



International Medical Corps www.imcworldwide.org.uk

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IMC are a humanitarian relief organisation. They are unusual because they are willing to consider 'first timers' for overseas voluntary posts. The posts are funded on a local wage and flights are paid for by IMC. Placements last for anything from 3 months to 2 years. While many of their voluntary posts are for medically qualified personnel there are also opportunities for those with other, more general experience – for example a degree in development or a Masters in Human Rights.

- *Volunteers* with the latter qualifications can expect to help with a wide range of tasks. Many of the posts are in programme support. In this role volunteers will be acting in support of project managers or those submitting project proposals. Tasks undertaken include
- *Operations* – helping camp doctor overhaul medical services; help devise new layout and patient flow-system; organise cleaning crews and duties training.
- *HR* – Create national and refugee staff database; update and distribute country staff contact list; interview new staff and help write job descriptions; create a national staff leave calendar year
- *Reports* – Compiled draft DfID quarterly report; took minutes at internal meetings; wrote a 'success' story for country web site.
- *Translation* – Translated into French directorate report for country government; translated for staff in inter-agency security and coordination meetings.
- *Compound Duties* – Organised the food box, including financial, HR and menu issues; briefed new arrivals on running of the compound; acted as point of reference between national staff and expatriates.
- *Teaching* – created lesson plans and took English classes for groups of IMC national staff; taught IT skills on an ad-hoc basis to national staff

When applying for posts applicants should take care to stress how their experience (primarily) and qualifications equip them for the post. Clearly those with medical qualifications will be at an advantage but those with other skills such as accounting will also be make specific cases. However, posts do exist for those with more general backgrounds and applicants with degrees and master in development related subjects are encouraged to apply.

Previous international experience is essential. Applicants should be able to convince that they will be able to survive in the tough conditions they may find themselves in. So a bus tour of Australia may not be relevant but an arduous outback trek may be mentioned.

Some advice on CVs and applications

These are aid related, relatively short term postings. You will need to engage the attention of the reader quickly and therefore the first section needs to stress the relevant practical experience rather than your academic background.

If you are including a short profile then make sure this mentions the significant experience and organisations in your background.

Remember you are applying to organisations that have specific objectives and loose formulations about fighting poverty will not be enough. Be specific about the skills you are able to bring. Tailor these to the sector and role and organisation. For example the skill set for policy work will be different for that for aid work or development work.

Be clear about the assumptions you are making about the organisation and role and then double check them. This can often be a good reason to contact the organisation. Be aware of what the web site says but also be aware that sites are geared for raising money and are not necessarily that informative from a recruitment perspective.

Making the most of Voluntary opportunities

- Be aware that voluntary work is an opportunity and not just a way of clocking up time in an ngo.
- Your starting point must be what the organisation needs doing. There be willing and flexible.
- Much of what you take from the experience is simple observation and insight into the sector
- Speak out – bring ideas and energy.
- Ask if you want to attend meetings – remember that the organisation knows you are a volunteer and may not require you or ask you to attend things outside the voluntary job description

Jeff Riley – SOAS Careers Service.

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