



InterplastTM

Repairing bodies & rebuilding lives
in the Asia Pacific region

INTERPLAST PROGRAM ACTIVITY OBSERVER GUIDELINES

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1. Background and Context

Since its inception in 1983, Interplast Australia & New Zealand (Interplast) program activities have been supported and sponsored by a variety of groups, organisations and individuals. Throughout the years, some of these supporters have been able to join an Interplast program activity to be able to observe what happens on a trip, enabling them to return to Australia or New Zealand and further support Interplast by sharing and promoting the work it does.

There are several types of observers who may join an Interplast program:

- Corporate observers – representatives of Interplast’s corporate supporters who are identified through specific programs and processes to join a program activity.
- Rotarian observers – when a Rotary Club or District raises sufficient funds for an Interplast surgical activity program, they may be given the opportunity to send a representative on an Interplast program activity. Rotarians who are members of the funding Club or District are eligible to nominate for the position of Rotarian observer (for more information on this specific process, please contact the Interplast office).
- Media observers – these may include journalists, photographers, film crews or other media personnel.
- Major donors – individuals who play a significant role in supporting Interplast’s work.
- Interplast Board members.
- Interplast staff members.

While processes of selection vary depending on the type of observer, Interplast is involved in all selection processes and reserves the right to approve final observer participation.

Interplast prides itself on its commitment to child-safe practices in all elements of its programs. To be eligible to participate in an Interplast program in any capacity you will be required to undergo a criminal record check, read and understand Interplast’s Child Protection Policy and sign the Interplast Child Protection Code of Conduct. Interplast reserves the right to refuse an opportunity or terminate any person’s opportunity to participate in an Interplast program activity if Interplast believes the person may pose a risk to children based on criminal history or perceived/actual risk.

These guidelines cover all the above observer types, with elements of the guidelines being relevant to Interplast staff accompanying a medical team. These guidelines are to

be read in conjunction with the Interplast Child Protection Code of Conduct, Interplast Social Media Policy and are referred to in the Volunteer/Observer Code of Conduct which must be agreed to and signed by each and every observer prior to their final confirmation of participation on an Interplast program activity.

Requests from medical trainees to attend programs as an observer

The Interplast Board has determined that it is not appropriate for self-funded, medical volunteers (who have not yet fully qualified) to participate in Interplast programs at this time, even in a non-medical observer role, unless it is a part of one of the few observer programs which are directly linked to Interplast funding agreements.

It is not possible for medical or nursing volunteers to participate in Interplast program activities in their professional capacity unless they are fully qualified in their profession. For example, to volunteer as a surgeon, individuals must have finished their plastic surgery training and passed the Fellowship exam. This is a strict requirement of all Interplast programs, partly due to the fact that most of our partner countries require that medical volunteers are fully qualified in order to gain temporary medical or nursing registration. Interplast also focuses on building capacity in our partner countries, and work to maximise training opportunities for *in-country* trainees. For individuals who are enthusiastic to volunteer for Interplast prior to completing their training, they are encouraged to contact the Interplast team for other volunteering opportunities such as raising funds and awareness.

2. Role of the Observer

The objective of an observer is to observe an Interplast team at work so they are able to see first-hand how lives are changed through the work of Interplast. Upon their return, the observer is expected to play a proactive role in raising awareness and support for Interplast within their organisation, community and beyond (roles and objectives may vary slightly depending on the type of observer). Participation as an observer on an Interplast program activity is a unique, rewarding, often challenging and overall very special opportunity. As an observer, you will have the opportunity to see and experience many things not otherwise possible. Most of all, enjoy the opportunity and be sure to bring your experience back with you to share, and help Interplast raise awareness of the work it does.

3. Program Attended by the Observer

The program activity which an observer attends is at the discretion of Interplast. It depends on which volunteer teams are going, the nature of the program activity and medical, security and cultural considerations in the destination country.

4. Observer Costs

Interplast will coordinate airfares, accommodation and visas (if required) and any other logistical requirements. Payment of costs depends on individual agreements with observers and/or their organisations.

5. Photography Guidelines for Observers

Interplast is required to adhere to strict protocols in terms of photography and collection of patient information, in line with its AusAID accreditation, ACFID accreditation, child protection standards and privacy laws. As such, Interplast's Photography and Case Studies policy and guidelines are provided to all observers and it is a condition of participation that these are adhered to. Observers are only permitted to take photos in clinic or the operating theatre at the specific request of the team or Interplast staff. Use of photographs taken while on the program for personal or presentational use following the program is subject to the permission of Interplast. Interplast will make available a set of appropriate clinical and operating theatre images to the observer at the conclusion of the trip.

6. Requirements of Observers

Observers are required to acknowledge that they are accompanying a professional team who are working in a strictly regulated and, at times, challenging clinical environment. As observers, they will be afforded every courtesy and given as much information as possible, while also being under the direction of the team leader (who is generally the lead surgeon on the program activity). The medical team may, at times, request the observer to assist with specific tasks as part of the activity. Prior to departure, Interplast staff in Australia may also request that observers assist with specific tasks such as the collection of photos or patient stories.

Where possible, the observer will travel with a team to the destination country and observe the team working, usually for a three to four day period, and then return home. The team will make every effort to ensure the observer has a well-rounded experience.

Observers should be in good health and must be able to understand, accept and respect the conditions and customs in developing countries. They should take a proactive role in availing themselves of as much information as possible about what to expect in their destination country prior to departure. Interplast can assist in providing this information.

Before

- Provide a current police or Victorian working with children check (Interplast can arrange);
- Complete an Interplast Volunteer Registration form which will be provided;
- Read and sign Interplast's Child Protection Code of Conduct, Social Media Policy, and other policies and protocols as directed by Interplast staff;
- If requested by Interplast, provide a medical certificate stating fitness to travel to a developing country; and
- Provide all information as required by Interplast to effectively and appropriately organise their participation in the program activity.

During

- Adhere to Interplast's photographic guidelines. Ensure at all times that behaviour and actions respect the dignity of our program beneficiaries;
- Understand that observers are generally seen by the local medical personnel as representing Interplast, and it is absolutely critical that while representing Interplast, observers ensure their role is not misrepresented (for example, ensuring they are not mistaken for medical personnel) and will make no promises of support on behalf of Interplast. On the occasion that an observer does happen to have medical training, unless it has been arranged otherwise, they are not permitted to undertake any duties in their professional medical/nursing capacity, as local registration to do so has not been arranged; and
- While participating in the program activity, follow the direction of the team leader and other medical team members, as well as local hospital personnel at all times.

After

- On return, provide a report using the template provided by Interplast;
- Work with Interplast's Communications Officer regarding future presentations and other communications about their participation in the program activity;
- Ensure all photographs used for personal and presentational purposes are approved by Interplast; and
- Ensure all presentations given about the program are done so using the correct Interplast templates and have been reviewed by the Interplast Communications Officer.

Given the unique access to often a very vulnerable population group, and the position of power which the teams have working in the medical setting, it is crucial that Interplast maintains strict guidelines and protocols in the delivery of its programs, including the participation of observers.