



Working as a volunteer abroad

**A resource list of development agencies
for
Occupational Therapists**

October 2013
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<http://www.otfrontiers.com>

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We are indebted to the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, document PD007, from which this has been adapted.

Organisations with a wider remit are highlighted

* Those willing to accept new graduates marked with an *

Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 4 |
| AIM OF THE LIST | 5 |
| GENERAL ONLINE RESOURCES | 5 |
| Aid Workers Network | 5 |
| BOND for International Development | 5 |
| Do it Volunteering made easy | 5 |
| International Disability and Development Consortium | 6 |
| NHS health partnerships links | 6 |
| People in Aid | 6 |
| RedR | 6 |
| Reliefweb | 7 |
| World Service Enquiry (WSE) | 7 |
| World Federation of Occupational Therapists | 8 |
| RECRUITMENT WEBSITES | 8 |
| Acorn | 8 |
| Cerebral Palsy Africa | 8 |
| Challenges Worldwide | 9 |
| (* Charityjob.co.uk | 9 |
| Christian Blind Mission (CBM) | 9 |
| (* Christians Abroad | 9 |
| Church Mission Society | 10 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| (*) CRP Bangladesh | 10 |
| Handicap International | 11 |
| Hands Around the World | 12 |
| (*) Hands At Work in Africa | 12 |
| (*) Health Action Overseas | 13 |
| Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO) | 13 |
| (*) Humanity First | 13 |
| International Nepal Fellowship (INF) | 14 |
| (*) International Service | 14 |
| (*) Jacob's Well Appeal | 14 |
| (*) Kitega Community Centre | 15 |
| Liberty Foundation | 15 |
| Mediterranea | 15 |
| Multi-Agency International Training and Support (MAITS) | 16 |
| (*) Progressio | 17 |
| (*) Projects Abroad | 17 |
| Rehabilitation International | 17 |
| (*) Skillshare International | 18 |
| (*) Tearfund | 18 |
| Veterans International Cambodia | 19 |
| (*) Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) | 19 |
| (*) World Unite | 19 |

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Introduction

Spending some time working as a volunteer abroad, for example in an overseas community development programme, provides the chance to live among people from a different culture, and to explore avenues that may not be open to you either in your home country or as a tourist.

As someone who may be newly qualified or who is an experienced Occupational Therapist working as a volunteer abroad can enable you to learn new skills and languages. It can provide opportunities for practical experience in the field, sometimes in demanding conditions; it can help you develop leadership and teamwork skills and enhance your cultural competence, all things that will be invaluable to you in your future working life.

Ref: <http://otfrontiers.co.uk/pages/posts/benefits-of-volunteering-21.php>

However you do need to choose carefully, making sure that you find out in advance as much as you can about the expectations of the organisation, the location, clinical setting, facilities, and support structure for the volunteers where you would be working. Also check exactly what will be provided by the organisation and what you will be expected to provide for yourself and their cost: placement charges can be high.

The skills of an Occupational Therapist are generally less well recognised internationally than those of a physiotherapist or teacher, however the skills that are being sought may be the core skills of an Occupational Therapist. For example an organisation may be advertising for a job that requires someone to have a knowledge of community inclusion and disability awareness, they don't know that an OT might fit that perfectly. You will need to be imaginative and flexible in your approach and you may need to market your skills!

So after careful thought you have this idea that you want to work as a volunteer abroad but are unsure what's out there and where you fit in.

Aim of the list

As a starting point OT Frontiers (<http://www.otfrontiers.co.uk/>) in its capacity as a central point for networking, sharing links and resources for OTs, has produced the following list of links and possibilities for volunteering internationally.

NOTE: It should be noted OT Frontiers cannot endorse individual organisations, furthermore this list is for information only and cannot be exhaustive as there are many other disability International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) and local NGOs (e.g. Mobility India <http://www.mobility-india.org/index.html>) for which crosslinks can be made.

Web links were current as at August 2013. If you find any broken links in this publication, please inform OT Frontiers at enquiries@otfrontiers.com

General online resources

Aid Workers Network

A free and comprehensive online service enabling aid workers of any discipline to share practical advice and resources with each other. <http://www.aidworkers.net/>
Their advice page for first-time aid workers may be helpful:
http://www.aidworkers.net/?q=advice/first_time_aid_workers

BOND for International Development

Bond is the UK membership body for organisations working in international development or supporting those that do through funding, research, training and other services. They produce a regular email bulletin. <http://www.bond.org.uk/about-us>
http://www.bond.org.uk/membership-directory3.php?name=&location=®ion_of_work=&submitted=Search#search-results

Do It -Volunteering made easy

<http://www.do-it.org.uk/wanttovolunteer/volunteeringoverseas/professionalandskilled>

#The International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC)

The IDDC is a global consortium of 25 disability and development NGOs, mainstream development NGOs and disabled people's organisations (DPOs) supporting disability and development work in more than 100 countries around the world.

The aim of IDDC is to promote inclusive development internationally with a special focus on promoting the full and effective enjoyment of human rights by all persons with disabilities living in economically poor communities in lower and middle-income countries.

<http://www.iddcconsortium.net/>

IDDC's main objectives are:

- To promote the inclusion of the disability dimension, as well as appropriate disability specific approaches, in all development policy and practice.
- To improve the practice of the member organisations by collaborating and sharing experience about policy and practice.
- To support the exchange of information and knowledge about inclusive development, especially between people and organisations in economically poorer countries, by the wide distribution of information

<http://www.iddcconsortium.net/jobs>

NHS health partnerships links

The Health Partnership Scheme is a programme to support the development of health services in some of the world's poorest countries. Some NHS trusts have longstanding exchange links with hospitals or other health services in low income countries. If you work for one of these trusts you may be able to participate in exchange visits. To see if your trust has links please look at <http://www.thet.org/hps/health-partnerships> To find out if there are partnership links in your area type your area name, e.g. Essex, into the "name" section of the "Search Health Partnerships" box.

People in Aid

People in Aid is an international network of development and humanitarian assistance agencies, whose role is to support international agencies to work more effectively. Their focus is largely on policy issues. Their website includes tools, resources, case studies, and links to other organisations such as NGO service providers and aid networks. <http://www.peopleinaid.org/>

RedR

With a focus on people and skills for disaster relief rather than development or rehabilitation.

A register of skilled personnel available to help at times of humanitarian disaster, RedR runs aid programmes in areas affected by natural disasters and conflict, and also provides UK training courses in such topics as emergency public health. <http://www.redr.org.uk/>

If you have a minimum of five years' professional experience and two years' field experience in humanitarian work and are interested in joining the RedR Register information on membership and an application form are available at <http://www.redr.org.uk/en/Services/Membership/> If your application reaches the interview stage an administration fee is payable (in November 2011 this was £55).

For those who do not yet have the required experience, training is available. See <http://www.redr.org.uk/en/Training/index.cfm>

As an introduction to working in the humanitarian sector RedR run a 1-day training course "So You Think You Want To Be A Relief Worker?" monthly in London. The cost is from £100 upwards depending on employment status. <http://www.redr.org.uk/en/Training/find-a-training-course.cfm>

You can also become a RedR Affiliate and access support and guidance to develop your humanitarian career. The benefits include access to the RedR Members' network, training discounts, and the chance to be mentored by an experienced RedR Member. All Affiliates must have 3 years of professional experience in a role with transferable skills to the humanitarian sector; a strong humanitarian commitment and be able to provide references.

Reliefweb

A website providing time-critical humanitarian information on complex emergencies and natural disasters. <http://www.reliefweb.int>

The site has an online job search facility. Health professional vacancies are rare but are included under the theme category "Health". Most require additional experience in administration or management. <http://reliefweb.int/jobs>

World Service Enquiry (WSE)

Practical information and careers advice for people who want to volunteer or work in international aid and development. <http://www.wse.org.uk/> Resources include face-to-face events in London and other parts of the UK, podcasts, online information, plus WSE published booklets "Volunteer for Development" and "Working in Development" which can be purchased through the website at reduced prices. New: e guide to Writing your CV.

World Federation of Occupational Therapists

<http://www.wfot.org/Membership/CountryandOrganisationProfiles.aspx>

Recruitment websites

An asterisk (*) before the organisation name indicates possible opportunities for new graduates.

Acorn

A Dutch NGO working in a variety of community development areas. Most projects are in the fields of medical rehabilitation, disability awareness or special education.

Location Primarily with Kurds in Northern Iraq

Web <http://www.acorn.nl/>

Vacancies <http://acorn.nl/current-vacancies/>

Cerebral Palsy Africa

Established primarily to support the teaching to local therapists of best practice in the management and treatment of children with cerebral palsy and their families.

Location Sub Saharan Africa

Web <http://www.cerebralpalsyafrika.org/>

Vacancies Teaching programmes require therapists (Physios, OT and Speech and language) who are experienced in working with cerebral palsy and ideally have some teaching experience.

New trainers are given induction training, covering cultural competency, teaching and learning, management of course material and a detailed description of the course they will be teaching and how it can be adapted to local circumstances.

Challenges Worldwide

Working to help develop successful businesses in low income countries. Not primarily seeking clinicians.

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| Location | Across the developing world and emerging economies in South America, South East Asia and Africa |
| Web | http://www.challengesworldwide.com/ |
| Vacancies | You can register to be notified if a suitable vacancy arises. Management or business development skills are desirable. Volunteers normally act as consultants sharing technical expertise that is either not available or not affordable locally, rather than in service delivery. |

(*) Charityjob.co.uk

A central general resource for vacancies in the voluntary sector. CharityJOB is the UK's busiest site for charity jobs, fundraising jobs, NGO jobs and not for profit jobs. (Mostly UK)

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| Web | http://www.charityjob.co.uk |
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Christian Blind Mission (CBM)

CBM is an international Christian development organisation committed to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities in the poorest countries of the world.

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| Location | Various locations in Africa, Asia and Pacific, Central and South America, Afghanistan |
| Web | http://www.cbm.org/In-Action-250903.php |
| Vacancies | Mainly eye and ear care services, but there are projects in orthopaedics, community based rehabilitation and special education, suitable for Occupational Therapists. Looking for well qualified professionals to pass on skills through teaching and training of national staff and to prepare a local successor. Applicants should have inter-cultural competence and knowledge of life in developing countries. |

(*) Christians Abroad

Provides opportunities for volunteering and professional work in mission and development

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| Location | Eastern Europe, Latin and Central America, Caribbean, Africa, Asia, Middle East, Pacific |
| Web | http://www.cabroad.org.uk |
| Vacancies | <p>Most placements are in faith-based schools, hospitals or community projects and last 1-6 months. Some longer term posts are available.</p> <p>Volunteers pay a placement charge of between £1500-£3000. This includes flights, insurance, visas, health and CRB checks and a preparation, support and debriefing programme. An Associate Volunteer package is also offered for £150. Associates arrange their own placement but can obtain advice, help or support.</p> <p>A “How it works” document is available to read or download at www.cabroad.org.uk/images/stories/documents/2010%20how%20it%20works.doc</p> <p>Christians Abroad is open to people of any faith or none; however, some projects specifically request committed Christian volunteers.</p> |

Church Mission Society

A Christian evangelist missionary organisation working with Christians in other cultures.

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| Location | Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America |
| Web | http://www.cms-uk.org/ |
| Vacancies | Short term (4 months-2 years) or long term (5-6 years). Health care professionals are actively sought in certain locations. Combining professional expertise with Christian commitment, working under the authority of local church leaders. |
| Restrictions | Christians only, supported and funded by their local church in the UK |

(*) Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP) Bangladesh

CRP focuses on a holistic approach to rehabilitation. It aims to provide treatment, rehabilitation and support services focusing on physical, emotional, social, psychological and economic aspects of disability with a focus on spinal injury in adults and cerebral palsy in children. It also aims to promote the development of skilled personnel in health care and rehabilitation in the country and the region.

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| Location | Bangladesh |
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| Web | http://crp-bangladesh.org/ |
| Vacancies | Physio / OT. Links with York St John University for final year placements |

Handicap International

Handicap International is an independent international aid organisation working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster. They work alongside disabled and vulnerable people in over 60 countries worldwide.

HI works in humanitarian aid and development in the areas of emergencies, health, rehabilitation, inclusion and disability rights.

Linked to "Source" an international online resource centre providing free access to disability and inclusion information. <http://www.asksource.info/>

Key Rehabilitation Activities

- Training rehabilitation specialists, prosthetics & orthotics technicians and staff managing rehabilitation centres (administration, human resources, coordination). Developing rehabilitation services.
- Supporting the development of rehabilitation services within national health and social systems through the establishment of professionals' networks.
- Gaining recognition for the training and status of new professionals.
- Issues regarding management of services, including cost-recovery schemes.
- Choosing appropriate technologies adapted to each context.
- Establishing temporary prosthesis production facilities in emergency situations with a view to transferring technology and know-how to support local facilities.

Overseas recruitment is usually done from the HI France and HI Belgium offices
www.handicap-international.org

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| Location | Africa, S.E. Asia, Central and South America, Middle East, Russia & Central Asia, and crisis areas |
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| Web | http://www.handicap-international.org.uk/ |
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| Vacancies | Posts are 'professional' (longer-term, usually salaried); or 'internship' volunteer posts (short-term, unpaid). |
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Some posts are advertised in French only, these may be more suitable for French speaking clinicians.

Interviews for overseas posts take place in Lyon, France, except for emergency postings where time is of the essence. Preparation provided includes a mandatory induction course (1 week for posts of up to 6 months or emergency postings, otherwise 4 weeks) and a pre-departure briefing.

Hands Around the World

Helping needy, vulnerable children around the world.

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| Location | Skilled work placements, mainly in Africa, with some in India. 4-week group construction projects for unskilled workers are also available. |
| Web | http://www.hatw.org.uk/ |
| Vacancies | <p>Individuals are encouraged to submit an initial enquiry form and will then be contacted if a suitable skilled vacancy arises.</p> <p>3-6 month work placements. Volunteers are unpaid and are asked to pay or fundraise £2000 to cover flights and expenses. Accommodation is provided by the hosts, normally without charge. You will need to arrange your own meals.</p> <p>Clinical staff provide an in-service training capacity, working alongside a local person. Requires at least 2 years' work experience, a mature and sensitive attitude and willingness to share knowledge and experience.</p> <p>HATW is a Christian organisation but volunteering is open to all on an equal opportunity basis.</p> |

(*) Hands At Work in Africa

A Christian non-profit organisation working in vulnerable communities where support structures are very low, in HIV/AIDS, poverty, and with orphaned children.

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| Location | Across sub-Saharan Africa |
| Web | http://www.handsatwork.org |
| Vacancies | <p>Short-term (3 weeks – 3 months), to serve, learn and experience the work being done to transform communities.</p> <p>Medium-term (over 6 months), to serve and build capacity in leaders and organisations across Africa.</p> <p>Health professionals are not specifically sought.</p> |
| Restrictions | Christians aged over 18 |

(*) Health Action Overseas

An Irish charity working with children and young people with disabilities, promoting a rights-based approach to disability service provision and social integration for people with disabilities.

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| Location | Mainly Romania |
| Web | http://www.hao.ie/ |
| Vacancies | 1 or 2-week placements working with young disabled people. Self funded |

Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO)

A private non-profit organisation, based in the US, dedicated to improving the availability and quality of health care in developing countries.

HVO volunteers train local health care providers, giving them the knowledge and skills to make a difference in their own communities. Volunteers may be involved in a variety of activities - teacher training, developing or updating curricula, providing continuing education workshops, and mentoring students and residents. They may lecture, serve as clinical instructors, conduct ward rounds, and demonstrate various techniques in classrooms, clinics etc.

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| Location | Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean |
| Web | http://www.hvousing.org/ |
| Vacancies | Minimum placement is usually 1 month (some 2-week opportunities) but longer stays are welcomed. Volunteers fund their own travel and insurance. Many sites provide room, board, and daily transportation. There is financial assistance available but this is primarily for US-based volunteers. |

(*) Humanity First

A non-political, non-sectarian international relief and development agency. Projects in 35 countries across 6 continents. Originally provided mainly disaster relief, now focusing on longer term knowledge transfer programmes. To view the other international operations, visit: [Humanity First International Website](http://www.humanityfirst.org.uk/).

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| Location | Africa, South America, Pakistan |
| Web | http://www.humanityfirst.org.uk/ |

Vacancies Not primarily seeking health professionals

International Nepal Fellowship (INF)

A Christian mission working in health and development. INF helps people affected by TB, leprosy, disability, HIV / AIDS and drug abuse, facilitates development among poor communities, runs medical camps and provides medical training.

In Nepal, and with Nepali migrants including labourers in Malaysia and the Gulf, sex workers in Indian cities, etc.

Location In Nepal, and with Nepali migrants including labourers in Malaysia and the Gulf, sex workers in Indian cities, etc.

Restrictions Committed Christians only

(* International Service

An international human rights charity working with the most disadvantaged groups in three priority areas: sustainable livelihoods, human rights, and sexual and reproductive health.

Location Latin America, West Africa and the Middle East

Web <http://www.internationalservice.org.uk>

Vacancies Occasional paid vacancies for development workers, who share their skills and experiences with local people. Primarily seeking managers / coordinators with development experience. Placements are for a minimum 2 years.

Also run the International Citizen Service (ICS) programme of 12-week placements for young people aged 18-22. Contributions are based on household income. <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/ics>

(* Jacob's Well Appeal

Working with young adults with disabilities in a small rehabilitation unit in Siret.

Location Northern Romania

Web <http://www.thejacobswell.org/romania.php>

Vacancies Opportunities for young people minimum 18 years old, before or after university, and for older people with experience especially in education, healthcare or social work.

Volunteers pay their own costs including air fare and living

expenses. Accommodation, bed and breakfast can usually be arranged at a cost of about £30 per week, staying with local families or in the Rehab Centre.

In a remote area with a traditional way of life. The young people and staff mostly have a working understanding of English. Knowledge of French may be an advantage.

(*)Kitega Community Centre

Kitega Community Centre in Uganda works to empower disabled and disadvantaged children, to advocate for disability rights, and to foster community-owned development. They have a five-year plan (2013-2017) to provide education and vocational skills to 100 disabled children and 100 orphans and to expand credit and entrepreneurial training to 600 families.

| | |
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| Location | Kitega Uganda |
| Web | http://www.kitegacc.org/ |
| Vacancies | Non specific |

Liberty Foundation

A non-governmental, non-profit organisation providing care, rehabilitation and education for abused and abandoned children.

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| Location | Belize, Central America |
| Web | http://www.libertyfoundation.org.uk |
| Vacancies | Liberty Foundation works through a leading non-profit UK-based organisation, Personal Overseas Development (PoD), for the recruitment of its volunteers. See: http://www.podvolunteer.org/Child-care-and-orphanages/childrens-home-belize.html |

Mediterranea

A Spanish humanitarian aid Non Governmental Organisation; non-political, non-denominational, impartial, independent, and primarily dedicated to alleviating the suffering of children, improving their life expectancy and assisting their development, education and quality of life.

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| Location | Africa, Central America, Far East etc |
| Web | http://www.mediterraneango.org/ |

Vacancies In Ethiopia: Supporting the operation of four schools.

In Abugida over 250 street children are clothed, taught, fed and medically treated if need be, every day.

Work with handicapped children to develop skills to support themselves at a school in Akaki – and also feed and dress hundreds of other children at schools in this area. There are also several projects in the Sebeta School for Blind Children.

Contact mediterranea.org@gmail.com

Multi-Agency International Training and Support (MAITS)

The aim of MAITS is to facilitate development primarily by capacity-building amongst health and education professionals working in the disability sector in under-resourced countries – people mainly working with children with cerebral palsy, intellectual disability and autism, as well as some within the mental health sector and working with stroke.

This is done by drawing on the expertise and knowledge of UK professionals to assist in the development and delivery of training packages in collaboration with local experts. They also support people to draw on expertise that already exists within their own country or region and prioritise organisations that not only provide services but are also training institutes themselves.

Location India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Uganda, South Africa, Mexico and Pakistan

Web <http://www.maits.org.uk/>

Vacancies We operate in three ways

Firstly by offering training packages. (These packages are currently being piloted and evaluated). The aim is that local centres of excellence will be the providers of these trainings in the future, with UK professionals providing support and monitoring.

Secondly, where requests for training cannot be met through our packages, we advertise the request to our database of UK professionals who then contact the organisation directly. Once the organisation has identified the applicant(s) they would like to receive training from, the applicant(s) can then apply to us for a grant.

Lastly, MAITS provides grants to UK based individuals who have an existing relationship with an organisation overseas and are looking for some extra funds to help with a training visit.

MAITS provides funding towards flights, visas, insurance, overseas

accommodation, and overseas transport costs. Costs of a personal nature such as meals overseas are paid for by the volunteer.

(*) Progressio

An international development charity working for justice and the eradication of poverty

Location Africa, Central and South America, etc.

Web <http://www.progressio.org.uk/>

Vacancies Recruit and place experienced professionals as development workers with local partner organisations, usually for a two-year period. Health professionals are not specifically sought.

Flights, visas, accommodation, training and annual leave are paid. Development workers also receive a monthly living allowance.

Progressio also participate in the International Citizen Service (ICS Empower <http://www.progressio.org.uk/ics>) programme for 18-22-year-olds and offer placements for both volunteers and group leaders.

(*) Projects Abroad

A global organiser of overseas voluntary work placements. Includes summer breaks, gap years, career breaks and graduate placements.

Web <http://www.projects-abroad-pro.org/about-us/>
<http://www.projects-abroad-pro.org/volunteer-jobs/medical/>

Vacancies For OTs in Bolivia, Cambodia, India, Nepal Romania

Projects may run all year round so you can join at any time. You decide how much time you can spare.

Costs of placement may be high.

Rehabilitation International (RI)

RI and its members are an international policy and lobby group aimed at protecting the rights of people with disabilities, including ensuring access to and the improvement of crucial services for persons with disabilities and their families. RI also promotes collaboration among stakeholders and advocates for strong policies and legislation in the international, regional and national levels to promote these rights.

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| Web | http://www.riglobal.org/ |
| Vacancies | RI offers internship and volunteer opportunities for qualified candidates who are interested in learning more about lobbying for disability rights. |

(*) Skillshare International

An international volunteering and development organisation working to reduce poverty, injustice and inequality.

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| Location | Southern Africa, East Africa, West Africa, India and Nepal |
| Web | http://www.skillshare.org/ |
| Vacancies | Placements for experienced professionals as development workers with local partner organisations, usually for a two-year period. Flights, a living allowance and accommodation are provided. Current vacancies for health professionals are advertised at http://www.skillshare.org/internationalvolunteering You can make a general application to be considered for any future vacancy in your area of expertise. |
| | Skillshare also participate in the International Citizen Service (ICS Empower) programme for 18-22-year-olds. http://www.skillshare.org/ICS |

(*) Tearfund

A Christian relief and development agency working with a global network of local organisations and churches to help eradicate poverty. In partnership with Soul Action, Go Make a Difference (Go MAD) and the Salvation Army.

Focus on disaster relief rather than development.

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| Web | http://www.tearfund.org/ |
| Vacancies | http://www.tearfund.org/en/about_you/go_overseas/current_trips/ics / http://www.tearfund.org/en/about_you/go_overseas/ |
| Restrictions | Committed evangelical Christians living in the UK or Ireland who are involved with a church which can provide a reference. |

Veterans International Cambodia (VIC)

Assisting in the rehabilitation of Cambodians living with disabilities and helping them to lead active, fulfilling lives.

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| Location | Cambodia |
| Web | http://www.ic-vic.org/Contact.html |
| Vacancies | Projects Abroad place volunteers in Cambodia via this organisation; however it is also possible to apply to them direct, which may be a cheaper route. |

(*) Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO)

VSO is the world's leading independent international development organisation that works through volunteers to fight poverty in developing countries.

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| Location | India, Africa, Asia |
| Web | http://www.vso.org.uk/ |
| Vacancies | <p>In general: A volunteer needs to have a minimum of two years' experience gained in the last five years.</p> <p>Most countries also need an official qualification (usually a degree) to secure a work permit.</p> <p>Be ready to volunteer within the next 18 months.</p> <p>For those 18 and 25, there is VSO ICS http://www.vso.org.uk/volunteer/volunteer-placements/</p> <p>OT: Occupational Therapists are needed to help develop and strengthen rehabilitation services, and train local staff to build their therapy skills. Occasionally looking for registered Occupational Therapists with at least three to five years' post-qualifying experience (for short-term roles, you'll need at least five years). Many roles require OTs with experience of management, teaching or training. Roles are generally longer term, ranging from one to two years, but we sometimes have short-term assignments for up to six months.</p> |

(*) World Unite

A German organisation which arranges placements via locally based partners and also runs its own development projects.

Current projects are listed on the website. You can also make a general enquiry and the organisation will try to match you to a suitable project. Various lengths of stay are available.

Location Tanzania, India, Israel, Nicaragua, Morocco

Web <http://www.world-unite.de/>

Vacancies <http://www.world-unite.de/en/volunteering-tanzania/physiotherapy-occupational-therapy-speech.html>
