

Little Fireface Project

VOLUNTEER GUIDE

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1. Introduction

1.1 Little Fireface Project

The Little Fireface Project (LFP) is a non-governmental and non-profit organization for the conservation of the slow loris. The Little Fireface Project aims to:

- Collect species-specific information through the ecological study of lorises in the wild.
- Educate people through events, workshops and classroom programmes, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Promote awareness of slow loris conservation issues through use of social media.
- Conduct supplemental research and conservation activities (e.g. forest surveys, market surveys, ethnozoological surveys).

The Little Fireface Project or Projek Muka Geni, named after the Sundanese word for slow loris, was established in 1993 to protect the future of these animals. Slow lorises are a unique group of primates found throughout South and Southeast Asia. Their vice-like grip, snake-like movements, shy nature, and venomous bite make them unique among primates. They also are, to many people, undeniably adorable, and to others, nature's answer to over 100 diseases. Their slow movements make them easy prey to expert hunters who literally empty the forests of these shy primates—amongst the most common mammals seen in Asia's illegal animal markets, but amongst the rarest spotted even in Asia's best-protected forests.

1.2 Mission of the Little Fireface Project

The Little Fireface Project aims to save lorises from extinction through learning more about their ecology and using this information to educate local people and law enforcement officers, leading to empathy and empowerment whereby people in countries where lorises exist will want to save them for themselves. This is done through education, media, workshops and classroom programs. Our education does not stop in range countries, but also reaches out to potential western purchasers of loris pets.

1.3 Volunteers

LFP is open for local and international students, researchers, interns, volunteers and other individuals visiting the project. Through our volunteer

programme, we hope to get valuable support for the project and in return provide an opportunity for volunteers to gain experience in research, ecology, and conservation. Activities mainly involve radio-tracking, behaviour observation and habitat assessment, but also occasional work in camera trapping, insect abundance, health checks of lorises, market surveys, and education and awareness activities. The volunteer scheme also offers the opportunity to exchange ideas and experience with people from different academic and cultural backgrounds.

1.4 How to contact LFP

Project Director in the United Kingdom:

Prof Anna Nekaris

Email: director@littlefireface.com

Field Station Coordinator in Indonesia:

Email: volunteer@littlefireface.com

2. Volunteer Programme at LFP

2.1 Before applying

A. To become a volunteer at LFP, you must first fill in the application form and email it with a *curriculum vitae* to the Field Station Coordinator. You may then be interviewed by an appropriate manager of LFP, either in person or via phone/Skype. We highly recommend reading the volunteer guide carefully before applying in order to find out whether this volunteer programme is right for you.

B. Participation is possible all year-round. Due to limited space, please apply as early as possible before your desired period of stay.

C. The volunteer fee is taken at a monthly rate. Volunteer stays that do not include a full month (e.g. 5.5 months) will apply a weekly rate to the remainder of their stay.

Prices are as follows:

- Short-term volunteers (<2 months): £200 per week
- Mid-term volunteers (2-6 months): £300 per month
- Long-term volunteers (>6 months): £250 per month

For all volunteers payment includes:

- Accommodation in Cipaganti field house for duration of stay
- Lunch and dinner at field house (except for Sundays).
- Purified water (hot and cold)
- Use of project equipment
- Use of a project guide whilst in the field

For all volunteers payment does not include:

- International and domestic flights
- Visa (see section 2.2)
- Travel and medical insurance
- Pickup from airport and transport to field station
- Meals outside of field house
- Breakfast, Sunday meals, and snacks
- Internet or cell/mobile phone service
- Toiletries including toilet paper
- Other incidentals

D. All volunteers have to sign an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) and a Volunteer Agreement that makes sure all ownership of data and behaviour rules are understood.

E. Before applying you should consider several points (details see throughout the volunteer guide):

- **Weather:** The tropical but seasonal climate means that we work in all weather conditions, including cold, heat, rain and high humidity. Java has two seasons: rainy and dry. The rainy season typically lasts from September to April and dry season from May to August, though this can vary a lot between years. Sudden downpours and dense fog (due to altitude) are to be expected.
- **Work:** As lorises are nocturnal, we mainly work during the night. Work is done in two 6-hour shifts in the first (5 pm to 11 pm) or second half (11 pm to 5 am) of the night. Work is physically demanding and involves walking in steep and uneven terrain. We work in teams of two with a local tracker (whose English might not be perfect) and a volunteer. Research assistants and academic interns are expected to work 5.5 days per week, of which 2-3 days are spent on a miniproject. Education

assistants are expected to work 5.5 days per week, of which 3 nights doing fieldwork and at least 2.5 days of education.

- **Small creatures:** Mosquitoes are common and working in the forest means encountering many different kinds of animals (e.g. insects, spiders, snakes, bats, etc.)
- **Respect to culture:** The project relies on its acceptance by local people. This means all foreign people working for the project must respect the culture and religion of the local people. In order to maintain this good will, relationships between local people and volunteers are to remain purely professional at all times. In particular, volunteers must accept that standards may be different for men and women, including the need for women to cover the upper arms and legs, dress in a more modest fashion, and absolutely no smoking or drinking in public places. A briefing on appropriate behaviour will be given upon arrival at the station.
- **Remoteness:** The field station is in a village with small shops and mobile phone coverage. Access to Internet coverage in the field house is spotty, but there is an internet café a short motorbike ride away.

2.2 After being accepted as a volunteer

A. **Registration:** After being accepted as a volunteer, we ask you to fill in a registration form, show health and insurance certificate, complete deposit and risk assessment, and attach a copy of your passport and flight ticket.

B. **Legal requirements:** A visa is required for any stay in Indonesia. As you will be working for a non-profit organization, you must acquire a Social Budaya visa (Social and Cultural Visa) which can be extended for up to 6 months. Please contact the Indonesian Embassy in your home country for details of the application process. To complete the application they will request a letter of recommendation. The LFP Field Station Coordinator will work closely with you to guide you through the visa process. Make sure that you ask us for this letter at least one month before your planned arrival in Indonesia (request included in registration form). With the Social Budaya visa, you will be allowed to extend to six months while you are still in Indonesia. After six months, you are obliged to leave the country and return with a new visa. You **MUST** show proof of a roundtrip flight to and from Indonesia in order to be issued any type of visa.

C. **Payment:** Field station fee payments should be made in local

currency (IDR) to the Field Station Coordinator. Payment is due upon date of arrival. While paying the entire sum up front is preferable, monthly instalments are an option, please discuss this with the Field Station Coordinator. Cash is preferred though payment through PayPal or bank transfer is also possible for up to 50% of fees. Please note that any international banking transfer (either through PayPal or your personal bank) will require a fee. In order to avoid this fee, the easiest option is to take money from a local ATM for payment.

D. Practical information: We offer some practical information (see section 3) so you can prepare your visit to LFP appropriately. For more complete information, you may want to consult other sources of information (e.g. the Internet or travel guides).

2.3 Before you leave home

A. Make at least 4 photo copies of your passport and visa page and keep these with you while travelling.

B. Ensure that your cell phone is sim lock free so that you can use it during your time in Indonesia. You may also purchase an Indonesian SIM card for very cheap to use during your stay. This will allow calls and internet.

C. Send the Field Station Coordinator a copy of your emergency contacts (at least 2) including names, telephone numbers (with country codes), house and email addresses

D. Notify your bank that you are travelling to Indonesia

E. Money – it is recommended to either purchase Indonesian rupiah at a local bank before arriving, or to bring your local currency and exchange it for rupiah at the airport (the rates are not very good, but it is convenient). You may also withdraw money from local ATMs near the field station during your stay with LFP as long as your home bank has approved it.

F. Purchase comprehensive travel insurance and send a copy to the Field Station Coordinator

2.4 Your arrival

Arrival into Jakarta:

Airplane crew will hand out customs and immigration forms. The address you are providing is the address of your hotel in Jakarta. Do not lose the immigration form. Staple it to your passport once you arrive at the field station. If you are coming on a Social Budaya visa please tick the box for tourist when asked reason of stay.

Getting cash money - in the baggage claim section at Jakarta airport there is a corner with several ATMs. It is best to take out at least 2 million rupiah.

A. How to find us:

The field station is located in the village of Cipaganti situated one hour from the city of Garut in West Java.

Option 1: From the airport in Jakarta you can take the bus company Primajasa to Bandung. From the end station in Bandung you have to take a taxi to the bus terminal "Leuwi Panjang". From there, take the minibus to Cikajang and get off at Bayongbong. You have to take a motorbike taxi ("Ojek") to get to the village Cipaganti. Ask the driver to drop you off at "Rumah Hijau". The whole journey takes about 7 hours, but can vary according to traffic. Minibuses in Bandung stop driving at 6 pm.

Option 2: From the airport in Jakarta you can take a bus to Kambungan Rambutan bus terminal in Jakarta (about 1.5-2 hours drive). Here you can take a bus straight to Garut. It takes about 5-6 hours. From Garut bus station you take the yellow minibus ("Angkot") to Bayongbong, getting off at the Alfa Mart. From the Alfa Mart get the "Ojek" (motorbike taxi) to Cipaganti and ask for Rumah Hijau.

Option 3: It is also possible to arrange for airport pickup and transfer directly to the field station. This is the simplest, safest, and fastest method of arrival. However it is also the most expensive. The cost is around \$100 (depending on exchange rates) and the total travel time will be 4-6 hours door to door.

B. MOU:

Upon arrival, the volunteer has to sign the Memorandum of Understanding and Volunteer Agreement.

C. Training:

During the first week, we provide the volunteer with training in the required field methods. After this time we expect the volunteer to be able to work independently, but still as part of the team.

2.5 Your stay at LFP

2.5.1 Work

A. Type of work:

The usual work includes radio-tracking and behavioural observation during the night. A team consists of a volunteer and a local tracker. We work 5 days per week during the night and a half-day during the day. The schedule can change following the needs of the project. The normal work shifts for the night are from 5 pm to 11 pm and from 11 pm to 5 am. During certain times of the year (e.g. mating season) full-night follows and full-week follows may be necessary. The way to and from the field takes up to 10-45 minutes each, depending on the target animal. Nocturnal work is physically challenging and requires walking on steep and difficult terrain. In the night, it can get very cold (down to 10 °C) and might rain. When doing habitat assessment during the day, it can get very hot. Please consider these challenges before applying to work with the project. Education and awareness are also an important part of the project and so volunteers may be asked to participate in related activities in the village, community or local area (e.g. school visits, awareness stalls, distributing awareness materials, etc.).

B. Associated work: Volunteers are expected to schedule a time to enter their collected data and photographs in the project laptop once a week. All volunteers are required to write two blogs per month and a volunteer report every month. Your own laptop would be handy but not mandatory. Volunteers might be asked to perform other duties like maintenance of equipment, entering education data, etc.

C. Other project activities: LFP does a range of conservation activities and volunteers will most likely be asked to participate in some of those. They include monitoring camera traps, measuring insect abundance, phenology, wildlife market surveys or forest surveys, and contributing to media campaigns (e.g. Facebook, twitter, etc.).

D. Weekly meetings: The team meets weekly to prepare working schedules, share experiences, give feedback, etc. These meetings might include short presentations on different topics or training sessions (e.g. reports of interns and students on their activities, training in certain methods or computer programmes, presentations of volunteer's previous experiences).

E. Free time: The volunteer has one day off per week. Volunteers may want

to join local sports (badminton, football, volleyball), learn to cook Sundanese specialities, and are often invited to local festivities or celebrations. The staff may be able to suggest places for short holidays. All holidays must be cleared through the Field Station Coordinator.

2.5.2 *What we expect from you*

- A.** Interest in animal behaviour, ecology, conservation, and preferably a university-level qualification in animal behaviour, primate conservation, zoology or other relevant subject.
- B.** Basic experience of working on a scientific research project or collecting and working systematically with data is not mandatory but would be helpful.
- C.** In respect to challenging nocturnal work, we expect volunteers to be mature, responsible, reliable, open, flexible, healthy, able to work independently but also as part of a team, and highly motivated.
- D.** As life in the research station may not permit a lot of personal space (rooms may have to be shared), the applicant should have above average social skills.
- E.** The volunteer must show respect to the local culture and religion.
- F.** The volunteer should have read the volunteer guide and be aware of all conditions in this project.

2.5.3 *What you gain*

- A.** We offer the volunteer a once-in-a-lifetime experience to work with a Critically Endangered and very little known primate species.
- B.** The volunteer will learn different field methods, like radio-tracking, behavioural observation, working with a GPS, and habitat assessment.
- C.** You will get familiar with the general work of a conservation and research project.
- D.** The volunteer gains experience in living and working in a foreign country.
- E.** We cannot provide full-time supervision for students, but we can act as “external supervisors” and are more than happy to assist with planning and conducting small projects as well as the dissemination of results.

2.6 After your stay at LFP

Evaluation:

When you return to your home country, we would kindly ask you to fill in an evaluation form to give feedback for the project. This form includes space for a small text that we would like to publish on our website, in order to give future volunteers and other interested people an idea of your experiences. It would be great if you could return the form within one month after your departure.

3. Practical information

3.1 General

A. **Accommodation:** You will live in the house of the field station. You will have to share a room with other volunteers. The bathroom has cold water, Western toilet with bucket flush and showering is done Indonesian style (with a bucket). Kitchen and house facilities are shared and volunteers are expected to share the house duties. Food is delivered in the morning. Volunteers are required to perform basic cleaning duties. There is a washing machine that can be used at a small price.

B. **Food:** A cook provides two main meals per day (local rice-based food) for six days a week. The volunteer has to organise breakfast (all days) and Sunday meals him/herself. Clean and purified water is constantly available.

C. **Language:** While our trackers speak basic English, most local people do not speak English. The local language is Bahasa Sunda, but all people are able to speak Bahasa Indonesia.

D. **Money:** There is an ATM in Bayongbong (15 minutes motorbike ride from the village) or in Garut (40 minutes motorbike ride away). In the village, you can only pay with (small) cash. Use of bank or debit cards is allowed at some places in Jakarta (typically with small charge included), but outside the capital city you mostly have to pay with cash.

E. **Electricity:** The plugs are European-style (France, Spain, etc.). If you need an adaptor, a universal style with surge protection is recommended.

F. **Weather:** The climate is tropical, but seasonal. This means that you have to prepare for all weather conditions including cold, heat, rain and high humidity.

G. Small creatures: Mosquitoes are common and working in the forest means encountering all kind of other animals like insects, spiders, snakes, lizards, etc.

H. House cat: The project has several cats who keep the house mouse-free. Please let the Field Station Coordinator know if this may be an issue for you.

I. Contacting home: LFP is located in a relatively remote village of West Java. There is mobile phone connection. You can access internet via mobile phone but sometimes the connection is not strong and/or slow. There is an internet café in the city of Garut.

J. Respect to culture: The project relies on its acceptance by local people. We expect volunteers to be friendly and polite to local people (e.g. always saying hello), and would appreciate occasional participation in the village life (visiting religious celebrations, following invitations to weddings, playing sports with locals, etc.). As the area is 100% Muslim, we have to comply with the local culture by respecting the dress code (covering shoulders and knees for women), avoiding physical contact with members of the opposite sex and not drinking alcohol (men and women) or smoking (women) in public view.

3.2 What to bring

Equipment

- Thermos flask or water bottle (can be bought locally)
- Backpack/Rucksack for field work
- Digital watch with a continuous timer for behavioural observations.

Medication

At the field site we have first aid kits but some items may be helpful for volunteers to bring themselves :

- Anti-diarrheal pills
- Oral rehydration sachets
- Vitamin supplements
- Ibuprofen/paracetamol
- Insect repellent

- Sunblock (factor SPF 50) and after sun
- Malaria prophylaxis (Cipaganti is not in a malaria zone but if you are planning to travel to other parts of Indonesia before/after your stay we recommend you take malaria tablets.)
- For female volunteers: tampons, as they can be difficult to find locally.

Clothing

- Rain gear (jacket, trousers); you may buy them locally but they are not of high quality
- Lightweight walking boots for field work, and sandals for daily life (wellington boots and flip-flops can be bought locally) - fieldwork is carried out in wellington (gum) boots. Very large sizes may be difficult to obtain locally
- Field clothes (long-sleeve shirts and pants in dark neutral colours; white or yellow should not be worn in the forest)
- Warm clothes for the night (e.g. thermals, warm jumper/sweater, hat, gloves)
- Culturally sensitive clothing for women (covering knees and shoulders)

Miscellaneous

Volunteers may find the following items helpful for their stay with LFP :

- MP3 player
- Books/e-reader
- Laptop (for data entry and entertainment; not necessary but is preferred)
- Cell phone with unlocked sim card (phones and sim cards can also be bought locally).
- European plug adapters
- Silica beads/gel to protect electronics from humidity/moisture.
- Ear plugs – the call to prayer at 4 :15 am is very loud
- Indonesian phrasebook/dictionary

3.3 Health and risks

A. Volunteers are responsible for their own medical and travel insurance, including vaccinations. It is recommended to visit a travel clinic in your home country to ensure all vaccinations and necessary medications are covered and up-to-date.

B. Malaria does occur in Java, but the risk at the field station is low. However, other diseases spread by mosquitoes may occur.

C. Local doctors are available, and there is a hospital in Garut. However, only some doctors in the regional hospital can speak English (the project's trackers can translate if needed). For English-speaking doctors, it is necessary to travel to Bandung or Jakarta.

D. As Indonesia is made up of volcanic islands, special risks on Java always include volcano eruptions and earthquakes.

3.4 Reasons for Dismissal

Most volunteers enjoy their time at LFP with no mishap. However, it is important to keep in mind that breaking key guidelines would subject a volunteer to dismissal from our project. Volunteers being dismissed are expected to pay the full month's fee of the month in which they are dismissed. Reasons for dismissal from the project include but are not exclusive to:

A. Consistent and inappropriate disrespectful behaviour in the village

B. Consistent and disrespectful behaviour towards the team

C. Non-disclosure about adverse health conditions

D. Refusal to participate in LFP activities

E. Refusal to conduct night research

F. Refusal to work the agreed-upon duration of time each week

G. Inappropriate relationship with local people or other volunteers (culturally only married individuals in this area are permitted intimate relations).

3.5 Further Information

Recommended Reading:

- Lonely Planet's Indonesia Travel Guide
- *Gifts of Unknown Things* by Lyall Watson
- *Krakatoa: The Day the World Exploded* by Simon Winchester
- *Indonesia: People and Histories* by Jean Gelman Taylor

Internet Resources:

- Foreign and Commonwealth Office UK (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/>) for travel advice and considerations.
- The Little Fireface Project Web Site (www.nocturama.org).
- Antara (www.antara.co.id/en) for official Indonesian news.
- Inside Indonesia (www.insideindonesia.org) for country and travel information.
- Jakarta Post (www.thejakartapost.com) for the first Indonesian English-language news daily.
- Mongabay (www.mongabay.com) for regional environmental news and photos.
- Learning Indonesian (www.learningindonesian.org) for language lessons.

Important Phone numbers (+62):

- Pak **Dendi** (manager) - 085316620333
- **Aconk** - 085794491102