

# Proposal for NVDA Policy

**Title** (less than 30 letters): **Marketing Ethics**

**Main proposer** (Name and NGO): **Julie, DreamWalker China**

**Co-proposers** (Names and NGOs, if any):

## 1. Summary

It is important to distinguish ourselves from commercial form of volunteer tourism, especially now when we are talking about “What is our IVS” and how we are different from others. Having a set of marketing ethics guidelines that are complied by all NVDA members will help show the public where NVDA stand on our ethical values and belief. Members who do not comply will be discuss and voted in the GA by other members to disaffiliate from NVDA.

## 2. Background and reasons

The guidelines aim to provide information about responsible marketing of IVS.

### Background articles about voluntourism:

Although marketing is not fully responsible for the impacts of IVS, marketers/IVS promoters still have a responsibility in influencing, leading and managing volunteers desire and expectations (Krippendorf, 1987:138). Responsibility communications could have a positive effect on volunteers’ belief, attitudes and motivations; they have the potential of fitting well with the NGO’s raison d’etre if they are altruistic and not profit-motivated (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore and Hill, 2006) There is general consensus that voluntourists’ main priority is to genuinely have a positive impact on a less developed community, and an aid narrative seems to be central to the marketing of most volunteering providers (Palacios, 2010). A VT company/IVS organization must take responsibility for (1) marketing a sustainable product (e.g. putting the community first, ensuring there is a lasting impact, working with locals, respecting heritage and wildlife...) and (2) targeting a segment that is appropriate for the product (e.g. ensuring an appropriate match between volunteer skills and destination needs , conducting a needs assessment, ensuring volunteers behave appropriately...) (Kotler and Zaltman, 1971; Weeden, 2002). A high proportions of our volunteers are “once in a lifetime” customers with limited understanding of the sector and what to expect, which make up pre-purchase unobservable quality. Sending organizations confirm that volunteer tourists, in a business sense, tend to be one-time customers, so the priority is attracting volunteer rather than the impact that they have on host communities (Morgan, 2010). Despite set product (IVS) page content and standards, it is not surprising that content on project pages may score inconsistently, and may not even reflect the organization’s Policy (Smith and Font, 2014).

### Reasons:

Honest marketing is essential for participants to understand the nature of the project they are signing up for and to create trust between the IVS organization, beneficiary communities, and participants. Being honest about the expected impact of the volunteer project is essential. By us being honest about the organization's impact, participants can better discern the right fit for them and will not be disappointed by contrasting realities.

## 3. Benefits

1. Increase the professionalism of NVDA- better understanding of marketing strategies of competitors and what to avoid to distinguish ourselves from them
2. Distinguish NVDA members from volunteering organizations/company that are very commercial and does not consider much about the sustainability of the local community.
3. More qualify volunteers: Volunteers understanding of the project is better and their expectations can be control to some extent

4. Local communities need are more focused for sustainability rather than volunteers expecting too much from local communities?
5. Aligning NVDA's values and policy with its members to avoid criticisms from the public
6. Transparent communication of the reality of a destination and its objective to realistically manage expectations of volunteers and make IVS sustainable
7. Honest marketing is essential for participants to understand the nature of the project they are signing up for and to create trust between the IVS organization, beneficiary communities, and participants. Being honest about the expected impact of the volunteer project is essential. By us being honest about the organization's impact, participants can better discern the right fit for them and will not be disappointed by contrasting realities.

#### **4. Risks**

#### **5. Additional info. (more details of the policy, reference info., etc.)**