

Willing to engage your company in a meaningful CSR activity? **EXO Sustainability team is here to help you**

Corporate social responsibility may have several objectives

- *Demonstrate your commitment to doing well and good socially and environmentally*
- *Motivate your staff or sales' force through a collective charitable action that will reinforce their bonds with one another and with your company, an action not based on commercial grounds and search for profits as usual but on exchange, generosity and learning; on human values..*
- *Share your benefits by giving back to disadvantaged communities*
- *Be unique*

We aim to leave behind a memorable and long lasting positive contribution benefiting local people. And we can achieve that with a sustainable action. We sincerely thank you and encourage you to follow this path, you can trust us to guide you along the way...

It is our duty and responsibility but also our great satisfaction and pleasure to help you design a truly meaningful experience for your participants and, for the people you are willing to help.

Uniqueness is also an important criteria for a CSR activity;

Handing out medicines to hospitals, clothes or gifts to children, playing with children at day care centers, painting the wall of a local school or even building one are very common CSR activities. Moreover they are not always as beneficial as one thinks and may actually create significant negative impacts. As we've been informing you in previous communications, EXO Travel has decided to stop visits to any schools/orphanages/hospitals following advice from child welfare organizations such as Friends International, Save the Children, APLE and UNICEF.

The good news is that we are here to cater tailor made actions for you through our existing partnerships with local organizations established via our EXO Foundation and we are continuously looking for new ideas and projects.



- *Think about the long term impact of your project: **Set-up a partnership with a local organization***

- **Ask our team to find a reliable organization to partner with.** It will enable us to send you a follow up on the project to share with your team members and thus to keep an ongoing communication with them. Even if you don't intend to go back to that destination you/they'll be able to extend your/their support throughout the years.

- **Listen to and understand your partner needs before deciding which action to put in place.** You might already have an idea on the project you want to organize but is it really adapted to the needs of the local community? Is the organization a reliable one? Do they follow basic ethics?

- Have you considered involving the local community in your project? If you are building a house or a collective facility how can you involve the local people? Creating jobs for the community is always a better source of pride for locals than being given charity. It also ensures that the project is well accepted and has more chance to be sustainable if endorsed by locals in a comprehensive manner. Building a school for example may look more tangible and sustainable at first but what is often most need is teachers' training;

- Once you are back in your home country, what will happen? Is the project self-sufficient? Does it require people to be trained on specific skills to maintain it? It is much better to plan this in your activity, if you wish it to be useful once you've left.



- *Reduce your ecological footprint: adopt Eco-friendly practices*

- Reduce plastic water bottles, use refillable ones and our team will set up water fountains along your travel road stops and inside your vehicles. Encourage your participants to bring their own refillable bottles or ask us to provide customized ones to your team members.

- Especially if you are planning to visit remote areas, plan ahead. We try to avoid as much as possible to bring along plastic bags or containers (hard / soft), our team can provide for you cloth /paper bags or natural alternatives (eg: eco-friendly packages for your lunch). Limit all plastic waste as much as possible, and we will ensure rubbish are collected and disposed of safely! It will also be a good opportunity to raise awareness of the local people showing you do care for their beautiful environment, then it is likely they will care more as well.

- If you plan to offer gifts to the community, mind their impact on the environment, can you find an environmentally friendly alternative? It can be a gift produced with local/natural components, or some animals (such as chicken, pigs, buffalos, etc..), such a gift is one of the most valuable ones for many as a real investment for the future.

- You want to organize a treat or a meal, think about local ingredients! Do not give unhealthy food: junk food, sodas, and sweets, prefer local fruits, fruit juice or local tea.

What's behind a Gift?

The gift may be a source of ambiguities and can even be harmful, while the initial approach falls from an act of sincere generosity. The "good intention" is not always enough and there are sometimes more appropriate solutions than the gift, alleviating the burden of poverty and light up the lives of a few which is what you wish.

We wish here to share with you some feedback we gathered from working with local organizations and international ones on why donations and gifts may not help and what to consider before deciding how you choose to contribute to local development and poverty alleviation.



Contribute to the local economy

Bringing in goods all the way from your country even in small quantities hinders the development of local markets burdens your gear and increase your carbon footprint. In Asia, you can easily find local editors, publishers, libraries, paper book manufacturers, pens and colors pens sellers...whatever you need you can find in Asia and you are sure it is adapted to their needs and facilities.

Dependency

Sending or bringing goods such as medicines, pens, notebooks, are punctual helps but they will not contribute to changing living conditions of local populations in the long term. These practices even increase people dependency towards international aid, preventing them from finding solutions more adapted to their context or for example to safely pursue a medical treatment in the long run.



*'You do not wish our gift??
No sorry I do not like to owe anything'*



Waste recycling

Especially for electronic equipment or pharmaceutical products, these donations can be retreated or given in breach of regulations and lead to harmful effects on health (recycling of old electronic equipment or not adapted/expired medications) and environment.

Unfair distribution and power struggles

Donations distribution can lead to power struggles among the community or reinforce a feeling of unfairness especially for children. If the beneficiaries are not involved in the distribution criteria, there is a high risk of mismanagement. For example, medicines can be sold at the black market, a computer can be appropriated by one person instead of being



given to a school. Some extreme cases report people being mutilated, in order to get more money. Unfair distribution of donations cause rivalries and jealousy and may raise tensions between children from the same village (for candies, clothing, toys distribution etc.) or gifts from tourists. All children organizations strongly discourage donating any gift directly to children, and so do we.

Reinforcing stereotyped views



Bringing massive amount of goods from western countries often vehicle the idea that everything coming from the western countries is better. It can contribute to low self esteem or disinterest from the young generation for their own country. Moreover, it creates hierarchy and unfair relationships between the ones who gives and the one who receives (which is de facto placed in a situation of moral debt and assistance).

Logistical difficulties

It is important to understand the complexity of the logistics to transport material. The economic and ecological costs when sending parcels or overweight baggage are very important. In addition, many logistics aspects must be anticipated and can become unexpectedly costly: storage, packaging, customs formalities, local legal restrictions (medicines)...



Drugs donations

Medicines can be dangerous if misused or improperly maintained in heat and humidity. In addition, the drugs treating specific conditions in our countries are not necessarily tailored to the needs of the people there. The instructions on the medicine are written in a language they don't understand, and so they can end up taking a wrong posology. Moreover, the drug donation can jeopardize local health policies, compete with local pharmaceutical distribution circuits and encourage parallel and illegal sales

markets. Legislations in most countries strictly forbid the import of medicines aside for personal use. It is still possible to do so bribing customs officials, which is totally against our ethical code and certainly yours as well.

In Vietnam, the Circular 01/ 2014 / TT- BYT of the Ministry of Health of Vietnam (2014) specifies the conditions of importation of drugs by non-commercial way (by Vietnamese or foreigners). Many drugs are prohibited on the territory (even for individual use) and are listed as "Prohibited drugs" by the government. The imported medicines by doctors / pharmacists in order to be donated must have been listed by a clinic / hospital partner officially approved and declared to customs. They should be enclosed orders and correctly labels (not expired). The import cannot exceed the dosage prescribed for 7 days and the value of medicines must not exceed 30 USD per trip for each kind of medication, and 100 USD for a maximum total value per trip.

Clothing donations

Used clothing sent to developing countries are often not suited to the local climate, the location of the action or the size of the beneficiaries ...

It may be fueling a parallel economy and contributes to destroy local textiles sector (cotton production, weaving, clothing ...) and so to worsen poverty. "For 1 position created in the industrial countries in the collection and recycling of clothes, 10 are lost in developing countries. If your objective is to help out, buy a maximum of garments produced locally.

Otherwise, the best way to collect is to establish a list of clothing that will be most suited... we are happy to help you with this.



Books donations

Sending books in developing countries is not necessarily the best solution. For example, sending textbooks is inappropriate and even a problem as it is very likely they do not match the established school programs. As well these books convey values and representations that are ours and which they may not want nor understand. It is often better to support local publishers and bookshops by purchase new books to them. However, if you wish you can bring some classic children's books in your native language and give them to a library or a foreign language learning center. Do not hesitate to contact us if you

are interested.

Donations of electronic equipments

We must be extremely vigilant regarding the quality of hardware we want to give. Indeed, the donation of computer equipment can pose serious environmental problems, as it can transform rapidly into toxic waste. Since 2005, a European directive requires manufacturers to recover and recycle their products and prohibits the export of electronic waste. Moreover, to use a computer, minimal training is required. Giving a computer without the means of its use is unnecessary. Any donation of computer equipment must be accompanied by a transfer of skills to the use and maintenance of equipment. We must also think whether consumables are available locally and if electric requirements match.



Often it is preferable to finance the purchase of new computers, suitable for the local context instead of giving older models, even repaired ones. SoftComp, created by an Indian company is producing the cheapest computer and the easiest to use in the world. It is very cheap (less than 180 euros each), with free software, and works with only 8 watts, a major advantage in countries where power fluctuations are daily.



IF BRINGING GIFT IS NOT THE BEST SOLUTION, WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

Working with local partners in the long term:

There are numerous local organizations doing a fantastic work, by helping them to conduct prevention campaigns, take action to provide access to clean water rather than giving medication, to rescue street children, to provide education to disadvantaged kids, to save wildlife, etc.

Buy local fair trade products

(food, clothing ...) and in this way contribute to improving the income of small producers. You can visit shops listed in our "TIPS for Responsible Travel" booklet and on [EXO Foundation website](#). It will be cheaper for you as well, the most important is not how much you spend but how useful it is to the person you give it to.

Donating money to support meaningful projects:

In areas such as food security, health, education, emergency relief ... Please visit our Foundation website dedicated to showcasing the best local projects that need most support: www.exofoundation.org

Instead of giving books here, give them in your own country:

Hospitals, retirement homes, prisons, literacy associations, school support, etc. may be interested in your books. Again, the same rules must be respected: it is not to give everything that does not serve us, but to respond to identified needs or desires.

BEFORE DECIDING PLEASE SEEK OUR ADVICE AS ASIAN SPECIALISTS AND LONG TERM RESIDENTS