

WELCOME TO

Volunteers Without Borders



Dear Potential Volunteer,

Thank you for taking the time to locate our organization and we would like to personally send you a warm welcome. We are pleased to hear you will be volunteering with Volunteers Without Borders. Although there are numerous avenues for volunteering, we can assure that we offer **life changing volunteering opportunities** at the **LOWEST possible cost** to you, the volunteer. Now that you've filled out the online application and that you're on board, our goal is to take care of you every step of the way. We will ensure that you are fully prepared before you leave to the country of your choice and begin working on your first volunteer program with us. This information package was designed to serve two purposes. The first purpose is to give you more detailed information about the country you have chosen to volunteer in as well as providing some additional insight into the various types of programs we offer. The second purpose is to provide you with specific items that you will be expected to bring along with you, what types of vaccinations you will be needing before you leave, and what we recommend for your emergency/medical travel insurance. Not only do our volunteering programs benefit the organization and community you will be working with, but they also provide volunteers with an appreciation and gratitude for others, sense of fulfillment, as well as new perspectives. Our goal is to inspire volunteers to raise awareness, share their stories and continue to support or contribute to our programs in any way possible in the future. Although our programs can be quite demanding at times, we ensure that you will be given adequate time and days off to tour around the area you are working in and get the opportunity to participate in any outdoor activities or adventures you would be interested in.

It is your job to explore this information package and then reply back to us at: info@vwbinternational.org to let us know that you are ready for the next step of the enrollment process. If you have specific questions please see our frequently asked questions page as this covers most questions that the volunteers may have. To locate this page, visit our website and click the 'About VWB' tab.

Like most developing countries in the world; political instability could arise at any given time, so we encourage you to check with your local government travel advisory just to be sure that nothing is expected to occur in the location while your over there. With that being said, we can ensure you that every country that we offer has been checked out by our team to ensure the security and safety for our volunteers.

While volunteering on any of our available programs, you will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of health, educational, community development, or wildlife and marine conservation programs. This will give you a chance to make an important contribution to the local community and while doing so, gain an in depth understanding of the country and its culture. We assure you that this experience will leave a lasting impression and stay with you for the rest of your life.

Information to help you prepare for your trip

If it's your first time volunteering or going abroad, there are several things you will need to make sure you bring on your trip before you leave. Here is a list of the following items that we have deemed necessary to bring to make sure you can enjoy your time on the program. The list below is a general suggestion; each volunteer may prefer more specific items that we have not included in this list. Please make sure that you remember to bring any special items that you are used to having back home, that may only be purchased in your own country.

What to Bring:

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable shoes and sandals | <input type="checkbox"/> Camera and/or iPod |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shorts and pants | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone - You can buy simcard) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain Coat/Jacket | <input type="checkbox"/> Rechargeable batteries w/charger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping Bag | <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses and Sunscreen | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight/head torch |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Lock |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mosquito net & insect repellent | <input type="checkbox"/> String |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Sanitizer | <input type="checkbox"/> Eyeglasses/Contacts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First Aid Kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Medication (Anti Malarial Tablets) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duct Tape and/or superglue | <input type="checkbox"/> Picture Book / Journal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Binder or notepad | <input type="checkbox"/> Country Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Ear Plugs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small water heater or kettle | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothes or Electronics for donation |

Vaccinations:

The World Health Organization recommends that all travelers be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, polio and hepatitis B, regardless of their destination. The consequences of these diseases can be severe and outbreaks do occur. [Click here](#) to learn more.

“As the President and Founder of Volunteers Without Borders Association, I’d like to offer you a warm welcome! I have done a lot of volunteering myself and believe it is the most fulfilling and gratifying way to give back to countries around the world that need all the help they can get. Whether you’re an adventurous traveler or looking to help make a difference, we are happy to have you join us. By volunteering, you will make a difference to the local people that you come in contact with overseas. Our volunteering opportunities expose you to the often-harsh everyday realities of life for many people around the world in underdeveloped areas. We thank you for your time and consideration.”

~ Kevin Francis

President & Founder of VWB

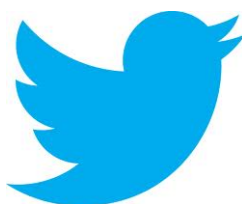


Website:

www.vwbinternational.org

Email:

info@vwbinternational.org





MYANMAR



Myanmar is one of Asia's greatest civilizations of India and China, It faces the Indian Ocean and neighbors the well-known country of Thailand. Myanmar is one of Asia's largest and most diverse countries. Its borders stretch from the sparkling islands of the Andaman Sea in the south, right up into the Eastern Himalayan mountain range in the north.

This country remains one of the most mysterious and undiscovered destinations on our planet so it attracts a special type of volunteer. For those who come to these foreign lands, they will quickly be rewarded with breathtaking scenery, beauty, charm and incredible landscapes. It offers all the traditional delights of Asia in one fascinating country. During your trip, you can find jungles, snow-capped mountains, pristine beaches, and a rich and glorious heritage spanning more than two thousand years. Spectacular monuments and ancient cities attest to a vibrant culture that is still home to 135 different ethnic groups here. Only until recently, this country began to reach out and emerge themselves into the modern world. Wherever you go in Myanmar, whether it be cruising down the mighty Ayeyarwaddy River in style, drifting over the ancient city of Bagan by hot air balloon, or searching for that elusive tiger on the back of an elephant, there is always a feeling of adventure. Other activities can include Mountain trekking, rafting in the far north, or world class diving in the Mergui Archipelago. Myanmar also boasts one of the lowest tourist crime records in the world, so visitors can rest assured their holiday will be safe from start to finish.

Currency Advice

The local currency accepted in Myanmar is **Myanmar Kyat (MMK)**. Crisp, clean, unfolded, mint condition USD bills are also accepted. If there is the slightest crease, fold or tear in the bill, it will NOT be accepted. Credit cards are not accepted which means that you will need to rely here more heavily on cash, as there are only a couple of ATMs in across the entire country. The best thing to bring is new USD Currency in a mixture of large and small denominations, and a Visa or MasterCard card for emergency.

Travel Document information

Myanmar can be a little bit more challenging than simply getting a visa upon arrival. To enter Myanmar, a valid passport and getting an entry visa are required before travelling there. You can get a tourist visa either in your own country or at a Myanmar Embassy, which can take up to 10 business days. Please check with a travel expert from your country for requirements. A 28-day visa costs approximately **\$80 CAD**.

Medical Insurance and Facilities

There are no hospitals, doctors, or chemists in the area where the project is located. The closest hospital is in Bagan located approximately 90 Km from the Project. Please arrange vaccinations and travel insurance in your home country before you arrive.

Communication

As like most of the world, mobile phones have taken over and having an international unlocked phone and a local SIM card is necessary if you wish to use your phone here. SIM cards can be purchased and registered in most areas. Internet access is also very limited in most areas.

Transport

The easiest way to reach the project is to fly into Yangon and catch a bus to Bagan and then arrange transport from Bagan to Yenangyaung, which is approximately 120 kilometers south from Bagan. Alternatively, you can fly from Yangon to Mandalay and catch a bus or boat from Mandalay to Bagan. Flying is always faster than a bus but it depends on your transport budget and what you can afford.

Dangers and Annoyances

Myanmar is a relatively safe, hassle-free country and can be a relief if you've recently been somewhere like Thailand, Vietnam or Cambodia. With that being said, you do still need to take the usual precautions. Avoid isolated areas; especially stretches of beach, and in cities and tourist areas take a taxi at night. When using public transport, don't accept drinks or food from someone you don't know and ensure your bag or belongs is secure. Be skeptical of anyone who comes up to you on the street asking whether you remember them from the airport, your hotel or wherever. In the majority of cases, they are just trying to get money from you.

In tourist areas like Yangon, Rangoon, and/or Bagan, you may see a few touts and flycatchers but they are not aggressive, especially around bus stations and budget tourist hotels. Do your best to minimize the impression that you're a newly arrived tourist. If somebody is following you or you feel the need, duck into a shop if you need to get your bearings or look at a map and don't walk around any more than necessary with your luggage. While looking for a room, leave your bag with a friend or reliable hotel rather than walking around town with it. Buy your bus tickets a day in advance (without your luggage) and, when arriving in a new city, take a taxi from the bus station to your hotel. Be very wary of anyone who approaches you on the street, at the bus station or in your hotel offering tour deals, and never pay any money for a tour in advance until you've thoroughly checked out the company.

A Few Tips

- Avoid external money pouches, dangling backpacks, camera bags, and leave jewellery, fancy watches, and fancy headphones at home. Carry your passport, money and other documents in a pouch against your skin, hidden under loose-fitting clothing. Or, better, store valuables in a hotel safe, if there's a reliable one, ideally inside a pouch with a lockable zip to prevent tampering. It never hurts to make a photocopy of your identification and cards and store it separately in another bag.
- Have your luggage as consolidated as possible, with your valuables well hidden under your clothes. Try to spot the taxi area before disembarking and make a beeline for it. It's well worth a few extra dollars for the fare, rather than attempting to walk to your hotel with your luggage.

Water

Unless your intestines are well accustomed to South East Asia, don't drink water from the tap that hasn't been boiled, filtered or chemically disinfected (such as with iodine tablets). Also avoid drinking from streams, rivers and lakes unless you've purified the water first.

Cultural Awareness

Myanmar is a very interesting, exciting, beautiful and scenic country, but the majority of the population does not speak the English language. We encourage volunteers, planning to stay for 2 to 3 months or more, to consider learning essential words and phrases in the local language in order to communicate better with the surrounding community. We can try to arrange lessons for those that are interested. Female volunteers should be aware that in the towns and villages, it is normally respectful to have your knees and your midriff covered (and in some cases, your shoulders). Some practices in Myanmar are very different to what volunteers may be used to at home. Visitors to Myanmar do not have to agree with all the customs around them, but should respect them and endeavor to understand the complex cultural history that shaped them.

PLEASE NOTE: There is a **ZERO TOLERANCE** policy in place for alcohol consumption, during volunteer work hours, while on the project. The consumption of alcohol is looked negatively upon and even forbidden in certain countries and it is essential that you abide by this rule. We need to ensure that you are giving the project the right impression of Volunteers Without Borders during your stay. **If volunteers choose not to follow this policy, they will be removed from the project immediately, and no refund will be issued.**

BURMESE SCHOOL TEACHING PROGRAM



Location: Yenangyaung (120 kilometers south of Bagan)

This program is designed and built for people who are interested in helping to support local life in this part of Myanmar. First of all, you should come because of the people – that’s what community based tourism is all about. Wander down the hill, into town and you will encounter smiling faces everywhere: Children waving to you from the back of horse carts; old, toothless men sitting in front of obscure shops; labourers with teeth red from chewing betel nut; teenagers zipping by on scooters, shouting “hello”; women in colourful dresses, their faces white with Tanakar, the traditional make-up, balancing rice bags on their heads. Although Yenangyaung is a very poor town in this land of daily toil, everyone is smiling at you, because you will possibly be the only stranger here. Sit down on the front steps of a shop and watch everyday life. There’s always something happening.

Second, you should come because of the traditional Myanmar life that you will encounter. Walk down the hill on the other side and watch farmers herding their cattle and ploughing their small fields with oxen, visit the brick factory where bricks are still being made solely by manual labour, go further till you reach the Irrawaddy River and talk to the fishermen working on their small boats. Come back through the little villages and see the tiny huts where these friendly people live, with chickens, pigs and dogs. It’s almost certain that someone will invite you for a cup of tea.

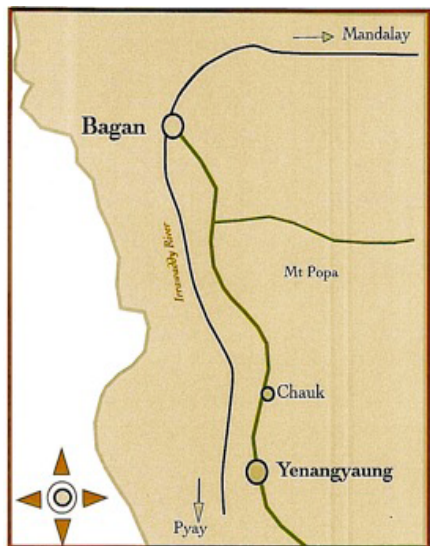
And of course you should to volunteer and help provide valuable education at our school which is situated next to the Guest House. Go there in the morning and be prepared: The preschool kids will come running for you, hug you and practice their English with you. Most of them are orphans or half-orphans and they all come from very poor families. It’s shocking and heartbreaking to hear their stories. Yet they are happy and willing to learn. At this school, volunteers are encouraged to teach English, play with kids, and the most important thing is to have fun while enjoying a unique sharing and caring experience with so many hopeful children who you may come in contact on a day-to-day basis.

AS A VOLUNTEER ON THIS PROGRAM, YOUR DUTIES WILL INCLUDE:

- Providing care and Support to the school children
- Teaching English
- Playing games with the children
- Future Project Development
- Assisting with community or other projects



With help from foreign friends, the owner and regular donors have been subsidizing poor families in the area, offering education and sustainable life for many underprivileged children, along with providing food to more than 60 elderly locals. Parentless children thrown off their land are slowly being brought back into society, going to school, finding apprenticeships, becoming properly nourished and above all, finding the dignity and happiness which all children should enjoy.



Yenangyaung (literally “stream of fossil oil”) is located 60 miles South of Bagan, in the Magwe Division, on the main Nyaung-U to Pyay highway. The car ride takes about three hours on a forest of toddy palm scenic road. You can also reach the project by bus from Rangoon or Bagan. A haven for writers... From fallow land, between waves of sand, its owner has created a haven in an incredibly peaceful environment... A garden of bougainvilleas, oleanders and rosebushes blazing in colors, is a great luxury in this dry zone. Inside, quarters are very cozy and decorated tastefully.

RESTING and TEACHING: A visit with meaning

2009 saw the completion of a training and life center close to the guesthouse, where children come on Saturdays. This is a caring, clean place to play, wash and study, and receive protein meals. Foreigners are welcome to teach English, draw, play, and/or hold pediatric consultations. In 2010, our aim was to provide each household with small solar-operated lamps, so that they can continue studying after dark (6pm). Each lamp costs (\$50 CAD). In 2011, the plan was to begin caring for more households and start to build a professional training center. Three or four years ago most of the families we support were living under trees or on the street. A resourceful Burmese, devoted to the well-being of these children, started the whole project. These children are now able to live and be educated thanks to donations from abroad and help from friends. Little by little, they are beginning to have a social life, learn how to play, and regain dignity.

We are doing everything possible to ensure they stay in their original community. Patrons distribute monthly food rations; choose an adult to look after the children, settle fees for schooling and transportation (sometimes a bicycle is very useful), provide books, uniforms and additional private lessons as basic schooling in Myanmar is rudimentary. We are now doing very well, provided we keep on getting donations and support. This project, simple but multi-faceted, must stay small on both a financial and human level if it is to last. Our goal is to be able to continually support 250 people and pay local salaries, In reaching this goal it means we need about \$50 000 CAD every year. Volunteers have become an essential step forward both on project and helping us create awareness about the good we have been doing over here. We welcome all walks of life from any cultural backgrounds to come here to Burma/Myanmar and provide us with as much help and they can. We are grateful to have people like you want to help and do their part to make sure the world becomes more connected and a better place to live.

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS PROGRAM:

- Basic school fees = \$15 CAD / month (uniform, books, extra courses = \$15 CAD / month)
- Rebuild a bamboo house = \$ 150 CAD
- Individual solar lamp (3w) = \$ 50 CAD
- Food for an elderly person = \$ 120 CAD / year
- Solar paneling for a village = \$ 600 CAD
- Dig a well in a village = \$ 250 CAD (Diesel to operate the pump = \$300 CAD)

HERE ARE THE STEPS TO COMPLETE OUR ENROLLMENT PROCESS

Step 1) - Review this information package and decide which country you want to volunteer in and what program you are most interested to volunteer on. Once you have done that, please fill out the online application form available on our website and click submit. Please make sure to include the necessary required information.

Step 2) Once we receive the application form, we will send you a temporary confirmation for your desired program. If you need to make any changes, please feel free to email us and let us know. If we do not receive any further correspondence from you, we will send you the program fee payment request via Paypal within 3 business days.

Please note: *A \$225 CAD one-time registration/enrollment fee will also be added to your program fee.*

Step 3) - When we receive confirmation that your program fee has been paid, you will receive a confirmation email from us. In this email, there will be a waiver/release form that will be required to fill out and send back to us at your earliest convenience. You are also encouraged to book your flights at this time. Once you have done so, please send us a copy of your flight itinerary so that airport pickup/transfer (if available) can be arranged for you upon arrival.

Step 4) - After we receive your waiver/release form, we will confirm your placement on the program and detailed program specific information will be provided to you at this point.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Our enrolment and registration process begins by applying online. Once you have filled out and submitted the online application form, you will receive a confirmation email. To continue on in our enrolment process, all volunteers will be required to pay a Registration Fee of \$225 CAD, which will be added to the Program Fee. This fee helps to cover the administration and processing costs. Once we receive your payment, we will send you a confirmation email with the program details and encourage you to book your flight at that time. Our team will be readily available to correspond with you and answer any questions you might have from the time you apply until you reach the project. If you have any further questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact us at: [**info@vwbinternational.org**](mailto:info@vwbinternational.org)

OUR PROGRAM FEES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- **Registration Fee** - (refundable if you choose not to go), ongoing support from VWB staff, program marketing costs, information pack, administration costs, travel costs to develop and ongoing costs to sustain programs and communication costs with volunteers.
- **Program Fee** – airport pickup/transfer (additional cost for this service if required) orientation, program supervision, accommodation (single/double) and meals during volunteer program period, in-country 24/7 volunteer support and in-country administration costs.

WHAT ADDITIONAL COSTS WILL I HAVE?

- Visa, flights, travel insurance (mandatory), immunizations / vaccinations, in-country trips or tours, transfer to other areas of the country, and spending money.



During this entire process, we will always be available to correspond with you to answer any other questions you might have from now until you reach the program. Thank you for choosing **Volunteers Without Borders**.

We can assure you that you've come to the right place!