



HIMALAYAN

HEALTH & HEARING INC.

COMPASSION IN *Action*

Himalayan Health & Hearing Inc. Field Tripper Policy Version 4 Date amended 4th April 2016 For review December 2018

1. Introduction

This policy has been developed to protect the interests of Himalayan Health & Hearing Inc., its volunteers and most importantly, the beneficiaries of the Association. It also aims to assist those applying to volunteer within Himalayan Health & Hearing Inc. by:

- Clearly defining the goals of the Association to prospective volunteers.
- Providing guidance and information to people who are considering applying to be a volunteer.
- Managing the expectations of volunteers and the Association.

2. Suitability Criteria

The policy also has been developed to assist the Association and prospective volunteers to clarify the suitability criteria for applicants for volunteer work within the Association in terms of their

- health and well-being
- motivation
- skills and experience
- flexibility
- ability to work as part of a team
- intention to enhance the Association ie. “to bring something to the table”
- self-reliance

3. Volunteering with Himalayan Health & Hearing Inc.

- The Association values all contributions, big and small, made by volunteers.
- The Association aims to benefit as many people as possible with the resources available to it, including its volunteers.
- The efforts of volunteers will be used to assist the Association to achieve its object of the provision of primary ear care and rehabilitation of hearing impaired persons (as well as enabling the provision of other health services in conjunction with the ear and hearing services) in Developing Countries. Service delivery will target those people who would otherwise have no access to these services.

4. The Role of Volunteers

Volunteers can assist the Association in many ways including:

1. Fundraising, either individual pursuits or by joining a larger event.
2. Seeking donations of hearing aids, cochlear implant parts and accessories (new and used) and other hearing equipment to be used in Nepal and elsewhere in the Himalayan region.
3. Promoting the Himalayan Health & Hearing Program and its objectives, through word of mouth, talks to community groups, and through social media.

5. Volunteers on Field Trips – Being a Field Tripper

From time to time, volunteers may apply to be a “Field Tripper” on one of the projects of the HH&H Program in Nepal or other Himalayan country.

This may include:

1. Assisting our partner organisation at NAHOH or in Ear camps within the Kathmandu Valley.
2. Accompanying one of the teams on a remote Health and Hearing Camp to one of the less-accessible regions of Nepal or neighbouring countries.

NOTE: These opportunities are very limited in number due to logistics and the long-range planning required for these Camps, and would be offered only where the volunteer had shown prior commitment to giving something to the Program either in donation of time, funds, or through fundraising efforts. (See the website for more information)

6. Responsibilities of Volunteers

- Volunteers must observe the rules and policies of the Association as well as the relevant laws, regulations and policies of the jurisdiction in which the volunteer work is being undertaken at all times. It will be the volunteer’s responsibility to familiarise themselves with the relevant rules, policies, laws and regulations. Volunteers should contact the Association if they require further information in this regard.
- Any task carried out by a volunteer is strictly at the volunteer’s own risk. The Association will not be held liable for the actions of volunteers.

7. How to Become a Volunteer

- Prospective volunteers must complete and submit an application form, which is available by contacting the Secretary of the Association or from the website www.himalayanhealthandhearing.org/volunteers.
Application forms are to be submitted online or by post to:-

Himalayan Health & Hearing Inc.
c/- PO Box 599
Cannonvale
QLD 4802
AUSTRALIA

- Each application must be approved by the Management Committee before a person can become a volunteer of the Association. The Management Committee may at its sole discretion approve or decline an application.
- An applicant must be given written notice of the Management Committee's decision within 14 days of the decision.
- The Management Committee may impose reasonable restrictions on a volunteer's participation within the Association provided that the volunteer is given written notice of those restrictions within 14 days of the Management Committee's decision.
- Volunteers will not be permitted to undertake volunteer work that would place them in contact with children until such time as the volunteer has undergone a satisfactory police check. The applicant must undertake the police check at the applicant's cost. In the event that the applicant does not pass a police check, the Management Committee must either reject the applicant's application or impose restrictions on the volunteer which prohibits the applicant from coming into contact with children. It is the policy of the Association that unsupervised contact between a child and a volunteer of the Association is prohibited.

8. Timing for Volunteer Applications

At present, while the Association's activities are focused mainly in Nepal, projects in other areas of the Himalayan region are also being undertaken.

Travel in this region involves significant forward planning and, for this reason, any volunteer offered the opportunity to travel with the Association for an overseas Ear Camp must submit an application at least six (6) months prior to the departure date.

The prospective volunteer's application must be accepted prior to departure.

9. Costs Involved

9.1 Travel as a volunteer with Himalayan Health & Hearing Inc. is at the volunteer's sole cost and expense. Travel costs generally include but are not limited to:

- return airfares
- travel insurance
- clothing and equipment, and
- accommodation costs, (at the time of writing were approx. AU\$60.00 per day for remote ear camps, including food and accommodation, and AU \$15-40 per day for accommodation in Kathmandu)

9.2 Depending on the location and work to be undertaken by a volunteer, the Association may require a volunteer to contribute a one-off payment (varies) to cover expenses including:

- incidental damage to equipment used on Camps
- consumables including batteries, tips, impression material, repairs and calibration costs
- wages, gratuities to local assistants working with the Association

10. Other Information

10.1 About the programs

Typically, volunteer work is undertaken in conjunction with Nepal Association of the Hard of Hearing (NAHOH), Nepal Australia Friendship Association (NAFA) and Kopan Monastery in ear camps throughout various regions in Nepal and nearby countries. Many of the locations of the

remote ear camps are extremely remote. Depending on the location of the ear camps, travel may be by airplane, vehicle, trekking on foot, or by other means.

10.2 Visa requirements

Volunteers entering Nepal on a Tourist Visa are not permitted to work within Nepal and this extends to activities such as a volunteer testing an ear camp patient.

“In Nepal the rules have been much stricter now and one cannot get involved in any activities even like teaching, nursing and organising other activities with a tourist visa. Any such activities would need to possess working visa and it is not easy to obtain either.” Advice from Nepali official
For audiology professionals, there is some scope for volunteers in a training role. The Nepali government does monitor the work of tourists and prosecution may result. It is essential that volunteers respect the laws and policies of Nepal and follow the directions given whilst carrying out volunteer work.

11. Types of Assistance Provided / Not Provided to Volunteers

11.1 The Association *will* assist volunteers by providing:

- fundraising ideas to assist with travel costs
- an introduction to a reliable trekking agency, if required
- moral support when things get difficult
- recommendations on hotels and restaurants, and
- introductions to affiliated organisations

11.2 The Association *cannot* provide volunteers with:-

- payment for any work undertaken by volunteers
- bookings for hotels or travel

Nor can the Association:-

- act as a travel guide;
- or take responsibility for any problems or issues faced when in Nepal.

12. Preparation by Volunteers in Overseas Projects

12.1 External Conditions

Travel to Nepal by a volunteer is strictly at the volunteer’s own risk and the Association can not guarantee the volunteers safety whilst in Nepal.

The following are some of the current issues faced by people visiting Nepal

- electricity load shedding / blackouts;
- strikes;
- lack of hot water in hotel
- lack of decent toilets in village areas
- food different to what you are used to; and
- language barriers, especially in rural areas.

12.2 Requirements of Volunteers on Location

- obey all applicable local laws, regulations and policies at all times;
- respect the local people and listen to what they say;

- when wanting to help, find out what people need – don't tell or give them what you think they need or should have;
- respect the cultural differences and ways of life;
- be prepared to take only what is required on remote trips and assume responsibility for your belongings;
- remember, your personal life needs to be kept separate to your role as a volunteer; observe ethical discipline – keep your relationships with other team members on a professional footing – friendly but respectful.

12.3 Useful Information for Volunteers Prior to Embarking

- Read some information on Nepal. Good sources of information are the Lonely Planet guides and on-line resources on Nepal's culture and way of life, though the Association does not guarantee the accuracy of any information.
- Talk to others who have travelled to Nepal on previous occasions.
- Seek the advice of your health professional and consider any precautions you may need to take including vaccinations.
- Seek the advice of government advisory services such as "Smart Traveller".
- Think seriously about your motivation for volunteering and what you are hoping to gain on a personal level.