



Pre-Registration Booklet

2011-12



World's most affordable volunteer program fee

“ 9 Years of Volunteer Abroad Experience
Over 4500 Happy Volunteer ”

RCDP International Volunteer Program

- Fees as low as \$178 per week.
- Your money directly goes to orphanages, local projects, and host families.
- RCDP has turned out 4,500 satisfied volunteers since 1998.
- Thanks in part to the connectivity and communications provided by the Internet, RCDP has gone global, acquiring partners with BTCV (UK), AID Camps (UK) and Yeti (US).
- We have worked with many US- and UK-based volunteer organizations.



Dear Volunteer,

Thank you for inquiring about an RCDP volunteer program in Ecuador. We have developed this pre-registration booklet to provide you with more information about RCDP and its volunteer programs in Ecuador. The booklet also gives some tips on how to make your volunteer experience rewarding and memorable.

Ecuador has become a very famous volunteer destination because of its jungles, snowcapped volcanoes, beautiful beaches and colonial cities. A country with astounding cultural and natural diversity – the beautiful Amazon Rainforest, the Galapagos Islands (made famous by Charles Darwin) – Ecuador has much to offer volunteers, world travelers and nature lovers. Our volunteers have described the Ecuador volunteer experience as incredible, amazing, and life changing. It is our sincere hope that you too will greatly enjoy our volunteer program in Ecuador.

Many volunteer organizations run programs in Ecuador. But, RCDP program is completely different than its competitors in many aspects, mostly importantly in terms of our low program fee, its direct allocation to places most in need of help, and program quality. We would appreciate it if you could find time and go over the information in this booklet. If you have any questions after doing so, please feel free to contact us.

Please remember that this booklet is only the start of the wonderful support you'll receive from RCDP. If you decide to join RCDP, we will guide you every step of the way to make sure that your volunteer is experience meaningful, rewarding and has a positive impact where needed in Ecuador.

We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Wishing you a great day,

RCDP International Volunteer Program

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Legitimacy of RCDP and Why you should join an RCDP volunteer program



I found out about RCDP on the Internet. How do I know that RCDP is a legitimate organization?

Brief Internet research will confirm the legitimacy of our program. We are registered with the government of Nepal's Social Welfare Council. RCDP has been running volunteer program since 1998. Since then, we have served nearly 4,000 volunteers. You can find hundreds testimonies, photos, and blogs of our past volunteers at http://rcdpnepal.org/about_rcdp/testimonies_nepal.php RCDP has been working with many leading UK- and US-based volunteer organizations. Some of our partners include: Experiment in International Living, US (experiment.org/) the British Trust for Nature Conservation, UK (btcv.org.uk) AIDS Camp International, UK (AidCamps.org), Youth Enhancement and Training Initiative, US. If you are still not convinced we would be glad to give you the email addresses of at least 10 volunteers who have joined our program recently.

Why isn't RCDP based in a developed country like the US, UK, Australia or New Zealand?

Yes, our main office is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. But many UK- and US-based organizations run programs through local organization like us in many countries. Just being in the US, the UK, New Zealand, or any developed countries does not make any organization genuine. As we are increasingly in the Internet Age, why can't an organization run a program just as effectively from New Zealand as in Kathmandu?

There are hundreds of volunteer organizations every where. Why should I join an RCDP volunteer program?

RCDP aims to offer volunteering opportunities to all volunteers. We don't want affordability to hinder anyone's willingness of serve humanity. Therefore, our volunteer programs are humanitarian missions. We do not run our volunteer programs to make profit or earn money. We do not get external funding. Our program fees are the world's most affordable, starting at fees as low as \$181 per week in many countries. We challenge you to find any organization that can beat our program fees.



I found the orphanage to be run very well and the kids well taken care of. I had an excellent time, working with the children on their homework and playing with them after school. I chose orphanage project because I have never been around children before and it was a great personal challenge to work with 28 kids. Thank you so much for everything.

- Stacy Schrader, USA

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1. You directly pay your host families and projects

Except in the Nepal office, where we collect program fees and allocate funding to host families, projects, and our ongoing community projects (two orphanages), you pay all of your money directly to host families and projects. In some countries, you pay our coordinators, who will arrange room and food. Otherwise you directly pay your host families and projects, which makes sure that your money does not go to middlemen or as a profit for a company but go directly to people who deserve it. We challenge you to find any other organization that runs programs this way.

2. Our services

RCDP feels proud of its efficient communication and prompt delivery of services. But in RCDP we guarantee an efficient and accurate reply to your email within 48 hours. If you send your telephone number, we guarantee that you will be called within 48 hours. From our many years of experience, we have learned the importance of quick communication. Please drop us one email and see how efficient we are!



RCDP have helped in many ways to ease the problems or difficulties that volunteers face. All in all, I had a wonderful time; I have learnt a lot and hope that students and teachers at my school have learnt some worthwhile things from me too.

- Emily Thorn, England

3. Program quality

- Do you believe that by just charging you \$2,000 for two weeks of volunteer program, good-quality services are guaranteed?
- Do you believe that volunteer fees are very high for many US and UK volunteering organizations because of expenses such as salaries, or profiteering?
- Do you believe that many UK- or US-based organizations that run their program through local partners (like RCDP) keep a large chunk of your fee as profit?
- What would you feel when you meet many volunteers from leading UK, US, Australia, New Zealand organizations working in the same orphanages or teaching projects, and living in the same host families, basically getting the same shelter and food, but paying nearly 1,000% more in program fees?

You may associate low program fees with low program quality. This should not be done. Since 1998, we have been running extremely affordable, safe, and yet high-quality programs serving nearly 4,000 volunteers. Please read our testimonies or please ask us for the references of volunteers who have joined our program recently and find the quality of our program. As a humanitarian organization, we aim to grow and serve humanity. This is only possible if we win your trust. Therefore, we want to provide you with the best volunteer experience with the cheapest price possible. When you land in developing countries and when you find everything so cheap, you might wonder where all of your program fee is being spent. With RCDP, payments are directly made to families, to get the best experience and best value for your money.

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4. Experienced staffers/host families and screened projects

When we started our volunteer program in 1998, nearly 100 enthusiastic volunteers from different parts of the world joined the RCDP-Nepal program. In the first year, we understood the importance of having an organized program, dedicated service, meaningful projects, and concern for safety. Ever since then, RCDP has been a respected and recognized name in the field of volunteering. We are committed to maintaining our reputation.

When we develop a new program in a new country, we do not just do it by email correspondence. We travel each country and spend at least one month time recruiting local staffers, visiting many host families and projects. We select a few host families and projects which have worked with or served the volunteers from UK- and US-based organizations. This way, we ensure the safety and quality of the program. RCDP feels proud of our staffers and host families. All of them are socially respected, experienced or worked with international volunteers, and believe in making your volunteer experience wonderful.

5. Flexibility—customized projects

We understand that every volunteer has different needs and expectations. Therefore, in each location, we have developed partnerships with different kind of local projects like orphanages, schools, healthcare centers, HIV/AIDS programs, women's empowerment projects and NGOs working in different areas. Therefore, we can tailor your need and meet your expectations.

We know that some volunteers want to work many hours while some want to travel more. Some enjoy rural areas and some need cities. Some volunteers want to stay in host family for cultural experience while some prefer living with other volunteers in a hostel. Therefore, before assigning any project or host family we carefully read your application, try to understand your needs and expectations, and match the best placement for you.

6. Ongoing Support

From the day we receive your email, we take care of you. We work hard to make sure that you are getting all support. Our support structure is varied.

- When we get your email, we reply within 48 hours
- When we get your telephone number, we call you within 48 hours
- Before you apply, we send you a pre-registration package
- When we get your application, we guarantee placement within four weeks
- Before your departure, our country coordinator will email or call you to answer last-minute questions
- Before your departure, you get a comprehensive booklet
- Our coordinator and staffers come to welcome and pick you up at the airport
- Our coordinator introduces you to the projects and host family, and gives a short orientation about country
- Our coordinator meets or calls you every two week to find how things going
- If you need any help our group coordinators are always there for you



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7. Safety first

Like your parents, we are concerned about your safety. Safety is the first priority of RCDP volunteer programs. We ensure your safety in many ways.

- Our pre-departure booklet explains many safety issues
- RCDP places you in trustworthy, screened projects where volunteers from other organizations work
- We screen host families carefully and place you with a host family with high social status and previous experience with volunteers
- Our country coordinator will visit or call you regularly
- We train our staffers, host families, and project workers about the importance of safety
- Our offices are available 24/7 for you
- If you prefer, we guarantee that you will live and work with other volunteers

8. A sense of family and friendship

RCDP volunteer programs are humanitarian missions. The RCDP founder, staffers, host families, project workers and volunteers are all considered to be a family working for the noble cause of serving humanity. Many host families and volunteers develop strong ties of friendship. We recently launched a Facebook website where you can see our growing family. It is our sincere hope that our program will develop a friendship between you and RCDP and help us to grow and better serve communities in future.



I would recommend RCDP for other volunteers looking for a rewarding volunteering experience. My advice would be to make sure you can stay long enough- I have only been here two weeks and if I could do things over again I would stay for two months or longer. There is so much to learn, see and do.

- Maddy Macdonald, USA

9. Our Experience

RCDP has been running its volunteer abroad program since 1998. So far we have successfully placed more than 4,000 volunteers. Nearly 99% of our volunteers were very happy—please ask us for the references of the past volunteers. We offer a thorough, well-rounded, and successful volunteer program which often exceeds the expectations of participants. RCDP volunteer programs are not just a simple volunteer placement services. We aim to offer meaningful abroad programs which include language courses, cultural immersion, volunteer opportunities and amazing travel experience, ensuring that volunteers do not miss out on a single lifelong memory. RCDP programs consist of language and cultural immersion programs, volunteer service projects, and excursions.



Program Overview



Ecuador has rainforests, snowcapped volcanoes and eco-diversity that you can't find anywhere else. It also has beautiful beaches, colonial cities, Incan ruins and Andean peaks. The magical Galapagos Islands, famous for spurring Darwin's Theory of Evolution, is also part of Ecuador. With all these attractions, it's not surprising that tourism is one of the mainstays of Ecuador. Despite growing tourist arrivals though the country's economic progress has been sluggish and many people still remain poor, making Ecuador the perfect destination for volunteers to travel to and work in volunteer projects that are designed to uplift the lives of poor Ecuadorians.

RCDP is working with many grassroots organizations in Ecuador that are helping the poor and deprived communities. Through our volunteers, we hope to bring relief and provide hope of a better future. Join us in our effort by volunteering in Ecuador. You'll also experience this amazing country and encounter incredibly warm Ecuadorian hospitality.

Volunteer Locations

All the volunteer placements are in Quito, the Amazon Rainforests and the prismatic Galapagos Islands.

Start and Duration of Programs

All the programs start every 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. Volunteers can choose to volunteer for 1 to 12 weeks.



I volunteer at an orphanage and it was really a very nice experience. The children were great and I was made to feel at home there. I also felt I was able to make a difference in their lives even if it was only for a short period of time.

- Darryl Lee, USA

Skill and Qualification Requirements

No specific skills and qualifications are required. But volunteers must be 18 or above and should have love and passion for serving poor kids, and respect the local culture and religion. Volunteers should also be flexible, self-motivated with open-minded and desirous of cultural learning. Any volunteer interested in joining a healthcare program needs to submit the proof of certification of being a medical student, nurse, doctor, or other medical-related professional. Volunteers without professional medical credentials are not allowed to work in this program because of risks involved.



Orphanages

Ecuador is plagued with poverty, illiteracy and a government that fails to provide basic services to its people. Under this situation, it's the poor who have suffered the most and many orphaned children have a hard time surviving and the orphanages that house them have difficulty providing the children proper care. There are many orphanages that have sprouted up to help orphaned children but they lack funding and support staff to look after the children.

RCDP is working with these orphanages of Ecuador to help them raise the children. You can now volunteer in our orphanage work project in Ecuador and help the orphanage educate, feed and house the children. Through your work and the love you will provide, the children can start to dream of a better future ahead. Don't miss this opportunity to bring happiness to the lives of the neediest children.

Volunteers will assist orphaned children in various ways and help the orphanage run their programs smoothly. You can teach them English and/or Spanish, organize games and creative programs such as plays, music, dance and even recreational activities. You may also take the children on day trips, educational visits and teach them on personal hygiene. You can also participate in kitchen work, help clean the orphanage and work in the administration.



The staffs in the school were equally kind and arranged activities for entertainment outside school hours. I observed teachers the first day and then taught alone. Before arriving I feared that my presence would be unnecessary in the school; I might be assisting only. I was glad to see however that I was needed while I was there.

- Aisling Marron, Ireland

Street Children/Children at Risk



As a result of rampant poverty in Ecuador, many children end up in street. There the children are often exploited as they seek work to survive or they become involve in petty crimes. There is an urgent need to bring them off the streets and some organizations are working on it. These organizations however lack funds and adequate staff to be more effective that what they are now. Recognizing this situation, RCDP has collaborated with the organizations and is now offering volunteers a chance to work in the project.

Volunteer now in our street children project and help the children come off the street. You'll work with kids from low income families, kids whose parents are in prison and some who have been abandoned. Through your care and by imparting skills, you'll make the children dream of a better future.

Volunteers are needed to assist already-existing institutions in their effort to provide hope and improvements in the living conditions of the street children. Depending on personal skills and interests, volunteers can teach English, music, mathematics, computer skills, assist in cooking and serve meals to the children, educate them on issues of personal hygiene/sanitation, ensure they complete their homework and simply spending quality time with the children. Furthermore, volunteers can assist in reintegrating these children into society also.



Teaching English in Rural School



English is the second most important language in Ecuador and the demand to learn the language is now at an all time high due to increase in tourism and international trade. The standard of English is very low and trained English teachers are in short supply across Ecuador. As a result of this, it's the poor who suffer the most as the schools they attend are mostly devoid of quality teachers, while the rich schools take away all the talent. With this in mind, RCDP has teamed up with local partners to offer Teaching English project to our volunteers. Our volunteers can contribute meaningfully and have fun while volunteering. You'll find the students extremely eager to learn from a foreign volunteer and generally well behaved.

Volunteers will be either teaching or assisting students from kindergarten to elementary to high school depending on their experience and proficiency. If you are interested, you can teach: art, physical education or other areas also. Classes are held from Monday through Friday. Volunteers are encouraged to use a number of methods to aide in the teaching of English, including: flashcards, singing songs, etc. You are also encouraged to hold debates and discussions as this can increase their ability to comprehend English better.

Medical/Healthcare

Healthcare services in Ecuador are improving steadily. In urban areas you can find all the modern health amenities and doctors and nurses who are well trained and have plenty of experience. But in rural areas, healthcare services are still primitive. People have to travel far and wide to receive proper care and people in these parts still die of curable diseases. Recognizing this reality, RCDP is working with local initiatives that are trying to improve the healthcare services in Ecuador. If you are a healthcare profession or work in nursing field, this is your ideal project. You can make a genuine contribution in Ecuador's hospital or health clinics. So volunteer now and cure patients with your expertise.

Volunteers will be involved in the daily procedures of medical centers. You will observe or directly provide various assistant to existing doctors and nurses. Volunteers may also be expected to assist nurseries, be involved in routine patient check-ups, and much more. Volunteers may also provide much-needed assistance in various health camps, distribute medication, provide tips to patients regarding proper health, nutrition, personal hygiene, sanitation as well as provide general counsel to needy Ecuadorians. Qualified participants may also assist in treating minor wounds and ailments as well as record-keeping.

Any volunteer interested in joining a healthcare program in Ecuador needs certification for being a medical student, nurse, doctor, or show other medical-related professional. Volunteers without professional medical credentials are not allowed to work in this program because of risks involved.



HIV/AIDS

Like many countries in the world, Ecuador is also plagued with HIV/AIDS epidemic. There are many initiatives underway to halt the spread of the disease. This program provides technical support (both programmatic and organizational) to local implementing partners, advocate for HIV prevention issues to be considered by local and national decision-makers, create public awareness about sexually transmitted infection and offer counseling and testing services. Volunteers participating in this HIV/AIDS Project work to spread awareness and help to continue the ongoing program.

There are many things a volunteer can do in HIV/AIDS project. Your work will include: developing sexual health education campaigns, promoting prevention programs and training seminars for groups such as common healthcare professionals and sex trade workers. In addition, you can assist in the medical and psychological attention and antiretroviral therapy programs. There are also opportunities to provide comfort and support to the patients, their families and the community. Volunteers may also be required to make routine visits to hospices and other medical facilities providing an in-depth perspective into the debilitating affects of this disease.

Nature Conservation/National Parks

Ecuador has a diverse but fragile environment. Recently, due to the inability of the government to enforce stricter control over its environment and logging, forests are rapidly dwindling. There is an urgent need to halt this. There have been efforts underway to stop these activities and some of them have been quite successful. RCDP is working with these local initiatives and trying to make their campaign more effective. Join our conservation project now and help Ecuador save its precious environment. Ranging from research to maintenance of existing facilities, volunteers can participate in many activities to preserve nature.

Work varies but mostly you'll be involved in building and maintaining trails, taking part in environmental education, helping the existing staff members/ environmental conservationists in ongoing projects, assistance in administrative activities of the project, weeding, building fences etc. You will also be involved in activities like reforestation, agro-forestry, organic and sustainable farming practices, nursery protects and environmental education. You can expect to work in varieties of ecosystem like dry forests, cloud forests, rain forest and mangrove forests.



Our time spent on the conservation project was time well spent. Working with team leader each day made it even more enjoyable. He included the volunteers in all aspects of the project and he is a lot of fun to work with. The RCDP staffs were friendly and helpful, as was the orphanage staff.

- Amanda Provencher(Canada)
- Paul Schults, (USA)



Accommodation

Depending upon the project locations, RCDP Ecuador offers two types of accommodation: host family and project hostel. We assure you a clean, simple and safe accommodation. Mostly volunteers will share a room with a fellow volunteer of the same sex. Living is comfortable and all accommodations have electricity and running water. While bedding is provided, we recommend volunteers to bring a pillowcase, bed sheet and a towel.

Food

Whether you stay in a host family or a project hostel, we provide you three local meals a day, 7 days a week.



“My host family is lovely. It was an interesting experience to stay in a real home in a host country, seeing how everything works, sitting with the family and joining in the meal, talking and laughing. The experience allows total immersion in to daily life. The food was good and serving generous. My accommodation was really good-comfortable, private and everything I required there. The family was really lovely and made me feel at home.”

- Bronte Prosser



Program Fees – the world’s most affordable

When you join our program, we will make sure that all of your money goes to the projects and host families. Part of your fees also helps us to cover our expenses. The program fee is divided in as registration fee of \$259 and weekly fee for room, food, coordination, and project donation.

In Ecuador, weekly fee is divided between coordination (services of local staffs), host family (room/3 local foods a day), and project donation. This allocation may be different depending up on location, project type etc. However, our coordinator will explain these issues before you pay the fee. Please find below the breakdown of costs:

Fee for 2012

1wk	2wk	3wk	4wk	5wk	6wk	7wk	8wk	9wk	10wk	11wk	12wk
\$210	\$336	\$462	\$588	\$714	\$840	\$966	\$1,092	\$1,218	\$1,344	\$1,470	\$1,596

Spanish – GROUP \$5.50 per hour

What the program fee covers

- Airport pickup
- Transfer to hostel or host family (one way)
- Accommodation and food (3 meals a day)
- Support from local staffs
- Orientation upon arrival
- Customized volunteer placement
- Regular visit or call (1-2 week intervals)

What the program fee does not cover

- Airfare, visa and visa extensions
- Daily transportation (between project and host family, if required)
- Return/transfer to airport, airport taxes
- Any personal expenses
- Mineral water and soft drinks
- Gifts to project staffs and host family
- Laundry, telephone, immunizations



Visas

All volunteers traveling to Ecuador will work on a tourist visa. Though you can get a tourist visa upon arriving at the airport in Quito, we strongly recommend all volunteers to apply for a tourist visa in an Ecuadorian embassy or consulate. It is your responsibility to arrange your visa and the flight. Please contact us if you need any further information on getting a visa.

Vaccinations

We suggest vaccinations against public health threats and other communicable diseases. Please refer to CDC website:
wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/Ecuador.aspx

Following vaccinations are recommended.

- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Yellow Fever
- Rabies
- Typhoid



Safety

The safety of our volunteers is our first priority. There are many layers of support for you in Ecuador. You will get support from the country coordinator, project directors/staff, the host family, your embassy, and our Ecuador office. However, your main support comes from our in-country coordinator. Our in-country coordinator is a full time position specially created to support and help our volunteers (at any point for any reason). In Ecuador, we work with terrific country coordinators. They are mature, educated, socially respected, and having long history of working with international volunteers.

Communication:

There are plenty of Internet centers in Quito from where you can email or phone your friends and family home. You will be able to easily send and receive emails and call internationally. You can also use a mobile phone. If you bring a mobile phone that is SIM card compatible you can get a SIM card and Ecuadorian mobile number for approximately \$30 which is great for keeping in touch with other volunteers and also home. You will be guided on this during orientation.



3-Step Application Process:

If you want to volunteer with RCDP International and gain incredible experience of helping grassroots communities thrive, please apply online at www.rcdpinternationalvolunteer.org/apply.php

Please make sure you know which program you are volunteering and how long you want to volunteer before filling up the form. For details, please visit www.rcdpinternational.org

First Step:

Please submit your application using on line application system. A \$50 refundable application fee is needed to apply.

Second Step:

Once we receive \$50, we will immediately forward your application to country coordinator for processing. Our coordinator will visit the project and confirm the placement for you. We will also make necessary arrangements for rooms/foods. Once everything is confirmed and arranged, we will send you a confirmation letter and placement sheet through an email. This process may take up to 2 -4 weeks. Once you receive the confirmation letter, you can start to prepare for the trip as it means you have been accepted in our program. Your preparation includes vaccination, visa, ticket, collecting information about Equador etc.

Three Step:

Once you confirm your flight itinerary, you will pass the information to us. When you arrive at the airport, one of our staffs will be waiting for you. You will pay the weekly project fee directly in the orphanage in the first day. Then start your project without any worries as we will take care of your every need during your stay.



If you have any questions, please email us at info@rcdpvolunteers.org
RCDP-International Office