

VOLUNTEER

Marist Asia Foundation

2018-2019

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT



Contact Information

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Thanks for your interest in learning about becoming a Volunteer with the Marist Mission in Ranong. Below is a brief description of the Application Process and the Volunteer Agreement containing information for volunteers.

Volunteer Application Process 2018/19– Stage 1

Marist Asia Foundation invites those interested in becoming a volunteer to provide the following documents to begin the Volunteer Application Process.

1. Write a letter outlining why you would like to volunteer to serve in the Marist Mission in Ranong (at least 500 words)
2. Request a Letter of recommendation from some Catholic Agency (e.g. Parish Priest, a Marist you may know, Diocesan organization....) that knows of your faith and life journey.
3. A Work Reference from a previous employer
4. A Character Reference from someone who has known you for at least 3 years
5. A Curriculum Vitae containing at least your personal contact details, educational history, interests, skills, life and work experiences.

Volunteer Application Process – Stage 2

If you are invited to become a volunteer for Marist Mission Ranong, you will be asked to produce the following documents

1. A written statement outlining how you aim to have financial security for the time of volunteering in Marist Asia Foundation
2. Insurance Policy covering the items mentioned above
3. Police Clearance from your home country
4. An International Drivers License

Marist Asia Foundation has a preference for Volunteers to be available for 6-12 months, and gives preference for those who are teachers, but encourages people to make contact to discuss their availability and circumstances.

Due to Thailand Volunteer Visa requirements a minimum requirement for volunteers is 6 months. During the Volunteer Application Process if you have any questions or concerns please make contact with Fr Frank Bird

francisbird@gmail.com

Volunteer Agreement International Volunteers

Introduction

The Marist Mission in Ranong operates under the Marist Asia Foundation in Thailand. Since its earliest days, we have been blessed with volunteers. Generous people from varied backgrounds have come and shared in the mission in Ranong and have made a positive contribution to the lives of the people we serve.

The ministries undertaken by MAF generally require specialized skills, including knowledge of the two main local languages (Thai and Burmese). The Marist religious community (whose members are committed long-term) and local staff are usually the best equipped persons to engage in these ministries.

What contribution, then, can a foreign volunteer make? MAF volunteers do not come just to 'do a job'. (There may be exceptions to this principle when very particular expertise is required.) Being motivated to serve the poor by making a practical difference to their lives is a noble motivation. However, this desire can be fulfilled by volunteering with numerous NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations).

MAF volunteers are persons with a desire to have an experience of service and mission, form a connection with the local Marist religious community, to grow in the Marist charism, and to experience Catholic mission in an interreligious context. When possible and before arrival, a future volunteer may be invited to make contact with a Marist to learn about Marist values.

Though not usually resident in the Marist house in Ranong, volunteers share in the life of the religious community and in its mission. They are committed to growing in faith and to expressing their faith by their participation in MAF's mission. MAF is committed to welcoming volunteers who are motivated in this way.

General requirements

The most important quality for a volunteer is an ability to share in the life and mission of MAF.

Volunteers will also need some skills and experience that can enable them to engage in an MAF ministry. They need to have a commitment to:

- grow in faith and experience Catholic mission in an interreligious context
- participate in community life, learn and share in the Marist charism
- engage respectfully with people of other cultures
- fulfill their work commitments as assigned by the Director

Volunteers must be:

- at least 18 years of age
- able to reside in Thailand legally for the length of their stay
- culturally and religiously sensitive (eg. will dress appropriately according to local custom)
- in good physical, mental and emotional health
- able to live and work according to the vision, mission and objectives of MAF

Adhering to the vision, mission and objectives of MAF means living and working within a particular style of mission. For example, MAF does not explicitly evangelise or preach the Gospel among the Buddhist and Muslim people with whom we work. Rather, we seek to “preach” the Gospel by living good Christian lives of service among the poor.

Volunteers Rights and Responsibilities

Rights

Accommodation

Accommodation includes cooking facilities, is provided for volunteers by MAF. It is simple and, by local standards, comfortable. This will generally consist of an apartment, which is appropriate for a married couple, or one or two individuals. In cases when it is necessary for volunteers to stay in another community house or apartment, this will usually be for limited periods of time.

General housekeeping costs

Such as electricity, internet and tap water will also be covered (this excludes food and drinking water).

Basic furniture and appliances

These will generally be provided for each individual apartment, however there may be appliances that are used communally (such as a community washing machine, etc)

Transport

Each volunteer apartment will be provided with a mode of transport – this usually consists of a bicycle or a small motorbike. Please note that this is per apartment, not per individual volunteer, so in cases where individuals are sharing, or when a married couple volunteers, they will need to share this mode of transport between them.

Faith Community

MAF seeks to nourish and strengthen the faith of all staff and volunteers. At least once a week, volunteers gather with the Marist religious community to celebrate the Eucharist and share a meal. Some evenings, the Marist religious community gather alone. Other days, volunteers are welcome at prayer, meals and recreation in the Marist Community house. Normally volunteers have a mass and shared meal on Wednesday and a shared meal on Friday. Reflection days provide a supportive experience for volunteers to grow in their faith and to learn about Marist Spirituality.

Support

There may be occasions where volunteers have questions or concerns and MAF is committed to dealing with these. Concerns can be directed to the Director of delegated person with responsibility for care of Volunteers.

Privacy and time off

MAF is a community of people living, working and sharing their faith, all with a particular Marist flavor. As mentioned previously, it is crucial that volunteers are

willing to engage in and become part of this community, however it is only natural that people need time alone and time off. Volunteers generally have weekends and evenings to themselves. Connected to this is each individual's right to a sense of privacy. Volunteers need to feel that they have a personal life separate from the community, and this is particularly true for married couples. Volunteers are encouraged to maintain this sense of privacy and engage in activities that will allow them to personally relax and feel rejuvenated.

Responsibilities

Health

Westerners can find conditions in Ranong somewhat challenging (e.g. climate: some very hot months, some very wet) but are almost always able to maintain a sound level of health. For example, malaria is not a threat in Ranong, and dengue fever is rare. Local health facilities are adequate, and international hospitals are within reach in the rare case that they might be needed. Volunteers are required to get health insurance for the duration of their stay in Ranong as MAF cannot be responsible for health costs incurred by volunteers.

This insurance needs to include

- Cover for any unexpected illness or injury
- Repatriation to home country in case of severe injury or death
- Cover in case of injury due to the use of a motorbike or vehicle

Depending on the Volunteers country of origin, vaccinations may also be required. MAF strongly recommends that volunteers see their doctors prior to travel, not only for vaccinations but also for general health check-up to ensure that volunteers are healthy, and that any unforeseen medical issues are taken care of. It is also important that individuals are well rested before they arrive, as it can be somewhat demanding to settle into a foreign environment. That is why it may be beneficial for volunteers to have a break or holiday prior to arriving in Ranong, however this is completely up to the individual.

Although MAF are unable to pay for health costs incurred by a volunteer, in the rare case a volunteer becomes seriously ill, they are able to help in a variety of

ways. These include transport to local medical services as well as being able to provide translators to talk with medical practitioners (In Ranong, doctors and other medical staff mainly speak Thai). They are also able to recommend clinics and hospitals suitable for the needs of the volunteer.

In cases of illness it is expected that the volunteer make their health decisions in dialogue with the Director of MAF or designated person.

Agreement Period

Volunteers need to commit to a set amount of time. This will be worked out between MAF Director and the volunteer before they arrive in Ranong.

Most often, MAF volunteers make between a three month to six-month commitment. This allows for a period of adjustment and cultural acclimatization, as well as a significant experience of and contribution to the mission. It also fits more easily within the relatively stringent immigration procedures for foreign volunteers in Thailand.

There can also be the possibility that a volunteer seeks to extend their time with MAF. This decision will be made by the MAF Director.

Inter cultural living sometimes can have unexpected effects. If the Director decides that a volunteer's continued presence in Ranong would be detrimental to the volunteer or to others, then this decision is to be accepted.

Finance

Volunteers make a very generous commitment in working without a salary. The expenses that are covered by MAF include: accommodation (rent), power, internet and tap water bills. All other expenses need to be covered by the volunteer. This includes flights to and from the volunteer's country of origin, health insurance, visa costs as well as day to day living costs.

Experience tells us that while locals can live on salaries of THB 6,000 – 10,000, a young, single foreign volunteer would usually want to budget for around THB 10,000 a month.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to source this money (eg. from a sponsoring agency, a benefactor, savings) for the length of their stay. During the application process, potential volunteers need to assure MAF that they will be able to remain financially secure during the term of their service.

Language Learning

The most commonly used languages in Ranong are Thai and Burmese. English is not often heard, though it is one of the three “official languages” within MAF, and volunteers can “get by” using English. However, part of the Marist style of mission is to try to become immersed in local culture, which obviously includes language. Volunteers need to be open to learning aspects of Thai and Burmese, and to undergo classes if necessary to develop their skills. Volunteers are usually not here long enough to become proficient in a new language, but a willingness to learn is an important sign of one’s interest in and commitment to local people.

Cultural expectations

Volunteers need to be culturally and religiously sensitive (eg. will dress appropriately according to local custom).

As volunteers will be interacting with Burmese and Thai, Buddhist, Muslim and Catholic, this can be a challenge, however, a few general guidelines are useful.

Generally when volunteers are working for MAF or are involved in the local community, shoulders need to be covered and legs covered at least to the knees.

When teaching, trousers are generally worn. For working days a MAF uniform of black trousers and MAF shirt is to be worn. Depending on a volunteer’s immigration and visa status, you will be provided with two shirts. Any more shirts will be need to be purchased by the volunteer from MAF .

Visas

The Visas that are available to a volunteer depends on their country of origin. Volunteers need to research the available options for them. The process for obtaining any visa other than a tourist visa needs to begin before the volunteer travels to Thailand.

It is important to note that volunteers meet all costs of obtaining and renewing (including travel) visas. MAF is able to assist with some helpful advice and by writing endorsement letters etc.

Commitment to work

A volunteer's workload may fluctuate during the course of their time with MAF, however, volunteers will never be given more work than it is expected they can manage.

Volunteers will be expected to work Monday to Friday, and 8.30 to 4.30 is a standard working day. Occasionally there may be events or activities that do not fit into this working week, however these are generally kept to a minimum. MAF volunteers have school holidays and public holidays. There may be the occasional opportunity for individuals to have short breaks, as long as this doesn't interfere with the volunteer's workload.

Volunteers will need to arrange their travel in consultation with the Director of MAF. It is very common that volunteers will do a wide variety of tasks while they are with MAF, as needs arise and the volunteer's particular skill set becomes apparent. It is crucial that volunteers have a flexible attitude towards work and what roles they may engage in.

Code of conduct

MAF has worked hard to develop the trust it now enjoys with many other organizations in Ranong. This has not always been easy and has taken a considerable amount of time to build up.

It is crucial that volunteers represent MAF appropriately. This means fulfilling commitments made, being culturally aware and most importantly treating all with respect, whether or not the volunteer agrees with the individual or not. These expectations also apply to the way fellow staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and members of the MAF religious community are treated.

If volunteers have concerns they need to direct these to the director of MAF or the delegated or appropriate person. It is important that this is done as soon as possible to avoid misunderstanding and resentment.

MAF expects all Volunteers to abide by the MAF Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.

MAF continues to benefit from the skills and viewpoints contributed by its diverse members. All programmes that have been developed by MAF come from developing relationships with the Burmese community, and are a result of a direct need expressed by this community. Consequently, relationship is absolutely central to MAF, and ultimately final decisions are made by the director of MAF.

Confidentiality

Volunteers may be privy to sensitive and private information about members of MAF, community staff or beneficiaries. Volunteers will be expected to keep private matters private and employ sound judgement and professionalism.

Child Protection Policy

Children who attend MAFs programmes come from families where poverty is common. Volunteers need to treat all children with care, respect and professionalism. It is important that volunteers understand that good relationships with the children improve the effectiveness of our programmes. Most MAF volunteers engage in some kind of teaching while they are with MAF which means that they will usually come into contact with children and young people.

MAF has created its own child protection policy, which volunteers need to adhere to.

Volunteers will be expected to understand and sign this Agreement as well as the MAF Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy.

Name:

Date: