

## Fair Trade Volunteering

Fair Trade Volunteering is an organisation with a simple mission, which is to :

*“Ensure that your money and your presence benefit the local community when you volunteer overseas”*

There are five criteria for being a member of FTV, all of them commonsense and eminently ‘right’ for companies that sell trips into developing countries under the label of Gap Year or Development trips. Gavin has been campaigning long and hard for such measures to be introduced into the industry.

This is how we comply with the criteria:

### **1. MINIMUM "LOCAL INVESTMENT" LEVEL**

Organisations provide investment into the project itself above and beyond the volunteer's time and work. This can be in the form of finance, resources or training.

All of the projects which our volunteers work on are supported and implemented by our charity Moving Mountains, whether in the areas of education, health, environment, social welfare or community projects. AA provides all the financing for MM, plus all the resources such as trucks in Africa, office space, money for administration and staff time. All of the training which AA carries out for its own staff is also carried out for MM staff, mostly because they are employed by both organisations.

This investment has been happening since 1991 when Gavin started both the company and the charity. Nowadays it is much more comprehensive because AA and MM are much bigger, but the principle is still at the heart of the company ethos. See our document entitled Commerce Supporting Charity which fully explains this relationship.

### **2. LONG TERM COMMITMENT TO THE PROJECT (MINIMUM 3 YEARS)**

Organisations have a direct relationship with the host project or community, and develop the project in joint communication with their project partners.

In Kenya the projects where we send Gap volunteers are all between 15 and 3 years old. In most cases the schools now consider the income from the volunteers as the major source of their funding for the school development.

In Nepal the projects began properly in 2004 with the hydro-electric power plant and have continued to this day with the development of schools and monasteries.

Our project partners are Moving Mountains in both Kenya and Nepal, and the staff also works for the company. They are either Kenyan or Nepalese and they work directly with the myriad number of committees and co-operatives which run each individual project, be it a school, a clinic or an orphanage. The staff sits on most of those committees as advisory members. They then advise us here in the UK on how each project is going, and we all work together to see it develop over time.

The projects have developed at the same time as the trips, with the primary aim to use tourism as a way of offsetting our charitable commitments. So these are long term commitments.

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### 3. CLEAR AND HONEST PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND THOROUGH VOLUNTEER PREPARATION

Organisations give clear, comprehensive and honest descriptions of their projects. They also have an appropriate pre-departure selection, preparation and training programme.

Every gap year applicant or member of one of our youth trips takes part in fairly long process of preparation for their trip, which includes a number of discussions on the telephone about his or her suitability for the trip. We don't run selection weekends, but we do talk a lot to people! For the Africamp trips in South Wales we have a long training programme of physical preparation, fundraising and information evenings. Elsewhere we visit the schools and establish a good relationship with the teachers and the young people, and we run a Meet the Parents evening.

For Gap applicants who want to help in a school, or in an orphanage, or one of the projects we rely on building a rapport which is often a year prior to going. This extends throughout the trip and often far beyond. Some people have ended up becoming seasonal leaders for Adventure Alternative.

Because we do not run hundreds of Gap trips we find that it is quite easy to spend time on the phone with people, properly discussing their trip and helping each person design a trip which is unique to their skills and interests.

We do describe our trips very comprehensively, both on the website and through the ongoing correspondence with every client. All our UK staff have spent many years visiting all the project sites and they are all Trustees of Moving Mountains, so they are able to speak with absolute authority on every school, clinic or orphanage. You will find that this goes beyond their 'job'!

### 4. IN-COUNTRY SUPPORT AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Volunteers receive constant support and regular communication while on site at their project.

Yes, this is our biggest plus for Gap year trips and youth expeditions to Nepal and Kenya. AA has companies in both countries and many staff, who are all travelling back and forth. They visit volunteers a lot; they provide constant and regular communication which really goes way beyond a cursory call to check if you are okay. They become friends, and they offer volunteers a chance to be integrated into the local community.

In that respect our Gap Year trips ostensibly are about helping out in a school or an orphanage, but the feedback we get suggests that the volunteers love the fact that through the company and the charity they really get involved with a community. This is in our favour because we very much hope people will continue to support Moving Mountains after they have left.

We also have contact with all Gap clients and youth expeditions by the phone from the UK office. We keep records of all next of kin and we run a clear system of back-up and support during the summer when a lot of groups are in-country.

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### 5. 100% VOLUNTEER EXPENSES COVERED BY THE VOLUNTEER, NOT THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Organisations ensure that 100% of volunteer expenses on site (food, accommodation, transport) are covered by their placement fee.

Again, this is one of our central policies that any volunteer does not take someone else's job and does not end up as a burden on the community.

When a trip fee is paid, the money is split into three sections – In-country costs, direct donation to the project r community and UK administration.

Incountry costs – amount to 50% of the trip fee and covers all of the expenses such as food, accommodation, transport, local staff and the house in which you stay. Some of this money is given back to you when you arrive, so for example you receive all your food allowance in cash which allows you to budget yourself in a local environment, do your own shopping and so on.

Direct Donation – amounts to 10% of the trip fee and is given to the institution where you end up staying. The donation is done through Moving Mountains. So AA gives the money to MM UK and MM UK gives MM Kenya that money and MM Kenya gives the money to the school or clinic, which they then use this to buy books, repair windows, or do whatever is necessary.

AA Admin – amounts to 40% of the trip fee and this allows Adventure Alternative to run itself and also invest in the operation of all its country offices. For example, we own all our own transport incountry, like overland safari trucks, which need to be maintained.

We also donate £10 from every trip fee into our Rainforest Project, which is a carbon offset programme running in Borneo. We also of course underwrite the administration of Moving Mountains from the AA offices, so part of the 40% covers that too.