



The Ayui Foundation Volunteer Policy

Preamble

The Ayui Foundation (TAF) recognizes the significant contribution volunteers make to support the Baan Ayui hostels, our organization and our young people, while gaining an understanding of hilltribe issues and having a memorable experience. TAF is committed to providing volunteer opportunities that are meaningful, support our organization (and, therefore, the young people living at the hostel) and that draw on the many skills and talents of our volunteers. In supporting the young Akha people you are also working to increase the wellbeing of the Akha community by breaking what can be entrenched generational social disadvantage.

Purpose of the policy

This policy:

- ensures that all volunteers are treated equally and fairly;
- clarifies the relationship between volunteers and TAF;
- ensures that volunteers have clear expectations of the volunteer experience at Baan Ayui and that they receive appropriate support and supervision; and
- ensures our volunteers have a supportive environment.

Volunteering with The Ayui Foundation

TAF currently provides volunteer opportunities both at the Baan Ayui hostels in Chiang Rai, Thailand, as well as assisting with fundraising from overseas (online).

We ask that volunteers be aged at least 18 years old, preferably non-smokers, and consider committing to at least a two week stay. Applicants' skills/interests/capabilities need to be considered when accepting volunteers.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a volunteer at the hostel I understand that I am not to:

- Be alone at any time with any one child (as an adult it is your responsibility to ensure that there are always two or more people present)
- Press my own view, religious or otherwise
- Meet the young people outside of Baan Ayui without the Director's and/or Houseparent's knowledge

As a volunteer at the Ayui Foundation I will:

- Agree to TAF's policy on volunteering
- Have a non-judgmental approach
- Be reliable, responsible and committed

Dress

There are also some culturally acceptable ways to dress in Thailand that we ask our volunteers (particularly female volunteers) to respect. We think this is important as our volunteers are seen as role models to our young people and have a responsibility to dress appropriately:

- Skirts to be at least knee length
- Nothing exposing i.e. singlet tops, low cut tops
- Shorts to be of an appropriate length

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a volunteer with TAF you have a right to:

- Join in all TAF activities and excursions
- Receive a clear job description or duty statement
- Be supported and supervised in your volunteering
- Be offered opportunities to discuss your experience at the hostel and with the young people

As a TAF volunteer you have the responsibility to:

- Be reliable and accountable
- Support and respect the young people, Houseparents and Director
- Carry out duties that are specified in your agreed job description
- Ask for support when you need it
- Discuss any issues/concerns you have with the Director

Insurance

Volunteers are responsible for their own medical/travel insurance, as TAF will not be liable for any accidents.

Expenses/Accommodation

We hope volunteers understand that TAF (as a small and independent not-for-profit) does not have many resources. Your expenses will be breakfast and lunch – as dinner will be with the children at the hostel - and any personal items you need, plus guesthouse accommodation. We can recommend a cheap guesthouse in town center, and pick you up when we pick up the students from school. Some volunteers have rented motorbikes or bicycles to make their own way around.

Other Support

Many of our volunteers have also been able to support us by bringing second-hand clothes or by purchasing some art supplies and sports equipment (available, and probably cheaper, in Chiang Rai) to donate to our students during their visit. Alternative options are covering the costs for an excursion during your stay (not expensive) or thinking about donating other things that may support your volunteering activities. We are grateful for anything – you'll find even a small pack of coloured pencils goes a long way – and it's the little extras (toys, stickers, marbles etc.) that our budget doesn't always stretch to cover!

Use of vehicle

If comfortable with driving in Thailand, volunteers may be asked to assist with driving duties (taking children to and from school, doing errands, etc.) using the TAF pick-up truck or motorbike. Please note that volunteers are not covered by insurance while volunteering with TAF and if there were an accident we may need to ask for some contribution towards repair costs. We therefore make it clear that volunteers have the right to refuse to drive.

Ending volunteering

Both the volunteer and TAF have the right to end volunteering early however we ask that the reasons be communicated as soon as possible so other arrangements can be made. At the end of the volunteer experience, we ask volunteers to write a short article about their experience for TAF's newsletter. We hope our volunteers will continue to be involved in TAF after leaving and we would greatly appreciate any fundraising ideas/activities that you could help with back home, as well as sharing your experience with others.

Volunteers' Duty Statement

Primary duties

- Assist and support the housemother in supervising young people during activities
- Assist and support the housemother with errands/shopping
- Teach subjects such as English, computer, art, sports or math, and provide assistance with homework where possible (experience not necessary).
- Assist the Director with any tasks assigned, including light administration work
- Entertain the children with songs/games/sports/arts and crafts during their free time/weekends
- Contribute in any other way that may add value and use your unique skills – eg. We had volunteers add shelving in the storage room, add bookshelves into the wall, and a professional accountant helped improve our accounting processes.

Qualifications

- Flexibility/adaptability to new surroundings/cultures
- Ability to create your own activities
- A willingness to try new things
- A sense of humour
- Enjoy being around young people
- Enthusiasm

As the children go off to school during the day, you will be free during school hours to explore Chiang Rai or go into town. We ask that you be at the hostel with the children from 4:30pm, when they get back from school, until about 8.30pm. During this time, you can play sports, tutor anyone who needs help with their English or math homework, or teach English to those who don't have homework, or just play games - basically keep them entertained/busy. On Saturdays, you could do an art activity, or plan your own activity with the kids, join in any planned excursions or help with any maintenance work around the house.

We're basically one big family and you'll come and be a part of the family for your stay, helping out and mixing with the children whenever you can. They can learn things from you (about your country/your job/any games/hobbies/interests you'd like to teach them about) and you will learn from them. It's also an opportunity for the children to practice their English skills and meet someone from another culture.

Please note that much of the volunteering experience will be up to your ability to take initiative and engage with the children, or find opportunities to contribute to the house. We thank you for thinking of us and hope that you can come and visit to experience Thailand in a different way.

Feel free to email any questions, concerns or ideas to the Director – we're happy to talk about options for your volunteering experience (ayui.foundation@gmail.com)

As the philosopher Kahlil Gibran stated;

“You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.”