

The reading passages cover a range of views about voluntourism.

How far do you agree that voluntourism is beneficial?

Support your answer with reference to:

- the ideas and opinions from at least one of the reading passages
- examples drawn from your own experience and that of your society

Sample application

<i>Point from Passage 3</i>	<i>Dangers of voluntourism</i>	<i>Qualify</i>
<p>Paragraph 3 ...many of these trips serve no purpose other than to pad resumes and fuel social media posts...</p> <p>...voluntourists’ actions are often fruitless due to the <b>volunteers’ limited involvement and expertise</b>.</p>	<p><b>EV/R (Reasons why the point is true in SG; reasons why voluntourism is not that beneficial; Applicability to SG context)</b></p> <p>Singapore boasts one of the world's most successful education systems. The nation has consistently outperformed its peers in international benchmarks. This has led to a hyper-competitive culture among students in Singapore. Many students have been perceived to go after overseas service-learning opportunities in order to complement their stellar academic results, so as to show that they are well-rounded candidates and to give them an edge in the highly coveted prestigious scholarships and university admissions.</p> <p>Additionally, Singapore has a very high percentage of social media users, many of them who are youths. The idea of being perceived as ‘woke’ or the aforementioned ‘perceived all-rounder’ is ever present in the reasons why Singapore youths are such avid users and consumers of social media. The constant competitive culture is further emphasised by social media posts - where everyone is posting about good things and virtue-signalling is a common thing that people do on social media, Singaporeans being no exception.</p> <p>Hence this implies that voluntourism has a limited impact on the lives of the locals as once they voluntourists get what they need (the Instagram posts, the tiktoks, the resume padding), they might not be willing to continue their acts of service with the communities by making return trips, making the impact exactly like what was said in the passages, to be short term and insignificant. In fact, it is not inconceivable that many of them may even be rather half-hearted in their acts of service while on the expedition itself, content to stand by while more altruistically motivated students carry the bulk of the tasks. This limits also the personal growth they may achieve also if so motivated.</p> <p>Furthermore, what P3 says about volunteers is also similar to what the average Singaporean voluntourist may be like. Singaporean youths, having lived in an affluent and safe country all their lives, have little knowledge of poverty on a global scale and display little knowledge of the poor even within Singapore itself, much less of neighboring countries. It is unlikely as well, that they would have expertise with regard to construction, or indeed any valuable life skills or economic skills they could impart to impoverished communities, such as how to make a living, having little experiences in life besides cramming for examinations. Furthermore, Singaporean students are highly protected, and overseas trips require lengthy and thorough risk assessment procedures to ensure the expedition participants are safe and protected. They are prevented from risky endeavours, there’s always wet weather programmes, they eat catered food, and live in nice hotels which are vetted for hygiene, safety and comfort. The trips are also unlikely to be very long in order to minimize the risks and the anxieties of the over-concerned parents of these privileged teens. All these incontrovertibly show that as voluntourists, Singaporean youths may be the sort that would result in futile and fruitless attempts to improve locals’ lives due to limited involvement and expertise, and that such trips benefit them more than the locals. Through such trips they gain (some) global exposure, and perhaps also an exercise in developing empathy, but the beneficiaries do not have their lives changed in any significant way. Hence while not exactly</p>	<p>It may be too cynical to write off all the efforts of voluntourists from Singapore. While the short term expeditions which make up service-learning trips may indeed reflect the poor qualifications of Singaporeans to change the lives of the locals, there are also plenty of Singaporeans who are indeed qualified and who are willing to invest the time on long-term overseas volunteering commitments. Singaporeans have always displayed diverse aspirations, and there are also many who are motivated by religious beliefs or the spirit of altruism and selflessness instead of only thinking of their own interests and using voluntourism as a stepping stone for their own gain.</p> <p>An example can be seen from one young Singaporean, Jerome Wong, who set out to prolong the impacts of his school’s overseas community programme, WeeTrip. WeeTrip is an annual overseas service project organised by WeeVolunteer for students in Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information. Being media communications students, Wong and his team conducted a journalism project in Luang Prabang, a city where they were doing volunteer work in. They interviewed locals and filmed their documentaries. These human interest stories aimed to raise awareness and bring attention to the issues locals face. His commitment to making a genuine and lasting change, also demonstrated how Singaporeans can indeed <b>use the skills they have</b>, to improve the lives of the local communities.</p>

	detrimental to the locals, it would be hasty to over-state the benefits of voluntourism to them.	
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