



Nepal

Volunteer Projects and Placements

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Namaste, I am Mohan, joined OpenmindProjects in May 2009. I come from Western Nepal but moved to Kathmandu, due to the previous violence in that part of Nepal. I am the founder and director of the HUC orphanage, and have experience in child development. I have been a team leader in the District Development office for Kathmandu. Children at our orphanage attend the nearby Creation School where volunteers also work. Welcome to Nepal,

Mohan Thapa,



Namaste, I am Ranjan Bhandan. I am 23 years old. I live in Gawcej, South Nepal, and am OpenmindProjects local coordinator for our eco project in my village. I also work in tourism and am a very keen nature guide. I was born in a village. My family is farmers. We are very close to the famous Chitwan National Park and you are welcome.

Ranjan Bhandan



About Nepal



A landlocked Himalayan country between Tibet/China and India. Nepal is diverse, from the humid Terai in the south to the icy Himalayas in the north. Nepal boasts eight of the world's highest mountains, including Mount Everest. Kathmandu is the capital and largest city about 4 million people live there

A small breathtakingly beautiful country with a population of about 25 millions. More than 90% is living in rural areas where there is little access to medical care or good education, making children of poor families particularly disadvantaged. Poverty, illiteracy and disease are the greatest dangers faced by Nepalese children.

Several of our support projects focus on education

and the development of vocational skills

The number of street children is increasing, exacerbated by the past conflict between the government, king and Maoists and children are often forced to work in child-labor industries.

Projects and Placements

Eco and Village Project in South Nepal

The Gawai Village. An Eco, Village and School Project near the Indian border and the famous Chitwan National Park



This is an amazing opportunity for the adventurous volunteer. Live with a local family, stay overnight in the forest watch tower, watch wild rhinos, maybe tigers, and other wildlife.

Volunteer to help empower the local village people to receive eco tourists, providing trekking, guide, host family and reception services as well as the administration of these eco tourism services.

Volunteer Tasks – You will, depending on your background:

- Train local village tour guides and host families, English and guiding principles which includes some trekking and overnight stays at the Community Forest

watch tower with a chance to see rhinos and other wildlife

- Teach at the village school
- Work in local communities, with farmers and others on environmental and wildlife conservation, eco tourism, small income generating programs.
- Interact with local people, women, Brahmans, monks.

Local volunteer contact and coordinator -Ranjan Bandhan, 21 year old eco guide with ambitions for his village



Information about the Gawai Village School

No of children: about 450. Classes 1-9

Subjects: English, Social studies, Science, Math, Environment, Nepali, Vocational training, bookkeeping



Kathmandu – Orphan Home and Schools

The Helpless Upliftment Center Orphan Home, HUC and the Creation School in Katmandu

A unique opportunity for the volunteer who wants to help and experience life at an orphan home as well as a school in Nepal. Stay with a host family, get immersed in Nepal culture.

About the HUC Orphan Home



HUC-Nepal was established in 2003 and is a home for helpless children who lost their parents from natural disasters and the arms conflicts. HUC-Nepal develops an environment where children can live without discrimination. The focus is to provide basic needs, healthcare, education and protection, to help them become good citizens and develop career skills in a caring environment.

The orphan home is located at Koteshor-35, Kathmandu. There are some ten children in the orphan home, between 6 to 14 years old. Most of them lost their parents due to arms conflict and come from the mid-western region of Nepal. All children go

to the Creation School near the orphan home.

Located in Kathmandu, Koteshor district, Nepal

Children: 10

Staff: 3

Volunteer work: Work at the orphanage and assist staff with the children. Teach English and other subjects at the Creation School.

Home Stay: Yes, normally our Nepal coordinator, Mohan and family

Meals included: Yes, two

Restaurants, Shopping Internet nearby

About the Creation International School (Academy)

Located in Koteshor, Kathmandu. The school accommodates students from grade levels 1 to 7, and will add levels 8 and 9 soon. Teachers and students are very motivated and here is a well-established music and arts program that volunteers are welcome to join too.

Size of school: Small school in Koteshor, Kathmandu

Students: About 150

Teacher/staff: 10, several young university student teachers

Volunteer work: Assist teachers with school activities, teach English and other subjects.

Home stay: Yes, volunteers stay with the HUC host family

Restaurants, Shopping Internet nearby





The Bal Badika School



For the volunteer who want s to help Nepali children coming from different regions, many escaping the previous violence.

Children, Residential and non-residential, mainly come from poor ethnic minorities and different castes. . There are about 250 girls and boys. Some come from surrounding villages, and some from far away western Nepal where schools were closed due to the war.

Staff: 20 teachers, teaching in English
Extra curriculum activities include games, drama, music, singing, dancing, scouting, and nature training. Computer training from class level 4 up

to 10 with 6 PCs, one with Internet.



Volunteer work: You will assist children in school activities, games, teaching English, and other subjects.

Kanti Rana is the host for mainly female volunteers.

She is the manager of **Seto Guras, a Nepali NGO with a** focus on rural and isolated children's education and health. Read more below.

Restaurants, Shopping Internet nearby

OpenmindProjects also helps some other Kathmandu Hospitals. Email us for more information

Kathmandu and Rural Nepal

Childhood Development and Empowerment of Women in Rural Nepal The Seto Guras Project– Training and Resource Center for Early Childhood Development and empowerment of women.



This is a demanding project for an experienced aid worker, volunteer!

Kanti Rana is the manager of **Seto Guras, a Nepali NGO with a** focus on rural and isolated children's education and health. Seto Guras works in 59 places around Nepal and is supported by UNICEF, Save the Children, and the Nepal Ministry of Education.

Local village women are invited to Kathmandu, 3 are selected from each district and train for 3 months and then go back to survey the needs of the village children i.e. regulate their health, education, social issues, emotional and physical development. The children are 3-5 years old.

Seto Guras also trains local primary teachers by sending a national resource person to the villages. The skills training portion focuses how to produce local teaching material without other resources and also teach training.

Minimum stay: 2 months and takes place only certain periods of the year. Winter season is too severe making it impossible to reach the villages.

Volunteer tasks: Teacher training, performing health work with locals.

Volunteer conditions: Volunteers spend the first period in Kathmandu then go to a rural project. Conditions can be very demanding and only experienced volunteers are recommended to come.

How to get to these placements in the Himalayan regions of Dolpa and Jumla in western Nepal. Fly from Kathmandu to Nepaljung or Surket then transfer to a helicopter. You may have to wait a few days when due to weather conditions.

More about Nepal

Recent History

Nepal became a constitutional monarchy in 1990 marked by instability with Maoists waging a guerrilla war against both monarchy and mainstream political parties. The present king is the brother of the previous king, allegedly shot, together with other members of the royal family, by the then crown prince. Following the 2006 democracy movement, the king was forced to reinstate the dissolved House of Representatives which unanimously passed a motion to curtail the power of the king.

Culture



Nepali culture is similar to the cultures of Tibet and India. There are similarities in clothing, language and food. Traditional Nepali folklore retains a strong influence and its stories are acted out in dance and music that tell stories of gods and heroes much like in India, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. Music from Tibet and India has a strong influence on traditional Nepali music. Women are less likely than men to play music, except in specific situations such as traditional all-female wedding parties. Most marriages are arranged, and divorce is rare. Polygamy is banned by law. Television was only introduced to Nepal in the 1980s. The Nepali year begins in mid-April, like in Laos and Thailand, and is divided into twelve months.

Most houses in rural Nepal are made up of a tight bamboo framework with mud and cow-dung walls which make them cool in summers and retain warmth during the cool season. Houses at higher altitudes are mostly timber-based.

Food Culture



A typical Nepali meal is dal-bhat - boiled dal served with rice, vegetables and spicy relish. This is consumed twice daily. Meat, eggs, and fish are a treat. In the mountainous region the staple diet is based on wheat, maize, millet and potatoes. Local made alcoholic drinks are popular.



Religion

Hindus constitute more than 80% of the population. Buddhists make up 10% and Muslims 4%. The differences between Hindus and Buddhists are subtle. Both share common temples, worship common deities similar to what can be found in Thailand and elsewhere too. There are several ethnic groups, the largest is the Chettri (15.5%). Nepali is the national language with less than 50% of the population speaking it as their first language. The northern mountains are sparsely populated. A majority of the population live in the central highlands. Kathmandu is the largest city in the country.

History

People have probably been living in the Himalayan region for at least nine thousand years. Indo-Aryan tribes entered the valley around 1500 BC, small kingdoms arose. One of the princes was Siddhartha Gautama (563–483 BC), who renounced his royalty to lead an ascetic life and came to be known as the Buddha ("the one who has awakened"). In 1765, the Gurkha ruler Prithvi Narayan Shah set out to unify the kingdoms. This marked the birth of the modern nation of Nepal. Rivalry with the British East India Company over the annexation of minor states bordering Nepal led to the brief but bloody Anglo-Nepalese War (1815–16), in which Nepal lost territories to the Company in exchange for autonomy.

Factionalism among the royal family led to instability. In 1846, after clashes that led to the execution of several hundred princes, a military leader, Bahadur, won and founded the Rana dynasty that was pro-British, and assisted the British in both World Wars.

In the late 1940s, emerging pro-democracy movements were critical of the autocracy. China occupied Tibet in 1950 which made India sponsor Nepal's new king in 1951.

In 1959, a "partyless" system was instituted to govern Nepal. In 1989, the People's Movement forced the monarchy to accept constitutional reforms.

According to officials, on June 1, 2001, the then crown prince killed his parents in the royal palace, in response to their rejection of his choice of wife. He died three days later. The throne was inherited by the killed king's brother. On February 1, 2005 the new king dismissed the government and assumed full executive powers in the name of combating the Maoists.

On January 14, 2006, the Maoists attacked military targets in the Kathmandu Valley. The people were shocked to see that the Maoists were able to attack multiple locations within the Valley, considered to be safe. The Maoists, through support from the seven parliamentary parties arranged a mass uprising against the reign of King Gyanendra. People took to the streets. The security forces turned brutal. On April 21, 2006, the king, under pressure, announced that he was giving up absolute power. Parliament reassembled and stripped

Following the king's relinquishing of absolute power, the Nepalese government and Maoist rebels agreed on a cease-fire.

As of 15 January 2007, SPA and Maoists serve together in an Interim legislature under the new Interim Constitution of Nepal awaiting elections to take place in June 2007

Foreign Affairs

Nepal has close ties with both India and China. In accordance with a long-standing treaty, Indian and Nepalese citizens may travel to each others' countries without a passport. Nepalese citizens may work in India without legal restriction. China mainly seeks cooperation with Nepal on the issue of Tibetan independence, including the degree of freedom that Nepal gives the thousands of Tibetan refugees living in its territory.

Geography

Nepal is 800 kilometers long and 200 kilometers wide, and divided into three areas: the Mountain, Hill, and Terai Regions. The Plains bordering India are part of the northern rim of the Indo-Gangetic plains. They are fed by three major rivers. This region has a hot, humid climate. The Hill Region varies from 1,000 to 4,000 metros in altitude. The hilly belt includes the Kathmandu Valley, the country's most fertile and urbanized area. Elevations above 2,500 metros are sparsely populated. The Mountain Region contains the highest region in the world with the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest (Sagarmatha in Nepali) at 8,850 metros located on the border with Tibet. Deforestation is a major problem in all regions, with resulting erosion and degradation of ecosystems.

Climate Nepal has five climatic zones, corresponding to altitude. The tropical and subtropical zones below Nepal has five seasons: summer, monsoon, autumn, winter and spring. The Himalayas block cold winds from Central Asia in winter, and forms the northern limit of the monsoon winds.

Economy: Agriculture about 40 % of the GDP. Services 40%. Industry 22%.

Agricultural produce: Rice, corn, wheat, sugarcane, root crops, milk, and water buffalo meat.

Industry: Mainly the processing of agricultural produce, including jute, sugarcane, tobacco, and grain

Tourism: Growth has been stifled by political events.

Nepal's main exports are carpets, clothing, leather goods, jute goods.

Hilly and mountainous terrain has made roads and other infrastructure expensive. There is less than one telephone per 19 people, mobile telephony is in a reasonable state in most parts of the country. The country receives foreign aid from India, Japan, United Kingdom, United States, European Union, China, Switzerland, and Scandinavian Countries.

Government running a budget deficit with expenditures of about \$1.8 billions. The inflation rate is down. The Nepalese Rupee has long been tied to the Indian Rupee. Close economic relations with India.

Distribution of wealth, skills and jobs

The highest 10% of households control about 40% of the national wealth and the lowest 10% control only 2.5%! Per-capita income is around US\$1,400 per year.

Nepal suffers from a severe shortage of skilled labor. Agriculture

Employs 80% of the workforce, services about 15 % and manufacturing/craft-based industry only 3%. Unemployment and underemployment approach half of the working-age population. Many Nepalese move to India, the Gulf countries and Malaysia in search of work and Nepal receives about US\$ 50 million a year through the Gurkha soldiers who serve in the Indian and British armies! Around 1 billion USD, is sent back from abroad, from around 700,000 Nepalese!

Demographics: The present population of Nepal exceeds 28 million. About 40% of the population is less than 14 years old! About 4% above 65. Nepal is said to be the only country in the world where males outlive females. Literacy rate is about 50%. More than 90% of this number is still living in rural areas where there is little access to medical care, making children of poor families particularly vulnerable to disease and malnutrition. This situation reflects the pressing need for development activities to be increasingly geared towards meeting the socio-economic needs of the country's children. Poverty, illiteracy and disease are the greatest dangers faced by Nepalese children today.

These projects focus on those who are parentless or homeless. Education and the development of vocational skills are the major factors that will allow these children the opportunity to have a self-supported income, a place in the work force, and future with good prospects.

The number of street children is increasing rapidly, exacerbated by ongoing conflict between the government, king and Maoist rebels. The children are often forced to work in child-labor industries denying them the chance at an education and exposing them instead to the dangers of the streets. It is therefore of vital importance to provide them with the security, education and medical care of which they are deprived.

Do's and Don't's in Nepal, similar to SE Asia

1. **Take off your shoes before entering a temple or one's home.**
2. **Ask for permission before entering a Hindu temple.**
3. **Taking photographs inside most Hindu temples are considered illegal.**
4. **Ask for permission before taking photographs of objects, and including Nepali people.**
5. **Public displays of affection such as kissing is offensive.**
6. **Say hello or Namaste It has a lot of meaning such as hello, how are you, have a nice day, bye bye like Sa wad Dee in Thai. To do Namaste by hand, join your palms together, bring it few inches below you chin facing it upwards. Same as the Thai wai.**
7. **You may accept handshake, but never offer your hand first to women, do 'Namaste Hand shakes are very soft.**
8. **Roads are narrow and crowded so horns help drivers save lives. be ready to hear horns all the time and don't get upset about it.**
9. **For Yes : shake your head from side to side, and for NO: nod your head up and down!**
10. **It is common to see men or women walking together hand in hand or with arms around each other, common friendship gesture. When someone taps you while talking to you, the person is trying to get your attention - its a Nepali friendship.**
11. **Pointing finger at people is bad. If you have to point at someone, use your upturned hand or lift your chin and say oo, same as in SE Asia**
12. **It is believed that it's uncommon to say I don't know. People expect answers from you but not the "I don't know" answer!**
13. **When you are in a Nepali dining table, the senior female, will normally serve to everyone. She will repeatedly offer food, take a little and say thank you. In Nepali, usually the mother eats last and she makes sure that everyone eats and eats well. The same as the Isan mother in Thailand**
14. **You generally visit someone in a hospital with fruits or other. Never visit someone in a hospital empty hand and have a happy face!**
15. **Elders are called by their title but not by their names.**
16. **Shopping in Nepal by bargaining.**
17. **When you touch someone with your feet accidentally, you pay back the respect by tapping the person's shoulder, and then your forehead.**
18. **Calling people by Dad, Mum, Sister, Brother, Uncle is very common. For example, you say 'Amaa' (Mother) or Buba (Dad) to your friend's parents never call them by their names.**
19. **Never compliment a girl on her features. Girls consider it impolite and rude - you are flirting with them, except highlanders who have a different culture or some living in cities with western tourists.**
20. **Slurping - It is common slurp hot drinks.**
21. **Spitting - is very common, men and women.**
22. **Superstition is a part of Nepalese life, like in SE Asia.**
23. **Sharing a meal - always ask someone around you if that person wants to share your meal. This is very common specially in remote villages in the country.**
24. **Nothing in Nepal works on time. Don't expect punctually. Thai time! Expect All sorts of excuses you from someone who shows up late.**
25. **Nepali Topi is the national cap of Nepal - wear a Nepali topi while traveling in Nepal.**
26. **Use of bad language is not common even among friends. Visitors to Nepal should avoid using bad language, and remember most city people do understand spoken English.**

27. Licking your fingers is considered a bad manner. Blowing your nose in front of people is considered rude. If you must blow, do it quietly and/or alone.
28. People throw stuff everywhere- there is no law against littering.
29. When women have their monthly, they sleep and eat alone without touching anyone in the family for three to four days, they are also kept isolated for a week when they give a birth. Such traditions have been modified to fit family's desire or needs. During untouchable period, women don't visit temples.
30. Most Nepalese eat their meal by hand specially for the Nepali food Dal Bhat and Tarkari.
31. Once someone has eaten from a plate, most Nepalese will not eat from it as it is considered impure.
32. Priest play an important role in the lives of Nepalese. He is called in to get a special 'birth name' when you are born, he is there to witness your marriage vows, and he is with you at your funeral.
33. Traditional Nepalese marriage is a deal between the parents.
34. People who don't look like Nepalese get lots of looks when you are away from the main cities Nepalese kids whose curious eyes will be all around you like in SE Asia. Smile and Enjoy
35. Nepalese don't eat beet, but buffalo meat is eaten by Buddhist highland Tibetan people.
36. Never accept or offer anything, or eat with the left hand.
37. Do not eat from someone else's plate or offer food from one's own.
38. Women should dress conservatively and cover as much as possible.
39. Permission should be sought before taking photographs, particularly at religious sites.
40. Public displays of affection between men and women are frowned upon.

- An aid, development and volunteer organization providing free advice and training to the projects we support.

"Learning for Life, Nature and Future"