



HearingNEPAL Program Inc

Volunteer Policy

1 Introduction

This policy has been developed to protect the interests of the Association, its volunteers and most importantly, the beneficiaries of the Association and to assist those applying to volunteer within HearingNEPAL Program Inc. by:

- (1) Clearly defining the goals of our Association for prospective volunteers.
- (2) Assisting the Association to determine the suitability of individual volunteers for volunteer work within the Association in terms of-
 - (a) health and wellbeing
 - (b) motivation
 - (c) skills and experience
 - (d) flexibility
 - (e) ability to work as part of a team
 - (f) intention to enhance the Association ie. “to bring something to the table”
 - (g) self-reliance
- (3) Providing guidance to people who are considering becoming a volunteer.
- (4) Managing the expectations of volunteers and the association.

2 Volunteering with HearingNEPAL Program Inc.

- 2.1 The Association values all contributions, big and small, made by volunteers.
- 2.2 The Association aims to benefit as many people as possible with the resources available to it, including its volunteers
- 2.3 The efforts of volunteers will be used to assist the Association to achieve its object of assisting with the development of the provision of primary ear care and rehabilitation of hearing impaired persons in Developing Countries who would otherwise have no access to such services by assisting recognized organisations native to those Developing Countries.
- 2.4 Volunteers can assist the Association in many ways including:-
 - (1) hands-on assistance on one of the projects of the Association including:-
 - (a) assisting with hearing assessments, fitting hearing aids , training local personnel in hearing related work; and
 - (b) assisting with organisational tasks such as recording names, taking photos and general support tasks;

(Restrictions on tourists in some jurisdictions limit the volunteer “work” that can be carried out. Volunteers should discuss their expectations with the Association to avoid disappointment.)

- (2) fundraising;
 - (3) promoting the Association and its objectives; and
 - (4) seeking donations of hearing aids (new and used) and other hearing equipment to be used in Nepal.
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Any volunteer work 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.

3 How to Become a Volunteer

- 3.1 Prospective volunteers must complete and submit an application form, which is available by contacting the Secretary of the Association or from the website www.hearingnepal.org/volunteers.

Application forms are to be submitted online or by post to:-
HearingNEPAL Program
c/- PO Box 599
Cannonvale
QLD 4802
AUSTRALIA

- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 An applicant must be given written notice of the Management Committee's decision within 14 days of the decision.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.

4 Travel to Nepal

- 4.1 At present, the Associations activities are focused in Nepal though the Association hopes to be in a position to assist other Developing Countries in the future.
- 4.2 Travel to Nepal involves significant planning and for this reason, any volunteer wishing to travel to Nepal with the Association to undertake volunteer work must submit an application at least three (3) months prior to the departure date. The prospective volunteer's application must be accepted prior to departure.

- 4.3 Travel to Nepal is at the volunteer's sole cost and expense. Travel costs generally include but are not limited to:
- (1) return airfares;
 - (2) travel insurance;
 - (3) clothing and equipment; and
 - (4) accommodation costs (at the date of this policy accommodation costs were approximately AU\$60.00 per day for remote ear camps including food & accommodation and AU\$15-40 per day for accommodation in Kathmandu).
- 4.4 Depending on the volunteer work to be undertaken by a volunteer, the Association may require a volunteer to contribute a one-off payment of \$500.00 to cover expenses including:-
- (1) Incidental damage to equipment owned by the Association;
 - (2) Consumables including batteries, tips, impression material, repairs and calibration costs; and
 - (3) Wages/gratuities to Nepali assistants working with the Association.
- 4.5 Typically, volunteer work in Nepal 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. 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.
- 4.6 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. 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.
- 4.7 The Association will assist volunteers by providing:-
- (1) fundraising ideas to assist with travel costs;
 - (2) an introduction to a reliable trekking agency;
 - (3) moral support when things get difficult;
 - (4) recommendations on hotels and restaurants; and
 - (5) introductions to affiliated organisations.
- 4.8 The Association can not provide volunteers with:-
- (1) payment for any work undertaken by volunteers; or
 - (2) bookings of hotels or travel.
- Nor can the Association:-
- (3) act as a travel guide; or
 - (4) take responsibility for any problems or issues faced when in Nepal.
- 4.9 Volunteers travelling to Nepal should demonstrate the following attributes:-
- (1) Healthy – volunteers should be generally of good health and the Association recommends that volunteers seek the advice of their health professionals before embarking on travel to Nepal.
 - (2) Resourceful – the language barrier presents inevitable challenges, and you will often need to work with translators who are themselves volunteers!
 - (3) Independent – in making own arrangements outside of scope of the work of the Association.

- (4) Able to cope with different situations.
 - (5) Patient - the pace of life is slower and things do not always go according to plan
 - (6) Able to take initiative where there are no clear guidelines for how to behave, eg at various children's institutions there may be no formal volunteer policies.
 - (7) Willing to allow time before and after a project in case of travel delays, bad weather, strikes etc.
 - (8) Generous with their time in regards packing, briefing and preparation for trips (some trips requires special Passes which take time to arrange).
- 4.10 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:-
- (1) electricity load shedding / blackouts;
 - (2) strikes;
 - (3) lack of hot water in hotels;
 - (4) lack of decent toilets in village areas;
 - (5) food different to what you are used to; and
 - (6) language barriers, especially in rural areas.
- 4.11 When volunteering in Nepal the Association asks that volunteers:-
- (1) obey all applicable local laws, regulations and policies at all times;
 - (2) respect the local people and listen to what they say;
 - (3) when wanting to help, find out what they need – don't tell or give them what you think they need or should have;
 - (4) respect the cultural differences and way of life;
 - (5) be prepared to take only what is required on remote trips and assume personal responsibility for your belongings;
 - (6) remember, your personal life needs to be kept separate to your role as a volunteer; and
 - (7) observe ethical discipline - keep your relationships with other team members on a professional footing - friendly but respectful.
- 4.12 The Association recommends that before Volunteers embark on travel to Nepal that the volunteer:-
- (1) Reads 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.
 - (2) Talk to others who have travelled to Nepal on previous occasions.
 - (3) Seek the advice of your health professional and consider any precautions you may need to take including vaccinations.
 - (4) Seek the advice of government advisory services such as "Smartraveller".
 - (5) Think seriously about your motivation for volunteering and what you are hoping to gain on a personal level.