

## But why pay to do volunteer work?

*HorizonCosmopolite elaborated this complementary document thanks to various comments and past experiences in order to clarify certain topics and to contribute to a constant improvement of its services.*



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## But why do I have to pay to do volunteer work?

To this day many volunteers have asked us: "why, in addition to giving my time and efforts to participate in such an internship, must I pay an extra amount of money to spend time with one of your partner organizations?"

**First of all**, we would like to remind you that HorizonCosmopolite does not claim to do humanitarian help, cooperation or international development. You will realize if you carefully read our mission that we are an organization that offers Canadians the opportunity to experience a cultural immersion abroad meanwhile developing new abilities and gaining knowledge. In other words, we develop educational internships that profit above all our participants rather than the local population. If the local populations do benefit from the volunteer involvement in our programs, it's a plus, but that is not HorizonCosmopolite's initial goal. Also, our website clearly indicates that our programs are open to everyone and do not consider your experience in the field related to the internship, your age and your travel experience.

**Secondly**, it is necessary to try to understand the North-South dynamic because our programs usually take place in developing countries. If our partner organizations had the capacity to pay you for the work you achieve, they would much rather hire local workers, considering that most of these countries know a high and chronic unemployment rate. It would be unreasonable to employ foreigners when an important part of the population lives under the poverty line (less than \$1 US per day). It is also practically impossible to obtain a work visa in the countries we collaborate with. So to pay you for your implication such as that that HorizonCosmopolite proposes would be just "illegal".

**Thirdly**, we believe it is important that our participants ask themselves the following questions. Ask yourself when you do volunteer work in Canada: Do the organizations pay for my meals? Transportation? Accommodation? The answer is most often: no. In that case, why would it be any different for our partners in countries a lot poorer than us?

You must also remember that for most of you, your implication will be of only a short duration and by the time you are functional it is already time to leave. You are simply a participant contributing to the progress of a project that was already functioning when you got there and that will pursue itself once you move on, with or without the collaboration of volunteers. To bring tangible and sustainable changes, it takes more time, and often, more money.



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In a fourth case, you must realize that although you can be of a substantial aid to our partners, you may also be a source of problems and stress. Some of you will be sick, and maybe even need to be brought to a hospital. Others will find it hard to adapt to their new environment (culture, customs, food, host family, etc.) or will miss their family, boyfriend, girlfriend, little brother, big sister, etc. These are all concerns that the organizations will have to deal with.

Another important element must be taken in account by the participants: the positive or negative “traces” that each one of you will leave behind. When you find yourself placed in a new cultural environment, there are many cultural factors that you do not control and that can cause certain situations that the partner organization will have to deal with once you have left.

**Lastly**, the partner’s workload starts well before the volunteer arrives. Indeed, each one of our partner organizations must make sure that they understand the participant’s expectations and goals all the while considering the project’s context and the environment in which the volunteer will be living. This first step is essential to guarantee adequate supervision that live up to the participant’s as well as HorizonCosmopolite’s expectations. The partner must also prepare the participant’s arrival in a host family and make sure he is picked up at the airport. Some of our partners being far away from the capital, this requires them to travel the day previous to the arrival to get there in time to greet the participant... and sometimes having to wait longer due to change of itineraries or delays.

## So why do foreign organizations receive international volunteers?

There are many reasons for organizations to receive international volunteers and these vary. Here are only a few:

- For cultural exchange;
- To sensitize people of the North to the realities of the South. In fact, some partners see the participants as “multiplier agents” who once they return to their country will have an impact on their surroundings and community;
- For money. The organizations often have very limited resources. Receiving volunteers brings them additional funds to accomplish their mission. This matter will be explained in the next section.

HorizonCosmopolite’s partners are familiar with our mission and our educative approach (cultural exchange). It is with this understanding that they accept to work with us, receive our volunteers and help us achieve our mission.



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For HorizonCosmopolite, work is not the objective but the tool permitting our participants to experience a cultural exchange and open their horizons to the world. The organizations that receive you abroad know that our participants come from different backgrounds and do not necessarily have specific qualifications for the demanded involvement.

Where does the money that I pay to the host organization abroad go (participation fee)?

**First of all**, remember that the participation fee covers your food, accommodation and the supervision from the host organization.

**Secondly**, the participation fee has been established following discussions and negotiations between the two parties. It takes in consideration the work that needs to be done by the partner organization before, during and after your stay, the country's economical situation, the partner's location, the other projects available in the region, etc. We believe we have established fair agreements with each and every one of our partners for the amount you will have to pay.

**Thirdly**, be aware that the participation fee to pay abroad is non-negotiable. From the beginning you are informed of the amount you will have to pay on site to participate in the project and you commit yourself to do so to the host organization. This participation fee is on our web site and on the contract you have signed. If you have questions regarding these fees, do not hesitate to ask us and we will do our best to clarify the information. These fees cover the various expenses before your arrival, during your internship and once you have left.

More precisely, in most cases, a first part of the participation fee goes directly in the organization's budget to be invested in projects other than the one in which you will be participating (to pay for equipment, salaries, rent, etc.). In other words, this part consists solely as a grant to assure the well functioning or the organization's activities and its survival.

A second part is used to develop your project and for the supervision you will receive on site. Among other things it consists of:

1. Communications (e-mails and phone calls) with HorizonCosmopolite to set up the internship.
2. Preparation time necessary to organize your internship:
  - Meetings with the local people of the organization, with the target population or



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- groups (before - after);
3. Identification and preparation of the tasks you will have to execute.
  4. Host families management:
    - Recruitment of appropriate host families;
    - Training of the host families on themes such as security, food, cleanliness, multicultural relations, etc;
    - Meeting with the family after your departure.
  5. Supervision during your internship:
    - Greeting at the airport;
    - Orientation on the project before you start working;
    - Support in case of health problems;
    - Relations with your host family;
    - Follow-up of the development of the internship (tasks to do, work relations with your local colleagues and the ones abroad, etc.).

Finally, a last part of the participation fee is used to pay the host family or the fees related to your accommodation and food. The proportion attributed to these expenses varies from one organization to the other. The amount allocated to the host family is pre-determined before your arrival and this agreement has been established between the family and the organization, taking in consideration the country's economic situation and the tasks required to receive you.

**Fourthly**, the participation fee must usually be paid once you arrive on site. However, in some cases, following the demand of the organization, it may be required that the fee be paid beforehand to HorizonCosmopolite who will then transfer the money to the organization abroad. HorizonCosmopolite and the partner organization will meet the costs of the bank transfer.

**Fifthly**, HorizonCosmopolite is not involved with the management of the partner's finances. It is up to them to manage the money you will pay them and to decide how much is to be distributed to the host families, to the employees and how much is to be used for the functioning of their activities. Our partners are legally constituted organizations that have full autonomy of management.

**Sixthly**, the participation fee that you will pay upon arrival must cover the exact number of days of your stay. To avoid any misunderstandings, you must plan in advance and let the partner know at the beginning if you wish to travel at the end of your internship.



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If you decide to put an end to your internship sooner than planned, the fees will not be reimbursed as you will have broken the agreement. However, if you must leave in advance for medical reasons, the host organization will reimburse the amount for the time period that was not used.

If you wish to take a holiday during your internship, you will have to discuss it with the partner organization to see if the fee you have paid can be reimbursed or not. For example, if you leave some personal belongings with your host family because you know you'll be returning, it is comprehensible that you will have to pay as the family cannot rent out your room during your absence if your things are there.

If you choose to extend your stay in the village with your host family, you must obligatorily continue paying the participation fee to the organization that received you, even if you do not continue the volunteer work.

**Seventhly**, you commit yourself to stay with the host family to which you were assigned to by the partner organization for the whole length of your stay. If you do not do so, you will have to pay the additional fees stipulated in the contract. Only a written agreement between the host organization and the participant can permit one to change families without any extra charge.

## What is the registration fee paid to HorizonCosmopolite used for?

The organization of these programs naturally includes expenses both in Canada and overseas. To assure we offer you an adequate internship that meets your expectations, HorizonCosmopolite maintains a close relationship with each and every one of the partner organizations. On the one hand, we travel abroad several times a year to visit our partner organizations, witness the projects' evolution, evaluate the repercussions and sometimes resolve participants' problems. Back in Montreal we remain constantly in contact (e-mail, telephone, fax, etc.) with the organization to keep a follow-up of the projects, coordinate volunteers' internships and sort out all logistics matters. There is also a pre-departure orientation day for all the participants. Furthermore, we meet each person individually an unlimited number of times in order to answer any possible question or doubt and to help to the preparation of the trip. Since we have visited the project locations and offer personalized counseling we are able to recommend the internship most adapted to your needs and interests. You will note that our fees are relatively low in comparison to other organizations



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that offer similar services.

The registration fee covers the following services:

1. A program is found and established for you in a secure area.
2. A program is guaranteed. If we cannot place you, you will be reimbursed.
3. We offer a counseling service to help you in preparation for your trip. This includes:
  - A pre-departure orientation day (if you register 3 months before the departure date).
  - Advice regarding plane tickets, insurance, visas, security in the host country, information on your host country, and any other questions you may have.
  - Our service is personalized and unlimited anytime you may have questions before your departure.
  - Once registered and accepted you may speak with or meet a past participant.
  - You are given a 90 page Participant Guide Book full of helpful advice for before, during, and after the program.
4. Our programs are flexible and varied. YOU choose:
  - The duration of the program (within the indicated duration timeframe).
  - The type of program and the host country.
  - Your date of departure.
5. Our selection process is simple and with few restrictions.
6. Abroad:
  - You will be received in a secure area and you will have a contact person in case there is a problem.
  - In all programs accommodation is arranged for you. There will always be infrastructures where you can make yourself something to eat or food will be provided by a host family.
  - There is not a HorizonCosmopolite representative in all the countries we work in.
7. Following the program, you will receive the e-journal TERRE EN TÊTE put out every week with information on programs abroad, work opportunities, conferences, and other subjects of international interest.
8. You receive 10% rebate in any Tourisme Jeunesse store.

There are fees for our programs, but they ensure a certain structure and security while offering great flexibility in planning your exciting trip!



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## In conclusion...

HorizonCosmopolite works with many organizations around the world. Each partner organization is differentiated by its constitution, the members that are part of it, its culture and the country in which it is located. For this reason the operation's methods and the participation fee vary from one project to the other. We would like you to let us know if you have any questions or doubts before or during your internship. We want to avoid any misunderstandings and maximize the quality of your experience abroad. HorizonCosmopolite and its employees are always available for you and we will with great pleasure do whatever is possible to assure your total satisfaction.

