



HUGO CHITTENDEN

"The Volunteer"

In March 2008 at the age of 31 Hugo's life was turned upside down by a life threatening illness which in turn led to him losing his job, filing for bankruptcy and losing his fiancée. This turning point in Hugo's life ignited a passion in him to lead expeditions with a team of volunteers to less developed countries. He has since become known as "The Volunteer", raising awareness, support and education for causes around the world.

Having overcome his illness and fully recovered, Hugo decided to go and volunteer in the slums of Nairobi caring for orphans with HIV. With a team of Volunteers he set himself the task of re-building a medical clinic in Kibera Slum, Nairobi. The experience had a deep impact on him and on his return he decided to document how volunteering and project building overseas can help small charities and the local communities, while at the same time inspire and educate.

Hugo's documentaries and volunteering projects have taken him to the slums of Kenya, rural Uganda, the devastation of Haiti and the Philippines following natural disasters, the refugee camps in Lebanon and the suburbs of Moscow with the homeless.

'The Volunteer' has now become a recognized brand and via his documentaries which include contributions from personalities such as Sir Richard Branson, Hugo aims to inspire people into the benefits of volunteering while also exposing the good work that UK charities are doing overseas often under difficult and dangerous circumstances. Hugo has raised huge amounts of funding and awareness for a variety of UK charities through his projects and also his charity challenge expeditions, which have seen him climb Mount Kilimanjaro, cross the Sahara desert and run a marathon in Siberia! Hugo's projects and expeditions have taught him valuable lessons about teamwork, endurance, leadership and how to operate under great stress and danger.

Hugo is now writing a book called 'The Volunteer: A Guide to Volunteering' which he hopes to distribute across the country in a bid to bring the benefits of volunteering into people's lives. David Cameron has written the introduction to his book and Bear Grylls has done the foreword.

The continuing imbalance in the world following his illness and the global economic crisis has only reinforced his passion that everyone now needs to show social responsibility, whether at home or abroad. This is applicable to individuals, corporations and governments. He makes the point that the leaders and companies of the future will only succeed long term and attract the best talent & growth, if they are seen to be fulfilling their ethical and social responsibilities. The best of the next generation will apply to those leading the field in these growth areas with volunteering at its core.

Hugo lives between London and Moscow where he teaches French, Spanish and English while working with inspirational speakers looking to spread their message to international audiences. He has just self-published his first book The Volunteer: A Guide To Volunteering.