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IELTS Listening – Volunteering Abroad

Ok everyone, thanks for coming today and for your interest in volunteering abroad. For those that don't know much about our company, Time Abroad, let me start by telling you a bit more.

Time Abroad is one of the largest volunteer abroad organizations in the UK. The company was founded in 2000. In 2007, the company grew by joining with another company, PT Travel, making us even larger. In 2014 we sent 10,000 people abroad on a variety of service projects and internships overseas, more than any other company. All participants receive the best support from our full-time, professional staff to ensure that the experience is safe, worthwhile and fun. Q11

We have lots of very experienced staff working for us. We have around 150 full-time staff members, many of whom are former volunteers themselves inspired by their own experience. Some of these people are even part of the original groups of volunteers back in the early 90s. About 75 of those staff are not located in the UK at all, and spend their whole time in another country supporting the volunteers. They are experts on the local communities you are working in, having spent their whole lives there. They have vast experience in fields such as community development or education. Q12

The times that volunteers join the program vary a lot. Some join in July because they have just finished studying at college or university and want to do some volunteering before they move onto work or further study. The winter months are also popular because people want to escape the cold weather in the UK. But there are no set start dates and programs run continuously throughout the year, so the majority of volunteers start when it is best for them. Q13

Time Abroad is an entirely independent organization which does not receive any funding from religious bodies, political parties, development organizations, or other sources. And of course, we don't request money from our partner organizations in the developing world. All our work is 100% funded through your contributions as a volunteer. We do get help from the government, but that is from reduced business taxes, not financial contributions. It is this financial independence that gives us the freedom to set up projects wherever we think it may be useful and where we think that our volunteers can make a valuable contribution. Q14

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Now I'm going to tell you about some of the more popular opportunities in a bit more detail. One of the most popular volunteering choices is teaching. You'll find a warm welcome awaits you from our students around the world. The main thing you will do is assisting with English conversation because although the local teachers are very capable of teaching the structural aspects of the English language - such as the grammar – they do not use the correct intonation or pronunciation, because they lack the confidence of a native speaker. By providing conversational English teaching, you can greatly enhance the learning experience of thousands of children and adults with whom we work in the developing world. Q15

You can also volunteer in agriculture and farming. Access to safe and healthy food is a major concern of any society. Volunteers work on a farm with the aim of promoting sustainable local food sources and responsible farming. Using pesticides and other destructive agricultural techniques can have a long-term negative impact on the environment and threaten the future well-being of whole regions. Time Abroad's agriculture & farming projects focus on organic farming practices and educating local communities on their benefits. Q17

You could also volunteer in the field of veterinary medicine. If you do this you will be working alongside a vet in a local veterinary practice. You will help the vet when people bring in sick animals or join the vet on visits to people's houses or other places. You will gain fantastic insight that would not be possible in your own country. You are likely to see many exciting types of animals like snakes, big cats or even elephants! And you will develop a better understanding of the problems people are faced with in both urban and rural areas of the third world. Q18

So, I hope that has helped you to learn a bit more about Time Abroad. Does anybody have any questions? Q19