

# Considering Ethics Abroad: Questions to Help you Plan for International Internship, Volunteer, and Service-Learning Placements

## About the Organization

- Does your intended host organization promise huge change with little time commitment?
- Can host organization outcomes be measured? Do they sound reasonable or over-inflated?
- Is the project sustainable?
- Are you taking the place of a local person?
- Are they letting you do something that you are unqualified to do in the US?
- Are training or language skills needed?
- Will you be supervised by local subject matter experts?
- How are your qualifications assessed and background checked?
- Do the photos on web page reflect “white savior” dynamic?
- Are you working with orphans or vulnerable populations?
- Do travel or tourism elements detract from other stated goals?
- Can you access the organization's annual report?
- Is there transparency about how your participation fee relates to the overall project budget?
- Does your host organization provide enough information to the public for you to answer these questions on your own and with relative ease?

## About You

- Are you prepared to perform assigned tasks and interact with the local people with humility?
- Do you and your host organization recognize your limitations to help?
- Do you and your host organization agree that your primary role is that of a learner? Can you name the local experts you will learn from?
- Have you taken the time to inventory what you don't know about your intended host organization and the issues it addresses? (Hint: this process is a great way to formulate questions to jumpstart your learning.)
- Have you checked reliable sources for known health, safety and security risks associated with your participation? Are you prepared to manage those risks?

## About Your Role within the Organization

- Do you have sought-after skills, experience or education that will contribute to the project and truly assist those you are hoping to help?
- Will you receive training and education to complete the project?
- Will you be engaging with locals, exchanging ideas, and collaborating?
- Would your impact be greater if you just sent the money instead of paying to go to the host organization?

## Useful Links

Forum on Education Abroad Standards of Good Practice:

<https://forumea.org/resources/standards-of-good-practice/>

Standards Guidelines: Health Related Programs Abroad:

<https://forumea.org/resources/standards-of-good-practice/standards-guidelines/undergraduate-health-related-programs-abroad/>

U.S. Department of State Country Specific Information: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>

University of Iowa International Travel Policy for Students:

<https://international.uiowa.edu/study-abroad/first-steps/ui-international-travel-policy-students>