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Friendship Association for Community Education



FACE Nepal

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FACE Nepal Volunteer Information Booklet

V3 January 2014

Ann Bartholomew

Thank you for volunteering with FACE Nepal and welcome to working with our dedicated team in contributing to the development and progress of our local communities. We hope that you will find your time with FACE Nepal becomes an experience to remember and that you will find working in Nepal a worthwhile challenge that enhances your skills and confidence.

Please take a few moments to read through this information package; we hope that you will find it helpful to prepare you for your journey to Nepal and your stay here.

Airport and Arrival Information

You will arrive at Tribhuvan International Airport which is Nepal's only international airport.

A FACE Nepal representative will meet you at the airport. They will be holding a placard which you will be able to see clearly.

If you get delayed or miss your flight please call us to let us know, if possible, but do not worry as the representative will be able to check arrival times and will be there to meet you no matter how long the delay.

Please remember to bring enough cash (US\$ or GBP) for your visa as you may not be able to withdraw from the ATM's at the airport.

It is much easier to get a 90 day visa if your stay is for 90 days or more at the start of your time in Nepal.

Contact Details:

Shreeram Devkota (M.D. FACE Nepal): 00977-984-5047738

Hotel (Mt. Annapurna Guest House,

Thamel, Jyatha, Kathmandu): 00977-1-42254624221493

Before you leave

Inoculations/medical supplies

Please consult your doctor/local travel clinic for the latest recommendations regarding the necessary inoculations for Nepal. We receive many questions about vaccinations but ultimately it is your responsibility to ensure you are adequately protected. There are useful travel information sites on the internet and your clinic doctor or nurse will guide you.

You may feel more comfortable bringing your own first aid kit, cold/flu and stomach medication, vitamins, acclimatization aids and antibiotics. These are all, however, readily available in Nepal and can be bought over the counter.

Any specific prescription medications should be brought with you, as there is no guarantee you will be able to purchase these.

What Should I Bring?

This will vary depending on what time of year you are traveling to Nepal, your personal choices for comfort and what non-FACE Nepal activities you want to participate in (trekking, white water rafting, etc.),

You can buy most things that you will need in Kathmandu and often cheaper than at home. While high tech trekking gear is becoming increasingly available in Kathmandu this may be best brought with you if necessary.

Here are a few suggestions.

- Sleeping - if you are planning to trek in the Himalaya. Your host family will provide bedding but it does get quite cold in the winter months of December to February. A cotton inner lining is adequate outside of winter.
- Flashlight/torch (the electricity supply is fickle)
- Sun cream
- Mosquito repellent/Mosquito net
- First aid kit
- Jacket (if here for winter)
- Water purification tablets or good quality water purifier
(bottled water is available and most volunteers find after a short while they are able to drink the local water)

- Earplugs (if you are a light sleeper)
- Journal, camera, battery chargers, books, etc.
- Spare batteries for appliances

Items such as sleeping bags are available in Kathmandu. Clothing can be purchased there and in local towns. You can also have local style clothing tailor-made cheaply in the villages and towns.

For traveling, it is generally better to bring a travel size backpack rather than a suitcase. You will be taking the local buses to your placement and it's much easier when moving around.

Clothing and modesty: women do not bare their shoulders or their legs although long skirts and shorts are increasingly tolerated; men do not bare their torso even in the hottest weather when working in the fields and again, longer shorts are acceptable. Clothing is hand washed and appropriate soap is available in the villages.

Flip-flops/thongs can be bought cheaply in villages; remember that footwear is removed before entering houses.

Items to show/give the children at your placements (some suggestions):

- Books about your country or calendars with pictures of your country on them
- Photos of your family/friends/home (important! your host family and the children love to see these)
- Basic English/Nepali/English dictionary or phrase book
- Colouring pencils and pens, drawing books, stickers, balloons, bubbles
- Inflatable globe
- Books on teaching English/English Grammar for your reference.
- Other classroom accessories such as cellotape, coloured paper/card, pencil sharpeners and erasers are always useful
- Footballs/balls for playing games like cricket or volleyball (to be inflated when you are here)

What should I bring for my host family?

You are not expected or obliged to give a gift/gifts to your host family but we have found that volunteers like to do so and the host family usually presents you with a leaving gift. Below are some suggestions:

- A framed picture of yourself and your Nepali family (you can have this made while in Nepal)
- A small photo album with pictures of you and your family/friends from home
- A 'coffee table' book of your home town or country
- Some small souvenirs from your country
- Posters, stickers or magazine pictures from your country
- Children's books/ toys/colour and drawing materials for kids of the host family
- T-shirts from your country
- Flags

Arrival and visits in Kathmandu

Once you have been met by our FACE Nepal representative at the airport you will go by taxi to the Guest House. Your accommodation, food, travel and entry fees to cultural sites are paid for by FACE Nepal but we expect that you will pay for extras, such as alcohol, yourself.

The representative will answer any questions you may have but may not know all the details of your project or placement. This will be discussed at length once you arrive in the area of your placement.

Please let the representative know if you need help or time to buy anything in Kathmandu, especially if it is for items not available once you get to your placement.

Note: Your volunteer fees for FACE Nepal can be withdrawn in Kathmandu or when you arrive in Chitwan (Narayanghad). Please let the representative know if you need to visit an ATM in Kathmandu. If you have brought the fees in local currency and need to exchange to NPR (Nepalese rupees) you need to visit an exchange office in Kathmandu as there are no currency exchange agents in the village where you will live or the closest town of Narayanghad.

FACE Nepal offers you two sight seeing trips in Kathmandu to both Durbur Square and Swayambunath (otherwise known as Monkey Temple). All entry fees and transport are paid for by FACE Nepal.

Note: If you think you may return to Durbur Square you can take your passport and a photograph to the office there and you will have subsequent free entry for the duration of your visa.

The FACE Nepal representative will stay with you during the day and evening. We advise that you do stay with the representative but if you are confident to explore on your own and would like to do so please refer to the Safety and Culture attachment. Please also make a note of the representative's telephone number so that you can make suitable meeting arrangements with him/her. The representative will feel responsible for you and concerned for your safety.

Remember that the Guest House staff are very helpful and can contact the representative should you need him/her. Keep a Guest House card with you for details of the address and telephone number as the streets of Kathmandu can be very confusing to newcomers.

What should I expect on my placement?

Accommodation

During your placement you will be living with a host family.

The further you are from a major city, the more rustic the accommodation is. In all cases, the accommodation is clean and hygienic. The most rustic accommodation, however, is sometimes the most difficult to adjust to.

The toilet may be an outhouse which is slightly separated from the house but only by a few feet. These are squat toilets which may take some getting used to! For bathing, you may have to wear a lungi (bathing garment) or sarong (make sure this can wrap around you tightly) for modesty as the bathing facility may also be in the courtyard. Here you will fill a bucket of water at the pump and use this for bathing or manage Nepali style to use the pump as a shower. The FACE Nepal representative who meets you in Kathmandu can help you to buy a lungi if needed or you can wait until you arrive at your host family's home.

You will have your own room with an electricity supply (remember the electricity supply is fickle so keep your torch to hand).

Your host family will be fascinated by you and may be curious about the lotions you bring, if any, and your clothes and books. Although there is no issue with the safety of what you bring if you want privacy it is better to keep personal items locked in your backpack.

FACE Nepal is discerning in its choice of host families. We try to place volunteers with families who have had some experience of different cultures and traditions so are more

accepting and tolerant of differences. The host family receives payment for your stay so should not ask for any monies. We also advise against making a personal donation to host families as this can lead to unrealistic expectations of future volunteers and those families who do not receive a donation will feel disgruntled. Donations are best made through FACE Nepal where they will be registered in our accounts. You will be kept up to date with how funds are distributed to various projects.

In a typical placement volunteers live with their host family where they eat Nepali food twice a day (around 9 o' clock in the morning and 7 o' clock in the evening). Tea (chiya) is served in the morning and in the afternoon.

Placement Information

Please remember that while you are working as a volunteer you are representing FACE Nepal and any behaviour which the community judges as unfavourable will affect the credibility of FACE Nepal as well as your own standing.

Shreeram and Ashok (our M.D. and Programme Coordinator) will have planned your placement in collaboration with you prior to your arrival. Sometimes the details will only be finalised once you have arrived. There will be time for you to clarify expectations, both your own and those of FACE Nepal and your placement contact.

Outside of your more 'formal' project work volunteers can utilize their time according to their own skills and experience. Children are always eager to play a variety of games and particularly enjoy competition. You will find the community will respond to your enthusiasm to help and you will have the freedom to use and enjoy your creativity, ingenuity and innovation.

(Please remember to complete the volunteer evaluation form or email any feedback informally. We need this information to ensure that we continue to adapt and improve volunteer experience.)

You will be able to travel to nearby towns to purchase items for daily use and you can also travel to other areas on longer vacation. Volunteers may have the opportunity to get together with other volunteers and share their experiences.

Keeping in touch with home

There will be someone in or near your host family's home who will have internet provision. In some villages there is a communication centre from where you can make international calls and use computers. Most locals do not have landlines and where they

do they are not capable of international connections. Your host will transport you, if necessary, to a place where you can make calls or use the internet. Remember that electricity is managed on a 'load share' system so is not available consistently through the day or evening.

Free time and Travelling

We encourage you to plan short trips to visit other parts of Nepal depending on your interests or desire. FACE Nepal can make arrangements for volunteers to get discounted rates for certain activities including: a jungle safari in Chitwan National Park, rafting and trekking etc. If you are interested, please let us know and bear in mind that it's usually significantly cheaper to book activities once you are here in Nepal, whether through FACE Nepal or not, rather than from your home country.

The Nepali working week and school week ends at midday on Friday and resumes again on Sunday. One and a half days off is sometimes not enough time for longer term volunteers to explore the locality using public transport. Discuss any trips you would like to make with Shreeram, Ashok and your contact at your placement. Extra time off can be negotiated though please bear in mind that your commitment will be very much acknowledged and respected by the community and requesting time off too frequently may interfere with your programme.

Essentials

Passport - Ok we shouldn't need to mention this but make sure you don't get to the airport and realise it is still on the coffee table...

Bank Information - You can find Western Union, ATM's and banks in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitwan. Currency exchange facilities are available in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Outside of these cities, the only banking facilities are for cash or traveler's cheques. There is an additional charge at the bank for cashing traveler's cheques. There are no credit card systems in Nepal.

Travel Documents - This may be your plane ticket, bus ticket, whatever. Make sure you keep these safe and bring with you all documents for return travel.

Passport Photos – You need two passport size photographs to obtain your visa at Tribhuvan airport. FACE Nepal also requires 2 passport size photos which you can have taken quite affordably in Nepal but it is more convenient to carry additional passport photos with you. You will also need additional photos if you decide to extend your visa.

Entry/Tourist Visa - This can be obtained on arrival at Kathmandu. It is not essential to arrange this in your home country but you may wish to obtain it there if you would rather avoid the queue at Tribhuvan airport. Initial visas are issued for up to 90 days (and for a minimum of 15 days), and cost \$60 USD for 30 days and \$100 For 90 days. You need to present the visa officials with 2 passport size photos. You can extend your visa for one month, up to 3 times, in Kathmandu or Pokhara. The maximum stay in Nepal is for 5 months in one calendar year. If you think you may have problems, please check with your embassy before you travel.

Again, please remember to bring enough cash to cover the cost of your visa at Tribhuvan Airport. ATM's there do not always work. You can pay for your visa in US\$ and GBP.

At the End of Your Placement

At the end of your placement you will leave the accommodation provided by your host family. You are welcome to stay in the area and participate in more activities and sightseeing or to visit other areas of Nepal.

Your remaining currency will contribute positively to the economy and provide mementos of your stay here so another good reason to stay that little bit longer is for the shopping! The products here are more than likely a lot cheaper than they would be in your home country and obviously there are gifts here which are unique to Nepal.

You will receive our annual Newsletter which will include details about you and your placement. Photographs of you during your programme can be emailed for inclusion in the Newsletter (contact details below).

Please feel free to keep in touch so that we can let you know how your volunteer programme is progressing.

You may leave Nepal, but you will never forget it.

Extra Information

Climate

The width of Nepal is only about 200 km on average, but within this short distance the altitude of the land rises from lowly 60m to all the way up to above 8000m. Hence the

weather depends upon the altitude of the place in Nepal. However, in general Nepal has four climatic seasons: Summer, Monsoon, Autumn and Winter.

Summer starts from March to May. The temperature of this season fluctuates between 20°C to 30°C (68°F to 86°F).

Monsoon starts from June to August. These are also the pre-monsoon months with occasional evening thunderstorms and high temperatures.

Autumn starts from September and ends by November. During this period, the climate is dry and mild with temperatures fluctuating between 20°C to 30°C (68°F to 86°F). It can still be very hot during the day.

Winter starts from December to February. The mornings and evenings are very cold while the afternoon is pretty sunny. The temperature during these months rises from 15°C to 20°C (59°F to 68°F).

Political Situation

The Maoists and the Government have been in conflict for the past 15 years. Occasionally there is some violence between the two parties – mostly during demonstrations. Most of the violence is at government buildings and offices. The Maoists also call general strikes from time to time. These strikes are called '*bandh*'. For the most part, this does not affect our programmes at all, but sometimes transport is affected and there are more checkpoints set up prior and post the *bandh*. We do advise volunteers if there will be a *bandh* in their area and we strongly advise that you do not participate in any demonstrations, make any political statements or form any political affiliations during your stay. At the time of writing (29.12.13) there have been elections in November 2013 and there is currently no conflict or concern.

Drugs, Smoking & Alcohol

Many tourists are targeted by people who ask you if you want to 'smoke' or the more bold ones ask you if you would like marijuana or hashish. We strongly recommend that you do not indulge. If you are caught, FACE Nepal cannot help you and your embassy will not make any effort to rescue you.

Smoking is very common in Nepal. Generally only men smoke but occasionally you see women smoking as well. Smoking is permitted indoors at many establishments.

Alcohol is readily available but is generally served at a premium. At your placement the locals may offer you raksi or chhang. Both of these are local wines made from

fermented rice and are very strong. We recommend that you only drink a small amount at any one time. It is also important that you only drink in safe environments as some tourists have been robbed when drunk.

While on placement we also suggest that you do not drink or smoke with your students. This increases their familiarity with you and subsequently can make it very difficult for you to enforce discipline. It will also reduce your status as a teacher in the community.

Precautionary note for women: although it may be common for you to smoke or drink at home we recommend that you limit these activities while you are on placement. Unfortunately there are cultural perceptions and local people find it difficult to respect women who drink and smoke. Once you and your host family and the locals have got to know each other you may decide that more freedom is appropriate. It is best, at least initially, that you drink only a little to be sociable and accept your family's hospitality, but not to excess. It is acceptable to smoke and drink in the larger cities of Kathmandu and Pokhara.

Language Basics

Learning a few of the basics of Nepali will open up the country and endear you to the local people. Just a little of the language will help you to get around, to meet people and to really deepen your experience of our culture. It is an indication to the locals that you want to learn about them and care about their country and culture.

Some of the basics are noted below.

Note: Underlined words are shown as examples only; you should substitute as necessary.

Basic Greetings & Pleasantries:	
Nepali Language	English Translation
Namaste	Hello, Greetings, I bless the divine in you
Namaskar	The more respectful version of Namaste
Hajur	All purpose term meaning yes? pardon, excuse me?
(Tapailai) Kasto Cha?	How are you?
(Malai) Thik Cha	I am fine
Khana khannu bhaiyo?	Have you eaten? (Used often as informal greeting)
Dhanybhad	Thank you
Tapaiko naam ke ho?	What is your name?
Mero naam <u>Leticia</u> ho	My name is Leticia

Maaph garphnus	Excuse me/ pardon me/ sorry
Maile bhujhina	I don't understand
Maile bhujhe	I understand
Pheri bhetaunla	I hope we meet again

Useful Adjectives

Nepali Language	English Translation
Mahango / Sasto	Expensive / Cheap
Ramro / Naramro	Good / Bad
Sapha / Phohar	Clean / Dirty
Thulo / Sano	Big / Small
Sajilo / Gahro	Easy / Hard
Thada / Najik	Far / Close
Chito / Dhilo	Fast / Slow
Tato / Cheeso	Hot / Cold (for food)
Garmi / Jaado	Hot / Cold (for weather)
Naya / Purano	New / Old
Dhani / Garib	Rich / Poor
Add 'dherai' for 'very'	
E.g. Trekking dherai gahro cha	Trekking is very hard

Questioning Words

Nepali Language	English Translation
Ke	What
Kahaang	Where
Kati	How much
Kina / kinabhane	Why / because
Kasko	Whose
Kahile	When
Kun	Which
Kasari	How
Kasto	How (of quality)

Feelings and Emotions

Nepali Language	English Translation
Malaai _ lagyo / lagna.	I feel / don't feel _____.
Birami	Sick
Raksi	Drunk
Nindra	Sleepy
Thakai	Tired
Alchee	Lazy
Dar	Scared
Jaado	Cold

Garme	Hot		
Bhok	hungry		
Thirkaa	Thirsty		
Dukha	Sad		
Khushee	Happy		
Numbers			
1 / ek	6 / cha	15 / pandhra	50 / pachaase
2 / dui	7 / saat	20 / beece	60 / sathi
3 / tin	8 / aath	25 / pacheece	70 / sattari
4 / char	9 / nau	30 / teece	80 / assi
5 / panchs	10 / das	40 / chaleece	90 / nabbe
100 / ek saye	200 / dui saye	1000 ek hazar	

Safety and Cultural Considerations

Safety

- **Going out alone:** Whilst in Kathmandu it is advised that you don't go out alone, especially at night. It's a city, they live in poverty and you are a rich westerner...be careful and cautious. If you do go out, go in pairs if possible, or with the FACENepal representative and let someone know roughly where you are going. We also recommend that you keep a note of the representative's telephone number, the address and phone number of the guest house (or their business card) while in Kathmandu. At your placement carry the name of the host family for when you are in the village at first just in case you get lost.
- **Hygiene:** At the start of your stay in Nepal you can avoid some illnesses by, for instance, not biting your nails or putting your fingers in your mouth or near your eyes or nose especially after handling money. Be thorough with hand washing or use of alcohol sanitisers. Be particularly careful if you wear contact lenses and bring enough lotions with you for throughout your stay. Your host family will not provide tissue roll so you may wish to carry some with you to your placement. Toiletries can be bought locally.
- **Travellers diarrhoea:** If you do get TD the rule of thumb is if you have more than 3 loose motions in 24hrs and one of the following symptoms: nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, bloody stool or urgency then you need to take some medication and not just a stopper, as this will not cure it. Let your host family know and they will take you to a local health clinic or pharmacy, whichever is appropriate. Remember to

drink enough to replace lost fluids and go back to bottled water until your symptoms have subsided.

- **Water:** Remember to drink plenty, especially if it's very hot and you are losing a lot of fluid through sweating. Bottled water is available in cities and locally and it may be worth checking that the seal is intact. After a couple of weeks or so volunteers find that they can drink the local water from the pump with no ill effects.
- **Sex:** Apparently the most statistically likely group to cavort with the locals whilst travelling away from home are woman over 30. If you think sexual encounters will be a possibility then bring condoms.
- **Clinics:** There are some good clinics in Nepal of western standards. Locally there are health posts and your host family will make sure you have appropriate medical attention should you need it. Many medications can be bought over the counter but adequate supplies of specific prescription medications should be brought as there is no guarantee that you will be able to buy these.
- **Pre travel vaccinations** Please consult your local medical practitioner, GP or travel clinic at least two months before travel to make sure you have time for the recommended vaccinations.
- **Walking out and about:** When you are out in the village you need to be careful at first. It is easy to get lost and you are now in a very bio diverse country so will not be familiar with the dangers. Do not go wandering through the rice fields or off the pathways until you are more familiar with the environment. If you find that you do have to cross a field then walk slowly and noisily to warn snakes that you are coming and give them time to get out of the way. It is unusual for them to attack for no reason; it's usually when they have been disturbed or surprised. A stick is useful to walk with. It can help move things out the way and keep any animals at bay that may be around.
- **Insects:** To avoid being bitten by mosquitos wear light clothes, not dark or brightly coloured, and long sleeves if comfortable. Avoid perfumes as they attract insects. Use repellent. There is a negligible risk of malaria but let your host family know if you have any symptoms such as temperature, headaches or diarrhoea etc. Your host family will provide a mosquito net over your bed or you may prefer to bring your own. It is worth checking your shoes to make sure they are empty of crawling creatures, especially as they will be left outdoors (shoes/sandals are not worn indoors) during the night and when you are indoors during the day.

Cultural Considerations

- Take off your shoes before entering anyone's home and before entering temples.
- The form of greeting in Nepal is Namaste or Namaskar. It has a lot of meaning such as hello, how are you, have a nice day, bye bye. You should join your hands

together in front of your face when you say it. Namaskar is the more respectful greeting.

- For Yes: shake your head from side to side, and for NO: nod your head up and down.
- You may accept a handshake offered by both men and women but never offer your hand first to women. Instead you do `Namaskar'. It is considered rude for a man to touch a woman and especially a married woman. Handshakes are more gentle so don't consider that a limp handshake is a sign of disinterest.
- Pointing your finger at people is considered bad - it means "wait" and "I have a problem with you!" If you have to point at someone remember to use your upturned hand or lift your chin in their direction.
- An answer of "I don't know" is considered rude - an alternative is to suggest where an answer could be found.
- When you are at a Nepali dining table (or floor), there is usually a senior, female member of the family serving everyone. She will repeatedly offer food. In Nepal, usually the mother eats last and she makes sure that everyone eats and eats well. When visiting a local family it is polite to bring fruit.
- Shopping in Nepal starts with bargaining (especially if you are a tourist). Most products don't have price tags, so you are expected to haggle with shop owners. Don't buy anything without bargaining or if you feel that extra dollars of yours would not hurt poor Nepalese go ahead and pay as you wish. Bargaining is common for buying stuff like vegetables and groceries, riding a cab, buying gift items such as Nepali Kukhuri, carpets, and just about anything. You don't bargain in the supermarkets or where goods have a price written on or tagged.
- Superstition is a part of Nepalese life. Never say a young baby is healthy - they think the baby will get sick afterwards. Never keep your shoes or sandals upside down - it's a sign of bad luck.
- When a Nepali family prepares a special meal or even a special pickle at home, they will often send it out to neighbours before they have it themselves. Sharing a meal makes them feel good about it. This is very common especially in remote villages in the country. Sharing of fruit and snacks is common. You may be offered some of a fellow passenger's fruit on a bus, for instance, and people will be very happy if you do the same.
- Nothing in Nepal works on time. Do not expect punctuality. Public buses run when they are full and road traffic is unpredictable. Expect everything to slow down. This includes service in hotels, at post offices, in restaurants and in shops.
- 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. Your host family may also have adequate understanding.
- Licking your fingers and blowing your nose in front of people is considered rude.

- Expect to see people throw litter indiscriminately and to spit. There is no law against littering and no refuse collection service. Rubbish is often burned at roadsides. Education regarding safe refuse disposal is ongoing and volunteers have the opportunity to get involved in such issues locally. The most common spitting is from the chewing of betel leaf (*paan*) and chewable tobacco (*khaine in Nepali*)
- Most Nepalese eat their meal by hand specially for the Nepali food *daal bhat and tarkari*.
- Once someone has eaten from a plate, most Nepalese will not eat from it as it is considered impure (*jutho* in Nepali). Many Nepalese women may eat leftovers from her husband's plate when it's felt that sharing of this food is a loving gesture.
- On the roads all traffic will continually sound their horns. It lets other drivers and pedestrians know that they are there, that they intend to overtake, that they know the other vehicle is there etc etc. It is rarely a sign of aggression and is simply a part of the way everyone drives in Nepal.

Thank you for reading and we hope you have found this useful.

Revised 29.12.13 Ann Bartholomew

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