



**Women's
Foundation
Nepal**



Volunteer's Handbook

www.womenepal.org



Thank you for choosing to volunteer with The Women's Foundation of Nepal and for helping women and children in Nepal who are victims of violence, abuse and poverty.

Established in 1988 by a collective of concerned Nepali women, The Foundation for the Solidarity and Development of Women, also known as The Women's Foundation of Nepal (WFN), stands as a non-profit, non-governmental organization.

Their unwavering commitment to addressing gender disparities fuels their mission to this day. WFN's core objective is to support women and children irrespective of caste, religion, or ethnicity, with a particular emphasis on assisting the rural poor. Their dedication is focused on tackling socio-economic challenges and discrimination prevalent among Nepali women and children. WFN achieves this through initiatives promoting economic and social empowerment for women, while cultivating self-reliance and social responsibility within rural communities.

Volunteering opportunities

Join us in creating a better future for the women and children of Nepal.

A little bit about us

WFN is always seeking volunteers who can collaborate with us to achieve our objectives. Our volunteers come from diverse backgrounds, some residing in Nepal while others are located halfway across the globe, organizing in-country fundraising events and managing our website.

We offer volunteer placements in many areas as listed below. Your role will be tailored to match our requirements as well as your skills and experiences. Upon acceptance as a WFN volunteer, our volunteer coordinator will collaborate with you to define your specific responsibilities.





Volunteering opportunities

1. WFN office

The WFN serves as the nerve center for all of its programs and initiatives. This is the area where volunteers are most in demand. Volunteers can contribute to fundraising, writing proposals and reports, editing, marketing, website development, accounting, and various administrative and IT tasks. Proficiency in English is essential for this role, and we encourage volunteers with prior experience and relevant professional skills to join us.

2. Maheela textile production center

Maheela, a textile cooperative under WFN, was established to empower and employ women who have experienced abuse. It plays a vital role within WFN, as 60% of Maheela's profits contribute to funding other activities of the organization. Volunteers are welcome to support in various capacities such as business development, sales and marketing, textile design and procurement, and website development. Specifically, we seek volunteers with expertise in business development and sales and marketing, who can help expand Maheela's business on an international scale.



3. Shelter home

The shelter provides a safe haven for women and children who have endured abuse and neglect, situated on the outskirts of the city. When the women aren't engaged in work and the children aren't attending school, volunteers have the opportunity to organize activities for them. These activities may include dance, music, art and craft sessions, as well as hygiene lessons. Volunteers interested in teaching English or assisting with schoolwork must have formal teaching qualifications and a familiarity with the Nepalese education system.

Moreover, there's a pressing need for volunteers who can enhance the living conditions at the shelter. Individuals with technical expertise in construction, carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, sanitation, and healthcare are highly valued here.





Volunteering opportunities

4. Childcare center

WFN runs a childcare center catering to single mothers, working mothers, and the local community, providing a safe place for young children while their parents are at work. We're seeking enthusiastic and imaginative individuals with experience in early childhood education to join our team. Your responsibilities may include organizing games, teaching songs and dances, and offering general support to both the children and our staff.

5. Volunteer from home

We currently have many volunteers from all over the globe helping us in various ways.

Fund raising is of the utmost importance to WFN. This could be in the form of finding sponsors for the women and children at our shelter home, or donation for our various projects. We will supply volunteers with all the information required to do so.





Volunteer guidelines and rules

As a volunteer, you'll need to be aware of the following policies and procedures at WFN.

- Volunteers must be able to speak English.
- Minimum charge for accommodation, including meals, is one month.
- Volunteers are expected to work 5 days a week, 7 hours each day.
- The first 2 weeks will be a trial period where the volunteer's job scope may change after according to the needs of the organization after monitoring the progress of the volunteer.
- Volunteers are to follow the instructions provided by the Volunteer Coordinator/Program Coordinator and consult them should they face any problems.
- All sensitive matters regarding WFN and WFN's members must be kept confidential.
- Smoking and drinking are strictly prohibited in all our premises.
- WFN may terminate the volunteer's services should his/her work or behavior prove unsatisfactory.
- Priority will be given to volunteers who apply to stay with WFN.

Volunteer guidelines and rules specific to the shelter home and childcare center

- Male volunteers are not allowed at the shelter.
- All activities run by the volunteers and gifts for the children should be approved by the Volunteer Coordinator/ Program Coordinators.
- Volunteers not working at the shelter or childcare center should request permission from the Volunteer Coordinator before visiting.
- Volunteers are not allowed to take the children outside of the shelter or childcare center.
- Volunteers are not allowed to enter the bedrooms of the children at the shelter
- Volunteers should not focus on one child or a group of children, at the exclusion of others.
- Volunteers should not consume their own food in the presence of the children.
- Should volunteers notice any undesirable behaviors or problems amongst the children, you must inform the Program Coordinator immediately.





Volunteer guidelines and rules specific to staying in the Solidarity Home

Some volunteers might want to share this experience of living the Nepali way. This is also an excellent opportunity for volunteers to immerse themselves in the Nepali community, within a supportive environment, learning about Nepali lifestyle, culture, and language and sharing their culture in return. It is also very good for us to exchange and learn from the volunteers as well.

What you will have as a volunteer?

- 1 nice large shared bedroom (2–3 volunteers).
- 1 smaller shared bedroom (1–2 volunteers).
- 3 simple vegetarian meals per day.
- Drinking water.
- Internet access.
- Hot shower.
- The private kitchen if you decide to cook your meals but this would be at your own expense.
- Breakfast will be served to you. If you like to have Nepali breakfast you are welcome.
- Airport pick-up.
- Family atmosphere.
- Cost: 400 USD per month.



Rules and regulations

- Volunteers of the same sex only share the rooms (or married couples).
- Volunteers have to do their laundry.
- WFN staff would expect you to report to the Home by 9 PM. If you will be late please kindly inform before you leave home.
- Smoking and drinking alcohol are prohibited inside the Solidarity Home.



Basic rules and regulations for WFN volunteers

- Smoking and drinking alcohol are prohibited inside the Solidarity Home and all WFN program areas.
- One should wear proper and clean clothes at home and also at the program areas.
- Daily personal hygiene is required.
- Should follow the instructions from the volunteer Coordinator or the program coordinator.
- Need to give written weekly report to the Volunteer Coordinator or the Program Supervisor of WFN.
- If any problems arise, directly contact the program coordinator or the volunteer coordinator.
- If volunteers would like to give something to the children at the shelter home or at a childcare center, it should be given through the coordinators.
- Volunteers who are not working at the shelter home have to ask permission from the office or an authorized person before visiting the shelter.
- Not allowed to go inside the bedrooms of the shelter home without a special reason.
- Not allowed to take children outside without permission from a coordinator.
- If you are going out other than programs of WFN, you should inform a responsible staff where you will be and approximately what time you will return
- All the activities running by volunteers in the shelter home should be approved by the WFN/home coordinator.
- Volunteers are requested to inform any observation in the shelter home and child care center, to the WFN.
- Volunteers are requested to share their feelings and to give suggestions to the organization about all projects visited.

Other things to note:

- Applications will be accepted from skilled and professional applicants only.
- The WFN selection committee reserves the right to accept or refuse applications from volunteers.
- The minimum period for volunteering is 2 months.
- The working period can be flexible for professional or official persons for certain projects. (Conditional)
- Volunteers must confirm their service one-month before at WFN.
- There shall be no male volunteers at the shelter home.
- The first two weeks are a trial period for each volunteer.
- A volunteer's area or type of work can change according to the needs of the organization, or after monitoring the activities of the volunteer for two weeks.
- Rules regarding volunteer projects can be changed when appropriate.
- The Volunteer Coordinator will have a meeting with a Project Coordinator once every two weeks.
- The contract between volunteers and WFN can be broken at any time when a volunteer's attitude or behavior is deemed unsatisfactory or unacceptable.
- Volunteers must directly contact the Project Coordinator or Volunteer Coordinator if they have any questions or issues to discuss regarding any WFN project.
- Volunteers must maintain the confidentiality of all sensitive matters regarding the organization or the organization's members.
- Volunteers must work the full required months before taking any days off for personal matters.



Cultural behavior

A few rules of social behavior, so that you don't have to feel embarrassed afterward and wonder what people must have thought about you:

- Don't walk over anybody's food, plate, books, etc., but pass behind or next to it.
- You can perform the Namaste gesture (palms against each other) to adults, but it's not appropriate to do this to children.
- Don't eat from anybody else's plate, and don't slide anything from your plate onto anyone else's.
- To shake hands is done among men, and women perform the Namaste gesture.
- It is perfectly normal in Nepal for people to clear their throat as noisily as possible (although we only allow this in the toilets and bathrooms). Loudly blowing your nose, however, is considered to be disgusting by most Nepali people. So, make sure you definitely don't do that at the table.
- Make sure that you are not eating alone if you are sitting in a group. Either you share your food with the person around you or do not bring food only for yourself.
- And if ever you've got your off-day, nostalgic feelings, homesickness, missing friends and family, that's very human and it happens to all of us, so don't forget: we're all here to help each other.

Eating and Drinking

There are many cultural and norms practices in Nepal, particularly in rural areas. We expect our volunteers to be culturally sensitive and follow the traditional guidelines in Nepal.

Always use your right hand to eat and deal with food. Many Nepalese eat with their hands but you can always request for a spoon. Once your lips have touched a food item, its container or a piece of cutlery, it is considered *Jutho* (contaminated). Even when using a serving spoon, the serving spoon should not come into contact with your plate or the existing food on your plate. As such, never eat off someone else's plate or offer anyone food you have taken a bite out of. Do not enter the kitchen until you have been invited to. In addition, it is rude to blow your nose loudly, especially at the dining table.

Feet and shoes

Never wear your shoes into any religious site or people's homes. Some homes are more relaxed about this practice. Watch your hosts and do as they do.

Privacy

This does not exist the same way it does back home. Complete strangers in public may ask you seemingly personal questions. It is also not uncommon for the Nepalese to look over your shoulder as you write or use your mobile phone. Do not be alarmed. The concept of privacy in Nepal is simply different and should not be viewed negatively. If you wish to be alone, politely explain that you are tired and want to rest.

Relationship between men and women

Affection between men and women, even between married couples, is seldom expressed. Kissing, hugging or hand holding in public is considered inappropriate.

However, it is not uncommon to see two men or women holding arms or walk arm in arm. This is perfectly acceptable in Nepalese society and does not imply homosexuality.

Sexual-related topics are considered taboo in Nepal. You should not engage in such conversations, especially with a Nepalese of the opposite sex. Do note that more than 90% of marriages in Nepal are arranged.

Dating is traditionally frowned upon and love marriages are rare. Hence, do be sensitive when discussing these topics.

Religion

Hinduism is the main religion in Nepal. However, Nepalese are tolerant of different religions and interest in learning the many religions of Nepal is welcomed as casual conversation.

Begging

You will encounter many beggars while in Nepal, particularly in tourist areas. Sadly, giving them money usually does not solve their problems. It makes them reliant on others and encourages them (as well as others) to continue to beg. Sometimes, you will meet women carrying babies, asking for powdered milk. It is known that many will take the goods back to the shop to ask for a refund. If you really want to help, it is better to take an individual to a meal.

It is also not wise to give money to street children. It is not uncommon for the money to go to their gang leader or to fund their drug addiction. It would be better if your money goes to established NGOs dedicated to helping street children.



Pre-departure

Flights

You will be responsible for organizing and paying for your own flight to Nepal. The WFN Office is in Kathmandu; hence, volunteers should book a flight to Tribhuvan International Airport.

Vaccinations

Once your placement with us is confirmed, volunteers should consult their GP or Travel Clinic on the vaccinations recommended for Nepal. Some vaccinations need to be taken a longer period in advance; hence, volunteers are advised to seek medical advice as early as possible.

Insurance

Volunteers are advised to purchase their own travel and health insurance for the period they are in Nepal.

Packing list

Do note that Nepal is a predominantly Hindu country and people dress modestly. Women in particular should be careful about what they wear. Female volunteers should avoid shorts, skirts above the knee, low-cut tops, and tight-fitting and skimpy clothes. This is particularly so in rural areas.

We will not permit volunteers to wear such clothing in the presence of our children from the shelter and childcare center.

Aside from clothing, you may wish to bring the following:

- Head Torch/Torchlight (Nepal is prone to frequent power cuts).
- Laptop (Especially if you are volunteering at the office or production center).
- Mobile Phone (Make sure it's unlocked such that you may purchase a local SIM card for us to contact you).
- Electrical adaptor (To ensure your gadgets work in Nepal. The sockets in Nepal vary but a 2 pin (round) plug usually fits).
- Passport sized photos (For VISA application and passes to places of attraction).



On arrival

At the airport

Once you have arrived, you are required to complete a disembarkation card at the Arrival Hall. The English version can be found at the far end of the hall.

VISA

For volunteers requiring VISA on arrival, the application can be found along with the disembarkation cards.

VISA cost:

15-days – 30 USD

30-days – 50 USD

90-days – 125 USD

Please bring sufficient money for this. You will be required to submit one passport-sized photo as part of the application. Please note that you **MUST** register yourself as a tourist instead of a volunteer.

You will also be required to provide an address. Any guesthouse in Kathmandu will suffice.

Accommodation

WFN welcomes volunteers to live in the house (Solidarity Home) of its founder and President, Kamala Upreti, and her family. The Solidarity Home is a 4-story house located in the same compound as the WFN Office.

The rooms are not heated and there is no AC.

If you do not wish to stay at the Solidarity Home, we recommend you stay in the vicinity of the Boudhanath Stupa. The WFN Office is a 15-min walk from this major tourist attraction.





FAQ

How do I change of withdraw money?

Money can be exchanged at banks. Many moneychangers can also be found at Boudhanath (where WFN is) or in tourist areas like Thamel. ATMs for money withdrawals are also widely available. Most will charge a transaction fee and will allow you to withdraw a maximum of 10,000 to 35,000 rupees each transaction.

How much do things cost in Nepal?

Do note that this is just an estimate. A meal (without a drink) at a tourist restaurant will cost on average 300 – 500 rupees. A meal at a local restaurant can be considerably lower.

A taxi ride from Boudhanath to Thamel (~20 min) will cost around 300 rupees. A bottle of drinking water will cost between 15 -25 rupees.

How common are power cuts?

Scheduled power cuts are the norm all year and are worse from November to May. Sometimes there may be no electricity for up to 16 hours a day. You can find the power cut (also know as load shedding) schedule online here. WFN's Office is in District 7.

How do I contact my friends and family?

We recommend volunteers bring their laptops here. When there is electricity, the WFN Office has Wi-Fi and you can easily email or Skype your family. There are also plenty of Internet cafes that offer international call services around Boudhanath or Thamel.

Can I get a local number?

Yes, you can buy a pre-paid SIM card here in Nepal and we recommend you to do so so that we will be able to contact you. The shops generally will require your passport and a passport sized photo. 3G data SIM cards are also available if you own a smartphone or a tablet. Due to frequent power cuts, the Wi-Fi service in the office may be limited. Some volunteers have also bought USB dongles (with 3G SIM cards) that can be connected to their laptops. NCell is the largest mobile service provider in Nepal.

What is the best way to get around?

Taking local buses is the cheapest way to get around. They are frequent, though often very crowded. A ride will cost between 10 – 25 rupees depending on the distance. Typically, there will be a bus boy at the door shouting out the bus' route as the bus drives along the road. If you are not sure, shout your intended destination out to the bus boy. To get to the WFN Office, you can get off at "Boudha" or "Pipalbot", depending on which direction you come from.

You can also download ride share apps like InDrive and Patheo. This is a convenient method of transport, though it will be more expensive than a bus.

What kind of food should I expect?

The Nepalese typically have daal bhat (rice and lentils soup) for breakfast and dinner.

Around tourist attractions such as Boudhanath or in tourist areas like Thamel, you will be able to find food of many different cuisines, general Western food, Tibetan, Korean, etc. The Nepalese typically drink more tea than coffee but there are many cafés with coffee available in tourist areas. You can also get coffee mix from the supermarkets.

Where can I get groceries, toiletries and other supplies/

You will be able to find most things you need in Kathmandu. There is a large 4-story supermarket, BhatBhateni, (similar to Wal-Mart, Carrefour) approximately 30minutes walk from our office. You will be able to find food, clothes, toiletries, electronics, toys, etc. There are also smaller supermarkets, such as G Mart and KK Mart, near Boudhanath (15 min walk from our Office).



FAQ

What can I do during my free time?

There are many places of attractions around Kathmandu you can visit during the weekends or after your volunteering stint with us. You easily purchase a Lonely Planet guidebook during your stay here to help plan your activities. Some of the major attractions in Kathmandu include Boudhanath Stupa, Pashupatinath, Swayambhu and Durbar Square. There are also cinemas where you can find American movies as well as cafés where you can spend your time reading or using your laptop. Outside of Kathmandu, our volunteers have typically visited places such as Patan, Bhaktapur, Nagarkot, Pokhara and Chitwan National Park.

What is the weather like ?

The weather in Nepal varies depending on the time of the year. Different districts in Nepal also have different climates. The following is guide of the climate in Kathmandu. During December and January, it can get very cold (0 – 3 degrees Celsius) at night, while remaining relatively warm in the day. Between June to August, the temperature can go up to 32 degrees Celsius. This is also the monsoon season where it rains frequently.

If you choose to stay in the Solidarity Home, do note that the rooms are not heated. During winter, volunteers are advised to bring enough warm clothing to sleep in. You may also choose to bring your own sleeping bag, though our volunteers have typically found our blankets sufficient.

How to apply

Volunteer with us!

Interested parties are to drop an email to indicate your interest to our Volunteer Coordinator, at:

womens_foundation@ hotmail.com

wfnvolunteer12@gmail. com

You will be requested to submit your CV, along with a recent photo. We will also require you to complete an official volunteers application form.

Priority will be given to those who commit to stay for 3 months or more and those with working experience.





Women's Foundation Nepal



Equity begins at home

Established 1988

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