



Press Release Contact Information:

Henry DeVries
UC San Diego Extension
Director of Communications
9500 Gilman Drive # 01760
La Jolla, CA
USA, 92037
Voice: 858-534-9955
Fax: 858-534-7385
E-Mail: [Email us Here](mailto:henry.devries@ucsd.edu)
Website: [Visit Our Website](http://www.ucsd.edu/extension)

Top ten travel destinations and volunteer opportunities for global 'voluntourism'

Many international volunteers find working in situations of extreme poverty, different cultures and languages to be personally challenging. UCSD Extension offers online courses to help travelers prepare for a productive, safe experience.

/24-7PressRelease/ - LA JOLLA, CA, May 04, 2008 - Africa, East Asia and South America are the top desired travel destinations for Americans interested in volunteer opportunities and global volunteer service, according to a UC San Diego poll of more than 1,400 adults.

About 40 percent of Americans say they're willing to spend several weeks on volunteer vacations that involve volunteer opportunities, with another 13 percent desiring to spend an entire year. But where volunteers want to go and how long they want to stay is linked to which generation they belong.

"More and more people in all stages of life are thinking of becoming 'voluntourists' and international volunteers," says Bob Benson, director of the Center for Global Volunteer Service at UC San Diego Extension, the sponsor of the study. "People are looking to spend their vacations and retirement in meaningful ways that make contributions to others."

The research found stark differences between the Retiree Generation (age 65 plus), Baby Boomers (age 45 to 64); Generation X (age 25-44) and Generation Y (age 18-24). While 26 percent of Generation Y want to hop on a plane and help out in Africa or Europe, about 36 percent of retirees and baby boomers would choose staying in North America for their volunteer vacations.

UC San Diego Extension has created first-of-its-kind, self-paced online courses to help travelers determine if foreign volunteering is right for them and prepare them to have a productive, safe experience. Information is available at the UC San Diego Extension's Center for Global Volunteer Service website.

One online course that provides an overview of key issues related to both international and domestic volunteer opportunities is "What kind of volunteer service is best for you?" Taking this course can help a traveler determine what type of service is most appropriate. Topics covered include: self assessment, exploring volunteer opportunities, analyzing useful skills, understanding financial commitments and rules of volunteer organizations.

The top ten international desired destinations for volunteer opportunities are:

1. Africa - 17 percent
2. East Asia - 12 percent
3. South America - 9 percent
4. (Tie) Mexico - 8 percent
4. (Tie) Western Europe - 8 percent
6. Eastern Europe - 7 percent
7. Central America - 6 percent
8. Pacific islands - 5 percent
9. Australia - 4 percent
10. Middle East - 3 percent

How old you are also determines how much time people are interested in volunteer opportunities and volunteering on vacation. One week would be the right amount of time for 29 percent of Generation Xers and 23 percent of Baby Boomers. On the other hand, about 45 percent of Retiree Generation and Generation Y would like to help out for many weeks or an entire summer.

The research indicates that international volunteers want to connect with other people, not to organizations or governments in giving service. More than 84 percent stated that helping school children, families and people in poverty were their top

interest.

To gain deeper insight into the initial survey of 1,000 adults, UC San Diego conducted an online survey of 433 adults ranging in age from teens to retirees.

About 45 percent of Americans have considered volunteer vacations for themselves and 72 percent said they know someone who has been a global volunteer.

Benson helped start the Center for Global Volunteer Service because UC San Diego Extension saw a need for more collaborative grass-root approaches that match U.S. citizens of all ages with volunteer opportunities. Benson has firsthand experience with global voluntourism. In the late 1990s, he spent two years in the Peace Corps building greenhouse gardens next to village schools in the Andes of Bolivia.

UC San Diego is one of the nation's most accomplished research universities, widely acknowledged for its local impact, national influence and global reach.

UC San Diego Extension courses are open to the public - everyone is invited to attend.

We offer individual courses, certificate programs, and Masters degrees both in-class and online. We also offer contract classes at employer locations. All of our offerings are organized by Area of Study.