



VOLUNTOURISM GUIDEBOOK

**Voluntourism Best Practices in the Asia Pacific Region:
Promoting Inclusive Community-Based Sustainable
Tourism Initiatives**

APEC Tourism Working Group

Glossary of Terms

Voluntourism: the combined act of tourism and volunteering, where volunteer services are delivered free at the point of delivery at the destination. The duration of volunteering can last from a few hours to up to one year and can be undertaken by domestic or international tourists.

Tourist: someone who is making a visit to a main destination outside their usual environment for less than a year for any main purpose including holidays, leisure and recreation, business, health, education or other purposes.

Voluntourist: a participant who is volunteering outside of their own community for a period of time that is less than a year and is seeking a touristic experience. Note that in many cases, these people would refer to themselves as 'volunteers' not 'voluntourists'.

Voluntourism organisations: organisations that cater for the voluntourism market. These organisations arrange the trip for the voluntourist. Services range from payment for the activity to a full touristic package including flights, accommodation, voluntourism activities, meals and other touristic trips.

Host organisations: organisations that receive the participant and provide guidance and instructions at a volunteer project, either as a contractual local partner of the sending organisation or as a totally independent organisation, such as an NGO. Hosting organisations often also provide location-related living conditions such as food, accommodation, free-time activities, contact with local community, support and so forth. They also address work-related needs including training, materials, safety instructions and insurance. They usually partner with volunteer-servicing organisations to attract volunteers.

Servicing organisations: organisations that act as brokers, mediators, agents or third-party providers that recruit, manage and support voluntourists. Servicing organisations mainly operate through websites or umbrella organisations and provide steady flows of volunteers to the sending and hosting organisations of voluntourism projects. In doing so, in most cases, servicing organisations host an online portal for voluntourism opportunities, through which they offer, market and sell a variety of activities that are available through sending and hosting organisations.

Sending organisations: sending organisations are generally based in the home economy of the participant and provide information about the project. They usually take responsibility for the recruitment of voluntourists and organise (to various extents) accommodation, travel and free-time activities, as well as provide financial and visa advice. They also provide preparation materials for the participant prior to their departure to the destination. Sending organisations communicate with (potential) hosting organisations and participants during their stay abroad, and in some cases follow up with the participant after they return home. These organisations can be voluntourism specific, or they can be tour operator/travel agents, school/universities, church or religious-based groups.

Host communities: communities who are directly affected by voluntourism taking place in their locality.

Voluntourism activity/programme: a particular activity or longer-term programme that participants are involved in volunteering with in the host economy. Usually activities are themed; for example, building, teaching, conservation, animal welfare, business development, etc.

People-to-people connectivity: refers to the movement of people across APEC economies and the exchange of cultures, skills and knowledge. It forms part of the APEC blueprint on connectivity.

APEC: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Economy: Country or nation

APEC region: 21 countries in APEC - Australia; Brunei Darussalam; Canada; Chile; China; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Japan; Korea; Malaysia; Mexico; New Zealand; Papua New Guinea; Peru; The Philippines; Russia; Singapore; Chinese Taipei; Thailand; Vietnam; the United States of America

In- economy: in-country

APEC member economy: a member of the APEC (referring to any of the 21 members)

Industry Standards: general outline of conduct perceived as the correct approach when taking part in any tourism activity within the APEC Region

Voluntourists education: Training and awareness undertaken by a voluntourist prior to taking up a voluntourism trip in a host economy

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Best Practice Cases

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FOREWORD

Voluntourism is a complex and diverse tourism product, covering a variety of activities in different cultural contexts. Under PNG's 2018 hosting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the 10th-Tourism Ministers' Meeting (TMM) outcomes, PNG sought the opportunity to propose to the APEC member economies Voluntourism Best Practises in the Asia Pacific Region, which was well received by all member economies.

Voluntourism is not a new concept as other economies in the Asia Pacific Region have actively engaged in voluntourism. The Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority (PNGTPA) in its endeavour, to assist Papua New Guineans' develop tourism products and services to an acceptable standard, have once again come up with this "Voluntourism Guide".

This guidebook will assist and guide industry members on the best practises of Voluntourism covering various aspects; from understanding voluntourism; initiating the activity and after the activity.

We recommend you read through the topics one at a time to fully grasp the concept of voluntourism. This booklet is a general guide and it provides a summary full coverage of voluntourism. You may find that not all points mentioned will be applicable to you, depending on which stakeholder group you come under, so you may need to go through and mark the information which is most relevant to you.

The Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority (PNGTPA) as the lead government agency responsible for developing and promoting tourism in the country is fully committed and will give its unwavering support to Papua New Guineans venturing into tourism industry.

We earnestly hope that this guidebook will provide you the much-needed knowledge and serve as a guide to develop voluntourism in your community to a standard accepted as the voluntourism best practises.

We wish you every success in your operation.



Jerry Agus

Chief Executive Officer

PNG Tourism Promotion Authority

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Voluntourism is a fast-growing multibillion-dollar segment of the global tourism industry, driven by tourists who want to 'give back' while travelling and – in many cases – connect with local communities (Figure 1).

Voluntourism can be a powerful tool for tourism and community development. The APEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) seek to determine and initiate best practice in voluntourism to promote inclusive community-based sustainable tourism initiatives.

Figure 1: Voluntourism International Market Overview



Sources: Popham, 2015; Mostafanezhad, 2013; SPTO, 2013; Tourism Research and Marketing, 2008; WYSE Travel Confederation, 2007.

SECTION 2: VOLUNTOURISM – WHAT IS IT AND HOW DO YOU FIT IN?

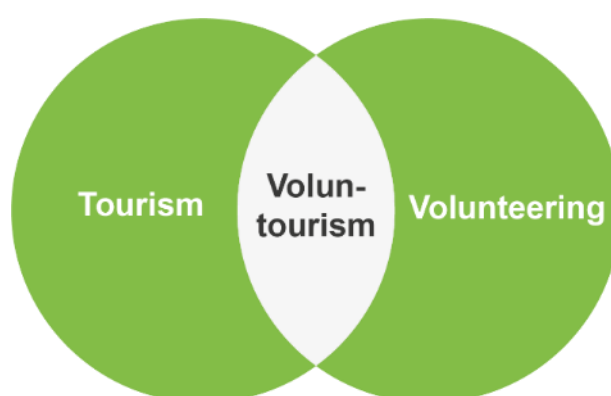
What is voluntourism?

In this guidebook, voluntourism is defined as:

The combined act of tourism and volunteering, where volunteer services are delivered free of charge at the point of delivery at the destination. The duration of volunteering can last from a few hours to up to a year and can be undertaken by domestic or international tourists.

Voluntourism can be short term (a few hours) or long term (up to one year). It can be undertaken by international tourists travelling long distances across continents, or domestic tourists travelling within their own region or economy.

Figure 2: Voluntourism



The key to ensuring positive community outcomes from voluntourism is making sure the activity or programme is well planned and managed in conjunction with local communities. Voluntourism must be well thought out, planned and managed collaboratively with all stakeholders.

Voluntourism has the following characteristics:

- Short term (periods less than one year)
- Organised programme
- Element of leisure and touristic activity
- Being on holiday outside of your own community and volunteering at a destination for any time period under one year
- Element of payment for the activity by the participant to an organisation
- Packaged trips including accommodation, meals, touristic activities
- Sold as adventure and involving some degree of cultural immersion
- Access to communities which a tourist might otherwise not be able to interact with
- A range of activities, including volunteer work, that can contribute to both community development and local economic growth

The voluntourism market

Estimated 10 million trips per year, voluntourism is a fast-growing sector internationally. Motivations of voluntourists include the transformational effects of connecting closely with local communities and giving back by participating in a meaningful project. Voluntourism gives the element of adventure.

The market is mainly youth (20–25 years) and female, with the second largest demographic being baby boomers. The average spend per trip is estimated to be US\$2800.

Voluntourism activities

Voluntourism is a diverse industry offering multiple activities that volunteers can do as part of their holiday. When well planned and managed, these activities can benefit communities and the local environment. Make sure that all voluntourism activities are conducted in compliance with the local laws and regulations of the host economy.

Structuring voluntourism activities to support existing government strategies and local development plans adds value to host communities and APEC member economies.

High risk voluntourism activities:

- Working with children
- Healthcare and medical assistance
- Activities involving animals

Voluntourism can add value to communities when it supports the achievement of a longer-term community project or goal. It does this by providing resources to projects and initiatives that otherwise would not receive support.

Skilled voluntourists can assist in developing the capacity of local people to achieve a certain goal or fill a particular knowledge gap such as:

- Business development
- Access to markets
- Access to healthcare and medical
- Computing and Engineering (Technical skills)

Box 1: Who benefits from voluntourism?

- The volunteer
- Community segments: including school children, older people, women, and people with disabilities
- Project employees
- Wider business sector, hospitality, tourism and services
- Host families/homestays
- Local organisations/local NGOs
- Activity specific, e.g. teachers in schools, school children, locals who get access to new infrastructure, conservation projects
- Government (national/local)

When developing voluntourism activities, it is important to think about who benefits (Box 1).

An emerging trend is to shift the focus from volunteering as the primary activity onto cultural exchange and learning about different ways of life. The trip fee goes to help the community

and boost community projects, which is the voluntourist contribution. In return, the voluntourist gets first-hand access to a particular project/organisation and can ask questions and have open conversations about issues. This helps move the understanding that voluntourism is 'helping' to voluntourism is 'learning', especially in shorter-term trips.

Case 1: Learning about local initiatives

GOOD Travel support micro-investment in Tanzania. 'Investours' in Tanzania uses tour fees from GOOD Travel to provide microfinance aid to local entrepreneurs. GOOD Travel participants meet with investours to discuss and learn about the initiative. Debrief discussion encourages learnings to be distilled, and facilitates conversations between participants and locals.



Voluntourism activities in the APEC region:

- Teaching activities
- Animal welfare
- Building community facilities
- Skills development and training
- Environmental/ conservation activities
- Medical/ healthcare
- Volunteer work in childcare and orphanage
- Agriculture
- Sports
- Research
- Business development
- Events (sports/cultural/festival)

Supply and demand

As the demand for ethical and responsible tourism increases, the voluntourism industry will have to shift to meet market demand and rising customer expectations, in order to stay competitive.

Applying best practice principles and raising awareness along the voluntourism chain – on both the supply and demand side – can help to initiate best practice voluntourism in the APEC region.

(Demand = Voluntourist, Supply = Sending and Servicing organisation)

“Raising awareness of the responsibilities of organisations and also raising that awareness on the demand side”

– Tour operator

Figure 4: Best practice – voluntourist education and industry standards



Case 2: Organisations taking responsibility to shape demand

PEPY Tours and GOOD Travel are two organisations that are actively taking responsibility to shape customer demand and educate voluntourists on how to best approach voluntourism. PEPY Tours launched a campaign called Learning Service, which produces several engaging and fun online videos and resources for voluntourists. The resources focus on **learning first** about communities and then thinking about ways you can help.

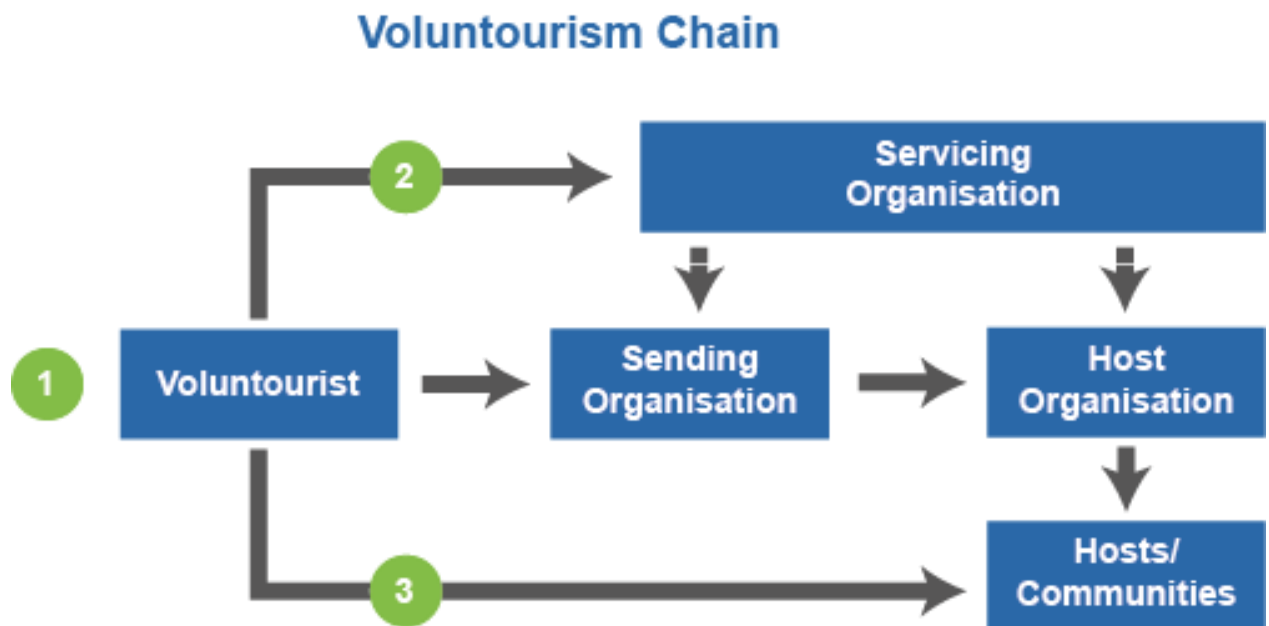
GOOD Travel provides ten tips on how to be a GOOD traveller, blogs for voluntourists to reflect on why they are motivated to be a voluntourist, and links to resources on how to be a better voluntourist. Both organisations share links to blogs and videos for volunteers to reflect on their motivations as well as tips to be a good volunteers and responsible travellers. GOOD Travel shares resources from other organisations such as the ChildSafe Movement, which provides tips on how to protect children during your travels.

Voluntourism chain

The voluntourist chain outlines three different routes through which a domestic or international tourist can get involved in voluntourism (Figure 5).

1. The voluntourist goes directly to a sending organisation, often based in their economy of residence, who links the voluntourist to the host organisation of their preferred activity or programme. The host organisation then directly links the voluntourist to local hosts and communities.
2. The voluntourist goes to a servicing organisation, an online directory that contains information about sending and host organisations. The voluntourist selects an organisation and deals directly with them to organise their trip.
3. The voluntourist, while at home or on holiday at a destination, engages directly with the local or in-economy organisation. Similarly, for a voluntourist while travelling independently can also volunteer directly with the local community or host organisation.

Figure 5: Voluntourism chain



Where do you fit in?

There are six main stakeholders commonly in the voluntourism chain:

- The voluntourist,
- The sending organisation,
- Host organisations,
- Government,
- Servicing organisations
- And local communities.

Best practice is achieved when all stakeholders gain positive outcomes, with community benefits being the highest priority of all. The stakeholders involved in voluntourism have a responsibility to one another. When responsibility is accepted and acted on, then best practice is achieved across the voluntourism chain.

Table 1: Voluntourism key stakeholders – benefits, roles and responsibilities

<p>Voluntourist</p> <p>Benefits derived: learning outcomes, personal development, connecting with community and other volunteers, meaningful/transformational experience.</p> <p>Role: to learn from the community and develop cultural understanding; to add value to projects that they have selected.</p> <p>Responsibility: to the local community – to add value, learn about their way of life and be respectful.</p>	<p>Sending Organisation</p> <p>Benefits derived: profit, non-profit benefits, sustainable outcomes, mutually beneficially experiences with communities/projects, organisational development.</p> <p>Role: to prepare the voluntourist, package trip, and ensure their safety; organise, plan and oversee the voluntourism activity and ensure that a good experience is had by both host community and voluntourist; liaise with the voluntourist and the community; must ensure voluntourist's safety and prepare them for the experience; must ensure host community's needs are met, and the programme is well resourced/managed and adheres to policies designed to protect community members and voluntourists.</p> <p>Responsibility: to the voluntourist and the host community.</p>
<p>Host Organisation</p> <p>Benefits derived: profit, non-profit benefits, sustainable outcomes, mutually beneficially experiences with communities/projects, organisational development.</p> <p>Role: to organise and manage the voluntourist activities; to liaise with the voluntourist and the community.</p>	<p>Host Community</p> <p>Benefits derived: economic, social, environmental benefits, new ideas, outlooks and motivation, people-to-people connectivity.</p> <p>Role: to be actively involved in the planning management and oversight of voluntourism; to give feedback.</p> <p>Responsibility: to the local residents and to the voluntourist.</p>

<p>Responsibility: to the local community and to the voluntourist.</p>	
<p>Servicing Organisation</p> <p>Benefits derived: profit, non-profit benefits.</p> <p>Role: to share information and raise awareness of what is best practice and how to be a responsible tourist. This allows the voluntourist to deliberate between organisations and ultimately choose one that best fits their motivations. It is important that servicing organisations portray communities fairly in their advertising.</p> <p>Responsibility: to the voluntourist and to the community.</p>	<p>Government (National/Local)</p> <p>Benefits derived: tax/revenue from the tourists and companies, assistance with local and government development initiatives.</p> <p>Role: to share information and provide oversight; to provide advice on best practice to all stakeholders, regulate, and formulate policy.</p> <p>Responsibility: to the local people.</p>

SECTION 3: BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

Voluntourism must first work for communities but the voluntourist experience must also be considered.

Getting value from voluntourism

Voluntourism can add value when it is conducted responsibly and ethically. Often voluntourism brings most value when it:

- Addresses a basic community need and contributes to small local projects
- Supports existing local projects, programmes and organisations, and/or NGO activities
- Contributes to achieving outputs that support longer-term strategic outcomes.

“The greatest challenge about voluntourism is to create a positive impact in all the communities at the same time that volunteers learn and improve their skills. We need a balance between these groups.”

– Voluntourism sending organisation



The potential to cause harm

Voluntourism can be a hinderance or cause harm when it is not well planned, and the voluntourists themselves are not prepared (socially, culturally, physically, mentally). In particular, voluntourism can have negative impacts when:

- When the project involves short-term unskilled volunteering with vulnerable groups such as children in residential care/orphanages.
- When involving animals without due thought to animal welfare principles.
- The voluntourists are not skilled or experienced for the jobs assigned to them.
- It is short-term and does not contribute value to the locals or project; thus, the voluntourist becomes an operational and financial burden on the organisation and/or community.

- The community has been overlooked and projects do not address identified needs, and locals are not engaged or involved with the project.
- When voluntourists and organisations are not prepared, and do not fully grasp the local context or culture and then cause offence.
- When money is given to one party and this causes imbalance of power within communities.
- When the project involves children and there are inadequate controls and child protection policies in place.

Get quality voluntourists

Getting quality voluntourists for projects is vital to maintain good relationships with communities and ensure that value is received from voluntourism activities. Sending and servicing organisations can facilitate the recruitment of quality voluntourists by:

- Managing voluntourist expectations
- Screening/vetting of voluntourists
- Providing pre-trip preparation and training for the voluntourist
- Linking voluntourist skills and experience to specific projects
- Creating a position description for the role so that people and skills can be better matched to projects
- Looking for and actively encouraging soft skills such as communication, relationship building, team work, reflective practice/learning and a positive attitude.

Community value

For local communities to get value from voluntourism, it is vital to reflect first on what is needed and what voluntourists can contribute. A community needs assessment, forms part of this process. In particular, it is important for community members to reflect on how the addition of voluntourists to the community will affect local social dynamics.

Stakeholder checklists

The following checklists outline key guidelines for each of the six stakeholder groups – the do's and do nots to keep in mind when engaging with or planning for voluntourism.



For the voluntourist, the focus is on responsible travel – being conscious of expectations, respectful of local culture and customs, and mindful of conduct and behaviour (Table 2).

Table 2: Key guidelines for the voluntourist

Voluntourist	<p><u>DO</u></p> <p><i>Be reflective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Know what is involved and what is expected of you ✓ Understand what your contribution will help to achieve ✓ Understand that your contribution is a small part of a longer-term achievement ✓ Add value and leave preconceived notions at home ✓ Research and learn about what good voluntourism entails and ask questions of the organisation about steps they take to achieve this ✓ Choose a good project that matches your skills and experience ✓ Do research on the project and the economy before you leave home <p><i>Be respectful</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Of local people ✓ Of how communities are portrayed to the outside world by social media ✓ Of local community culture and customs, including what is appropriate in terms of dress and behaviour ✓ Understand the context and culture of the community/economy ✓ Work in partnership, and as part of a team ✓ Adhere to organisational policies and codes of conduct <p><i>Be positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adopt a positive learning attitude <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Assume that you will be able to make a large contribution; understand that your short time assisting with a project is part of a longer-term goal ✗ Bring gifts for families or children without first checking with the organisation about what is appropriate ✗ Behave or dress in ways in ways that might be offensive to certain cultures ✗ Assume that you know better than local people
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Sending organisations have a responsibility to both the voluntourist and the host community and/or host organisation to ensure both share a positive experience and derive benefit from the interchange (Table 3).

Table 3: Key guidelines for sending organisations

<p>Sending Organisation</p>	<p><u>DO</u></p> <p><i>Be transparent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In terms of organisational values, aims, objectives, financials and impact reports <p><i>Be honest</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ About the type of experience a voluntourist might have and expectations of voluntourists in terms of behaviour and roles ✓ With marketing and selective in the use of issues – do not market poverty <p><i>Be collaborative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ With local communities, organisations, businesses and governments ✓ Create a programme that addresses a genuine community need, with engagement and collaboration with the local community ✓ Work with existing <u>reputable</u> local projects and initiatives ✓ Work with child protection agencies to protect vulnerable people <p><i>Plan and evaluate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adhere to government and local laws ✓ Ensure adequate supervision of voluntourists by an in-economy member of staff ✓ Create a sustainable programme including exit planning ✓ Communicate well with all parties ✓ Support and prepare voluntourists (before, during and after) including pre-trip information, and post-trip feedback and reflection ✓ Evaluate and reflect on programmes, adapt and improve as an organisation ✓ Regularly vet hosting organisations for compliance with policies <p><i>Provide quality voluntourists</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Always conduct due diligence when selecting voluntourists – including interviews, reference and background checks <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Create projects without community consultation and support ✗ Market poverty for advertising purposes ✗ Create situations that put vulnerable people at risk; in particular, do not have short-term voluntourism in residential childcare and/or orphanages
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	✗ Operate without implementing policies that protect community and voluntourists
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An example of a best practice in financial transparency comes from People and Places (Case 3), the organisation shows where the voluntourist fee goes on a voluntourism trip to Peru and is clear on what is actually included.

Case 3: Transparency in financials – where does my voluntourist fee go?

£1425 for 32 days full board accommodation.

Read about our costs and pricing policy [here](#).

Watch an explanatory interview with programme director.

Included: all in-host economy transfers, accommodation and meals, full local orientation and training, project and placement liaison.

How your money is spent – based on 4-week placement duration:

£845 – direct costs in Peru (airport transfers, in-host economy transportation during work on the project, accommodation and meals, orientation)

£350 – project management, liaison and supervision in Peru

£130 – project contribution in Peru

£100 – people and places fee

Not included: flights, insurance, visa costs, personal expenses such as phone calls, medical expenses, etc.

If you or your friends and family wish to make further donations to this project, [CLICK HERE](#).

Host organisations play an important role in organising and managing voluntourism activities in economy. They liaise with and have a responsibility to both the local community and the voluntourist. Key guidelines for host organisations are focused on being transparent, collaborative, and having good communications to ensure the in-economy logistics work well (Table 4).

Table 4: Key guidelines for host organisations

Host Organisation	<p><u>DO</u></p> <p><i>Be transparent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In how the project will benefit the community ✓ In how the benefit is shared among the community <p><i>Be collaborative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In working with community, voluntourists and organisations <p><i>Plan and communicate well</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Articulate needs and the expectations of voluntourists and sending organisations ✓ Plan projects and activities to be sustainable in the long term and provide adequate supervision ✓ Review programmes and evaluate their impact ✓ Set relevant policies in place, including resources needed to support voluntourists ✓ Provide local leadership ✓ Screen voluntourists to see if they will be a good match with the project ✓ Have procedures in place for health and safety of community members and voluntourists <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Have voluntourists work on projects that they are not suitable for or do not have the skills to do ✗ Put vulnerable people in a position where they could be harmed. In particular, do not provide short-term voluntourism in residential childcare and/or orphanages
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Government, both local and government, has a role to play in the protection of local people in voluntourism and ensuring better standards. This involves sharing information and supporting programme monitoring and supervision of high-risk activities. A key role for government is to provide best practice advice to stakeholders. Guidelines for government are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Key guidelines for government

<p>Government</p>	<p><u>DO</u></p> <p><i>Be supportive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Of industry and communities in sharing information on best practice and helping to evaluate programmes ✓ Assist communities and organisations to link voluntourism to local or government initiatives, plans and strategies ✓ Provide sending organisations with information on economy-specific regulation ✓ Help to prepare the community for voluntourism, ensure they have the infrastructure to support the programme, and advise to start small and experiment before growing larger ✓ Support the transition away from voluntourism in orphanages and residential care to community-based support <p><i>Provide supervision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Oversee high-risk voluntourism activities – childcare, medical and healthcare, and animal welfare ✓ Provide a level of support and leadership to the voluntourism industry ✓ Promote community development through the implementation of best practice ✓ Compile and keep a register of reputable local organisations/NGOs and community projects that can benefit from international or domestic voluntourists <p><i>Share information on best practice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communicate best practice to stakeholders ✓ Gather information about voluntourism operations in your APEC member economy <p><i>Evaluate impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Undertake independent assessments of voluntourism programmes ✓ Provide mechanisms for community to provide feedback about voluntourist tourism planning and implementation ✓ Support objective research into impacts of voluntourism in local communities <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Support or encourage short-term voluntourism in residential childcare/orphanages
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Servicing organisations can help to initiate best practice by sharing information on how to be a responsible voluntourist. Key guidelines for servicing organisations relate to responsible and ethical behaviour, and not advertising poverty when marketing various voluntourism organisations (Table 6).

Table 6: Key guidelines for servicing organisations

<p>Servicing Organisations</p>	<p><u>DO</u></p> <p><i>Be responsible</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ By promoting best practice information and resources through online platforms ✓ Assist with matching voluntourist skills to projects ✓ Help to educate voluntourists and provide simple information about how to be responsible and how to select a good organisation ✓ Ask organisations to provide evidence of best practice; for example, partnering with child protection charities and organisations <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Support organisations that market poverty ✗ Support organisations that have networks that might lead to child exploitation and trafficking
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Community: Host communities play an important role in voluntourism with responsibilities to both local residents and the voluntourist. Communication and collaboration with partners and stakeholders are key guidelines for community (Table 7).

Table 7: Key guidelines for host communities

Community	<p><u>DO</u></p> <p><i>Be leaders</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be an educator for the voluntourists to allow them to learn about local culture and customs ✓ Ensure host and sending organisations know what the community needs are and what is acceptable practice ✓ Ensure community leadership and consultation; for example, village chiefs are engaged and consulted <p><i>Be collaborative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be collaborative in working with voluntourists, sending and host organisations ✓ Be clear about what is required and acceptable in the communication with stakeholders ✓ Work with voluntourists on projects <p><i>Be reflective</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Evaluate the impact of activities/projects and communicate this back to organisations ✓ Reflect on the need for voluntourists, including what skills are required, how many are needed and how long each voluntourist should stay for <p><i>Plan and evaluate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establish a list of community assets and requirements, including gaps and maintenance needs, and clearly articulate these ✓ Communicate needs to voluntourist, sending and host organisations ✓ Plan logistics, including resources to support voluntourists ✓ Make voluntourists feel welcome; put processes in place to welcome new voluntourists ✓ Ensure health and safety of voluntourists; implement policies ✓ Advise community members why voluntourists are around and what they are likely to achieve <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Create 'busy work' for voluntourists — ensure that voluntourists are working on a project that will be a positive contribution to the community ✗ Disengage from voluntourism; ensure there is a high level of community engagement including if it is working or not ✗ Put children or vulnerable people in a position where they could be harmed ✗ Support or encourage short-term voluntourism in residential childcare/orphanages
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Cross-Cutting Principles

In addition to the key guidelines outlined above, we can identify five key cross-cutting principles for every stakeholder to apply in all voluntourism projects and contexts. The ***key messages*** from each principle are highlighted in black italicised text.

1 Community empowerment

The number one belief of voluntourism best practice is to ensure that the host community is prioritised above all other stakeholders. Best practice voluntourism focuses on empowering communities to develop sustainably by providing much needed assistance to build local capacity (finances/skills/human resources) rather than creating an ongoing dependence on voluntourism.

When community is clearly identified as the first priority, voluntourism has the following features:

- Community leads
- Voluntourists work alongside locals and do not replace local jobs.
- Address the needs and priorities of local people and their environments.
- The community is actively involved in the development of voluntourism projects and the benefits derived from them.
- There is a high level of community engagement and input into the project; for example, the organisation of voluntourists, including support and training.
- There is an element of ownership, or total local leadership of the project
- The operations of voluntourism programmes do not jeopardise the fundamental needs of the local community such as access to local resources, land rights or intellectual property protection.
- Voluntourism projects support existing local or government projects initiatives and provide support where it has been identified as needed.
- Voluntourism activities have local economic linkages, such as supporting local markets, food and accommodation.

“The most successful organisations solve local problems. Fix a problem and then set it up so the community can continue.”

– Voluntourism sending organisation

Work with the local community

Case 4: Community-led voluntourism

Warm Heart is a grassroots organisation based in rural Thailand which aims to empower rural Thai villages through community-based initiatives. The main focus of these initiatives is to foster equal educational access and create economic opportunities that provide jobs and sustainable livelihoods to low-income families. The organisation is staffed by locals and the Board comprises mainly Thai citizens. Voluntourists are recruited through the Warm Heart website and various servicing organisations. Voluntourists complete an online application form outlining their skills and experience. The organisation prioritises applications to address local needs. These needs include developing micro-entrepreneurship; supporting children to develop language skills, specific skills or sports and education; environmental conservation; organic farming; and providing assistance to local people who are older and/or disabled (for example, home visits to support those unable to live off the state pension). Where volunteers have specific skills, such as business development, they provide assistance with micro-entrepreneurship. There is a minimum commitment of three months. Voluntourists are supervised by coordinators and assigned various tasks. The key benefit that the local organisation gets from the volunteers is the funding that they provide to support important initiatives that address local needs.

2 Partnership: build trust and relationships

A central best practice principle is to build partnerships, based on trust and good working relationships. This will develop long-term understanding between organisations and communities.

Effective partnerships between organisations and communities have the following features:

- An equal and balanced relationship between community leaders and organisation staff
- Clear communication and feedback mechanisms between all parties
- Values alignment between the community and the organisation

“Form a strong bond with the community and listen to them. Find out what really needs to be done rather than coming in saying, ‘Our volunteers want to do this.’”

– Voluntourism sending organisation

- Organisations providing local staff in-economy to meet with local representatives and help to organise voluntourists
- Trust between local organisations and offshore organisations
- Having conversations about how a partnership can work with a local organisation or community, and outlining how voluntourists might be able to help to solve a local problem or support an existing initiative
- Organisations working alongside communities to develop project aims and objectives
- Engaging the community in a discussion about what sort of voluntourists they would like to receive, including desired types of people who are, for example, 'open to learning', 'hard working', etc. This will help to prepare position descriptions and better link people to projects
- The expectations of all parties are clear, including voluntourist, sending organisation and community

“There are huge benefits when done properly, but if that balance isn’t right... You need to genuinely look at the needs of both and minimise risk for both. It’s constantly in flux, hosts having changing needs.”

– Voluntourism sending organisation

“Maintain the engagement and interaction between operators and government representatives, to share and exchange ideas and best practices.”

– Government official

DO NOT RUSH IN: Spend time to develop trust and build relationships with communities and host organisations. Research local needs and find ways that the project can add value.

Case 5: Linking to APEC member initiatives – Malaysia government-led

Led by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia, the programme *1Malaysia Voluntourism* aims to “foster the spirit of volunteerism in contributing to the growth and progress of tourism and cultural sectors”. Malaysia has a cross-sectoral National Voluntourism Council based on three principles: (1) Do not cause harm or create problems, (2) Create business opportunities for communities, and (3) Adhere to ISO and standard guidelines for operations. The government-led voluntourism programme links to and helps to advance government initiatives in social work, conservation and culture. The social work programme is linked to health, education and economic business development including community-based activities with the volunteers. The conservation activities are aligned to projects in national parks, marine parks, wildlife rehabilitation and conservation centres, zoos and natural heritage sites. The activities around culture include working with heritage bodies, assisting with cataloguing heritage assets, traditional food and cuisine, and linking to traditional lifestyles. Packages aimed at the international market will be from one week to three months in duration and link in with tourism initiatives such as community-based tourism strategies and existing homestay networks.

Malaysia began the programme with domestic volunteers, mainly the youth market linked to schools and universities. This allowed for local communities to become more familiar with the concept of volunteering. It also prepared their young people to be hosts to international voluntourists.



3 Sustainability

Sustainability relating to voluntourism is three-fold. Firstly, on a basic level there must be sufficient resources to support the project activities and the voluntourists. Secondly, the project must empower communities by providing support to advance a longer-term community goal or solve an identified problem. Lastly, voluntourism is sustainable when it has linkages to the local economy and supports sustainable business development; for example, local homestay initiatives, sustainable tourism and accommodation providers, microenterprise such as handicrafts, and local food markets.

The programme addresses a genuine need

To ensure projects are sustainable and meet local needs, they need to be well planned from start to finish.

Community needs assessment

The first step, if not linking to an existing project already underway, is a community needs assessment. In collaboration with local community, this involves identifying needs and where voluntourists can add value. Part of this process is ensuring that the project has the support and engagement of the local community.

Thorough planning of the project

The second step is thorough planning around what is needed to achieve aims and objectives. Clear responsibilities, including expectations of the voluntourist and the host organisations and/or local community, form part of the process. Planning should be optimised to ensure that the experience for both the hosts and voluntourists is positive.

Sustainability needs to be incorporated into the project plan. For example, can the project run without voluntourists? Sustainability also needs to be thought of in terms of logistics and resources required to support voluntourists in a local community.

Think about logistics

Projects logistics must be well thought out. Questions to address include:

- How the logistics will work? Who will train and support the voluntourists? How will the community be involved? Where will the fees go and how will they be used?
- How much voluntourist time is needed, and how much supervision will be required?
- Is there local supervision and oversight of the project?
- Do we have enough resources to support voluntourists? Consider staff time/supervision, finances, accommodation, food and water.
- Do voluntourists know what is required of them before they arrive?
- Have voluntourists been prepared and is there someone to train and supervise them at the destination?

Find the right voluntourists

Attracting the right voluntourists is the next step. Include a statement of community requirements and voluntourist skills that are needed in marketing materials. Create a simple position description including what sort of skills you are looking for.

The end of the project

In some cases, the project will come to a natural conclusion when the objectives have been fulfilled. In this case an exit plan and/or plan for diversification is required.

An exit strategy is a plan of what to do once the voluntourists leave or a project ends. An exit plan ensures that communities are empowered by the activities rather than becoming dependent on them. An exit strategy forms part of the planning, links to the project's aims and objectives, and outlines what happens when they are fulfilled.

Diversification

For voluntourism to be sustainable for communities, a key issue is how to sustain activities after a project has come to an end. An example of diversification would be for voluntourists to come and learn about local initiatives and help to support these. For example, learning about a local conservation project and assisting with research.

Voluntourists support and do not replace locals

Case 6: Supporting sustainability in the community

When creating itineraries, GOOD Travel, whenever possible, ensure that they stay at local accommodation, specifically endeavouring to support those who promote sustainability (social/environmental). In Peru, GOOD Travellers stay at a carbon neutral lodge which is owned by the local community and supports conservation initiatives. Local businesses are supported by GOOD Travel; for example, activities include food tours at local markets in Peru.



4 Continuous improvement and evaluation

Voluntourism can be beneficial for all parties. Yet it is complex, diverse and both context and content specific. Therefore, no one has all the answers and there are countless grey areas. It is for this reason that honest self-reflection and evaluation, and dedication to continually improving is needed to achieve best practice. This is required of all stakeholders – the voluntourist, the sending and host organisations, local communities and government.

“Everyone is learning – there is constant learning for everyone involved. There a role to play in developing, improving and teaching others.”

–Voluntourism sending organisation

“Best advice: Only assume you have 12 months to do what you do. Every 12 months look back and have an honest evaluation of your work, and then decide ‘Do I believe it is worth 12 more?’, because otherwise we build institutions that can’t change. They can’t change, because they get entrenched with their mission without changing. Do not build an empire; build a year’s worth.”

– Voluntourism sending organisation

For continuous improvement, evaluation needs to include activities, programmes and partnerships. Feedback needs to be sought from community, voluntourists and local or, if relevant, the government of the APEC member economy (Box 2).

Co-creating the evaluation criteria together with various stakeholders, especially community, helps to ensure that everyone is moving towards the same objectives.

Impact is tricky to measure, this includes reporting on outcomes that were planned at the beginning of the project. Whenever possible, use data to measure against outcomes; for example, surveys. Other ways to measure impact can be:

- Sharing stories about how the project has helped the local community
- Having an open and honest conversation with the community about how things have gone and how they can improve moving forward, and
- Linking to others who can help measure impacts, such as universities.

Box 2: Voluntourism checks and balances

- ✓ Community feedback
- ✓ Government supervision
- ✓ Volunteer feedback

Is the programme meeting the needs of all stakeholders?

Case 7: Voluntourism organisation changes business model after evaluating impact

PEPY Tours began as a typical voluntourism organisation, sending volunteers to Cambodia to build schools. When a few volunteers stayed in the area after the school had been completed, they realised that a school is much more than a building. They had not thought about providing teachers to teach kids at the school.

PEPY continued but brought people in to help the school – volunteers would bring any skills they had (yoga, guitar, English language, etc.) as well as money for the NGO that ran the local school. When PEPY, the school and the NGO reflected, the help the volunteers provided was negligible and sometimes was actually a hindrance, getting in the way of teaching the national curriculum. What was beneficial was the financial support the school received from the volunteers.

PEPY conducted a candid evaluation and, in the end, they felt they were letting down both the communities who thought they were getting development outcomes but were not, and the volunteers who thought they had a chance to make a difference but that difference turned out to be very little.

PEPY changed its business model from voluntourism to a learning service. The focus is now on group (school or university) travel to Cambodia or Nepal to learn about local cultures and issues from the locals themselves. Through facilitated sessions, volunteers explore complex development issues and reflect on global issues. The volunteers' chance to make a difference is then at home, being advocates and being conscious of issues in the rest of the world.

Local communities continue to benefit from this different business model, with PEPY ensuring that tourist dollars support existing projects that are already doing good, and that they are transparent in their finances and are reporting impact in Cambodia. Guest speakers from local projects who speak with the participants are compensated for their time. In addition, the money from PEPY Tours supports the PEPY NGO that supports education in Cambodia.

5 Do no harm

Voluntourism is a force to do good, yet there are instances when unintended negative impacts occur. In the majority of cases, these impacts can be avoided or mitigated by sound planning and good communication throughout supply chains. This includes ensuring resources are in place to support voluntourists so they are not a drain on the local community.

Training with voluntourists and host communities can help to establish a safety-led culture through active implementation of health and safety plans. Adequate supervision resources must be available on the ground for the health and safety of both the voluntourists and locals working on projects.

Safeguard the dignity of the local people

It is important to put measures in place to safeguard the dignity of local people. This relates to a mutual respect between everyone. This can be achieved by ensuring the following steps are instigated:

- Do not 'market' poverty. Organisations should not use marketing images that portray local people being in helpless situations needing to be 'saved' by outsiders; instead they should use images that show authentic pictures of community life.
- Stress the ideals of partnership in the training and preparation phase and live these ideals during the project.
- Where possible, *facilitate* learning about local culture and customs and different world views.
- Consider what is an appropriate level of voluntourist time; in particular, contexts and activities.
- Provide mechanisms for the voluntourists, community and staff to reflect on and evaluate what they have learnt.
- Ensure voluntourism is conducted on local terms.
- Involve local leadership and employ collaborative planning from start to finish.
- Link to homestay programmes in the area.

"If you cut out all the power and cultural differences, its about humanity. If you have humanity you help each other. It's the root of hospitality, caring for a stranger."

– Researcher

Case 8: Voluntourism strengthens indigenous culture – New Zealand

A voluntourism programme was established between an Australian NGO and an indigenous Māori community in New Zealand. The community was engaged with and consulted from the beginning and agreed to the voluntourism programme. In the programme, 12 voluntourists were sent from Australia to be immersed in Māori culture and to assist with community projects. The objectives of the project were to immerse volunteers in culture as well as physical labour and community work. In the first week, the group stayed at the *marae* (a Māori community meeting place), which included a traditional welcome and interaction with *kaumātua* (tribe elders) who explained the stories of the *iwi* (Māori tribe) and the marae. The volunteers also took part in cleaning, water-blasting and painting on the marae. In the second week, the volunteers designed and helped to deliver a school holiday programme for local children in a low socio-economic area. Activities included craft, art, drama, music and sports. The volunteers were not a burden on the community – they cooked and cleaned for themselves.

The young Australian voluntourists gained a deeper understanding of Māori culture – beyond the All Blacks (New Zealand's national rugby team) and the haka (traditional war dance). They learned what life, culture and identity is for contemporary Māori communities. By interacting with the community, on the terms outlined by the community, the volunteers gained a meaningful interpersonal experience, with the value of feeling welcomed into a different culture. For the indigenous host community, there was a sense of pride in their community of telling their stories, especially in their young people. In this case, interaction between the volunteers and the community was mutually beneficial.



Protect vulnerable people

Organisations must ensure that vulnerable people do not come to harm as a result of voluntourism activities. Children are particularly vulnerable in this respect. When working closely with children, there are risks of harm, including abandonment and abuse. To mitigate these issues, the following must be employed:

- Do not allow unskilled and short-term voluntourism in residential care or orphanages.
- Volunteers act in a support role to local staff and due diligence is engaged in terms of child protection.
- Compulsory full police checks are carried out on all voluntourists working or coming into contact with children.
- References are provided for those who want to work with children.
- Child protection policies, including items such as 'Volunteers are never to be alone with a child', are communicated and enacted by all.
- Registration at a government level should be required for all voluntourism organisations that work with children and vulnerable people in the receiving economy.
- Partner with child protection charities or membership associations that can provide toolkits on child protection.
- Support organisations that transition and diversify away from voluntourist work in orphanages or residential care where the main activity is providing care for the children.

Ensure animal welfare

The large majority of voluntourists who want to work with animals care about their welfare. A challenge when it comes to ensuring animal welfare is overseeing a loose international supply chain. For example, ensuring local partners also adhere to policies, or ensuring that an animal sanctuary is in fact legitimate and not contributing to breeding animals for canned hunting (wild animals being put in a football pitch sized area for hunting purposes). There are also differing cultural views of animals and animal welfare.

Strategies to ensure animal welfare include:

- Having an animal welfare policy in place
- Encouraging local partners to sign up to the policy
- Helping local partners to understand the demand from visitors for animal welfare standards, and
- Providing information about cross-cultural attitudes and history.

Box 3 highlights key questions to consider when developing a voluntourism initiative in local or indigenous communities. It is recommended to start small and evaluate often.

Box 3: Considerations when initiating a voluntourism project

- Has a community needs assessment been completed?
- What is the duration of the activity?
- What is the appropriate length of stay for the volunteer?
- Is there a system in place for the management of the voluntourist? Does the burden of care fall on the community?
- Is the project structured so that lots of short-term voluntourists can be managed to meet a longer-term project goal? Can the work on the project achieve outputs that will move a longer-term objective forward?
- How well structured is the project? Are the voluntourists expected to work set hours and are these expectations clear?
- How embedded is the project in the local community?
- How well conceived is the project?
- What are the organisational values? Are the aims and objectives of the project clear?
- Is there **transparency** of financials, local economic flow into local communities, and ways for community to connect? Clearly outline **who benefits and how**.
- Is it adding value to the local community?
- Has the community been consulted? Does the project have local support?
- How well organised is the project by the organisation? What support and frameworks are in place for the project and community?
- Marketing and promotion: Does the organisation and project fairly reflect the community and the issue?
- Is the project properly resourced with staff?
- Will voluntourists receive training and support?
- Transparent financials: Where is the money going? (From both the sending and local partner organisations)
- Will the project disrupt the day-to-day activities of the local organisation or school/centre?
- Are there safety and emergency procedures in place?
- Are there policies and/or codes of conduct in place to ensure the safety of voluntourists and the community including safeguarding vulnerable people and the dignity of the local people?

SECTION 4: ACTIVITIES – KEY GUIDELINES

Voluntourism activities can positively contribute to community development but it is vital that every type of activity considers specific factors that can enhance local benefits. This section presents best practice guidelines for voluntourism activities in the APEC region.

High-Risk activities


Three voluntourism activities are highlighted as high risk with a significant likelihood to cause harm. These are: volunteer work with children, medical/healthcare, and animal welfare activities.

Only skilled long-term volunteering in children's residential care should be permitted. Organisations must be encouraged and supported to transition away from this form of voluntourism. Even in cases of high skilled and longer-term volunteering with children in residential care, volunteers should provide a support role to in-economy staff to lessen attachment issues and to ensure that care continues to be provided by local people.

“We have volunteers that ask us about orphanages and if they can visit schools and we have to tell them no, but a lot of the time they do not understand, so the education of the volunteers themselves is important.”


– Voluntourism sending organisation

Table 8: Key Guidelines for volunteer work with children

Activity	Key Guidelines
<p>Volunteer Work with Children</p> 	<p><u>DO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make police checks/criminal background checks mandatory for voluntourists ✓ Conduct reference checks for voluntourists ✓ Comply with all government legislation and regulation permitting to working with children ✓ Create comprehensive policy outlining how the organisation will safeguard the rights of children and other vulnerable people. ✓ Adopt a child protection policy when working with children and promote this to voluntourists and locals ✓ Work with local partners to implement their own policies with regards to child safety and protection ✓ Communicate policy to all staff and voluntourists and is enforced ✓ Apply zero tolerance to exploitation, including physical, sexual and emotional violence ✓ Prohibit the use of company facilities and networks that can be used for child exploitation ✓ Mandate and provide mechanisms for safeguarding children within the economy ✓ Be accountable for the people who you put into contact with children through your organisation ✓ Create a code of conduct for voluntourists who work with children. For example, never be with a child alone ✓ Train staff on policy including how to recognise and report child exploitation ✓ Train staff and develop skills required, support existing staff in their roles, move away from intimate care to roles focused on education, entertainment, sports ✓ Partner with child protection charities and organisations <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Promote orphanages or residential care centres or children as tourist attractions ✗ Have unskilled and short-term voluntourists work with children in residential care/orphanages ✗ Market children as tourist attractions ✗ Have voluntourists work with children unsupervised ✗ Have voluntourists be a primary caregiver ✗ Have voluntourists replace local staff

In terms of human health and well-being, there is significant potential to do harm in voluntourism medical and healthcare related activities. Guidelines for medical/healthcare related voluntourism activities are outlined in Table 9.


Table 9: Key guidelines for medical and healthcare related voluntourism activities

Activity	Key Guidelines
<p>Medical/Healthcare</p> 	<p><u>DO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have voluntourists with appropriate skills and experience relevant to the task ✓ Have informed consent of people you are treating, including parental/guardianship consent for children ✓ Address an identified healthcare issue/need with skilled voluntourists ✓ Conduct background checks and attain references ✓ Be aware and sensitive to varying cultural norms around healthcare and administration ✓ Have relevant policies in place to protect vulnerable people <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Have unskilled/unexperienced voluntourists ✗ Provide treatment to people (adults or children) without their consent ✗ Assume a need for medical care without evidence or inquiry to support

When done well, medical and healthcare activities can help to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all. This can include experienced voluntourists providing healthcare education to remote communities.

Voluntourism programmes that revolve around volunteer–animal interactions need to maintain high standards of animal welfare including a strong stand against animal cruelty and exploitation. Guidelines for voluntourist work with animals are outlined in Table 10.

Table 10: Guidelines for Voluntourism Animal Welfare Activities

Activity	Key Guidelines
<p>Animal Welfare</p> 	<p><u>DO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have an animal welfare policy in place based on the Five Freedoms (see Box 6) ✓ Ensure voluntourists are trained in appropriate interaction with animals ✓ Have skilled local staff on-site to supervise and train voluntourists ✓ Have a safety plan in place when working with animals ✓ Sign up to a credible set of guidelines to ensure animal welfare and publish commitment in marketing materials ✓ Set out guidelines that align to animal welfare standards that work for your organisation including supply partners ✓ Work with reputable NGOs or local initiatives to identify projects and ways voluntourists can help to support existing reputable projects ✓ Link to animal welfare charities and organisations ✓ Conduct risk assessment for the animals and the voluntourists and plan accordingly ✓ Comply with all government legislation and regulations relating to working with animals ✓ Commit to non-breeding ✓ Partner with animal welfare charities ✓ Communicate the demand for sound animal welfare practices to local partners and communities ✓ Ensure that your plans include safety around animals ✓ Promote commitment to animal welfare and partnership with reputable charities in marketing materials <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Keep animals in a manner that causes them pain or distress

The 'Five Freedoms' outline five aspects of animal welfare under human control and have been adopted by professional groups including veterinarians and various major international organisations associated with animal welfare. Box 4 outlines the Five Freedoms and best practice in voluntourism activities.

Box 4: The Five Freedoms of animal welfare

Animal welfare refers to the state of an animal. When developing a programme that involves the care of wild animals, an animal welfare policy should be based around the following internationally recognised 'Five Freedoms'.

- **Good feeding:** 1. Absence of prolonged hunger. 2. Absence of prolonged thirst.
- **Good housing:** 3. Comfort while resting. 4. Thermal comfort. 5. Ease of movement.
- **Good health:** 6. Absence of injuries. 7. Absence of disease. 8. Absence of pain induced by inappropriate management procedures.
- **Appropriate behaviour** 9. Expression of social behaviours. 10. Expression of natural behaviours. 11. Good human–animal relationship. 12. Positive emotional state.
- **Protection from fear and distress** 13. Absence of general fear/distress/apathy. 14. Ability to seek privacy/refuge. 15. Absence of surgical or physical modification of the skin, tissues, teeth or bone structure other than for the purposes of genuine medical treatment/manipulation/sedation.

Ways to meet these Five Freedoms include:


- Disease prevention and veterinary treatment
- Appropriate shelter
- Nutrition, and
- Humane handling.

Other Common Activities

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 focuses on ensuring inclusive and quality education for all, as well as promoting lifelong learning. Access to English and Mandarin can be routes out of poverty, providing people with vital skills in business and in particular, tourism.

Assisting teachers by providing support of a native speaker in foreign language classes can add significant value to local communities. Voluntourists can support teachers in large classes and assist with administration and teaching. When linked well to existing educational frameworks, voluntourism can provide additional support to schools to provide quality education. Guidelines for voluntourism teaching activities are outlined in Table 11.

Table 11: Key guidelines for voluntourism teaching activities


Activity	Key Guidelines
Teaching 	<p><u>DO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Link teaching activities to the school curriculum ✓ Add value by <i>supporting</i> local teachers ✓ Complete background checks on voluntourists ✓ Have skilled voluntourists, with teaching qualifications or experience ✓ Have a plan in place for voluntourist teachers to ensure continuity of teaching ✓ Have a timetable for voluntourist teachers to work in with so as not to disrupt the school day ✓ Comply with and add value to the government school curriculum ✓ Have relevant child protection policies in place <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Replace local teachers ✗ Disrupt the class ✗ Repeat the same thing at a low level for children ✗ Have voluntourists teaching on their own

“Schools in more affluent areas levy a fee to hire Native English Teachers for their schools. People with money send their children to after-school tutorial lessons to learn English. English can be a route out of poverty, leading to careers in commerce or tourism. A pass in English is mandatory for university entrance. Thai teaching is still conservative. A concentration on the technical aspects of English makes the lessons on a par with the Latin lessons of my school days. Volunteers can make English fun. A quote from a Thai teacher: ‘The children love volunteers’ lessons. They are now hungry for English.’ ”

– NGO


Small-scale infrastructure projects can add value to communities and help to improve vital services such as public health. Providing clean water and sanitation infrastructure is a tangible benefit that voluntourism can facilitate. Voluntourism can assist with providing access to water and sanitation to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Guidelines for voluntourism community infrastructure activities are outlined in Table 12.

Table 12: Key guidelines for voluntourism community infrastructure activities

Activity	Key Guidelines
<p>Building Community Facilities and Infrastructure</p> 	<p><u>DO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure that there is a genuine need for infrastructure ✓ Ensure that the project is not taking local jobs ✓ Have skilled local supervision ✓ Have a safety plan in place and a safety-led culture ✓ Have voluntourists provide labour that is safe and non-skilled; for example, painting ✓ Have a local supervisor aware of and committed to the safety plan ✓ Comply with all government legislation and regulations relating to construction <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Have voluntourists work on construction beyond their skill set ✗ Have the project take paid jobs from local people ✗ Build infrastructure without a plan for its use and resource, particularly schools/medical centres. When they are built, are there teachers and doctors to staff them?

Conservation is the proper management of a natural resource to prevent its exploitation, destruction or degradation. Conservation is an activity and focuses on efforts to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources and protection of the environment. Key guidelines for voluntourism conservation activities are outlined in Table 13.

Table 13: Key Guidelines for voluntourism conservation activities

Activity	Key Guidelines
<p>Environment and Conservation</p> 	<p><u>DO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Link activities to government and local conservation and environmental protection plans ✓ Support existing reputable projects run by local NGOs ✓ Use less-skilled voluntourists as research assistants for easy tasks such as counting species or simple measurements ✓ Engage with and respect local indigenous culture and their links to the land and sea ✓ Ensure local communities are engaged with and supportive of the initiative <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Develop tourism in fragile environments to the extent that it causes harm – consider carrying capacity

Conservation activities can help to raise awareness and support initiatives that advance the United Nations sustainable development framework aiming to protect the planet (Sustainable Development Goals 13, 14 and 15).

13 CLIMATE ACTION



14 LIFE BELOW WATER




15 LIFE ON LAND



Voluntourism can provide an avenue to build capacity and skills as well as access to international networks and expertise. Key guidelines for voluntourism skills development and training activities are outlined in Table 14.

Table 14: Key guidelines for voluntourism skills development and training activities

Activity	Key Guidelines
<p>Skills development and training</p> 	<p><u>DO</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Have voluntourists with appropriate skills and experience relevant to the task ✓ Provide well thought out and articulated needs analysis; i.e. aims and objectives and skills needed ✓ Link voluntourists' skills to the appropriate project ✓ Spend time verifying skills and matching to appropriate projects ✓ Look for soft skills such as personality <p><u>DO NOT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Provide people who do not have experience to be mentors ✗ Provide people that do not have the expertise to give advice ✗ Provide people who do not have the softer skills needed to interact and form relationships with others

FINAL REMARKS

Voluntourism is a worthwhile activity when properly implemented to serve and protect the well-being of local communities. It is only through thorough planning and managing in conjunction with local communities then we see the true benefits of welcoming visitors that can add value to livelihoods in various forms. We have outlined a lot of important points to take note of to start voluntourism activities in your community. By correctly applying the best practises outlined in this booklet you will realise the best outcomes of voluntourism in your local community.

We have tried to make this guide as up to date, accurate and simplified as possible. Write to PNGTPA and tell us which parts of the guidebook you think are useful and where we may need to change or improve for next time. This will remain a useful resource for all voluntourism stakeholders for some time to come.

If you have any queries regarding this guidebook, please do not hesitate to contact:

PNG TOURISM PROMOTION AUTHORITY

PO Box 1291

Port Moresby, NCD

Phone: 320 0211

Fax: 320 0223

Email: info@papuanewguinea.travel

Website: www.papuanewguinea.travel

Find us also on: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest

