

## SECTION 1

### Strategy for Development **A PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE**

By Global Volunteers Co-founder and President Burnham J. Philbrook

Each of us is accountable for our own personal development. However, we are also entrusted with gifts and talents to be shared with others. Global Volunteers provides a direct way to share those gifts and talents. We are dedicated to helping build a foundation for world peace through mutual international understanding; recognizing that the mere absence of war is not peace and peace without justice is no peace at all. Our goal is to engage short-term volunteers on long-term community development projects to create, nurture and sustain the wellbeing of the world's children - so they can realize the full promise of their human potential.

#### ***WAGE PEACE & PROMOTE JUSTICE***

Global Volunteers' philosophy of service is based upon the recognition that war and injustice are born of insufficient human and economic development, and that individuals from any community working as volunteers can assist people from other communities and cultures in their human and economic development. It is a person-to-person strategy building a foundation for world peace and justice by encouraging and enabling people throughout the world to spend short periods working with and learning from local people in communities other than their own.

When people are engaged as volunteers, they enrich their awareness of the earth's cultural, ethnic, religious, and racial diversity, discover that we are all far more alike than we are different, and establish meaningful friendships with the people served. It is our hope that this newfound awareness and new friendships will result in multitudes of people urging their respective governments to institute mechanisms which require the peaceful resolution of disputes which otherwise might deteriorate into war. While national governments have the primary responsibility for maintaining peace, they are limited in what they can actually do to ensure a just and peaceful world. Individuals, however, can make tremendous personal contributions toward peace and justice. All of us who hope for peace are challenged to take on this responsibility.

#### ***GUIDING PRINCIPLES***

Global Volunteers relies on ten guiding principles. These principles have proven essential to the success of our partnerships with communities around the world. We share them with you as you prepare for your service program because they will help you better serve the community with which you will be working and help you maximize your personal benefit from the experience.

##### **1. We serve only where we are invited.**

Millions of dollars are spent annually by well-intentioned governments and nongovernmental organizations to enhance human and economic development. However, for external assistance and resources to be genuinely effective, local people must invite the outside help, otherwise it will have limited positive effect. Local people are the source of development. Individuals,

families, neighborhoods, and community organizations must initiate and conduct their own development efforts. The role of the outsider in the development process is vital, albeit precarious. Outsiders are most valuable in facilitating, advising, encouraging, catalyzing and working shoulder-to-shoulder with local people in their efforts to build their future. Externally imposed and top-down approaches simply do not work. Programs that are centrally controlled, or even centrally planned, do not inspire development. Effective development is initiated at the local level and requires the full participation of local people.

There is substantial evidence that, although appropriate development technology donated by outside organizations may ease the burdens of the impoverished or those struggling with new democracies, it will not be effective in assisting people in the development process unless they "own" it. This is a nearly universal, but all too often misunderstood, principal. Kusum Nair, in her account of village life in India entitled *Blossoms in the Dust*, illustrates this point. She quotes a government official responsible for rural farming projects who described this phenomenon:

*"We carry manures and improved seeds in a trailer and offer to deliver them right at the doorstep to induce these (farmers) to use them. We offer them loans to buy the seeds and manures. We go to their fields and offer to let in the water for them. We ask them to try it out first in two acres only, if they are not convinced. They could quadruple their yields if they would only take our advice and at least experiment. Still they are not forthcoming."*

Free people will decide for themselves what they will and will not do. Neither agricultural technology nor democracy can be imposed. A development strategy, which is based upon outside government agencies, religious organizations, or non-profits doing the job for or attempting to impose solutions on local people, is doomed to failure. Global Volunteers understands that it is only when local people decide to act that positive change will occur. It is only when local people decide to implement development plans, that those plans have any currency. And it is only when local people take a leadership role in the creation of those plans, that they have any chance of success.

**'DEVELOPMENT':** Global Volunteers defines development as a process whereby people achieve their full human potential and fullness of life. Local communities are primarily responsible for this process and self reliance is the ultimate objective. Results are best achieved through the ethical use of local resources available to all. People outside the community are most valuable in working side-by-side with local people to achieve locally-defined goals.

A community awakened to the possibility of achieving their collective hopes and dreams is a powerful force, a force that holds the promise of new life and self-reliance.

## 2. We work under the direction of local leaders

The reason is simple; for people to become self-reliant, they must be in charge. Local people embody their cultural, social, and economic issues. They know their needs and their priorities. They are the ones who realize the barriers to, as well as the possibilities for, their development. They must articulate their needs and identify the barriers that prevent those needs from being met. They must develop the plans to release those barriers and be mobilized to implement those plans. In every community where Global Volunteers works, local leaders identify one or more major development projects to be addressed during the time each team of volunteers is scheduled to be in the community. Often a major project will continue over many months or even years while many teams visit. While in the community, one or more local leaders take charge of the volunteers to help ensure that they are meeting the community's needs.

To ensure the best use of the volunteers, the community partners and local leaders must be aware of their skills and capabilities. The significant objective, from Global Volunteers' perspective, is to make certain the volunteers' skills are made known to the community. Because each team of volunteers is different from another, the team leader identifies for the host community the resources the team can share. Each team member also has the opportunity to identify the skills they are willing to offer in service to the community.

## 3. We do whatever we are asked to do.

*"God does not require that we succeed. God only asks that we serve."*  
- Mother Teresa

Global Volunteers attempts to do whatever we are asked, and only what we are asked. We act as a partner in the human and economic development process by assisting local communities in efforts that enhance self-reliance. To ensure that volunteers can make a positive contribution in this process, we ask our volunteers to take on the role of a "**Servant-Learner**." As servants, volunteers agree to do whatever they are asked to do within their limitations - within the parameters of their ability. The "Servant-Learner" is a "good neighbor," someone who comes along and sees that you're working on a project at your home and says, "Can I lend a hand?" Sometimes that neighbor gives us the momentum to get started. For example, if you are planning to paint your house but you are a bit overwhelmed by the magnitude of the endeavor, a helpful neighbor might say, "If you have an extra brush, I'll give you a hand." This is typically the context in which Global Volunteers works. (It is important to note that the servant willingly agrees to perform and should not be confused with the enslaved who participates only under duress.)

Global Volunteers' fundamental objective is to simply help local people do what they have already decided to do. We are not primarily concerned about constructing buildings, improving education, caring for children, or providing health care. Although all of those can be vitally important. We are concerned about increasing local people's capacity to do that which they have determined is important for their future. It is in this context that volunteers become a valuable resource for the communities served. We have been invited to teach conversational English in

the classroom, tutor English teachers, teach math and science, care for abandoned infants, conduct parent educational workshops, contribute patient care, explain how successful entrepreneurs employ basic principles of free enterprise and sound business practices, train home gardeners in using EarthBoxes, teach planning and problem solving by facilitating community forums, help local people build schools and health clinics, identify crop diseases, build chicken coops, facilitate women's cooperatives, and construct water harvesting and purification systems. However, in the absence of a specific project invitation, we do not "do" anything in a community, even when we might "know" something is needed or that it would be good to do it. Nor do we tell local people how they ought to do any of these things. If asked, we respectfully explain how we might accomplish something in our homeland and allow the local people to decide if there is any aspect of our process they wish to employ.

One of our teams in Guatemala was asked to help dig a ditch for a clean water system. Now you might ask, "Why encourage people to travel all the way to Guatemala to dig a ditch? Certainly, even the poorest people can do that." That question might even be more poignant given this particular team of volunteers because among them there were several teachers, a school superintendent, a couple of lawyers, a journalist, a nurse, and a couple of businesspeople. These were all well-educated and highly talented people, and they were all assigned to digging a ditch with shovels and pickaxes. Some might argue that these volunteers could have made a more substantive contribution if they had used their skills and expertise rather than digging a hole in the ground, albeit, an important hole.

However, the servant does what s/he is asked to do, and this team was asked to help with the ditch for the potable water system. It was a life-saving project. Contaminated water is a killer - particularly of children. Potable water is a lifesaver. Still, that may not justify the use of highly skilled professionals for the excavation. To fully understand the value of the Servant it is important to know that in a subsistence society, where people live off the land they do not survive if they do not work the land. Consequently, it is extremely difficult to organize a group of community people to dig a ditch, even for a life-saving potable water system.

When the people of this Guatemalan village became aware that 14 strong and energetic volunteers were coming to their community to work with them, they decided to take advantage of that resource and to put them to work. The plan for the water system, which would bring clean water directly to their homes, had been discussed for several years. The decision to do it had been made sometime before. Nevertheless, organizing the effort was more challenging. However, now there was an unexpected resource available. So, there they were, 14 Global Volunteers and 40 villagers strung out in a long line digging a ditch that would hold pipe through which clean, potable water would flow. The volunteers became the catalysts for the local people to do what they had already decided to do. On subsequent trips, the water pipe was laid, and the water was hooked up. Within a couple of years, most of the modest village homes had running water that comes from pristine mountain springs.

As in many stories of development, the water did not solve all the community's problems. The villagers soon discovered that running water needs to drain, and there was no sewer in this village. Water ran out of their homes and into the streets, deteriorating the already rutted roads. This was a complication that was unforeseen by the villagers, but they soon figured out a

solution. With the help of other volunteer teams, they installed a community sewer system. The results were clean, potable water and a sewer system that will grow to serve the health of the village children.

The most important part of this story, however, is that many friendships were made among the local people and the many volunteers who served in this village. Friendship is foundational to waging peace and promoting justice and is the primary goal of all Global Volunteers work projects. In fact, even though the work project is often the principal objective of the local people, for Global Volunteers the project is the vehicle to establishing genuine friendship and to serve mutuality of understanding.

#### **4. Local people are always in charge.**

Global Volunteers does not supplant the role of local people. We offer advice only when it is solicited. It is both inappropriate and counterproductive for any outsider to propose to a local community what it is that they ought to do to improve their livelihood or advance their human condition. To the contrary, our volunteers only do what local people specifically ask us to do. We do not impose our judgments or values upon the communities we visit. We do not decide for others what they need or what they ought to want. We do not even presume to know what they might need. Our only function is to serve in a manner that is consistent with our invitation. By respecting local prerogative, we acknowledge and honor the responsibility that local people everywhere are obligated to meet - the responsibility for their own development.

Volunteers who want to be effectively engaged in assisting local people in human and economic development know that they cannot solve local peoples' problems. This is frustrating for some volunteers, because so many people who want to volunteer have been trained as problem-solvers.

I remember an American western TV series called "Have Gun, Will Travel." The principal character was a hired gun fighter and his business card read, "HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL." Well, many of us could have a business card declaring "HAVE SOLUTION, WILL TRAVEL" because our education system teaches problem solving and many of us are paid to solve problems.

However, in a developing community, the problems can be dreadfully complex and the solutions equally difficult to come by. More important, those problems are not the outsider's responsibility. They are the responsibility of the local people, and they can and must solve their own problems. The outsider simply cannot become entangled in the problem-solving process.

Thus, when a community asks whether they should start a particular project, Global Volunteers responds that only the local people can know that. However, when we are asked "*Do you have any suggestions as to how we might implement this new project we have decided to do?*" or "*How do you think we could start this project in a way that might work better?*" or "*Do you know anything about child development that might help our children reach their potential?*" that provides an opening where the outsider can begin to be of some assistance.

Pommern, Tanzania offers an insightful example. Pommern is a remote agricultural village in the south-central part of the country. We were invited to send volunteers there in 1986 and have worked in this region ever since. On an early service program, we were asked to help build

classroom chairs and desks for the secondary school. Our community partner created a design for the furniture and the local people had sufficient materials and some hand tools to construct it. They wanted all the desks and chairs to function and look pretty much alike and asked for help in accomplishing that. The volunteers were all from the United States and one had worked in a manufacturing plant. He explained that if they were back home, how they might accomplish this task. First, they would build one desk and one chair - a prototype - to make sure that the product, as drawn, met their needs. Second, they would use the prototype to set up an assembly-line to build the furniture ensuring that all the desks and chairs looked and functioned alike. The local workers were not familiar with the concepts of prototype or assembly line. The Tanzanians' standard procedure at that time would have been to build each desk and chair one at a time. However, they liked the concept as presented. Even though only one of the volunteers had ever worked on an assembly line, every team member understood the principle and value of the assembly-line process. Accordingly, the volunteers and the local people together built a prototype chair and desk using the local design, materials, and tools. After they modified the prototype sufficiently to be acceptable to the school leaders, an assembly line was set up to manufacture the rest of the furniture. Forty desks and chairs were constructed to the thrill of all.

The Tanzanian villagers were in charge and Global Volunteers simply helped them do what they had already decided to do. The volunteers' role was not to decide that desks and chairs were needed, what they would look like, or even that they should all look the same. Those were decisions made by the local people. Global Volunteers' role was to add a little value, a little creativity to the process, some appropriate technology. In that process, not only was the specific task accomplished, but also the local tradesmen were exposed to new concepts of prototype and assembly line.

##### **5. We work hand-in-hand with local people on community-based projects.**

On all community projects, volunteers work hand-in-hand, alongside local people. Our expectation is that if the local community invites us to send ten Global Volunteers to help them on a labor project, there will be at least ten community people working on the same community projects. This not only ensures that we work on community priorities, but more importantly provides the occasion for the volunteers and the local people to learn from and about each other and to establish meaningful friendships. In fact, it is in working together - toiling, sweating, laughing, and sharing - that mutual understanding is rooted.

While our volunteers work along side community people, we never do a project "for" a community. In fact, if local people do not participate, we do not work. On our first team in the Mississippi Delta in the United States, we were asked to help construct a community building. As the team leader on that service program, I assigned 12 of the 23 volunteers to work on this important project. On Monday, the day work was to begin, only three local people showed up to work. The mayor was quite apologetic and assured me that there would be more local people on Tuesday. Nevertheless, we were clear about the importance of local people being in charge and their being held accountable. I only permitted three members of the team to work on the building that day. The other volunteers sat idle. They were not happy about this since they had come to work, but they honored the process. The next day, six or seven local people showed up

at the work site and an equal number of Global Volunteers worked with them. By the end of the week, the local people far outnumbered our volunteers, not only on the construction project, but also on all the community work projects. When this team of European Americans left this African American community at the end of the service program, the local people knew they were in charge. They also knew that this group of volunteers had not come to their community to do their work or impose their standards or values, but rather to work with them and under their direction. Equally important, the jobs got done and the Global Volunteers and the local people enjoyed each other's company, learned from and about each other in the process, and gained a much deeper mutual understanding than they ever could in any other setting.

We ask the community leadership to assign a local person to head up each project with which our volunteers are involved. After visiting with the local leaders and ascertaining on which projects the volunteers will work, Global Volunteers' team leader may also assign a volunteer to take on the role of the counterpart to the community project leader. For example, when we are asked to help teach conversational English, one local teacher and one member of the Global Volunteers' team generally have primary responsibility for overseeing the teaching process in each school and coordinating the key elements of the work.

Global Volunteers recognizes that it is extremely important that volunteers be fully engaged while they are in the community. After all, volunteers expend a substantial amount of money and valuable time to be of service. We have advised community leaders that it can be quite frustrating for "results-oriented" volunteers to have nothing tangible to do after they have traveled so far, spent so much money, and are in the community for such a short time. Furthermore, our community partners understand that it is a tragic waste to the community if there are skills, energy, and resources available but not utilized. However, sometimes reality simply takes control and there is nothing the local people or Global Volunteers can do to alter that course. Materials don't show up, teachers go on strike, the weather doesn't cooperate, funding is withdrawn, officials change their mind, and the importance of a funeral surpasses all project plans. That is why flexibility is such an important value when engaged in development work. It is helpful to remember that everything is subject to change without notice. Whether anything gets accomplished on schedule is often beyond anyone's control.

#### **6. We send teams of volunteer to each community several times each year, year-after year.**

Every community we serve can rely on Global Volunteers as an on-going resource. We send teams to each community two to 20 times annually and we commit to do this as long as we are invited and are able to recruit volunteers. We have maintained this commitment for decades in some places. This on-going relationship produces interdependency; Global Volunteers depends upon the communities to extend the open invitation to our teams of volunteers, and the communities depend upon us to show up and work with them.

However, it can take several teams of volunteers visiting a community before the host community, the community partners, and Global Volunteers are able to create a working relationship that is mutually beneficial. It takes time for our community partners to learn how to best use volunteers. An analogous process is the time it takes most people to learn how to use a new computer program. The software contains all the capability of the program before it is even

downloaded. Nevertheless, until it is installed, and the program is started up, it cannot do anything. It generally takes the user substantial time working with a new program before s/he becomes fully aware of all it will do and how to make it do it, although the program is fully capable as soon as it is loaded. Volunteers are much like a new computer program, and the local people are much like the computer user. Until they master the art of engaging volunteers, local people may not be able to fully capitalize on their skills.

Perhaps most important, volunteer teams generate a catalytic effect for local development. When local people know that a group of volunteers is coming to their community in a "servant-learner" capacity, that opportunity can help motivate the local people to organize themselves. In addition, because our development philosophy requires that the community provide local participants in a number equal to or greater than the number of Global Volunteers they invite, the resulting human resources available to the community are magnified. When this interchange goes on several times a year, for many years, the positive constructive results can be truly amazing.

## **7. Self-reliance is the ultimate objective.**

Successful human and economic development strategies build upon the concept of renewable wealth. They recognize that, while people may need some outside catalytic assistance and capital infusion to initiate their development efforts, local communities have the capacity to cultivate their natural resources, the capability of adding the necessary value, and the desire to generate their development. When local communities can produce their own nutritious food, adequately educate their children, ensure preventive health care, reduce their need for large families, practice the precepts of their religion, and honor their culture and heritage, then people can strive to develop their full human potential. This does not mean that individuals must become self-sufficient. Rather, it implies that through mutual dependence, communities are able to develop a cooperative self-reliance whereby the needs of all are met. Using local natural resources, local decision making, local consensus, local labor, and some outside objective assistance, the developing community can meet its own basic needs by producing goods and services which it needs, exporting surpluses to other communities, and importing what it doesn't produce.

I remember an occasion in India in the mid-1970's that illustrates this point. I was working as a short-term volunteer consultant on a village community development project. One day, several of us were assigned to dig a latrine – the first latrine in this village. We all understood the importance of latrines and the subsequent health benefits. However, our only digging tools were bamboo sticks. When our U.S. project director happened along, I asked him why we only had bamboo sticks for digging. I said, *"If you knew we were going to be constructing latrines, why didn't you tell us before we left home and we would have brought along collapsible shovels. That would have made this job a whole lot easier."*

His response has stuck with me ever since. He said, *"This is the first latrine that's being dug in this community. If you had brought along those shovels, it might be the last latrine because people do not have shovels here. You couldn't bring along enough shovels to fulfill the needs of this community and all the surrounding communities."*



What I learned from that exchange, and have confirmed on numerous subsequent occasions, is that the key to the development process is self-reliance. People must be permitted to do what must be done with what they have. Self-reliance is achievable even in the most economically impoverished areas, provided the natural resources that belong to all the people are available for the people to utilize. And, provided the community has a little outside catalytic assistance.

We provide modest financial support for community-driven projects when necessary. Although we do not subscribe to the theory that outside funding is absolutely necessary for development, we recognize that there are many situations when money is necessary to initiate and/or complete a development project. Caring for at-risk children, constructing a school building or health clinic, establishing a potable water system, planting EarthBoxes, building chicken coops, and providing textbooks all cost money that local people too often do not have. The scope of our financial contribution is relatively minor given the enormous need, but even a small amount of material support can be crucial in economically impoverished areas.

However, we are extremely careful with how we manage money and other types of donations. Our preference is to provide financial assistance on a matching basis, although some communities are so poor that they cannot generate matching dollars. And we do not give our partners money. Rather, we purchase materials that are necessary. All nonmonetary donations are given directly to our community partners. We never give personal gifts. We ask community leaders to furnish us written requests and explain how the tools, materials, or funding are directly related to the community

#### **Financial and Material Donation Guidelines**

- ◆ *Global Volunteers maintains control and discretion over all tax-deductible donations*
- ◆ *We request a community match whenever possible*
- ◆ *No personal gifts are ever given*
- ◆ *All nonmonetary contributions are presented directly to community partners through Global Volunteers*
- ◆ *Local leaders furnish written priority lists*
- ◆ *We buy what we can in the country served*
- ◆ *We introduce only appropriate technology*

projects, and how the local community plans to make its matching contribution to the effort. We purchase materials, books, tools, etc. in the countries where we work, depending on availability, to help the local economy. On occasion, we introduce appropriate technology to a community. This can be quite challenging, but we rely upon the local peoples' wisdom on when they might need new technology and its appropriateness. Each team of volunteers provides some funding which comes from the service program contribution or money we raise for the community. But whatever we do, self-reliance is always the ultimate objective.

#### **8. We stay in the community during most of the time we are in-country.**

Whenever possible, Global Volunteers teams work and live in a host community. Each volunteer is a guest of the local people and has the opportunity to experience the joy and

simplicity of rural, small-town, or neighborhood life. Volunteers have the occasion to learn from and about the people they serve and their hopes, dreams, struggles, and hardships. Volunteers also explore a diverse culture in a way that might otherwise never have been imagined.

As we return to these communities many times a year, year-after-year, we become a part of the community. We generally stay in local hotels or guesthouses, and occasionally in local people's homes. At most meals, the volunteers eat traditional foods, and on the day of worship, they can share in song and prayer with the indigenous people.

Unlike a tourist who can only be an observer, every Global Volunteer can become a participant in a community. We have worked in some communities for more than 20 years. Because each team of volunteers is a link in a long chain of volunteers, the community opens itself up in a manner that it simply would not consider under other circumstances. For example, in many communities, if there is a wedding, the volunteers frequently join the celebration. If there is a funeral, we may be invited to attend.

### **9. We pay for our food, water, lodging, and local transportation.**

Most of the communities we serve do not have the capacity to host our volunteers financially. Moreover, most volunteers are financially affluent by global standards. Ninety-seven percent of Global Volunteers reside in the United States, and the United Nations (UNU-WIDER) reports that 70 percent of Americans are among the richest 10 percent of the world's population in terms of net worth: "the value of physical and financial assets less debt." Consequently, we charge each volunteer a contribution that covers their food, water, lodging, local transportation, and project materials, as well as our program related and administrative expenses, all of which is tax-deductible for U.S. taxpayers.

### **10. We treasure what we learn from local people.**

The occasion to meet a 50 something village women hoeing in the front of her home with her grandson strapped to her back is a treat indeed. She probably didn't go to school beyond the third grade and has few worldly possessions, but she possesses wisdom that PhD's only dream about. Volunteers in her community may well have the chance to visit with her and to learn from and about her. She offers the essence of the learning side for the servant-learner.

As learners, volunteers are encouraged to open themselves to the new, hopefully to learn much like a child learns, with a fresh perspective. We invite volunteers to put away their preconceived notions, biases, and prejudices for the duration of the time they are in country, thus enhancing their opportunity to learn. For it is through the mastery of learning that we can genuinely achieve our own personal development.

Over the years, we have found that people everywhere need and want to share their personal gifts and talents. However, it is not always easy for individuals to discern how best to make this type of contribution. Global Volunteers affords such an opportunity. A theologian observed that the poor of the world are enslaved; they are shackled by their struggle for daily subsistence. He also noted that the affluent of the world are likewise enslaved; they are chained to their material

possessions. If we are both enslaved, then neither the economically poor nor the economically affluent can fully appreciate the full value of life.

Global Volunteers offers the possibility to shatter those chains. Many of our service programs are in rural communities in developing countries, emerging democracies, and economically impoverished villages and small towns in developed countries. By working with and learning from economically struggling people, the materially affluent volunteers can learn first-hand that the mere acquisition of possessions is not a satisfying route to happiness and that love and friendship, stable families and vibrant communities can be reality, even amidst enormous hardship. Simultaneously, the economically poor can acquire new skills and catalytic assistance, thus creating new possibilities for self-reliance as they continue to enjoy the richness of their culture, communities, and simplicity of life. Global Volunteers enables volunteers to encourage local people to become more and, in the process, local people encourage volunteers to become more as well. Global Volunteers service programs enrich the people in the communities where we work, and the local people in those communities, in turn, enrich the volunteers.

### *CONCLUSION*

Your choice to experience a Global Volunteers "Adventure in Service" allows you to directly wage peace and promote justice. Virtually every person wants world peace, but we often think that only governments and large international organizations can have real impact on that goal. A week or two of working hand-in-hand with local people in a different culture and living by the principles outlined above, persuades even the most cynical that every one of us can contribute to the creation of a more just and peaceful world.

In addition to the benefits realized by the community, volunteers benefit tremendously as well. Many volunteers tell us that they joined a Global Volunteers service program to teach, but learned far more than they taught; that they were inspired to serve by the opportunity to give of themselves, but they received far more than they gave. We believe this is the true gift of volunteer service.

Participation on a Global Volunteers service program is an adventure. Life in any community is unpredictable, particularly for those of us who are just visiting. However, in this state of unpredictability is enclosed a profound gift to all of us, especially those who believe they are in control. That gift is the new awareness that neither we nor any other mortal is in command, and life is the more interesting because of it.

### **Guiding Principles**

1. We go only where we are invited.
2. We serve under the direction of local leaders
3. We do whatever we are asked to do.
4. Local people are always in charge.
5. We work hand-in-hand with local people on community-based projects.
6. We send teams of volunteer to each community several times each year, year-after year.
7. Self-reliance is the ultimate objective.
8. We stay in the community during most of the time we are in-country.
9. We pay for our food, water, lodging, and local transportation.
10. We treasure what we learn from local people.

This is Travel that Feeds the Soul®. Everyone benefits, and because of the Servant-Learner, the world is better place.