



Construction project in Nepal



EXPECTATIONS

An important part of the pre-departure support we provide is managing your expectations. This section is not meant to patronize or put you off – but to advise you as to what to expect and how to approach your volunteer programme. This handbook is a general guide to help you prepare. However, you will be volunteering in the developing world and as much as we try to be as accurate as possible, things are prone to change, so please don't read into the information too literally.

Full details of your placement will be given to you during your in-country orientation.

THE PROJECT

We always do our best to give a good over view of the program on our website. However, each project is different and each volunteer's contribution is unique. You should be willing to take the initiative to identify areas you can assist with. Whilst there is a general structure in place at the project, you should not expect an itemized schedule to your day. You are there to make a positive difference and so you are expected to help in any way possible (within reason!).

CULTURE DIFFERENCE

Volunteering in a place where the lifestyle may drastically differ to your own will expose you to various cultural differences. Whilst the majority will amaze and entertain you in so many ways; some you may find difficult to accept and understand. We ask that you try to appreciate the context of the situation and see both sides of the story before making a final judgment. Many of the customs or types of behavior that you may find offensive or strange are easily understood when you learn more about the local culture. As a

volunteer you are there to help and not impose your values upon the local people. If you can teach the local people about a more progressive way of doing things then we always encourage this. But you must remember that change is slow and values are deeply rooted, so you will need plenty of patience and diplomacy.

If you join us with an open mind, give things time, talk to us if you are struggling and adopt a positive attitude whereby you help where you are needed, then you will have a life changing experience and make a valuable contribution.

VOLUNTEER TASKS

The renovation project in Nepal focuses on rural areas where many communities live in precarious conditions. Despite international aid, many families still lack access to decent housing, clean water, and electricity. This project aims to improve living conditions by renovating local infrastructure.

1. Infrastructure Renovation :

- **Schools and Temples** : Renovation work on classrooms and local temples
- **Painting and Decoration** : Preparing surfaces, handling materials, and painting buildings using traditional techniques.

2. Gardening and Maintenance :

- Participating in gardening activities and beautifying green spaces around the renovated infrastructure.

3. Social and Educational Actions :

- **Information Sessions** : Organizing educational sessions to teach children how to use the installed water purification systems.
- **Community Contributions** : Engaging in various social actions to support local communities.

This experience offers volunteers the opportunity to significantly contribute to the improvement of local infrastructure while gaining practical skills in renovation and painting. With a wide variety of renovation tasks and community initiatives, each volunteer can find their niche and make a valuable contribution to the humanitarian renovation project in Nepal.

RECOMMENDED ATTIRE

Visiting the sites will require comfortable walking shoes, comfortable attire such as t-shirts, shorts up to the knees during summer and warm clothing during winter.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

ORIENTATION

Orientation starts on the Sundays of your selected start date. Program coordinator will conduct detailed introduction on the Nepalese life, culture training and necessary health precaution along with an area orientation tour. Coordinator will brief on the project and provide necessary support on planning. Support staff will assist participants to and from the project, taking public vehicles, introduction to the project site. Additionally, weekly bi weekly and final follow-up meetings are performed to monitor the progress.

Example Volunteer Week

On your first day of volunteering, you will be escorted to your placement by a local coordinator and introduced to the placement staff you will be working with. Local project coordinators will be there to guide you and also support you until you are comfortable. Generally, on the first day it will be introductions and you can opt to observe as well but we do want you to dive into things soon.

A typical daily schedule would be as follows:

- 8.30 AM - 9.30 AM Breakfast at your accommodation.
- 9.45 AM - 12.00 PM Volunteers leave home and travel to their placements. Work and hours are dependent on the project and placement that the volunteer is working at.
- Your unique skills, interests and qualifications and experience relevant to your chosen project
- 12.30 PM - 2.00 PM Lunch break either at the placement.
- 2.00 PM - 3.30 PM Work at the placement. Volunteers are free to travel back to the volunteer house once project time is over, go sightseeing or relax once placement is over.
- 6.00 PM - 7.00 PM Dinner at the accommodation

Please note, this schedule may vary depending on the particular project you are participating on and the local team will advise on your project timings on arrival only. Please keep a small budget for any project resources you may need.

ACCOMMODATION

Volunteers in Nepal are accommodated depending on the program you are at. You could be staying in a home-stay in Kathmandu, Nuwakot, Bhaktapur or Lalitpur or at our volunteer house based in Kathmandu. Living is basic but comfortable and you will have access to electricity and western style toilets. WIFI is not always very strong but you can always get 4G data on your mobiles and stay connected. There are fans provided, however, it is important to be aware that there is no air-conditioning at the accommodation.

All bedding is provided and you can expect to be sharing a room with up to 3 other volunteers of the same gender. Typically, mattresses in Asia are a lot firmer than what you may be used to, so please be prepared for that. If you also wish to use a mosquito net over your bed, you will need to bring a pop-up net with you. You will be required to bring your own toiletries and towels.

Private room upgrades for \$40 per night in AC rooms and \$25 for non-AC rooms are available at extra and you can pre-book this with us. This may be at a nearby guest house.

If you are planning on arriving to your program early or wish to depart a day or two after your program has finished, you can book extra nights of accommodation directly with your program manager for an additional US\$25 per night (this includes meals).

Volunteers can either handwash their clothes in the volunteer house or arrange **laundry service** through the local team for a small fee.

MEALS

Two meals are provided per day. Please note that only breakfast and dinner are available to volunteers on all projects and lunch needs to be purchased near the site you are placed at, for a very affordable price. In case you are at home or can come back home lunch can be given to you.

Nepali food is tasty and diverse, and volunteers can expect to experience a myriad of local flavors and meals during their experience. Breakfast is different on each day and would be eggs, bread, and tea and coffee. Lunch/Dinner features local curry dishes made with a base of rice, roti or chapatti. Meals are typically vegetarian and include potatoes, okras, carrots, and various pulses and lentils that are the staple of locals and available locally.

If you have any dietary requirements, please let us know ahead of time so that we can make arrangements for you. However, we need to stress the point that you should not expect to eat as you normally do at home, we will do our best to see that you are well taken care of, but as a volunteer there is also a need to be flexible. If you want western meals, you can easily get this at the local cafes and restaurants in the tourist areas.

TRANSPORT

Volunteers need to arrange their own transport to and from their placements. Some placements are within walking distance but most placements will require a bus and the local team will be happy to guide you until you are comfortable.

We will try to ensure your accommodation is very central so you can easily walk to your projects or into town or there would be a bus service available.

For travel further outside Kathmandu, it is possible to hire a driver and car, catch a flight, train or bus. The local team can arrange transportation for you.

In your bag

- Always try to travel light.
- When you have to carry your valuables on you, you may wish to hide them in several places rather than putting them all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid keeping your valuables in handbags, backpacks and outside pockets.
- Make photocopies of your passport identification page, airline tickets, driver's license and the credit cards that you plan to bring with you.
- Bring travelers' checks and one or two major credit cards instead of a large amount of cash.
- The average temperature is around 30 degrees Celsius, so a few shorts, long (or at least knee length) skirts, long pants and shirts should be fine.
- Comfortable walking shoes.

- If you are working in an office or school, you are a role model and certainly want to show some respect to your colleagues, so make sure you are wearing decent clothes.
- Sun hat, sunglasses
- A raincoat
- Small backpack or travel bag for weekend and day trips
- Towel or sarong
- Electric adaptor: Voltage (230 V, 50Hz) is not always reliable in some areas so use it at your own risk. Electricity outlets are usually suitable for plugs with 2 (sometimes 3) round or flat pins. If you are not sure if that matches your electronic devices, make sure you bring an electric adaptor.
- Small flashlight
- Insect repellent

About the country

The population of Nepal in 2019 is reportedly 29.7 million. There are about 101 ethnic groups speaking over 92 languages. The distinction in caste and ethnicity is understood better with a view of customary layout of the population. The official language of Nepal is Nepali which is spoken and understood by a majority of the population. The ethnic groups have their own mother tongues. English is taught in schools and many of them are English medium schools so a large portion of the population understands the language. Most private schools today teach in English.

In northern Nepal summers are cool and winters are severe, while in the south, summers are very hot while winters are mild to cold. Nepal has five seasons: spring, summer, monsoon, autumn and winter.

The Kathmandu Valley has a pleasant climate with average summer temperatures of 20°C – 35°C and 2°C – 12°C in winter.

Average temperatures in Nepal drop 6°C for every 1,000 m you gain in altitude. There is no seasonal constraint on traveling in and through Nepal. Even in December and January, when winter is at its severest, there are compensating bright sun and brilliant views. As with most of the trekking areas in Nepal, the best time to visit are during spring and autumn.

Money

The currency of Nepal is the Nepali Rupee – please visit the XE website to check the current exchange rate at the time of your program. We recommend taking some United States Dollars (around US\$200) to keep away in case of emergencies and a VISA or Mastercard credit/debit card to withdraw cash in local currency as you need it.

ATMs are easily accessible in Kathmandu and tourist areas, and hotels, shops and restaurants generally accept credit cards and Nepali cash.

You will need cash for public transportation, taxis and independent shops and hospitality venues. Most currencies can be exchanged easily at the airport.

Plugs and adaptors

In Nepal the standard voltage is 230 V. The standard frequency is 50 Hz. The power sockets that are used are of type C / D / M. You may wish to travel with a worldwide adaptor that is capable of connecting to multiple socket types.

Free time

Nepal's capital, Kathmandu, is electrifyingly exotic, with its medieval warren of alleys, Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas, and its uniquely relaxed nightlife. The city is increasingly hectic and there is a lot to see and do in Kathmandu city itself! A guide helps you choose the right destinations and also provides non-stop entertainment in the form of history and local folklore.

Exploring Pokhara: Pokhara, essentially a lakeside town, attracts explorers, nature lovers and adrenaline junkies with its spectacular natural beauty, an array of fishing opportunities, mountain biking, exciting treks such as Poonhill, Annapurna Base Camp and Annapurna Circuit, visiting the peace pagoda, paragliding and sunbathing. It is one of those destinations that you certainly wish to visit for the second time in your life. Boating and strolling down the lakeside in Pokhara are definitely two of the top things to do in Pokhara. You can also visit Sarangkot for some amazing views of the 'fish tail' Annapurna range.

Chitwan National Park: A UNESCO site in Nepal, is considered to be another must-see destination in Nepal. More than 500 species of migratory birds call the park their home, as do one-horned rhinos, Bengal tigers and Asian elephants. It covers almost 332 sq. miles and is supposed to be your best chance of seeing animals such as bears, tigers, crocodiles, elephants and rhinos while in Nepal. The most common bird sightings include kingfishers, paradise flycatchers, egrets and brahminy ducks.

Trekking in Nepal: The Poonhill trek is one of the better short treks in Nepal; the Everest Base Camp trek is a great trek if having 12 days available; while the Everest Base Camp – 3 Passes trek or the Manaslu trek are some of the best adventure treks in Nepal, taking you on unparalleled trekking routes amidst pristine nature.