

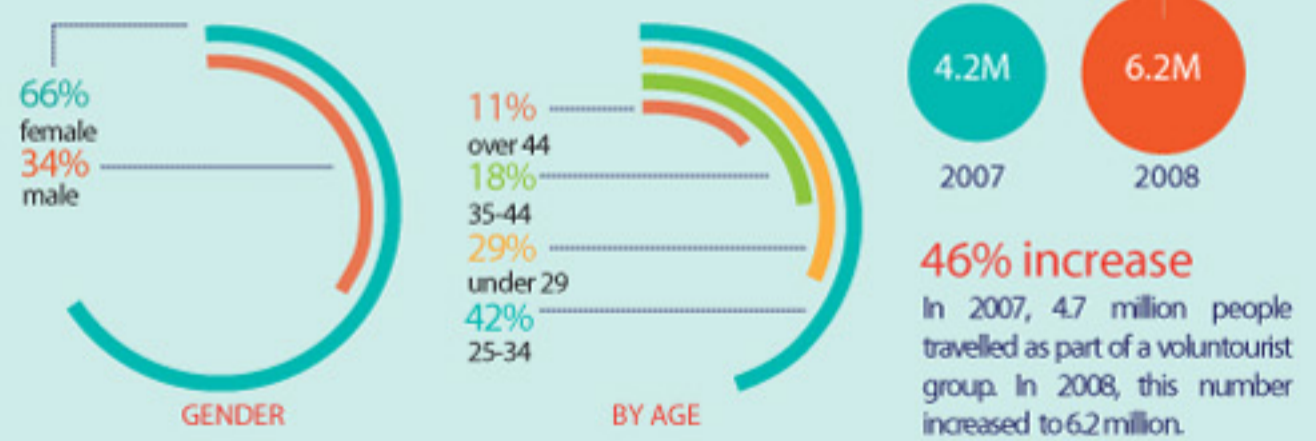
Q: What Is Voluntourism? What Are the Economics Of Voluntourism?

A: Voluntourism is travel which includes volunteering for a charitable cause. In recent years, "bite-sized" volunteer vacations have grown in popularity. The different types of volunteer vacations are diverse, from cleaning up local wildlife areas to providing medical aid in a foreign country.

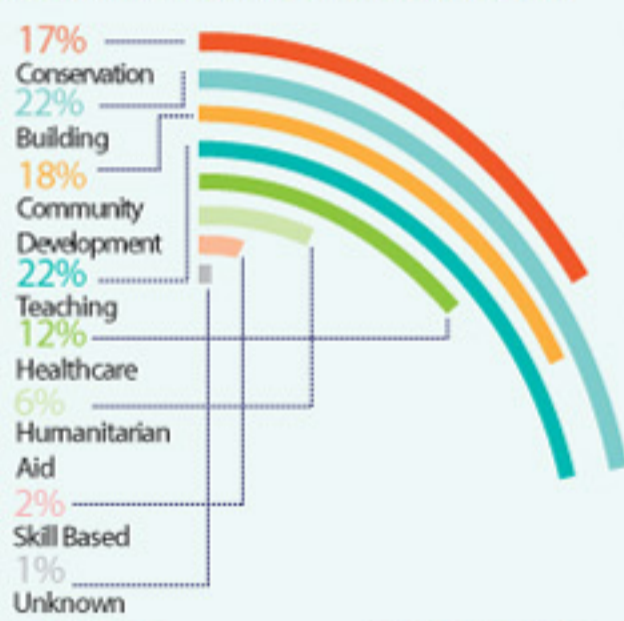
BEGINNINGS OF VOLUNTOURISM

The idea of combining voluntary service with travel is not a new concept. Volunteer Service Overseas and the US Peace Corps were among the first. However, it was not until the 1990s that the travel industry found a niche combining philanthropy and leisure. The first company to do so was Catalyst Marketing, Inc, now called Volun-Tours.

WHO VOLUNTRAVELS?



WHY ARE THEY VOLUNTRAVELLING?



The reasons why people volunteer and travel are as varied and unique as the voluntourists themselves. However, there are many that fall into three main categories, according to age, dedication level and personal interests.

VANGUARDS

- The smallest, but most motivated group
- Young
- Have an average of 17 days of experience
- Mostly interested in skill-building

PRAGMATISTS

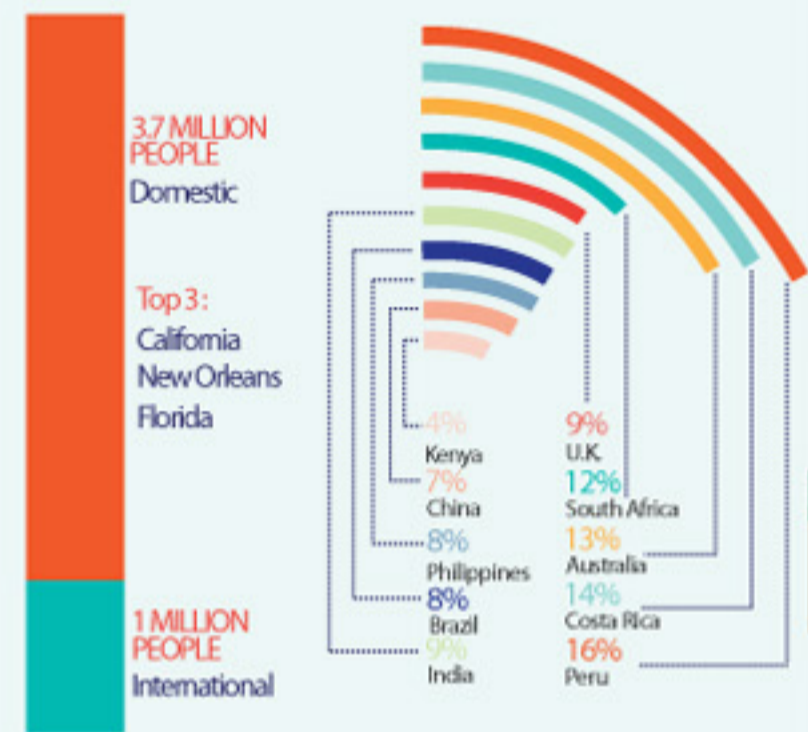
- Interested in developing a relationship with the host community.
- Not as wealthy as other groups
- Prefer to volunteer in Europe

QUESTERS

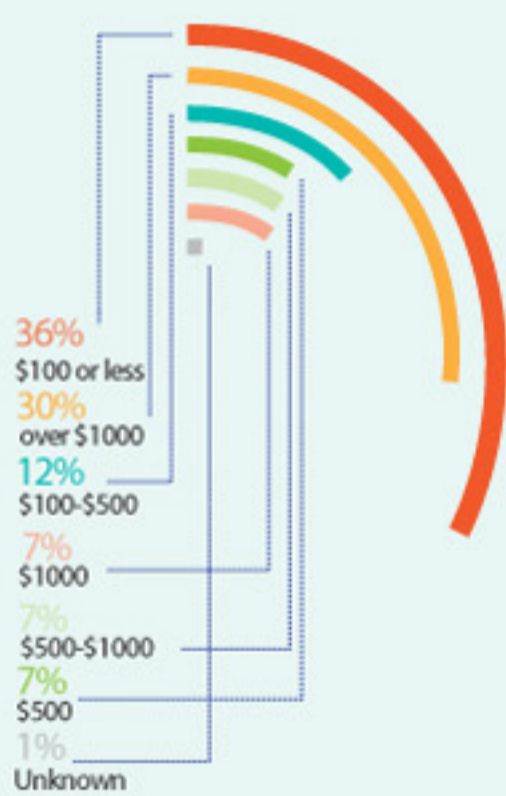
- Oldest group
- Will spend the most amount of money on trips
- Most likely to spend greater amounts of time volunteering at a single interval
- Tend to prefer South America

WHERE DO THEY VOLUNTRAVEL?

In 2009, The majority of voluntourism still occurred in the US. Top international destinations for American voluntourists in 2009.



HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?



Paying to Volunteer

The idea of paying to volunteer may seem like an undesirable notion to some. However, it is important to consider that when travelling anywhere for more than one night, food and accommodations will be the primary cost, in most cases. At the same time, there have been allegations of voluntourist agencies inflating the costs of their trips.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

Total: \$2,934 Duration: 4 weeks



The voluntourist site "i-to-i" quotes the trip package to volunteer with children in Ecuador as \$1869.00, including training, airport pick-up, room and board. However, a similar program sponsored by the NGO CENIT (Centro de la Niña Trabajadora) has a total cost of \$1440.00, including airfare, visa, home stay, meals and transportation.

PROS

- Embraces the idea that leisure and social conscience can go hand-in-hand
- Meets the needs of busy people who want to volunteer and travel
- Brings renewed interest to international agencies like the Peace Corps
- Once people have voluntouristed they are more likely to volunteer at home

CONS

- Expands the trend of episodic volunteering
- Most of the money generated goes to the travel agency and not the local community
- A majority of voluntourists only stay for 2 to 3 weeks. Very little time to make a lasting impact

LUXURY VOLUNTOURISM

Percentage of Luxury Voluntourists in 2009



"Taste of Volunteering"

"Traveling with a Conscience"

Luxury voluntourism is a high-end travelling experience organized by luxury travel operators or a hotelier. For most luxury voluntourism excursions, the trip itineraries have a greater tourism focus with less time dedicated to voluntary service.