

Volunteer Manual

International Orthoptic Association

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Hello and welcome to the International Orthoptic Association's (IOA) Volunteer Program,

This handbook has been produced to help ensure that your volunteer experience for the IOA will be an enjoyable and rewarding one.

The importance of volunteers to the IOA cannot be overestimated. The valuable services that we deliver throughout the globe are only made possible through the efforts of our volunteers who, like you, willingly give up their time to make a real difference to other people's lives. Our volunteer faculty are the heartbeat of our programs abroad.

Inside this handbook you will find important information about the policies and procedures of the IOA Volunteer Program and our mission and objectives. You will learn about the range of interesting activities in which volunteers are involved, and what you personally can expect as a volunteer. All IOA volunteers are responsible for reading and understanding the policies. These policies have been prepared to define procedures that affect the relationship between the volunteer and the Association. The IOA retains the right to change, modify, suspend, interpret or cancel, in whole or in part, any policies of the Association.

The IOA is recognized all over the globe for promoting the orthoptic profession and the education of orthoptists in low-resource countries where the profession does not yet exist. By choosing to join the IOA Volunteer Program, you have joined a global network of caring orthoptists dedicated to educating orthoptic professionals. Thank you for choosing the IOA and welcome aboard!

Mr. Jan Roelof Polling
IOA President

2. Mission of the IOA Volunteer Program

Our mission is to provide sustainable solutions for quality allied health eye care for those in need around the world, by providing orthoptic care support to existing or visiting eye care teams and by orthoptic education of locally based eye care professionals. The IOA Volunteer Program honors the following principle: to assist populations in low resources countries where eye care is not readily available without any regard to race, religion or political affiliation.

3. Statement of The IOA's Commitment To Volunteerism

The IOA is **committed** to creating a warm, safe, and inclusive environment where the unique gifts of **volunteers** are recognized and nurtured and where dedicated efforts and resources support meaningful **volunteer** opportunities.

4. The IOA Volunteer Role



WHO WE NEED?

The IOA recruits qualified orthoptists to volunteer in projects in developing countries. All our volunteers bring professional abilities, practical experience, as well as a commitment to and concern for the patients they help.

Our volunteers

- triage patients for pathology and refer for care
- provide direct patient care and clinical supervision
- coordinate eye care in hospitals and clinics
- coordinate vision screening programs
- train community health care workers, local allied health and ophthalmology personnel

5. Requirements for Volunteering

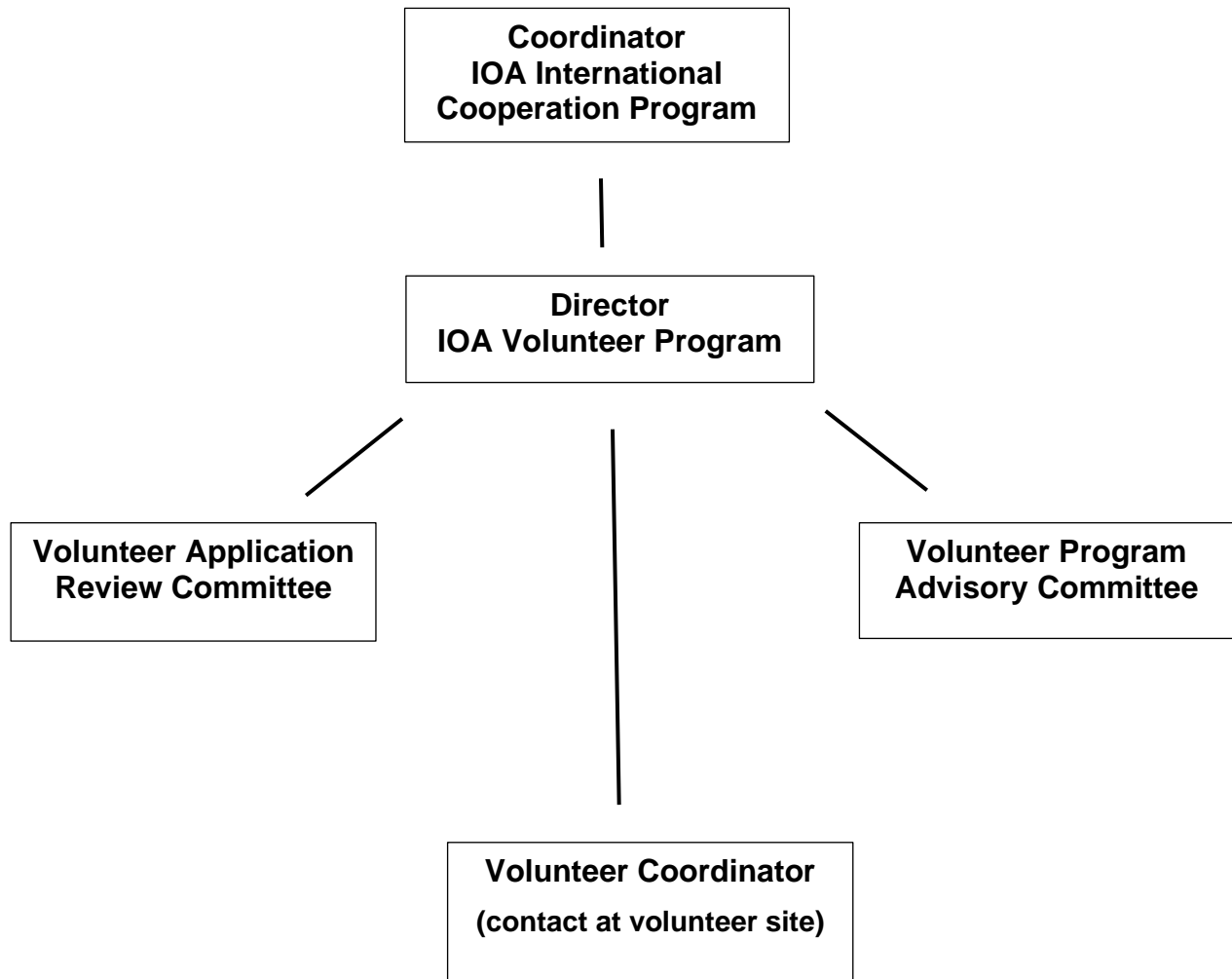
Role Requirements

- full and current registration/certification
- minimum two years relevant post-qualification work experience
- available to volunteer for a minimum of two weeks
- experience assessing and providing orthoptic management for adult and pediatric patients

Desirable Experience and Other Skills

- experience educating, training and managing others
- relevant experience in ophthalmic examination techniques
- qualification and experience in expanded orthoptic practice
- knowledge of other languages
- strong teamwork skills
- flexibility and openness to working in different countries
- relevant travel or work experience in a developing country

6. Volunteer Program Organizational Chart



7. IOA Volunteer Code of Conduct

Volunteers are an integral component of the International Orthoptic Association's (IOA) success. The IOA benefits greatly from the time, expertise, wisdom and enthusiasm its volunteers bring to the fulfilment of the organization's mandate. Through this Code, the IOA aims to assist volunteers by setting clear expectations for behaviour and performance. The fundamental principle of this Code is personal responsibility for professional conduct, consistent with the standards of professionalism long espoused by the IOA.

The following standards of conduct are meant to supplement good judgement. The list of situations described is not exhaustive but representative of common circumstances that may arise where additional information may help clarify expectations or guide behaviour. If a volunteer has any questions about these standards, he or she is encouraged to contact the IOA Director of Volunteers for guidance.

PROFESSIONALISM

The IOA Volunteer work is to be guided by the IOA and OCE "Orthoptic Code of Ethics: Standards of Professional Behaviour" — particularly the duty of the orthoptist to provide services that fall within her/his scope of practice, level of competence, considering his/her level of education or training and recent experience and in accordance with their national requirements of registration, licensure or certification. The Orthoptic volunteer will comply with the duty to practice based on best available evidence and professional consensus. Orthoptists involved in the education of students have a duty to deliver the highest standard possible in both academic and clinical aspects to ensure professional competencies taught are achieved. They are also committed to safeguarding patients' rights to autonomy, confidentiality, and informed consent. Finally, they will respect the dignity of patients and their students, which includes respect for their cultural and religious beliefs.

RESPECTFUL CONDUCT

Volunteers must treat with respect all patients, students, staff, and fellow volunteers with whom they interact while conducting the IOA's business. Harassment, discrimination or other behaviours that compromise the dignity and self-worth of others cannot be tolerated, and will be addressed promptly, in confidence, and in accordance with standards of due process developed by the Association. The IOA expects all staff and volunteers to abide by Human Rights codes.

PERSONAL GAINS

Volunteers must not use their status as an IOA volunteer to obtain personal gain. IOA volunteers should neither seek gifts, payments, services, fees, special valuable privileges, pleasure or vacation trips, accommodations or loans from any person or from any organization or group related to their volunteer placement. The acceptance of gifts, hospitality and other benefits is permissible if they are infrequent and within the normal standards of courtesy or protocol, arise out of activities or events related to the official duties of the volunteer, and do not compromise or appear to compromise the integrity of the work concerned or the IOA.

PRIVILEGED INFORMATION

Volunteers must not use for their own purposes, including financial gain, or disclose for the use of others, information obtained as a result of their volunteer role with the Association (for example, lists of sponsors or suppliers). This applies both during and after the period in which the individual is an IOA volunteer.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Many IOA volunteers fulfill multiple roles; thus, avoiding conflicts may not always be possible. This fact makes real or perceived conflicts of interest a reality of the IOA's working environment. As a result, the appropriate management of conflicts is a primary concern of the IOA. To ensure the appropriate management of real or perceived conflicts, volunteers are asked to disclose any relationships, contracts, transactions or activities, whether existing or proposed, that would create, or appear to create, a conflict between

their personal, professional or other private interests and their responsibilities to the IOA. This request to disclose is reinforced with the invitation to accept a volunteer role and before each volunteer activity.

CONFIDENTIALITY

At all times, the privacy and dignity of students, patients, donors, and staff will be respected. Volunteers may have access to information and documents relating to clients, donors, volunteers and staff that are private and confidential in nature. Reasonable care and caution will be exercised to protect and maintain total confidentiality. Volunteers will not read records or discuss such information unless there is a legitimate purpose.

OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Volunteers are encouraged to promote the IOA. When communicating officially and unofficially on matters of direct interest to the IOA or about the nature of their IOA Volunteer work (including through social media such as blogs, Twitter, and Facebook), volunteers must make every effort to protect the integrity and reputation of the IOA. For additional guidance, volunteers should:

- Share information that is in the public domain and other information not designated as confidential to promote dialogue about IOA initiatives.
- Separate personal and other professional opinions from their IOA volunteer role
- Be careful to not commit the IOA to any action or initiative unless approved by the Association.
- Respect colleagues, staff and other eye care professionals by avoiding derogatory comments.

Volunteers should not approach the press about IOA volunteer activities on their own accord without prior approval from the Association and or the Volunteer Site authority.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Any intellectual property developed by the IOA for its Volunteer Program (for example, guidebooks, training resources, promotional materials) is the property of the Society.

CODE BREACHES

Volunteers who know of, or suspect, a breach of this Code are asked to report this information to the IOA President or Director of the IOA Volunteer Program. All complaints or suspicions of misconduct will be reviewed in accordance with the process for addressing Volunteer Code of Conduct Concerns and Complaints.

8. Getting Started – Becoming A Volunteer

To become an IOA Volunteer you will need to:

- Complete online application form found on the IOA website
 - Submit a Letter of Motivation (1 page maximum)
 - Submit a copy of your licensure/registration and or certification
- * All documents are mandatory. Incomplete applications will not be considered.*

You will receive an automatic response confirming that we received your application. Please **contact us** if you do not receive the automatic response within 24 hours.

We screen applications for suitability for volunteering. All applicants will receive feedback within six weeks.

9. Interview & Screening

If your skills and experience meet the IOA's Volunteer Program needs, you will participate in an in-person or online interview to discuss your interests and our volunteer projects.

Following the interview, you will complete any required screening (i.e. police check etc.) and we will verify your references.



10. Field Assignment

Upon successful completion of the interview and screening you will be registered in our pool of available volunteers and we will work to match you with an appropriate IOA project vacancy as our need for volunteers arise.

11. Trip Costs

The sites IOA volunteers travel to offer a varied menu of supports for the volunteers depending on their ability. Some sites will be unable to offer any support towards a volunteer's travel, while others will be able to offer accommodation, meals and/or the cost of the flight. When you are offered a field assignment the Volunteer Director will outline any costs and supports available so the volunteer can decide if s/he is able accept the posting.

Potential costs may include:

- International and Domestic flights
- Passport fees, visa fees, and transit fees, including baggage or overnight accommodations/meals while in transit
- Required or recommended insurance
- Vaccinations and medications common for travel

Some volunteers engage in personal fundraising to cover the costs of their travel. Let us know if you are engaging in fundraising and need our assistance.

12. Personal Health and Safety When Volunteering

Jet Lag

If you are flying across several time zones you may experience jet lag. The effects include: tiredness, headache, irritability, difficulty concentrating, loss of appetite, and other gut disturbances. Some of these effects are due to the stresses of flying, like dehydration and immobility, while others are the result of having to set your body clock to a new time.

How to reduce the impact of jet lag:

- On the plane set your watch to the new destination time and adjust your schedule to this time.
- If it is daytime on arrival, get active and don't give yourself the chance to doze off.
- Eating is a potential time-setter, so try to take all your meals at the appropriate new time.
- Try to stay awake until at least a reasonable bedtime. If you can't keep your eyes open take a short nap.

Physical health risks

These will vary depending on the country in which you are working. Ensure that you have sought medical travel advice and received appropriate vaccinations and/or anti-malarial medication. It is strongly advised that you consult a health professional or visit a travel clinic at least 3 months before your trip as some vaccinations need to be spread out over time. You may have to pay for some vaccinations. If you receive certain vaccinations, such as Yellow Fever, ensure that you bring any supporting documentation with you.

If you have a medical condition, please ensure you bring an adequate supply of your medication. Do inform your IOA Volunteer Director of any existing

medical conditions before you travel. This information is necessary so that, should an emergency arise, assistance can be given easily. All information provided to the IOA Volunteer Program Director will be kept strictly confidential. Carry a card on your person, in the local language, that identifies any chronic illnesses you have, blood type, allergies and your medications. Wear your medical alert bracelet on your trip.

Volunteers with Disabilities

Each country has its own standards of accessibility for persons with disabilities. Many developing countries do not legally require accommodations for persons with disabilities. Please make the IOA Volunteer Program Director aware if you are mobility-impaired and require accommodations. All information provided to the IOA Volunteer Program Director will be kept strictly confidential.

Water and Food Safety

Contaminated food and water are two of the most common causes of diarrhea and can also cause Hepatitis A and Typhoid Fever. Food should always be thoroughly cooked and served hot. Leftover food must be handled with great care in a tropical climate. As soon as the prepared dish is cool enough, it should be put in a well-functioning fridge for a maximum of two days. Food poisoning is the result of bacteria growing in food and usually becomes evident a few hours after eating. It is characterized by the sudden onset of profuse diarrhea and vomiting and sometimes fever. It usually does not last long, 1-2 days at the most, but the weakness may persist a little longer.

In a tropical climate, try to avoid buffet meals in restaurants and hotels, as there is a high risk of food poisoning. It may be difficult to know how long food has been standing in the heat and sometimes hygienic standards are not adequate.

Drinking water should be boiled and filtered or disinfected with special water purifying tablets. When using a water filter remember to clean it regularly according to the instructions. Remember to carry safe drinking water with you when travelling. Hot drinks like tea and coffee are safe. Milk and cream (including ice cream) should be avoided unless you know they have been pasteurized.

Generally, increase your intake of water in hot climates, especially if you have diarrhea or fever. Adding ORS (oral rehydration salts) to the water can be beneficial in hot climates where salt is lost through sweating. In hot climates, you need to increase fluid intake substantially to prevent dehydration

To avoid picking up any bugs or infections through food or drink, we recommend that you do the following:

- Drink only bottled water. Always ask to open the bottle yourself in restaurants, checking that the seal is in place. If in doubt stick to carbonated water - and make sure it fizzes.
- Use bottled water for cleaning your teeth. Don't open your mouth and drink water in the shower.
- Order drinks without ice and avoid roadside food vendors selling ice cream and unwashed fruit.
- Eat early if you have a buffet that has been sitting out for long periods during the day - food kept warm under food lamps can be a source of food poisoning and bacteria.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk, shellfish, soft cheeses, raw or under cooked meat and lukewarm food.
- Never use communal, damp towels. Use disposable paper towels, hot air, or leave to air dry.
- Eat raw vegetables and fruit that can be peeled
- Avoid lettuce or vegetables that cannot be peeled. They should be avoided.
- Carry anti-bacterial wipes or hand sanitizers as you may have limited sources for cleaning water and or soap for hand washing
- Avoid the use of swimming pools in low resource countries as the chemical and bacteriological composition of the water is often unsafe.

Mental Health

Volunteering overseas can be stressful and may come with emotional challenges. It is important to talk about your experiences, both whilst away and when you come back. Seek professional help if you are having trouble adjusting to your return home.

Security

Common sense is the best approach to personal security. Do not carry large sums of money or extremely valuable items. Carry personal items safely i.e. do not carry your camera around your neck and do not wear overly expensive items such as jewelry or watches. Be careful with your mobile phone, it is often prudent to travel with an 'old fashioned' Nokia and leave your smartphone at home, or at least keep it for use in your accommodation or workplace.

Ensure you are aware of any areas that should be avoided in the country to which you are travelling and ensure you follow any safety procedures suggested by the organization for whom you are working. It is sensible to familiarize yourself with emergency exit routes in your accommodation and any specific safety advice such as the protocol to be followed in the event of an earthquake.

Personal Safety

Below are some tips for when travelling abroad:

- Dress conservatively.
- Do not wear expensive looking jewelry (even if it's fake!).
- Conceal essential valuables and documents.
- Travel with a photocopy of your passport/documents.
- Lock your luggage away.

- Avoid having your home address or nationality prominently displayed on luggage.
- Be vigilant when out on the streets and abide by local laws and customs.
 - Seek advice from your host as to where it is safe to visit locally and ensure someone always knows where you are
- Do not bring valuable items or large amounts of cash on to the volunteer site.
- Do not leave your cash or belongings in someone else's care.

Infectious Disease Outbreaks

The IOA Volunteer Program will not send volunteers to countries where known infectious disease outbreak situations are occurring. Always use universal precautions when examining patients and use personal protective equipment as required. Sinks with clean water sources and soaps or hand sanitizers are not always readily available in countries with limited resources. It is advisable to travel with hand sanitizer, wipes to clean equipment and personal protective equipment such as gloves and masks.

Register Your Travel

Many countries allow their citizens to register their travel with their government. We strongly encourage you to register any trips abroad you take with your government to ensure they have the ability to notify you of any emergencies and security risks that occur abroad, offer you consular support, or inform you of an emergency at home.

24/7 Support

You will be supported 24/7 during your volunteer placement by your Volunteer Coordinator at the volunteer site and by the IOA Volunteer Program Director abroad. Always carry a mobile phone and have both their phone numbers in your contact list.

Awareness of local culture and customs

An awareness of the local culture and customs will help to ensure you do not accidentally cause any offence. It will also help to prevent drawing any unnecessary attention to yourself and will help to keep you safe. You will receive some pre-trip information on the relevant history, culture, customs, economics, politics, environment of the area, languages used and resources available at the host volunteer site from your IOA Volunteer Director prior to your departure.

Political and Religious Sensitivity

Before traveling consider erasing any sensitive photos, comments, or other materials from your social media pages, cameras, laptops, and other electronic devices that could be considered controversial or provocative by local groups.

Be aware that many countries have laws that restrict religious expression. These laws may be applied more or less severely to foreign visitors. These restrictions could include such items as: wearing religious symbols, speaking to others about your beliefs, possessing printed religious material, visiting religious sites if you are a woman, public or private prayers etc. Engage in practices that are culturally and legally appropriate.

LGBTI Volunteers

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) volunteers can face unique challenges when volunteering abroad. Laws and attitudes in some countries may affect safety and ease of travel. Legal protections vary from country to country. Many countries do not legally recognize same-sex marriage. More than **seventy** countries consider consensual same-sex sexual relations a **crime**, sometimes carrying severe punishment. Please be advised that you should check on the laws for LGBTI of the country in which you are to volunteer. The IOA Volunteer Program will not **knowingly** assign a LGBTI volunteer to a country where s/he might be placed at risk. You can discuss any concerns you have regarding volunteering with the IOA Volunteer Program Director. All IOA volunteer personal information is kept strictly confidential.

Driving and Road Safety

Please note that IOA Volunteers are not authorized to drive a motor vehicle or transport patients while carrying out IOA volunteer activity. Transportation from your accommodation to the volunteer site will be by a vehicle with a designated driver arranged by the volunteer site or by foot if you are staying in accommodation that is close by the site and the Volunteer Coordinator determines such transport is safe.

If you are considering driving a vehicle when you are not volunteering please be aware that road conditions, laws, and driving norms in other countries can be quite different from those at home. Poor road maintenance, lack of signs, vehicle safety, and insurance coverage are just some things you should consider. And, remember to buckle up, no matter where you are. It is illegal to drive without a valid license and insurance in most countries. Check with the country you plan to visit regarding specific drivers licensing requirements.

Where possible ensure travel is in reasonably well-kept vehicles, use a reputable transport company, never get in an unauthorized taxi, always wear a seatbelt, and avoid travelling alone at night.

Money Matters

Before going abroad, notify your bank and credit card companies of your travel, and check exchange rates. For information about using cash, debit/credit cards, and ATMs overseas, read information about your destination.

On Your Return

When you get home do not forget that health can still be a problem, i.e. further change of diet etc. It is important to seek medical advice if you have been in a malarial area, have lingering bowel symptoms or any other health concerns. It is important to tell the GP what places you have been to and what activities were undertaken.

13. Packing for Your Trip

The below kit list will give you guidance when packing for your trip

Item	Packed it?
Airline tickets (having a printed copy in additional to an electronic version is advisable)	
Cash (most airports will have a money exchange)	
Credit card and debit card. Most airports will have a cash machine.	
Contact information for your credit card company and bank	
Passport (with photocopy kept apart from the original)	
Travel visa if required	
Insurance coverage information	
Vaccination Certificates	
Contact info for your country's embassy or consulate in the country you will visit	
Prescription medicines (carry essential medicines in your cabin baggage or person). Also, a good idea is to keep a separate list of medicines with your documents and a doctor's letter to accompany any medicine needed.	
Antibacterial (or alcohol-based hand gel)	

Insect repellent (containing 50% DEET)	
Anti-malarial medication – (check with a health professional/doctor if these are necessary)	
Altitude medication (where indicated)	
Permethrin-treated bed net	
Small first aid kit, band aides/plasters, topical antibiotic, paracetamol.	
Rehydration sachets, anti-diarrhea medication	
Sun protection (maximum factor)	
Toilet roll/moist wipes	
Small torch/flashlight (the wind-up ones save on bringing extra batteries)	
USB loaded with lectures (advisable to have copies on a cloud storage program and or emailed to yourself).	
Laptop	
Mobile phone	
Plug adaptor (only if bringing digital camera/phone charger etc).	
Camera, film/memory stick, batteries/charger	
Alarm clock/Watch	
Sun hat	
Ruck sack	
Own Water Bottle	

14. Passports & Visas

You are responsible for ensuring you are eligible to travel, both in relation to your passport and obtaining a visa (if required). Your Volunteer Program Director will be on hand to help with the provision of supporting documents for a visa if needed. The expiration on your passport must be more than 6 months after you plan to depart the host country. You should also ensure that you have enough 'blank' pages on your passport to factor in any on-arrival, departure stamps or visas you may require.



15. Insurance Requirements for IOA Volunteers

Required Insurance

1. **Malpractice insurance** for all orthoptists who will be volunteering in clinics or as part of screening programs. Check with your malpractice insurer to see if you will be covered internationally or if you need to acquire additional coverage.

Recommended Insurance

We recommend that all volunteers obtain the following insurance before traveling:

1. **Trip insurance or travel cancellation insurance:** This type compensates for lost, stolen, or damaged luggage while in transit and for unplanned trip cancellations in stated circumstances, such as a relative passing away.
2. **Medical evacuation insurance:** This type of insurance provides coverage if you must be transported to a hospital or even airlifted to seek special emergency care.
3. **Medical insurance:** This insurance ensures that you will not have to pay medical bills for medical expenses. Please consult with your current insurance carrier to determine if your personal health insurance covers you internationally and seek additional coverage if it does not.

16. Donating Equipment, Patches, Fresnels & Textbooks

Volunteers often bring new or gently used orthoptic and ophthalmological equipment, patches, fresnels, and/or textbooks and donate them to the eye care team at the volunteer site. Before your trip chat with your host Volunteer Coordinator to ensure you are donating items the site can use and that will not be wasted. Follow the World Health Organizations guidelines for donations of health care equipment found on the IOA website, at:

<https://www.internationalorthoptics.org/programs/exchange-volunteer-program/donation-of-equipment/?L=0>

All donations should be given to the Host Coordinator and nobody else. Donated items are retained by the affiliate and are to be used by all team members.

17. Gift Giving

The IOA discourages volunteers from giving gifts while engaged in or because of being engaged in volunteering. The very act of being a volunteer is a gift. Different cultures view the giving of gifts in different ways. Many cultures feel that to receive a gift means that a gift must be given in return. Most times, the person or family to whom a gift is given is not able to reciprocate. This results in disappointment and unhappiness by the very people you are intending to make happy.

18. Adherence to Local Requirements for Visiting Health Care Volunteers

The IOA Volunteer Program works with local government authorities and health institutions to comply with all regulations related to licensure, certification, and registration of visiting health care volunteers.

19. Adherence to Volunteer Site Policies and Procedures

IOA volunteers are expected to adhere to all policies and procedures of the institutions they visit. Your Volunteer Coordinator will familiarize you with any policies and procedures as they relate to infection control, confidentiality, and patient records.

Thank you

For volunteering