



## Cross-Cultural Solutions

# About Cross-Cultural Solutions



At Cross-Cultural Solutions, we are building a world where people value cultures different from their own, are aware of global issues, and are empowered to effect positive change. We are committed to operating our volunteer programs around the world in partnership with sustainable community initiatives, bringing people together to work side-by-side while sharing perspectives, and fostering cultural understanding.

Cross-Cultural Solutions, a non-profit 501c(3) organization founded in 1995, is headquartered in New Rochelle, New York, with offices in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. Cross-Cultural Solutions operates in 12 countries with more than 300 staff members worldwide. Steven Rosenthal founded Cross-Cultural Solutions in 1995 and serves as its Executive Director. Cross-Cultural Solutions offer three types of Programs: Volunteer Abroad, Intern Abroad and Insight Abroad. Our Volunteer Abroad and Intern Abroad Programs are year-round, and normally range from 2-12 weeks. We have programs in Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Morocco, Peru, Russia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Thailand. Our Insight Abroad program is one week long and available in Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Peru, and Russia.

Cross-Cultural Solutions is a recognized leader in the field of international volunteering, with over 4,000 volunteers each year. We are also in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, maintain a partnership with CARE, one of the world's largest international humanitarian organizations and were integral in coordinating volunteers for the World Trade Center relief efforts after September 11, 2001.

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**"I wanted us to create something that's short term,  
but still meaningful."**

– *Steve Rosenthal, Executive Director & Founder, Cross-Cultural Solutions*

In 1994, Steve Rosenthal took the money he had saved as an engineer at AT&T and bought a one-way ticket to Nepal. Having spent all of his life in North America, he wanted to see the world and come to a greater understanding of people in other cultures. After traveling throughout Nepal, he continued on to visit India, Thailand, Indonesia, Uganda, Egypt, Kenya, Jordan, and Israel. He met hundreds of people, and began to learn of their lives, their struggles and their successes.

In this year of fascinating and fulfilling travels, one week stood out from the rest. While in Kenya, he got in touch with an old friend who was volunteering with the Peace Corps. Together, they traveled to a small village in the Turkana region. His friend had been working in the village where the community was in the process of building a medical clinic. For little more than a week, Steve lived and worked in the village. He helped build the clinic and became friends with many of the children for whom it was being made. After leaving the village, he continued to travel, but something about the village in Kenya stayed in his mind.

When he returned home to the United States, he told friends about the places he had visited and the scope of his travels. The more he told, the more he realized the true value of his time in Kenya. It was as if, for one week, he was no longer a tourist, but was just another inhabitant of the small village. The sense of accomplishment that came along with not only learning, but working on a project with social impact helped him feel at home there. For the villagers, the benefits were obvious – more hands meant the clinic would be built more quickly, while for Steve, the rewards didn't become clear until his return to the U.S..

In Kenya, Steve had the unique opportunity usually only available to people who have committed years to volunteering. The more he thought about his time in Kenya, the more he wondered if it was possible to organize this type of experience for others. He knew that creating an organization capable of providing this kind of experience would take more than just one person. While it was Turkana that had originally given him the idea, there was a vibrant community of grass-roots organizations in India that he believed would be open to his ideas.

## Getting Set Up

After only a few months back in the U.S., Steve left for Delhi. There, he brought together a number of local development experts who were capable of finding the areas in which volunteers would be the most helpful. Some talked about the need for better schools, while others talked about health care. Among the most enthusiastic of the group was long-time community organizer, Bela Singh. Bela's work with mentally challenged children in India had brought her in touch with hundreds of volunteers and dozens of communities for which volunteers were needed. Together the two decided to create Project India.



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Project India (which was soon re-named Cross-Cultural Solutions) provided a framework in which volunteers from around the world could take part in ongoing work within local communities in Delhi. One of the primary goals of the organization was to follow the lead of local organizers and provide them a helping hand without imposing outside ideas. At the heart of their philosophy was a respect for these communities. This meant creating an organizational model in which volunteers could integrate smoothly into the lives of local community residents who live and work there year-round. Project India's focus would be the facilitation of meaningful, sustainable community development that is locally designed and driven, while providing a safe and comfortable environment in which volunteers could get to know the country.

They began by setting up a Home-Base for the volunteers that would be appropriate for the cultural norms of the country. They recruited local staff that could guide volunteers through Indian life and give them greater access to the cultural resources available, and partner organizations interested in accommodating short-term volunteers. Before long, everything was in place and Steve returned to the U.S. to begin the second stage of the project, recruiting volunteers.

### Launching the Program

At first it was slow, but he pushed forward, knowing that people would eventually recognize the true value of a locally driven volunteer program. After nearly a year in which only a few volunteers were sent, word began to get out. Those who had gone were amazed at the depth of such a short experience, and began to tell friends. With the success stories of each new volunteer it became clear that this unique approach to volunteering was filling a valuable niche. By 1997, only three years after Steve had left on his initial trip to Nepal, programs in India were filling up with volunteers.

As interest in short-term volunteering grew, the organization grew with it. Steve began his search for a second location, and with Besa Amenuvor, a Ghanaian community leader, they created a second program in Ghana. There they partnered with organizations working on sustainable community development projects. With the success of this program came the realization that the Cross-Cultural Solutions' approach was one capable of crossing many borders, and a third program was opened in Peru. Soon there were many more programs, each locally run, which allowed Cross-Cultural Solutions an even greater opportunity to build on its mission of bringing people together to work and learn, fostering cultural understanding.

### Today

Today, approximately 20,000 people have participated in programs around the world, and each has had the opportunity to work closely with local people and experience volunteering in a new way. They have become part of a movement of volunteers who work and learn together, benefiting local communities through their work and gaining a new perspective of the world as well as a new-found knowledge of another country. For Steve Rosenthal, it has been the opportunity to give others a chance to experience what he experienced in Kenya.

## Press Quotes



Cross-Cultural Solutions



"Programs offer an opportunity to give something back during your time away from work and everyday life."

**THE WALL STREET JOURNAL**

"By plunging into grassroots projects, volunteers gain instant access to the local culture in a way that traditional tourists can only dream of."



"The volunteers get first-hand experience in some of the biggest problems facing this part of the world and they become part of the solution by getting involved."



"You might care for babies at one of Mother Teresa's clinics, discuss Western culture with local women, or teach children to speak English. Cross-Cultural Solutions offers short and long term programs that let volunteers make a difference."

**TRAVEL  
+LEISURE**

"For a growing number of travelers, volunteering in a remote corner of the world is the trip of a lifetime."

**San Francisco Chronicle**

"The globe is so much smaller now. Only an ocean away, there's a girl who fell asleep holding my hand."



Cross-Cultural Solutions

## Our Credentials



Cross-Cultural Solutions is a recognized leader in its field, sending thousands of volunteers overseas every year and having been profiled in more than 500 news outlets, including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *National Geographic Traveler*, *Travel + Leisure*, *NBC's The Today Show*, *CNN*, and the *ABC Nightly News*.

Cross-Cultural Solutions was granted Special Consultative Status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Through this status, Cross-Cultural Solutions was recognized as an expert in its field and may be consulted on economic and social issues by the United Nations.

In the US, Cross-Cultural Solutions is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and has registered with the following local, state, and national organizations:

\*Locally: The **New Rochelle Chamber of Commerce** is an association of business and professional people that serves as a catalyst to bring together economic and human resources in the City of New Rochelle, New York.

\*At the State Level: The **Attorney General's Charities Bureau** is responsible for supervising the activity of foundations and other charities to ensure that their funds and other property devoted to charitable purposes are properly used.

\*Nationally: Founded in 1912, the **Better Business Bureau** has worked to monitor business in the U.S. through the use of voluntary self-regulation and consumer education.

\*Nationally: The **Internal Revenue Service** is responsible for monitoring the finances of all U.S. businesses and has designated Cross-Cultural Solutions a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

In the UK, Cross-Cultural Solutions is a Registered Charity (No: 1106741) and a Registered Company Limited by Guarantee (No. 4991010).



## Cross-Cultural Solutions

Cross-Cultural Solutions has played an active role in the field of national and international volunteer programs for many years. Today, Cross-Cultural Solutions is a member of the top organizations that have had the greatest success in the promotion of volunteer work throughout the world.

\* **InterAction** is the largest alliance of U.S.-based international development and humanitarian non-governmental organizations.

\* The **International Volunteer Programs Association (IVPA)** is an alliance of non-profit, non-governmental organizations based in North America that are involved in international volunteer and internship exchanges.

\* **Connect America**, an initiative of the “Points of Light” Foundation, is a national movement of a diverse group of national, state, and local organizations working in partnership to leverage knowledge, resources, and volunteers to address social and community problems.

The **Nonprofit Coordinating Committee of New York (NPCC)** is a non-profit membership corporation with over 1,100 New York City 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. Their goal is to protect and help the city's non-profit sector.





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