



Frequently Asked Questions

The nature of the work of Skillshare International Ireland and its partner organisations means that almost every placement is different. At times, even the terms and conditions of your employment as a development worker may vary. However, some issues and concerns are the same for many applicants. So, although we can't tell you everything on this page, here are answers to some of the most **frequently asked questions**.

Who or what are Skillshare International Ireland partner organisations?

Partner organisations are local and national organisations that Skillshare International Ireland enters into partnership agreements with to support them in more effectively delivering their various kinds of services to the communities that they serve in the countries that Skillshare International Ireland works. Skillshare International Ireland partner organisations include local, provincial and national government departments and ministries, local and national non governmental organisations, community based organisations, workers' co-operatives, schools and colleges, community groups such as youth and women groups, community associations such as the disabled and the unemployed.

Are there age limits for development workers?

If you are over 21 and under 62 then you can apply to become a development worker.

How long are the placements?

For some posts, shorter placements are considered if it is felt that development workers can still make an effective contribution. In many cases though, two years is the average, to give you the chance to become fully effective and make a lasting impact.

Do I have to apply for a specific post?

No. Rather than applying for one particular post, you can make a general application in your skill area.

What if I'm interested in several posts?

That's fine. Just indicate on your application form if you feel there is more than one post you are suitable for.

Will my qualifications and experience be appropriate?

The range of skills we're looking for is incredibly varied, covering a wide variety of occupations. However, whatever your field of work, you need to have a combination of a relevant professional qualification and relevant work experience - normally at least two years. Evidence of skills in training others is also desirable.

Who will I be working for?

Your employer will be the organisation in Africa or Asia with whom we partner, not Skillshare International Ireland. However, Skillshare International Ireland country office staff will be there to provide support throughout your placement.

My partner wants to come with me. Is that possible?

Skillshare International Ireland welcomes applications from couples where both have relevant skills. Also, some placements will accept accompanying partners. Where this is possible, Skillshare International Ireland will generally pay for flights and medical insurance for your partner. You must make it clear though, when applying, that you wish your partner to accompany you. It is also important that accompanying partners have fully thought through the implications of the move they are making and attend the pre-placement preparation.

And my children?

In certain cases, Skillshare International Ireland is able to accept applicants with children. It must be stressed though that the decision to take children with you calls for careful consideration of many issues, such as living conditions and the education facilities available. As with partners, Skillshare International Ireland will generally provide flights and medical cover for accompanying children.

Who handles the pre-placement administration such as booking flights and arranging work permits?

This work is distributed between ourselves and yourself, but we will help you to get all the right documentation. But you will have to arrange for a work permit yourself and pay for it. We will support you with obtaining the necessary documentation from the partner organisation.

Will I receive training?

Development workers recruited through the UK office will receive pre-placement preparation to gain a better idea of what to expect while living and working in Africa and Asia. The preparation will cover issues relevant to all, such as the practicalities of day-to-day life and your likely status in the community and at work. You will also learn how your role fits into the activities of Skillshare International Ireland as a whole. In country or regional induction covering other issues is given on your arrival in your country of placement. You may also receive specialist training as needed.

If you are selected from the other non UK selection centres, you will not be required to attend the pre-placement preparation that is held in the UK. Instead, the necessary information will be provided to you during the in-country or regional induction when you take up your placement.

Do I need to speak another language?

English is widely spoken across most of Africa and Asia. However, wherever you're placed, learning to speak the local language will help you integrate with your colleagues and the local community more easily. Where necessary, we provide language training in country to get you started. e.g. in Mozambique, where Portuguese is the most widely spoken language, every development worker is given two months training in Portuguese at the start of their placement.

What and how will I be paid?

You will be paid either a local salary or an allowance. This will enable you to afford a reasonable standard of living in the country where you are working. For most development workers, the allowance is paid monthly in arrears and may consist of two payments, one in your country of placement and another in your country of residence, occasionally allowances are paid quarterly in advance. It will be paid either by Skillshare International Ireland, by your employer, or by a combination of both. Our benefits package includes other grants and allowances. These may vary and are not universal. More details will be available if you are selected.

What about National Insurance?

If you are eligible for inclusion in the state social security schemes of the UK, Skillshare International Ireland will pay contributions to that scheme for the length of your placement. For other nationals, we will pay you an equivalent sum.

Will I have to pay anything towards my accommodation?

While development workers are provided with rent-free accommodation and basic furnishings, your exact living arrangements depend on your placement. Most will have to pay for utility bills out of their allowance. And if they are on a local salary contract, receiving more than the standard allowance, they may have to pay some or all of the rent.

What's the accommodation like?

It can vary considerably from placement to placement, depending on whether you are based in an urban or rural location. You could be housed in a block of flats or find yourself traditional housing or sharing with a community. You might also have to share accommodation with another development worker, although you will always have your own room.

Will I get holidays?

Yes. We aim to ensure a minimum of 20 days leave per year in addition to the statutory holidays of the country you're working in. Most development workers use their holidays to fully explore the country they're working in. Bear in mind that Skillshare International Ireland covers the cost of flights at the start and finish of your placement only.

What if I fall ill?

The vast majority of development workers enjoy good health during their time in Africa and Asia. However, medical facilities to treat most conditions are available in all the countries in which we operate. If necessary, you will be transferred to another country or even repatriated to receive treatment. Your medical costs will be paid by Skillshare International Ireland, as will any inoculations you may need.

What's the role of Skillshare International Ireland country office staff?

As well as being responsible for the development and promotion of Skillshare International Ireland in the regions and own countries, Regional staff and Country Office staff provide advice and support when needed to development workers and their employers.

Will I receive support on my return once my placement is over?

If you were recruited through the UK office and you return to your country of residence, in order to help you resettle, you will receive a Welcome Home Pack which includes advice and useful information. You will be invited to a feedback session, which is an opportunity to reflect on your experience. You will also be invited to become a supporter. Supporters share experiences and have the chance to remain actively involved with Skillshare International Ireland. Opportunities may arise in future for people in the regions/countries that Skillshare International Ireland works to also become supporters.