

Laos



COUNTRY GUIDE

for ADRA Connections teams



CONNECTIONS
AUSTRALIA

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Message...



Dear ADRA Connections Team,

On behalf of the ADRA Laos, we want to thank you for your decision, commitment and fundraising efforts. You have chosen to be involved in being a part of ADRA's team and mission. We are happy you are coming to visit the beautiful country of Laos. ADRA Laos was established in 1991 and our aim is to build the capacity of the communities in which we work with to ensure a bright future for people that have endured atrocious wars in the past. From 1964 to 1973, the US dropped more than 2 million tons of ordnance on Laos during 580,000 bombing missions - equal to a planeload of bombs every 8 minutes, 24 hours a day, for 9 years. This makes Laos the most heavily bombed country per capita in history. The new generation in Laos need positive changes in their lives and that is what ADRA Laos is doing in each communities we work in.

The ADRA Laos team is delighted to have you join us. This booklet contains general information for all our ADRA Connections volunteers on many questions you may have before embarking on this amazing adventure. We hope it answers any questions you may have about your trip. Project specific information can be obtained from your country ADRA Connections coordinator.

As you embark on another great journey in life, we hope that you'll not only cherish the life lessons that are presented to you, but that you'll internalise the experience and share how God has not only changed the lives of those you've helped, but also how God has changed your life! We are in the business of changing lives, thus our motto "Changing Laos, one life at a time."

Your involvement will let communities, both here and afar, know just how much people truly care about the welfare of others. Thank you for partnering with us to carry out our mission and vision to bring positive change to the beneficiaries, the people of Laos.

We are looking forward to meeting you and sharing this great time together.

Wishing you a safe journey,

Luc Sabot
Country Director

About Laos

Laos (pronounced “Lao”) is a beautiful country of rugged mountains and thick forests, populated by a warm and hospitable people who carry the legacy of a strong multicultural background. After decades of war and repressive political systems, a series of social and economic reforms has led to a rapid opening up of the country and some improvement in human development indicators. However, Laos remains a country of great hunger and poverty, with nearly 1 in 4 people living on less than US\$2 per day, with a poor human rights record.



Country Facts

Nationality: Lao or Laotian

Population: 6,911,544 (2015 est.)

Infant Mortality: 52.97 deaths/1,000 births (2015 est.)

Literacy: 79.9% (2015 est.)

Life Expectancy: 63.88 years (2015 est.),

Location: Centre of Southeast Asia, sharing borders with Thailand, Myanmar, China, Vietnam, and Cambodia, completely landlocked, widely covered by rich tropical and sub-tropical forest.

Natural Hazards: Seasonal flooding and drought.

Religions: Buddhist 66.8%, Christian 1.5%, other 31%, unspecified 0.7% (2005 est.)

Languages: Lao (official), French, English, and various ethnic languages, including Thai, Khmu, and Hmong.

Education Facts

Though Laos has made a commitment to “education for all,” the overall standards and level of education have not seen much improvement. Education expenditure remains one of the lowest in the world at only 2.80% of their GDP, ranking them 147th in the world (World Bank, 2010). Despite the minimal funding, low enrolment rates, and high drop-out rates, the literacy rate for children is improving. However, about 1 in 4 children are forced to drop out of primary school, mainly to help their parents or because of poverty (2012, World Bank). These outcomes are even worse for girls, those in rural and remote regions, and those from different ethnic backgrounds.

In line with ADRA’s mission to provide access to quality education, especially for the poor and marginalised, ADRA Laos has conducted several programs to improve educational outcomes in the country:

The Community Initiative for Education Development (CIED) program focussed on creating a holistic approach to education in a remote area. This project helped construct and resource schools, facilitate ease of access, support the training of educators, and helped provide a framework for community awareness of the importance of education.

The Youth Empowerment Against HIV/AIDS (YEAH) program provided peer education and training and a media campaign to dozens of villages and hundreds of school children. This program aimed to provide information on HIV/AIDS and other STIs to minimise the risk of infection by empowering students as peer-to-peer educators. The program was so successful in improving awareness and reducing transmission that the government of Laos has since recommended extending the project.



Expectations

Laos is a developing nation with challenges affecting daily life that you may not face at home. We ask all volunteers to come out with a flexible and open-minded attitude to make sure you have the best experience.

While we plan and endeavour to make your trip run as smoothly as possible, sometimes there are things that are completely out of our control. For example, weather can cause havoc to flight schedules, sometimes lasting for days.

Compromises and sacrifices might be asked of you. While it may be difficult to accept things haven't gone according to plan, the ADRA Laos staff will do their very best to help you achieve your purpose in Laos.

Your Health



MALARIA, DENGUE FEVER & JAPANESE ENCEPHALITIS

Malaria is endemic in many regions of Laos, but does not affect the capital Vientiane. We recommend you take anti-malaria medication. Transmission of dengue fever usually peaks from June through November, caused by Aedes mosquitoes which bite primarily in the daytime and in densely populated areas. However, there is no such medication to prevent or treat dengue fever.

As malaria and Japanese Encephalitis are transmitted through mosquitoes, we highly recommend you take preventative measures. Use insect repellent at all times, wear long, light-coloured clothing, ensure your accommodation is mosquito proof, and have the appropriate vaccinations if necessary.

Please also ask your GP about the side-effects of the anti-malaria medication you are taking. Most give a high sensitivity to sunlight making it easier for you to burn, and a common symptom is nausea, especially if not taken with food.

**MOSQUITOES COME
OUT IN NUMBERS AT
DAWN AND DUSK – BE
PARTICULARLY VIGILANT
DURING THIS TIME.**

MEDICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Please be aware that your project might be in a remote location. If this is the case, a medical facility could likely be hours away, and even then, may not have sufficient staffing or the equipment needed if a serious medical need arises. Please take care to avoid sickness, treat any cuts or wounds immediately, and do not put yourself in danger.

By coming on an ADRA Connections trip you are recognising that you will not be able to receive the same medical care that you would in your home country. This is why ADRA Connections ensures that you have travel insurance so that, if needed, you are covered for emergency evacuation to Australia.

ADRA Australia has partnered with International SOS who will assist you 24/7 in any emergency situation. No matter how small your concern give them a call. You can find more detailed information in your welcome pack and on the International SOS website. All participants are required to participate in an International SOS briefing prior to departure.

SUN-SMART AND WATER SMART

While experiencing a different routine, you may not realise your water intake could be considerably less at a time you need it to be considerably more. Take note of how much you are drinking to ensure you're staying hydrated, but also make sure it is clean, uncontaminated bottled water, as local tap water is often unsafe to drink and is a leading cause in illness while travelling abroad.

While you many experience overcast days, one day of sunburn is enough to make the rest of your trip uncomfortable. Wear sunscreen, a hat, and long sleeve shirt to help prevent sunburn - prevention is always better than cure.



TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

Many people travelling to any destination in the world may experience traveller's diarrhoea. While it may only last a few days, it's important to treat it as effectively as possible without passing it on to other team members.

To prevent catching a bacteria or parasite, make sure you practice good hygiene habits (e.g. washing your hands regularly), and as above, drink only bottled water or boiled water, avoid ice cubes and raw or undercooked foods.

In the treatment of diarrhoea, the most important thing it to keep hydrated. Drink plenty of water and bring oral re-hydration sachets with you as well as medication (such as Gastrostop or Immodium). If you are somewhere you can rest and be near a toilet, do not take the medication as it is best to allow your body to rid what it needs out of your system. However, if you must travel, medication will make your trip a lot more comfortable.

We recommend taking charcoal tablet every day to try and prevent travellers diarrhoea. Be sure to take charcoal at a different time from other medications as charcoal absorbs and removes toxins from the body, including medication.

TYPHOID AND HEPATITIS A

Typhoid is caused by a bacteria found in contaminated food & water. It is endemic in the developing world and vaccination is recommended for travellers to areas where environmental sanitation and personal hygiene may be poor. The adventurous eater venturing 'off the beaten' path should certainly consider vaccination.

Hepatitis A and Hepatitis E are viral diseases of the liver which are transmitted through eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water. Hepatitis A is the most common vaccine preventable disease that occurs in travellers to less developed areas of the world.

Again, it is advised to **ONLY** drink bottled water or boil all drinking water. Avoid ice cubes and raw or undercooked food.

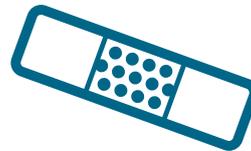
Read more about vaccinations on International SOS and please seek advice from a medical professional.

COLD AND FLU

Even in the tropics one can easily catch a cold. Please take personal treatment in case you do. Please also ensure you keep your distance from the team and get good rest for a speedy recovery. Build up your immunity before you depart by having a good diet, regular exercise program and sufficient sleep. Try also taking vitamins before, during and after the trip to help prevent colds.

MEDICAL KIT

Your Team Leader will provide a first aid kit for the treatment of minor wounds and injuries, but please don't rely on the kit for your personal medical needs. Take a small supply of first aid and medical supplies for yourself. e.g. hand sanitiser, panadol (take when you have a fever to reduce the fever), bandaids, charcoal tablets, rehydration tablets, gastro tablets, vitamins,



antiseptic powder or tea-tree oil for treating cuts to prevent infection, needle and thread, eye ointment, deep heat, stop itch spray, repellent, after sun gel, wipes.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Due to Laos' climate, any cuts, scrapes and open wounds can rapidly become infected. You must treat any wounds immediately with disinfectant. We recommend using tea-tree oil as it is extremely effective in preventing infection. It also helps alleviate itchiness from mosquito bites.

Make sure you wash your hands, with soap, as frequently as clean water permits - when it doesn't, use hand sanitiser. If your group is working with a community to install a water system, don't expect consistent access to clean water. We will ensure you have enough clean water for drinking each day - do not share bottles.

You may not have access to plumbed showers each day, but depending on the location there may be a stream or ocean to bathe in.

Arrival



VISA

Tourist visas for Australian passport holders can be arranged before departure by completing a visa application form (available from the Laotian Embassy website at <http://www.laoembassy.net>). Visa fees are US\$30, and tourist visas are valid for 30 days. Tourist visas are also available on arrival in Laos, and similar fees will apply. Make sure your passport has at least six months of remaining validity and you have a return ticket printed out and ready to show upon arrival.

Another important thing to remember is that you will need to receive an entry stamp in your passport upon arrival. Without this stamp, visitors will be fined a costly amount and may be subjected to other penalties.

As always, check with the relevant Australian and Laotian authorities for confirmation of these details, leaving enough time to apply if necessary!

INTERNAL FLIGHTS

Given the mountainous geography of Laos, it is often easier to take a domestic flight to reach certain areas. Larger cities are served by larger aircraft, however a flight to many smaller destinations will most likely be a smaller, propeller-driven plane. This is a different flying experience which some may enjoy, but most are nervous and taken by surprise.

If you usually get motion sickness, please take appropriate medication. Due to the size of the plane the noise from the engine may be very loud inside, and you may like to take ear plugs. Always check if baggage allowance for your flight is reduced when travelling by smaller aircraft.

Around Laos FAQs

Q: ARE THERE ATMS NEARBY?

A: ATMs are fairly common in the major cities and tourist spots, but few in the rural centres. However, some local bank networks limit withdrawal amounts, and local withdrawal fees can be quite high. Check with your bank to see if any special arrangements exist to lower potential costs. It's also a good idea to let your bank know you will be travelling to Laos & dates you will be travelling so that bank security won't block your withdrawals for 'unusual activity'.

Q: CAN WE EXCHANGE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN LAOS?

A: Currency exchange offices and banks are common in the major tourist areas, especially in Vientiane, but less so otherwise. The Laotian kip is the official currency, and though prices are often advertised in US\$, they are only accepted occasionally. It is a good idea to carry some foreign currency with you as credit card facilities usually have a high surcharge.



Q: IS LAOS SAFE?

A: Yes, Laos is safe for independent travel and the Laotian people are extremely helpful. However, it is important to have your wits about you as you would in your own country. While pick-pocketing is not common, there is no need to draw attention to yourself – use common sense and discretion.

For most of your trip you will be under a tight schedule. However, if there is free time (especially at night), we strictly request ADRA Connections team members not to leave the team or accommodation without permission, for their own safety. Be on your guard in darker streets outside the city centre, and stick to well established roads and paths.

Q: WILL WE HAVE A CHANCE TO SIGHTSEE AND GO SHOPPING?

A: Free time and sightseeing is scheduled into your itinerary where it is possible - we wouldn't want you to miss out on the chance on the spectacular beauty of the Laos or the opportunity to pick up a few souvenirs!! However we do request that you buddy up with someone, and before you go anywhere you check with your Team Leader or ADRA Host first. When there is free time at night, we request ADRA Connections team members not to leave the team or accommodation without permission, to ensure optimum safety during your stay.

Q: WHAT FOOD WILL WE EAT?

A: Food is an integral part of Laotian culture, and like the majority of the other Southeast Asian countries, rice is the staple food. In Laos, sticky rice is the most common variety found. Fresh vegetables are an important part of the diet, and the cuisine includes lots of herbs, spices, tropical fruits, salads and soups. There is also often a discernible French influence as a legacy of the colonial past. Laotian food can be quite spicy and bitter, compared to that of its neighbours, so be warned! Specific dietary requirements may also be difficult to provide for, so plan ahead.

When eating as a guest, it is customary to leave a small amount of food on your plate to indicate that the host has provided sufficient food for the meal. The guest should not begin eating until invited to do so, and should not continue after everyone else has finished.

Q: IS WATER SAFE TO DRINK THERE?

A: Drinking tap water is not recommended in Laos, though filtered water is readily available in the cities and larger towns. It is also advisable to avoid ice in drinks. ADRA recommends only drinking safe bottled water or boiled tea in a safe restaurant. Also avoid using tap water to clean your teeth.

Q: SHOULD WE BARGAIN FOR A BETTER PRICE?

A: Bartering is common in many places in Laos, but not always necessary. Keep it lighthearted but be wary of scams. Bargain fairly and with respect for the seller. Remember the economic realities of where you are. The final transaction should leave both buyer and seller satisfied and pleased. Be polite and refrain from driving prices unnecessarily low – settle on a price that's reasonable for everyone.

Q: WHAT IS THE WEATHER LIKE?

A: Laos has a tropical monsoon climate with its weather separated into two distinct weather seasons: a dry season and a wet season. The dry season lasts December to April, with the earlier months cooler and the later months hotter. The rainy season starts in May and continues through to November. Generally, the weather is cooler in the higher altitudes in the north and east, and warmer in the valleys and along the rivers of the west and south.

Q: WILL WE HAVE INTERNET ACCESS?

A: Internet availability is only widespread in Vientiane, but it can be found in some of the larger towns as well. However, some stores, hotels and shopping centres offer free Wi-Fi. Prices range from 5000K per hour in popular centres to as much as 20,000K per hour in more provincial regions. There can be intermittent internet censorship, sometimes including social network sites, though this is not common and easily bypassed.

Q: CAN I BUY A PHONE SIM TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY?

A: Telecommunication services are fairly reliable throughout Laos, though coverage can be poor in remote areas. SIM cards are readily available everywhere from as little as 10,000K and purchasing extra credit is reasonably simple. Be aware that telephone traffic can be monitored by the government order if deemed a perceived security threat.



Clothing

A MORE DETAILED PACKING LIST INCLUDING CLOTHING ITEMS IS INCLUDED IN YOUR TRIP INFO SHEET.

Most projects will contain large elements of physical labour and activity, so please bring clothing that you do not mind getting dirty or ruined.

As the climate is generally warm and can be very humid, loose fitting, light coloured and natural fibres make for the most comfortable clothing. However, take note of the season and region in which you are travelling, as warmer clothing may be necessary in the winter up north.

Clothes worn to church should be smart and modest for both males and females.

Ladies, though the cities and larger towns are not considered conservative, in more remote areas please wear modest clothing, cover your shoulders and knees and do not wear any tight fitting tops or pants. It may be considered rude and offensive to wear revealing clothing. We also recommend that you leave all jewellery at home as you may become a target for theft.

Gentlemen can dress much in the same way as at home, but be aware that some establishments may not allow entry if you are wearing shorts or sleeveless shirts.

Cultural Crash Course



Lao Basics

Hello/Good morning

Good night

Welcome

Goodbye

Please

Thank you (very much)

Excuse me/I'm sorry

I'm sorry

Help

What is your name?

My name is...

I come from...

How do you say... in Lao

Do you speak English?

I don't understand

Yes

No

Bathroom

Sa-bai-dee

La-tee-sa-wat

Nyin-dee

Sohk-dee-der

Khaw-lu-naai

Khawp jai (lai lai)

Khaw toht

Patawad

Sway-day

Jao say-ew nyang?

Khaw say-ew...

Khoy pen kon...

Ani phaa-saa Lao ee-yahng?

Jao wao phaa-saa ang-git bai daw?

Boh ka-ew jai

Jao

Boh

Hong naam



PHOTOS

In Laos a smile may be a sign of shyness or discomfort, so don't presume it's fine to take a photo of someone. Always ask permission first, and if you receive a nod along with a smile, feel free to snap away! You should, however, avoid taking photos of or near military and government sites.

COVER UP

Dress appropriately and show cultural sensitivity by covering your knees, shoulders, stomachs, backs, and cleavage, particularly in rural or remote settings. The temples are sacred places of worship, and though you may see many other tourists dressed inappropriately here, this is considered extremely disrespectful. This conservatism also extends to public displays of affection, which can make people uncomfortable in Laos.

IN THE MARKETPLACE

When bargaining at markets, stay calm, be friendly and reasonable, and keep a smile on your face. Fairness and respect will go a long way.

STREET CHILDREN

Poverty is evident, particularly in the cities. Please refrain from giving money to beggars, as this only contributes to a cycle of poverty.

KEEPING CALM

Don't give into frustration, as it may make for an uncomfortable and embarrassing situation. Making an effort to be polite and saying thank you will get you better responses from people.

POLITENESS

Laotian people are very hospitable, though there are many unwritten rules about etiquette. A visitor to a house, office or temple should remove their shoes and hat and wait for an invitation to enter. To indicate respect, upon meeting someone it is important to remove your hat and put your palms together with fingers pointed upwards and bow slightly. The avoidance of eye contact, which may appear suspicious or mischievous to us, is another way of showing respect to a person. Pointing with your index finger or feet is considered rude.

BODY PARTS

Don't touch someone's head, including children, as it is considered to be the most sacred part of the body. Feet are thought to be dirty, so the soles of your feet should never be shown to people or religious icons. Similarly, do not step over anyone sitting or lying upon the ground or any food. Hands should be washed before and after each meal, and the left hand should not be used to touch anyone or to take or give something to someone, particularly food.

IN TEMPLES

Be aware that temples may not allow admission to non-Buddhists. If it is permissible, remove your shoes and hat, and avoid wearing leather as it is considered offensive. Ask for permission before taking photos and be polite and respectful at all times. Many monks also take a vow of silence, so be respectful if they seem reluctant to talk.

MAKING A CONTRIBUTION

Most temples are maintained by charity, so remember to leave a donation when visiting. If invited to a local's home, a small token of gratitude in the form of a gift is appropriate and appreciated.

LEARN SOME OF THE LANGUAGE

Even basic phrases will help break the ice and be appreciated.

ASK QUESTIONS

If there's something you don't understand, a convention you're unsure of, or a subject you'd like to learn more about, **just ask!**

“Humanity is waiting for us.
Not to hear about our actions,
but to see our actions.”

—Hany El Banna, World Humanitarian Forum, United Kingdom

Photo & Images Policy



Photo and Images Reminder

ADRA is committed to respecting the dignity and culture of the people with whom it works. Its photo and image policy below includes many standards suggested by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

CONSENT

- Consult with local ADRA staff regarding the culture of the local people and their sentiments regarding being photographed/videographed.
- Ensure local ADRA staff have attained appropriate permission/authorisation from the local government and communities to be visited for photography/videography.
- When taking pictures of a group (more than three people), obtain verbal permission and explain to the group how the picture/s may be used.

PHOTO COMPOSITION

- When photographing or filming a child you need to fully abide by the Child Protection Policy.
- Images of people should present them in a dignified manner and not in a degrading manner.
- Images should be decent and respectful and not present people as victims or in a vulnerable or submissive manner.
- People (including children) should be adequately clothed in photographs and not in poses that could be interpreted as sexually suggestive.
- The use of images should not in any way endanger or stigmatise the people they include.

REMEMBER

Think twice before uploading your photos to Instagram or Facebook. Please make sure all ADRA policies are followed when you uploading photos and information to social media.

CAPTIONS / USE OF PHOTOS

- Photographs/footage should be used in context and should be representative of the project or country referenced.
- Photo captions should be fair and accurate.
- The identity of children and their location should not be disclosed, especially on social media.

COPYRIGHT

- ADRA Australia holds copyright for all photos taken of ADRA subjects and projects. Written permission for commercial use is required.

FILING

- Please send your photos to ADRA Australia when you return from your trip. Look for ADRA Connections Australia on Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/adraconnectionsau/.

Child Protection Summary



Child Protection Code of Conduct

I WILL...

- Treat children with respect regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability, or other relevant status.
- Not use language or behaviour towards children that is inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate.
- Not engage children in any form of sexual activity or acts, including paying for

sexual services or acts, where under the law(s) applicable to the child (including Part IIIA of the Australian Crimes Act 1914 (Cwth) as amended), the child is below the age of consent or the act(s) are an offence under relevant laws.

TIPS...

- Wherever possible, ensure that another adult is present when working in the proximity of children.
- Do not invite unaccompanied children into your accommodation, unless they are at immediate risk of injury or in physical danger.
- Do not sleep close to unsupervised children unless absolutely necessary, in which case permission must be obtained from the team leader or ADRA Host, while ensuring that another adult is present.
- Appropriately use any computers, mobile phones, or video and digital cameras, and never to exploit or harass children or to access child pornography through any medium.

- Refrain from physical punishment or discipline of children (excluding your own children).
- Immediately report concerns or allegations of child abuse in accordance with appropriate procedures.



Useful Information

LUGGAGE

Please take note of any luggage weight restrictions, generally 20kg for checked luggage and 7kg for hand luggage. We also ask that you pack lightly when staying with a community.



ELECTRICITY

Electricity is consistent and reliable in the cities and larger towns, but less so outside these main centres. Please ensure you have spare batteries for whatever you need.

Power points are mixed, with two types generally found, most commonly either a generic North American type or European type. Both can be found in the same area.

WEATHER PREPAREDNESS

Laos is a tropical country, so expect humidity for much of the year. Depending on the season, your days will be either rain filled or sunny and warm/hot. Temperatures will be fairly consistent, even overnight, though it can get cooler in the early dry season so come prepared.

CLOTHING

Bring as much cotton clothing as possible to keep cool. Try to avoid bringing thick material that takes a long time to dry. If you are caught with a lot of rain, you may be unable to dry your clothing! A quick dry-towel would also be useful.

If travelling in the cooler part of the dry season, and particularly up in the mountains, you will also need some warmer clothing, so please pack suitably for the time you are travelling and the areas you will be visiting.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Australian passport holders can arrange a visa beforehand with the Laotian Embassy in Australia, or apply once arrived in the country. Fees will apply. For peace of mind, or if you hold a different passport, please do your research with enough time to apply for a visa if needed. All passport holders will need at least six months validity left on their passport as well as a ticket detailing an onward/return journey.



Laos is 3 hours behind AEST,
and 4 hours behind during
daylight savings.

Emergency Phone Numbers

If there are any emergencies while you're in Laos the ADRA Laos staff are there to manage the situation.

If the situation is serious, here are some numbers you may find helpful.

For the local emergency services in Lao, dial:

191 for Police

192 for Tourist Police

190 for Fire

195 for Ambulance

INTERNATIONAL SOS

The Australian number to call for pre travel briefings and assistance while abroad is +61 2 9372 2468

ADRA LAOS OFFICE

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RMS INSURANCE

To contact the AIG Travel Guard global assistance centre from anywhere in the world +60 3 2772 5641

ADRA AUSTRALIA

Telephone: +61 2 9489 5488
146 Fox Valley Road
Wahroonga
NSW 2076
Australia

AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY

KM4, Thadeua Road
Watnak Village
Sisattanak District
Vientiane
Laos
Phone: +856 21 353 800

NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY

M Thai Tower, 14th Floor, All Seasons Place
87 Wireless Road
Pathumwan, Lumpini
Bangkok 10330
Thailand
Phone: +662 254 2530



Homework!

To help prepare you for your ADRA Connections trip to Laos, we've prepared some activities.

From eight weeks before your departure, we have included weekly tasks on the following pages.

Team leader: please be proactive in ensuring the team is keeping up to date with this homework. Have team members share the experiences or things learned from the activities within the group.



Homework Tasks

8

8 WEEKS
BEFORE YOUR
DEPARTURE

**READ THIS BOOKLET!
GET YOUR VACCINATIONS!**

6

6 WEEKS
BEFORE YOUR
DEPARTURE

START LEARNING LAO

The basics have been included on page 14, but you can do some research online and there are lots of excellent phrase books around to help you too.

7

7 WEEKS
BEFORE YOUR
DEPARTURE

**DEVELOP AN
EXERCISE ROUTINE**

If you don't regularly exercise, you might wish your body was in better shape upon arrival at your project

location. Project locations can consist of mountainous terrain, long and hard walks to project sites, long walks to villages, etc. Manual work that you could be involved in may be quite strenuous as well: sometimes carrying bags of cement, pulling water pipes kilometers up a mountain, hauling sand and rocks from a beach and more. Don't wait - start now!

5

5 WEEKS
BEFORE YOUR
DEPARTURE

RESEARCH LAOS

Team Leader: Divide the following topics between team members, and have each person share a few interesting things from each.

RELIGION, CUSTOMS, CULTURE, LANGUAGE, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, EDUCATION, HEALTH, FOOD, HOLIDAYS, GENDER ROLES, SOCIAL ISSUES, INDUSTRIES and POLITICS



**RESEARCH ONLINE:
WHAT ARE
THE MILLENNIUM
DEVELOPMENT GOALS?**



**GO THROUGH THE PACKING
LIST AND MAKE SURE YOU
HAVE EVERYTHING NEEDED.**

Particularly multiple copies of your passport, insurance, and itinerary!



WATER CHALLENGE

Spend one whole day at home where you use one single tap as your only water source for ALL your daily activities. You must wash dishes

and laundry, shower, flush the toilet, and wash hands from the one tap. To make it more authentic, use an outdoor tap! Want to take it up a notch? Walk around the block with your bucket before you fetch your water, and around the block again once you've collected your water. This will simulate what many people go through collecting water every day of their lives.



IT'S ALMOST TIME!

All the last minute details need to fall into place now. Have you arranged fail-proof transport to and from the airport? Are you under luggage weight restrictions? Do you know where your passport is? Have you printed your travel itinerary and travel insurance documents? Do you have photocopies of your passport, insurance, and itinerary? Do you need to set an auto reply on your email account? Have you posted details of your awesome trip to Laos on social network sites to inspire others to join an ADRA Connections trip?

Team Member

Please familiarise yourself with this booklet and take a copy with you on your trip.

We have also prepared a Welcome Pack that is specific to your trip with project details, food, accommodation, facilities, transport and medical information and a packing list.

If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to ask your Team Leader, who in turn can check in with ADRA Australia Connections Coordinator. We are here to help make your trip as smooth and hassle free as possible.

