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Traditional Vacations Give Way to Voluntourism

written by [Melissa Bryant](#) | Posted on September 9th, 2015

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Guests on GVI's *Volunteer with Children in Costa Rica* project teach underprivileged children.

As more vacationers catch on to the idea of volunteering for a part of or for their entire vacation, an increasing number of travel companies are creating unique ways for travelers to lend a helping hand, and good news for agents, they're all commissionable.

Teaching Disadvantaged Children in Costa Rica

Visitors to Costa Rica have undoubtedly toured its famed coffee farms and explored the country's vast national parks, and today, travelers have the option of seeing all of the country's best assets in addition to volunteering with GVI's *Volunteer with Children in Costa Rica* project.

During the voluntourism project, guests live and work alongside local community members in the city of Quepos, on Costa Rica's Pacific Coast, where they assist local school districts where there is a shortage of teachers. Guests will be responsible for organizing and introducing workshops, games, and sport activities to students, in addition to planning and assisting in general education

lessons, which requires Spanish language competency. Group and one-on-one Spanish lessons are available for travelers at an additional cost. Other responsibilities include contributing to arts and crafts classes, environmental education and educational games. On occasion, guests will conduct English lessons for older community members.

When guests aren't participating in their community service project, they have the opportunity to go mountain biking, hiking, and horseback riding, as well as ziplining on a rainforest canopy tour. Water activities include white-water rafting, surfing and snorkeling. The *Volunteer with Children in Costa Rica* project can last up to 24 weeks. Rates start at \$1,790 for 2-week trips. For more information, visit gviusa.com.

Building up Bhutan

Hands Up Holidays voluntourism trips also incorporate sightseeing with philanthropy travel. The new 10-day Bhutan itinerary, with departures from December 2015 through April 2016, focuses on building projects in the South Asian country.

Volunteer projects include working with a needy Bhutanese family to help them build their own 2-story traditional Bhutanese-style home and strengthening damaged bridges that are used widely by the local communities. On their downtime, guests can hike up the Himalayan mountains to the Tiger's Nest Monastery; visit the farming villages in the Paro Valley; and try to spot the rare black necked crane at Phobjika Valley. The Himalayan nation is also home to an array of temples, the royal town of Thimpu, and the Talo Monastery, a Buddhist monastery in Punakha. Luxury [accommodations](#) are provided at guest's choice of five-star lodges. Rates start at \$11,890 pp dbl and include all meals, airport transfers and local guides. For more information, visit handsupholidays.com.



Perillo's Learning Journeys' *Yoga Journeys* deepens guests' spiritual and cultural awareness.

Community Service in [India](#)

Perillo's Learning Journeys' new *Yoga Journey in [India](#)* combines yoga practice and meditation with locally sourced meals and community service projects for a one-of-a-kind holistic wellness vacation.

The 12-day India voyage promotes guests' spiritual development through visits to Ashrams, temples and villages, as well as participation in community service projects, interactions with yoga experts, plus cooking and astrology lessons. As soon as guests arrive in Delhi, their cultural immersion begins with a car ride to the **Mantra Amaltas** hotel. Along the way, guests can see the skyscrapers and ancient monuments of India's capital. The first three days are spent touring the Jama Mosque, the largest mosque in India; riding a rickshaw through a shopping center in old Delhi; and visiting Raj Ghat, a memorial for Mahatma Gandhi. Guests will also have time for guided meditation with a yoga guru.

Later in the journey, guests start the morning off with yoga at the hotel, then take a drive to the Parmarth Niketan Ashram hermitage to visit Parmarth Shiksha Mandir, a spiritual teaching temple that has adopted underprivileged children in order to educate them and help them find jobs. Additional community service-oriented activities include a trip to a non-governmental organization that provides children with complimentary holistic education, nutrition, and complete health care. The organization also helps women in rural communities who are looking for employment or are struggling with social issues. [Accommodations](#), daily meals and special site [events](#) and activities are included. The next India *Yoga Journey* departs on Nov. 15. Rates start at \$2,325 pp dbl. For more information, call (888) 884-8259 or visit learningjourneys.com.