



Volunteer Manual

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Yaowawit Overview

Forward

On behalf of the staff and children at Yaowawit School, we would like to thank you for your interest in applying to become a volunteer. Volunteering here makes a big difference to the running of our school and can be an extremely rewarding experience. The Volunteer Manual is designed to give you an idea of life at Yaowawit, to explain what you will need to bring to volunteer here, costs and rules that you will need to follow. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

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Yaowawit School – A Brief Introduction

Yaowawit School Kapong is a government approved environmentally sustainable Education and Life Skills Learning Centre. Situated remotely in the jungle, and close to the sleepy town of Kapong, day-to-day life at Yaowawit can be both unusual and inspiring.

We strive to provide a first-class education to children from some of Southern Thailand's most underprivileged backgrounds. Alongside standard academic subjects, students are taught meaningful, practical skills that they can utilize once they finish school. We have our own farm where students learn how to successfully grow specific crops, and at what times of the year, and they help to develop natural pesticides and sustainable farming practices. We have a hospitality training centre and restaurant, where our students are able familiarize themselves with the hospitality trade, develop catering and hotel management skills, and to help them become more self-confident. In addition to these skills centres, we teach IT and computer skills, and encourage our students to explore their interests and passions, whether that includes sports, dance, photography, etc. We are active in the community and our students regularly compete in local dancing, sports, and academic competitions.

Our goal is to become a model school for others across Southern Thailand, by sharing our successful holistic approach to education. We currently have between 10 and 12 international schools that come from around the world to visit us each year, to partake in our Cultural Exchange Programme. With frequent exposure to different cultures, our students become confident and open-minded to ways of life that differ to their own. We also organize a variety of



day trips and activities in the local community for visiting international schools, which with it brings in tourism and income to our rural town.

Mission Statement

Yaowawit School Kapong is a community where the well-being and care of all people is our highest mission. We pledge to provide a first-class education, which helps children to become open-minded, confident, caring, and happy human beings. Yaowawit School Kapong benefits its neighborhood and makes a positive difference in everybody's lives.

Academic Overview

First Semester	May (2 nd week) – October (1 st week)
Second Semester	November (1 st week) – March (4 th week)
School break	April (1 st week) – May (2 nd week) October (1 st week – 4 th week)

Please arrive at least 5 days before the semester begins, so that we have enough time to go through the upcoming scholastic schedules and plan timetables that suit you.

Most of our children go home to their families during the school break, although some children that are unable to return home remain at Yaowawit. During these holidays, we invite school children and teachers from the surrounding region to join in our English Camp.

Volunteer Process Overview

Applying to Volunteer With Us

If you are interested in coming to Yaowawit, please send us your CV and a cover letter to volunteers@yaowawit.com. You can apply for the duration of a semester (4/5 months), or for a full academic year (around 12 months). Please indicate your preference when sending us your application.

Interview

After your application has been received, we may contact you to set up an informal interview over Skype. Once we have had a chance to speak more, we encourage you to contact any of our current volunteers so you can gain a better understanding of day-to-day life at Yaowawit.

Costs

Unlike many other volunteer programmes around the world that charge thousands of dollars a month, we ask for **7,500THB per month** to go in the Volunteer Fund. This is to cover your housing and food costs (3 meals per day). The Volunteer Fund also goes towards financing fun activities for the children, i.e. birthday parties, day trips, movie nights, treasure hunts, etc.

Please note that if you choose to extend your stay with us for longer than 3 months, you will no longer be asked to contribute to the Volunteer Fund. We feel that dedicating more of your time to helping our students should allow you to remain free of charge.

Housing facilities are relatively basic, with a shared kitchen space to use if you decide to purchase your own food. Living in Kapong is cheap, and you will not need more than 1,000THB per week (depending on your food and beverage consumption). If you choose to participate in the Volunteer's Supplies Fund (50 baht per month), we will



purchase cleaning materials and toilet paper for all volunteers to use. You are responsible for buying hygiene products, along with any alternative breakfast choices and snacks to make your stay more comfortable. Please note that if you choose to travel during school vacation times, the cost of living is higher in neighboring regions like Khao Lak and Phuket.

If you wish to rent a scooter, the monthly cost of this is 3,000THB. Some volunteers choose to split the cost of the rental so each person pays half. You will need to take a local scooter test before being able to legally drive one. *Please note that you will require an international driver's permit to legally drive cars in Thailand.*

Preparations & Considerations Before Arriving in Thailand

Driving in Thailand

If you plan to ride a scooter or drive a car, you must have a driving license valid in Thailand. Without a valid driver's license, you will not be permitted to drive a Yaowawit vehicle. Thailand recognizes international driver's licenses that can be obtained in your country. In addition, we recommend that you organise appropriate international insurance to cover you whilst driving in Thailand. We strongly encourage you to wear a helmet when you are on a scooter.

You may not drive students, except in the case of medical emergencies.

Transportation from Phuket Airport to Yaowawit

Phuket International Airport is the closest airport to Yaowawit, with a distance of around 90km. It takes 1.5 hours by car. If requested, our driver can pick you up from the airport for a cost of 1,000THB. Alternatively, you can organise to take a bus from Phuket to Takua Pa, where we can pick you up. Takua Pa is around a 20-minute drive from Yaowawit.

Dress Code at Yaowawit

Thai culture is conservative, and both adults and children are taught to greatly respect teachers. Our students will look up to you as a role model and representative of the community. During your time at Yaowawit, you will be seen as an ambassador for our foundation, and will be expected to dress appropriately. Although you are certainly not expected to wear a suit and tie, you must dress respectfully and cater your appearance to respect Thai customs. Please see the table below for dress code guidelines.

Men	Women
Clean shaven	-
Tidy hair (pulled back if long enough)	Long hair tied back
Trousers or shorts (conservative, knee length)	Skirts or shorts (conservative, knee length)
T-shirts or collared shirts (no sleeveless shirts unless they are being used for a sporting event)	Shirts that cover the shoulders (no low-cut shirts that expose cleavage)
Board shorts for swimming	One-piece swimsuits (especially at the school pool, beach, and waterfalls when the children are around), and board shorts for sporting events



No visible piercings (especially in the face)

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Tattoos to be covered if possible

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Under no circumstances should you wear short shorts when you are teaching or accompanying the children to special events (i.e. temple visits, outside school visits and functions, or sporting functions).

Please be sensitive to the dress code at all times, especially when you are on school grounds, in order to respect local Thai coworkers. We strongly advise that you adhere to the dress code guidelines when you are exploring the surrounding area as well, as it will encourage locals to offer assistance or camaraderie if sought.

Please ensure that you also bring **covered shoes** and/or trail boots with you, as there are poisonous snakes in the surrounding jungle (wearing flip-flops is definitely not advised when walking through the farm).

Visas

Yaowawit can provide you with an invitation letter that can be used to obtain an initial visa for Thailand. We recommend that you apply for a **one-year, multiple entry, Non-O visa** at the Thai Embassy or Thai Consulate in your country of origin.

In order to volunteer legally in Thailand, you must apply for a work permit. You must apply for a work permit after you arrive at Yaowawit School. It can be a long process, but we are willing to help you with your application.

Please adhere to the restrictions of your permit; if you overstay the length of your visa, you will be fined 500THB per additional day that you remain in Thailand. For more information, please see your country's Thai embassy or Consulate.

If you need to extend or renew your visa whilst you are at Yaowawit, we can discuss that when you are here, and organise transport to and from the border.

Please note: you will need to **bring all relevant documents with you when applying for a work permit in Thailand**. This includes a CV/resume, copies of any certificates and diplomas, copies of birth certificate if possible, **police check** from your country of residence, passport photos, and a reference letter. It is better to bring too many documents than too few.

Health & Vaccinations

We take any medical issues at Yaowawit seriously, and we always available to help you if you need assistance at any time. The school has a nursing room that contains first-aid supplies. If further treatment is required, the local hospital is only 1km away and is just off the main road. Any injuries sustained at Yaowawit must be cleaned and disinfected immediately, to minimize the risk of infection. Please ensure that you do not take any unnecessary risks during your stay. We are situated rurally, so it is important to remain alert and to respect nature.

It is advised that you are up-to-date with your **Hep A, B, and C** inoculations, along with **Tetanus**. Please speak with your local doctor for current vaccination recommendations. We also strongly recommend that you organise **international travel insurance** that covers your healthcare.

Although Phang Nga is malaria-free, mosquitoes can still pose a threat (i.e. dengue fever) and are most prolific during rainy season. To avoid getting bitten, we suggest that you wear insect repellent (particularly in the evenings when you are outside).



You could also potentially run into an issue with head lice. To prevent this, please bring mediated shampoo with you, and keep long hair tied back.

Comfortable and appropriate clothing	Cotton is best for the climate in Kapong. Leather items are not advised; they will mould over time. Do not bring expensive or precious clothing items with you. Long loose pants are recommended.
Sport shoes, flat sandals/flip-flops	You will be constantly taking your shoes off when entering rooms, as this is the Thai way.
Laptop, iPod, eBook reader, etc	
Medicated Shampoo	Advised as a precautionary measure. It can also be purchased at the local market.
Swimming cap	Necessary if you have long hair. This can also be bought locally.
Raincoat and umbrella	We're in the <i>rainforest</i> . It's wet here!
Tampons	Tampon are expensive in Thailand, and so it's advised that you bring them from home.
Food and Snacks	Some foods (such as muesli) can only be purchased at large supermarkets, the closest of which is 30mins drive from school.

Most importantly: bring happiness, an easy-going personality, a sense of fun, and an open mind.

Life at Yaowawit & The Surrounding Area

Surrounding Regions

Transportation to other neighboring areas is easy from Yaowawit. Popular holiday destinations are easily accessible (Takua Pa: 50km, Krabi: 120km, Phang Nga: 40km, Khao Lak: 60km, Phuket: 100km). Yaowawit is located in Kapong and there are regular buses that pass through. Yaowawit owns 2 pick-up trucks that can sometimes be used when they are available (only if you hold a valid international driver's license). If you are not eligible to drive, please inform our driver. He can take you to your destination. Please note that you will be charged for petrol consumption if the trip is for private use.

Scooters can be hired for 3,000THB per month (commonly shared between 2 volunteers) from a local shop in Kapong.

Local Area

Yaowawit is located in Mo Village, which is one of the 5 villages in Kapong (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kapong_District). Kapong is a quiet, small town, where everyone knows everyone else. Most of the locals don't speak English and will likely notice that you are from Yaowawit. It is advised that you dress respectfully. There is a local market (named Nut Market) that students often visit on Sunday mornings. It is a 30-minute walk from the school. Food from local street vendors is cheap, safe, and delicious. Costs range between 30-60THB. There are ATMs in Kapong if you need to take out money.



Kapong is a very quiet town, and volunteers tend to entertain themselves primarily on campus. It's about an hour's drive to the beach, but there are waterfalls, treks, and mountain bike trails around Kapong. Yaowawit has a selection of bikes that you are free to use.

The Volunteer Village

The Volunteer Village consists of a series of buildings near the entrance of the foundation, separate to the school area. This gives volunteers a private space where they live and can relax. As others live in the Village, it is important that communal areas are kept clean and tidy and that you are respectful to your neighbors at all times.

You will be provided with your own room and a shared bathroom, kitchen and seating area. There are 2 functional washing machines and 1 drying machine that are available for use in the Volunteer Village. It is requested that you use these machines during the day, so that they can harness power collected from our solar panels and use available energy efficiently.

Children should be discouraged from coming into the Volunteer Village, and under no circumstances are children allowed into any of the volunteer's bedrooms.

Swimming Pool

Yaowawit's swimming pool is next to the farm around 100m from the school area. Volunteers are free to use the swimming pool when it is available. If you have long hair, please use a swim cap when using the pool to ensure that no hair clogs up the filtration system. You may not bring children to the pool unless a member of staff is accompanying you.

WiFi & Communications

Pay-as-you-go sim cards can be bought at the local 7Eleven. Credit can be bought at shops around Kapong. It is recommended that you use an **AIS company** sim card, which is the only sim card that receives a connection in school. It is highly recommended that you bring a laptop or tablet with you. We do also have a computer room but it is locked at night. Yaowawit School and the Volunteer Village has 24-hour WiFi. We do occasionally have power cuts and other problems which may affect the WiFi, but we address them as quickly as possible.

Meals

07:00 – 08:30	Breakfast
11:30 – 12:00	Lunch
17:30 – 18:30	Dinner

If you are a vegetarian or have any specific dietary requirements, please inform us as soon as possible. Our restaurant serves mostly Thai cuisine, which is spicy by nature. Volunteers are served a separate, milder variation of each meal. If you have the desire to supplement your nutrition, a variety of foods and beverages can be found at the local market and in shops.

Drinking Water

There are drinking fountains next to the dining area where drinking water is available at all times. The taps are part of a filtration system that treats and purifies the water through reverse osmosis. The water system is well maintained and is regularly checked in order to fulfill the standard for processing suitable, safe drinking water.



Recycling

Yaowawit has an area for separating rubbish. Recycling is not very common in Thailand, but we are striving to become as eco-conscious as possible and so encourage our students and staff to practice appropriate recycling techniques. We expect our volunteers to promote and practice recycling as well.

Meditation

Yaowawit students meditate two times each day (mornings and evenings) in the theatre, with a small group of students meditating in the temple each evening. Volunteers are welcome to join in if they are interested in doing so.

Free Time

Your free time will be decided by your schedule. Volunteers are free to roam the grounds, and explore the local district. The volunteers tend to spend a lot of time together, and it is advised that you bring some card games, books and other activities to keep you occupied. Volunteers are encouraged to play sports or spend time with the children as much as possible. Yaowawit children will benefit greatly from speaking English with volunteers in the evenings or on weekends.

Volunteer Tasks & Responsibilities

Probationary Period

If you apply to volunteer with us for a semester or full school year, you are subject to a probationary period of four weeks, which commences upon arrival. This period is designed to allow you to adjust into school life, the surrounding area, the weather, and for you to get to know your peers, etc. If you decide that Yaowawit is not for you and you want to leave, we ask that you at least complete the probationary period first. This will enable us to find a suitable replacement volunteer to fill your position.

The School director reserves the right to dismiss any volunteer during this period if she deems them a poor fit for the school's philosophy. Please note that any breach of Yaowawit's Code of Conduct (found on page 10) could result in immediate dismissal.

Introductory Meeting

Upon arrival, volunteers are required to attend an introductory meeting. This is designed to introduce you to Thai culture and life, outlines the structure at Yaowawit, confirms your scheduled timetable that will include your primary responsibilities, and reiterates Yaowawit's Code of Conduct. You may also be required to learn the phonics (English sounds) that we use throughout the school. This is to encourage consistency for the benefit of the children.



Children's Schedule

08:00 – 08:30	Morning assembly (national anthem, meditation, teacher brief)
08:30 – 11:30	Classroom lessons (subjects learning)
11:30 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 14:30	Classroom lessons
14:30 – 16:00	Extra curriculum (Life skills)
16:00 – 18:00	Relaxation & recreation
18:00 – 18:30	Dinner
18:30 – 19:00	Showering
19:00 – 20:00	Relaxation, recreation and reading club
20:00 – 20:30	Meditation
21:30	Lights out

Volunteer's Schedule

Each volunteer will be provided with their own schedule. This will be full-time (unless the volunteer supervisor states otherwise) and typically, volunteers work from Monday to Saturday (Saturday is a half day). Depending on arrangements made with the volunteer supervisor, you may be required to work in the mornings and/or the evenings.

Weekly Volunteer Meetings

All volunteers meet each Friday at 4pm. Aside from going over the upcoming week's schedule, volunteers are encouraged to share best classroom practices, and provide feedback, reflections, etc. Any issues can also be openly discussed if volunteers choose to do so.

Potential Frustrations when Volunteering At Yaowawit

Language Barrier	<p>If you are unable to understand what someone is attempting to communicate to you, ask him or her again. If you believe that others are misunderstanding you, try to be patient. Take it easy and listen to what the other person has to say before coming to a conclusion.</p> <p>The children and some of the staff at Yaowawit have very limited English, but they are willing to assist you when required. It is helpful to pick up a little Thai during your stay. Staff and students at Yaowawit are very compassionate; they are willing to try to understand and help you whenever needed.</p>
Judgments	<p>Each person residing at Yaowawit has a different life story, and may do things differently to you. If you encounter issues with anyone around you, please handle them appropriately and do not label anyone in a derogatory way.</p>



Easy-Going Thai Life	Thai life is very flexible and reactionary. Things do not always happen when and how you expect them to. Patience and flexibility is key.
Unrealistic Expectations	Although we do welcome advice and feedback from volunteers, please understand our limitations as a charitable foundation situated in the middle of the rainforest. Please do not bring too many expectations for drastic change with you.
Weather	Summers are hot and sticky, and the rainy season lives up to its name. Try to adapt to the weather as much as possible and bring a good raincoat/umbrella with you.
Animals	We have a large variety of spiders, insects and lizards at Yaowawit. Most are harmless and are happy to be left alone. Occasionally scorpions and snakes are spotted so it is important to remain alert – especially when walking through the farm. Covered shoes are strongly advised when trekking.
Food	Food is generally spicy and can be a little monotonous. Milder variations of dishes are created for volunteers. If you are vegetarian, it is advisable that you bring along vitamin supplements, as vegetarian options are very limited.
Remote Location	Yaowawit is relatively isolated. Aside from the children, school activities, TV and internet, there isn't much 'entertainment' in Kapong – and definitely no nightlife. Other tourist destinations are easy to access though.
Accommodation	The Volunteer Village is fairly basic. There is a communal kitchen that has a toaster, fridge and kettle.

Summary

Thank You

Once again we thank you for your interest in Yaowawit, and your desire to come and work with us.

The children are at the heart of Yaowawit. All of our programmes, activities and efforts are catered towards their wellbeing and education. We are sure that if you come and work with us and bring your knowledge, skills, energy, compassion, open mind, patience, understanding, acceptance and a willingness to compromise and adapt, you will love your stay with us.



Yaowawit Code of Conduct

- No alcohol for volunteers under the age of 20 (national Thai law)
- Any alcohol consumed on school grounds needs to first be approved by the School Director (written approval) (national Thai law)
- Under no circumstances may you smoke or drink alcohol in the presence of the children. If you do smoke, we urge you to be considerate of other people living in the Volunteer Village.
- Any volunteer teaching under the influence of alcohol will be dismissed from Yaowawit
- Any volunteer using illegal drugs will be dismissed from Yaowawit (no-tolerance policy)
- Verbal or physical abuse of any kind is not permitted
- No bad language is to be spoken in front of Yaowawit students or staff
- Adhere to the dress code and be sensitive to local Thai culture
- Be respectful of your peers, and be mindful of other residents when in the Volunteer Village (the noise level is to be kept at a sensible one)
- Keep communal areas clean and tidy – kitchen, showers, toilets, etc
- Holiday days are to be used when they are given. Volunteers are expected to be at Yaowawit during term times.
- Please recycle trash

Your time at Yaowawit will make you grow as a person. Make the most of your experiences with us, but please remember that we are all here to foster each child's needs first and foremost. Remain respectful to your peers and enjoy your time with us.