

Volunteering: How To Help Responsibly

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Many of us with good intentions embark on volunteerism as a way to help relieve the burden of others. However, frequently this noble intention becomes a hindrance to those we are helping and prevent real assistance from arriving to beneficiaries. (Note: Victims are referred to as beneficiaries) Issues discussed include unnecessary donation of goods eg clothes, shoes, food, toys and mixed items. The best item to donate would be monetary donation and the reasons to support this are considered.

Our attitude too can psychologically affect others especially if we make unrealistic promises. Attitudes not to share with beneficiaries include statements telling them we know how exactly they feel as really we do not, giving them false hopes and taking undignified photos of suffering beneficiaries and splashing them all over social media.

Preparation and training of volunteers are vital. "Volun-tourists" are to be avoided at all costs. The media as a powerful influencing factor should not be forgotten.

It may be easier for most of us to join an institution or NGO or society as a means to assist. However ensure your institution / NGO / society is accountable. The needs assessment is the first vital step to ensure the appropriate help is rendered rather than wishful assumptions of what we think beneficiaries require.

We ourselves are accountable for our actions to ensure we help responsibly.