

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 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:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <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.”

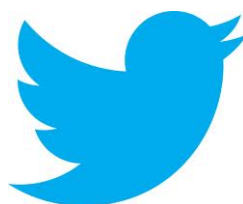
~ Kevin Francis

President & Founder of VWB



Website:
Email:

www.vwbinternational.org
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THAILAND



In northern Thailand, many of the local people are not been fortunate enough to have access to any type of formal education, most commonly those without Thai citizenship. Some are required to work in the fields with their families, while others are too poor to be able to afford the travel costs or resources or uniforms. Free education is not provided to for all children. For those able to go to school, resources are at a premium, the staff is hard pressed, and free education will end for many, before many children would be able to graduate. A number of the local communities are without the basics of life which most of us take for granted - running water, clean/drinkable water, and/or electricity. As such, health becomes a constant issue. Building water tanks which bring clean water to villages, instead of women trekking for miles to the nearest clean source, is a godsend. Building a childcare centre, or classroom, gives children the opportunity to learn, and improve their future chances in life. Planting banana trees saves the hills from eroding quickly, thus causing landslides and dangers to those living below. Making 4,000 bricks at our site, gives us the means to build a childcare centre. Now more than ever, there is an immediate need for volunteers to assist in the education of not only young children, but also adults from surrounding hill tribes and local villages.

Advice for bringing Currency into Thailand

The currency accepted in Thailand is **Thai Baht (THB)** or USD. In most places, credit cards are frequently accepted, which means that you will not need to rely heavily on cash. ATMs are located all over the country and in all major centers. The best currency to bring is USD or Euro in a mixture of large and small denominations, plus some travelers' checks as an emergency standby and a Visa card for withdrawing money from ATMs. Euros are also easily changed.

Dangers and Annoyances

Thailand is in general a safe, hassle-free country and can be a relief if you've recently been somewhere like Cambodia or Vietnam. With that being said, you do still need to take the usual precautions. Avoid isolated areas; and in busy 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 Chang Mai, Bangkok, Kho Pi Pi, or Krabi, touts and flycatchers can be aggressive, especially around bus stations and budget tourist hotels. Do your best to minimize the impression that you're a newly arrived tourist. 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 or trek 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.
- Arriving for the first time at major bus stations can be a fairly stressful experience. You'll probably be hassled by touts as you get off the bus, all reaching to help you with your pack and trying to sell you a cheap hotel rate or tour.
- 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.
- Take requests for donations from 'refugees', 'students' or others with a grain of salt. Contributions to humanitarian causes are best done through an established agency or project.
- When bargaining or discussing prices, don't do so with your money or wallet in your hand.

Water

Unless your intestines are well accustomed to Southeastern Asia, don't drink water from the tap that hasn't been boiled, filtered or disinfected (with iodine tablets). Also avoid drinking from streams, rivers and lakes unless you've purified the water first. The same goes for drinking from pumps and wells – some do bring pure water to the surface, but the presence of animals can still contaminate supplies.

Cultural Awareness

Thailand is a very peaceful, 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 Thai language in order to communicate better with the surrounding community. 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 Thailand are

very different to what volunteers may be used to at home. Visitors to Thailand 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.**

INDOOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

Projects Benefiting Local Communities



Location: Various areas in Northern Thailand

In the northern areas of Thailand, such as Chiang Rai, many of the local people have not been fortunate enough to have access to any type of formal education, especially those without Thai citizenship. Some are required to work in the fields with their families; others are too poor to be able to afford the travelling cost, resources or uniforms. Free education is not automatic for stateless children. For those able to go to school, resources are at a premium, staff is hard pressed, and the free education will end for many, before those with citizenship would be able to graduate. There is a real need for volunteers to assist in the education of not only young children, but also adults from surrounding hill tribes and local villages. These lessons and activities take place in a variety of venues, with a range of ages and abilities, and minimum of resources. The area around Chiang Rai is home to thousands of hill tribe people, so schools are a mixture of many ethnic groups, including Thai, Akha, Lahu, Karen, Mien, Lisu as well as other tribes. The childcare centers are located in hill tribe villages and serve a vital role in preparing the children for government schooling, which is conducted in the Thai language, not the children's native tongue. The role of the volunteers is to assist the teachers in taking care of the kids and conduct activities that will help the kids develop.

VOLUNTEER DUTIES

The volunteer duties are constantly changing and the work schedule can vary from year to year, and term to term, as villages become accessible after the rains have finished. Currently, volunteers will be encouraged to help out at any or all of the following: childcare centers, 3 schools, hospitals, Buddhist temples, providing lessons for local hill tribe tour guides, project staff, and local children each week. The basic duties include:

- Teaching English
- Lesson planning
- Resource development
- Other duties can include cleaning dorms and/or manual labor at homestay

Security

Volunteers work with children and vulnerable adults, and as such are in a position of responsibility and trust. To help us, we ask you to provide a Vulnerable Sector police background check.

OUTDOOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Projects Benefiting Local Communities



Location: Various areas in Northern Thailand

Everyday in Thailand and many other countries in the world, thousands of communities are without the basic necessities of life which most of us take for granted (ie) running/clean water, or electricity. Without these basic necessities, healthcare becomes a constant issue. Building water tanks which bring clean water to these villages; instead of women trekking for miles to the nearest clean source, is a gift in itself. Building a childcare centre, or classroom, gives children the opportunity to learn, and improve their future chances in life. Planting banana trees saves the hills from eroding quickly, thus causing landslides and dangers to those living below. Making 4,000 bricks at our site,

gives us the means to build a childcare centre. The Outdoor program is a mixture or a combination of a number of different tasks, all of which help benefit the local communities and everyone involved.

VOLUNTEER DUTIES

The Outdoor Work placement is for those who are not afraid of getting their hands dirty, who like physical labor, and are reasonably fit. There is a wide variety of work, especially for those staying for longer periods, although at times, you should be prepared for some monotonous tasks. We attempt to get the Outdoor volunteers into a village, where they experience a home stay, at least twice a month for 3-4 nights at a time. Those staying for more than two weeks will be going to different villages and doing different work each time. During the weeks, volunteers are based on site at our project. Some work is done here to maintain our working capabilities, and other work is to experiment with new ideas. If we can develop workable methods of farming, or other agricultural skills, then these can be a way of increasing and improving the lifestyle of local hill tribes and communities. Here are some examples of work completed previously:

- Building water tanks
- Extending water pipe systems
- Building check dams
- Building/Painting school classrooms
- Developing an agricultural project
- Helping in the vegetable garden
- Working on developing a plantation
- Road repairs
- Repair/Maintenance of homes
- Building new houses
- Building toilets for elderly villagers
- Building the new staff office
- Making bricks
- Cleaning
- Washing the dogs

The above can only be considered as examples, and is not a guarantee of what you will be doing when you are on the project. Other duties are involved, such as cleaning dorms, and a possibility of helping out with teaching occasionally (rare, but it can happen), so there is a need to be flexible and understanding. It is important for you to know that this program costs more to run than the Indoor program, which is why you will be onsite for a lot of the program.

In 2012, the outdoor team began helping to create rice terraces for the poorest of the villagers in this area. A rice terrace is a field cut into the hillside, rather than planting crops directly into the natural curve of the hill. It is effective in a number of ways:

- The water that would normally just run down the hill, can be retained and irrigated with more control.
- The number of crops per year can be increased from one to two, which naturally increases the income for the family.
- The terrace style helps to prevent landslides and soil erosion.
- The government is less likely to take the land away (most farmers do not have

deeds to their land).

- The farm work, once the terrace is completed, is less arduous.
- The conversion of fields to terraces has the added benefit of government approval, and although they cannot afford to subsidize the work, they are supportive of the change.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS:

- Fluent in English language, includes spelling and grammar
- Ability to focus and learn quickly
- Positive and realistic commitment to volunteering
- Open mind
- Positive attitude
- Flexible to changing situations
- Self assurance
- Committed to, and capable of, working in a team setting
- Sensitivity and affinity to others
- Clean and tidy
- Respectful and polite
- Neatly and modestly dressed

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As you might imagine, the culture in Asia is quite different than in North America or Europe. What may be considered appropriate or acceptable where you live could easily be viewed as the opposite in Asia. Volunteers are expected to respect the culture where they will be volunteering in and keep in mind their own safety. If you have never left home or been to Asia, you may experience a bit of culture shock shortly after arriving in Thailand. It really depends on the individual and people react differently to new environments. A few tell tale signs that you may be experiencing culture shock is feeling of bit homesick, some get depressed, while others may simply withdraw into themselves. The best way to prevent these feelings is to educate yourself as much as you can about Asian culture before you leave home and the more you can prepare for your stay the easier it will be for you to adapt and feel comfortable in your new environment.

ORIENTATION PERIOD

Volunteers spend the first day getting picked up, settling in, learning how to make Thai desserts, and helping our handicrafts project (optional). Day two is orientation in the morning, with a teaching workshop in the afternoon. This workshop will provide you with the chance to learn about Thai culture, what it means to be a volunteer at an NGO, pick up some Thai language, integrate, and get over any culture shock and jetlag you may be experiencing. It also gives us the opportunity to assess your qualities and strengths. New volunteers will then join their program for the remainder of the week. The second week

will include a home stay with the other volunteers starting at the same time. A Home stay consists of a 3-day visit to a hill tribe village, working on a project to aid the community and staying with a local family.

ELEPHANT SANCTUARY PROGRAM

Wildlife Conservation & Education



Location: Chang Mai Province (Northern Thailand)

If you've ever dreamed of giving something back, assisting with conservation efforts, learning about herbal medicines, getting close to nature, sharing elephant secrets or helping to save endangered species, then this volunteer project could be just the perfect placement for you. The Elephant Nature Sanctuary is a unique elephant rescue and rehabilitation center in Northern Thailand where you can volunteer and help conservation efforts. Set in a natural valley, bordered by a river, and surrounded by forested mountains the area offers a timeless glimpse of rural life. This project was first established in the 1990's with the aim to provide a sanctuary and rescue centre for elephants. The park is located approximately 60 km from the city of Chiang Mai. This center has been involved in dozens of rescues to create the thriving elephant herd that you will see here. The park provides a natural environment for distressed Elephants and other animals under our care from all over Thailand. Volunteers and visitors contribute to the healing while learning about the health, conservation efforts, and well being of these massive animals.

Over the years, the park has received numerous awards from institutions including the Smithsonian. The founder was named Asian Hero of the Year by Time magazine in 2005 and the park has been featured in many international publications including National Geographic magazine as well as feature documentaries from respected film production companies - Discovery Channel, National Geographic, Animal Planet, BBC, CNN, KTV, RAI, major Thai language TV channels, printed press and radio stations.

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS AVAILABLE:

Professional Veterinarian

Position mainly for vets who have completed their studies with 5 or more years of experience with large animals. Tasks will include administering modern as well as traditional medicines under the supervision of a local vet. Additional tasks will include the upkeep of the area. A report on elephant care in the park area and environmental improvement plans is expected at the end of the stay.

Elephant Student Vet

This special category is exclusively for veterinarian students as part of their course work and is 28 days in length.

Elephant Helper

This category is suitable for all visitors. Designed for those who wish to work with elephants for the first time and gain knowledge about the local conditions and problems facing elephants in the area. **PLEASE NOTE: No previous experience is required.**

VOLUNTEER DUTIES:

Volunteer jobs are varied, from bathing elephants to basic health care. Traveling around the country in a variety of ways, from 4 wheel truck to bamboo raft volunteers will experience local and tribal lifestyles, culture and hospitality. In some cases volunteers may be required to look after our recent rescues and may be sent to different areas. Volunteers will assist in a variety of tasks concerned with elephant care. Tasks include assisting elephants keepers, bathing elephants and general duties around the park and surrounding areas. Office work may be required of applicants with suitable skills. The maximum stay is 14 days (except in the case of trainee vets as part of their course-work). Extensions of stay may be available at the end of this 14-day period if space permits.

The program operates throughout the year and starts each Monday. If you cannot make it on this day then we can accept other starting days but please try to aim for a Monday start if possible. If possible, try to arrive in Chiang Mai by 08:00 am.

- **Accommodation:** Traditional huts at the park with showers.
- **Meals:** are included when you are at the park. Supplies are carried from Chiang Mai, or grown locally, and cooked over open fires. There will be a selection of food available with suitable diets for vegetarians, halal, kosher etc.
- **Toilet facilities:** are basic in the jungle with Asian style squat-toilets. Showers are simple bamboo huts with tanks of fresh rainwater.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Area Introduction and meeting with the staff and mahouts
- Learn about elephant communication
- Experience Elephant Families and how they choose friends
- Find out about the problems facing elephants in Thailand today
- Discover how Elephant Nature Park is helping
- Feed and bathe elephants
- Identify the secret life of the elephants in their natural habitat
- Learn about elephant disease and how they are treated when sick
- Meet volunteers, visitors and park staff from around the world
- All volunteers are required to help with household chores and cooking

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS:

To get from Bangkok to Chang Mai will take a full day unless you fly there. we recommend using any of the following methods of transport:

- ❖ **NIGHT TRAIN** - can be booked from the airport or hostel where you stay. It will take approx. 12 hours.
- ❖ **COACH BUS** - will take approximately 12 - 14 hours to get there.
- ❖ **AIR** - from Bangkok to either Chang Mai or Chang Rai using the following budget airlines: Air Asia, Nok Air, Thai Airlines, Orient Thai, Bangkok Airways

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 pick-up, orientation, program supervision, accommodation (private or dormitory style depending on location) 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!