



UK OFFICE: Christian Centre, Oldbrook, Milton Keynes, MK6 2TG Tel: 01908 553070
UGANDA OFFICE: Telela B, Lira, Uganda Email: missions@lightforce.org.uk Web: www.lightforce.org.uk

THANK YOU FROM LIGHTFORCE INTERNATIONAL

First of all, we would like to take the time to thank you for choosing to volunteer for LightForce International, giving your time to support the work that we do. Upholding our vision of taking good news to the poor and practical help to those in need.

We have taken the time to put together this information booklet for you so that you are up to date with all that LightForce do and the organisations we support in India. We ask that you please take the time to read the information, policies, and guidelines carefully, in preparation for your time with us.

As a volunteer for LightForce International we ask that you agree to live and work by our policies and principles.

- Act within the best interests of the charity and its beneficiaries
- Look to work alongside our policies, procedures and staff members, not trying to change how things are done but enhancing what we do
- Treat all our staff members, community members and anyone who comes into contact with the charity with respect and dignity.
- Adhere to our Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policies and Procedures

Thank you again for volunteering your time with LightForce International. We hope it is a life changing time for you.

INDIA VOLUNTEERS INFORMATION MANUAL

India is located in south Asia and is bordered by other countries like Pakistan in the west, China and Nepal in the north to north eastern part, Bhutan in the north east and Burma in the west.



Weather

In Chennai, where IGM are based, monsoon season is October- December. The rest of the year temperatures are mostly high and can peak above 30 degrees.

In Andra Pradesh, where Home of Faith is based, the weather can vary. March- June can be very hot, July- September brings tropical rains, October to February the weather is cooler but still for visitors will be a warm climate.

Important information:

Money:

There is only one legal currency in India, the Rupee. You can either exchange your money in the UK before you leave. This can be done at any foreign exchange bureau but we would suggest giving yourself time in case you need to order the currency. Or, you can wait until in India and somebody in Home of Faith or IGM will help you to exchange this. If you want to exchange in India, inform people when you arrive so this can be planned in.

Entering India:

You will need to complete an e-tourist visa online before your trip to India. You can find Guidance on this in our Volunteer Documents section on the website. Please ensure you have this printed out and with you when travelling to India.

You must have your Yellow Fever certificate ready to present and be checked as you enter Chennai or Hyderabad airport especially if you have travelled to Africa or South America.

Travel will have been arranged with us from the airport to where you will be staying, a driver will be at the airport to collect you. They will be holding up a sign, as you come out of the doors in the airport look for them.

Mobile phones:

You may have occasional access to WIFI but this is not guaranteed. There will however be phone signal for you to communicate with your loved ones that you have arrived and potentially an update further into your trip.

Sleeping arrangements:



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When staying in both Home of Faith and IGM, accommodation is on the site of the projects. The accommodation is simple but comfortable. You will need to bring towels with you, and if you like to have your own sheets to travel with, you can bring them also.

Food:

Whilst in India, you will be eating local food which will be prepared for you daily. If you have any specific dietary requirements or you if you currently do or have suffered from an eating disorder, this must be declared on your application form.

Friendliness:

You won't fail to realise very quickly how friendly the people are. They will all speak to you and make you feel very welcome. Whilst in the local community it is extremely important that you visit people respectfully, greeting people with a shake of the hand and if you have learned any greetings in the local dialect that is always welcomed.

Why volunteer

- To give something of yourself to other people
- Experience another culture
- Live simply and examine your values
- Your financial contribution helps the sustainability of our work
- Understand poverty and realise its impact
- Ugandans feel encouraged to see you there and helping them

Is this for you?

LightForce is a faith based organisation; therefore you will be exposed to Christians and church. Part of the weekly programme whilst in India will be attending church, supporting the children in their Christian faith and spending time with them whilst they have their daily devotions. We want people who are sympathetic and respectful towards Christian values.

Being in India is a great opportunity to serve. It goes without saying that you have got to love people and children. You must be patient, kind and generous but at the same time strict in order to earn their respect and ensure the smooth running of the project. You must be able to handle the heat and humidity and insects. If you are prepared to put in the work it will be the most amazing, life changing experience you will ever have. It may take time to adjust to the food, time difference, heat, smell and culture but it will be well worth it.

Principles you agree to live by whilst with us.

Volunteers agree to the following:

- Not to smoke or drink alcohol at the base or at project locations
- Not to get romantically involved with other visitors or people working within the organisations
- Get involved with the program as required
- Make every effort to be courteous to all and maintain unity in the team at all times
- To treat all staff with courtesy and respect

Kit list

- Smart and modest clothing for when you are visiting projects or if you attend church (shirt and trousers for men, long skirt and blouse or long dress for women)
- Light cotton underwear
- Long trousers for evenings, shirts, long sleeve tops. (Note: jeans may not be comfortable as it is generally hot and they won't dry quickly when washed),
- $\frac{3}{4}$ length trousers are very practical for the day.
- Shorts must reach the knee
- T-shirts or short sleeve tops
- Cotton night wear
- Towel. You can also bring bedsheets with you if you want.



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- One really good pair of shoes-sandals that fit well for general every day outside use.
- Walking boots or heavy shoes for use during wet and muddy seasons
- A set of clothes for hands on activities (gardening, painting etc)
- Flip flops or slippers for in the house
- First aid kit including blockers for diarrhoea, rehydration sachets, paracetamol, antihistamine tablets (especially if you react badly to bites) and cream for fungal infections (which are more common in the humidity)
- Sun tan cream, after sun.
- Hat or a cap.
- Insect repellent (spray variety is easiest to apply)- Jungle Formula Max Strength is recommended
- Bring your own feminine hygiene stuff.
- Torch & spare batteries as there are frequent power cuts
- Bring a diary-you'll regret not keeping one
- Toiletries-soap, shampoo etc.
- Bible & books to read
- Camera & music

Before you leave home

Please note the following:

- You will be asked to complete a DBS check
- Passports must be valid for a period of 6 months or longer than the period you will be in India. Check it before you apply.
- Travel Insurance. Most travel policies do not cover doing any type of work. We highly recommend SALT Insurance company <https://www.saltinsurance.com/> as they cover the types of activity you may be involved in.
- Vaccinations are required for entrance into India. Take advice from your GP.
- Mosquitoes- take preventative measures such as covering up at dawn & dusk and using mosquito repellent. The repellent needs to contain 50% deet- Jungle Formula is a good brand to use.
- **Make photocopies of your passport, visa, tickets, travel insurance certificate and print out a list of emergency contact details and any medication you are currently taking. Give this to the office upon arrival.**

Getting to India

You can get flights to both Hyderabad and Chennai from a variety of airlines including direct flights, which we would always recommend. You can come with whatever airline you wish but we need to coordinate arrivals and departures

In order to go and visit IGM, you must fly in to Chennai Airport. IGM is based about an hour's drive from the airport.

For Home of Faith, the airport is Hyderabad. Home of Faith is between 4 and 5 hours' drive from the airport

What you can bring for the children

People ask us what they can bring that will be useful.

- Children's clothes
- Pencil crayons
- Educational toys
- Coloured paper
- Bubbles
- Skipping ropes
- Story books

Please DO NOT bring anything electrical or with batteries

Please make the resources available to the senior UK staff person on arrival or the leaders at IGM/ Home of Faith – don't give things out directly. We don't want to breed a culture where all our visitors are seen as gift bearers.

Staff should not ask you for help with finances or for any of your belongings. They have been told that this is an abuse of their position so please don't do anything to encourage such practice.



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We ask that you don't give email addresses & telephone number in the UK as you may be plagued with requests for help after you return home.

Health and Security u

LightForce International has been providing opportunities for adults of all ages to volunteer on short term & long term mission trips for 40 years. Our safety record is excellent. We don't have any serious incidents on record. We want to keep it that way and ensure that people joining our teams feel as secure as possible and are cared for. Sometimes volunteers are frustrated by the "ground rules" applied but we believe adhering to the guidelines has enhanced security.

Both projects are secure and supervised 24hrs a day by our guards.

We ensure that in India ALL volunteers are met. Volunteers need to come out of the airport and look for a sign saying LightForce International or with their name on.

Copies of Medical insurance should be placed in the LightForce International UK office before departure and a copy given to the office upon arrival in India. This ensures that in the unlikely event of serious sickness or accident there are no delays in organising treatment or if necessary repatriation.

Travellers expect to occasionally get tummy upsets or feel the effects of heat and humidity. Take care not to eat food from unknown sources, drink safe or bottled water and peel fruits before eating. This will help avoid most problems. Personal hygiene is also more critical in hot climates. If volunteers are feeling unwell they should always make someone in the LightForce, IGM or Home of Faith leadership team aware.

It is not unusual for most people to feel a little homesick. Especially if they are away for the first time or this is their first long trip. Keeping busy, making new friends and getting involved in the project will help.

There is no greater risk of being mugged or robbed in India than there is in the UK. The same rules apply there as here. Just be vigilant and use common sense.

- Don't go out alone after dark
- Don't carry phones, cameras or bags in ways that they can be easily snatched
- Don't carry large amounts of money or let it be on display when paying for things – just carry what is necessary for the day.
- Dress appropriately and modestly
- Don't be rowdy or act in ways that attract attention.
- Keep your wits about you – don't be flattered by people who you don't know – people will like to talk to you because you are English. Just be alert. Most are genuinely friendly but from time to time there'll be an opportunist.
- Follow the local advice given you – keep out of "no go areas" and don't go anywhere without advising the local project leader. Never change your plans without advising them.

We are so excited to welcome you to India and wish you a safe journey to us and a memorable life changing time with us.

LightForce International

Contact Details

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