



# Punarbal Plus

## Volunteer Handbook 2013

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## 1. Introduction

Welcome to Punarbal Plus and thank you for choosing to volunteer with us. The organisation is dedicated to serving children infected / affected by HIV, and orphans deprived of education due to their HIV status and poverty. All children have the right to an education as outlined in the UN Convention on the rights of the child, to which Nepal is a signatory.

The Punarbal organisation also works to increase awareness of HIV/AIDS and educate people about the disease. It is also committed to reducing stigma and discrimination against those affected and supports the policy of integrating children living with HIV in to mainstream education.

The purpose of this Volunteer Handbook is to provide new volunteers with background information and orientation to our organisation, including the processes and policies in place that ensure a positive and rewarding experience volunteering with us.

## 2. About Us

The organisation Punarbal Plus was established in February 2007. It is a non-governmental, non partisan and non-profit organization working in the field of HIV & AIDS. Punarbal Plus opened the school "Punarbal Shikshya Sadan" in May 2007.

The school was created to provide education for all children without discrimination. It does however give priority to those children who are living with HIV/AIDS and/or affected by it.

The school is divided in to four classes. Nursery, LKG, UKG and class one. Some of the children stay at the school full time and some children come to school for the day.

The organisation has a staff of 11 including the school principal, teachers, a counsellor, program coordinator, finance, health assistant and caretakers.

### ***Address***

Swoyambhu, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Tel: 977-01, 4284497 office

Contact Person : Apsara Karki

9841-405427

Email: info@punarbalplus.org

### ***Website***

www. Punarbalplus .org

### ***Founders***

The organization was founded by Mohan khadka, Apsara Karki, Season Khadka, Mahesh Kumar Shrestha, Sunila Baniya, Gita Dahal and Suburna Shrestha and mandab raj karki.

## **2.1 Mission**

To serve children infected/affected by HIV and orphans who are deprived of education due to their HIV status & poverty

### ***Objectives***

- To provide a formal education to infected and affected children and orphans, so that they will have the resources to build a secure future for themselves.
- To provide psychosocial support and counselling in order to help children cope with the emotions inherent to their situation, such as fear, anger, and loneliness.
- To provide a safe, enabling and stigma-free environment for the educational, medical and other similar needs of these children to be met.
- To provide a caring home with comprehensive health care to infected/affected orphaned children.
- Make efforts to link children with the community in order to integrate them into society.
- To provide services to the parents and family of the children in order to raise awareness on HIV and AIDS.
- To reach out to the community at a grassroots level to educate about HIV and AIDS, as well as raise awareness to other closely related issues.

It is the belief of Punarbal Plus that by strictly adhering to these goals and objectives, a sustainable and effective program can be built. It is the hope that after 30 years of dedicated work and growth, Punarbal Plus can be turned over to the Nepal government, where it can be integrated into national policy and expand the reach of the cause.

### ***Beneficiaries***

Children infected / affected by HIV, and orphans deprived of education due to their HIV status and poverty.

## **2.2 Programs**

### ***Punarbal Shikshya Sadan***

The Punarbal Shikshya Sadan or “Primary School” was the first project to be established, in February of 2007. Noticing immense neglect for the education of children infected/affected by HIV, the school was initiated in order to provide these children with the education they deserve. Punarbal Plus believes that education is a fundamental right of all children, and to deprive them of this is truly immoral. It began with 35 children, and since then the enrolment has more than tripled.

### ***Punarbal community care Centre (ccc)***

Despite the immense success and growth of their existing projects, Punarbal Plus recognized one more piece still missing from their efforts. Many of these children had lost one or both parents to the AIDS virus and had nowhere to call home. So in November of 2009, the Punarbal community care centre was established. This care centre aims to provide care and guidance as well as nutritional and medical care to children that would, otherwise, go without. . Currently, the centre puts up 30 children and 5 positive women.

### ***Punarbal Awareness and Interaction Project***

The education of these children does little good if the society that they must eventually re-enter is not willing to accept them. So shortly after the opening of the school, Punarbal Plus began work on their Awareness and Interaction Program. This project is dedicated solely to reaching out to the community, educating the people to the truth about HIV, and advocating for these children's rights as well as many other related issues such as women's rights and modern techniques for preventing the spread of the virus. Specific attention is paid to school administrators and teachers in order to integrate these children back into the government school system once they have completed their primary education at Punarbal Shikshya Sadan.

### **3. Volunteering at Punarbal Plus**

Volunteering in Nepal and at our organisation will be a rewarding and positive experience with the commitment from both the volunteer and the Punarbal staff. To facilitate accountability, volunteers assisting Punarbal are requested to read and sign the Volunteer Agreement (see Appendix 1). We request that you sign the agreement prior to your commencement to ensure you are aware of your responsibilities, commitment to the volunteer assignment and that you have read and understood the Volunteer Handbook. We will allocate a staff member to work closely with you to support you during the placement.

#### **3.1 What we expect from you:**

When working with Punarbal, volunteers are expected to:

- Participate in a cooperative team effort to achieve the goals of the organisation
- Fulfil the individual agreement in a reliable and dependable manner
- Be willing to accept direction from the supervisor

We also require the following:

##### ***i) Reference***

at least one checkable reference, either a suitable childcare one or a character reference from someone who is not related to you. For example a school teacher, employer or police officer. If you have one then a current police check or CRB (UK) check is also useful.

##### ***ii) Interaction with children***

The children we care for have come from a variety of backgrounds and although they now have most of their physical needs met, the emotional trauma that most of these children have suffered is much more difficult to provide for. As with any institution there are far more children than adults so none of the children, however good the care, can receive all the personal or individual attention that they so desperately need. This is perhaps the most important thing you can give them, your time and attention.

##### ***iii) Language skills***

Spending your time with the children and talking with them will help them extend their understanding of English. The ability to speak good English is important in Nepal and gives the children a chance at a brighter economic future.

### **3.2 What you can expect from us:**

We look forward meeting you and having you as a volunteer in our school. We value your time and the contribution your efforts make to the children's education and well being.

We recognise our responsibilities to volunteers and undertake to:

- Treat all volunteers with respect as co-workers
- Provide information on the organisation and our policies
- Provide volunteers with work that is appropriate to their level, skills, and interests
- Provide volunteers with resources, information and support needed to conduct their work.

We can provide an airport pick up service and assist in arranging your accommodation (guest house or homestay). We cannot provide any financial assistance.

We will provide you with a lunchtime meal after the children have eaten, usually about 11.30am.

If you need advice on the issues surrounding people living with HIV/AIDS in Nepal, ask and we can tell you or refer you to more information.

We can also provide a reference for volunteers that excel in their placement and are interested in a related career.

### **3.3 What to bring**

You may want to bring some of the following items to help with teaching:

- The school has a DVD player, age appropriate (5-10yrs) English or Nepali language DVDs,
- English books or posters are useful.
- Teaching aids such as printouts or colouring sheets stored to a flash drive can easily be printed in many stationary shops.
- Many things can also be bought easily and often more cheaply in Nepal, which also supports the local economy. Pens, pencils, coloured paper, glue, skipping ropes, footballs and badminton sets are easily available. Bluetac is not...another thing you may want to bring!
- If you have an unlocked mobile phone Nepali SIM cards are very cheap (approx 1euro) and extremely useful.

### **3.4 General Information about the School**

#### ***Daily Activities***

Some of the day will be spent in formal class situations, usually with a teacher who can help to translate what you are saying. Try to speak slowly and clearly and use a standard version of English rather than slang. It is also good to point to what you are talking about and use pictures or books so that the children gain a better understanding

of the subject. They are quite good at repeating things like “red – r. e. d” but might not understand what “red” means. Formal grammar teaching is not necessary so don't worry too much about what you will be teaching. Explaining about wild and domestic animals, different rooms in a house, asking for things and experiences are the sort of things you might teach. Simple verbs such as “to be” “to have” “to go” with various examples is enough.

It is also a good idea, especially for the older children to give them different examples or different ways of saying something and correcting them verbally by repeating it correctly or pointing out corrections in their written books. Be careful how you do this however as one of the biggest barriers to learning is lack of self confidence.

Activities that increase the children's self esteem and confidence are always a good idea and it's ok if they vary slightly from the normal programme. Be aware however that your activities shouldn't disturb the other classes going on around you.

### ***Excursions***

From time to time we may take the children on short outings for example to the monkey temple. During these trips you are more than welcome to accompany the children at your own cost. (about 2euro) You should also remember that organising such trips requires us to know the number of participating adults. If you decide to come, then your first and main priority is supervising the children. Most of the tickets to sights in Kathmandu last for 7days so you will have the opportunity to visit again if you want to spend longer using the same ticket. If you take photos during the trip it would also be appreciated by the school if you shared them so they can be placed on the facebook page.

### ***School hours***

The school day runs between 9am and 3pm. The times you come to the school can be flexible and we will agree them at the induction. If you agree to come on a certain day or at certain times, please be on time and come when you agreed to. The teaching staff will have made allowances for your participation.

### ***School requirements***

Please inform a member of staff when you arrive and when you leave, there is also a signing in and out book which **you** are responsible for filling in.

If you are sick, unable to attend or going to be late, please notify us as soon as possible and if necessary your volunteer coordinator.

The children who stay at the school are there all the time. If you miss a day through illness or travel you would be more than welcome to spend time with those children out of school hours. They might need some individual care, mending clothes, helping with homework, personal care such as trimming and painting nails. The little things that often get missed but are greatly appreciated by the children.

### ***When there's more than one volunteer.....***

There may be times when you are not the only volunteer at the school. Not all the classes are taken in English so sometimes it might be beneficial to discuss working together to take a class. If it's a large group activity it might be more effective to manage games etc with two of you working together. This does not mean that you should spend

all your time together, there needs to be a compromise between team work and working on your own.

It may also hugely benefit the children if you take a small group of the less able or more able students out to do some catch up or extension work with them.

### 3.5 Curriculum advice

Trained early years teachers usually refer to the acronym PILES to ensure children receive appropriate care.

**P – Physical Needs:** basics like nutritional food, safe water, shelter, appropriate clothing in good repair, personal care needs and physical exercise.

**I – Intellectual Needs:** Developmentally appropriate curriculum, questions and answers, challenges, learning about new ideas and cultures, knowledge of the world and being encouraged to ask their own questions and find the information to answer them.

**L – Language Development:** Their own mother tongue and additional languages. There are a huge number of spoken languages within Nepal as well as the most commonly learnt foreign language which is English. Talking to the children and giving them the opportunity to practice, giving them new vocabulary and correcting their spoken and written efforts in a **positive** way, displaying correct examples of written text and labelling common items, drawings, furniture and rooms, reading and sharing books all help the children to develop good language skills.

**E – Emotional Development and Support:** Some of the children come to the school with unimaginable emotional and psychological trauma. They need individual care, attention, love, support and encouragement. Many of them need support to develop their self esteem and confidence. This area as much as the language development is where you can be most valuable. Be truthful with them about your stay and when you are leaving, many of the children have unfortunate experiences in their past, don't just disappear.

**S – Social / Spiritual development:** The children eat with their right hands as the left is considered “unclean” due to its use for personal care. For the most part the children eat with their hands. They usually use a communal jug or bottle for drinking with by pouring water directly in to their mouths without touching the edge of the jug. Both of these are cultural norms and not something which needs correcting. Most of the children are Hindu, they are aware of some other festivals such as Christmas but as a rule multi faith teaching is rare. Preaching Christianity or any other religion is not appropriate.

Remember that the “English” and Nepali calendars are different, teach both and avoid showing preference.

### 3.6 Tips for teaching

#### *i) Punishment:*

All the children in the school follow the government curriculum. Teaching in Nepal tends to be formal and corporal punishment does happen. This is not a license for you to

repeat what you may witness. Leading by example often shows people a different way forward.

### ***ii) Topics for teaching***

The children have English, science and social books in English, be aware that there may be some grammar errors. Commonly missed out words include “the” and “a”.

Introducing some topic work as part of your English classes gives the children some variation. Try to link it to some of the topics in the books. A project on the Chitwan National Park for example covers wild animals, different plants and trees and you can extend it to cover care for the environment. It also helps the children learn about geography, their culture and other cultures within Nepal. Show them the photos of your travels in Nepal, temples, places and people. You may learn something too!

A class that starts on items in the kitchen can lead on to discuss fuels used for cooking and the environmental impact. Children are the future of a country and what you teach them can literally change the world.

Things which are common in more developed countries such as appropriate waste disposal, care for the environment, human and animal rights and learning about different cultures are not included in the government’s curriculum, this does not mean you can’t extend a topic to cover it.

Perhaps stay away from politics and religion unless you first check what is appropriate.

Do also check what previous volunteers have done to avoid repeats.

### ***iii) Repetition***

Repeating some things is how children learn and if you feel they have not fully understood something that has been covered already it is ok to do a refresher. For the younger children especially, making a game from repeating colours, shapes, body parts and common items beginning with \_\_\_ helps them remember and is enjoyable.

### ***iv) Sharing your Culture***

Sharing your photos with the children and talking about your travels can also be relevant, as can sharing your own culture. Remember though that the children are Nepali and try to do it in a way that compares cultures rather than gives the idea of preference/superiority.

### ***v) Story time and Book culture***

Trying to encourage “a book culture” is something that is ongoing. Reading simple stories, discussing reference/picture books, talking about care of books and not leaving books around to be ripped, drawn in or generally mistreated is something which needs more work and can be something you help to develop.

### ***vi) Care for the environment***

Care of their school environment and wider environmental issues is also something you can help the children to put in to practice. Avoiding using lots of plastic bottles and refilling one with treated water can be your part.

### **vii) Positive reinforcement**

Giving the children opportunities to increase their self esteem and confidence are always good. Making displays of their work, giving them stickers for effort, giving them challenges and rewards and even ticks and smiley faces on their work all do this.

You will find “washing lines” in the class rooms, these can be used to peg up the children’s work. Check your English and try to include the children’s names with clear labels. If your handwriting isn’t great, printing things in Microsoft word using the font comic sans MS is another alternative. Consider the cost to the school though before you decide to print 20 pages out.

A good way to engage some of the younger children particularly LKG is to allow them to draw pictures to accompany their written work. It also helps their understanding of what they have written.

Ideas such as making scrap books or “special” collections of work are something they don’t usually do and is good for their self esteem.

## **4. Homestay Information**

### **4.1 Costs and benefits**

Volunteers joining our Homestay Program are required to pay only \$10 per day which contributes toward food and accommodation. Free Wifi and airport pick up is also included.

The Homestay program provides a unique experience into Nepali life and culture by either staying at the Home with staff and the children or staying at a nearby homestay with a local family. Volunteers will enjoy 3 Nepali meals per day (veg or non veg).

### **4.2 Accommodation facilities**

Volunteers will be placed in a single room with shared bathroom. Meals will be taken with the Homestay family or Punarbal staff if living at Punarbal Home.

### **4.3 Weekend Tours**

We can assist you in coordinating weekend tours, adventures to nearby places of interests such as the Monkey Temple, Durbar Square, Patan, Bhaktapur (UNESCO Heritage city), Boudha Stupa, Druk Amitabha Mountain, Nagarkot (Himalayan viewpoint) and trekking.

## **5. Policies**

### **5.1 Health and Safety**

Health and Safety in Nepal is probably not the same as in your home country. The general rules to consider are:

- Does what you are doing put you, the children or other adults at risk of injury or danger?
- Is there a safer alternative?
- Do you need to ask for help?
- Don't leave scissors, needles or other equipment lying around.
- Leave areas tidy.
- Keep medications out of reach of children.
- Clean up any spilt liquid.
- Do not deal with first aid incidents without first protecting yourself (see policy)
- "Normal" tap water is generally not safe for you or the children to drink directly.
- The school has a water filter and boils water to provide a safer alternative.
- **If in doubt ask for help.**
- You may also want to consider asking to put your bag in the office and refrain from bringing valuables or large amounts of money in to school.

## 5.2 Photos

It is OK to take photos of the children but please ask first. Also consider how you use them and any confidentiality issues. Imagine taking pictures of children in a school at home and act accordingly, avoid using names which can directly identify the children. Anything which the school considers to be inappropriate, defamatory or in breach of confidentiality/decency will result in this privilege being withdrawn and possible further action.

The school would also be grateful if you shared your photos so they can use them on facebook and their web page. The children also love to look at pictures of themselves and activities that they have done. They are also very interested in photos of you, your family, travels and home country so you may want to bring copies or look at them on the computer.

## 5.3 First Aid

Ideally you should have a first aid qualification and/or speak to a medical professional in your own country before you arrive.

Some of the children are infected with HIV some are not, they may also have other blood infections such as Hepatitis.

The general rule in all first aid situations is to not do anything which puts yourself or others at risk. If you are not comfortable dealing with first aid situations **ask for help**.

You should assume all children and adults are infected and act accordingly.

When dealing with blood or bodily fluids and HIV/Hepatitis it is strongly recommended to use personal protective equipment such as gloves. Preferably two pairs in the case of HIV and Hepatitis.

Remember that creams and oils damage latex gloves and some people are allergic to them. Ideally you should provide your own supplies. The school has a limited supply for emergencies. (Gloves and other supplies can be bought easily in Nepal, however if you want to be sure of the quality you may wish to buy them before you arrive)

### *i) Protecting yourself*

Splashes of blood, urine and saliva should be washed immediately with soap and water and followed with an alcohol hand sanitizer. (You can buy this in the main supermarket in Thamel and in many other outlets, it is a good idea to carry it everywhere in Nepal). Infection occurs via breaks in the skin, puncture wounds, unprotected sex and through splashes in the eyes.

If a puncture wound occurs encourage it to bleed by squeezing gently, then clean with “safe” water and alcohol wipes, seek medical attention.

If an eye splash occurs, wash immediately with “safe” water and seek medical attention.

It is your responsibility where possible to protect yourself and others from infection.

Infection with saliva is theoretically possible but unlikely unless from a bite wound. If this occurs follow puncture wound advice.

### *ii) Protecting others*

- Remove the child to the bathroom, most are old enough to hold a tissue/cotton wool/bandage on themselves while you put gloves on.
- Clean and cover any open wounds with a plaster or other dressing.
- Clean any blood or bodily fluids from surfaces (preferably with) disinfectant and paper tissue then place in the toilet.
- Remove gloves by pulling them inside out and place with other non flushable waste in a plastic bag to be burned.
- Treat one child at a time, one set of gloves to one child, wash hands and apply sanitizer **before** dealing with someone else.
- Only do what you are comfortable with, if in doubt **ask for help**.

### *iii) Illness*

The nature of living with HIV means that some of the children are more likely to become ill and are ill more often than other children. You should consider as part of your vaccination programme that you may require Hepatitis B, Flu, Pneumococcal and basic childhood diseases such as measles, mumps, rubella, polio, diphtheria and tetanus. Pneumonia is the leading cause of child death in Nepal and the children suffer from frequent colds and coughs. This combined with the air pollution means that asthmatics in particular may want to consult their doctor before arriving. You should talk to your medical practitioner about which vaccinations are appropriate, you may need a few more than the standard travellers’ ones.

If you become ill with diarrhoea and/or vomiting, please allow 24hrs after the illness has finished before you return to school.

Illnesses which may not be serious for you are more serious and can last longer in children whose immunity is compromised. If in doubt please phone and check before coming in.

## **5.4 Child Protection**

Punarbali Shikshya Sadan takes the issue of child protection very seriously, the protection of the children in its care is its number one priority.

- Do not do anything which puts you or a child at risk. If in doubt please **ask**.
- Remember that most of these children come from traumatic backgrounds.

- Avoid being in closed rooms alone with a child.
- Always seek permission to take and publish photos from the principal Apsara or one of the other senior members of staff. If the answer is no please respect this. Avoid naming individual children in association with photos. Consider what is appropriate in photos, remember Nepal is a very conservative country and modesty rules may not be the same as in yours, if in doubt **ask**.

Any information you may receive or see regarding the children, staff or other volunteers is considered confidential and may not be repeated, published or talked about in a public place or with people outside the school without specific permission. This includes facebook. Failure to comply with confidentiality will result in immediate termination of your placement and possible further action.

Please remember that these children are more likely than others to suffer prejudice and discrimination, some may have already suffered extreme mistreatment.

Please discuss with the principal any behaviour which causes concern, either from a child, member of staff or other volunteer. Looking the other way makes you guilty too.

The school reserves the right to check references and refuse or withdraw the offer of a volunteer place with immediate effect.

In the case of a criminal act further action can and will be taken in Nepal and possibly your own country, which may have serious repercussions for you, your family and your career.

If you have any questions or suggestions please contact a member of the school team. Your suggestions and questions help us provide better care and may also help future volunteers.

Thank you for your contribution to our programme.  
The Punarbal Shikshya Sadan and Punarbal plus team



# पुनर्बल प्लस

स्वयम्भू कारखाना चौक  
पो.ब.नं. २४८९१  
काठमाडौं, नेपाल  
फोन नं. २१८९४५६  
इमेल : punarbal\_ss@yahoo.com

पत्र संख्या :

## Volunteer contract

Punarbal Shikshya Sadan would like to welcome you to our volunteer programme.

I \_\_\_\_\_(name) have read and understood the volunteer welcome pack, including the health and safety, first aid, confidentiality and child protection policies.

I agree to comply with the schools' policies and understand that failure to do so will result in the withdrawal of the volunteer placement and may result in further action.

My working times will be: \_\_\_\_\_

Arranged holidays/days off are: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that I am expected to:

- Be on time and attend regularly as agreed.
- Phone in the event of illness, being late and/or non attendance.
- Have a good level of English.
- Work safely and with other members of the team.
- Talk to and play with the children.
- Provide exciting learning opportunities for the children.
- Promote the children's self esteem and confidence.

Signed (volunteer) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (school representative) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_