

EUROPEAN VOLUNTEER  
CENTRE

# VOLUNTOURISM TOOL KIT

2019



Europe  
for Citizens

CEV   
European Volunteer Centre



# AIM OF THE TOOL KIT



This tool kit is designed to help potential volunteers and stakeholders in assessing voluntourism opportunities. This will help with deciding if volunteering abroad is the most suitable action to take, and in which case, how to identify a good quality and worthwhile project.

The tool kit guides the user through a process to assess the quality and the sustainability of voluntourism opportunities on offer. It aims to change the perceptions around the goals and meaning of voluntourism, to achieve a more sustainable development. For more details on what is understood by voluntourism and deeper explanation of the issues, risks and challenges associated with it, read here the CEV report.



## 1. Why do you want to volunteer?



Assess your own intentions!

	Not important	Important	Very Important
To give back			
To do something good			
To deliver meaningful and measurable improvements in community projects			
Opportunity for personal development			
Increase self-esteem			
To meet interesting people			
Improve the understanding of the local community where you are based			
Interested in meeting new people and making friends abroad			
To travel			
Other reasons:			




**Remember:** Ego-boosting is not is not the goal of volunteering.




## 2. FINDING THE RIGHT AGENCY/ORGANISATION/PROJECT

### 2.1. Assessing the sustainability of the project

 **YES** Do you need to pay a fee to participate?


YES NO

 **YES** Are you required to raise additional funds from family, friends or fundraising activities before, during or after the placement?

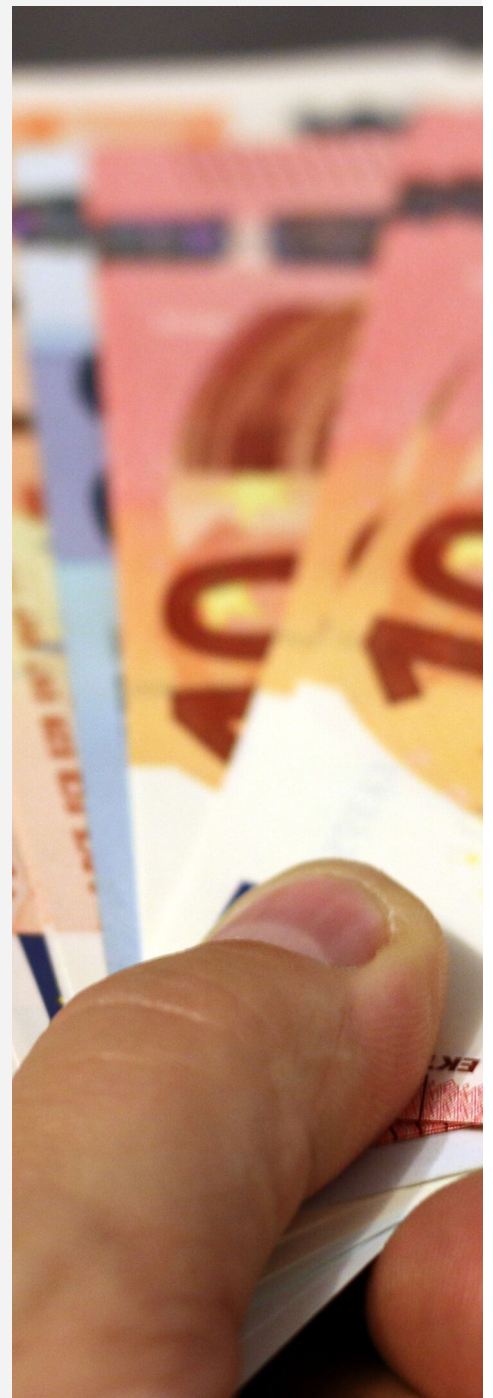
YES NO

 If yes, what are these funds being used for?

.....  
.....  
.....

 Is there any information about the overall accounts (income and expenditure) of the project/ organisation?

.....  
.....  
.....






Are the local communities benefiting from this money?

YES

NO

 What need in society does the project address?


.....


.....


.....

How long has the project been going on?

 0-1 year

 1-3 years

 3-5 years

 More than 5 years



 **YES** Can you identify any improvements over the project lifetime:

In the conditions?

YES

NO

In the project aims/goals?

YES

NO

In the local community?

YES

NO



**Remember:** If the situation is similar to what it has been like for years, this project might be profiting from making the community dependent rather than aiming for sustainable development.



## 2.2 Assessing the quality of the project

Does the organisation/ initiative aim to break stereotypes and promote understanding and tolerance of differences?

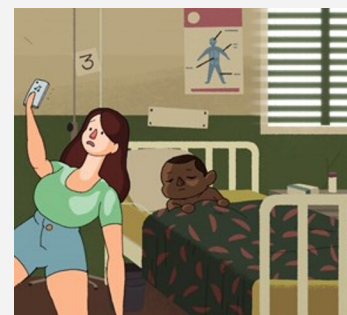
Fully  To an extent  Not at all

Can you spot any of the following on the project's website:

- White saviours
- Social distance
- Underage children
- People in social or healthcare institutions

Is the organisation committed to providing inclusive volunteering experience to volunteers from different social and economic backgrounds?

Fully  To an extent  Not at all





Does the organisation provide an environment where volunteers from different social, cultural and religious backgrounds and contexts, including from the local community, can implement actions together?

YES NO



Would the volunteering activity be considered ethical and suitable in the place where you come from or are located?

- Yes     To an extent     Not at all



Who are the beneficiaries of the project?

.....

.....

.....



Do you know what the beneficiaries of the volunteer action most appreciate or need from the project?

- Yes     To an extent     Not at all



**Remember:** Good voluntourism opportunities should enable the communities and the volunteers to learn from each other, reduce social distance and not reinforce geopolitical power relations.

In what sector is the voluntourism activity provided?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare    | <input type="checkbox"/> Education         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare     | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Heritage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social work   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other .....       |



Are any specific recognised professional qualifications necessary to carry out your responsibilities?

YES NO

Do you have the necessary skills to carry out the tasks?

YES NO



If no, will training be provided or will you organise your own capacity building/ training?

YES NO

Are there any legal frameworks that could impact on, or prevent, your voluntourism experience?

YES NO




**Remember:** Any concerns about voluntourism experiences on offer in Europe (advertised and accessible through online applications or other means) should be brought to the attention of the CEV secretariat, or to CEV members in their country. These examples will be used to create a report to be used as an evidence base for better voluntourism policies and practices.





## 2.3 Volunteering with children or other vulnerable groups

 **YES** Does the voluntourism opportunity involve 'orphans', vulnerable children or other vulnerable people (eg people with disabilities or the elderly)?

YES

NO

**Not aware**



**Remember:** It is estimated that 80% of children living in orphanages are not actually orphans. Despite best intentions, voluntourism experiences in these institutions can often cause more harm than good.



**YES** Do you have any relevant experience or qualifications for the proposed role?

YES

NO



**Remember:** If you would not be happy to see a volunteer without qualifications or background checks engaging in volunteering activities with children or vulnerable people in your local nursery-school or community then you should not do the same thing abroad.

Can you spot any of the following emotive language examples about the voluntourism opportunity communication?

- 'Giving the children love they need'
- 'Saving children'
- 'Providing love and attention'
- 'Change one child's life at the time'
- 'Life-changing experience'





**Remember:** Certain companies use emotive language to take advantage of well-meaning potential volunteers. Children's emotional attachment to short and long-term volunteers who then go back to their countries after the placement, can cause long-lasting harm to the children.\*



Do you have any doubts that the children are being purposefully kept in poor conditions to raise donations?

YES

NO

Maybe



**Make sure that the voluntourism opportunity you are interested in is not exploiting anyone!**



Can you see any improvements in the conditions of the orphanage/other institution over the years?

YES

NO



Who finances the institution?



Is it run by locals?

YES

NO

Is it fully depended on volunteers or is there a paid, trained staff to take care of the beneficiaries?



\*To learn more, visit: [Hope and Home: What is wrong with Orphanage VolunTourism?](https://www.hopeandhomes.org/blog-article/orphanage-voluntourism/)



### 3. ASSESSING THE VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

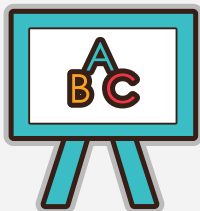
Is the organisation committed to providing assistance and training to volunteers?



- Pre-departure       During the placement  
 After the placement



- What kind of training is provided?  
 Orientation       Health and Safety  
 Skills Based       Child Protection  
 Other .....



What kind of relevant and appropriate support does the organisation offer in order to provide genuine and meaningful volunteering placements?


- Training       Mentoring  
 Language support       Other: .....

 Do you know and understand the structure of the organisation?

YES

NO


**To an extent**

 How much impact do volunteers have towards realising the objectives of the project?

.....

.....


.....

 How are volunteers supported and valued because of their contribution?

.....


.....

.....

 **YES** Have you discussed/agreed a volunteer agreement stating your rights and responsibilities?

YES NO



 Who will inform you about your tasks and responsibilities?


.....

.....

.....



**Remember:** A volunteer agreement is essential for a quality volunteer placement. A contract clarifies your responsibilities as well as your rights and obligations. It recognises the importance of your contribution. It can also be referred to if any question arises about about your placement.

 **YES** Do you know who you will you report to? Do you know who you can turn to share any concerns, questions or problems, if needed ?

YES NO **To an extent**



**Remember:** Good volunteer management is essential for the success of the project. It is necessary to understand how the project is run and who will manage you and other volunteers during the placement. Knowing who is responsible for the volunteer's safety, and who will serve as a point of contact for you and your family in case of emergency is crucial. Volunteer supervision is an important aspect of successful project implementation.

Are there opportunities for validation of skills and competencies gained?

YES

NO



Do volunteers have the chance to become the advocate/remain part of the project before and after participating?

YES

NO

**To an extent**

Is this limited to financial donations or are there other opportunities?

YES

NO



Notes:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....





## 4. EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS

The European Solidarity Corps initiative (ESC) is a good quality way to volunteer abroad.

This tool kit was produced by an ESC Trainee based on the CEV Volontourism policy statement and research paper.



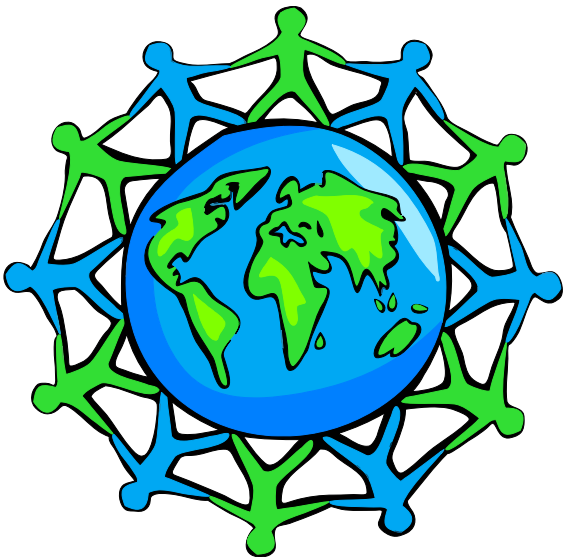
**EUROPEAN  
SOLIDARITY  
CORPS**



Europe  
for Citizens



European Volunteer Centre



© September 2019

CEV European Volunteer Centre  
Mundo B, Rue d'Edinbourg 26,  
Brussels 1050 - Belgium  
[www.cev.be](http://www.cev.be)

### For further reading:

- **Voluntourism: A Critical Evaluation and Recommendation for the Future:**  
[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ec99c\\_9dbfe67c64e74a658e5cd021affd0bb3.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ec99c_9dbfe67c64e74a658e5cd021affd0bb3.pdf)
- **CEV Policy Statement on Volunteering Issues in Europe:**  
[https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ec99c\\_c89d16a16f4647b6a3d3f4567452a9d1.pdf](https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ec99c_c89d16a16f4647b6a3d3f4567452a9d1.pdf)
- McGloin, C and Georgeu, N. (2015). 'Looks good on your CV': The sociology of voluntourism recruitment in higher education'. *Journal of Sociology*. 1-15
- Rosenberg, T. (2018), The business of voluntourism: do western do-gooders actually do harm?, *The Guardian*:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/apr/11/australia-must-legislate-to-prevent-modern-slavery-in-our-supply-chains>
- **Hope and Home: What is wrong with Orphanage VolunTourism?**  
<https://www.hopeandhomes.org/blog-article/orphanage-voluntourism/>

