

TRIP GUIDE

This guide will better prepare you and your group for your service learning trip.

Pre-Trip Recommendations

Meet with your group at least 4 times prior to your trip to address:

- **Education** to share knowledge of destination
- **Introduction** for participants to get to know each other
- **Orientation** to review logistics, preparations, and schedule
- **Expectations** to express feelings about expectations and discuss how you and your group might address challenges to expectations.
- **Cultural Issues** to discuss what it may feel like to be immersed in another country, culture, language, monetary system

Ensure every participant receives Via documents including:

- Medical Release Form
- Liability Waiver
- Packing Checklist
- Organizational Background

Remain in contact with Via staff prior to your visit:

Please inform us of:

- Any goals, expectations, or issues that you would like us to focus upon so that we can further enhance your experience.
- Any special dietary restrictions.
- Any special or specific medical needs.

Group coordinators will need to ensure that Via staff receive:

- Signed MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with deposit.
- Payments upon receipt of invoices.
- Arrival and Departure Itinerary - send 1 month prior to travel. (If travel plans change, please alert Via promptly)
- Signed Medical Release Forms for all participants.
- Signed Liability Waivers for all participants.
- Follow-up including evaluation and/or future requests.

Fundraising Recommendations

Fundraising provides an excellent opportunity to deepen participant engagement, enthusiasm, and anticipation while building team-spirit, group cohesion, and community support. It can also be creative and fun! We recommend:

- **Implementing** at least two team-originated ideas to raise money.
- **Appointing** group leaders to manage the fundraisers.
- **Acknowledging** and thanking all supporters, including individuals, organizations, administrators, family members, and businesses.
- **Sharing** progress & successes with the community before & after the trip.

Post-Trip Recommendations

After the trip, it is important to reconnect with participants about their experience.

Hold a meeting within one week after your return home.

Discuss:

- How the experience has affected feelings and perspectives about life, about their own community, and/or about the places and peoples visited.
- How perspectives differ among family, friends, & community members
- How the group and/or individuals could share their thoughts, feelings, photos, drawings, writings, or other creative expressions about their experience with friends, family, and community.
- How the group and/or individuals may continue to support or connect with each other & with Via Voluntours, & the people & places visited.

Hold another meeting within six weeks after your return home.

Discuss:

- How has the Via volunteer experience affected their personal lives?
- How have individuals or the group found ways to continue their connection with each other, with Via, & the people & places visited.
- What opportunities exist in your local community to continue living the experience and awareness gained from the Via volunteer trip?

Find creative ways to share your experience with family, friends, and your community, as well as with Via International!