

Aishworya Children's Home

Volunteer Handbook

As a volunteer, you'll play a vital role in our children's development and the day-to-day running of Aishworya. In return, you'll become part of our family, enjoying a unique and rewarding experience to remember for a lifetime.

Whether you plan to spend an afternoon with us during your holiday, or stay with us for a few months, we hope you find this handbook helpful for planning your visit.

If you have any further questions at all, please don't hesitate to email us at ach.nepal@gmail.com

For more information, visit us at www.aishworya.org



Josefin,
Sweden

"I had a great time at Aishworya Children's Home, sweeter and nicer kids are hard to find and I learned much from them and the entire experience."



Marianne,
Finland

"I learned so much from the children. Mostly about extreme community living, how more than 40 people can live happily under the same roof and share all!"



Maluz,
Panama

"I especially enjoyed staying with the kids before they went to bed, we shared really nice stories! I can't wait to visit again."



Contents

About Aishworya	3
Our location	4
Volunteer experience	
Voluntary work and life at Aishworya	5
Accommodation and meals	6
Trips and excursions	7
Before you arrive	8
Important information	9
Our contact details	10

About Aishworya

Established in 2005, Aishworya has become well-known in Kathmandu for the love we devote to our children. We care for over 50 children aged 0 – 17, providing the support they need to become independent, kind and responsible adults:

- A safe, loving home environment.
- Nutritious meals, clean water, clothing, medical care and all other basic necessities.
- A good education through local schooling.
- A safe play area and the opportunity to develop social interaction skills.
- Important life skills like cooking, personal hygiene, home care, and time management.
- Support with vocational training.

Not all children at Aishworya are orphans. Many have run away or been rescued from trafficking, and we work with authorities to reunite these children with family. We also take care of children whose families are struggling to provide for them. Where possible we work with and support these families so they can look after their children fulltime again. In the last nine years, we have successfully reunited 150 children with family.

Regardless of how long our children stay with us – whether just a few weeks or their entire childhood, they will always have a home at Aishworya. We stay in contact with all children to ensure they're happy and healthy long after they move on.

Aishworya is staffed by seven permanent volunteers who do not take a wage for their work. Our expenditure is covered by donation and volunteer fees.

MEET AAMA & PRAMILA



Nirmala Ghimire
Founder & Director

In 2005, Nirmala quit her job as a driving instructor and sold land in order to set up Aishworya. She lives at the house fulltime to care for the children.

She has a husband and three adult children who live nearby and support her decision wholeheartedly. Nirmala is devoted to the children and they call her 'Aama' (Nepali for 'mummy'). She never refers to Aishworya as an "orphanage" because, as she says, our children have a home - with us.



Pramila Ghimire
Assistant Director

Pramila is Nirmala's eldest daughter and considers herself a big sister to all of the children. She lives nearby with her husband and son and comes to Aishworya every day to take care of the children. Pramila is responsible for administration and looking after our volunteers; making sure they're comfortable and happy, and helping to put their skills to the best possible use for the children.

Our location



Aishworya is located between the suburbs of Baluwatar and Maharajgunj – see right.

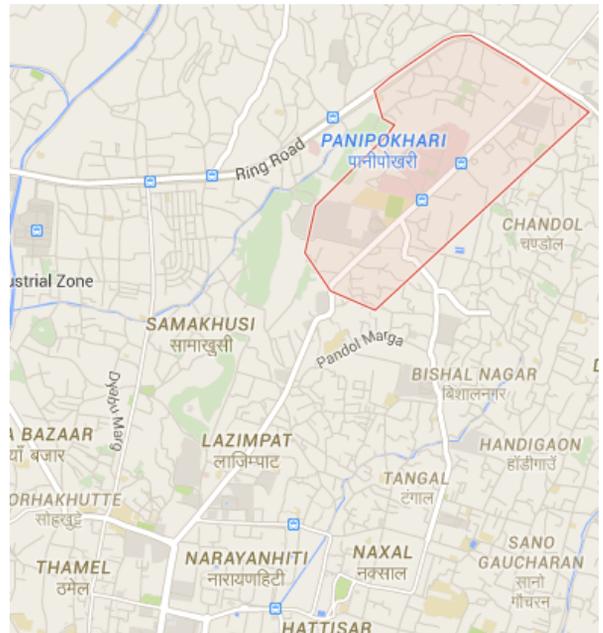
Thamel, Kathmandu’s lively tourist district, is only a 20 minute walk away, or a short taxi or rickshaw bus ride. Rickshaw buses are how most locals choose to travel because they’re so cheap. They’re also a great way to meet people.

NEARBY FACILITIES

There are plenty of small shops, restaurants and internet cafes within easy walking distance from Aishworya (2-5 minutes).

There’s also a large, international supermarket nearby.

Should you fall ill while you’re here, we can provide advice on pharmacies, clinics and hospitals, and Pramila is happy to accompany you. There are several private clinics and a local government hospital nearby.



OUR ADDRESS:

Aishworya Children’s Home
Near Shivapuri Secondary School
Maharajgunj
Kathmandu

Volunteer experience

You can stay for as long (or as short) as you'd like. We love having volunteers stay with us in the home and charge a very small accommodation fee, *all* of which supports the day-to-day running of Aishworya.

VOLUNTARY WORK:

We're aware you're offering your services without pay, and that different volunteers can offer different skills. So we don't allocate specific jobs. Instead, we encourage your active involvement in our daily life through:

- Teaching English through play, conversation and helping with homework
- Helping with daily chores like cleaning, washing, cooking, or getting the children ready for school
- Providing entertainment like playing games, sports, drawing, reading, or trips to the park. The children also love music and dance!
- Volunteers can also support us with their specific skills, e.g. previous environmental science graduates helped us to install solar panels, an IT expert helped to develop our website, and a communications professional wrote this handbook!

On school days, you're free to explore Kathmandu while the children are at school. You're also welcome to take days off, just preferably not Saturdays as the children will be home from school.



A TYPICAL DAY AT AISHWORYA

During term, children attend school Sunday – Friday. Saturday is their day off and Friday is usually a half-day. This is our activity on a typical school day:

5.00am – 6.00am:	Wake up
6.00am – 8.00am:	Chores, exercise, prayers
8.00am – 9.00am:	Morning meal
9.00am – 9.30am:	Get ready for school
9.30am – 3.00pm:	Children at school
3.00pm – 5.00pm:	Homework, play, chores
5.00pm – 5.30pm:	Prayers
5.30pm – 6.30pm:	Evening meal
7.00pm – 8.00pm:	Bedtime

Volunteer experience



ACCOMMODATION

Staying with us provides a true sense of Nepali culture and life at Aishworya.

Volunteers have a separate bedroom with full bedding to provide space and comfort. If there are other volunteers staying at the time, you may need to share a room.

We have a hot shower and flushing toilet (please note that toilet paper and sanitary napkins cannot be flushed). For laundry, you're welcome to wash your clothes by hand with us, or you can easily take them to Thamel to be laundered.

We charge a small fee to stay with us, which includes accommodation, meals and airport pick up and drop off. The fee depends on the duration of your stay.

Although small, your accommodation contribution is a huge help in providing a regular source of income to support the day-to-day running of Aishworya.



MEALS

Volunteers who stay at Aishworya share in our daily main meals, served 8.00am – 9.00am and 5.30pm – 6.30pm. We also provide you with safe drinking water.

We typically eat a traditional Nepali meal of dhal bhaat (lentils and rice) which is delicious. We also love to teach volunteers how to cook traditional dhal bhaat so they can keep the recipes forever.

There is usually a small snack ('tiffin') at lunchtime. You're also welcome to keep your own snacks if you'd like.

If you're a keen cook and don't mind cooking for very large groups, you're welcome to cook for everyone – the children love to try new things! In the past, volunteers have made popular meals from their country, or have made fun snacks like popcorn! Please note that you would need to cover any expense for cooking meals.

Volunteer experience

TRIPS & EXCURSIONS

The children love to get out and about on weekends, and volunteers are welcome to take them on fun excursions. Past volunteers have planned trips to the swimming pool, the park, the cinema, and even out for pizza!

Depending on the excursion, sometimes it's best to arrange two or three trips with smaller groups (transporting 50 children to the pool or the park takes a lot of supervision!). But we can help you to plan trips and can also come along if you need extra hands.

Please bear in mind that any associated cost would need to be covered by you, however they needn't be expensive – the children love going to the park and it's free!





Before you arrive

WHAT TO BRING TO AISHWORYA

- The children love to learn about where our volunteers are from. So, pictures of your home and family are always a hit!
- We provide full bedding but please bring your own towel.
- Electricity in Nepal can be unreliable so a torch or headlight will come in handy. You can easily buy one in Thamel.
- Unreliable electricity also means hot showers are not always possible. So volunteers often bring back-up wet wipes.
- It can sometimes be difficult to find your preferred toiletries in Nepal. However, the nearby international supermarket should have what you need. They also sell tampons which aren't common in Nepal.
- Travel guide books like Lonely Planet have useful advice for travelling to Nepal, and great information about local attractions.
- You can buy most things very cheaply when you get here – including clothing and foreign-language books. So as long as you have your essentials, you needn't worry about forgetting other items.

DONATIONS

Many volunteers like to provide additional support through donations and gifts. There's absolutely no obligation to do this, but if you'd like to, here's some helpful advice:

Gifts:

Clothes, toys, games, books, school gear, sports goods and stationery are always helpful gifts. For advice on items the children need most, please don't hesitate to ask us. Note that items can be much cheaper to buy in Kathmandu. So instead of carrying them with you, you may prefer to purchase them when you're here – and we can take you to the best places for locals to shop!

Donations:

Many volunteers like to fundraise before their trip to make a donation when they get here. If this is something you'd like to do, visit www.aishworya.com/fundraising to see what others have done and get inspired!



Important information

We must always place our children's wellbeing first. We don't have many volunteer rules, but the ones we have are important to us. So we really appreciate your co-operation.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

We don't allow alcohol onto our premises (or illegal substances of any kind). We also don't allow volunteers into the home if they're inebriated.

We appreciate you may wish to go out and drink with friends from time to time. All we ask is that you do not disturb the children by coming home late or inebriated.

At 8pm, the children go to bed and we lock the front gates. So if for any reason you will be home later than 8pm, you'll need to let us know in advance.

In the past, some volunteers have chosen to stay at a hotel or hostel in Thamel on the nights they wish to go out. Hotels and hostels can be very inexpensive (as little as 300 Rupees per night). If you do choose to spend a night away, just let us know in advance so we don't worry about where you are!

GIVING GIFTS

You're welcome to buy gifts for the children, but should feel under no obligation to do so. Sometimes the children may ask you to buy chocolates or gifts for them – please do not feel that you have to. Also, while it is nice to buy toys, books or sweets, sometimes other gifts may be more appropriate for the children's wellbeing, such as fruit, milk, eggs or socks for school.

Feel free to ask our staff for suggestions if you wish to buy a gift, and please never give any money directly to the children.

CHILD SAFETY

We operate within Nepali child safety and volunteering laws. For transparency, we arrange regular visits from social workers who ensure the children's rights are being upheld.

Our contact details



EMAIL

For all queries, please email Pramila Ghimire at ach.nepal@gmail.com

FACEBOOK

You can find us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/aishworya.childrenshome>

PHONE

(+977) 9851005341 or;
(+977) 9841932846 or;
(+977) 9813618466

VISIT

Aishworya Children's Home
Near Shivapuri Secondary School
Maharajgunj
Kathmandu

POST: If you want to send anything to Aishworya, please use the following address:

Pramila Ghimire
Aishworya Children's Home
Shiva World-Wide Communication
Baluwatar
Near Nepal Rastra Bank
Kathmandu
Nepal

From everyone here at Aishworya, thank you for your support and we look forward to meeting you!