

## Volunteering not 'voluntourism' with Raleigh International

15 August, 2007

Educational charity Raleigh International has spoken out in support of VSO's recent statement that some 'voluntourism' organisations may not be providing young people with the worthwhile gap years they are expecting. But rather than damning volunteer work overseas, Raleigh International says young people can make a positive impact with their year out – they just need to do their homework first.

By opting to take a gap year with a reputable organisation, young people can have the adventure of a lifetime, experience new cultures and remote parts of the world, and gain valuable skills preparing them for higher education and the workplace – all while making a tangible contribution to long-term, sustainable and worthwhile projects overseas.

A true pioneer of gap years, with more than 22 years of experience, Raleigh International recommends that young people should consider what they realistically hope to achieve from their year out. They should thoroughly research any organisation they are considering volunteering with and should not be afraid to ask questions.

'By doing the groundwork before they jump on an aeroplane, gap year volunteers can save themselves time, money and that sinking feeling that their year out has been nothing more than an extended holiday,' Raleigh International's Chief Executive Stacey Adams said.

'Raleigh International is a registered charity working in partnership with local NGOs, government agencies and local communities in each of its expedition countries, where permanent staff on the ground ensure all its projects are planned thoroughly, provide long-term benefits, and are genuinely needed,' Adams continued.

Five- and ten-week expeditions are currently run throughout the year to Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Malaysia, with a brand new expedition to India starting in February 2008. All potential volunteers are provided with comprehensive information about what their expedition will entail and how their individual contribution fits into Raleigh's long-term projects. All volunteers are also provided with structured training and Volunteer Managers supervise their personal development throughout.

Raleigh International's volunteers come from all walks of life and from countries around the world – including socially excluded young people from the UK and volunteers from the host countries. In addition, all volunteers fundraise to cover the cost of expeditions, which forms an integral part of the experience.

While the last thing on most students' minds will be homework when the A' Level results are published on 16 August, taking the time to research all of the year out options available will not only help them avoid the 'spurious' volunteer schemes VSO have warned against, but will mean the latest generation of gappers will bring back more from their time overseas than a suntan and dented bank balance.

Visit [www.raleighinternational.org](http://www.raleighinternational.org) or call Raleigh International on 020 7183 1270 for more information.

ENDS

**Notes to editors**

Educational charity Raleigh International is a leading expert in structured gap year expeditions and one of the key advisors behind the new British Standard BS8848 specification for the provisions of visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom.

Prince William helped Raleigh International hit the international headlines in 2000 when he took part in an expedition to Chile with the charity. The royal is just one of more than 30,000 to have taken part in an expedition, including young people from around the world and socially excluded young people from the UK.

Past volunteers and senior members of Raleigh International's staff are available for interview, case studies and high-resolution images can also be provided.

For more information about Raleigh International please contact Michelle Byrne on 01452 381 654 or email [michelle@fyrne.com](mailto:michelle@fyrne.com).