

THE MOUNTAIN TRUST

Volunteering in Nepal



Registered UK Charity No 1112841

Information Pack



Contents

Mission Statement
Why Volunteer in Nepal?
Volunteering Placements
Eligibility & How to Apply
Fundraising Requirements & Tips
Travel, Accommodation & Other
Useful Information
The Team
Famous Friends
FAQs
Nepal Fact File
Contact Us



The Mountain Trust Mission Statement

Pioneering Health, Education and Human Rights in hardest hit Nepal in a transparent and empowering way.

Who We Are

The Mountain Trust is a non-profit registered UK charity working solely in Nepal. Over the last two decades The Mountain Trust has established itself as a reputable NGO in Nepal pioneering Health, Education and Human Rights projects among marginalised and remote communities. We receive no statutory funding and our UK Team is entirely volunteer-run.

What We Do

The Mountain Trust runs innovative projects across Health, Education and Human Rights throughout Nepal. Our work focuses on empowering communities by enabling access to schools, health clinics, tools and work

programmes. We have built a strong and reliable network of supporters and colleagues on the ground in Nepal and internationally.

How We Are Funded

The Mountain Trust receives no statutory funding and is run entirely through fundraising. We generate income through Donations, Volunteer Fundraising & One-off grants.

Our Flagship Projects:

Radio Guru - Empowering secondary age students through radio education.

Remote Health Camps - Providing basic and essential medical care to communities who have no facilities or funds to access treatment.

High Altitude Genetics Study - Since 2011 The Mountain Trust has supported UCL and Oxford University in groundbreaking genetic research on Hypoxia.

Why Volunteer With The Mountain Trust?

We offer Flexible, Tailored Placements for individuals & groups working on the ground with a dedicated and experienced team bringing about positive change for some of Nepal's neediest communities.

The Mountain Trust is featured in the Lonely Planet Guide to Volunteering in Nepal.

Unique projects across Health, Education & Human Rights in Nepal.

Volunteer Placements can form part of a school, college or university course

Staff on the ground providing 24 hour support.

Out of this world adventure, leisure and cultural activities from temples to trekking, to rafting and rickshaws - all in the heart of the stunning Himalayas.

All money fundraised by volunteers goes directly to Mountain Trust projects.

Centrally located modern office in Pokhara with accommodation.

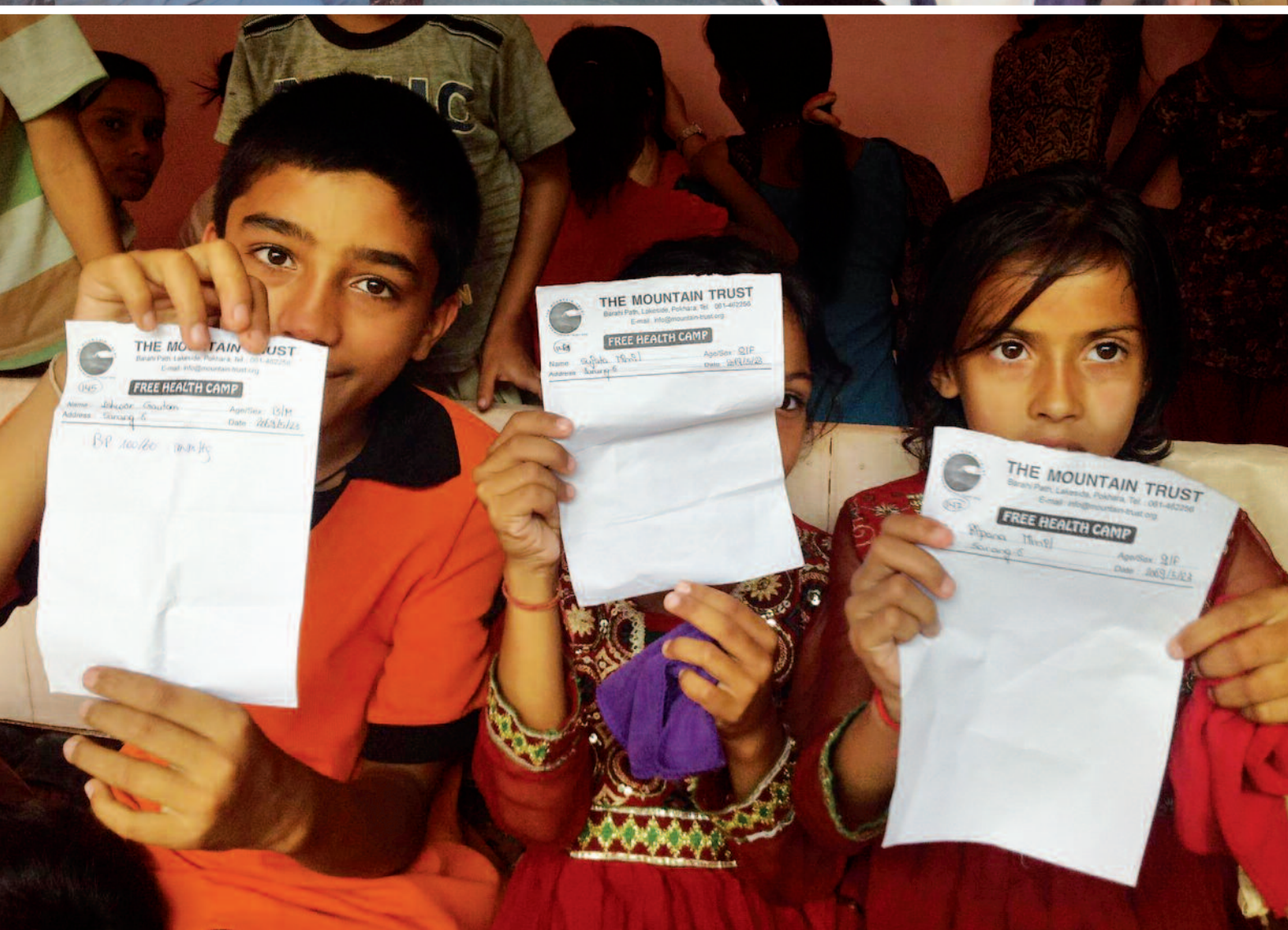
Social activities in Nepal for Mountain Trust Volunteers.



1 in 3 children in Nepal are malnourished.

Many more live with treatable diseases due to lack of resources or knowledge.

Government spending on healthcare is estimated to be less than \$5 per head.



Remote Health Camps

Nepal has many and varied health related problems including a lack of basic provision.

The Mountain Trust provides medical assistance to thousands of people in remote communities, delivering vital treatment and support across a variety of specialisms through our free Health Camps.



Volunteering Placements Education



Bal Mandir Kindergarten



Medical Volunteers Doing Vital Work

Free Remote Health Camps
Medical Aid for Earthquake Victims
Hospital Placements
Sponsored Operations



Radio Guru

The Mountain Trust pioneers high-impact, low-cost Education Project Radio Guru; a high quality teaching programme broadcast each week for free to hundreds of thousands of school-age students in Nepal. Initial studies indicate great success. Our Student Sponsorship programme and Volunteer Teaching Placements are also key to our Education & School Support Strategy.



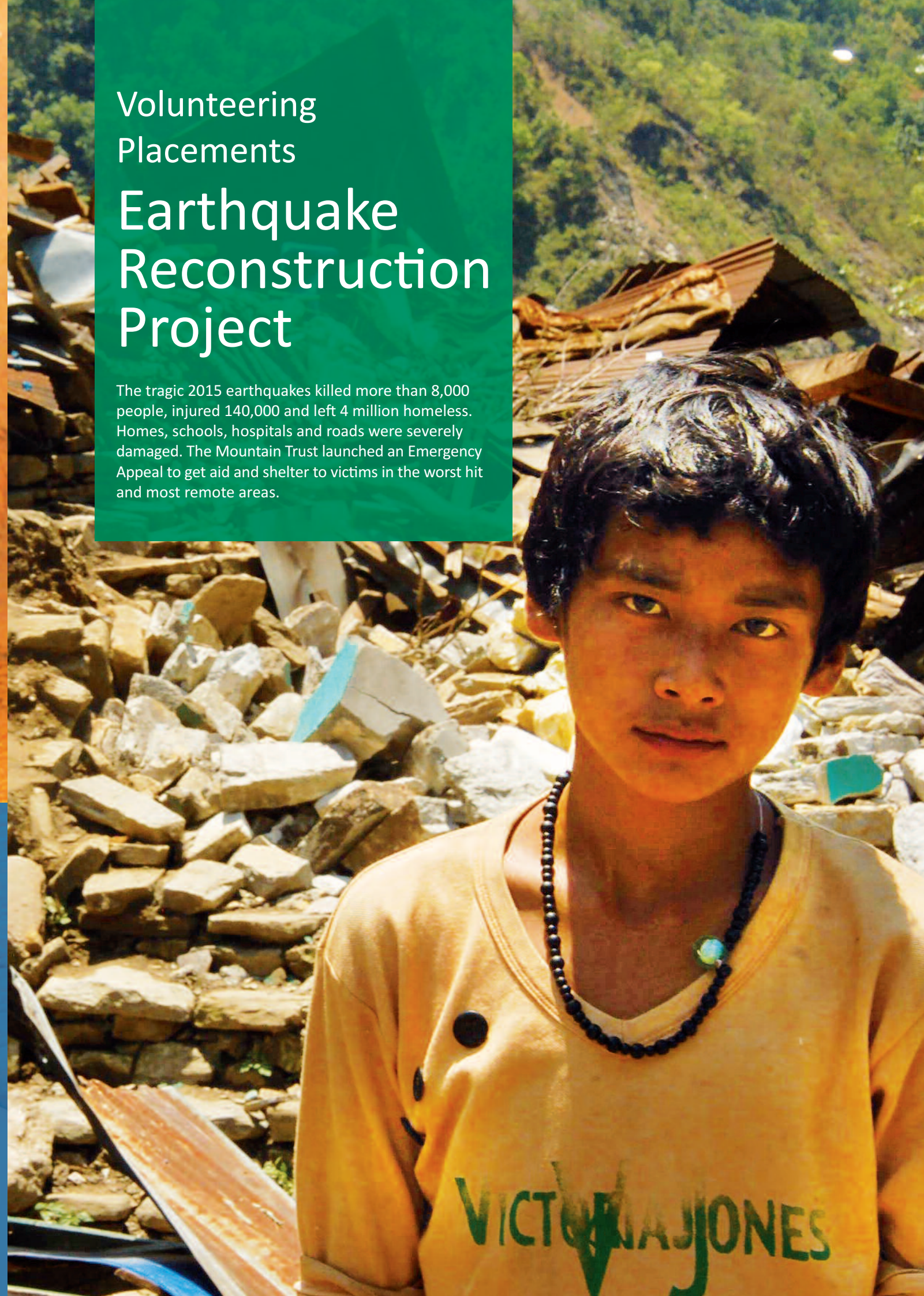
Sabita Gurung
Sponsored Student



Georgina & Jackie
Teaching Placement



Ramya
Health & Hygiene Placement



Volunteering Placements

Earthquake Reconstruction Project

The tragic 2015 earthquakes killed more than 8,000 people, injured 140,000 and left 4 million homeless. Homes, schools, hospitals and roads were severely damaged. The Mountain Trust launched an Emergency Appeal to get aid and shelter to victims in the worst hit and most remote areas.

Volunteering Placements

Human Rights

In 2006 Nepal emerged from feudalism and a decade long civil war which claimed more than 16,000 lives. Despite a resulting Constituent Assembly and a renewed engagement in politics within society the country remains blighted by a weak state, corruption, and widespread abject poverty.

The Mountain Trust runs a range of Human Rights projects and has also developed partnerships with distinguished academic organisations and NGOs working to actively promote awareness of Human Rights in marginalised communities across Nepal.

Human Rights Placements Include:

Our Radio-Based Civic Education Project (part of Radio Guru)

Women's Empowerment Project at Cranitole

Primary research, field work, project monitoring, report writing and evaluation.

Rebuilding Lives Together



Our Team was on the ground assessing damage and distributing aid within 24 hours of the earthquake

Overwhelmed by the scale of disaster, the government struggled to cope and many remained without help for weeks. Apply to volunteer on our Earthquake Reconstruction Project and you could join our team doing vital work with local communities to coordinate, facilitate and implement rebuilding work.

Rebuilding homes, schools and health centres in areas devastated by the earthquakes

Our Rapid Relief Appeal has so far raised more than £75,000*. The Mountain Trust has used this to provide emergency aid - food, water, shelter, medicines and blankets, while also establishing a longer-term building reconstruction project.

*At time of print



Jack, Fiona, Elena & Lynn, Medical

"The Health Camps made us realise just how little access some villages had to medicine and how respected doctors are."



Eric Earthquake Reconstruction

"This experience has been highly valuable to me. Working in the field complemented my academic and mostly theoretical studies at university perfectly. I would recommend it to anyone - no matter the field of studies - who wants to learn more about the situation in Nepal or developing countries in general. As well as learning a lot, you'll get plenty of opportunities to get involved."



Eligibility & How To Apply

Do you have a skill you could offer? Want to broaden your horizons? The Mountain Trust takes Volunteer Interns from all over the world. Anyone aged 16 or above can apply. The Mountain Trust creates tailored placements, matching your skills and background to best serve the needs of the people we help in Nepal.

Students: All levels from Secondary to PhD

Professionals from all walks of life & Retirees

Got some leave? Taking a sabbatical? Want a trip with a difference? Volunteer with The Mountain Trust and we can put your professional skills to good use in a vast range of different placements.

Groups:

Do you represent a school, college or university? Perhaps you're part of a club or society, or just keen to head off into the sunset with a group of friends...We cater for groups of all sizes, creating a unique itinerary based on preference.

How To Apply

To apply for a Mountain Trust Volunteering placement you must submit an application online via our website. You will need:

- Your CV
- A brief description of your skills & preferences for volunteering
- Your availability

Once Accepted onto a Mountain Trust Placement You Must

- Pay your deposit and start fundraising!
- Provide proof of up-to-date health and travel insurance.
- Visit our online fundraising community at www.justgiving.com/MountainTrust
- Set up your own fundraising page and link it to The Mountain Trust as your chosen charity
- Pay your £100 deposit and all money fundraised through this page goes to The Mountain Trust
- Confirm your flight number/(s), travel dates and accommodation preferences
- Engage in our Social Media presence by connecting with The Mountain Trust on Twitter and Facebook

Fundraising Requirements

All Volunteers must pay a Deposit of £100

Volunteers must then raise a further minimum of £250, or £500 for placements lasting for two months or more.

We emphasise that this is a MINIMUM requirement and encourage all volunteers to raise as much as they possibly can. Outstanding fundraising efforts are recognised with Certification and References for schools, colleges, universities or employers.

We ask all Volunteers to pay their Deposit and to donate all funds to The Mountain Trust via our JustGiving page, which allows us to keep track on our large network of global fundraisers.

Visit www.justgiving.com/MountainTrust and check out our JustGiving community.

Set up your own Justgiving Page and link it to The Mountain Trust as your chosen charity.

Pay your £100 deposit and all fundraised money via this account.



Fundraising Tips

Fundraising can be challenging and rewarding. Approach it the right way and you'll be surprised at how generous people and organisations can be.

Promote your JustGiving page on social media with a personalised message explaining why you are asking for support. Make sure you add PHOTOS to your page helping donors connect - download them from The Mountain Trust website or ask us for copies.

Capitalise on your contacts: family, friends, colleagues, neighbours - email, call or go and see them and explain what you are doing and why and ask if they could make a small commitment to sponsor you or donate to your running total.

Approach local organisations to which you already have links to see if they have any funds to spare - perhaps your old school, a village club or organisation.

Organise an event! Try getting together with some friends and holding a bake sale, a curry or quiz night, run a marathon or shave your hair off - the bolder the better! **Speak** to local businesses - could they sponsor you and donate to your fundraising total?

Show people why you are doing this. Tell them about the community you are trying to help and why their donation will make such a difference.

Remember, every donation counts no matter how big or small.

TOP TIP: When approaching potential donors go armed with some clear facts about what you are doing and why. Why not contact us and we can send some leaflets which you can use to show people what you are doing.

John Wallace, Mountain Trust Volunteer raising awareness and money for sanitation in Nepal by running a marathon with a loo seat on his head.

The Mountain Trust relies on the income it receives from Volunteers. Your fundraising finesse helps keep us and our vital projects going.



Travel, Accommodation & Other Useful Information

Mountain Trust Volunteers independently fund international travel to and from Nepal, visa fee on entry, any internal flights or overland journeys once there, as well as food and accommodation throughout the trip.

The Mountain Trust can however advise on travel and accommodation arrangements and there are various options:

Accommodation:

There is accommodation available at The Mountain Trust office in Pokhara (see below for details)

The Mountain Trust can advise on and arrange low, medium and high budget accommodation including hotels & home-stays with Nepali families.

International Flights:

The earlier you book, the cheaper they are.

You cannot fly directly from the UK to Kathmandu, but can fly via S/E Asia (eg. Delhi).

Flights are more expensive during school holidays and festivals such as Christmas and Easter in Britain, and Diwali in Asia.

The only airport in Kathmandu is TIA - Tribhuvan International Airport.

There are broadly two routes by air from the UK: transiting via the Middle East (via Doha, Dubai etc) which involves around 12 hours flying time with added connection time. Operators for this route include Ethiad, Turkish Airlines, Emirates, Gulf Airways & Qatar.

The second route from the UK is via Delhi where you can fly from London to Delhi and then connect onwards to Kathmandu. The flight time from Delhi to Kathmandu is less than 2 hours. Virgin and Jet airways operate this route among other providers.

Arrival in Kathmandu & Internal Travel

The Mountain Trust can provide a driver collection for you on arrival in Kathmandu on request as part of your fee. They can advise you on accommodation locally in Kathmandu and other general issues such as local sims etc.

Getting To our Office

Most of our placements take place based out of our Pokhara office. Pokhara is a short internal flight from Kathmandu, and costs around USD100 per person each way depending on the operator (they include Buddha and Yeti). Overlanding either by car or by bus from Kathmandu to Pokhara is less expensive than flying but takes around 6 hours each way. It is a great opportunity to see lots of Nepal including fabulous mountain and valley views, but we advise against travelling at night-time because the road network in Nepal is poor and accidents, delays and breakdowns can occur. Our team on the ground are happy to help with plane and bus tickets if you require.

Contact details and directions to the office provided below.



The Mountain Trust Office

Come and join our friendly team at our Pokhara office, just a few minutes walk to the centre of popular destination Lakeside. There's plenty to do in your spare time - from boating on Lake Fewa in the foothills of the Himalaya, to micro lighting along the mountains, to mingling with trekkers and tourists in the lively strip of bars and restaurants. Treks, trips to temples elephant encounters are just moments away...



Accommodation:

X2 Double Bedrooms
£5 per person, per night
Self-catering
Modern Building walking distance to Lakeside



Mountain Trust Volunteers get FREE use of this beautiful pool courtesy of our good friends and supporters at Hotel Barahi, just minutes walk from The Mountain Trust Office and Lakeside.





Becki Human Rights

“I would have no hesitation in recommending volunteering with The Mountain Trust. My experience superseded any expectations...My only regret is that I couldn't stay longer!”



The Team

The Mountain Trust Nepal

Pokhara:

Biplab Poudel, President
Bikal Tulachan, Treasurer
Sandhya Poudel, Secretary
Kisan Gurung, Administrative Officer
Bandana Adhikari, Programme Officer

Kathmandu:

Yogendra Thapa, Vice President

Bharatpur:

Dr Iype Cherian, Fellow
Mr Sujan Amatya,
Medical Electives Coordinator

The Mountain Trust UK

Charles Malcolm-Brown, Chairman
Andrew Ahmad-Cooke, Vice Chairman
Natasha Malcolm-Brown, Volunteering Coordinator
Georgina Phillips, UK Fundraiser

Phil Pearlman, Trustee
Miette Lauwers Gdontakis, Ambassador

Aradhana, Health & Hygiene

“Within a month after the Internship I was offered full-time work as a coordinator for child health and women’s empowerment projects. I sincerely thank The Mountain Trust for this enriching experience - this is one opportunity nobody should miss!”



Famous Friends & Partners



Professor
Hugh Montgomery



Michael Palin



Rt Honourable
John Bercow



Lord Wilson of Dinton



FAQs

How much does it cost?

Volunteers pay £100 deposit, and then fundraise a minimum of £250, or £500 for placements of 2 months or more. You must also fund your flights to Nepal, internatl travel whilst there plus accommodation and food. Return flights from the UK cost around £500 depending on time of year & operator. Once in Nepal accommodation, travel and food is relatively inexpensive, with budget accommodation starting at around £5 per person per night. For detailed information on places to stay and many other things we recommend all Volunteers read the Lonely Planet Travel Guide to Nepal.

How Do I Pay?

Via our Justgiving site, www.justgiving.com/MountainTrust - see the Fundraising section for details.

Is there a Time Limit?

No - you can go for as long as you like, our minimum placement length is 2 weeks.

How Do I get a Visa?

You can get a tourist visa on entry to Kathmandu, but we recommend obtaining a visa prior to departure from the Nepal Embassy in your home country. It costs around £20, if you obtain on arrival you will need cash and 2 passport photographs.

What Expectations are there on me?

Aside from paying your deposit and fundraising, volunteers are expected to represent the Mountain Trust in a respectful and proactive manner. All volunteers are given Mountain Trust T shirts, which you are expected to wear when on duty. We expect feedback on your placement in the form of a written report and photos and also ask volunteers to engage with us on social media. Ultimately we hope that you have a fantastic trip and will continue to support our projects in the future.

Where Can I Stay?

The Mountain Trust can arrange for low, medium or high budget accommodation in all areas where volunteers are working (predominantly Kathmandu, Pokhara and Chitwan). This includes accommodation available at our Pokhara office and family homestays.

Where Does The Money Go?

Your deposit and all the money you fundraise goes directly to Mountain Trust projects on the ground in Nepal. We take no administration fees - just enough to cover basic overheads – staff in Nepal, office rent, and the nominal cost of transferring money from the UK to Nepal.

I’m a single traveller - will I be OK on my own?

Absolutely. The Mountain Trust Team will do all we can to support and help you while you’re in Nepal. You also get the chance to meet other volunteers and participate in social activities.

Do you advise on health and vaccinations?

All volunteers must to provide proof of health and travel insurance prior to travel. Volunteers must seek independent advice from a GP or health practitioner about required vaccinations. If you experience health problems in Nepal, our team is on hand 24/7 to help.

What clothes / equipment should I bring?

We advise you bring comfortable and practical clothes. We have no uniform, however Volunteers are given a Mountain Trust T Shirt, and are expected to dress in appropriate and practical clothes. Sensible footwear will be needed (sandals/trainers), as well as a jumper for cooler evenings. We recommend taking mosquito repellent & basic medical supplies (paracetamol, rehydration salts, diarrhea tablets, plasters and insect bite stick) plus any regular medicine you require. You’ll also need sun lotion, glasses and hat, and a waterproof jacket if going during the monsoon season (June - September). Plus a camera to capture those magical moments!

What are communications like?

Some UK network operators will have coverage in Nepal but many do not. If you want to use your mobile phone wifi is widely available, local sim cards can be obtained easily and public telephones are common and relatively inexpensive to call internationally. There are plenty of internet cafes in Kathmandu and Pokhara.

Is there a chance to do other activities outside of my placement?

Yes! Your time in Nepal is totally tailored to you, we can advise on adventure, cultural and leisure activities from trekking to safari!

Can I Volunteer in the UK?

Absolutely! We are always looking for people to help our UK Team with a range of things from fundraising to marketing and communications, social media and web content management.

What else should I know?

Power cuts & Infrastructure – or load shedding as it is called there – is common and can occur for many hours in the day. Most hotels and some offices and private homes have generators but the majority of Nepalis do not. The road infrastructure is basic and for this reason we advise if travelling by road to do so during daylight hours. Phone lines can often fail and it is sometimes a case of just trying the number a few times before it connects.

Culture

Nepal is a highly religious country and tourists are expected to be respectful of customs. It’s mostly common sense stuff, like dressing respectfully and embracing cultural traditions such as removing shoes before entering somebody’s home. Nepalis are extremely welcoming people and will happily explain anything you’re unsure of.

Festivals are a regular and serious affair in Nepal and south-east Asia generally and really show off Nepal’s distinctly rich and colourful cultures. They are mostly post monsoon and the big ones are:

Dashain (Good overcoming evil) is considered the biggest and holiest festival for Hindus and Buddhists and is widely celebrated in Nepal. It happens for ten days in October.

Tihar (celebrating the Goddess of Wealth) takes place in October and November and is regarded the most vibrant celebration with magnificent decorations displayed in honour of Goddess Laxmi.

Indra Jatra & Kumari Jatra (street festival) takes lace around September depending on the lunar calendar.

Teej (fasting by married women) takes place over August and September and lasts for three days

Holi (festival of colours and love) involves a huge powder paint party on the streets across Nepal and can be great fun for visitors too. It’s usually in March or February.

Words you should know:

Namaste = Hello, Namaskar = Good evening, Dandhyabad = Thank you.

Shopping: Nepal has some wonderful wares on offer and unlike in the West most shops do not operate a fixed price policy. If in doubt just ask a member of our team and they can advise on approximate costs of items.

Tipping: is normal in Nepal and India and for many is vital income.

Taxis: In Kathmandu and Pokhara are inexpensive, in India they cost more but are still relatively inexpensive. Rickshaws and buses are cheaper. Oyr team can advise on the ground depending on your journey.

Drinking Water: Only drink bottled water. Tap water is deemed unsafe to drink due to poor filtration methods.

Begging: Begging still occurs on the streets of Nepal and can be an upsetting experience but there are considerably fewer in recent times than in previous years. It is up to individuals whether or not they chose to give money to beggars.

Safety While On Your Placement

The Mountain Trust has strict safety guidelines for volunteers which must be followed at all times to protect both volunteers and those they are working with:

All volunteers must take direction from The Mountain Trust Team in Nepal and seek guidance where unsure about any action, procedure or direction.

All volunteers working with children will be accompanied by a member of the Mountain Trust Team at all times for safeguarding purposes. All volunteers travel at their own risk only with valid health and travel insurance and undertake extra curricular activities such as trekking or rafting independently of The Mountain Trust. The Mountain Trust will support and advise you in every capacity prior to and during your trip.



Nepal Fact File

Population: 31 million (UN, 2012)

Capital: Kathmandu

Area: 147,181 sq km

Main language: Nepali

Major Religions: Hinduism & Buddhism

Monetary Unit: Nepali Rupee (NRS)

Life Expectancy: Women 68; Men 70 (UN)

GNI Per Capita: \$730USD (World Bank 2013)

Public spending on Health as a % of GDP: 1.9% (2007-11, UNICEF)

International Dialling Code: +977

Poverty: Around 40% live in poverty (UN)

Economy: Nepal is heavily reliant on trade with India, foreign tourism & international aid. The country is largely agricultural and the majority depend on this for income.

Politics: Nepal became a republic in 2008 after a decade long civil war between the monarchy and the Maoist uprising. A constituent assembly has been established in Kathmandu with open elections taking place in 2008. However political instability continues to plague Nepal as politicians have failed to agree on a new constitution.

Contact Us

For Volunteering Enquiries

Pre Travel contact

Natasha Malcolm-Brown, UK Volunteering
Coordinator
nmb@mountain-trust.org

For general enquiries in the UK contact

Charles Malcolm-Brown, Chairman
cmb@mountain-trust.org
+44 (0) 1223 844204

For help & advice during your Placement when in Nepal contact

Kisan Gurung, Senior Administrator
kgb@mountain-trust.org
+977 61 462256

Bandana Akhari, Administrative Assistant
info@mountain-trust.org

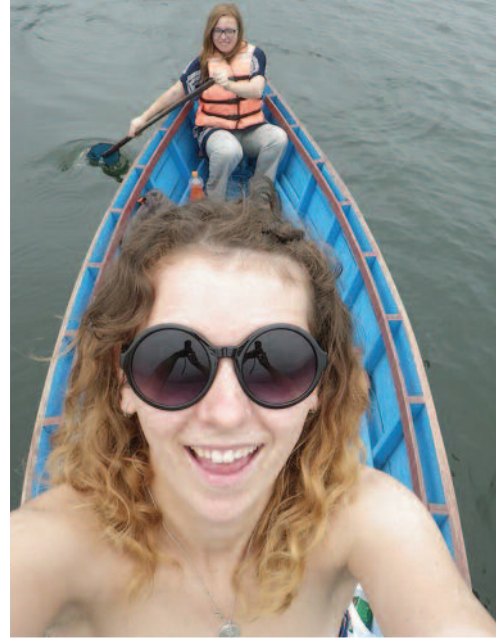
For advice specifically on Medical Electives at Bharatpur College of Medical Sciences contact

Sujan Amatya
suamatya@gmail.com
+977 980 8921081

For Consular Assistance (for UK citizens) contact

The British Embassy
+977 (0) 1441 0583 / 4411281 / 4414588 / 4411590
For detailed information about placements
and for our latest





We're Ready
Are You?

