

QUESTIONS TO ASK

When planning any sort of service learning experience, it can be helpful to ask the following questions:

WHO HAS THE BIGGEST SAY IN DESIGNING OUR SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT?

- Has our project been designed based on the outcomes for our students, or based on the needs of the charities and their participants?
- Who holds the balance of power in this relationship? What would the people we work with be afraid of losing if they were to voice disagreement with us?
- What processes or systems have we created to get honest feedback about the effectiveness of our projects from the organizations we work with?

HOW DO WE RECOGNISE THE HARD AND CELEBRATE THE RESILIENCE OF THE PEOPLE WE ARE “SERVING”

- How do we show a balanced view of the people we are serving, highlighting their strengths and similarities to us and building connection points for empathy?
- What language do we use to talk about those we are serving when we communicate with families?
- How do we help our students learn from the experiences of those we are serving?
- If this is a cross-cultural experience, how are we celebrating the good things from other cultures? Is the view of the country, people, politics, history, economics and faith balanced to include the hard and the good?

HOW ARE WE CREATING PARTNERSHIP “WITH” OTHERS INSTEAD OF DOING THINGS “FOR” OTHERS?

- How does this experience help foster relationships across age, culture, class or national divides?
- How can we turn our event into mutual learning experiences, or relationship building activities which we do “together”?
- How do we explicitly teach our students the values of friendship, and compassion in the context of getting to know others, rather than suggesting that our students can be the “saviors:” or fix other people’s issues?
- What decisions about their own lives are our students encouraged to make because of what they have experienced through this service project?

QUESTIONS TO ASK

HOW ARE WE HELPING OUR STUDENT INTEGRATE THEIR LEARNING WITH THEIR LIFE EXPERIENCES

- Do we explicitly teach concepts such as social justice, charity, poverty reduction, trauma informed care, privilege and about the governmental systems and structures which effect it, outside of HASS class?
- Do we help students learn about society's complexities through books, movies, and the stories and experiences of others?
- Do we provide opportunities for personal reflection where students can practice building empathy?
- Do we provide experiences and reflections that give students "the next step" so they don't feel powerless in the face of complexity?

ARE THE SKILLS NEEDED FOR THIS SERVICE ACTIVITY AGE-APPROPRIATE FOR OUR STUDENTS?

- Would we expect children in our country to do the tasks that we are suggesting for this service learning project?
- Would we expect the service learning task to be done by professionals or adults in our home country?
- Is there anything in our communications or the way we are organising the trip that implies that the recipients of our service "will be grateful for any help"?

WHAT IMPACT IS THIS HAVING ON HOW THE PARTICIPANTS ARE ABLE TO ENGAGE WITH THEIR COMMUNITY?

- Does your service project highlight particular community members as "charity participants" or "welfare recipients"? How can you supply donations etc in ways that protects participant agency and privacy?
- Does your program replace an adult's role with one of your students? Could this lead to shame or disrespect in the community for the adult who is being 'replaced'? How can you mitigate that?
- If you are providing resources, have you brought them locally? Are they able to be replicated by locals if they want to keep using them? Are they able to be fixed on location by local people?

RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

EVALUATION TOOLS FOR SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

While it's designed for churches taking groups overseas, the following website helps you reflect on your service learning projects and give you tools to know what needs to change and how.

The Self-evaluation forms on the last page are particularly helpful.

www.ethicalmissionstrips.org

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Also produced by ACCI, this due diligence document helps evaluate the governance processes and policies of any organization you are working with to determine if they are suitable for partnering with:
https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/acci/pages/145/attachments/original/1461811683/2.ACCI_Due_Diligence_Guidelines.pdf%3F1461811683&ved=2ahUKEwi_xtSlqp6HAxUzTGwGHSPqB1kQFnoECA8QAw&usg=AOvVaw2VJfR1kCf88DU0DeDLR7wD

For International service projects, The **Australian Council For International Development** has a toolkit for helping to understand what is best practice in development with questions to evaluate your own projects.

<https://acfid.asn.au/good-practice-toolkit/>

BOOKS TO READ

Anu Traranth (2019) *Beyond Guilt Trips: Mindful Travel in an Unequal World*. Between the Lines, Toronto

Pippa Biddle (2021) *Ours to Explore: Privilege, Power and the Paradox of Voluntourism*, Potomac Books, Nebraska

Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, (2009) *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor . . . and Yourself*, Moody Publishers, Chicago
 And the accompanying short-term mission focussed: *Helping without Hurting in Short-term Missions: Leader's Guide*

David Livermore (2012) *Serving with Eyes Wide Open: Doing Short-Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence*, Baker Book House

Robert D. Lupton (2012) *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help, And How to Reverse It*, Harper One,

RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

TED TALKS

Getting more than we give: Realities of Volunteerism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hXFwMyK1KE>

What's wrong with volunteer travel?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYWI6Wz2NB8>

Why we need to end the era of orphanages

https://www.ted.com/talks/tara_winkler_why_we_need_to_end_the_era_of_orphanages

SUBSTACKS AND PODCASTS

Do Good Better: check out the archives for conversation-starting topics about international issues, faith and mission, humanitarian work, and expatriate life.

<https://rachelpiehjones.substack.com/>

The Good Problem with Leigh Mathews Podcast

Exploring the ethics and complexities of doing good.

<https://open.spotify.com/show/6gKrwXVnVmNVSAtzgCli9f>

ACADEMIC ARTICLES

Elnawawy, O., A. C. K. Lee and G. Pohl (2014) 'Making short-term international medical volunteer placements work: a qualitative study', *The British Journal of General Practice: The Journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners* 64(623): e329-335.

Guttentag, D. A. (2009) 'The Possible Negative Impacts of Volunteer Tourism', *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 11(6): 537-551.

Hammersley, L. A. (2014) 'Volunteer tourism: building effective relationships of understanding', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 22(6): 855-873.

King, I. (2013) 'What We Are About to Do Is Highly Problematic: The Unpaved Road from Service Trips to Educational Delegations' in K. Borland and A. E. Adams (eds) *International Volunteer Tourism: Critical Reflections on Good Works in Central America*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 81-92.

Priest, RJ et al., (2006). "Researching the Short-Term Mission Movement," *Missiology* 34

Probesco, L (2013) 'Giving Time, Not Money: Long-term Impacts of Short-term Mission Trips', *Missiology: An International Review* 41(2): 202-224.

Raymond, E. M. and C. M. Hall (2008) 'The Development of Cross-Cultural (Mis)Understanding Through Volunteer Tourism', *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5): 530-543.

RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

Poverty Simulation Games

TearFund Australia have a range of projects they support internationally and with Australia's First nations

Check out their school resources for some simulation activities for both primary and secondary school students.

<https://www.tearfund.org.au/resources/category/school-and-youth>

Their intentional counterparts also have some useful case studies and resources

<https://learn.tearfund.org/en/resources>

It's not Fair Monopoly

Another great ACCL resource, this adapted monopoly game explores the difference between justice and charity while asking the question, what if the world was only 10 people. Contains some mature themes.

[PDF download](#)

Individual lesson plans on justice and poverty related themes.

The following Non-Government Agencies have resources about specific justice issues and poverty reduction related themes such as poverty in Australia, Refugee issues and support, indigenous Australia's closing the gap and reconciliation resources, climate change and water and sanitation.

The Caritas and World Vision resources also have theological reflections and prayer resources.

<https://antipovertyweek.org.au/resources/teaching-resources>

<https://www.worldvision.com.au/get-involved/school-resources>

<https://www.caritas.org.au/resources/school-resources>

CHAT (Cultural Hearing Asking Telling)

The CHAT project is an 8 session course for small groups of multicultural or multi-faith young people. Based on the the Feast's [Guidelines for dialogue](#), the course equips our young people with skills for intercultural communication and teaches them how to listen, learn from and work with, people who have different beliefs, cultures and experiences to them. Training to run the program and the supporting resources are available through Scripture Union.

<https://chatproject.org.au/>

Anglican Board of Mission (ABM)

The Anglican Board of Mission has a range of justice-themed bible studies which link to the community development work they do in Australia and globally. The studies are aimed at adults but could be a good resource for staff teaching and reflecting on your service learning or social justice programs.

<https://www.abmission.org/resources/>

SERVICE AS FRIENDSHIP

LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

Personal

Be an empathetic listener to your friends and believe what they tell you about their experience of the world.

Read books/watch interviews/listen to podcasts by people with different life experiences than you.

Public

Awareness campaigns
Education events/seminars

ADVOCATE FOR THE SUPPORT THEY NEED

Personal

Encourage your friends to seek support when they need help.

Learn about ways that you can support others by learning what it means to be a good ally to those who are marginalised because of disabilities, gender, sexuality, or race and follow their lead on actions to take. This might mean talking to people and systems that are supposed to support them but aren't!

Public

Take part in direct social action about things that are important to you. This could include things like making or signing petitions, taking part in protests or choosing to write to or visit your local MP.

BE A FRIEND

Personal

Enjoy the friendships you make and be a good friend

Public

choose to volunteer in ways that cause you to create genuine connection with others such as mentoring, or doing acts of service with other people

SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE

Personal

Think about what your values are around money and stuff and how you choose to share it with friends and family. You might think about hospitality and the role that plays in your life

Public

Donating to causes can make a big difference. You can fundraise or make regular donations to something you care about

SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW

Personal

What things are you good at, what skills do you have, that can you use to support others? Eg helping grandparents with technology.

Public

"Technical support" is the term used when volunteering in ways that uses your skills or trains others to use your skills. It is one of the most effective forms of volunteering. Examples include social media content creation for an NGO campaign, training people in specialised skills like OT or speech pathology, working as a Pro-bono lawyer

CHOOSE TO MAKE LIFESTYLE CHOICES WHICH BENEFITS OTHERS

Personal

Make the choice to make your personal lifestyle decisions line up with your ethical values eg live with a low carbon footprint, boycott brands that use slave labour, buy fairtrade or ethically sourced clothing

Public

consider a career which allows you to put your value of serving others into practice. This is sometimes called a vocation