

# Kaya Healthcare Placements Ethics and Best Practice Guide

At Kaya, we are delighted to be able to offer a range of quality healthcare volunteer and internship placements in Africa, Asia and Latin America that fall in line with best practice and ethical standards in international healthcare volunteering. We want to adhere to these standards and know that you, as someone who is either thinking about a career in healthcare, who organizes placements for those who are planning to join the sector or as a qualified professional in the field, will want to do so too.

In order to deliver this pledge, a research project was conducted by the projects team at Kaya that resulted in a set of guidelines, that we follow in the implementation of all Kaya healthcare placement. This document sets out the research conducted, the policies implemented as a result of the research and the impact that this has on those participating in international healthcare volunteering and internships through Kaya.

## What research did we do?

We consulted many resources to identify the common themes in ethical thinking and best practice within the international healthcare sector, with a specific focus on volunteering. We undertook online research, joined global health seminars, attended university lectures, read articles by leading thinkers in international development, consulted resources from leading education and healthcare providers, spoke to respected healthcare professionals and had in-depth discussions with our in-country partners. These include:



- Attendance at NHS Foundation Trust Conference on International Healthcare in Northumbria, UK, led by leading healthcare practitioners, professors and representatives from global and UK healthcare organizations
- Analysis of NAFSA Association of International Educators, Internationalizing Education for Health Professionals Report
- Review of NHS documents including Developing People for Health and Healthcare, Engaging in Global Health, NHS Viewpoint
- Review of Guidelines for Premedical and Medical Students in Providing Patient Care During Clinical Experiences Abroad, by the Association of American Medical Colleges
- Interview with Dr Amy Hughes, a leading emergency response healthcare professional and lecturer at Manchester University, England
- Participation in Unite for Sight and [www.globalsl.org](http://www.globalsl.org) webinars
- Correspondence with The Medical Defense Union Ltd, Gallagher Charitable Trust and the Medical Indemnity Protection Society

---

This breadth of resource was considered important for us at Kaya, dealing as we do with participants from across the world, as the best approach to account for different perspectives as well as enabling us to identify quality source materials from across Europe and North America.

### **What key ethical issues and best practice guidelines were identified?**

There were common messages regarding global health and the role of participants in overseas placements identified in the research, with most sources agreeing that there were many important benefits of placements abroad for both the participant and the project. Here are the main topics that we identified:

- Placements are an exchange and should not be regarded just as a training course, with a recognition that the local team and resources must always prioritize their responsibility to their patients and their clinic/ project over the instruction of or attention to the visiting participants.
- Preparation of interns and volunteers for placements is essential - there is often a lack of resources, shortage of staff, different treatment methods, consideration of traditional approaches, different diseases, cultural differences regarding treatment, the treatment of women and language barriers to contend with, to name but a few, and being prepared for these challenges helps participants better deal with them as they arise.
- Do no harm - volunteers and interns should only be allowed to participate in healthcare activities in which they are fully trained or qualified, and work alongside local healthcare professionals who understand the context. As is the case at home, patients are people not specimens and being in a different setting does not alter this. Interns and volunteers are often unqualified and are not permitted to treat patients or administer drugs and their role is more of an extra pair of hands for routine tasks and to observe more complex work.
- Legitimate placements should be vetted to ensure they are appropriate for volunteers and interns.
- “Show and tell” must be avoided – privacy, dignity and empathy for patients should exist at all time.
- If one participant takes part in a procedure it does not necessarily mean that it is acceptable for others to do so - they may have different training and experience which enables them to do so.
- Western approaches and solutions do not fit all situations- consideration of the local context is vital.
- Qualified medical professionals are required to register in many countries and if that is not possible then they should only undertake a capacity building and education role.
- Indemnity insurance should be acquired by qualified medical professionals - you may be covered for work at home (depending on the rules of the governing medical council or state) but not for overseas placements.
- Volunteers and interns should not be the primary providers of healthcare provision.
- Agreements should be put in place to set expectations of the local team as well as the volunteer/intern.
- Evaluation of the impact of a placement should take place both for the volunteer/intern and also the community and local healthcare team.
- Students have to be made aware that the exposure to experiences that breach ethics and best practice guidelines can have a negative impact on their records - countering the idea that getting maximum involvement beyond their abilities is of benefit (which is if the case for placements within other disciplines) instead leaving students exposed to criticism and judgement over their lack of ethical understanding.

## What processes and procedures have been implemented at Kaya to ensure we meet these ethical and best practice standards?

As part of all Kaya healthcare placements, the following have been implemented;

- In-depth discussions with our in-country partners about the ethics and best practice guidelines that we wish to follow at Kaya, ensuring buy-in with our approach.
- Project descriptions developed to outline for each placement:
  - ✓ why the need for volunteers/interns at this location and the skills and experience required for acceptance onto the placement
  - ✓ the requirements for medical professionals (as these differ from students / unqualified participants)
  - ✓ further details about the placement including staffing, departments, and patient demographic
- Kaya Placement Advisors are all trained in the placement details as well as the ethics and best practice principles and provided with supporting resources to enable them to best match volunteers and interns to placements and advise enquiries of the considerations for this process.
- Preparation documents have been produced for participants to help them understand the issues, make good decisions about their placement and manage their expectations.
  - ✓ Kaya Outline of Healthcare Placement Types - describes the types of project and settings in which healthcare placements are offered to help enquiries understand the scope of options
  - ✓ Kaya Healthcare Ethics and Cultural Pre-departure Preparedness Document - helping participants prepare for their placement
  - ✓ Kaya Healthcare Learning Reflection Manual - guiding participants through their experience on the ground
  - ✓ This Kaya Healthcare Ethics and Best Practice Guide - explaining the thinking that guides the structure of our placements
- An in depth interview is conducted with all new applicants to identify their interests, skills and motivations, to set out ethical issues and manage expectations. We share the details of this interview with our in-country partners, so that they can accept the applicant in context of their responses.
- We have outlined the registration requirements for each of our destinations where qualified medical professionals are accepted and identified indemnity insurance providers that are able to provide cover specific for this area.

## What do you need to do to ensure you meet these standards too?

Kaya's approach to setting up ethical placements ensures you the best start to participating in a quality, ethical placement, but a lot of the responsibility to delivering an ethical program also lays in the hands of our participants.

As we take you through the process of selecting and participating in a placement, we will guide you through the considerations and requirements. These are just a few of the ways that you can ensure you make the most of your placement for you and your project.

## In finding your placement

Finding the right placement is essential, and to help us recommend the best option for you, we will ask you to participate in a telephone interview to ascertain the goals and expectations for your placement. If you are

organizing a placement on behalf of someone else, please note that this interview must take place with the participant before we can confirm a placement, but we are happy to arrange a call with you to discuss your needs and begin the selection process. It is important to be honest as part of this process and share with us your fears and expectations, so we can be honest with you about what can realistically be delivered in each location.

We ask all participants for a copy of a CV/resume detailing qualifications and experience to date which we share with our projects to ensure that there is a good match between the skills and experience necessary to commence the placement. Once agreed, volunteers and interns must complete an application form and pay their deposit to secure the placement.

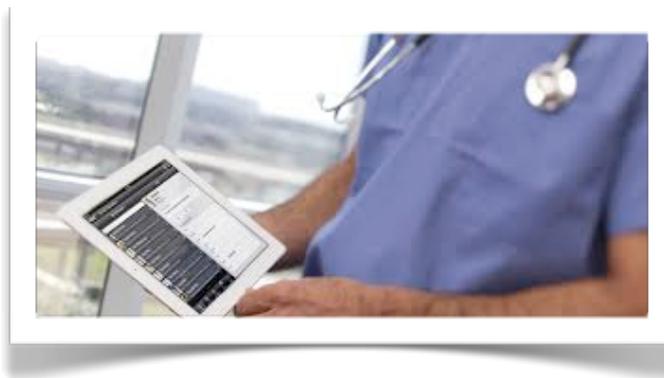
Remember when planning your placement that healthcare placements are working with people, and, as with all working relationships, it takes a little time to build friendship and trust, and to learn about the project within which you are joining. While many of our healthcare placements are available for as little as 2 weeks, the longer you have available to participate, the more you will be able to get involved, and the more you will learn so we encourage healthcare participants to consider placements of at least 4-6 weeks or longer if possible.

If you are looking for a placement to fulfill practicum or internship requirements, require an additional level of supervision, have paperwork required for your school or are a qualified professional who needs additional paperwork for registration an additional administration cost of £35/\$61 will apply to your placement. In some locations the project incurs additional costs for supporting placements that have academic requirements and these costs will also need to be added to your placement fees. Please inform your Placement Advisor at this stage if you have such requirements and they can find out about these costs before you sign up.

## Before you go

It is important that all participants are prepared for their placement as not only will you be living in a different country you will also be working in a healthcare setting that will more than likely be very different from your home setting. Ways that participants can prepare include:

- Reading your Kaya welcome pack to learn more about the destination and life in country



- For qualified medical professionals, obtaining the appropriate indemnity insurance and ensure registration with the local medical council if this is required. The Kaya placement advisor can provide the appropriate contacts to enable this to be arranged.
- Working through the Kaya Healthcare Ethics and Cultural Pre-departure Preparedness Document, to become familiar with how to respond to certain situations and to prepare for a different healthcare context.

- 
- Completing the Kaya Healthcare Learning Reflection assessment included in the Kaya Healthcare Learning Reflection Document to establish learning needs and priorities before arriving in country
  - Do your own research, including looking online at the local demographic, challenges facing the healthcare setting and common ailments.

### On the ground

A participant's time on their placement is where they have the greatest responsibility to fulfill their part in an ethical placement. Our Kaya in-country coordinators and your project leader will provide ongoing support for you, but these are some examples of our expectation for great volunteers and interns :

- Building a rapport with your local colleagues – it is important to build a relationship that leads to trust so that local staff can then determine how can best fit into their team and where your skills are best used to help them. Being willing to listen, learn and observe, and eager to take up any job, however small, is the best way to get more included during your placement.
- Helping where needed – this includes filing, cleaning implements and pill counting duties. This may not be your main interest area, but even this work needs to get done and it all helps the clinic or project deliver it's overall care.
- It's OK to say no to tasks you are not qualified to conduct - While you should never say no to to doing the menial tasks that the project teach you to carry out, you have the right to say no if asked to do something medically you do not have the experience or training to do. Sometimes volunteers from Western countries are perceived to have better education and be “more knowledgable” and assumptions can be made that you will know the answer, have the skills or be able to make a decision which is often not the case. On these occasions, politely decline and assure the local team that you would prefer to learn from them.
- Remembering that it is an exchange not a course. Volunteers and interns will be expected to discuss aspects of the home medical environment with members of the local team. Remember to be respectful in comparisons and not assume your domestic approach is necessarily better.
- Sharing best practices you have learned in your studies, such as health and safety e.g. hygiene control, cleaning implements, disposal of sharps, servicing of equipment but always take into account the local setting and resource availability, as well as the cultural context.
- Remembering that access to patients is a privilege and not a right. Showing respect to all individuals at all time is a must, and accept that some patients may not want you present for their consultation.
- Being flexible and understanding if working hours are not the traditional 9 – 5. You may be ask to fit into the project's shifts earlier, later or even at weekends. There may also be times where the placement closes unexpectedly (due to an unexpected national holiday, strike or even the weather) or where an emergency or rush means your supervisor cannot provide you adequate support for involvement on occasions.
- Adapting training methods and materials to the local context, seeking the input of the local team. Materials should be culturally appropriate and simple to follow.
- Dressing appropriately. In a hospital setting many placements as medical volunteers/interns to bring their own scrubs, gloves and masks, as we do not ask resource poor clinics or hospitals to provide these.

### When you return home

Learning is ongoing and it is not just a case of completing your placement, returning home and adding the experience to a CV/resume. There is so much more that can be taken forward and these include:

- Maintaining contact with the local team to continue to develop the relationship and share best practice.
- Completing the learning reflection assessment for a second time to assess what has been learnt and adding these to your CV/resume or document for the next work based appraisal.

- 
- Providing feedback to the Kaya team from your experiences about what went well, what could be improved and what others can do in future placement to further improve the assistance provided.
  - Sharing experiences and learnings with colleagues at home, highlighting any changes that might benefit the home healthcare setting and the unexpected challenges and successes that you faced on your placement.

### **So what are the next steps?**

If you are interested in finding out more, you can search our current healthcare placement options at our website [www.kayavolunteer.com](http://www.kayavolunteer.com) or get in touch with a Kaya advisor by phone, email or on our online Chat function. A Kaya Placement Advisor will happily talk through the options available and email you our healthcare brochure and more information about our healthcare placements.

Please note that some placements require at least 3 months notice, while others only have limited space, so we recommend contacting us as soon as possible to ensure we secure the best placement at the time that best suits you.