

Care Management Plan

Costa Rica



OVERVIEW

Company Mission

Our company mission is to make it the norm for young men and women from developed countries to live and work as volunteers in a developing country; they should work on projects which have a clearly favourable impact on host-communities. In this way, we will continue to create a multi-national community with a passion to serve and to inspire.

Care Programme Mission

Our Care programme mission is to provide sustainable educational support, care and protection to disadvantaged children and vulnerable groups to enhance their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development.

Background Information

Children and adolescents make up 37% of Costa Rica's population, of which 8% live in poverty.¹ It is estimated that 30% of school aged children do not attend school and 60% of teenagers leave education prematurely.² Child protection is a serious issue with 21% of reported domestic violence cases affecting children under 14 years of age in the form of physical and sexual abuse. There is slow progress in promoting early childhood development as only 5% of children aged 2-7 years receive services from the National Centre for Education and Child Nutrition and Comprehensive Care Centres (CEN CINAI) and 5% of children suffer from severe malnutrition.³

Partners

Projects Abroad Costa Rica registered as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in 2008 with the National Registry of Costa Rica.

We partner with various organisations in and around Heredia. These organisations include: Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social (IMAS – Mixed Institute of Social Help), Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica (National University of Costa Rica), Comité Cantonal de Deportes de Belén (Belén County Sports Committee), Municipalidad de Belén (Belén Town Hall), Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje (National Institute of Learning) and Ministerio de Educación Pública (Ministry of Public Education).

Our volunteers work at our partner day care centres such as Centro de Atención Integral Semillitas de Vida, Asociación Obras del Espíritu Santo, Saint Mark Little People Pre-School and Centro Infantil Luz Divina.

¹ http://www.unicef.org/costarica/overview_12394.htm

² <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTPA/0,,contentMDK:20207556~menuPK:435735~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:430367,00.html>

³ http://www.unicef.org/costarica/overview_12394.htm

GOALS

In order to work towards our Care programme mission, we have set the following goals to achieve in the placements where we send volunteers:

1) Improve English

Costa Rica receives an increasing number of tourists each year and it is now one of the fastest growing economic sectors of the country. Many visitors travel from the United States and Europe, making English a beneficial language to speak that improves job prospects. Learning English at a young age can greatly increase a child's language ability and interest. Through creating visual learning aids and conducting one-on-one lessons, our volunteers play an active role in improving the children's level of English from a young age.

2) Promote early childhood development

Early childhood is the period from birth to eight years of age. It is critical to a child's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.⁴ Early education and preschool programmes enhance children's language and maths test scores, behavioural skills and long-term educational attainments.⁵

Through assessing each child in physical, social, emotional and cognitive development with staff at our partner organisations, volunteers can highlight areas in which we need to provide additional support and attention. By identifying a child's strengths and areas for development, we are able to provide essential resources that enable the child to thrive. Our volunteers help achieve this through researching new teaching aids, introducing creative activities and ensuring each child is included in the activities.

3) Improve hygiene levels of the children

It is vital that good hygiene levels are promoted at our partner day care centres. Volunteers and staff carry out checks before meal times to ensure the placement is clean and safe throughout the day. Volunteers are also involved in educating the children by playing games about hygiene to improve awareness.

4) Improve the level of stimulation to each child

Many of the children grow up without one or both of their parents due to the impact of poverty. They are often left at home or in institutions with little stimulation or company. Children without parental care are at a higher risk for discrimination, inadequate care and abuse.⁶

Our partner organisations support disadvantaged families by providing childcare. By engaging children in frequent creative games, volunteers provide early exposure to activities that will increase their learning ability and strengthen their physical and social skills.

5) Improve the quality of life for those living with disabilities

The inclusion of people living with disabilities is mainstreamed into the policies, processes and mechanisms of the MDGs to ensure the participation of marginalised groups in society. The Costa Rican government actively encourages organisations to employ adults living with disabilities; however it is still relatively uncommon for those living with disabilities to be employed. By working with special education centres, volunteers introduce creative activities to help develop motor skills. By keeping a record system on the development of each child, their learning abilities and preferences, we can ensure that there is consistency in the level of support they receive.

⁴ [http://www.unicef.org/lac/Inequities_in_Early_Childhood_Development_LoRes_PDF_EN_02082012\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/lac/Inequities_in_Early_Childhood_Development_LoRes_PDF_EN_02082012(1).pdf)

⁵ http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-1099079922573/ECD_LAC.pdf

⁶ http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Children_and_the_MDGs.pdf

RESOURCES

- a. 70 (average) Care volunteers per year
- b. One x Projects Abroad Care Supervisor
- c. Myprojectsabroad resources (www.projects-abroad.co.uk/resources)
- d. Monthly workshops/ discussion sessions conducted by staff
- e. Guest speakers from various NGOs and volunteer-led workshops
- f. Books, stationery, games, PCs and Internet access in the Projects Abroad office Financial capacity for community work, volunteer support, etc.
- g. Community & Care group trips (three or more per year)

MONITORING & EVALUATION

- a. Regular feedback from partners including weekly volunteer/staff/placement meetings
- b. Onsite visits by staff
- c. Feedback from Projects Abroad staff
- d. Volunteer Workshops/ discussion sessions – attendance, feedback and significant outcomes to be tracked each week by staff
- e. Volunteer Debriefing forms and End of Placement Feedback forms
- f. Early childhood care and development: Overall developmental status of children recorded after six months. Analysed by placement, area (motor, social, cognitive) and age. Results are compared with international standards. Based on this data, more resources are focused on problem areas
- g. Children's Feedback: (In line with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – Article 12 regarding a child's right to participation)
- h. Annual Placement Evaluation Feedback
- i. Test results

LOCATION OF PLACEMENTS



Projects Abroad				
Care Programme - Costa Rica				
		INDICATORS	MONITORING (MEANS OF VERIFICATION)	ASSUMPTIONS
Company Mission: (the change we want to see in greater society)				
Our company mission is to make it the norm for young men and women from developed countries to live and work as volunteers in a developing country; they should work on projects which have a clearly favourable impact on host-communities. In this way, we will continue to create a multi-national community with a passion to serve and to inspire				
Care Programme Mission: (the change we want to see for the target group)				
Our Care programme mission is to provide sustainable educational support, care and protection to disadvantaged children and vulnerable groups to enhance their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development		2014 is the implementation and mind-set changing year. Head Office-led status reviews will take place every 3 months. We expect to have the foundations of the new Care programme in place by the end of 2014	1. Onsite visits 2. Placement staff feedback 3. Projects Abroad staff feedback 4. Volunteer feedback (DQs & EOPF) 5. Children feedback 6. Test results	1. Number of volunteers does not drop considerably 2. Number of volunteers with a good grasp of English does not drop considerably 3. Political and civil stability in the countries we work 4. No natural disasters that could affect our work
Goal 1:				
IMPROVE ENGLISH				
	Actions:			
1.1	For a minimum of 1 hour per week research and document new learning and teaching aids			
1.2	Each volunteer to produce at least 2 new learning aids each month			
1.3	One-on-one lessons			
1.4	Create visual learning aids on the placement walls and make sure these are updated every month			
1.5	Create a lead volunteer system where the experienced volunteer advises and mentors the new volunteers			

Goal 2:				
PROMOTE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT				
	Actions:			
2.1	Each volunteer to carry out at least 1 remedial class per month for those identified as slow learners			
2.2	For a minimum of 1 hour per week research and document new learning and teaching aids to focus on the 4 key areas of ECD			
2.3	Run 1 workshop per month for volunteers on early childhood development, especially attachment theory			
2.4	Introduce creative activities to help develop motor skills			
2.5	Ensure no child is left by themselves for a substantial length of time			
2.6	Create team games where all the children are included			
2.7	Create visual learning aids on the placement walls and make sure these are updated every month			
2.8	Engage children in regular games and activities to improve their attention span			
2.9	Introduce creative activities each day to help develop motor skills			
Goal 3:				
IMPROVE HYGIENE LEVELS OF THE CHILDREN				
	Actions:			
3.1	Each day allocate a time to check placement is clean and safe (no harmful object or hazards)			
3.2	Create and carry out a daily cleaning roster for each placement			
3.3	Each volunteer to create at least 2 games each month to make cleanliness fun			
3.4	Do basic hygiene checks before meal time			
Goal 4:				
IMPROVE THE LEVEL OF STIMULATION TO EACH CHILD				
	Actions:			
4.1	Design and initiate 4 mini-campaigns per year			
4.2	Engage children in regular games and activities to improve their attention span			
4.3	Introduce creative activities each day to help develop motor skills			
4.4	Create a rota for one-on-one remedial classes			
4.5	Engage children in games and activities to improve their attention span			

Goal 5:				
IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THOSE LIVING WITH DISABILITIES				
	Actions:			
5.1	Introduce creative activities to help develop motor skills			
5.2	Introduce a record keeping system for each placement and maintain it for each child on a monthly basis, including profile of child, learning ability, preferences, dislikes, etc.			