



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

We want you to have a fantastic & life changing experience. Following these guidelines will assure that the relationships you form are positive, and the experiences you have are safe and happy.

PLEASE:

- Trust your team leaders. They are well trained, experienced and care about each of you!
- Trust our local staff, they know what is most needful in the projects and will help you have a positive experience as you listen to their counsel & follow their instructions.
- **BE FLEXIBLE**, count on things changing and not going according to the plan.
- Always make sure that what you are doing is what the people in charge want you to do.
- **We know you came to help and that you care.** There will be things you will want to do, like offer someone money or your personal assistance. In most cases we will instruct you not to do so, because we know something of the situation that you are not aware of. Please comply with our request to never offer money or personal assistance at ANY of our program sites.
- Don't assume: listen, ask & be a good communicator. **Be patient** with the language barrier, understand that words sometimes mean different things & people have different expectations. **LAUGH**
- Try your best to never be critical. Assume everyone is doing the best they can! **Positive energy is very important to the overall success of your team.** If you have a question or concern, or don't understand why we do something, please speak to your team leaders. They are there to help you navigate your way through this complex emotional experience.
- Try not to make judgments about the government, the local people or how they do things. **YOUR WAYS ARE DIFFERENT BUT NOT NECESSARILY BETTER.** We only teach the things they ask us to teach, not what WE think they should learn.
- **Our motto: WE VALUE LOCAL WISDOM.**
- Be respectful. Don't take photos when we ask you not to. **Always ask before you take a photo.**
- Be a little quieter than you would at home, remember that we are a large group and tend to be LOUD. Follow the lead of your team leaders.
- **Don't make promises.** Go out of your way to make sure everyone you talk to knows you won't promise or even hint of a promise. Don't say you'll do things for them when you get back to the States!
- Don't offer college sponsorships, don't offer trips to the US, and don't offer to build, buy or give anyone ANYTHING.
- **Don't give or promise your personal belongings to staff, volunteers or children in any of the programs. This includes sunglasses, hats, bandanas, flip flops, jewelry, pens, candy...ANYTHING you have.**
- **Don't give money! Don't promise money or financial support of any kind. Trust me, everyone will ask.**
- Don't buy items for people at the work sites, this causes jealousy and sometimes violence.
- Don't give food, candy or items from your backpack to children without the express permission of team leaders.
- Don't go anywhere at night without your team leader's permission.
- Don't form romantic relationships with locals, no dating while on the expedition!
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
- Keep your valuables—this includes your passport—in a money belt on your person, locked in a carry on bag in your rooming house, or give to Kathy for safe keeping.
- Don't flash cash, even in what seems to you to be small amounts.
- You will see things that will make you sad and break your heart. Remember that there are a lot of REALLY SMART people trying to solve the problems you'll see. If the solutions were easy or quick, it would have been done by now!
- Don't offer a 'quick fix', it probably doesn't exist.
- **When in doubt, ASK us what to do. There are NO stupid questions.**
- Remember that AIDS and poverty are complex problems. You and the things you will help us do are one part of the solution, WE APPRECIATE YOU.
- Practice the phrase "You will have to talk to Innocent (or Josephine) about that. I will pray for you." When something is requested of you by a local resident, say this! **AND REMEMBER:**

- EVERYTHING YOU DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE!