



LAOS

Orientation Packet

Adventures in Service.

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INTRODUCTION TO LAOS

Laos, also known as Lao PDR (People's Democratic Republic), is a beautiful, tropical and mostly untouched country. It is becoming an up-and-coming destination for travelers looking for an authentic taste of South-east Asia. It may not be as developed as neighboring Thailand, or Vietnam, but Laos' has uniqueness and charm. Laos, like others in South-east Asia, is still communist, though you would never realize this, as its people have freedom of business and movement.

About 6.8 million people live in its 18 provinces, with most people (63%) still living in rural areas. However, urbanization is occurring rapidly. The country is largely mountainous, with the most fertile land found along the Mekong River plains and has the second highest forest density in Asia.

Laos is a relatively safe country to travel to, with a slow and laid-back lifestyle, or *Î Bor Pen Nyangî* as the locals say, "No worries!"

RURAL LAOS (YOUR PROJECT SITE)

In Laos, the way people treat each other is very different from the way they treat animals. Some local people may not treat animals in the way a lot of people in a developed country expect. You can be confronted with shocking situations and may see wild animals kept in captivity: like a primate on a chain, or an eagle in a cage no bigger than itself.

Note that not all Lao people have this attitude towards animals and generally, due to Laos being a Buddhist country, if you see any neglect, it usually comes from the lack of access to knowledge than from cruelty.

This attitude towards animals seems to be changing in Laos and people seem to be more conscious of nature preservation and the bigger picture, with the help of many education projects. Please be prepared for difficult situations and hold back if they occur. You are a guest in the country and animal welfare foundations are lobbying for

changes in order to improve the situation. It is also worth remembering that certain forms of what we would deem as animal neglect can be legal in developed countries.

SAMPLE ITINERARY

Your program runs from Sunday to Saturday. This is an example itinerary, so you have a rough idea of what your week will be like. Please note that these activities are subject to change and depend on how many volunteers are there during the week, project availability, weather, previous progress, etc.

Day	Place	Itinerary	Meal	Lodging
Day 1 Sunday	Vientiane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pick-up and transfer to project site. Afternoon Orientation 	L, D	On site
Day 2 Monday	Rural Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer work begins at 8 AM and ends at 5 PM. Lunch break from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM every day. Free time in the evening. 	B, L, D	On site
Day 3 Tuesday	Rural Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer work continues. Free time in the evening. 	B, L, D	On site
Day 4 Wednesday	Rural Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer work continues. Free time in the evening. 	B, L, D	On site
Day 5 Thursday	Rural Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer work continues. Free time in the evening. 	B, L, D	On site
Day 6 Friday	Rural Laos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer work ends. Visit to nearby pool or river restaurants. Please request in advance, if you prefer this visit during the week. 	B, L, D Meals outside of the project site are at an additional cost.	On site
Day 7 Saturday	Vientiane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departure day. Drop off at airport. 	B	On site

PROJECTS

Laos is sadly one of the major gateways of the illegal wildlife trade from South-east Asia. There is thought to be thousands of protected wild animals and their parts being smuggled in and out of the country every month. Therefore, having a facility in Laos to directly combat this illicit activity is of great importance.

Historically the Laos zoo had been left without the expertise needed to run a wildlife facility. One of the aims of this program is to improve the conditions for animals currently in the Laos zoo and help with the zoo's complete transformation into a wildlife rescue center. The wildlife rescue center provides a home and specialist rehabilitation, for animals rescued from the illegal wildlife trade.

From caring for, feeding and enriching our animals, to helping build new enclosures, as a volunteer you will be able to see the impact you make directly on our animals' lives throughout your time here. Everyone who volunteers at the leaves something behind - whether it's building a pool, climbing structures or even new enclosures. Every volunteer leaves here having given something to the animals that will be used for years to come.

The center is open for the public to visit and engage with nature and provide access to knowledge and education, in an ethical setting.

Every animal that comes to our center is assessed by our wildlife professionals in one of our rehabilitation programs, this checks their suitability for release to the wild. Sadly, many victims of the illegal trade will have long term or permanent health issues. If this is unfortunately the case, we can provide lifelong sanctuary for wild animals, who can't be returned back to the wild.

The center carries a strict NO TOUCH policy. Volunteers will be removed from the project site, and asked to leave the program if this rule is not respected. No refunds will be provided.

ENRICHMENT

Enrichment is exactly what it sounds like, a way to enrich the lives of the animals and stimulate them mentally and/ or physically by providing activities to work on throughout the day. Before, at the zoo, the animals spent many years without any sort of mental or physical stimulation. Enrichment is an essential part of any animal routine, as it helps prevent boredom and stress behaviors in animals.

Enrichment can play a critical part in wildlife rehabilitation and preparation for a life back in the wild. It can be tailored for certain animals to train them to complete specific tasks in order to survive in the wild. Volunteers will follow an enrichment schedule for the animals in the morning and afternoon, fresh ideas are encouraged to create new enrichment programs that can be added to the animal routines. Challenging the animals

and making them think through new problems is extremely important to keep their quality of welfare high.

CONSTRUCTION

The center is still being developed and many sections of the old zoo are in poor condition and in need of repair. There is a big construction schedule for building and improving homes for all the animals, volunteers are an essential part of the team. Working with onsite construction team of local staff, volunteers will help build new enclosures and environmental enrichment structures including, swimming pools, shelters and climbing towers.

This is your opportunity to leave a lasting legacy for our animals. If the weather does not permit volunteers to do construction outside, they will move inside to the enrichment room to work on enrichment furniture for the animals such as, wooden houses, rope ladders and many other smaller projects.



EXPECTATIONS

Globe Aware volunteers in Laos are placed in a meaningful work setting in rural Laos. Your volunteer experience occurs in a context of cultural learning, exchange, and experience consistent with Globe Aware's mission of promoting sustainable development AND cultural awareness. Thus, while direct volunteer work is the most important factor, it's important that you have access to an extensive orientation on Laos culture, history and traditions, excursions to local points of interest and the expertise of our local supervisors who provide translation services and guidance in matters of local custom.

Ultimately, however, the need of the center is the most important factor that decides what project you'll be engaging in. In order to keep the development initiatives relevant, some specific details of the projects may change in view of the evolving needs of the center.

Please remember that concepts of scheduling and organization are not universal. It is best to keep an open mind and not be judgmental when visiting a foreign country. Remember that your way of doing things may not be the best way here – the locals usually also have a very good reason for completing a task in a certain way, and their priorities may be different than ours.

We understand your desire to know as much as possible about the project you will be working on. It is important to understand that projects are often not set in place until about two weeks prior, as they are based on factors such as which projects were finished by the last group, what supplies are available, how many volunteers are in your group, the changing priorities of the community, and can even change upon arrival, for example based on the fitness level of the specific volunteer group and changing weather. Therefore, it's best to approach the experience with an open attitude, knowing you'll be working approximately 5 to 6 hours a day during the week days. You'll also have a couple of hours of unstructured free time every day.

Communicate with your coordinator. If you find the work level is too much, or not enough, he or she will do as much as possible to work with you. You will undergo an orientation upon your arrival in Laos, which will contain details on possible excursions and your activities for the week, and further help you to form your expectations. Keep in mind that Laos has problems like poverty, which remain a widespread challenge going forward. Your work, your compassion, is valuable to the people and organizations you will be assisting. BUT you will not solve these problems in a matter of weeks or months. This knowledge in the face of the poverty and lack of opportunity that you will see can be an at times gut wrenching experience for many volunteers. Yet one of the most valuable things that you can do is to see and experience this for yourselves in a way that the vast majority of tourists never do.

LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Just 200 meters from the gate to the volunteer house, is a small village with a market for fresh fruit, snacks, beverages, toiletries, some clothing and some other supplies, as well as a pharmacy. There is also a phone shop to buy internet and call credit and a hairdresser. This village has a few local style eateries, which serve traditional meals. There are some other small snack shops and restaurants in front of the main gate to the rescue center.

We are situated about 2.5km from the main center of Ban Keun. This town also has a few small supermarkets with a limited range of products such as toiletries and food. There are ATMs that do accept most international cards in the town, though please note that it is not possible to use international cards in shops. There are also facilities in the village to exchange international currencies, we recommend bringing local currency with you as these services are open and closed intermittently.

There is a large regional market with a large variety of fruit and vegetables, local freshly made snacks and general household items. We can provide transport to the main market for volunteers weekly, upon request, which can also coincide with trips to the local swimming pool for volunteers on days off or upon request. There are also a few larger riverside restaurants close to the center that volunteers may visit. We ask volunteers to always be respectful of Lao culture and behave appropriately.



CULTURAL NUANCES

Laos is such a friendly place that there are generally no major cultural issues, though to really settle in, here are a few pointers: Lao people are very proud of their country, if you make a real effort to understand and respect the Lao culture, you will find this really enhances your experience of Laos.

When Lao people meet, they do not shake hands, they 'wai'. When meeting someone, put your hands into prayer formation thumbs pointing towards your nose and bow your head slightly. If they 'wai' you first, you should 'wai' back.

Do not point the soles of your feet at anyone, or any images depicting Buddha. As feet are considered impure, make sure you are not putting your feet on tables, chairs or anywhere close to someone's head or in line of their eyesight.

Touching heads of Lao people or Buddhist statues is also an insult.

Remove shoes when entering a temple, shops, houses, as well as your rooms. It's a sign of respect (it also keeps your room clean).

Physical expressions of love (e.g., hugging, kissing) is not very common and you are advised to avoid such actions in public.

Smile and speak a little Lao and you will be loved by the locals. 'Sabaidee', pronounced 'Sab-ai-dee' is the standard Lao greeting, which you can use for all people. Do not take offence if they call you 'farang', pronounced 'fa-lang' - this translates as foreigner and is often used to describe westerners.

PACKING INFORMATION

Make sure to pack enough clothes to be comfortable, considering that you may get dirty doing volunteer work. There is an onsite laundry service where you can get your clothes washed at 1,000 Kip (\$00.079 USD) per item.

Remember that cultural expectations may be different here than in your country. It can be hot and we understand it can be uncomfortable to work in a lot of clothing, though cultural differences need to be considered.

Women: should not display any midriff, cleavage, or large amounts of back. Tank tops/singlets with thick shoulder straps are preferable over 'spaghetti' straps. Though tops that cover your shoulders or even long sleeve are recommended as this will give you extra sun protection, along with being culturally appropriate. should wear shorts that are no shorter than mid-thigh range and must not walk around onsite in swim wear at any point.

Men: cannot walk-around or work without a shirt.

For visitor's modesty, caution, and adherence to traditional standards are generally a good way to avoid undue attention and blend in to the culture you want to experience.

Essential Items:

- Lightweight work clothes, you do not mind getting dirty or stained.
- Long sleeved tops and trousers: to protect you from the sun and insect bites.
- Mosquito repellent.
- Sunhat, cap, or bandana to protect you against the sun.
- Sunscreen.
- Torch/flashlight and/or headtorch.
- Wash towels (they can be bought locally, but choice is limited).
- Comfortable shoes or sandals for leisure and enclosed toe shoes for work shoes.
- Lightweight rainproof clothing (e.g., poncho - cheap quality ones can be bought locally).
- Simple first aid kit with plasters, bandages, antiseptics and various medications for gastric bugs etc.
- Working gloves.

- High-factor sunglasses are recommended for eye protection from the sun.
- Power adaptor (2 straight pin or 2 round pin).

Optional and Rainy Season Specific. These items are not required for you to stay here, though may make your time here more comfortable.

- Mosquito net (especially towards the wetter season in June- August).
- Rubber boots if coming in rainy season and a good supply of socks (rubber boots can also be bought locally).
- Good supply of clothes, especially underwear (getting clean clothes dry is more challenging in wet and humid seasons). Warmer clothes for the evening in cool season (December-February).
- Extra padding for your Laos style mattress if you think this will make your stay with us more comfortable.

Please note that the packing list is meant as a guideline. You may also enjoy bringing games or books for free time. There is no single item that you can't live without for one week. As a result, pack what you think you will need to be comfortable, but do not get preoccupied about items that you didn't bring, weren't on the list, etc.

ACCOMMODATIONS

There are 5 beautiful bungalows for volunteers to stay in, with 2 people per bungalow. The project site tries to maintain single sex rooms, with the exceptions of couples, friends and families, but this is not always possible due to their capacity for volunteers.

Fresh bed linen is provided when you arrive and can be changed during your stay. Please note that the mattresses provided are traditional Laos style so they may be quite a bit harder than you are used to. If you think you will have trouble sleeping on a hard surface feel free to bring your own additional mattress padding.

There are two shower and toilet blocks that are a short walk from your bungalows, one for males and one for females, each fitted with two western style toilets and two showers: one hot and one cold. They are traditional open-air style which means you may have an occasional friendly frog or spider keeping you company from time to time.

During your stay, we ask all volunteers to look after their own space by keeping your personal area tidy and rooms swept. This will help with keeping ants and other bugs from coming inside.

Air conditioning is not provided however each bungalow is equipped with it's own rotating fan. We recommend you check the temperatures for the time of year you are joining as the climate here can be extremely hot.



ELECTRICITY

All rooms have electrical outlets for you to use. In Laos, two flat pins or two round pins, of 220v are used. All your meals are provided during your stay.

FOOD

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are included during your week with Globe Aware. Volunteers prepare their own breakfast in the volunteer house, we provide you with buffet style ingredients such as eggs, bread, jams, milk, butter/margarine, tea, coffee, and seasonal fresh fruit. Clean drinking water is also provided in a number of locations onsite for volunteers.

Lunch, served at 12.30 PM and dinner, served at 6 PM, are cooked by staff, and are predominantly traditional and local Lao style, however there is western cuisine nights. We can cater for meat, vegetarian and vegan diets. You must inform Globe Aware if you have any special dietary requirements before your arrival here, allowing the kitchen staff to plan for your arrival.

WEATHER

Despite having two distinct weather seasons you can travel in Laos all-year-round and with no coastline to influence things, Laos' weather system is relatively straight-forward compared with much of Asia; consisting of a dry season (October to late April) and a wet season (May to late September).

At the center, there can be varied weather patterns such as extreme heat, heavy winds, and heavy rain storms. If we happen to have any out-of-the-ordinary events, please follow the directions of staff. For example, we can have very heavy storm onsite that may not come with much warning. If staff say to seek cover, please follow instructions immediately and do so.

MONEY

Whilst all your food and accommodation are covered while you are here, volunteers should bring some additional currency with them for spending money, such as for local sightseeing, meals out with friends, snacks, etc.

The local currency here is the Lao Kip and this is the only currency accepted with smaller vendors, though some larger hotels and restaurants in Vientiane will also accept US dollars and Thai Baht. Check the exchange rate with your own currency from one of the many online resources.

Vientiane is a small capital city in comparison to other countries, but you can still find most items you need, and will easily be able to exchange foreign currencies. In the local area around the rescue center, shops will only accept Lao Kip. There are some money exchange locations in our village and there are a couple of ATMs that work on most, but not all international cards. We recommend you bring additional Kip with you just in case your card does not work here.

PHONE AND INTERNET

Even if you are only staying a week, the best option is to bring your own mobile phone and buy a cheap Lao SIM card here (available in the local village), so you can receive calls/SMS for free and makes calls at a reasonable cost. Your phone must be unlocked.

We recommend you get a Unitel or Lao Telecom brand SIM card. There is no Wifi anywhere on site. You can grab one of these at the airport or staff can help you buy one after your orientation tour. If you have a smart phone, we recommend the data plans only as they are more cost efficient than the call plans. If you do not have your own phone with you, it is not possible to make international calls from the center.

HEALTH

From the U.S. or Canada. Please defer to the CDC's Laos Travel website for official recommendations:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/laos>

Please make sure to stay up to date on travel policies in regards to Laos:

U.S.: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/laos-travel-advisory.html>

Canada: <https://travel.gc.ca/destinations/laos>

Currently fully vaccinated individuals do not require pre-departure or on arrival tests. Unvaccinated individuals will be required to take an ATK test a maximum of 48 hours before departure. There is no requirement to quarantine. Visitors contracting or arriving with COVID-19 will be responsible for all treatment costs.

All COVID prevention safety guidelines will be strictly followed. Please be respectful and mindful of Lao's safety guidelines and rules in regards to COVID.

Please make sure to carry hard copies of your vaccination proof as well.

You are covered by travel medical insurance. While there is no need to be overly concerned, this does not mean that you should not prepare carefully and remain mindful and aware of your health while in Laos.

Westerners' immune systems are often unprepared for many garden variety viruses and ailments, but if proper preventative measures are taken, most conditions can be avoided before any question of treatment arises. If your drug needs are very specific, bringing a supply along is of course a good idea.

We recommend that all volunteers should see a specialist travel doctor or their family doctor before coming to our project, as they can provide the most up-to-date information for safe travelling in Laos and working with animals. It is best to schedule an appointment up to three months before you leave, as some vaccinations may need to be administered over multiple appointments or weeks. We recommend all volunteers, at the very least, have their DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Polio) vaccinations up-to-date. We also recommend you discuss the following diseases specifically with your doctor:

Malaria and Dengue Fever: While the risk of Malaria is low in other urban areas and areas surrounding Vientiane, you should discuss this with your travel doctor.

Medications to reduce the risk of disease may be recommended, but deciding whether or not you will use malaria medication is your own responsibility. Taking mosquito repellent precautions with Picaridin (minimum 20%) or DEET products is recommended. There is a risk of Dengue Fever in Laos, which is transmitted by mosquitoes. There is no vaccine for Dengue Fever & prevention is based upon insect avoidance via repellents, nets, and insecticides. Our area is classed as the lowest risk area for contracting Malaria and Dengue Fever.

Rabies: The Rabies vaccine is used in two distinct occasions. Firstly, to protect those who are at risk of exposure to the disease and secondly, to prevent the development of Rabies upon exposure as a form of treatment. The schedule of vaccinations to prevent the disease varies between each brand so check with your doctor, as you may need to begin vaccinations as long as 3 months before travel. Pre-exposure vaccination is recommended for extended travel & those who work with, or are likely to come in contact with animals. Note that many domestic animals roam freely throughout South-east Asian streets. In case of any incidents onsite, there are vaccines available at the international hospital in Vientiane.

Hepatitis A&B: Your doctor may recommend a Hepatitis vaccination. Hepatitis can be found in Primates and although there are no known cases at our center or the surrounding area. As we function as a no contact facility, mention this to your doctor. There are available vaccines to combine Hepatitis A and B that will protect you for several years to come.

Tuberculosis: Depending on your age and country of origin, some of you may have had this vaccine as a teenager at school. Once you have this vaccine, it will protect you for life. Tuberculosis (TB) is found in some primate species and can be transferred to humans through coughs and sneezes. Although we have no primates diagnosed with this disease at the center, we still recommend that you mention this to your doctor as a precautionary measure.

Zoonotic Diseases: The center has certain procedures for animal management, including the hands-off policy, in place for both the safety of people as well as the animals. However, consider if you are not being consciously aware of your surroundings or are not following your coordinator's guidance, an animal with a long reach and fast reflexes may grab you. You will also be warned about specific animals during your introductory tour, with whom extra caution is advised.

Please always be alert when working near animals and please be aware that you are not expected to take any risks, in any situation. If in doubt about handling any situation, please ask a member of staff. Zoonotic diseases are passed from animals to humans and vice versa. All of the animals cared for at the center are thoroughly tested and kept in specific areas, unless we suspect illness. However, it is important to be aware of the health risks that can occur when working with any wild or domestic animals. Viruses and

bacteria can be transmitted to humans through bite wounds and scratches, or by coming into contact with feces, saliva and urine.

A further concern is the possibility of humans transmitting diseases to the animals in our care. Respiratory infections are the most common diseases transmitted from humans to primates, even when there has been no physical contact. Primates are very close to us genetically, so infections can easily cross. All volunteers will be given a safety briefing before working with our animals. Rules are very clear and if any volunteer does not follow our safety procedures or endangers the safety of other volunteers by acting recklessly, they will be immediately asked to leave the center without refund.

Snakes & Scorpions: On rare occasions, you may encounter snakes and/or scorpions during your stay in Laos. In such cases, DO NOT panic or approach them and move away from the animal. If you are onsite, alert a member of staff, who may move them to a safe area. Occasionally snakes are encountered in long grass, in the trees, pools, etc. but rarely attack people unless they are threatened, so keep your distance. Scorpions may be found under tree bark, logs, in piles of leaves, etc. Be sure to take precautions, wear proper closed-toe shoes and working gloves if handling logs and leaves. We have staff sweeping leaves every day around the rescue center and working areas, but please also take precautions yourself by keeping work and living areas tidy. Scorpions and other animals could even seek refuge in piles of clothes strewn around the floor. Please ensure your room is kept clean and tidy at all times to avoid harboring any unwanted visitors. Don't forget to also check your footwear for any unwanted visitors before you put them on.

On the rare occasion that someone is bitten or stung, withdraw immediately and call for help. It is important that the person stays as still and calm as possible, this will help to slow down the effects of venom, if someone has been envenomated. Do not attempt to catch the animal, as this will increase your risk of being bitten again. Most of the species here are not venomous, and even those that are, do not always inject venom when they bite. You will be given first aid and then taken straight to the hospital if deemed necessary. If you are bitten on the hand, then remove any rings you might be wearing, due to risk of swelling.

Bugs: This is a rural and tropical environment and insects come with all of the beautiful and untouched nature that we get to enjoy. This means you will encounter ants, mosquitoes, spiders, etc. in and around your work and living area. That being said you should aim to protect yourself from bites as much as possible. During dusk hours or working in the forest, use adequate insect repellent and preferably wear long sleeves and trousers to cover up your skin. If you do get bitten, then TRY NOT TO SCRATCH!

Working in this environment means you could infect your wounds. It is important to keep wounds of any kind clean and dry at all times to prevent infection. If you infect your wounds, let a member of staff know immediately, so that we can treat or take you to the hospital before the infection spreads. If you have a mild allergic reaction, it is

recommended to use antihistamine pills and/or cream, these can be purchased from the local pharmacy.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Some staff at the rescue center can perform basic first aid including our medically trained veterinarians. If you or a staff member feels you need to see a doctor, there are a number of options available. There are a couple of local pharmacies in the village for basic illness treatment, however for anything serious, staff will drive volunteers to one of three international, 24-hour clinics in Vientiane. These clinics have experienced foreign doctors whom speak English or French, provide pathology services, x-ray, ultrasound and many other services.

For serious medical emergencies or surgery, volunteers are taken into Thailand from the border bridge in Vientiane, as the services provided in Thailand are more comprehensive. Please make sure to ask your Coordinator to keep Globe Aware updated on your needs, and health status in case of emergency.

ARRIVAL AND DROP-OFF

We are able to arrange pick-ups every Sunday from Vientiane between 09.30-10.30am only, to allow time for your volunteer welcome and orientation tour, ready for your first full day on Monday. We are also able to pick you up from local guesthouses or hotels in Ban Keun. This is done every Sunday around midday and should be arranged in advance. If you do arrive early, please provide us with your pick-up details. Include the: hotel name, address and contact number at least 48 hours prior to your pick-up. Please note, there are no pick-up options we arrange from Vang Vieng or Luang Prabang to the center.

You will be staying on the project site, so no transportation will be required.

We are also able to arrange drop-offs in Vientiane, at the Lao-Thai border Friendship Bridge, at Wattay Airport on your departure day. Inform your Coordinator as soon as possible when your planned departure is. We can arrange these drop-offs when you are at the center. Please note national holidays may affect the times and dates available, make sure you plan ahead.

CONTACT INFORMATION/MISS THE PICK UP

In case you miss your pick-up time, please call the Globe Aware U.S. emergency number listed below. We will coordinate with the center to reschedule a pick-up time for you.

Globe Aware U.S. Emergency Number: +1 214-824-4562

EMERGENCIES

In case of an emergency, you can receive telephone calls to the rescue center. The best time for people to call is in working hours in Laos. Please stress that calling this number must only be in a real emergency, and preferably not during the night in Laos.

Emergency Phone Number: +856 2052 902 093

VISA APPLICATION

To enter Laos, a passport valid for at least six months is required by all nationals. You may not always be required to show a return ticket if you are travelling overland. It is wise to procure a travel itinerary to avoid problems, these may be asked for on rare occasions. Most nationalities can obtain a 30-day visa on arrival at road, river and air borders for entry into Laos. Bring two passport-sized photographs with you for the visa.

To volunteer in Laos, volunteers only need a tourist visa. Check specific requirements for your nationality online or with the consulate in your home country before you arrive, as there is some variation, including cost. A visa on arrival costs approximately \$35 USD, depending on your nationality this can be more or less, once again check before arrival. Please ensure that you bring the exact amount in USD to pay for your visa, the immigration checkpoints do not always provide change if you do not have the correct change.

You should make copies of important travel documents (passport, tickets, traveler's cheques, driving license etc.) and keep these somewhere safe and separate from the originals. Leave an extra copy with family or friends back home. We also highly recommend registering your travel details with your home countries Foreign Affairs Departments, if they have one.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Do not buy or use any illegal substances, the penalty in Laos is severe. Exercise general caution and feel free to ask your coordinator for assistance or clarification of a given situation.

Volunteers are permitted to visit the village during the evenings. Be aware that as soon as you leave the center, we are not responsible for your well-being. If you plan on leaving the center, please remember to use the sign in/sign out sheet located at the volunteer house for safety and security reasons.

DO NOT get in cars or on the back of motorbikes/scooters which are not driven by the center's members of staff under any circumstances. If you walk out of the center after

hours, please always have a light or torch with you. Hold it in front of you at all times as there are not many streetlights and many cars and bikes do not have lights on them. Walk close to the sides of the road or off it and do not walk in large groups or lines across the road.

Please review the United States Department of State travel website for more information about safety and security while traveling in Laos.

U.S. Embassy in Vientiane, Laos

Ban Somvang Tai
Thadeua Road, Km 9
Hatsayfong district
Phone: (856) 21-48-7000

Please understand regulations and rules may change in accordance with the Laos government. If you require further details, clarification or answers, contact us at office@globeaware.com.