little put off by the high costs involved.

Konrad Markham

Just wanted to drop you a line to congratulate you on your efforts to bring a deep ecological view of the world at an affordable price! I've spent a good deal of time trawling around the

web looking for a suitable voluntary position; and I must say after reading through your website I think I've found it.

Warren Young

Thank you so much for all the information you sent me. I was inspired, and eventually, after a lot of thought and research, contacted Belize Botanical Gardens. I received a really warm and informative email from them and hope that I will be going there next February to work on a programme for people with special needs, and of course to do my share of digging and delving and weeding and watering etc. etc. I approached the whole prospect of volunteering with some trepidation because I am 65 and ageism is rife in England, in spite of what our government protests. To my delight, my age seems to present no problem, and in some ways may be an advantage. I am really excited and elated. I have had a very rich life, not financially, but in a lot of other ways, and have felt a raw need to put something back into the world for some time - a way of saying thank you, I suppose. It seems that at last I have the opportunity. Thank you for your help in getting me started. I will let you know how well I succeed, or otherwise, as the case may be. It will certainly be an experience, and one that I am looking forward to so much.

Thank you again

Ann McKee

Thanks a lot for the really comprehensive guide which I received today. Though I haven't gone through it fully yet, it looks great and is exactly what I wanted in terms of the information and contact details for each project. Absolutely worth the £22.50. I had been spending quite a bit of time trying to locate centralised information on a range of projects which would accept volunteers in this region. As well as being time-consuming and quite a bit of hard work, it was quite frustrating that I was invariably led to websites of agencies which focus not so much on the organisers and location of the projects, specific aims and content but more so on the extra-curriculars. It seems that you end up paying these extortionate fees for pre-trip pamphlets and a helpline phone number...

Well done on this great service. Now that I have a good base of contacts to work from I can get stuck into doing my own research and make a well-informed decision on when and where to go. Keep up the good work and I'll be sure to give you guys feedback on my trip.

I'll definitely be recommending VLA to my friends

Joanne Walsh