

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What are you looking for in a volunteer for Global Xchange?

Global Xchange is open to all Indians (18-25 years of age) with valid passports. We do look for our teams to be as diverse and in the past volunteers have come from Kashmir and the North East (Nagaland and Sikkim) as well rural and semi-urban communities in Uttarakhand and Rajasthan. We are not looking for any specific experience or qualification but you will need to demonstrate openness, initiative, ability to work in a team and commitment and motivation for all aspects of the programme.

Q. Why do I need to have a passport to apply to the programme?

One phase of Global Xchange is always held outside India, for which you will need a passport. Besides this, application of visas for 10 volunteers is always a lengthy process, the delay of which can hamper the smooth start of a programme. Hence we strongly advise you to apply for a passport before applying for the programme.

Q. Do I need to pay something? Why?

Global Xchange pays for your travel, accommodation, food and provides you with a modest allowance in the community. However you will have to raise funds for the programme to build shared responsibility and ownership of learning. Funds raised by a volunteer contribute towards planning and execution of community action projects organised by volunteers as well contributing towards meeting expenses of the programme in light of limited funding. The amount to be raised by individual volunteers will be communicated at the time of the Introductory Training Course.

Q. Do I have to attend all the training courses?

Yes. Global Xchange is an intense experience which will stretch you to your limits. You will be outside your 'comfort zone' for the duration of the six months, as the only support you will have during the programme will be your team mates and the Project Supervisors of the programme. This requires a period of adjustment on your part to develop coping strategies. The trainings also provide a great opportunity to develop skills of design and facilitating sessions, fundraising, exploring social issues etc.

You will be required to attend all trainings and orientation before and after the programme to make this journey as smooth as possible.

Q. What will I get out of Global Xchange?

Global Xchange offers an opportunity to learn by experience about the diversity of peoples' lives within the global community, develop life skills as well as an opportunity to engage with critical, social and developmental issues first hand and contribute in whichever way possible to the communities both in India and UK.

So what does this mean?

O.K. Think of people you admire who have made a difference to other peoples' lives. They may be local, national or international people/personalities but they all would have taken some time to develop their skills, attitudes and values necessary to get to where they are today.

GX is one such opportunity.

Q. What will I need to do on the programme?

Once you are formally accepted on the programme, you will have to begin to prepare for what may be possibly the best six months of your life. The following is a list of what you will need to do before the programme begins:

Checks:

Prior to the programme, you will have to undergo medical checks by a general physician which then must be approved by Global Xchange. You will also have to get a no-objection certificate from the local police station which must state that you don't have a criminal record and are clear to live and volunteer in the UK as well as India.

Preparation Courses:

You have to attend three training courses: an Introductory Training Course (ITC) and a Pre-Departure Training Course (PDT) and an In Country Orientation (ICO - for Indian and UK volunteers). This is the time to get more information on the programme, meet other volunteers, discuss issues and have your questions answered. This will also be an opportunity to find out more about the communities you are going to.

Fundraising & Publicity

As part of your commitment to Global Xchange, you are expected to share your experience with others in your home community. You will receive support and advice in the orientation programmes which will include guidelines and helpful tips to get you started.

This will be the time for you to raise funds towards a pre-decided team target. The links you make through fundraising will support the programme by taking the programme to more people. The funding you raise goes directly to contribute to your costs on this programme. Some organisations, or individuals who fund you, may expect you to share your experiences and learning post the programme end. Do make it a point to keep them updated and submit a small report of your experiences during the exchange.

Through GX you may receive media coverage in your host communities. You will also be expected to attend certain publicity functions organised by the partners of Global Xchange.

Preparatory Reading

You will also have to carefully read all the documents we send you. In addition to this, you should also read about the host communities, the region as well as the exchange country. It is also important that you find out about India and the diversity of countries and cultures that exist within India – think about the questions your counterpart, or host community in UK might ask you.

On the programme you will have to:

- Adhere to the authority of the designated Project Supervisors.
- Abide by the rules and regulations of the programme.
- Actively participate in all aspects of the programme and accept that the individual's commitment is central to the success of the programme.
- Abide by Health and Safety regulations, guidelines and training.
- Be available for the complete term of the exchange, including the debriefing session at the end of the programme and the Returned Participants Weekend.

Q. Will it be possible for me to travel outside the host communities during the programme?

As part of a team of 20 volunteers and 2 Project Supervisors, you will be staying in two host communities in UK and India. You will have to immerse yourself in the programme and learn as much as from the communities in the months of the exchange. As a lot of time and resources are spent in organising the programme, volunteers are not allowed to travel on their own to locations in both India and UK without prior permission of the supervisors. However in the event of a medical emergency or death in the immediate family, we do allow volunteers to leave the programme.

Q. I have travelled a great deal in India; can I simply do the UK phase?

NO. Completing both the UK as well as India phases is mandatory for all the volunteers. Global Xchange is an intense experience both for volunteers as well as the organisations involved. Besides the financial responsibility of expenses incurred on individual



volunteers, host families and community organisations take part in the programme to experience and learn from others' background and cultures as well as benefit from the impact of 20 dedicated volunteers.

It would also be unfair on your counterpart, volunteer placement, host home, community as well as the whole team if you decided to leave the programme mid-way.

In the event of you leaving the programme early through your own choice we will ask for reimbursement for the costs incurred so far on the programme. We will not cover your travel costs.

Q. Where will I live and who will I live with?

Most teams get to live with families in a host home. This is a great opportunity to live and learn from another culture. You may not learn all the nuances of the ways of the people you live with but this will be as close as you could ever be. You will also be living with counterparts from your own team; they will be UK nationals in the age group of 18-22 years but there have been instances of volunteers of the same nationalities or triads of mixed nationalities living together. If host homes are not available, volunteers will stay in basic, safe accommodation with other team members in small guest houses, hostels or residence halls.

Host families also get financially remunerated, but this is very basic only enough to cover costs like food and electricity. But most families both in India and the UK agree to host so they can learn from the lives of people from different nationalities and ethnicities.

Q. What if I don't know English or Hindi well?

No worries! It's all part of our learning curve and we will just work together on that. In the past, Indian volunteers have come from all corners of the country and have not necessarily been well versed in Hindi or English. You will have to be responsible for your own learning, so you will have to ask questions, be



forthcoming about your struggles on the programme especially about language as well as help others to make the best of this challenge. As a team, you will be expected to innovate to overcome barriers of language and dialects.

Q. What volunteer placements will I be working on?

Volunteer placements are designed on the basis of the needs as well as existing projects in the host community. We like to give people as many choices about a placement but as a volunteer, you may or may not get a placement which interests you, matches your skill sets or be passionate about. You will be allotted the respective placements subsequent to the community orientation in each phase. We will expect you to perform duties and tasks allotted to you by your placement supervisors.

Q. What is the role of the Project Supervisor?

Each exchange group will be accompanied by two Project Supervisors, one from each country. The Project Supervisors will live in the host communities with the teams. They are responsible for identifying the volunteer placements and the host families for you and your counterpart. They will also ensure that all volunteers receive medical attention if necessary. Project Supervisors cannot guarantee that your experience will be 100% perfect. The responsibility for the success of the programme lies primarily with you, the volunteers. The Project Supervisors will, however, be a source of support throughout the programme and they will be able to help you understand some of the experiences you are facing.

Thanks for reading through this info pack, for any more queries mail us at

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