

# How to turn volunteer work into paid experiences



[Heward](#) Jue with child in Rwanda. Photo by Wayne Kittelson.

Have you ever wished you could apply more time to a cause you believe in? Here's some advice from a pro art director, designer and photographer who evolved his volunteer work into a more professional capacity.

"A lot of people donate their time and efforts to nonprofits in order to do some good and add more meaning to their lives. While volunteering is noble and altruistic, we all have a limited quantity of time to give to a cause. We all need to earn a living," Heward says.

"Sometimes we can give more wholeheartedly of ourselves if we know our own needs are being met. One way to do this is to contribute your talents where there is grant funding set aside for a particular project. Corporations and wealthy individuals often sponsor humanitarian projects and need talented people to carry out the work," [Heward](#) adds.

For over twenty years, Heward has worked for some of the country's most creative ad agencies elevating countless brands.

"While working in advertising is a decent way to earn a living and can be fun, it often feels shallow in the larger scope of things," claims Heward. "I don't always agree with consumerism, so doing work for nonprofits gives me a sense of redemption."

Today, [Heward](#) gravitates toward working with corporations or organizations on their altruistic projects. He recently traveled to Kenya and Tanzania for Asante Africa, and to Vietnam for Roots of Peace. Here's how:

## How [Heward](#) was introduced to Asante Africa Foundation and the Getty Images Creative Grant



A Kenyan preschooler photographed by [Heward](#) Jue while working with Asante Africa Foundation

Because of his work and personal interest in different

cultures and developing countries, [Heward](#) has traveled to various parts of the world.

“I went to South Africa for a commercial wine project. But what captivated me was the sea of shanty towns I saw. I thought it would be interesting to visit the residents and take some portraits. The faces and spirits of the people I captured were absolutely wonderful, so I made large prints to hang in my office when I returned. One of my colleagues who knew the founder at Asante Africa Foundation saw the photos and introduced me to her. I started designing their annual reports and later became a Board Member,” [Heward](#) says.

“When I was at Asante Africa, I heard about the [Getty Images Creative Grant](#). I decided to build a proposal and provided a portfolio to apply for this \$20,000 grant. It was an international competition with 85 applicants from 23 different countries. We were one of the two awarded,” he states.

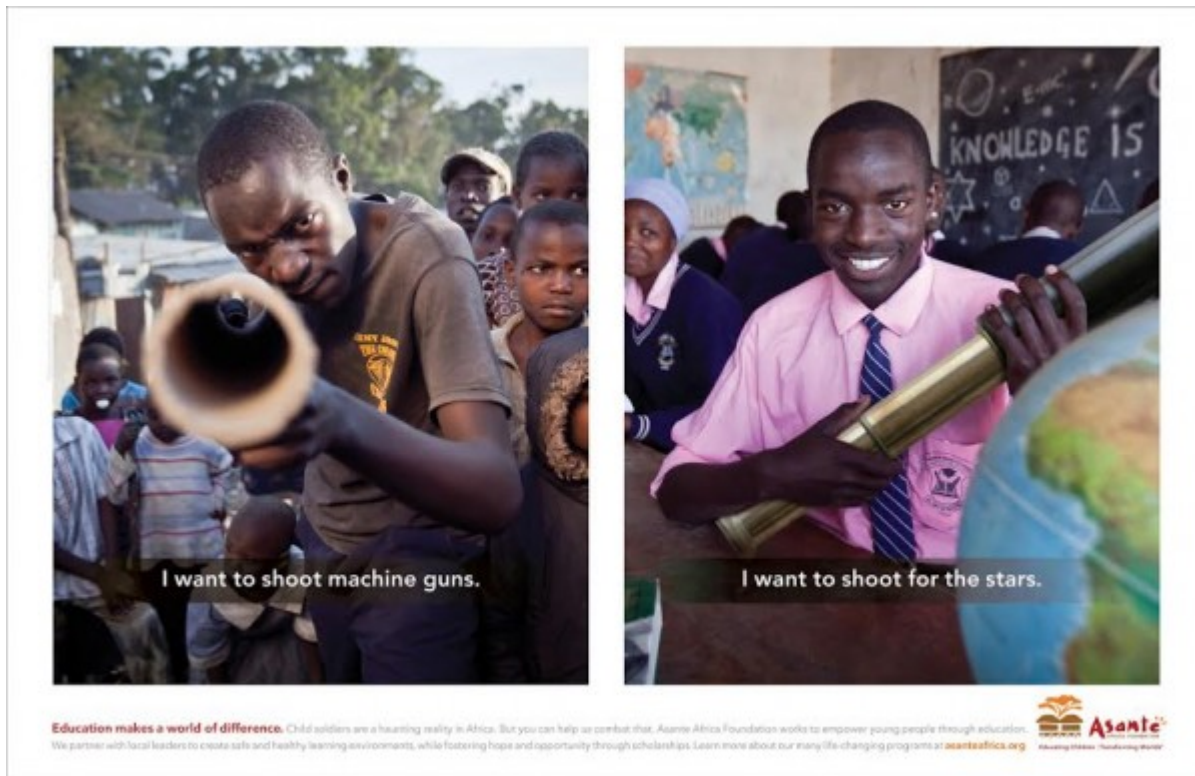
“Asante Africa Foundation helps to educate children in East Africa, where there are many obstacles besides poverty that hinder children from getting educated. For example, when girls start to menstruate, many stop attending school. Asante Africa Foundation helps by building girls’ [toilets](#) so that they have safe and private places to take care of the hygiene needs while at school,” [Heward](#) says.



[Heward](#) Jue adjusting microphone while preparing to record a Maasai girl's story for Asante Africa Foundation.

One of the main purposes of this project was to promote awareness for Asante Africa and the work they do. Utilizing his creative advertising background, [Heward](#) wrote, co-directed and shot this video for the foundation. It demonstrates the drastic differences between life with and without education:

A striking print campaign, as represented by this ad below, was also created to round out the campaign.



## How [Heward](#) got involved with Roots of Peace

“Back in 1999, I designed the [Roots of Peace](#) logo when their founder, [Heidi Kuhn](#), was operating out of her living room. They’ve grown tremendously since then, and she recently contacted me to document their work in Vietnam,” [Heward](#) states.





Photographer [Heward Jue](#) shooting while a Vietnamese farmer shares his story for Roots of Peace.

The [ACE Group](#), a global insurer and one of Roots of Peace's sponsors, provided the funding for this project.

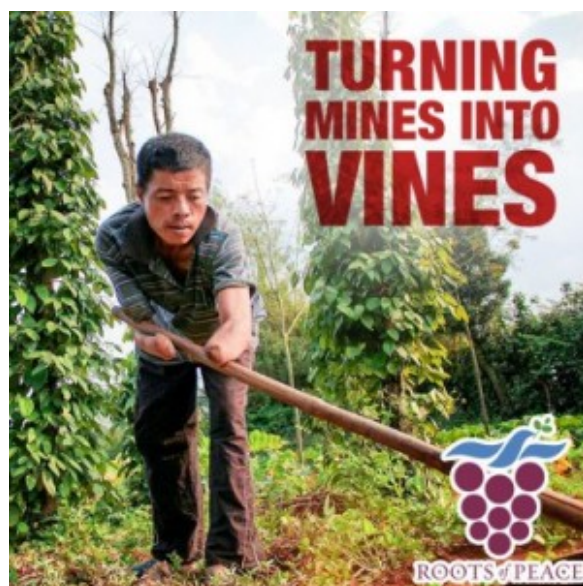


Photo by Tucker Kühn, Roots of Peace.

Roots of Peace's mission is to restore economic vitality to war-torn regions by creating livelihood opportunities through agriculture. In Vietnam, where the war ended 40 years ago, there are still areas plagued with unexploded landmines, bombs and rocket-propelled grenades. Roots of Peace works with partners to remove these devices, turning what was once destructive land into productive, arable land.



A Vietnamese family empowered by the work of Roots of Peace. Photography by [Heward](#) Jue.

## **Can you turn your volunteer work into compensated opportunities?**

[Heward](#) likes doing work for nonprofits that have noble causes. "Lots of people want to help nonprofits, but it doesn't always have to be charity. There are funds out there, and you can do some research to find organizations that need your skill set. It's just a matter of asking the right questions and finding the right avenues," suggests [Heward](#).

If you're interested in getting paid to use your skills to support a nonprofit, here are a four suggestions from [Heward](#):

## 1. Research to find opportunities you're passionate about.

"It needs to first come from the heart," Heward says. If you like and believe in what you're doing, it's better for everyone involved. Although Heward's work often requires him to travel to far-out places, there are countless ways you can make a difference within the borders of your own country, state or city. You don't have to go far to find people in need.

Here are a few tools you can use to identify volunteer opportunities:



- Use [VolunteerMatch](#) to “find a cause that lights you up.”
- Search for “Volunteer Opportunities” on [Yelp](#).
- Use [Facebook](#) to “like” and get involved with nonprofits you believe in.

“Begin by giving a little of yourself,” [Heward](#) says.

You don't have to be an expert to lend a helping hand. And you don't have to put in long hours if you don't want to. That's the nature of the work. One of the advantages of volunteering is that you have the right say yes or no. But when you decide to say yes, you'll find that there are endless possibilities to serve through nonprofits in almost any community in the world.

## 2. Get experience to build your credibility.

Get involved in small projects near or far. You need some experience and credibility before an organization will consider paying you. If you have a particular expertise or passion, it can be helpful to focus your work in this area.





"Yes, sir. I'm a fully-experienced flood relief volunteer..."

There's a website or app for nearly everything these days. If you're a photographer, for example, you can look for opportunities on [PhotoPhilanthropy](#). By providing a means for photographers and nonprofit organizations to come together, they *champion social change, one photo at a time*.

[Take a big sip of water and speak up a little louder.](#)

"Once you get into the areas you're interested in and become known, then opportunities start coming to you," [Heward](#) says.

### **3. Build your reputation.**

Whichever area of work you want to get into, start getting involved with people and projects in those areas. Document your experience along the way. Photos or videos can help, but they're not always a necessity. Once you make connections and friends, they remember you and they can always be used as a reference.

Share your passion and volunteer experiences on social media tools such as [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) or other social media tools. Then people start to get to know you.



#### **4. Search for opportunities to get paid for your expertise.**

Research the sponsors of these organizations. Some have the funds to carry out the projects and they often need people to do the work.

“Charitable projects are a good way for corporations to give back to the world to help elevate humanity, instead of just their bottom line,” [Heward](#) comments.

You can also apply for grants to fund your work, as [Heward](#) did with the Getty Images Creative Grant. Getting paid in volunteer organizations doesn't come easily. It's a bonus that you can work toward in the long-run.



[Heward](#) Jue sharing his work with a Tanzanian villager.

### [How to make your vacation last a lifetime](#)

As an art director and designer, [Heward](#) has won numerous awards for creative excellence including: [The One Show](#), [Communication Arts](#), [Clio](#), [Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival](#), [Graphis](#), [The Art Directors Club](#), [The Obies](#), [The Effies](#), [The ANDYs](#), and [The ADDYs](#).

His photography has been recognized for excellence by [PDN](#), [Planet Magazine](#), [Rangefinder Magazine](#), and the [American Photographic Artists](#).

If you're interested in having Heward shoot a project for your organization, contact him at [HewardJue.com](http://HewardJue.com).



[Heward](#) Jue showing off his tan line after 10 days of shooting in Africa. Photo by Erna Grasz.



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