

SRI LANKA: PINNAWALA ELEPHANT ORPHANAGE

You'll have the chance to work at this wonderful Elephant Orphanage which is a sanctuary for rescued, injured or abused elephants. The Orphanage attracts visitors from all over the world to view these magnificent animals. Around 80 elephants have found homes at Pinnawala, including some small babies who have been born into the herd.

Sri Lanka is a vibrant country, rich in its diversity of culture, race, language and religion. The island has an abundance of natural resources, fauna and flora, mountains, rivers and beautiful beaches. It is located at the crossroads where East meets West and is regarded as the gateway to South Asia. The hill country has gorgeous rolling hills and tea plantations. The entire island is teeming with bird life and exotics like elephants and leopards. The people are friendly, food delicious and costs low! A stunning island filled with beaches and wild life sanctuaries like the Elephant Orphanage, ancient cities, hills, beaches... and most of all - incredible beauty!



WHAT DO YOU GET?

- An exciting, never-to-be-forgotten adventure into South East Asia and the Sri Lankan culture.
- The enormous satisfaction of caring for these beautiful animals.
- New skills, more confidence, a greater understanding of a different culture, invaluable personal and professional development.
- An entry on your CV or résumé that will put you head and shoulders above most others in the job market.
- Experienced local staff with 24/7 back-up and support who'll meet you at the airport on your arrival - helps you **feel safe and never alone!**
- An in-depth Induction makes you **feel local straight away!**
- An opportunity to **make lifelong friends from all over the world.**
- And best of all ... **an unforgettable experience!**

SUMMARY FACTFILE

Start Dates	All year round - You choose your start and finish dates.
Duration	Minimum stay 2 weeks up to 1 year, subject to visa restrictions.
Requirements	No qualifications needed, just a big heart and a love of elephants!
Price	From £895 / US\$1,345 for 2 weeks, ranging to £1,995 / US\$2,995 for 8 weeks. Full Price List
What's included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Accommodation ▶ Food ▶ Meeting you at the Airport ▶ Transfer to your accommodation ▶ Full pre-departure support ▶ Local in-country team support and backup ▶ 24-hr emergency support ▶ Two free T-Shirts.
What's not included	Flights, Insurance, Costs of Visas (if a visa is required, but we'll provide necessary documents and assistance), Return transfer to the airport.
Who can do this Project?	All projects are open to all nationalities. You need to be aged between 17 and 70+

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW:

PINNAWALA ELEPHANT ORPHANAGE

You may have heard of Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage already – from the media or through friends or family who have travelled to Sri Lanka. It's a must-do stop on any tourists list and, quite frankly, usually an island visitor's highlight. It's a good place to spend some time, and call home for a while. Run by the Sri Lanka Government, Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage is home to around 80 elephants, from new born to very old! Apart from a few of the newborns, the elephants here have all been rescued from the wild, whether they are orphaned, abandoned or injured.

The Orphanage offers a brilliant chance for the victims of these situations as some of the main objectives of the orphanage revolve around giving the orphaned elephants a wonderfully happy and healthy life, including allowing for natural social behaviour, good medical treatment and food satisfaction to name just a few objectives.



Elephants... prepare yourself for some characters. You will notice Sama the aloof elephant who lost part of her leg in a land mine and there is Sapo, who is one of the favourites amongst the volunteers. There are Marley, Mia and Hiroshi the cheeky triplet teens and currently 3 newly born babies tripping along nimbly within Mum's stride.

Being close to an elephant is full of surprises. Their skin is grey, rough and wrinkly, with sporadically protruding coarse hair and their trunks are a phenomenon unto themselves. Far more sensitive than the tips of our fingers, elephants rely on their trunks to explore and discover anything and everything of interest to them and this will include you!! There is a sense of peace, intelligence and integrity about elephants that you certainly feel in the presence of 80 of them! Whilst elephants are unexpectedly fast movers when they chose, even with their huge hoofs an elephant will tend to go out of its way to avoid treading on an insect. These animals are compassionate, patient and well, just incredible... you have to experience them first hand!

YOUR WORK

You will work in the famous Government Elephant Orphanage at Pinnawala. There are about 80 originally orphaned or injured elephants living at the orphanage and the institute is well known and respected as the largest breeding base for Asian elephants. Many of the elephants here are not tame and the majority of your work would be more behind-the-scenes, rather than hands-on with the elephants themselves, although you will usually have the opportunity to do some hands-on work.

Part of your duties will include some supervised bathing of the elephants in the river, which takes place daily, and:

- Washing the tame elephants in the river
- Possibly feeding the baby elephants (subject to mahouts discretion up to a maximum of twice a week)
- Mucking out (there is a lot of this!)

The amount of work available for volunteers varies, so there may be some periods when you'll be working less than at others. Generally you will work in the morning, for approximately two hours anytime between 8am and 12pm. In the afternoon you will usually be free to watch these magnificent creatures in their activities. However, these hours are flexible.



Please note that you must cover your shoulders and your knees at all times in Sri Lanka so as not to offend the local community – Sri Lankan people are very conservative! This means you must work in long or cropped trousers and save your shorts only for the garden or the weekends at the beach!

THE LOCATION - PINNAWALA

In two words: absolutely breathtaking! Hot, peaceful and tropical, Pinnawala is a remote village lush with vegetation and alive with the sounds of crickets, birds and elephants.

Our Elephant Experience Placement is based in Pinnawala which is about 3 hours drive north and a bit West of Colombo. The Elephant Orphanage is 50 metres from the river where the Elephants bathe twice a day. It isn't

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possible to describe the sight of 80 plus Elephants trundling down a hot orange dusted road to the lake below. It is an awesome sight that stays with you always.

There is very little to do in the evenings, but with tremendous sunsets on your doorstep – it is easy to just sit back, put your feet up and unwind with the other volunteers!

ON YOUR ARRIVAL:

When you arrive in Sri Lanka, you'll be met from the airport by our delightful Manager, Roshan and his big welcoming smile (which never leaves his face!). Roshan will take you to Pinnawala where you will be introduced to the other volunteers on the placement and to our lovely staff at Pinnawala.

Everyone is always extremely friendly and very excited to see a new face. You will be looked after immediately and taken under the collective wing, soon to be absorbed in stories of wonderful weekend trips and the all important Sinhalese vocabulary such as ali betty (elephant poo) and hari hundi (very good!). You will be made to feel very welcome and at home and then you will most likely need a little sleep before a hearty meal and exploring your new surroundings and starting on your tan!

There is plenty of support at the house in Pinnawala 24 hours a day, with live in staff who will happily help you to understand and get around this new and exotic culture. Plus, you have the support and friendship of the other volunteers which makes adjusting very easy and fast – a little homesickness is normal for a few days however, trust us, it won't last longer than your first experience washing an elephant down with a coconut husk.... There are usually about 10 volunteers on this placement and it always fills up!

ACCOMMODATION & FOOD:

Travellers rents a lovely house in the nearby town of Kegalle. All the volunteers stay in the house together, usually up to about 8 at a time. The house is typical of the Sri Lankan style and is very 'homely' with five bedrooms, two bathrooms a regal entrance hallway and a brilliant large dining room and living area to socialise in. You will have all necessary facilities such as a washing machine and a TV and DVD player (Sri Lanka is a great place to buy DVD's, costing about a pound to buy in the cities of Colombo and Kandy). There is cold water only in the house, but with the year round heat in Sri Lanka this has only ever been looked upon as a blessing by our volunteers!

A chef will live in and cook all your meals for you and the local fresh food is delicious! We also provide a TV and DVD player. Sri Lanka is a great place to buy DVD's, costing about a pound to buy in the cities of Colombo and Kandy

Kegalle is about 30 minutes from Pinawala Elephant Orphanage and transport will be provided to take you to work every morning, bring you back and forth for lunch, and take you home at the end of the day. There are internet facilities and bustling street markets in Kegalle during the day. The evenings are quiet with the Sri Lankan culture favouring early mornings and early nights.

It is a nice sociable atmosphere in the house. However, do keep the quietness in mind and be prepared for slow paced evenings. Most of the work you will be doing is manual so you'll probably be very tired in the evenings and quite happy to go to bed early! However, do keep the quietness in mind and take plenty of books, games and similar to keep you entertained. You will share a bedroom with at least one other Travellers volunteer of the same sex.

There is a phone in the house that your family and friends can call you on and with a phone card that you can buy locally you can make cheap international calls home.

Security and support at the house is great with a tea, of live in staff including a lovely housemother who will like to share her knowledge with you on the local culture. If you're unfortunate enough to fall ill or suffer any problems (even if just homesickness) at any time, these staff are on call 24/7 to help you out with whatever is needed.



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REQUIREMENTS:

Don't worry about not having special qualifications. The whole idea of Travellers is to provide placements for volunteers who can help where they can in a variety of areas rather than formally trained conservationists. The fact that you are there to help and are not a drain on their resources makes the work you do valuable and much appreciated. However, if you do have any type of relevant qualification or past experience in the sector, please take any certificate or reference (preferably a good photocopy) with you.



VISAS:

Visas are required for Sri Lanka. We will liaise with you about your visa requirements, and make the visa process very easy.

FLIGHTS:

You have the option to arrange your own flights or we can assist you with your flight arrangements. If you would like us to do this for you, we will liaise with you regarding available flights and dates to suit you. All arrangements for your flight bookings/payments will be fulfilled by [Murray Rogers Travel Limited](#), ATOL No. 6856.

COSTS:

Please see the prices pages of our website [Full Price List](#). The price of this project is a reflection of the following costs:

- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Food
- ✓ Meeting you at the airport
- ✓ Local in-country team support and backup
- ✓ 24hr emergency helpline
- ✓ Full pre-departure support
- ✓ UK administration
- ✓ Marketing (brochures, website design and maintenance, attending careers fairs, advertising, website listings and presentations)
- ✓ Project Research/Site Inspection
- ✓ Staff Training/Equipment
- ✓ Donations to worthwhile projects

HOW YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

By joining a Travellers Program you enable us to keep donating money to worthwhile projects around the world; from clothing and feeding school children, building playgrounds or funding vital conservation research - your participation makes these donations possible.

For every volunteer, a donation is made by Travellers on your behalf into the [Bridge The Gap Foundation](#). This Foundation was set up by us to donate directly to particularly worthwhile and necessary projects for children and animals around the world, and partners with other NGO's to raise match-funding for worthy projects.



COUNTRY PROFILE:

Sri Lanka is famous for its 1,600 km of unspoilt, golden beaches. It's a paradise Island shaped like a tear drop in the Indian Ocean. Formerly known as Ceylon and famous for its wonderful Tea, Sri Lanka is a vibrant country with an incredible history. It's a country of 21 million people; rich in its diversity of culture, race, language and religion.

The island has an abundance of natural resources, fauna and flora, mountains, rivers and beautiful beaches. It is located at the crossroads where East meets West and is regarded as the gateway to South Asia. The hill country has gorgeous rolling hills and tea plantations. The entire island is teeming with bird life and exotics like elephants and leopards.



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THINGS TO DO IN: SRI LANKA

You will never be short of something to do in Sri Lanka - wherever you are based on your project you will be able to reach some of the most incredible beaches, cultural sites including ancient temples and cities, aromatic tea plantations and exhilarating waterfalls in the rolling hill country. The famous Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage is also a "must-see" on this paradise island.

In Sri Lanka, every sight, sound and smell will engulf you with new experiences. Take an early morning train ride from Colombo to Hikkaduwa and watch in awe as you travel past some of the most incredible scenery. Smiling children will wave at you from shanty towns lining the outskirts of Colombo, but these soon give way to views across paddy fields where buffalo and cows can be seen grazing. As your journey continues the train tracks begin to run parallel to the beach and you will be left mesmerised by the incredible sights in this friendly country.

WHY GO WITH TRAVELLERS WORLDWIDE?

- Professional work experience placements
- 15 years' experience sending thousands of participants overseas, plus the largest variety of flexible projects that are value for money!
- Excellent support - second to none in the industry
- Accredited projects helps appeal to future employers
- Your own dedicated Project Co-ordinator to answer all questions prior to, during and after your trip of a lifetime!
- Detailed information on your project and country and suggestions, safety guide, tips and checklists, via our EXTRANET, available from anywhere, 24/7.
- 24/7 emergency helpline for you and your family
- Free pick up from the nearest airport.



VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK:

The best part of the whole experience for me had to be working at the Elephant Orphanage. Oh my god, what an opportunity, those sorts of experiences don't come along everyday. Work in the morning was 'hard-work', but great fun at the same time, but you get your reward in the afternoon when the Mahoots let you go in the river and wash the elephants. They had to drag me out of there everyday, as I didn't want to leave. I built up a close bond with one of the elephants 'Sapu' – a seven-year-old female. The Mahoots taught us the commands, and I was over-the-moon when she actually obeyed me!! It was such a good feeling. It was just so amazing to be up close with these animals, not many organisations let you do that these days. So for that, I am eternally grateful.

CARINA ROGERS

The last 3 months have been absolutely amazing. I have met so many great people, had so many great experiences and bring back so many great memories. Sri Lanka was an amazing place to spend 3 months. It's a beautiful tropical country and the people are amazingly warm and welcoming. The pace of life is refreshingly laid back and one that I could (and in fact did) get very used to. The elephants were fascinating creatures to be around. I am looking forward to seeing the herd again one day and seeing my favourite elephants grown up. They say an elephant never forgets - I like to believe that that's the case. It's great being back home again but I can't say that I don't already miss Sri Lanka. But as Arnold Schwarzenegger once said: "I'll be back!"

ANDREW PRATT

HOW TO BOOK:

Please complete a [booking form](#) online or you can send a postal booking from our free brochure. When we receive this, we'll telephone you to discuss the details and then start the exciting process of planning your trip!

We do hope you'll join us and are confident that you'll find this an incredible experience. Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions - we'll be happy to help you plan your exciting adventure!

You may also be interested in other courses with Travellers – please visit our [website](#) for details of all our projects. In fact you can choose from over 300 projects in 19 countries!

Make a Difference – Get Involved!

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