



User Research

About WanderLove

WanderLove connects people traveling on vacation with **impactful, one-time volunteer opportunities** in their chosen destination.

Objective

Learn more about the audiences for this website.

- **Who** volunteers when traveling? Who do they go with (family, friends, tours)?
- **What** questions and needs do they have? What are they looking for in a volunteer experience? What ways do they continue to provide support after the trip?
- **When** do they plan travel? How long do they expect a volunteer experience to last?
- **Where** do they go on their travels? Where are they interested in volunteering?
- **Why** do they volunteer?
- **How** do they currently decide where to volunteer? How do they feel about their experience when it is over? How do they share these experiences with others?

Who volunteers?

- More than **1.6 million people** are spending about \$2 billion annually on voluntourism
- **64% of travelers** have spent some time volunteering
- **A third of travelers** expect to increase their travel-related giving in the next two years.
- When selecting tours, **25% of travelers** factor in the ability to integrate giving into the travel experience
- **Baby boomers** appear to be fueling much of the interest, as well as **Millennials** and **families**

Baby boomers

- 99% anticipate traveling for leisure in 2016, with approximately 4 or 5 trips in the works
- 17% are interested in taking a charitable trip
- Older volunteers are more likely to have more experience and skills to contribute to the community and project where they decide to volunteer
- About one-third of adults age 55 and older volunteer their time for various causes, a ten-year high
- According to Voluntary Service Overseas, about two-fifths of its volunteers are in their fifties or sixties, with around 2% of volunteers in their seventies

Millennials

- More generous with their time than any other generation: **81% volunteered when traveling** during the last two years
- 29% Americans under the age of 30 agreed that citizens have a "**very important obligation**" to volunteer
- **84%** would travel abroad to participate in volunteer activities
- **32%** are interested in taking a charitable trip
- By a margin of more than two-to-one, Millennials who **volunteer for nonprofits are more likely to make donations**. Bulk of giving is distributed in **small increments** to many organizations.
- On average, they volunteer more than **double the hours** and **donate nearly three times the money** and **4.5 times the supplies** than 55 and older travelers do

Families

- Families with children who travel **give more volunteer time (73%) and in-kind services (82%)** than other families
- Volunteered on average for **38 hours** on their most meaningful trip
- A Christian mission trip company estimates that **50% of their volunteer travelers** each year are families
- Range of ages for children, with **some as young as 8 and teenagers** making up most
- **Overlap with Millennials:** 28% travel with young children

What are they looking for?

- New places and experiences as well as giving value to their time
- Enable a deeper understanding and appreciation of the local culture
- Price is the dominant criterion in travel purchasing, with nearly 6 in 10 travelers rank price in their top three reasons for buying from a particular travel company
- 34% also consider a company's commitment to social responsibility
- 42% of travelers identify causes that address issues related to the provision of basic necessities such as food, water and shelter as the top priority

What are Millennials looking for?

- Some seek organizations and projects that offer housing and food as part of the volunteer arrangement to **reduce their travel costs**
- Nearly **70% want their travel giving** and over 60% want their travel spending to **benefit the communities** they visit
- 48% of respondents said they want to **utilize their education, background, or professional expertise** to help nonprofits build their capacity
- 63% of millennials interested in **working with animals**, 52% said they are most likely to volunteer in support of **education**, 50% for **human services**, 35% for **religious causes** and 33% for **arts and culture**
- Millennial travelers are far more interested in **thrilling vacations** than lazy trips
- Want a continuum of options – from **one-time engagements** to **long-term opportunities**

What are families looking for?

- Families and large groups heading to popular vacation destinations are often interested in devoting **several hours or a full day to volunteering**
- Seeking meaningful trips where they can make a difference and make strong **cross-cultural connections**

What are Baby Boomers looking for?

- ▶ Older volunteers often tend to favor the **more altruistic projects**, such as teaching English in underprivileged schools and helping to care for children in need
- ▶ Recognition and utilization of the **skills they bring**
- ▶ "It is very important to me to **make my time count**," said Betty Dotson, 83
- ▶ Like to know that the project is proven **senior-friendly**, with some others in their age bracket as a normal part of the mix

What questions do they have?

- Is this a **reputable volunteer organization**? One of the best ways to find this out is by starting with organizations that have won **awards for their work**, or otherwise have been publicly recognized
- **How are funds used?** If the project receives donations, where does the money go? Roughly what percentage goes to overhead vs. direct expenses on the project?
- Is your volunteer role **costing a local a job**?
- **How is the organization working with the community?** Have they asked the local community if this project is something that is wanted or needed?
- If you are only volunteering for a short period of time, is it **worthwhile for the project**?
- **What is expected of volunteers?** What is the exact nature of the volunteer work, and what is the level of volunteer support on the ground? What is a typical day like for your volunteers?
- What are the **age restrictions**?

What questions do they have?

- Do they **screen volunteers**, how and what are the requirements?
- **What is included in the fee?** Food, housing, travel insurance, transportation, facilitation?
- How many days a week and for **how many hours** will you work?
- Is **Internet** access available?
- Are there any **specific rules** on curfews, dress code, behavior?
- Is the trip **tax-deductible**?
- **References** from previous volunteers.
- Once I've applied, **what happens next?** Is there a phone call or video chat?
- We're eager to do something for needy children, but **our own kids are too young** to roll up their sleeves. What can we do?
- Can I easily get **medical care** if needed?

When do they plan travel?

- ▶ Plan at least a **couple of months ahead** because there's a certain amount of advance work to be done.
- ▶ After a charitable trip, 50% of Millennials intend to plan **more trips around giving**
- ▶ 71% of Millennials took **short getaways of three nights or less**, but were also twice as likely as older travelers to take **trips of 14 or more days**

Where do they go?

- Millennial travelers ages 18-34 (44%) are more likely than travelers ages 35-49 (33%) and 50-67 (27%) to view destinations as hot spots if they have a **booming industry and culture**
- 20% of Millennials would say a destination is a hot spot if it has recently been **featured in a movie**
- Millennials (28%) are much more likely than Gen Xers (15%) and Boomers (6%) to consider the **local nightlife** when choosing a particular destination abroad to visit
- 44% of Millennials consider the **local culture** when choosing where to travel, seeking to get **off the beaten path** and see places that other visitors miss
- Older travelers ages 50-67 (34%) are most likely to define a destination as a hot spot if it was highlighted in a notable **travel or lifestyle publication**
- Older travelers (47%) were twice as likely to **stay within the U.S.** as Millennials (23%)

Why do Millennials volunteer?

- To save money, interact with other people, learn more about the local culture and people
- Similar to the way they give money, Millennials volunteer when it **integrates with their whole life** and their aspiration
- Drawn into opportunities to aid their career trajectory by **diversifying their experiences, practice new skills, and building their professional network**
- 85% of participants who did not volunteer in 2010 cited **lack of time as the primary obstacle to volunteering**
- **78% of them choosing to splurge on experiences** over “things,” many are putting their money into the tourism industry
- 86% of the people surveyed said they travel to experience **new cultures**

Why do families volunteer?

- Creating **social awareness** among children is on many parents' minds
- 71% percent said giving **non-monetary donations was very or extremely important**
- Immerse our kids and ourselves in a **foreign culture**
- **Spend quality time** with their children and – among other things – teach greater **tolerance and understanding**, present a new **perspective on the world**, foster empathy, and lead by example
- Parents view family volunteer vacations as a **way to live their values** and impart them to their children

Why do Baby Boomers volunteer?

- Gives them a **sense of purpose and adventure** in their retirement years.
- "You always get a **good feeling** when you help someone else," said Dan Brown, 65, has taken part in around 20 projects in the past five years. "And we've **seen a lot of country** that we hadn't been to before."
- Strong interest in a **particular cause, project, or subject area**, often related to a long time hobby or an earlier career
- A wish to **give back something significant** to a world that has been, by and large, economically kind and physically comfortable to them in their earlier years
- "Working with the children in the different projects has been a **life-enriching experience.**"

How do Millennials plan?

- 53% are influenced by **close family or friends**
- 44% ask for travel opinions on **social media**
- 70% want to find information about the organization's **mission and history** on the website
- 81% prefer to learn about volunteer opportunities from **friends or family members**, 72% appreciate getting information from **email**, and 67% look to the organization's **website** for volunteer information
- Offering **online training** in place of in-person training is attractive to Millennials
- 80% of Millennials surveyed feel **reviews** have an impact on their decisions

How do Millennials plan?

- Use online **fundraising services** such as GoFundMe, YouCaring.com and Razoo for raising money for their volunteer travel
- A number take **four or five trips a year**
- **Simplicity** is another thing that makes voluntourism appealing to millennials. Voluntourists select the destination and pay a fee, and the **rest is done for them.**
- Tend to **want information fast** and make decisions quickly
- **Jeans and flip-flops** are among the most important items to take with them on vacation
- 65% of Millennials **establish a budget**

How do families plan?

- Some parents, particularly those who are doctors or educators with a toehold in a foreign community, **design family volunteer trips themselves**
- Others are signing on to **organized trips**
- A **camera to document their trip** is among the most important items to take with them on vacation

How do Baby Boomers plan?

- 6 in 10 of those aged over 55 traveled as a **couple**
- **Less likely** to seek out advice from peers for planning
- Rarely want to be away from home for long blocks of time, preferring **one week to a month**, though they may take **two or three different volunteer vacations** spread over the course of a year
- Older volunteers tend not to take the decision to travel and volunteer lightly and have often **put a lot of thought into what and where they want to go**
- A **good book and a list of emergency contact** information are among the most important items to take with them on vacation
- 42% of Boomers make a **budget for their trip**

How do they feel?

- ▶ Travelers' satisfaction with a trip is directly boosted by their charitable activity
- ▶ More than 6 in 10 travelers indicate that their trips were enhanced by their giving

How do Millennials feel?

- Over 80% said it had a **very positive impact on their satisfaction** with the trip
- The giant benefit is the **cultural immersion**. Living as part of these communities, not separate from them, was huge.
- “You really **learn so much through these experiences** and get more **locally connected**.”
- “It was the first time on my trip that I felt a **real connection** with local people.”
- “Taking care of people at an age that we will all reach eventually **humbled me and changed my perspective on life**.”

How do families feel?

- Nearly three quarters of all families said giving created a **very positive trip experience**
- When they return, many students want to find a way to **continue the work they were doing**
- Research shows that youth who volunteer are **twice as likely to be charitable as adults**

How do Baby Boomers feel?

- ▶ “A huge benefit of volunteering is escaping from everyday responsibilities and routines, so **that which is truly important is given a chance to emerge**. This had such an impact on us that within two months of our return we have sold our home and moved to a brighter situation 200 miles away!”
- ▶ “You come home feeling like you are a **part of something**. I can’t travel any other way now.”
- ▶ “As an older volunteer who had teaching experience, I definitely found the teaching and **relationships I made with the staff and children the most rewarding aspect** of this placement. “
- ▶ “**I found working with the children the most rewarding**. They are eager to learn, happy and enthusiastic and teaching them was an absolute joy and pleasure.”

How do they share their experiences?

- 54% of Millennials took an **active interest in the causes they gave to**
- Millennial travelers are more likely than older ones to **review their experiences** after returning from a trip.
- 97% of Millennials **post on social networks** and share experiences with friends while traveling
- On returning home, 46% of families **keep tabs on the causes they donated to** and 34% **gave more to the same cause**
- One-third of Boomers say they post to social media sites while on vacation

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