



International Volunteering Guidelines & Programme

Creating life-changing opportunities

Protecting children

Promoting ethical behaviour

September 2014

Volunteering policy and guidelines for IODR Sri Lanka

IODR Sri Lanka is a UK and Sri Lankan registered charity with a mission to “undertake activities that work towards improved opportunities for vulnerable children and their families in Sri Lanka”. We have constructed a community education and welfare centre near to Weligama in southern Sri Lanka, which is a fantastic facility from which to work towards our mission. More information can be found on our website: www.iodr.co.uk

Primarily we work in 3 areas:

- Children’s education, well-being and Sports
- Community health education
- Climate change education and awareness



Various programme activities in these areas are just starting and will continue to grow in the coming years. This will present increasing opportunities for local and international volunteers to get involved in our work. IODR Sri Lanka therefore actively encourage a limited number of UK/International volunteers to work in its programmes in Sri Lanka, or potentially those of its partners.

Although there are clear advantages to all involved in establishing a volunteer programme, it is also important to us that we establish standards of best practice that protect the organisation, its beneficiaries and the individual from potentially damaging allegations and ensure volunteers get the experience they want.

IODR are aware of recent reports relating to bad experiences of volunteers that pay money to work for overseas charitable organisations and want to assure all potential volunteers that IODR can offer a rewarding and valuable experience. We have this ‘International Volunteering Policy’ which outlines our commitments to volunteers in terms of our transparency and accountability in ensuring that all parties have the best experience possible. Provided volunteers comply with this policy at all times, IODR can offer a life enhancing and personally rewarding volunteer experience

A word about the conflict...

You are probably aware that Sri Lanka has been in and out of an internal conflict for the past 30 years. The military conflict between the Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, commonly known as “the Tamil Tigers”) ended in May 2009. There does however remain a heightened level of security (e.g. checkpoints, road blocks) throughout the country. IODR Sri Lanka is based about as far from the former conflict areas in the North and East as is possible, being right on the southern tip of the island. We have never had any security incidents nor have we been directly affected by the conflict in any way. We are committed to ensuring all volunteers have a safe and rewarding experience and regularly monitor the situation.



If you need official advice, please check the Foreign Office Travel Advice site: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>

Types of volunteers

There are several types of volunteers that could be suitable for IODR Sri Lanka. Different types of people can bring different types of skills for differing lengths of time.

- Long term skilled – anything over 3 months is considered long term. These people can have specific roles with clearly defined outputs that would benefit IODR Sri Lanka in a range of ways
- Short term skilled – people with various skills could come for up to 3 months to transfer knowledge to IODR Sri Lanka staff or help out with existing programmes.
- Gap year students – young people wanting a life enhancing break can work in various IODR programmes, depending on their skills and IODR's requirements. They might stay from a couple of weeks to a few months, as appropriate.
- International Baccalaureate students – stay for up to 2 weeks doing 'service' as part of the IB qualification. These students would pay IODR for working in our programmes, but would need additional supervision as they would be less than 18 years old.

Application process

- If you are reading this and are serious about volunteering for IODR, you should complete the IODR application form on the IODR website to register your interest.
- The application form should be completed and returned to the stated address to begin the process. Some positions may require an interview.
- All applicants are always welcome to contact the IODR London office at any time via phone or email with any questions they might have.
- The Country Director's recommendations for volunteers require final approval by trustees in Sri Lanka and the UK.
- Provided the applicant has what IODR are looking for, at the right time, we will pursue references and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and get you on board!
- If everyone is in agreement in terms of logistics and costs, the volunteer pays a small deposit and signs our Child Protection Policy (more on that later) and a form of commitment.
- The final balance should be paid before your arrival in Sri Lanka.
- The process need not take a long time, but it is always best to give us as much notice as possible so that we can plan accordingly.

Accommodation

There are a couple of options for accommodation, depending on the volunteers length of stay, levels of supervision and what is available at the time they wish to come. IODR have some accommodation on-site at its centre in Weligama for up to 10 people. There are twin rooms with en-suite facilities and one bungalow with a small kitchen, sitting area and bathroom. If we have multiple volunteers, then they will need to share a room with others (same sex only, unless specified otherwise i.e. you are a couple). Alternatively, there is a place called Crystal Villa which is 5 minutes from the Centre. IODR works closely with Crystal Holidays, a local tour operator who have a villa close to the Centre. It has air-conditioned rooms, is right on the beach and has a swimming pool. There is a restaurant with western and local food and beverages. If you wish to stay on the beach, please contact the local tour operator, Crystal Holidays. You can email them on crystal@sltnet.lk

IODR would prioritise long term volunteers and those less than 18 years old for the on-site accommodation. Others can stay there if there is availability; otherwise the accommodation at Crystal Villa offers a good alternative. Prices are available on request and are subject to the date and length of stay.



Once accepted as a volunteer, we will be able to give you detailed information on the volunteering process, advice on what to bring, wear etc, and some idea of what else Sri Lanka has to offer during your stay.

Money:

Sorry to mention the word, but we have to. All international volunteers are expected make a contribution to IODR and to meet the cost for their flights and medical insurance during their stay. You are also responsible for getting right medical injections. There are different options of accommodation at various costs that volunteers will need to pay for. The cost depends on where you stay (or where we can fit you) and how long you are staying.

The funds contributed by volunteers will cover IODR overheads incurred during your stay and make a direct contribution towards the programmes we are running. These funds are a valuable source of income for the organisation and we are committed to transparency in ensuring that all volunteers are happy that their funds are used in the right way.

Volunteering costs	
Detail	Amount (GBP)
Accommodation with all 3 meals (Breakfast, lunch & dinner)	£30.00 per person per day in a single room £20.00 per person per day sharing a twin room
One-way airport transfer (including airport collection and transport to the IODR site in Weligama)	£75.00 per vehicle (up to 6 persons)

Includes hot and cold water, electricity, internet, satellite TV and meals (as stated above).

The Child Protection Policy:

One of the cornerstones of our work with children is our Child Protection Policy. It protects everyone, the child, you and the organisation, and creates a positive culture for working with children within the organisation. IODR Sri Lanka is committed this policy and everyone that visits us needs to comply with it. Some relevant highlights:

- Everyone involved in the work of IODR Sri Lanka has a part to play in keeping children safe.
- IODR Sri Lanka will ensure that:
 1. Volunteers are suitable to work with children by ensuring that effective recruitment procedures are followed (interview, vetting & references)
 2. Volunteers are briefed about the way they should behave towards children and are provided with a Code of Conduct. This will include a 2 hour workshop upon arrival on the Child Protection Policy to ensure that all parties understand the rules in working for IODR.
 3. Any complaints, allegations or concerns receive appropriate attention and steps are taken to ensure the safety of all concerned.
 4. Dress Code – non revealing clothes must be worn at all times whilst volunteering and it is recommended you take note of this during your entire stay. Strapless tops, sleeveless tops and shorts are considered to be too revealing.



- Volunteers are expected to:
 1. Co-operate with IODR Sri Lanka's vetting arrangements and provide the necessary documents and/or consent to ensure that criminal records checks can be completed
 2. Follow IODR Sri Lanka's Code of Conduct at all times and take action if they witness or suspect someone else is behaving inappropriately
 3. Bring any complaints, allegations or concerns to the attention of IODR Sri Lanka without delay - regardless of the circumstances

Potential activities and desirable skills

IODR will develop a range of programmes that focus on our 3 main areas of activity, as stated at the beginning of this document. Ultimately we look for enthusiasm, commitment and an open mind, but various practical skills are also useful

- Teaching – TEFL is good, supporting existing teachers
- Sports – supervision, coaching etc for cricket, volleyball, swimming
- Arts and Craft skills
- Computer training
- Helping out at local orphanages
- Midwifery knowledge for educating local people
- Specific skills relevant to any of our areas of activity

This is just a sample, if the volunteer has something to offer that we can find useful then agreement can normally be reached, so we encourage potential volunteers to tell us what they have to offer.

The IODR Code of Conduct

IODR Sri Lanka's Code of Conduct for Volunteers seeks to ensure that children are kept safe from harm and that volunteers are not placed in a compromising position.

All IODR Sri Lanka volunteers will be expected to have read and understood the code of conduct.

DOs:

- **Do** put the Code of Conduct into practice
- **Do** remember that Sri Lankan culture may be different to your own
- **Do** plan activities, which involve more than one person being present, or at least are within sight/hearing of other volunteers or local staff
- **Do** work with other volunteers and local staff as a team
- **Do** respect a child's right to personal privacy
- **Do** listen to children's views and concerns
- **Do** encourage others to discuss attitudes/behaviour they do not like
- **Do** remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions
- **Do** recognise that caution is required even in sensitive moments, such as when dealing with bullying or bereavement

DO NOTs:

- **Do NOT** permit abusive peer activities (e.g. bullying)
- **Do NOT** allow children to stay in volunteer accommodation
- **Do NOT** play rough physical contact games with children
- **Do NOT** have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others
- **Do NOT** jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- **Do NOT** show favouritism to any individual (e.g. money, gifts etc)
- **Do NOT** give excessive gifts to children or their families (donations can be made through IODR Sri Lanka)
- **Do NOT** make suggestive remarks or gestures to children, even in fun
- **Do NOT** ignore others who do not put the Code of Conduct into practice

Criminal Records Bureau checks

- All volunteers participating in one of our programmes are required to submit a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.
- Volunteers working directly with children are required to submit a full police check report that includes offences against children. In the UK this is known as the Criminal Records Bureau CRB Enhanced Disclosure check. This is the same check as schoolteachers, scout leaders etc receive.
- Volunteers should get in touch with the IODR London office in the first instance to begin the CRB process. This normally takes up to 6 weeks and you will need to provide original forms of identification to complete the CRB application form.
- CRB checks are chargeable per volunteer. Up to date information on processing charges can be provided at the time of your application.

Visas

- Visas are required to enter Sri Lanka. As of 1 January 2012, British nationals should obtain short stay visas to Sri Lanka through an online visa application process, the Electronic Travel Authority (ETA), and pay the appropriate processing fee. Further details can be obtained from the ETA official website of the Department of Immigration and Emigration (<http://www.eta.gov.lk/slvisa/>).
- All IODR volunteers should request a short volunteer visa.
- If you experience any difficulty in accessing the ETA System, you can obtain a visa in person from the Sri Lankan High Commission or by post prior to travel. Further details can also be found on the High Commission's website (<http://www.srilankahighcommission.co.uk/>).