

THREE MODELS OF VOLUNTOURISM

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Volunteer as Learner

The volunteer is there to see, experience, and learn



Volunteer as Doer

The volunteer is there to perform a critical service



Volunteer as Expert

The volunteer is there to share their expertise with others

Nonprofit Responsibilities

- Be upfront with prospective volunteers about their role as learners
- Be willing to provide educational opportunities
- Be able to brief people in advance so they have an enriched understanding of the environment on site
- Be able to measure the value and impact of their program

In addition to those points in the Learner category:

- Carefully screen and qualify volunteers
- Match skills and expertise appropriately with the task at hand
- Be willing to turn down offers of support if the volunteer does not possess the skills needed
- Be willing to train people on the customs and norms of the site

In addition to those points in the Learner and Doer categories:

- Pay a stipend or cover travel expenses in some cases
- Accommodate the schedules of busy professionals
- Be willing to train the trainer: not all experts are teachers - they may have the knowledge, but do not know how to facilitate that learning in others

Volunteer Responsibilities

- Accept their role as a Learner, not Doer or Expert
- Be aware of their privilege (race, wealth, nationality, language, education, gender, lived-experience)
- Be willing to suspend judgement
- Be willing to question what they think they know
- Be open to learning something new
- Be willing to be changed by what they learn

In addition to those points in the Learner category:

- Possess valuable skills that serve the needs of the organization
- Demonstrate their expertise through past experience, licensure, training, or certification
- Be willing to take direction from local staff, treat them with respect, and follow their lead

In addition to those points in the Learner and Doer categories:

- Be teachable and trainable - just because you know your subject, does not mean you know how to teach it in another culture
- Keep their egos in check
- Be willing to take direction, pivot, improvise, and make mistakes in an unfamiliar environment
- Demonstrate emotional resilience.

