

Research Package #2

JH - "BIRT VOLUNTOURISM IS HARMFUL TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES"

SH - "THBT VOLUNTOURISM IS HARMFUL TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES"



6-Day Visit To Rural African Village Completely Changes Woman's Facebook Profile Picture

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THIS HOUSE BELIEVES THAT VOLUNTOURISM IS HARMFUL TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

This Research booklet is not complete. It is only an overview of information and good debaters will use this booklet as a basis for their thinking and move on to other ideas and research. As well, the best foundation for any research into a topic begins with some basic reading on the ideas. Follow this with an interview with someone who is knowledgeable, can suggest ideas and can direct you to other ideas and research. Although you cannot quote this person unless he/she is published in print or on video, a human being can always explain issues better than an article.

Both Junior and Senior High Debaters should set this motion normatively, you are not proposing that a Government or the UN should ban voluntourism, you are merely attempting to convince the judges of its merit or detriments.

PROPOSITION TEAM

Model/Definitions

No heavy modelling is required on this motion. Create fair definitions which allow for a good debate to be brought by both sides.

It is worth considering what your metric for “harmful” is. Proving that voluntourism has at least one bad aspect, that it is imperfect, is insufficient to win from proposition. On the other hand, Opposition is not required to defend every instance of voluntourism which has ever occurred.

This debate is about whether on balance, after adding up all the positives and negatives, voluntourism is a force for good in the developing world.

What is voluntourism? Voluntourism is the practice of travelling to developing countries to volunteer, often on infrastructure projects such as building orphanages, digging wells, building houses. It is most often undertaken by youth, sometimes with religious organizations as sponsors (youth groups at churches for example), but also sometimes with private charitable organizations as sponsors. Sometimes people pay out of pocket themselves. It's volunteering, but not in your own country.

Proposition Point/Counterpoint

1) Voluntourism promotes harmful narratives

Travelling to the developing world to build orphanages, dig wells, etc. invokes a “western savior” image. It implies that the people who live in the developing world are incapable of doing these things themselves and that without us to go help them, they would starve and die because they are incompetent savages who live without civilization.

Counterpoint : Helping people in one instance doesn't mean they're incapable in all instances, and the orphans without an orphanage don't really care about narratives, they care about having a roof, which voluntourists have provided them.

2) Voluntourism is economically damaging

There are people in developing countries who could have made gainful employment out of building houses and digging wells, but instead some canadian teenagers built it for free. There's no EI in Somalia, and by doing work for free you've condemned some poor soul to poverty.

Counterpoint : This can be solved by doing the work in concert with the local population, or choosing projects carefully where there these effects are not likely to occur. If this argument was true, then these things would already be done and there would be no need for voluntourism.

3) Voluntourism often creates shoddy work

Because the people who go on voluntourism trips are not always skilled tradespeople, sometimes the work they do ends up doing more harm than good. Frequently, after voluntourists build a house, locals will have to do significant amounts of work repairing it in order to make it structurally sound and livable. There's a reason construction companies in Canada don't hire 17 year olds to do difficult work relatively unsupervised with little training.

Counterpoint : This can be mitigated by choosing smarter and more responsible projects that can be performed properly by the volunteers.

The job of the Opposition is to be disagreeable! Whatever the Proposition believes, generally, the Opposition counters. The more you disagree, the better! The Opposition has to convince the judges not to accept the Proposition resolution. The Proposition wants to convince the judges that their proposal should be adopted. The Opposition wants to convince you that the Proposition proposal should not be accepted for one or more reasons. The steps that the Opposition should use are: 1) Either agree with the Proposition definition or propose a definition of your own. (Only disagree if absolutely necessary. These make for messy debates.) 2) Rebut the Proposition arguments in favor of the resolution. 3) Attack the Proposition Model and sometimes propose a counter model 4) Present reasons (arguments) to oppose the resolution. 5) Refute Proposition attacks on the Opposition case (show why the Proposition is wrong and Opposition is right). Owing to time restrictions, the Opposition duties are divided between the first and second opposition speakers. It is the custom for the First Opposition Speaker to present two arguments and the second opposition speaker to present the final argument. (This is flexible!)

Opposition Point/Counterpoint

1) Voluntourism impacts the problems of the developing world

Individuals who go on voluntourism trips and make a difference are likely to come home and continue to spread awareness and rally for change and support of the developing world. This is a way for people to go and see the problems of the developing world first hand without merely observing, and getting involved.

Counterpoint : Having seen a problem with your own eyes often biases you to its importance. Maybe the people of X Country need help more than the people of Y Country, but because many Canadians go on voluntourism trips to Y Country, Canadians lobby the government to redirect aid to Y Country, to the detriment of X Country.

2) Voluntourism does important work

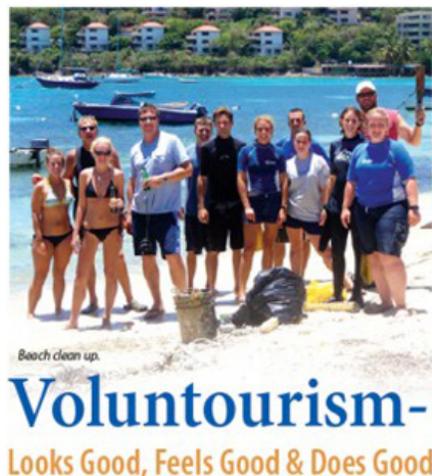
Voluntourists build infrastructure projects which allow the local economy and people to flourish. When voluntourists dig wells, they do so because the locals often don't have time to do so - they're busy getting water from a well many miles away, and taking the time to dig a well would mean going without water. Voluntourists can do things locals can't.

Counterpoint : There's no reason this sort of aid can't be accomplished in other ways - send water and money and let the locals dig wells and earn gainful employment from it.

3) Charities need volunteers

While money is nice, charities often can't get enough money to hire a whole bunch of people to go and build infrastructure in developing nations. Voluntourism is necessary because flying to a different country, doing that work and flying home represents a donation of tens of thousands of dollars, but using a volunteer's time as a resource rather than money. It's much easier to convince people to donate their time rather than their money, especially if they feel they're getting a trip out of it.

Counterpoint : Oftentimes, the trip is much more the focus. Voluntourists are often incompetent and more interested in the tourism than the volunteering, and have no attachment to the work they do - after they leave, they'll never hear of it again.



ARTICLES

In past, research packages have provided links to news articles/pieces about the motion or related to the motion. There are many, many, MANY articles available through a Google search related to voluntourism published by reputable news agencies.

When reading for debate, make sure you distinguish between fact based sources and opinion based sources. You need both to make a good debate case - facts you use reinforce arguments, but it's also important to read pieces which argue for or against voluntourism, as they provide you a narrative, potentially a starting point for the rhetoric you will use in your case.