



## Ethical Volunteering

TGS partners with volunteer organisations that practice **ethical organizational values and provide an ethical volunteering experience**. TGS has visited all sites where volunteers work and has had staff our own staff members volunteer while supporting a university group program.

Volunteer Vietnam (VV) is registered with the Vietnam Ministry of Foreign Affairs (charity number is 236/CNV-HD) and with The Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations and other international partners Activity International, Travel Works and 1-World Charity Shops. VV publishes an annual report that details where sponsorship and program fees are spent. Program fees are designed to cover the costs of supporting the volunteer with a small portion (5%) being a contribution towards the support of the children in the program.

All VV staff are locals who work in these communities every day, but with visiting volunteers they can support more members of the disadvantaged community. VV has several retirees who return annually to volunteer in the various programs and assist with redeveloping programs, updating resources and support and train new volunteers.

Projects are designed and developed in consultation with local govt and other organisations and people who are desperately trying to fill the gaps. In recent years, VV has worked with Swinburne University to develop a horticultural program that assists young men residing at the social support centre to not only learn skills and a qualification, but they use these skills to grow fresh vegetables for the social support Centre in DaNang.

VV runs a number of programs aimed at volunteers with specific skills, however training is provided to support those not qualified in a certain area. All volunteers are working with local therapy and teaching staff, which in turn helps “internationalise” the organisation and the centres they work with, and improve English speaking capabilities.

An **Ethical Volunteer** needs to understand that they are not there to “save” anyone, and that there is a lot they could and should learn from the community they are volunteering with. Keep in mind that you will only be able to effectively help the locals if you understand the problems they are facing and the root cause of those issues. This learning process will also give you new perspectives on things and help you be a more understanding volunteer.

As a volunteer you should be prepared to be flexible and be aware of the cultural lens with which you may view the organisation and the ways in which they operate. Do some research before you depart so you have a basic understanding of what to expect of the culture, which may assist with settling in, and allow you to navigate the thoughts and feelings you experience from the volunteering experience.

The following websites may be useful to your preparation:

- [Tourism Concern](#)
- [LearningService.info](#)
- [Globalsl.org](#)
- [The ChildSafe Network](#)
- [Orphanages Not the Solution](#)