

DO something useful with your time

International volunteer service Projects Abroad recently announced that 70% of its recruits are female. **Faye Stickings** explains why she signed up...

Surely volunteering is mainly a student gig? "Actually, women taking career breaks, perhaps due to redundancy, are the fastest-growing group of volunteers. And it doesn't just appeal to philanthropists, but women wanting to improve their skills or to see the world in a safe environment. Volunteers are placed in active projects with professionals who know the areas well. Living in local communities provides you with an authentic experience that's not 'postcard perfect'."

How long are the placements?

"It depends on you, but women sign up for an average of three months – and sometimes they stay longer than planned! It's such a rewarding experience that people often change careers when they return to the UK – like I did."



A-list volunteers (from top) Angelina Jolie in New Delhi; Madonna in Malawi; Salma Hayek in Sierra Leone



Do you get paid for your work?

"Sadly, the partner organisations we work with can barely pay their own staff, so the volunteer positions are self-funded. They cost from £995, but the experience is priceless and it will look great on your CV."

Can you choose which country you're posted to?

"Yes, volunteer programmes are available everywhere from China to Mexico and

you can help in all kinds of areas, from teaching to law. Just log on to Projects-abroad.co.uk for a full list of countries and projects and details of how to get involved."

DON'T turn your back on your ex

If you think it's awkward bumping into your 'office party snog' in the lift, spare a thought for Drew Barrymore and Justin Long (left). After meeting on *He's Just Not That Into You* (and splitting a year later), they've both been cast in new flick *Going The Distance*. And they're not the only stars to work together after a split...



▼ **Gwen Stefani** dated her No Doubt bandmate **Tony Kanal** for seven years, but after an amicable split they remained friends, and Tony co-wrote tracks on Gwen's first solo album



◀ **Rosamund Pike** and **Simon Woods** fell in love as students at Oxford. In 2005, years after they called it quits, they were cast opposite each other in *Pride & Prejudice*



18 years after leaving *Neighbours*, **Kylie** and **Jason** reunited on screen for a sketch on ITV's *The Kylie Show*, where Jason pretended he didn't recognise his former flame ▶

