



NK SEEDS

www.nkseeds.org

NK SEEDS Volunteer Welcome Guide

Feel free to read me anytime, I contain a lot of
information that you might need during your stay here
and I promise I won't bite you!



WELCOME AND THANK-YOU FOR SHARING YOUR TIME, ENERGY, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE WITH US.

WE HOPE THIS WELCOME GUIDE HELPS YOU SETTLE IN. PLEASE ASK US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES!



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I. WHO ARE WE ?

I.1. ABOUT US

NK SEEDS is a non-profit organization based in Nong Khiaw, northern Laos. The organization is active in three different areas: **Education**, **Environment** and **Solidarity**.

Our guideline: Free education in the respect of the environment

I.2. EDUCATION BRANCH

NK English School offers free daily English courses for children and adults from Nong Khiaw and the surrounding area.

Our main goal is to give the local community the opportunity to learn English for free. We currently hold English classes five afternoons per week with over **150 students** registered.

The English courses take place from Monday to Friday and are divided into 6 groups. Our students are aged from 9 to 26 years old.

Our purpose is to give them the opportunity to **access additional English education** in a friendly environment, where traditional learning is coupled with a set of activities that allow them to put their lessons into practice in a dynamic and fun way.

Our English programs have been validated by the village's Ministry of Education.

We have 4 local teachers who ensure Lao/English translation and vice versa, which ensures a better understanding for the students.

As our students are divided into 6 classes, **each volunteer is assigned 3 classes** that they will remain in for the entire stay in our school.

Volunteers are divided into two teams and **teach only 3 hours per day (from 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM)** with support from our local teachers. Their main role is to assist the teachers during the classes. For the students, it's a plus. They are very excited to learn with foreigners from all over the world.



I.3. ENVIRONMENT BRANCH

NK Environment aims to make young people **aware of ecology** and to clean up the environment by collecting and recycling plastic waste. The impact of this project will be ecological, sanitary, beneficial for biodiversity and educational.

Our first step is to transform the site where volunteers live into a zero waste and organic site.



- Ecological awareness courses
- Land development
- Waste collection
- Paper recycling
- Plastic recycling

I.4. SOLIDARITY BRANCH



Within our **NK School for All** pole, we help several schools around Nong Khiaw to give better learning conditions to the students.

During our missions, we have noticed that most of the schools lack basic materials, and the students live in difficult conditions, which influences their working conditions. In addition to donating school supplies and sports equipment to the schools, we support these students by providing them necessary items such as mattresses, cushions, mosquito nets, blankets, and food.

I.5. OUR TEAM ON SITE



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Head of NK English
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Xisidaphet
LY

Local Teacher

NK English School



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II. ABOUT VOLUNTEERING

II.1. A TYPICAL DAY

Every morning the volunteers and teachers meet at **9am in the office**. For an hour and a half, the volunteers **prepare the afternoon's lessons and activities**, according to the weekly topic. We have a wide range of manuals, books, games and online courses that the volunteers can use for the preparation.



Then at **10.30 a.m.**, it's time for manual work. Depending on the skills of each volunteer, everyone will be assigned a mission. For example, making new furniture for the site, renovating the bungalows, taking care of the garden, recycling paper and plastic with our recycling machines, managing the social networks, preparing the Saturday night charity event, etc.

12.30 pm is break time. Volunteers have lunch and free time to rest, visit the surroundings and enjoy the water activities on the river until 4pm.

At 4 pm, it is time for classes. Volunteers and teachers head to the school for lessons until 7.30 pm.



Volunteers' missions that volunteers

- Plastic caps collecting in guesthouses
- Watering the garden and the flowers
- Site maintenance
- Building new things
- Recycling the paper and the plastic
- Managing social media
- Managing charity events
- Helping the organization finding funds

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
08:00 AM  Meeting at the office (for new volunteers)	08:15 AM  Breakfast	08:15 AM  Breakfast	08:15 AM  Breakfast	08:15 AM  Breakfast		
9:00 AM  Meeting at the office Preparation of the courses	9:00 AM  Meeting at the office Preparation of the courses	9:00 AM  Meeting at the office Preparation of the courses	9:00 AM  Meeting at the office Preparation of the courses	9:00 AM  Meeting at the office Preparation of the courses		
10:30 AM  Manual works, recycling project etc	10:30 AM  Manual works, recycling project etc	10:30 AM  Manual works, recycling project etc	10:30 AM  Manual works, recycling project etc	10:30 AM  Manual works, recycling project etc		
12:30 AM  Lunch and break time	12:30 AM  Lunch and break time	12:30 AM  Lunch and break time	12:30 AM  Lunch and break time	12:30 AM  Lunch and break time	2:00 PM  Site clean-up + event preparation	
4:00 - 7:30 PM  English teaching	4:00 - 7:30 PM  English teaching	4:00 - 7:30 PM  English teaching	4:00 - 7:30 PM  English teaching	4:00 - 7:30 PM  English teaching	6:00 PM  NK SEEDS Event	

II.2. SATURDAY ACTIVITIES

Every Saturday we organize a charity event to raise funds for the school.

On Friday, we assign the different tasks to be accomplished on Saturday.



Saturday day's proceedings

STEP 1: Communication

We walk around Nong Khiaw and distribute flyers to people. We explain what this fundraising event is for, where it takes place and what the evening program is. We also tell visitors about the organization and talk about your work here.



STEP 2: Event preparation

The preparation of the party includes shopping, music playlist, punch making, decoration, and set up of the sales and promotional items booth NK SEEDS (postcards, straws, t-shirt ...).



STEP 3: Marketing

During the evening, we talk with customers, tell them about the organization, show them our brochure and invite them to make a donation.

STEP 4: Enjoy

Taste our homemade punch and the delicious meal offered by the boss of the bar!



II.3. SUNDAY OFF

Volunteers have Sunday off to relax or visit the surrounding area. For those willing to get out and explore, there are nearby caves, waterfalls viewpoints, treks, swimming-pool, boat trips, kayak, meditation etc...

We can organize tours in the weekend to discover the area.

As Luang Prabang has grown in popularity, so too has Nong Khiaw. It offers plenty of gorgeous riverside guesthouse and local restaurants. With the ragged mountains views on either side of the town, it's surely one of the most photogenic spots in Laos.



III. INFORMATION

III.1. MONDAY MORNING MEETING

- **FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS ONLY: Information Meeting at 8:00 a.m AT THE OFFICE.**
- **Please bring :**
 - Your passport

III.2. FOOD

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH INCLUDED MONDAY TO FRIDAY

We provide volunteers breakfast and lunch on teaching days. Taste the delicious and local food from Mita, our neighbor (vegetarian meals available).
We have unlimited free drinking water (hot and cold).

DISCOVER OUR PARTNERS:

We are in partnership with a few restaurants in the village. As a **volunteer for NK SEEDS**, you can **have discounts** on different kinds of services by showing your name tag to a staff every time you go there.

III.3. ACCOMODATION

You will sleep in a **shared bungalow (2 pers).**

Every bungalow is equipped with a fan, bedding, and private bathroom.

We have a common kitchen with cooking facilities, common spaces where you can relax, internet and a washing machine (10,000 kip / kilograms).



III.4. DISCOUNTS IN THE TOWN



GET DISCOUNTS WITH YOUR NAME TAG

As a volunteer of NK SEEDS, you get discounts in some restaurants in Nong Khiaw.



- **Delilah's 10%**
- **Couleur Café 10%**
- **CT Restaurant a free fruitshake**
for over 50,000 kip spent
- **Pizza & Pasta 10%**



III.5. WHAT TO BRING

- a towel
- long pants
- tee shirt that covers your shoulders
- a gourd
- a notebook
- pens
- earplugs (if you are sensitive to noise)
- money
- basic first aid kit / medicines

Recommendation

As we help many schools around Nong Khiaw, we need a lot of school supplies. If you have some space in your suitcase, please take some with you, you will make many children happy.

You can also create a crowdfunding, and we will buy the material on site. [Here](#) is an example of a group of volunteers.

III.6. WHAT YOU NEED

A VISA

Don't worry, for most countries it is very easy to get a one-month visa.

You can get it **online** or on **arrival**.

The visa cost around \$30 - \$45 American dollars (depending on your nationality). If you have, bring an ID photo with you.

for you:

- Make sure you have a pen for filling in the forms!
- If you arrive on a weekend, early in the morning, late at night or you haven't got a passport photo, make sure to bring some spare dollars as they will charge \$1 extra for all the above.
- In case you will stay with us longer than one month you can easily extend your visa by travelling down to Luang Prabang and apply for it at the Immigration Office (\$2 a day).

A HEALTH INSURANCE

Travel insurance is mandatory to protect the volunteer in case of any accident.

In addition, foreign travelers are required to purchase COVID-19 medical insurance with minimum value of USD 50,000 to enter to Laos.

Check [here](#) travel insurance.

PROOF OF VACCINATION OR PCR COVID TEST

Fully vaccinated individuals do not require pre-departure or on arrival tests.

Unvaccinated individuals will be required to do a PCR test a maximum of 48 hours before departure.

Please check the travel requirement from your country.

A VALID PASSPORT

Your passport should have at least on your date of **6 months' validity remaining entry into Laos.**

OTHER VACCINATION OR TREATMENT (NOT MANDATORY BUT RECOMMENDED)

Hepatitis A and B

Typhoid

Malaria treatment

III.7. DETAILS ON ARRIVAL



Arrivals and departures are on SATURDAY.

The **closest airport** is the one in **Luang Prabang**.

What we would recommend is to stay overnight in Luang Prabang and take a bus the next day. You can even stay for a few days, it's a beautiful town, lots of things to do.

If you land in Vientiane, take the train to Luang Prabang. The departure time are 7:30.am, 9am and 4:30pm. It takes about 2 hours to Luang Prabang.

The bus departure time from Luang Prabang to Nong Khiaw is at 9.00.am. We would recommend you to be there at 8:00. am. Then, it takes about 3 hours to reach Nong Khiaw.

You can easily book your bus ticket from guesthouses. It costs about 90,000 KIP (\$6).

When you get to NK, ask the tuk tuk driver to drop you at "NK SEEDS" on google map. Our site is located right next to the bank.

III.8. PARTICIPATION FEES

Costs: Prices in USD

4 weeks (min. stay): \$224

Average fees: \$56 /week

III.9. WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED ?

Visa, flights, travel insurance or vaccinations are **NOT** included in the program fees. An airport pickup isn't included within the program fees either.

IV. TEACHING TOOLS

IV.1. TEACHING CRASH COURSES

What do you need to do each week?

Discuss the proposed topic/unit with the teachers.

Before the lesson, make an outline lesson plan.

Tell us how the class went by providing follow-up information.

How do you plan a lesson?

The headway books are a roadmap to help you decide what to teach each day, and how today's lesson fits in with yesterday's and tomorrow's lesson (with the teachers' guideline)

The components of a lesson plan:

Brief review of the previous lessons

Learning Objective (what students are supposed to know at the end of the lesson)

Materials needed for the lesson to be brought to the classroom

Introduction-the lesson topic is written on the board and translated if necessary. New vocab is introduced by using visuals and keeping students engaged and participating in the conversation

Volunteers are expected to give pronunciation models

Volunteers are expected to walk around the classroom checking students work

Activity

Closing game

After the lesson... Take few notes about:

What worked?

What didn't work?

It's generally a good idea to:

Be flexible! Things never go as planned.

Have a back-up activity in mind. What can you do if this lesson doesn't go to plan, or if students finish the activity earlier than expected?

Don't take things too personally. The kids will be excited as meeting people from foreign places is new to them, they may laugh at your accent/the way you say things/the answers you give to their questions. This is normal behavior as their culture is completely different to ours.

Smile and be enthusiastic.

Try to incorporate these into EVERY lesson

(Intro)

Example: When teaching words surrounding the parts of a plant, draw a diagram of the plant on the board and label each part. Explain each word orally while showing the part visually.

(Activity Model) You do the activity on the board with the class

Example: Take the words away on the diagram and put them on the side as a word list. Students must complete the labels again. To make it less intimidating, do this as a think-pair-share instead of calling each student individually to the board.

(Activity) Have students do it on their own

Example: Give students a worksheet of the plant diagram. Have them work in pairs, small groups or alone to label the diagram.

(Closer) Play a game to reinforce the new idea

Teaching English involves...

Listening
Speaking
Reading
Writing

Keep these in mind as you are planning lessons. Each lesson doesn't have to include all four however, students should get practice in all of these areas for each topic they are learning.

Quick Activities and Games

Do these if your lesson flops, or if you have some extra time at the end of your lesson to review recent keywords

Hangman
Pictionary
The telephone game
The ball-name game
Sing a song
The categories game
"Who am I" guessing game
I Spy
The pointing game

IV.2. LESSON STRUCTURE

1- Teachers go around class asking everyone the learned questions (what's your name? How old? Are you happy?)

2- Repeat last week's material by writing it on the board. Ask one person per word to read it (if not, explain the sounds and letters) and meaning in Lao.

Example: 5 words and 5 sentences per 1h, not everything per seance. In the end, let the entire class repeat

3- Add to their toolbox with the entire class together, combi of grammar and words.

Example: you are – I am – Are you? ... happy, fine, angry, hungry, smart....

- always break down the words in sounds and make people repeat after you.
- Always let Lao teachers add Lao translations and explain (understanding is key to remembering)
- Give a lot of example sentences of how to combine learnings and see if they understand the meaning.

4- Let them use! Depending on the learnings

- ask them questions to answer class wide (is the cat cute? Is the river long? Do you like mango? Is he a teacher?...)
- Let them make sentences themselves to say in front of the class or by teachers going around the class.
- Exercises on the board or in print. Ex: He ____ bananas, the cat ____ fish.

5- If older students : homeworks

- if younger : games?

Note: try to prepare vocab, grammar, example sentences and exercises before to make sure you respect the program Lao teachers made.

IV.3. MOST IMPORTANT

- **Feedback is crucial.** The Lao teachers have the lead as they know what's best for the kids. They have been here since day 1. They can apprehend the learning difficulties, which usually the volunteers don't. Take daily time to talk about how things can get better. No subject should be touchy or taboo.
- **Lao translation is essential.** It's straightforward and is a quick method to add vocabulary to their toolbox
- **Focus first on the meaning of each word**, then the sentence structure. Always check with Tee and Noah to check in Lao if the students really understand what is written on the board (instead of copying what you say or write)
- **Repetition is key.** Be sure to use the words and grammar notions every day until the students can recall it instantly
- **Don't relate.** It's important to put aside how you were taught English. Most of us did not have to rediscover an entire alphabet. Every sound in English is a new phonetic noise. The struggles students will encounter are different from the ones you could have experienced
- **Verb tenses do not exist in Lao language.** The language works in a completely different way, be aware that for the students it's very difficult to grasp
- Never rush, it takes time. On the first day of school in September, the kids do not know how to read or write the alphabet. Losing patience is counterproductive. But also, don't underestimate their learning speed
- **One student = one pace.** One of the challenges is to make them progress at their own speed. Classes are heterogeneous
- **Organize your class** so that every kid concentrates. Test the students sitting in the back to make sure they are following
- **Every day gives way to progress.** Every effort has its own success
- **Respect and listen** to each other

IV.4. LAO LANGUAGE

Lao or Laotian is a tonal language of the Tai–Kadai language family. It is the official language of Laos, and also spoken in the northeast of Thailand, where it is usually referred to as the Isan language.

Greetings/ Basics

The Nop - When greeting and saying goodbye, it is a sign of respect for you to join the palms of your hands together in a prayer-like gesture (called the "nop") just under your chin for a second or two and bow a little.

Hello/ Hi	Sabai Dee
How are you?	Chao Sabaidee bor?
I am fine	Khoi Sabai
I am not fine (unwell)	Khoi bor sabai
Thank you	Khob jai (lai, lai)
I'm sorry/ excuse me	Kor thod
Do you understand?	Chai Khao jai bor
Yes, I understand	Koi Khao jai
No, I don't understand	Koi bor khao jai

Cultural Expressions

You will hear these expressions a lot and they are useful to know:

It's ok, never mind, don't worry	Bor pen yang
Is it tasty?	Seb bor?
It's delicious (very)	Seb (illi)
Good luck	Chock Dee
Very good	Dee lai
Is it fun?	Sanook bor
It is fun	Sanook!

Numbers

1	Nung
2	Song
3	Sam
4	See
5	Ha
6	Hok
7	Jet

8	Phat
9	Kaow
10	Sip
100	Hao
1000	Pan
100,000	San
1,000,000	Lan

Irregularities

20	Sao (not song sip)
11, 21, 31, 41 etc	Sip et, Sao et, Sam sip et, See sip et

Shopping

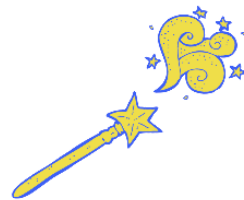
How much does it cost?	La ka tao dai
It's too expensive!	Peang

If you can only remember one thing remember to SMILE! 😊

V. RULES

V.1. AT VOLUNTEER SITE

General Maintenance of the site



- Sweep around you



- Wash and store the dish



- Put the garbage along the road



- Clean the fridge



- Put the empty beers in the yellow box



- If something looks defective, tell us to replace

- If there are things missing, please let us know (ex: sponges, cleaning product, garbage bags etc...)

Thank You 

V.2. AT SCHOOL

- Be on time for the class. Even 5 minutes early is preferable.
- Wear appropriate clothes to class. It means hiding knees and shoulders.
- Don't forget the local teachers have the lead, if you do not agree with their way of teaching, we could talk about it during the lesson planning meeting, not during the class.
- Respect everyone.
- Don't get frustrated or angry with the students as they have not been taught discipline in this country.
- Do not single out a student or pick on a student because they are being too disruptive. Instead, talk to the teacher about it. But you can tell them to be quiet if you need to.
- Do not touch the students on any part of their body.
- Do not be too casual in the classroom.
- Don't be afraid to be firm with the students in a positive way.
- Do not smoke inside the school or in front of the school. Be a good example.
- Don't be too close to each other while you're in the school. No hugging etc....
- When the teacher or a volunteer is explaining something on the board, everyone needs to pay attention.
- Congratulate the students all the time.
- Most importantly, SMILE!

V.3. USE OF TEACHING MATERIALS

- The school material in the meeting room is available for you to make course materials.
- After the use of felt-tip pens, glue, scissors... Please put them back on the shelf.
- For the use of the gardening equipment, after use please clean and put the tools back in the hut.

VI. TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. All the volunteers are responsible for their own accident, health insurance and care of property, entertainment props, camera, smartphone, and any other property belonging to them.
2. Volunteers have to acknowledge and respect the rights of others and their confidentiality.
3. All photography or film footage shot of children, must not be published in any way without permission from the representatives of the organization.
4. No volunteer to be alone with any children at any time.
5. No volunteer to give any medicines, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or toy/real weapons to any of the students.
6. Volunteers suffering from contagious sickness, common cold, flue or other diseases that can easily be passed onto the people that we serve. Must refrain from close contact with.
7. Volunteers must respect the religious, political views and traditions of the people that we serve. Wear appropriate decent clothing and do not espouse your own religious or political opinions when in contact with the students.
8. No volunteer seen to be under the influence of alcohol or other mood changing substances is allowed to be in contact with the students.
9. Volunteers must be punctual and reliable.
10. Volunteers must support other team members and ask for support when needed.
11. Volunteers are not allowed to use the plastic recycling machines without a team member.
12. Volunteers commit themselves to respect the material and to return their accommodation in good condition.
13. Volunteers agree to respect the rules of the community as well as the cleanliness of the site.
14. No volunteer can receive any salary from NK SEEDS.

VII. NK SEEDS'S STORY

October 2018

HOW IT ALL STARTED...

In October 2018, Melissa encountered a man called Sabu who taught English for free in his living room for the underprivileged children of Nong Khiaw.

She was inspired by his motivation to help the impoverished people of Laos who are unable to pay for education otherwise. This led Melissa and her mother (who helped from France) to set up a French non-profit organization called "Fastknuddeln" to help the children of Laos develop their English abilities for greater job prospects in order to keep up with the growing tourism industry Southeast Asia is experiencing.



December 2018

MEETING WITH THE EDUCATION OFFICE OF NK

In December 2018, through hard work and many discussions with the Educational Office and the local school of Nong Khiaw, Melissa and Sabu got the go ahead to set up an English class in Nong Khiaw Secondary School.

Melissa had to invest her own money into this project because the crowdfunding community and the companies that she contacted didn't believe in her project.

They were then able to build their own English classroom by renovating an old, unused part of the school into a suitable classroom.

Due to serious health problems, Sabu had to leave the project. Luckily, Melissa was able to continue to teach the local children through the unending support of the Nong Khiaw community.



From February to May 2019

OPENING OF THE ENGLISH CLASS!

On **February 18th 2019**, Melissa and a few volunteers such as Kelly (who taught from the beginning of the school opening and helped develop the project until end of May 2019) held the first class under the name of "NK English School," in their brand-new classroom.

Some teachers from the local school came to help and then they created daily volunteer opportunities for foreigners to visit Nong Khiaw for a few days.

At the beginning of **March 2019**, the project was threatened because of administrative authorization delays from the Muang Ngoi district headquarters.

At the end of **March 2019**, the project was finally validated.

In **April 2019**, the volume of children interested in learning English increased. Moreover, the success and popularity of the English school brought a lot of foreign volunteers wishing to stay for a longer time.

This required the creation of additional facilities such as several bungalows to accommodate them.

With the help of volunteers, they created a crowdfunding campaign in order to pay for rent.

The bungalows still need some refurbishment and renovation, but they housed about 20 volunteers from **April** to the end of **May 2019**; the end of the school year.



June 2019

BACK TO FRANCE, TO FIND MORE SUPPORT!

A return to France was necessary in **June 2019** to find funding and reliable partnerships with companies in France.

NK English School landed incredible partnerships with companies such as MAPED (supplier of school materials), Arc Info Sallanches (a communication agency,) and Damso SA, along with Gomez Groups and others (general funding).

In **July 2019**, Elodie, Melissa's friend, took the part of organizing events to raise funds such as:

- Le Criterium du Dauphine
- A crepes party (Bobby bar, Cluses)



August 2019

BACK TO LAOS...

In August 2019, Melissa returned to Laos to prepare for our first new school year. Thanks to the donations collected during the summer and the help of a new team of volunteers, the renovation of the bungalows and the building and furnishing of a kitchen were realized.



September 2019

BACK TO SCHOOL!

The Ministry of Education of Nong Khiaw validated their first official annual curriculum made by a volunteer, Maeva (a volunteer who came to NK English School in April 2019)! At the beginning of **September**, NK English School quickly began registering the vast number of students wishing to join the English school. Due to the sheer amount of students, the public school agreed to provide two additional classrooms.



September to December 2019

SITE EXPANSION

In response to the constant demand for space, we began refurbishing our newly rented community building **from September to December 2019.**

We organized the space into 3 parts:

- a living room, where volunteers can relax during their free time
- a conference room, for the daily 10 am planning meeting
- a storage room, where we stock all office supplies, teaching materials, and administration papers



January 2020

THE ORGANIZATION EXPANDS!

In January 2020, a collaboration started with Amandine (a volunteer who came to NK English School in March 2019). Back in France in July 2019, she created an organization to preserve the environment and came back to Laos.

NK English School supported her to raise children's awareness of eco-responsible actions.

Quickly, Fastknuddeln decided to merge both organizations to be more involved in ecological issues.

Following this, **in January 2020, Fastknuddeln became NK SEEDS** divided in two branches :

- **NK English School**
- **NK Environment**

NK refers to the village of **Nong Khiaw** in which we operate. **SEEDS** is the acronym of the values that the organization defends (**S**haring, **E**ducation, **E**nvironment and **D**evelopment of **S**olidarity).

Since this merger, NK Ecology has created on the site, a composting facility, vegetable gardens, a paper recycling facility and has plans to build machines to recycle plastic waste.





NK SEEDS