

Sponsor visits to the projects

Policy for the sponsors

(2021)

Visits to meet a sponsored child are encouraged, and the meeting can be a rewarding experience for both parties. You will see with your own eyes the difference your donation makes in the lives of the world's poorest and most vulnerable children. We trust that your visit will be a special experience you will treasure for many years to come.

A visit must be coordinated through the Integra office only. Please contact the Integra office to make arrangements best before buying a fly ticket. Sponsors should not contact the project directly, as they rely on us to coordinate all visits.

Integra will make every effort to arrange a visit with your child. However, sometimes political or family circumstances can prevent visits.

Some sponsors request to travel with an Integra staff member. Going with us is not always an option, since we have our own agenda.

Preparation for the trip

Before the sponsor travels he or she shall meet with an Integra representative to discuss the trip and explain the policies. Each visitor must sign our **Child protection Policy on Integra and Sponsor trip agreement**. If it is impossible, at the very least, an extensive video call should be held. The signed agreements need to be sent to the office before traveling.

Child safety and protection remains a top priority. Prior to visiting a sponsored child, a background check may be required.

During the trip

Costs and travel arrangements

The sponsor pays all their **costs**, including all pick up costs (driver, petrol etc) food while in the project, etc. Integra staff will give an idea of what to pay for pickup etc. We help with **arrangements** but only for the part of their trip that involves the project visit. **Travel arrangements, and tourist activities**, are not organized by us.

Make sure that you have had the correct vaccinations for the country you are visiting. These can be arranged with your GP or local travel clinic. Make sure that you have a valid passport and visa, if required.

Local habits

Local values and habits are more important than what we are comfortable and used to. This affects our dress, behaviours, and involves learning what is their way of doing things.

Every visitor should be given advice on what to wear when visiting a project. European standards are not considered acceptable in many of our projects. For instance in Kenyan projects you shall not wear bare shoulders, no short skirts, no low tops showing a lot of skin, not skin tight clothes, or short trousers on ladies. Sponsors should refrain from extreme styles that may be offensive in some cultures.

Although most of our field staff can speak English, our project workers who are all nationals, may not. Please be patient and tolerant. It is quite possible that you will be the first person from overseas the child's community has ever met. They will be extremely curious about you and will probably assume that all Western people are just like you. Be very sensitive about not show

Visit

A visit in a project is usually **only 1 day** – most projects can not entertain a visitor for longer and most projects will not offer accommodation (except BC or BoH). In these cases, the visitor must pay for accommodation. **Unmarried couples can not stay together overnight if staying in the project and no alcohol can be consumed on the grounds of our projects.**

All our projects and many guest houses are alcohol free, so do not take alcohol as gifts to project directors or families.

If the sponsor requests a **visit with the child's family**, we must first discuss with the project, before the trip is confirmed. We give the project director a total opportunity to say no, if he thinks a visit could have difficult consequences. We ask the project to provide someone from their staff to go with the visitor. We do not agree that the sponsor goes alone.

Gifts

Any **gifts** or help to give to the family must have the consent from the director before being offered to the family. We can give advice on what gift to bring for the child, after checking with the project. Before the visit, the local director must be consulted on any food items or gifts or which will be purchased for the family. We don't recommend giving money, unless the local director has agreed and gives an indication of how much is appropriate.

It is not allowed, in any circumstance, to give money directly to the child. If money is to be given, it must be given to the project director and not to the child directly. Having money, very often brings the child into trouble.

The visitors **must not** give their personal information – phone no, email, FB contact etc to anyone during your visit. This info can be badly misused.

The visitor must not make suggestions to the child or family that they might be able to visit Slovakia.

A visitor is not allowed to be alone with the child, either in the project or outside. The visitor is not allowed to take the child out of the project, unless the director has agreed and a member of their staff is able to go with the child, as well. No overnight visits are allowed.

Photography and social media

Before taking photographs, in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy you should always ask permission from the Integra worker as well as the sponsored child and their family. Photos taken in the field should only be used in the appropriate way.

You may post on social media about your visit to your sponsored child but you will have to comply with the following restrictions from our child protection policy. We kindly request you do not post

- Photos, videos or comments that mention the sponsored child's name or specific location
- Photos, videos or comments that portray children in a disrespectful or immodest way
- Photos, videos or comments that contain geotags. Keep an eye on the background and double-check photos to make sure there aren't any location indicators. Look for signs that show the name of the child's neighborhood, school, community center or other identifying information.

After your visit

Your visit may be a life-changing experience in which case you will return to Slovakia inspired and passionate about making a difference. We would love you to share your enthusiasm with others to encourage them to join us in caring for the world's poorest children and their communities.

There are a several things you can do:

1. It would be great if you could send us an informal report telling us about the highlights of your visit along with some photos. It is a great opportunity for us to share your feedback with other supporters and inspire them with sponsor visit stories that may be used in Integra publications.
2. Alternatively, we may ask you if you are interested in 'blogging' for us which would be posted on our website and/or Facebook page and we would encourage other supporters who have sponsored children in the country you visited to follow your posts.
3. You could also give a presentation in your home, workplace or church to family, friends and colleagues about your experience and we would be happy to provide you with the resources you will need for the event.
4. You can become an Integra Ambassador and help us in our mission.

Do not hesitate to get in touch with us at the contact details below if you have any questions. We are here to help you experience beautiful moments with your sponsored child.

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