

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

## a) What is Leave for Change?

Leave for Change (L4C) is a program that offers wonderful professional and personal development to staff and also strong support to organizations in developing countries. The program enables employees from participating organizations and companies to transform part of their annual leave into a two to four week volunteer assignment in a developing country. L4C is a component of the Uniterra Program, a leading Canadian international volunteer cooperation program, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and implemented jointly by World University Service Canada (WUSC) and the Centre for International Studies and Cooperation (CECI).

If approved by their immediate manager/leader, employees leave their current place of employment without pay. PHC policy covers employment benefits/continuation for up to 20 days while employees are on without-pay leave, and then the employee is billed for the duration of the leave.

## b) What do Leave for Change volunteers do?

Leave for Change is all about capacity-building. This means volunteers train others in their field of expertise. Volunteers do not act as employees, but as advisors who transfer skills to local staff so as to build their host organization's capacity in a certain area. Country preferences of volunteers are taken into consideration but we can not guarantee that a volunteer will be sent to his/her preferred country.

## c) Can spouses / significant others participate?

No.

## d) What type of accommodation is provided?

Accommodations are consistent with local standards. They will be clean and basic.

## e) Can I make stopovers to and/or from the country I will be volunteering in? Can I extend my stay?

Uniterra will issue the airline tickets with no stopovers or extensions built in. We cannot accommodate special requests for layovers, special itineraries or extensions. **No exceptions will be made.** If the volunteer wishes to stopover or prolong his/her trip, s/he is responsible for any additional ticketing costs and arrangements involved, and can only make these changes once we have purchased the ticket. Furthermore, the insurance coverage provided by Uniterra covers the volunteer ONLY for the specified contract period. It does not cover the volunteer outside the agreed-upon volunteer contract period.

## f) What are the qualities of the successful volunteer?

Adaptability and the capacity to relate on a human level are key. Volunteers must have the required professional qualifications for their particular posting, but personal qualities and relevant experiences are also very important.

**g) To what are participants committing?**

Volunteers commit to giving time and a lot of themselves! Before departure, volunteers must participate in a 2-day training session, generally on a weekend. During their 2-4 week volunteer assignment abroad, volunteers share their knowledge, skills and expertise within a particular project with one of our overseas partners. After their return to Canada, volunteers create their own public engagement activities to raise awareness about the importance of international cooperation. They also take part in debriefings.

**h) Do I have to pay for part of the travel costs?**

No, because your employer has accepted to cover part of the costs, and Uniterra covers the majority of the other costs. PHC will give \$5,000 toward your travel costs. Uniterra covers: pre-departure training, visas, criminal record check, flights, lodging, in-country travel to volunteer location, basic health and evacuation insurance. You are responsible for: vaccinations and required medication (malaria), food, daily transportation and personal spending money.

**i) In case of accident or disease while I'm abroad, am I insured?**

Yes. Uniterra provides all its volunteers with an insurance policy that includes important items such as hospitalization and medical evacuation, reimbursement of medication and vaccinations.

**j) Is there an evacuation policy in case of serious problems in the host country?**

Yes. We have an office in each of the countries where Leave for Change assignments take place. There is an emergency protocol established in each country. Uniterra staff in the host country are responsible for assisting volunteers in case of serious social, medical or environmental problems in the host country.

**k) Once volunteers are selected, they must:**

- Complete in a timely manner all administrative steps required to build their file.
- Sign a volunteer contract with Uniterra and Leave for Change.
- Take part in a 2-day pre-departure training (weekend), in evaluations and in a debriefing after their return.
- Potentially share their experience with staff and colleagues.
- Commit to potentially being a public supporter of the program.

Good luck!

***If you have questions about the L4C Program, or Volunteer Posts, please contact:***

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***If you have questions related to the requirements for PHC Employees, please contact:***

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