

HUMBLE SMILE
FOUNDATION

Visiting Our Humble Projects 2023

Tips for a respectful,
meaningful, and humble
volunteer experience.



Dos And Don'ts

DO - Research local culture and customs.

Learn about cultures, customs, and history, so you can better understand the people you will be working with.

DON'T - Impose your values.

Avoid imposing your own values and beliefs on the people you are working with.

Respect their cultural practices and traditions, even if they are different from your own.

DO - Be respectful.

Respect the local customs, culture, and people. Be open minded and willing to learn from them.

DON'T - Treat people like objects or charity.

Treat people with dignity and respect. Avoid the "white savior" mentality and recognize that you are there to learn and support, not to save or fix.

DO - Build relationships.

Take the time to build relationships with the people you are working with. Listen to their stories and perspectives, and learn about their lives and experiences.

Dos And Don'ts

DON'T - Forget about the impact of your actions.

Be aware of the impact of your actions. Think about the long-term effects of your work and how it will affect the local community after you leave.

DO - Support local businesses.

Buy local products and support local businesses. This helps to create sustainable economic growth in the communities where you are volunteering.

DON'T - Give out gifts.

Think about how you can make a long-term impact by sharing skills and knowledge, rather than giving out gifts that can only help in the short-term.

DO -Ask questions.

If you are unsure whether an action is the right thing to do, don't be afraid to ask program leaders for opinions and feedback.

DON'T - Photograph others without permission.

Respect the privacy of others. Always ask permission when taking a photograph.

What is White Saviorism?

White saviorism is a concept that refers to the idea of white people, typically from a Western context, seeing themselves as the "saviors" of people of color or marginalized groups in other parts of the world. It often involves a narrative in which white individuals or organizations are depicted as coming to the aid of people in need in other countries, and can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and reinforce power imbalances between different groups. It can also involve a lack of recognition of the agency and autonomy of people of color or marginalized groups, as well as a disregard for the historical and structural causes of poverty and inequality.

Helpful Terms

Oftentimes, we do not pay attention to how much power our language has. In order to make sure we use appropriate language that is most respectful of the communities we are working with, here are some alternatives for common terms.

The goal of using the right terms when communicating is to preserve the dignity of populations, be empathetic, just, kind, and ensure fairness.



Helpful Terms

Inappropriate Term	New Term	Explanation
Slum, Favela, Etc.	Informal Settlement	An informal settlement is a type of housing area that is built without proper legal authorization or formal planning by the government or other entities. These settlements are often referred to as "slums, favelas, etc." but this terminology is derogatory and is not to be used.
Third World	Developing Economy	Use the term "developing economy" instead of saying "third world." The term "third world" implies a hierarchy that puts higher-income countries on a pedestal.
working for/ helping/ saving/ giving	Working with/ Standing in Solidarity with	Use these phrases instead of "working for/helping/saving/giving." These emphasize both the autonomy of all individuals involved and highlight the fact that the project is a collaborative effort, rather than reducing the agency of local individuals involved in the project.
Beneficiary	Participant/ Stakeholder/ Community Partner	Use these terms instead of using the term "beneficiary." "Beneficiary" implies that a person is receiving assistance passively, even though these participants are actively engaged in the projects at hand.

Helpful Terms

Inappropriate Term	New Term	Explanation
Victim	Survivor	Use the term "survivor" instead of the term "victim." This once again reduces the autonomy and agency of the individual who may have experienced hardship.
Vulnerable	Underrepresented	Use the term "underrepresented" instead of the term "vulnerable". The term "vulnerable" implies weakness, and can be perceived as derogatory.
Empowerment	It is okay to use this term if it is used specifically, i.e. "financial women's empowerment."	When using the term "empowerment," it is important to be specific. Simply saying "women's empowerment" implies that you hold the power to empower others when really empowerment is a self-driven journey. The term "financial women's empowerment" illustrates that specific tools are being offered in order to facilitate women's empowerment.

Helpful Terms

Inappropriate Term	New Term	Explanation
Handicapped/ Special Needs	Disabled	Use the term "disabled" instead of the terms "handicapped" or "special needs." These terms imply weakness and can be perceived as derogatory.
Illiterate	Low Literacy	Use the term "low literacy" instead of the term "illiterate." The term low literacy recognizes that reading and writing are learned skills that can be improved upon, while the term "illiterate" implies that literacy is binary.
Manmade	Artificial	Use the term "artificial" instead of "manmade." There has been a shift away from using gendered words.
Mankind	Humanity	Use the term "humanity" instead of "mankind." There has been a shift away from using gendered words.
Manpower	Human Resource	Use the term "human resource" instead of "manpower." There has been a shift away from using gendered words.