

THE OFFICIAL

NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Nepal



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Volunteers in Their Natural Environments

A Note from Michael Goodwin, Projects Abroad Nepal Communications Officer

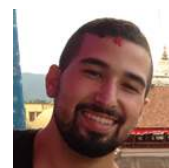
In February I had the chance to visit Projects Abroad volunteers in all three of our Nepali regions. From the heat of the Nepali jungle, to the cool mountain air of some of the nation's highest peaks, I am amazed by the diversity of our projects. Yet despite their different surroundings, all Projects Abroad volunteers in Nepal do share something in common: a connection to their natural surroundings through dedicated service.

Kathmandu may seem an unusual place to connect to Nepal's biodiversity. A bustling metropolis that is ever-expanding, Nepal's capital is its most international and cosmopolitan centre. Nevertheless, it is this city environment that allows volunteers to confront issues of urban poverty, education, and development. In Teaching and Care placements, our volunteers are improving the lives of communities affected by Kathmandu's size and the challenges that come with it. In the massive city, our volunteers are able to assist with communities who have little access to municipal or national social services. Just as the Nepali countryside is in need of development and support, Nepal's urban jungle greatly benefits from our volunteers. Additionally, given its central location, Kathmandu attracts those in need of medical treatment, nourishment, and educational support from all corners of the nation.

In Chitwan, volunteers also connect meaningfully to their natural surroundings. Bordering the Terai region, home to Nepal's grasslands and savannahs, volunteers are able to serve at many medical centres that treat those susceptible to the Terai's harsh climate. For many, a project in Chitwan means learning about tropical diseases that affect the Nepali-Indian borderlands. Given this climate, Chitwan volunteers assist with education, prevention, and treatment of mosquito-borne illnesses. Their location also allows them to witness the development of Nepal's safari sightseeing industry. Only a short tuktuk ride from Chitwan National Park, these volunteers have seen impressive wildlife in their leisure time, including elephants, rhinos, and crocodiles.

Conservation volunteers may have the greatest connection to Nepal's natural wonders. The village of Ghandruk, their home in the Himalayas, is home to inspiring views of the Annapurna Range. Though tourists may see the zone as pristine, Projects Abroad volunteers are working hard to combat the side-effects of rapid development in the region. Their efforts to protect wildlife, from mammals to butterflies, are critical contributions to the work of ACAP, the Annapurna Conservation Area Project. Conservation volunteers finish their projects with vast knowledge of the species of animals, birds, insects, and plants in the area.

All of our volunteers, in these three unique regions, interact with their environments significantly. It is often the natural surroundings that inform their volunteer projects. Though they live with Nepalese of distinct ethnicities and religions, eat a variety of regional foods, and spend their projects in different climates, they all understand that the Nepali people comprise one nation, united in its diversity.



Michael Goodwin
Projects Abroad Nepal

My Nepal

Gioia-Jaëlla Idemea, 17, The Netherlands



Literacy, Learning, and Laughter: The Kathmandu Reading Club

Genevieve Cox, Projects Abroad Nepal Teaching and Care Coordinator

Happiness and Friendship: they are two of the key elements to childhood. In Nepal, when children are marginalised from the education process, they don't just miss out on gaining life skills, knowledge and vocational training, they are also kept from forging the key relationships with their peers that result in happiness and friendship. These qualities are therefore particularly fitting as the names of two children's homes that Projects Abroad Nepal works with.

Happy and Friendship Houses are two children's homes which cater for approximately twenty girls and sixteen boys who have either lost their parents or whose families can't adequately care for them due to illness, imprisonment or poverty. Some of them came from NRH – a centre for malnourished children – and now healthy, they live at Happy and Friendship Houses. All the children have had difficult backgrounds, so as well as providing a stable home and a good education, they also ensure each child receives counselling. This nurturing environment means that the children gain knowledge and confidence. One way in which Projects Abroad Nepal is working to capitalise on this, is through a weekly reading club.

At the reading club, volunteers can visit Friendship House after school while all the boys are there, and some girls from Happy House have the opportunity to read supervised and then play English games or practise creative writing. The children have the opportunity to perfect their pronunciation and learn English in a more informal setting. Due to the fragmented nature of their childhood, the boys and girls are at various levels so this small group work is extremely beneficial.



Kathmandu Reading Club

Photos of Volunteers in Action

