

Peacebuilding Volunteer Teams **APPLICATION INFO**

Peacebuilding Team. A group of people with unique personalities, unique individual talents, unique cultural backgrounds and unique spiritual gifts who have agreed to synchronize their energies together *to build peace* among different people groups.

A *Peacebuilding Team* is made up of trained Peacebuilders Community volunteers. Normally, there are 15 people in each team and are organized into 5 Task Groups—

- :: Health & Security Group
- :: Logistics & Communications Group
- :: Formal & Legal Group
- :: Information & Documentation Group, and
- :: Media & Public Relations Group.

Each team is organized and led by a full time *Peacebuilding Team Leader (PTL)*. *PTLs* are carefully chosen and trained by *Peacebuilders Community's* experienced recruiters and committed human development professionals. They go through a rigorous selection process to be chosen as a leader. If they get through that, then they are invited to go through a 1-year *PTL Training Program*.

MISSION OF THE PEACEBUILDING TEAMS

- :: To promote lasting peace in a conflicted area by giving skilled, courageous support to peacemakers working in situations of conflict

- :: To inspire people's movements to discard violence in favor of nonviolent action as a means of settling differences

- :: To provide churches and communities with first-hand information and resources for responding to situations of conflict, and to urge their active involvement

- :: To interpret a nonviolent perspective to the media and the broader Philippine society



TASK GROUPS WITHIN A PEACEBUILDING TEAM

1. HEALTH & SECURITY GROUP

- :: To look after the physical health of the team. *Volunteers would be medical doctors, dentists, nurses, nutritionists and other health professionals.*
- :: To look after the team's security and navigation of the conflict area. *Volunteers would be mountaineers, adventure travellers, outdoor enthusiasts, local guides, and former combatants who are converted to non-violence.*

2. LOGISTICS & COMMUNICATIONS GROUP

- :: To make and distribute cell phone directory of team members, and to look after the transportation needs of the team during a mission trip. *Volunteers would be electronic communication enthusiasts, drivers, vehicle owners.*
- :: To look after food and housing needs of the team during a mission trip. *Volunteers would be food technicians, hotel-restaurant professionals, homemakers, travel-tourism consultants, bed-breakfast operators.*
- :: To manage the team's budget for the mission trip. *Volunteers would be accountants, business management people, banking-finance professionals, budget experts.*

3. FORMAL & LEGAL GROUP

- :: To make formal arrangements to meet with parties involved in conflict. *Volunteers would be respected leaders of various sectors, priests, pastors, teachers, NGO executives, people from the diplomatic community.*
- :: To advise the team when legal opinion is needed and to give para-legal training to the members of the team. *Volunteers would be lawyers, para-legal practitioners.*
- :: To choose from among themselves the official spokesperson for the team. *Volunteers would be teachers, priests, pastors, and other respected leaders of various sectors.*

4. INFORMATION & DOCUMENTATION GROUP

- :: To determine data gathering techniques for each of the team's fact finding mission. *Volunteers would be researchers, analysts, information technology enthusiasts.*
- :: To document relevant events during the team's mission trip using video- and still-cameras. *Volunteers would be photographers and video-camera enthusiasts.*

5. MEDIA & PUBLIC RELATIONS

- :: To facilitate the team members in expressing their views to the end that an official team statement is articulated. *Volunteers would be writers, journalists, academics.*
- :: To draft the team's news releases, official statements and position papers. *Volunteers would be writers, journalists, academics.*



VOLUNTEER CRITERIA

LANGUAGE. It is essential that volunteers are able to communicate fluently in the language of the project. Team members live and work constantly in these languages. Nearly all contacts, official and social, are made in the language of the project area. It is therefore necessary on a professional, personal and emotional level to speak the language well. For some projects, the willingness of candidates to learn other languages used in the area is also a requirement.

AGE. Applicants must be at least 25 years of age when they join the project. Exceptions are occasionally made for experienced volunteers in all the projects.

POLITICAL ANALYSIS. The ability to analyze political situations allows all team members to have greater insight into the workings of the project area's political system and encourages better foresight and planning in the team's decisions.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROJECT AREA. It is also essential to have a good knowledge of the history, political situation and culture of the project area.

NON-VIOLENCE AND NON-PARTISANSHIP. An understanding of the theory and practice of nonviolence is an important skill for anyone considering volunteering. It gives insight into the reality of conflict and *Peacebuilders Community's* role within that conflict. Potential volunteers must also have a thorough understanding of all the principles of *Peacebuilders Community's* work in order to become clear about non-violence and non-partisanship.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & DIPLOMACY. *Peacebuilders Community* volunteers need to be able to deal confidently with public relations since teams maintain cordial relations with many groups, including popular movement organisations, NGOs and governmental bodies. Team members have access to a lot of information that needs to be carefully analysed and utilised. In a conflict situation the emphasis on accurate information is paramount, as is a flow of up to date information within the team. Volunteers must be particularly aware of the possible consequences and harm resulting from misuse of information or breach of confidentiality.

REPORT WRITING & ADMINISTRATION. A large part of *Peacebuilders Community's* work involves the handling of information, so written and oral experience in writing reports, articles, etc. would be very useful. Experience of working with computers, creating and maintaining office systems and office management skills are also desirable.

MANAGING STRESS. The team often has to work through periods of extreme stress and tension due to a particular political situation, levels of work or interpersonal tensions. It is therefore crucial for each member to be able to manage their stress and work efficiently to meet deadlines under pressure.

LIVING AND WORKING IN A GROUP. In a *Peacebuilders Community* team you will be living and working very closely with a group of people. The size of the team varies but the ability to cope with and appreciate this situation is essential to *Peacebuilders Community* volunteers. In addition, team members live and work together in relatively small spaces; members must be able to function with the different rhythms and styles of the other members. Problems within the team can quickly begin to affect the quality of external work: to deal with such situations all volunteers must be tolerant of one another, their opinions and idiosyncrasies and be prepared to work to resolve interpersonal tensions.

FLEXIBILITY. The level and type of work being requested of the team often changes rapidly and with very little notice, thus an ability to learn quickly, take on board new ideas and concepts, read into situations and rapidly assess their significance are vital characteristics of a *Peacebuilders Community* volunteer.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY. Sensitivity and respect towards other cultures (enhanced by the experience of working in a substantially different culture) is an important requisite in facilitating team integration and building an understanding of how the project country works.

OTHER. It is necessary to take part in housekeeping duties (cooking, cleaning, etc). Knowledge of photography or IT, for example, would also be useful.



EMOTIONAL PREPARATION

At the core of *Peacebuilders Community's* work is the potential and real threat of violence. Before starting work with a team and with the help of the country group, each volunteer needs to seriously consider a series of personal and emotional questions. This process of raising self-awareness and openly acknowledging one's strengths and weaknesses is crucial preparation for the effective management of stressful situations volunteers. Volunteers will almost certainly encounter stressful situations. Without this awareness it can be difficult to address issues that may arise during a period on the team and this can be harmful both to the individual volunteer and the team as a whole.

The following areas should be considered:

- *personal limitations, fears and prejudices*
- *motives for and expectations of volunteering with Peacebuilders Community*
- *the role which PBI and the individual volunteer plays in the conflict*
- *your own political convictions*
- *your views on being non-partisan, especially given that many Peacebuilders Community volunteers come from very politically active backgrounds in their own country*
- *the possibility of your own death*
- *the possibility of torture*

Working with *Peacebuilders Community* can be very difficult emotionally. This can be especially true when a volunteer returns: the reverse culture shock can be intense for even the most experienced traveller.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

There is a period of preparation before joining a *Peacebuilders Community* team.

Step 1: Attending the Orientation Weekend. Potential volunteers will attend an orientation weekend in Davao City. These weekends occur four times a year. They are an introduction to the values, philosophy and work of *Peacebuilders Community* through workshops and informative presentations. At the end of the orientation weekend, candidates are offered the possibility of having a quiet get together with the trainers in order for candidates to self-evaluate their suitability in progressing to the next step of the training process. The Volunteer Evaluation Group of *Peacebuilders Community* then decides on the suitability of candidates to attend a regional training on the basis of the trainers' recommendations and the self- evaluation of the candidate.

Step 2: Attending Project-Specific Regional Training. In the second stage of the process, candidates will attend a regional training organized by the project of interest. Projects run two regional trainings a year. This 7-10 day training covers the history and current political situation in the project area, the conflict causes and *Peacebuilders Community's* role there. Applicants will explore possible situations in which team members may find themselves.

At the end of the training, candidates will be informed of their suitability to join the project.