

**Step by Step  
Global Volunteering and Peer Education Project  
UNA Exchange  
(South / South-West Wales)**

**Target group**

Young people aged 16-25, targeting young people with barriers to joining international volunteering programmes.

**What are we doing?**

- Global volunteering project run by UNA Exchange in partnership with Welsh youth organisations
- Enabled 34 young people (aged 16-25) to take part in a range international volunteer projects in a total of 12 countries in Europe, Asia, North America and Africa
- Volunteers supported to do ESDGC themed follow up work on their return to the UK
- Funded in 2008-09 through the GwirVol International Youth Volunteering Grants scheme and DFID Mini-grant
- Programme of global learning - including preparation and follow up work building on their international experience

We worked in partnership with youth services / projects to recruit and select young people for the programme, and support them to join the most appropriate international project. Volunteer projects were organised by our network of international partner organisations. Together with our Welsh partners, we provided training days and one to one support and mentoring throughout the duration of the project. The participants joined a range of community based projects in 12 countries doing a wide range of volunteering work including environmental, renovation, arts, and social projects. All the projects involved living and working with groups of international volunteers from many different countries. On their return to Wales, the participants attended a residential training to help them plan ESDGC themed activities with other young people. They received ongoing mentoring and support for this phase of the project.

**Outcomes**

- Supported the personal development of young people in Wales - confidence, communication and team-working skills, practical skills, and intercultural learning
- Enabled participants to develop follow-up activities that build on their international experiences, inspired others to volunteer, and promoted learning about other countries/cultures.
- Follow up work included: planning a new environmentally themed youth exchange in Merthyr in summer 2009, setting up new short term residential volunteering projects in Wales, planning ESDGC themed community events, and organising a new accredited training weekend for young people in global citizenship.

**Challenges and solutions**

- Some projects not suitable for participants – possibly too challenging? Needed better project matching/placements processes.
- Some participants needed more preparation activities in Wales before international project (including residential activities).
- Some of the participants lead relatively chaotic lives in which planning ahead is difficult; flexibility was vital!

- Involvement of participants in follow up work after the project was patchy – some very involved, others a little, and some not involved at all. Need to work out a better range of follow up support mechanisms.

### Next Steps

- Experience of first year very positive! We want to continue (and develop) our supported volunteering programme...building on partnerships in Wales.
- We want to provide international volunteering opportunities to more young people throughout Wales – developing partnerships with new organisations.
- Developing the involvement of young people within the programme is vital - as mentors, advocates, trainers and running their own projects.
- Sustainability of funding is a major issue - we have secured some funding through Youth in Action programme / other sources but covering our core costs relating to this programme is challenging.



Step by Step volunteer with local children, while on a project in Togo, West Africa

### Contact

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#### Quotes:

*I would recommend this to everyone and anyone. It's something well worth doing – thank you!"*

Scott Thomas aged 20, volunteered in USA

*"I tried loads of new things and learnt about new people and cultures and how to communicate better with them."*

Ashleigh Williams, aged 17, volunteered in Belgium

*"As with many things, you don't really appreciate the significance at the time of doing it; with the benefit of hindsight I can honestly say that it was one of the most amazing, eye-opening experiences of my life."*

David Clunie, aged 22, volunteered in India