

Who hasn't once needed a visa either for business matters, to attend a conference abroad or simply for holiday purposes ?

Usually, obtaining a visa is just a simple administrative procedure. However the same is not the case for many volunteers from abroad who want to **volunteer** within Europe or the US. Very often their visa requests are refused or they can only get a visa after overcoming immense administrative and financial hurdles. We think that volunteers add an important dimension to the local communities during their service. The experience they get from their projects will also be of benefit to themselves and to their own communities upon their return.

European and North American countries do not recognise voluntary work as a valid reason for granting a visa.

We therefore request that :

- Volunteers should have the right to be legally recognised as a social group and this should be reflected in the national and international laws.
- Participation in international voluntary work through acknowledged organisations should be a legal reason for issuing a visa
- An international debate should be held on the international mobility of volunteers and its legal implications

WE URGE NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS TO CREATE A SPECIAL VISA FOR VOLUNTEERS : « THE VOLUNTEER VISA »