



Dog Care Volunteering



Objective

The main motivation behind this project is to provide a high level of care to the most neglected and vulnerable street dogs of southern Sri Lanka, so they have the best possible chance to survive and thrive despite the difficult odds they face. We have partnered with Animal SOS Sri Lanka (<https://www.animalsos-sl.com>), a highly regarded charity registered in both UK and Sri Lanka, for this project. They care for approximately 2,000 dogs in their facility which is one of the largest animal care facilities in all of Sri Lanka. The dogs are divided in two adjacent units which house approximately 1,000 dogs each. The dogs are cared for in a beautiful, free-roaming sanctuary which provides a safe-haven for sick, disabled, and vulnerable strays. There is also an on-site veterinary clinic with resident local vets providing life-saving treatment and care. They operate neutering/rabies vaccination programs in the local area, adoption schemes and animal welfare education.

The goals of the organization and this project are:

- To provide quality care and rehabilitation for all dogs that need it, including sick, injured and disabled dogs.
- To facilitate socialization for puppies and adult dogs to help them feel more comfortable around people, enhancing their emotional well-being and preparing them for potential adoption opportunities.
- Offer physical and mental stimulation for disabled dogs and assist with their daily physical needs.
- To equip volunteers with hands-on skills in animal care and strengthening their commitment to humane animal welfare practices.

Background

There are an estimated 3 million stray dogs in Sri Lanka many of whom suffer immensely through malnutrition, disease, and horrific injuries. A significant portion of the local public's knowledge/awareness of dogs (and animals in general) is unfortunately still quite limited and often regressive leading to ill-treatment and abuse. Most dogs live on the streets, and many are in an appalling state. Unsprayed females produce several litters of puppies every year, many of which are simply abandoned in front of temples or at the gates of shelters.

These puppies are usually too small to have even the slightest chance of survival unless provided with care. Many of them die of hunger or due to parasites or fall victim to animal abusers. Unfortunately, the Sri Lankan government turns a blind eye to this problem and does nothing to support the well-being of stray dogs. Hence, it is of utmost importance to provide these vulnerable dogs with a level of care that gives them the best chance to survive and thrive. With a distinct lack of safe havens and veterinary care available to strays in Sri Lanka, the work and facilities provided in this project are a lifeline to many otherwise doomed dogs. The goal of this project is to provide a dignified, joyful, and protected way of life to these beautiful creatures and give them new hope where there was none before.

What our Participants do on the Project

Volunteers spend most of their project time at the dog care facility performing hands-on work with dogs that need the attention and care. They also assist in various activities around the facilities, including local beaches and streets, to assist with the care work and day-to-day operations as needed.

The type of tasks volunteers can expect to undertake include

- High level of engagement with dogs and dog activities (playing, cuddling, etc.)
- Assisting during mealtime feeding

- Working with injured and disabled dogs and using a range of rehabilitation techniques such as hydrotherapy, wheelchair therapy and more (involves weekly trips to the local beach for these activities)
- Cleaning the general areas to maintain hygiene
- Helping with socializing certain dogs
- Puppy care
- Occasionally assisting with building various tools for the betterment of the dogs' experience (e.g., building small sheds, utility tools, toys, etc.)
- Other day-to-day tasks as appropriate

The main shift happens in the morning (usually from 8 AM to 12 PM) but the times can be altered slightly depending on time of year and the needs of the project. There is also the possibility of conducting afternoon shifts from time to time as per the needs of the project.

Other Information

Availability: All year round (no blackout dates), except from April 13th to 15th due to Sinhala and Tamil New Year

Arrival & Departure Days: Saturdays Project Workdays: Monday to Friday (weekends are free)

Age Requirement: Must be **16 years** or over

Capacity: Maximum of 30 participants at one time

Nearest Airport: Colombo Bandaranaike International Airport

Location of Project: Ahangama, Sri Lanka (20-30 minutes from our Volunteer House)

Support Provided: On arrival, a detailed orientation & training program is provided, including health and safety training, culture training and an area orientation tour. All operational activities are managed, guided and supported by our experienced local team. Local transportation to and from the project is included every day. On the project, all participants get an introduction/orientation session on their first day. The project site has an experienced team of approximately 60 people consisting of veterinarians, caretakers, operations personnel, and other support staff. There are 3 Managers who will be overseeing the volunteers on a daily basis and also assigning them various tasks each week.

Recommended Attire: Clothing should be casual and comfortable– no restrictions as such except that it should not be too revealing since locals are generally more on the conservative side. Footwear can be comfortable sneakers or sandals. Sunscreen

recommended since a lot of the work is done outside. Light rain jacket recommended during the wet season (June-November)

Vaccine Recommendation: We strongly recommend participants get the anti-rabies vaccine before joining this project to cover for any unexpected bites or injuries that may occur in their day-to-day activities. These rarely ever happens but it's better to be safe than sorry.

Accommodation

All bedrooms are equipped with open cabinets for volunteers to store their clothes and toiletries. Mattresses, pillows and cotton bed sheets/pillowcases are provided. We also provide drying racks and extension cables for each room. All rooms can be key locked. Each participant is provided with a **safety locker** in which they can store their cash, passports, jewellery and other valuables. Wall fans and/or floor fans are provided in each room and all rooms are ventilated well with windows. Room **cleaning is done twice a week** including the bed linen change, while bathrooms and common areas are cleaned regularly.

Participants have access to **refrigerators** in all the common areas on each floor. **Wi-Fi** is available to each participant in the villa (20 GB per person per month).

Air-conditioning is also available in an additional cost. Participants can bring self-attached mosquito nets that fit bunk beds should they wish to.

Meals

Breakfast, lunch and dinner on all 7 days of the week.

(Monday to Sunday). The cooking style tends to be a **mix of both local authentic Sri Lankan** cuisine in the form of various curries (vegetarian and non-vegetarian), rice, coconut rotis, kottu, hoppers, etc, and western cuisine such as pastas, bread, wraps, spaghetti, etc. Fresh ingredients are purchased on a regular basis from local vendors and markets for the preparation of these meals. We also source fresh vegetables from our own organic garden from time to time. The emphasis is on cooking fresh, healthy, organic and delicious food so participants get to experience authentic Sri Lankan flavours along with all its nutritional goodness. With every meal we serve a minimum of one tropical fruit and a fresh salad mostly at lunches and dinners.

There are also **multiple local supermarkets** near us from where participants can buy food they like (e.g., nuts, avocados, packaged goods, etc.). We can also accommodate varied food requirements (e.g., vegetarians, vegans, specific allergies, etc.) if these requirements are mentioned to us beforehand.

The volunteer house is also located in close proximity to **several restaurants**, bars and cafes that offer high quality international cuisines (Italian, Asian, Mexican, Persian, etc) which give our participants additional options.

Transportation

Daily project transfers for all participants are provided in a van. The van is a 14 seater modern vehicle equipped with the necessary safety and security standards, while the driver is an experienced chauffeur with expert knowledge of Sri Lankan roads and

traffic conditions. However, for certain projects other transportation modes like company-owned tuk-tuks, locally contracted Tuk Tuks or buses are used. Our Operations team has a network of trusted and dependable tuk-tuk drivers that we have been working with for a longer period of time that meets our safety standards. Private transfers can be arranged upon requests of the participants at an additional cost.

Arrivals

Participants fly into the Colombo Bandaranaike International Airport (CMB) which is only a **2 hour drive** from the volunteer house.

The destined arrival date for our participants is **Saturday**.

The morning transfer covers the flights that arrive between 6:00-10:00 AM whereas the afternoon airport transfer covers the participant whose flights are arriving between 2:30-6:30 PM.

If a participant arrives outside of these time windows, then they can either wait longer in the airport to avail the shared transfer service or they have the option to book a private transfer for an additional fee.

Country Overview

Sri Lanka is home to some of the most beautiful sights in the world. Sandy beaches, lush green forests, over 100 beautiful rivers and clear waters populated by thriving marine ecosystem adds up to its beauty. These make Sri Lanka a special place for wildlife like elephants, leopards, sloth bears, deer, peacocks, small loris, wild boar and porcupines to live in.

The main religion in Sri Lanka is **Buddhism** (approximately 70% of the population). Buddhism does not advocate the belief in a God; instead expects the individual to seek truth within one's own experience.

Sri Lanka has a number of **languages** that are spoken in the country. The two official languages are **Sinhalese** (most prominent) and **Tamil**. **English** is also spoken widely, particularly in urban areas, and is prominently used in education, science and commercial purposes.

Weather

Being a tropical island, Sri Lanka has very little seasonal change in weather and is good to visit all year round. The temperature ranges from 15 to 30 degrees (Celsius) on average depending on the day and whether you are in the mountain regions or not. The weather in our vicinity (Galle) averages about 25 degrees Celsius throughout the year.

Electricity

In Sri Lanka the standard voltage is 230 V. The standard frequency is 50 Hz. The power sockets that are used are of type-G.

You can use your electric appliances in Sri Lanka, if the standard voltage in your country is in between 220V - 240V (as in the UK, Europe, Australia and most of Asia and Africa). Participants are advised to purchase an international plug adapter for convenience.



What to Bring:

A conservative dress code needs to be adhered to while at the project. Knees and shoulders must be covered, as well as any tattoos or body art. Additionally, participants need to wear our blue cotton teaching coats during their sessions which we will provide. The rest of the clothing can be comfortable and casual.

The most important thing to note is not to pack too much, as you are to live in a shared accommodation with limited storage space (helps to be fairly mobile), while leaving room to pick any clothing or souvenirs during your time in Sri Lanka. Along with your other travel essential, following are few of the important things required by participants over here;

- Passport /Visa
- Travel & Insurance documents
- Debit/Credit cards
- Towel
- Mosquito net
- Plug adapter (type G)
- Laptop (education projects)
- Sanitary products (tampons)
- Mosquito Repellent
- Sun Blocks
- Rain jackets
- Jeans / trousers (mandatory for education projects)
- Flipflops
- If any allergic medications
- Anti-Diarrhoea Medication
- Throat Lozenges
- Paracetamol
- Anti-inflammatory
- Anti-histamine

Money

The national currency of Sri Lanka is the Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR). You can only purchase Sri Lankan Rupees in Sri Lanka (not an International Currency). On arrival at Colombo Airport, it is best to change some money at various Bank ATMs or traditional money exchange centres (located in the Airport arrival lobby area).

It is essential that you notify your bank(s) in advance of the dates you will be in Sri

Lanka to ensure access to your bank accounts and debit/credit cards while you are away.

You should carry a debit card to withdraw cash from the ATM and to take a credit card just in case you lose your debit card or it is blocked. **Avoid carrying large amounts of cash** in public as ATMs are well located and easily accessible in and around Unawatuna and Galle.

Activities

Following are the activities presented by the local team that is available for all its participants:

- Movie nights (weekly)
- Yoga Class (weekly)
- Guided Bike Tour (monthly)
- Monthly BBQ Nights (monthly)
- Special Events like Christmas, Buddhist & Hindu New Year, Easter, Ramadhan Fast Breaking, New Year Day...

The following are popular daily/weekend excursions around the area (at an additional charge):

- Wildlife Safari
- Whale Watching
- Rainforest hiking at Sinharaja Forest Reserve (UNESCO World Heritage site)
- Surfing Lessons
- Galle Fort Walking Tour
- Tea Plantation Visit
- Local Cooking Class
- Gem Cutting Workshop visit
- Jaffna Tour
- Ella-Kandy Tour
- Handloom Factory visit
- Hindu Temple visit
- Upper Diyaluma Waterfall Hiking
- Arugambay / East Coast Tour