

Global Village Gift Giving Policy

Policy Title	Global Village Gift Giving Policy		
Unit	Global Village		
Author	GV Manager		
Version	Version 1		
Authorised by	Board of Directors		
Date endorsed		Reviewed	
Re-ratified		Endorsed	

1. Objective:

The purpose of this policy is to define the approach of Habitat for Humanity Australia (HFHA) to the giving of gifts by Global Village (GV) volunteers to members of project communities in the field.

2. Background

The Habitat for Humanity International (HFHI) Gift Giving Policy states that all donations and gifts must be channelled through the GV Sending Country and not given directly to the community.

The policy should be made known to all Global Village teams on a minimum of 3 separate occasions. It should be:

- Included in the Orientation materials that are sent prior to departure from the home country.
- Included in the mandatory pre departure team conference call and re-iterated at the “In-country Welcome Orientation” in the host country.

3. Rationale

HFHA discourages GV teams, team leaders, and individual team members from giving personal gifts while engaged in or as a result of being engaged in a volunteer opportunity with Habitat for Humanity or one of its partners.

Gift giving, although well intended, can have a variety of negative impacts:

- In many cultures, to receive a gift means that a gift must be given in return. This can result in disappointment and unhappiness among the very people the team members hope to honour by giving a gift.
- Gifts given to some community members but not others may cause jealousy and damage internal community relationships.
Gifts may set an unhelpful precedent and be construed as a handout rather than simply a kind gesture. Gift giving can have a negative impact on the host affiliate/host program, HFH in general, future volunteers who build with the affiliate/host program and future volunteer teams.

To avoid potential misunderstandings, embarrassment, injured feelings, or jealousy, we request that the teams or individual members do not give or exchange gifts.

4. Policy in Practice

Children at the Work Site

Giving of gifts to individual children is discouraged.

Team members may bring small items to the work site to share during the day's activities – soccer ball, bubbles, balloons etc. – as long as every child present can participate and team members take the items home to their lodging every evening. Team members, and team leaders should consult with a member of the HFHA GV staff prior to bringing items to site, to ensure they meet the criteria.

Team members should keep in mind that once word spreads, the work site may be inundated with children, which poses a safety risk. Team members should use restraint and common sense to avoid hurting anyone's feelings. If something is shared with one, it will be expected that it will be shared with all. All necessary actions should also be taken to keep children clear of the actual work site and safe from any danger.

Because such gifts could benefit the entire community (school, affiliate/host program), any items brought to play with at the work site that a team member would like to donate should be given to the GV Host Coordinator who, after the team departs, will see that they are appropriately distributed in the community. Leaving gifts with individuals is not permitted. If a team member or team leader is unsure of whether a gift is appropriate while on site, they should consult their GV Host Coordinator.

Donating Tools and Clothing

GV teams often ask if they should bring tools to use and then donate to the affiliate/host program upon departure. Although team members are not required to bring tools and should not be solicited by HFH staff, they may do so if they choose. Donated tools are retained by the

affiliate/host program and used on future builds; tools cannot be donated to a family or local labourer directly.

Some team members may wish to donate their work clothes. Donated clothing should be given to the local affiliate/host program, who will see that it is distributed appropriately in the community, through local charities and churches, to those most in need.

Sponsoring

Team members are sometimes approached about the possibility of “sponsoring” children or families in the host country. They might be the partner family children, children of a host affiliate/host program staff member, children of an extended family, or simply a local resident befriended by a team member.

Team members should not agree to any type of sponsorship, monetary or otherwise, while a member of an international volunteer or GV team. It is also against HFH policy for any staff member (HFHA or Hosting Country Staff) to solicit personal donations, cash or goods, from volunteers, donors, etc. Any form of sponsorship request should be reported by volunteers to the HFHA GV team leader or HFHA staff and may affect future participation in the program.

Suggested Mementos for Partner Family

HFHA suggests that a volunteer team develop a few photographs of the team and mount them on cardstock. Have each team member sign around the photo and leave these as mementos for the partner family by which to remember the team. Contact the HFHA GV Manager or program coordinator for other memento ideas.