

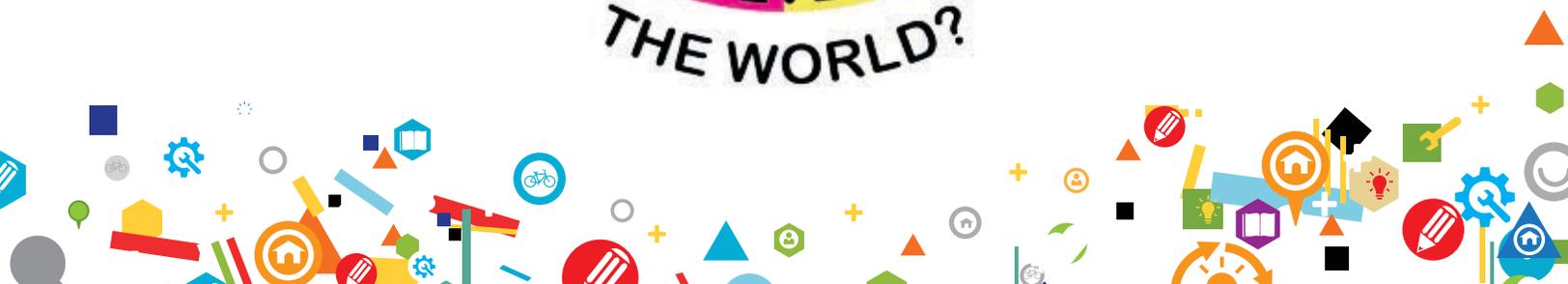
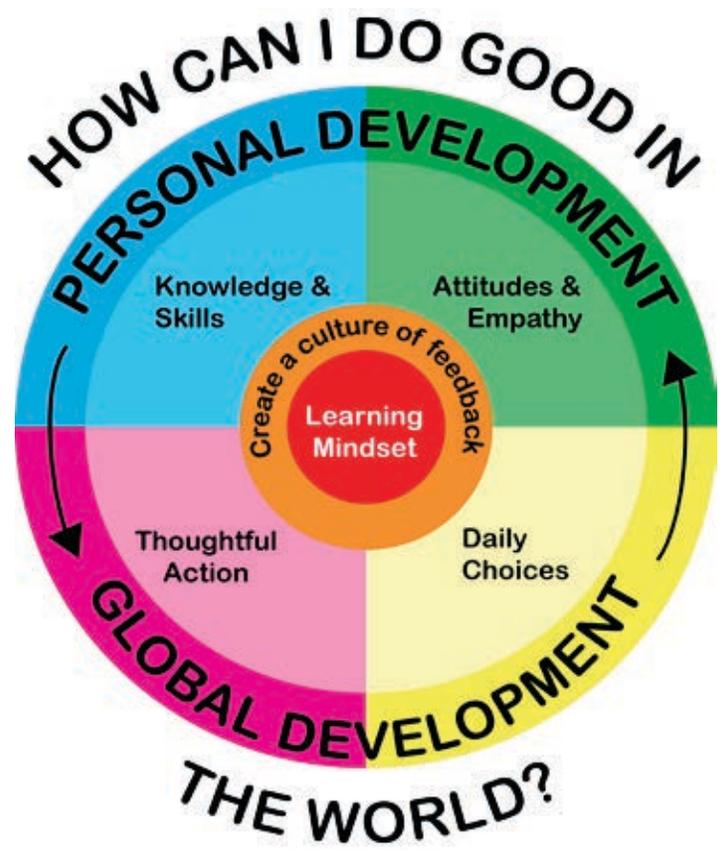
How Can I Do Good in the World?

We've been asking hundreds of people about international volunteer travel. When we asked people why they volunteered abroad nearly all of them said that they were trying to answer this question:

“How can I do good in the world?”

That's a pretty big question and not one the we can hope to answer in a four-minute video.

However - we thought you'd be interested in the answers we've been getting and so we've taken the tips and ideas we received and put them into a little diagram.



It starts here:

Global and Personal Development

Global development and personal development go hand-in-hand. A very wise man once said, “Be the change you wish to see in the world” – and many people we talked to suggested exactly this. We need to live the values we want to see in the world. Learning, broadening our perspectives, challenging our assumptions, being nice to people around us, and setting personal goals in themselves are as much a ‘service’ to the world as a service project is! Plus, going out into the world to “change” it without learning first isn’t always going to help, so the two are entirely interlinked!

Knowledge and Skills

The first piece of the model is, “Develop Relevant Knowledge and Skills”. “Doing good” starts with asking the right questions, doing the right research, and developing the right skills so we can effectively contribute our time.

Attitudes and Empathy

Attitudes are just as important as skills. Many people we spoke to stressed the importance of cultivating empathy and developing attitudes such as openness and humility while volunteering. Fostering these attitudes and understanding different cultures requires practice – just like learning a new language. We might need to “unlearn” the attitude of treating others how we’d want to be treated and instead treat others how they’d want to be treated. This means getting off the plane ready to listen and learn, and not assuming that we already know the answers about how to help.

Thoughtful Action

All this learning people are talking about is not just for the sake of building knowledge - it’s learning for action. We’ve heard over and over from past volunteers is that learning helps make sure your action is thoughtful and therefore more effective. Whether this is related to volunteering abroad or choosing how to spend your time at home - rather than rushing in blindly, stop, learn, and check that your assumptions are truly aligned with the causes you care about.



