



# INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING OVERSEAS?

## #SMARTVOLUNTEERING

Australians are well known for our generosity when travelling overseas.

We give our time, skills and money to help others.

Unfortunately, visiting orphanages while on holidays can encourage harmful practices and put vulnerable children at risk of more harm.

Our advice for Australian volunteers is to be an **informed volunteer**, be a **child safe volunteer** and be a **prepared volunteer**.

## BE AN INFORMED VOLUNTEER

The Australian Government discourages any form of short-term, unskilled volunteering in orphanages.

- Constant strangers coming in and out of children's lives can be harmful to a child's development.
- Some orphanages are created to get money from tourists, rather than providing care to children as a last resort.
- This can encourage an over-reliance on orphanage care, separate families and may put vulnerable children at greater risk of harm.

## BE A CHILD SAFE VOLUNTEER

Avoid any activity where children are promoted as tourist attractions.

- Care for vulnerable children should aim to reintegrate children into their family or community settings where it is safe to do so.
- Thoroughly research any overseas organisation offering opportunities to volunteer with children to check they are acting in the best interests of the children.
- Find out if the organisation has a Child Protection Policy, and how this is put into practice.

## BE A PREPARED VOLUNTEER

Be a smart volunteer when you are overseas.

- Your activities should 'do no harm' and address a need in a local community.
- Do your homework to make sure you are the right person in the right organisation, making a positive contribution to the community.
- Find out any country specific advice, requirements or restrictions on volunteering activities.
- Turn this page over to see a more detailed checklist of things to consider.



# SMART VOLUNTEERING CHECKLIST

We know that many Australians and Australian organisations generously give their time and resources to volunteering overseas. We have created a checklist to help you be informed before volunteering.



THIS CHECKLIST  
IS ONLY A  
STARTING POINT

To help you choose the right volunteer experience, ask the following:

## 1. Is the organisation trustworthy, transparent and reputable?

- ✓ What can you learn about their mission and financial information from their website and other independent materials?
- ✓ Does the organisation have a proven track record?
- ✓ Does it comply with the laws and regulations of the country where you will volunteer?

## 2. Is volunteering the right fit?

- ✓ Have you been given clear information about what activities you will be doing as a volunteer?
- ✓ Do you have the right skills and experience to do the proposed activities?
- ✓ Will you be sharing your skills with local staff?

## 3. Is the organisation child safe?

- ✓ Do they have a Child Protection Policy?
- ✓ Are volunteers asked to read and sign a Code of Conduct which includes guidance on their Child Protection Policy and procedures?
- ✓ Do they always put the best interests of the children first?
- ✓ Are visitors registered on arrival and always supervised?
- ✓ Are staff and volunteers required to have general background checks?
- ✓ Are staff and volunteers who have regular contact with children required to have child protection screening?



There are many worthwhile Australian and international volunteer organisations and programs which are making a significant difference to people's lives overseas.

Read more and apply for Australian government funded assignments at [www.australianvolunteers.com](http://www.australianvolunteers.com).

For more general information on smart volunteering visit [www.dfat.gov.au/australianvolunteers](http://www.dfat.gov.au/australianvolunteers) or email [smartvolunteering@australianvolunteers.com](mailto:smartvolunteering@australianvolunteers.com).

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