

# OVERSEAS VOLUNTARY WORK Handbook **2017**

A practical resource for  
volunteers giving voluntary  
service with organisations  
working on projects in Africa,  
Asia and Latin America.



Malta Council for the  
**VOLUNTARY** SECTOR



# OVERSEAS VOLUNTARY WORK HANDBOOK 2017

*The Handbook is a practical resource for volunteers giving voluntary service with organisations working on projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America.*

## Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Expectations</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Preparing Yourself - Practical Matters</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Preparing Yourself - Your Health</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Personal Safety and Work Safety</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Child protection Policy</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Packing List - What to Bring</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Contacts and Information</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Code of Conduct for Volunteers</b>	<b>27</b>

This publication was produced as a resource by the Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector as a tool for Voluntary Organisations and individual volunteers to support in their voluntary service overseas.

The aim of this Handbook is to help both the Voluntary Organisations which are planning their project overseas as well as the individual volunteer who is preparing to join a volunteer project overseas. It is natural that the volunteer who will be undertaking the first volunteering experience abroad, and is likely to feel anxious before the start of one's travel.

It is important that as part of the preparation, the volunteers should address their expectations as early in the planning phase as possible. This Handbook intends to ease any anxiousness one may have regarding expectations and also guide both the Voluntary Organisations and individual volunteers in their preparation phase, so as to facilitate a successful and safe experience for all involved.

## Preparing the volunteer for the project abroad

In order for the project to be successful and the experiences to be positive and enriching for the volunteer, it is crucial that the sending voluntary organisation adequately prepares the volunteer prior to departure.

This preparation should take place at least one month before departure and should be tailored to the individual needs of the volunteer and the specificities of the project, the service and the host country. Pre-departure preparation provides the volunteers with information about the Voluntary Organisation, the project details and the different parties involved. It allows volunteers to discuss their expectations, their motivation and also any concerns they may have about their future project with their Sending Voluntary Organisation.

During their service period, volunteers will be living in a different country, interacting with people from a different culture and often in a foreign language. At times this will be difficult, and volunteers are likely to face various difficult situations during the service period. It is therefore essential to lay the grounds for guiding volunteers through the intercultural learning process and to tell them about the support available during their service period.

Pre-departure preparation includes providing volunteers with practical and technical information on matters such as insurance, visa, pocket money, working hours, etc.

Prior to departure, each volunteer receives an Info-Kit. The pre-departure preparation is an opportunity for the Sending Voluntary Organisation to go through and discuss the different parts of the Info-Kit with the volunteer. The Volunteer Info-Kit should ideally consist of the following four items, namely a Welcome Letter, a brief description of what to expect from the project, information related to any insurance cover for volunteers and the Code of Conduct for Volunteers.

## Expected achievements of the preparation

The pre-departure preparation will vary according to training practices, organisational possibilities and volunteer needs. Nevertheless, pre-departure preparation should ensure that, by the time they leave, all volunteers:

- a) know about the aims and objectives of the sending voluntary organisations;
- b) are familiar with the partners in the project, i.e. the receiving and Coordinating Organisation, the mentor and, where applicable, the host organisation;
- c) have shared their motivations, expectations and fears, and have reflected on their goals, including goals for learning;
- d) have received appropriate practical and technical information on visas, residence permits, their legal status as a volunteer, their insurance, pocket money and the agreement with the voluntary organisation;
- e) understand the meaning of intercultural learning and are aware of the ongoing intercultural learning process;
- f) have received guidance or at least hints on crisis management;

Depending on the financial and human capacities of the Sending Organisation as well as the number of the sent volunteers the pre-departure training/preparation can take different forms. Ideally it can be a weekend residential training bringing together a group of outgoing volunteers with proper facilitators.

On the other hand, if the organization is sending for example only one volunteer, the preparations will take the form of several shorter meetings between the coordinator of the sending organisation and the volunteer. It is also very beneficial in the preparation phase to include a volunteer has past experience on a similar project to be able to answer the concrete questions of the outgoing volunteers.

## Suggested programme for the pre-departure training

- 1) **I am...**  
Who am I? Who is my sending organisation? Where am I going on the project, my hosting organisation? What am I going to do there, which target group will I be working with?
- 2) **I am going, because ...**  
Motivation, expectations, wishes, fears.
- 3) **My culture is ...**  
Meaning of the international mobility, what's in it for me, importance of the intercultural learning.
- 4) **I solve my problems ...**  
Where can things go wrong on the project? Who can help me, how?
- 5) **I want to learn to ....**  
What do I wish to learn? How do I wish to learn it? Who can help me in this? When will I learn it?
- 6) **This training was...**  
Short evaluation of the training

# EXPECTATIONS

## What are the expectations?

Before embarking on this experience you should ask what are you expecting from the volunteering experience? To be aware of your expectations is one of the most important ways you can prepare for the overseas experience. You must address these expectations since you may face a shock realising that expectation may vary from reality in a surprising way. The best way to avoid disappointment is to evaluate expectation before you go. Are they realistic? Are they based on the right motives?

## Differences

You must be prepared to encounter differences, and different is not wrong, it is just different. You may find different approaches to what you may consider as universal, such as food, work and communication. Make an effort to notice and appreciate these differences for the very short time you are in the country and make an effort not to let frustration get the better of you when you encounter things you are unaccustomed to.

## Disappointments

It is natural to have some disappointments, expecting one thing and finding another. You should always be prepared to encounter the unexpected. No matter how much you plan, schedules probably will not be as planned! There will be 'down' times when you have to wait for materials onsite or for someone to show up or make a decision. Use this time to enjoy and connect with the people around you. Talk with them and ask them questions about their lives, families and work. You may never have this opportunity again.



## Some things you may expect

As part of your volunteering experience you may be involved in community life and you will eat, sleep, and work within the local community. Community life involves learning about the host community, experiencing cultural differences and sharing your whole day with your team. Take this great opportunity as a possibility to grow which also brings responsibility. Each volunteer is expected to act responsibly with his/her every action.

## Culture Shock

The only sure thing is that the hosts and host country are different from what you are accustomed to at home. The difference starts from the language and accommodation, to the dress and behaviour. From the instance you meet your host, you may notice that people might greet each other in unusual ways and may be offended by your behaviour, which may be well-intended. In brief you may experience culture shock!

You may find yourself responding to culture shock by withdrawing or alternatively by becoming overly energetic trying to fit in. You may even become angry and resentful towards the hosts “different ways” or you may feel you are not experiencing much culture shock at all. A good way to counteract culture shock is to open your eyes and ears, open your mind, put on your sense of humour and a smile, be prepared to laugh at your own mistakes and genuinely become a part of the new culture. Attempt to learn the language, at least some basic words like hello, goodbye, good morning, etc. If you have problems adjusting to the culture differences, discuss this with your team members or team leader.

## The Cultural Experience

The cultural experience can be one of the most enriching and challenging parts of your volunteer adventure. Respecting the culture you are living and working in is essential to the success of your time within the community. Always keep in mind that different things are valued in different cultures

For example, domestic animals such as cats and dogs may not be regarded in the way you are accustomed to. Time and punctuality may also be regarded differently. Women may not experience the same degree of freedom or respect they are used to. Transport is different, there can be over-crowding, and driving at high speed.

### SOME know -ask!!

It is polite to respect the ethics and morals of the country that you are visiting. If you are not sure, ask. Clothing should be appropriate for the work site or after work event. This should also be appropriate and respectful of the host culture. Team members should dress comfortably, yet modestly.

Photographing local people and sacred cultural places should be done with reservation. It is respectful to ask permission before pointing the camera at such subjects.

Consumption of alcohol at work sites is prohibited and should be moderated all other times. In some communities even moderate alcohol consumption may be frowned upon, if not totally banned. The use of tobacco may be offensive too. Use of illegal drugs by volunteers is strictly forbidden at all times.

Always respect the values of your hosts and fellow team members.

## Practical Matters

**Travel Ticket:** You must be sure to have the correct travel arrangements to and from the destination.

**Travel Insurance:** See that you have a comprehensive Travel Insurance policy which covers all items you intend to carry and all the countries in which you will be both residing as well as in transit through.

**Health Insurance:** See that a comprehensive Health Insurance covers all you need in all the countries in which you will be both residing as well as in transit through, as well as for all the activities you will be undertaking. There may be situations where you have to get medical care in the country you are in or return home immediately.

**Passport:** You will need an up to date current passport. Check to see when it expires.

**Visa, if necessary:** When you are applying for a visa, you should always apply for a tourist visa. Although you are going on an International Volunteer Project, the majority of countries do not recognise voluntary work as a special activity for getting a different visa. To obtain a working visa is a long process.

**Vaccination and Vaccination Card:** Check with the Health Department the list, if any, of vaccinations you need to take for the specific countries you will be visiting. Check at least three months before because certain vaccinations need to be taken some time prior departure. Take the Vaccination Card with you for sometimes it is checked at border crossings!

**Documents:** Make **TWO** copies of any important documents (passport, visa, card numbers, insurance, travel tickets...) and leave one copy with someone whom you can easily contact in case you lose them and keep one copy with you in a separate

place from the originals. A good idea is to scan your documents and save them in your e-mail account, so you can access them anywhere you travel.

**Money:** Always carry a reasonable amount of cash but have also traveller's cheques. You will also be able to use credit/electronic debit cards in many of the countries but remember that most of the projects are in remote areas where there is usually no access to cash points. Do not carry all your money in one place! Take advice from previous volunteers who went to the same country.

**Local Addresses:** Bring the contact details of the Volunteer Organisation which is responsible for the project including emergency phone numbers. Bring the address and contact details of the Maltese embassy or consulate in the country you are visiting. If there is no Maltese embassy or consulate there, you may contact any other EU Country's embassy....

**Acclimatising:** Take it easy for the first few days after your arrival, get used to the heat, humidity, new time and new people. Try and arrive some days before your project is due to start.

**Valuables:** Do not take them if not necessary. The less you have then the less chance to be robbed. Do not look rich!

**Going somewhere on your own:** If you're leaving the group, inform someone about your journey, when you plan to be back, etc. Take advice from the project leaders and local coordinators.

**Always carry small notes:** or a second wallet in your pocket so if you are mugged you have something to hand over. If you are mugged hand over something ... it's not worth the fight.

**Gauging risks:** Seek advice from the local leaders and volunteers if you do not know the place, do not travel alone if possible, and do not go out after it gets dark.

**Clothing:** Dress appropriately to country habits/rules. Wearing lots of jewellery or expensive clothes can invite unwanted attention. Wear appropriate clothing i.e. being sensitive to cultural issues e.g. cover your shoulders and wear long shorts/skirts below the knee in some Muslim countries, while travelling and at the project site. This should include closed toed shoes which will help avoid cuts, unsafe debris and other hazards.

**Glasses:** Bring a **spare pair** of glasses or contact lenses in case of loss or breakage.

**Public Transport:** If possible avoid any form of transport known by reputation, or common sense to be unsafe. This includes poorly maintained buses, trucks, ferries and any overcrowded vehicles especially those with standing passengers and no obvious handhold.

**Walking:** Ensure your safety as a pedestrian. Consider wearing reflective arm bands at night if walking on a busy road.

**Hitch-hiking: *It is not recommended;*** however, sometimes it can be the only means of transport.

Remember that you will be asked for money for the lift. Ask before you get in how much it will cost!

**Swimming:** Find out about local beaches, lakes, rivers, wells, ponds etc. before you swim. Check that they are clean and safe. Swim only in areas known to be free from dangerous currents, sharks, sea snakes, poisonous fish, crocodiles etc. ***Never-ever*** swim on your own, nor swim if you have consumed alcohol or eaten a large meal.

**Mobile Phone:** You may be able to use your mobile in the country you are travelling to, so check with your service provider before you go and make sure that your phone is unlocked, if not ask them to unlock it. This may take a few days to put into place.

Otherwise you may be able to buy a local SIM Card which you could use instead of your local one but in your own phone.

**Mobile Phone:** You may be able to use your mobile in the country you are travelling to, so check with your service provider before you go and make sure that your phone is unlocked, if not ask them to unlock it. This may take a few days to put into place. Otherwise you may be able to buy a local SIM Card which you could use instead of your Irish one but in your own phone.

## Your Health

*The following is to provide you with some basic information on possible health problems:*

This is not meant to be an alarmist list or overview, but we have included quite a number of illnesses for your information.

Staying healthy in an environment that is very different to the one you are used to depends a lot on:

1. *Your preparations before you go*
2. *Your daily health care while travelling*
3. *How to handle any medical problem that may arise*
4. *Returning home*

The following information is a guide and is not meant to be a substitute for seeking professional medical advice. Before going on a volunteer project you should contact the Immunization Clinic within the Health Department which deals with tropical medicines and vaccinations.

Make sure you are healthy before you go. Have a medical and dental check before departure. It might be useful to have an eye exam, tuberculin test and for women a Paps smear. Check that your childhood immunisations are up to date. Check if you are allergic to any medications – get a note from your doctor describing these allergies (in both common and chemical names of those medications).

**Know your blood group** and record it on travel documents.

**Vaccinations:** check those you need in the country that you are going. Begin the process of immunisation early enough, since some series can take weeks/months!

*The following are generally recommended for those who stay longer than one month in Asia, Africa and Latin America:*

**Hepatitis A:** transmitted by contaminated water/food/close contact with infected people; Symptoms-jaundice and fever, incubation period of 3-5 weeks.

**Protection:** Vaccine, Gamma Globulin serum – expensive but gives protection for 4-6 months

**Hepatitis B:** transmitted through blood, blood products, needles, tattoos etc.

**Protection:** Vaccine. It is expensive, so check it first with GP.

**Yellow Fever:** transmitted by mosquito bite. Symptoms: acute fever, muscle pain, jaundice –can be fatal;

**Protection:** Vaccination (compulsory for Africa).

**Typhoid:** transmitted by contaminated food/water. Symptoms: Fever, headaches, diarrhoea.

**Protection:** Vaccination (can be combined with Diphtheria and Tetanus).

**Tetanus:** transmitted through soil or rust contamination; Symptoms lockjaw, muscle spasms.

**Protection:** Vaccination (or booster) see Typhoid.

**Cholera:** transmitted through contaminated food/water. Symptoms: Diarrhoea, vomiting, dehydration.

**Protection:** Vaccination but WHO advises people not to have it. (check it out)

**Polio:** Transmitted through food; Symptoms: paralysis.

**Protection:** Vaccination/Booster.



**TB:** transmitted through close contact with carrier. Symptoms: Coughing, fever, chest/back pain.

**Protection:** BCG –you probably had one as a child. You can have a simple test to see if it's still valid.

**Meningitis:** transmitted through bacterial or viral infection. Symptoms: Headache, fever, stiffness.

**Protection:** Vaccination

**Rabies:** transmitted by bite of rabid animal. Symptoms: Death.

**Protection:** Vaccination – expensive. Check with your GP or Immunisation Clinic.

**Malaria:** one of the biggest killers in developing countries and is transmitted by the bite of a female mosquito (how can you tell a male one from a female one?). The best way of preventing mosquito bites is by wearing long sleeves, trousers, scarf around your neck, socks at dusk and at night, by wearing insect repellent (ask what is used locally) and by using a mosquito net or coil (which you can burn). Mosquito and other insect bites can be painful and if you apply some anti histamine cream ASAP after the bite this can lessen the severity of the bite. If you are prone to insect bites consult your GP about taking antihistamine tablets before your journey.

**Malaria Tablets:** Consult your GP Health Department before you decide on which malaria tablet you should take. Usually you should start taking tablets before you leave Ireland.

**First Aid course:** It might be useful to do a First Aid course before you leave, especially if you will be far from quality medical care available through various qualified service providers.

**Medicine:** If you need to take any regular medicine during your stay overseas, be sure that you bring enough for the whole duration. If you need to buy them in another country, take with you trading name of the medicine. The commercial name that you know

from here may be different overseas. All medications should be carefully labelled and sealed-(effect of humidity!)

## Additional medical items you may want to take

- Water purification tablets (Potable- Aqua).
- Extra pair of glasses and/or contact lenses (with a good supply of lens solution of course).
- Sanitary towels/ tampons.
- Sunscreen lotions, Insect repellents, lotions with DEET, baby powder or medicated powder for heat rashes and to prevent fungal infections (available from your GP).
- Saline Solution (0.9% NaCl).
- Disinfectant soap (Betadine, Dial), adhesive bandages, sterile gauze pads, roller bandages, adhesive tape, elastic bandages, anti-septic solutions (Betadine, hydrogen Peroxide solution).
- Regular Pain killers (Paracetamol), Vitamins, Minerals plus Iron supplements, oral dehydration sachets (dioralyte, Electrolade, Rehidrat).
- Antibiotics, Anti-diarrhoea tablets (if your GP prescribes them).

**Medical information:** Medical history notes about your allergies, diseases, blood group and possible reactions to medication.

**Sun protection:** Take sun cream (>25 SPF) Sun block (25+), Sun hat and a cotton scarf for the back of your neck. Take also sun glasses.

## Miscellaneous items

**Ear plugs** (always useful!), handkerchiefs if you feel that you might have dietary difficulties.

**Acclimatising:** Take it easy for the first few days after you arrival, get used to the heat, humidity, new time and new people.

**Jet Lag:** If you have travelled 10-15 hours inside a tin can you will need time to get over this. Avoid alcohol, limit your teas/coffees and drink plenty of water.

**Keep Clean:** Scrupulous personal hygiene is proven to reduce the risk of illness. Make an effort to keep your hands clean to ensure a more enjoyable productive trip. It may be a good idea to have an antibacterial wet wash hand cleaner and baby wipes available for cleaning hands. It is highly important that you clean your hands thoroughly after using the toilet and before eating or touching your face. Wash your hands!! Many illnesses can be spread by "dirty hands" - spread by faeces to mouth route. Take a shower at least once a day, wash your body carefully, dry thoroughly, especially skin folds (bacteria and fungi's favourite place).

**Also watch where you swim or wade:** in some areas, rivers or wet, flooded fields can harbour snails carrying worms that can cause *schistosomiasis* and other hookworm or threadworm infestations. Water can also be contaminated with *leptospirosis*.

**Footwear:** It is advisable to bring comfortable practical footwear –do bear in mind that there may be all sort of insects, snakes, scorpions etc and bare feet are vulnerable. Wear shoes/ sandals as a protection against hookworm, tick bites, scorpion bites, and fungus infections. Be careful about sitting on the ground for the same reason.

## Health Care while travelling

**Prolonged Sun Exposure:** Avoid direct sun and have a siesta in a mid-day if possible. You should wear sun protection cream and wear a hat/scarf to protect your head and the back of your head. Exposure to too much sun can lead to sunstroke or heat exhaustion. Some people get heat rashes or prickly heat (red rashes of little blisters) on any part of the body. Synthetic materials can contribute to this and can aggravate it. It is advisable to wear cotton clothing.

If you receive a **small cut or scrape** you should clean them and cover them ASAP as otherwise they may become infected.

**Toilets:** In many developing countries the standards of toilets will not be what you're used to at home. In cities toilet paper is often used but not flushed down the toilet. Instead it is placed in a bin or container. Where toilet paper is not used you will have to do as the locals do and use water for cleaning. This can take some getting used to. At work camps the facilities will be very basic. No matter what the situation you should take care to wash your hands thoroughly after using the toilet. In many Asian societies you use your left hand for cleaning after the toilet and so in some circles it is considered impolite or insulting to use your left hand for eating, greeting etc.

**Periods:** Women volunteers have often found that their periods may be disrupted, disappear or become more frequent. It takes your body some time to adjust to a new environment. Women should bring a supply of tampons with them. Sanitary towels are often available in cities and large towns.

**Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked and is still hot when served.** Avoid any uncooked food apart from fruits and vegetables which can be peeled or shelled. Avoid fruits with damaged skins. Remember the phrase - '**Cook it, peel it or leave it**'

**Meat** can often be a source of many illnesses – check the source if possible. Ice cream from unreliable sources is frequently contaminated and can cause illness. If in doubt – avoid it.

In some countries, certain species of **fish** and **shellfish** may contain poisonous bio-toxins even when they are well cooked! Local people can advise you about this. Unpasteurised milk should be boiled before consumption.

**Beverages** such as hot tea, coffee, wine, beer (these are diuretics and can lead to dehydration) and carbonated soft drinks/fruit juices which are either bottles or otherwise packaged are usually safe to drink. Again like bottled water check the seals on the bottles.

## When to seek Medical Care

If you are not feeling well while on a project or while travelling you may be in need of medical care depending on the symptoms and how serious you think your condition is. Your project coordinator or the staff/volunteers of the Voluntary Organisation will be able to recommend a doctor or medical clinic which you can go to. The Maltese embassy/consulate will also be able to recommend where to get suitable medical treatment. This might only be available in the capital city/major city and not in a rural area and so you may have to travel to get adequate medical care.

You should consider having a full medical examination on your return from the developing world. Seek medical attention also if you experience illness in the weeks following your return home, particularly fever, persistent diarrhoea, vomiting, jaundice, urinary disorders, skin disease or if genital infection occurs. And also if you consider that you have been exposed to a serious infection while travelling or you have spent more than 3 months in a developing country. Also seek medical attention immediately if you have **fever** and if you have been in a malaria endemic area.

*The following tips are common sense while travelling in a foreign country.*

- Dress conservatively.
- Don't wear expensive-looking jewellery or watches (even if they are fake!). Conceal essential valuables and documents.
- Do not put valuables in easily accessible pockets or backpacks.
- Do not display large amounts of cash. Go somewhere discreet if you need to remove something from money belts or hidden pockets.
- Lock your luggage if it is out of sight. Be extra vigilant when out on the street-look out for bag snatchers, pick-pockets and scam artists.
- Abide by local customs and laws.
- Ensure someone knows where you are at all times. Do not wander off alone, especially at night.
- Keep hold of shoulder bags.
- Do not resist attackers. If confronted, give up your valuables. None of your valuables are worth more than your life.

## Work Site Safety

Safety is everyone's responsibility. If you think something is unsafe it probably is. Each volunteer is required to work in a safe manner, and to bring any safety concerns to the attention of the team leader, do not wait for an accident to happen. Each volunteer has a responsibility not to abuse or misuse materials or equipment. Assess any task before carrying it out.

**Think First:** Avoid putting yourself or others in danger. Be cautious at all times and ask questions if you are unsure about how to use equipment, how to perform a task or whether you should be even doing it.

**Lifting:** When lifting heavy objects keep your back straight, do not lift more than you can handle. Be aware of other volunteers, helpers and obstacles when lifting large or awkward materials and tools. Recognise your limits. Avoid struggling to keep up with other team members. When you get tired, take a break; sit down and rest often.

**Report Accidents Immediately** to the team leader. Do not horseplay or cause distractions to anyone on the site, which may result in an accident or incident occurring. Do not throw materials to each other to save time. Always work in a chain. No alcohol or illegal drugs are permitted on site at any time. Volunteers who need prescribed drugs (inhalers, etc.) should make sure they have a sufficient supply on site. If you feel unwell at any time during your trip, speak to your team leader.

**Animal Associated Hazards:** Animals in general tend to avoid human beings, but they can attack, particularly if they are with young or unable to flee. Wild animals and, in areas of endemic rabies, domestic dogs, cats and other animals should be avoided. If you are concerned about Rabies discuss this with your nurse or doctor. Poisonous snakes are prevalent in many parts of the world, although death from snake bites are relatively rare. Scorpion stings may be painful but seldom life-threatening except possibly in infants. Check your shoes before you put them on!

## Clothing and Equipment

**Footwear:** Sturdy work boots preferably steel toe cap safety boots should be worn at all times.

**Gloves:** Everyone should have a pair of gloves with either leather or rubberised grip.

**Eye Protection:** Wear protective glasses when using hammers, chisels, power tools, lime wash, chemicals, when dust is in the air.

**Face Mask:** Wear a dust mask when sanding, installing insulation, painting, lime wash or using chemicals and when working in demolition or doing strip out work.

**Ear protection:** Use ear plugs when using a power tool or are in the vicinity of loud machines.



## Principles of Good Practice when working with Children

Your volunteer experience is about more than work, throughout your experience you will interact, to varying degrees, with the local community, and volunteers. Interaction with local children is a key component of the trip. Children may befriend you as you work on site, as you eat a meal or even as you walk to and from your accommodation each day! Whenever we have contact with any child it is important that they always adhere to the following guidelines and to ensure that the safety and welfare of any child is a priority in all our dealings with them. Health and safety on the worksite is of paramount importance, children should not be encouraged to work on site by any team member. Team leaders should be aware of what is happening with their teams and keep an eye on anything that does not seem in order, such as a team member taking a particular interest in a child or walking away with a child. It can be useful at times to provide entertainment for the local children if it allows work on the site to go ahead in a safer manner. In such situations, at least two team members should be allocated responsibility for keeping the local children entertained away from the building site. Team members should be thoughtful about their language and tone of voice. Team members should never participate, with children, in games of either an aggressive or sexual nature. Team members should never invade the privacy of children or make any unnecessary physical contact with a child or group of children. Individual team members should never be alone with any child or any group of children. Team members should not spend excessive amounts of time with any one child or group of children.

Team members should not make any demeaning remarks or gestures to or about a child. When taking photographs of children, team members should always ask the permission of their parents or guardians.

## General

- Passport/Visa + copy of documents
- Vaccination Card
- Address of Embassy
- Rucksack
- Sleeping Bag
- Sleeping Mat
- Mosquito Net
- Hooks, Nail, String to hang it up)
- Sewing Kit
- Torch
- Swiss Army Knife (not in hand luggage!)
- A day pack
- Water Bottle
- Eating Utensils
- Money Bag
- Small Locks

## First Aid/Medical

- Malaria Tablets
- Diarrhoea Pills
- Laxatives
- Pain Killers
- Insect Repellent
- DEET
- Water Purification Tablets
- Bandages
- Plasters
- Scissors
- Syringes
- Antiseptic
- Anti-histamine
- Sunscreen
- Sun-block

## Toiletries

### **Self:**

- Nail Brush
- Baby Wipes
- Soap etc.

### **Clothes:**

- Travel Wash
- Clothes Pegs
- String/rope (clothes line).

### **Other:**

- Tampons/Sanitary Towels
- Contraceptives

## Clothes

### **Clothes:**

Should be practical and take into account local sensitivities.

### **Other Items:**

- A raincoat
- Sun Hat
- Sunglasses
- Work Gloves (2)
- Hike/Work Boots
- Sandals

### **Other Items loping Country...**

- Camera
- Books
- Deck of Cards
- Travel Games
- Reading light
- Travel Guide
- Photographs (of yourself and family).
- Maltese "Cultural" items (e.g. flags, postcards, songs etc).
- Small gifts (e.g. balloons, crayons, colouring books, balls, skipping ropes, playing cards).
- Musical Instrument

## Other /Miscellaneous

Let's Go Travel Guide	<a href="http://www.letsgo.com">www.letsgo.com</a>
Lonely Planet Travel Guide	<a href="http://www.lonelyplanet.com">www.lonelyplanet.com</a>
Rough Guide	<a href="http://travel.roughguides.com">http://travel.roughguides.com</a>
Travel Directory	<a href="http://www.travel.org">www.travel.org</a>
World Travel Guide	<a href="http://www.wtgonline.com">www.wtgonline.com</a>

## Health and Travel Issues

Health Department	<a href="http://www.healthservices.gov.mt">www.healthservices.gov.mt</a>
Immunisation Services	<a href="http://health.gov.mt/en/Pages/health.aspx">http://health.gov.mt/en/Pages/health.aspx</a>
Department of Foreign Affairs	<a href="https://foreignaffairs.gov.mt/">https://foreignaffairs.gov.mt/</a>

## General Information

Culture Information	<a href="http://www.CULTUREGRAMS.com">www.CULTUREGRAMS.com</a>
Currencies and Exchange Rates	<a href="http://www.xe.net/currency">www.xe.net/currency</a>
International Dialling codes	<a href="http://kropla.com/dialcode.htm">http://kropla.com/dialcode.htm</a>
Weather Report	<a href="http://www.weather.com">www.weather.com</a>
World Factbook	<a href="http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook">www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook</a>

## Volunteering Websites

Malta Council for the Voluntary Sector	<a href="http://www.maltacvs.org/">http://www.maltacvs.org/</a>
--	---

## As a volunteer, I am committed to:

### Personal responsibility

- Be dependable, recognizing the commitment and responsibility to your volunteer assignment(s).
- Accept assignment(s) consistent with your interest, abilities, and available time.
- Accept assignment(s) with an open mind and a willingness to learn.
- Accept feedback from your supervisor in order to do the best job possible.
- Avoid conflict of interest situations and refrain from actions that may be perceived as such. Volunteers should reveal any potential or actual conflicts of interest as they arise.
- Not accept tips, request meals to be paid for, or otherwise accept payment for my volunteer work.
- Address ethical concerns by speaking directly with the colleague/responder with whom I have the concern; and when necessary, report such to your leader in the defined chain of command.

### Respect

- Treat all individuals with a sense of dignity, respect, and worth. Make a personal commitment to be nonjudgmental about cultural differences, living conditions and the life-style of each person with whom you work.
- Avoid profane and abusive language and disruptive behaviour that is dangerous to self and others.
- Abstain from the use of photo, audio or video recording equipment unless authorized.
- Respect all confidential information. Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all proprietary or privileged information to which they are exposed while

serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a single staff, volunteer, client or other person.

- Not preach to anyone or pressure anyone to accept my political, cultural, or religious beliefs.
- Comply with mandated reporting in cases of suspected child and vulnerable adult abuse or neglect.
- Respect and use all equipment appropriately and as required for your assignment.

## Safety

- Not use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time while serving as part of volunteer activity.
- Abstain from all illegal activity.
- Wear required identification and clothing. All items of clothing must be suitable for the work environment and should not contain offensive or objectionable material (slogans or graphics).
- Follow safe workplace practices, including participation in applicable education sessions, using appropriate personal safety equipment and reporting accidents, injuries, and unsafe situations.
- Report suspicious activities to your supervisor.
- Recognize that you have a responsibility to adhere to the rules and procedures of the Voluntary Organisation. Failure to do so or failure to satisfactorily perform your volunteer assignment may cause you to be subject to dismissal.



# NOTES

This section contains a series of horizontal white lines on a light gray background, intended for writing notes. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page.





The aim of this Handbook is to help both the Voluntary Organisations which are planning their project overseas as well as the individual volunteer who is preparing to join a volunteer project overseas.



OVERSEAS VOLUNTARY  
WORK HANDBOOK **2017**