

Recession boom in overseas volunteers

GARRY McCARTNEY

PROJECTS Abroad, the world's largest gap year organisation, has reported a record increase in figures as the volunteer service overseas continues to expand during the recession.

Applications from Britons who have been made redundant increased by 50% in January compared to a year earlier, with a 98% increase in volunteers for environment and conservation projects.

Ellie Jones, of Projects Abroad, said: "With young people struggling to secure employment, Projects Abroad provides the opportunity for an amazing experience that can be a great asset on a CV."

Traditionally, volunteers

who wanted to offer their services abroad are young and aim to teach English as a foreign language. However, the average age has risen to 40 with a wider range of employment backgrounds than ever before.

"Enterprise volunteering" in countries such as Brazil, China, India, Ghana, and Moldova has become increasingly popular among volunteers who want to contribute to worthwhile ventures.

Scott McQuarrie, a Glaswegian volunteer in Ghana, helped with the development of young footballers in Accra through Projects Abroad.

He said: "I had nothing short of an amazing and life changing experience. I had the best time of my life."

