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*“Operation Groundswell does not just give students amazing, unreplicable experiences; rather they give you new eyes. By following the journey of the coffee bean we saw the industry through distinct perspectives: the tireless farmer, the judicious regulator, and the market driven retailer. The journey was meticulously planned and flawlessly executed - I couldn't endorse it more.”*

- Abdul Aziz Al-Salim, Stanford Graduate School of Business, Guatemala Winter 2013

# WHO IS OPERATION GROUNDSWELL?



## OUR MISSION

To provide high-value, intimate, immersive, and educational travel experiences that tangibly affect the lives of the communities we visit and our program participants. We are dedicated to providing financially accessible travel experiences that blend responsible volunteering, education, personal development, and adventure.

## VALUE

Operation Groundswell was founded on the principle of accessibility and affordability. As a registered Canadian non-profit organization our bottom line is people, not profits. We make sure our programs are as financially accessible as possible while maintaining the highest quality programming.

## PLANNED DAILY EXPLORATIONS

Our Programs Director works closely with each of our Program Leaders to organize a thoughtful itinerary for every day of travel with Operation Groundswell. Treks up mountainous regions, bike tours, boat rides, meetings with local advocacy groups, delicious local dishes...all of these daily details are planned and arranged for our participants. Critical to our success has been the development of fully integrated and meaningful programs.

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

With a passionate and innovative team of Program Leaders scattered across the globe and a carefully crafted core curriculum, Operation Groundswell takes experiential learning to a whole other level. Participants have the opportunity to meet with politicians, business leaders, heads of NGOs, and everyone in between. The group will learn firsthand through stories, question and answer, and critical dialogue facilitated by our exceptional Program Leaders.

## IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

Our programs are intentionally designed to uncover the intricacies and on-the-ground realities of each region we go to. As a grassroots organization, we have the unique opportunity of working with a large variety of different partners, each with their own particular perspective. Operation Groundswell does not simply organize presentations with partners. We create a dialogue between our students and our partners abroad, allowing for a more immersive experience.

## GROUP-FOCUSED EXPERIENCE

Our group-focused programs allow for the perfect blend of intimacy, flexibility, and challenge. Our programs excel at creating safe spaces in new and different regions. We hear varied perspectives, learn about ourselves, and together create a shared experience beyond compare.

**OUR 2014 SUMMER PARTICIPANTS GAVE US A RATING OF 9/10 ON THEIR OVERALL EXPERIENCE.  
93% WOULD RECOMMEND OUR PROGRAMS TO THEIR FRIENDS.  
WE LET THE NUMBERS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES.**





# THAILAND: HEALTHCARE & HUMAN RIGHTS

**PROGRAM DURATION: 14 DAYS**  
**DATES: MAY 17 - 30, 2016**  
**PROGRAM FEE: \$1910 USD**

*This program explores Thailand's contemporary healthcare system, from an overview of how it actually functions, to an analysis of its systemic inequalities. We will learn about how medicine is taught at Thai universities, how an NGO in a Bangkok slum provides a safe and clean educational space for youth, and we will even work alongside one of our partners to conduct health and hygiene research among minority groups in northern Thailand. All of this combined with an immersive experience that will have us eating delicious Thai food, take breath-taking hikes through lush green mountains, and visiting beautiful Buddhist temples.*

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- » Develop a thorough understanding of Thailand's healthcare system by talking to the next generation of doctors at a Thai university.
- » Trek to remote hill-tribe villages in northern Thailand and work with the Mirror Foundation, an NGO that works to improve the livelihoods of Thailand's ethnic minorities.
- » Learn about how traditional medicine is filling in the gaps of modern healthcare in Thailand's remote regions.
- » Explore beautiful waterfalls, lush jungles, and learn how to cook delicious Thai food.

## **DAY 1 - 3: ORIENTATION IN THE BIG MANGO**

**Location:** Bangkok

**Accommodations:** Riverview Hostel

**Transport:** Minivans, tuk tuks, riverboats, taxis

After being picked up from Survanabhumi International Airport, our group will check into our new home for the next three nights at the Riverline Guesthouse, located in Bangkok's historic Rattanakosin area. During our orientation, we'll have a chance to get an intimate glimpse of Thailand's bustling and diverse capital city. We will acclimatize to the sights, sounds, smells, and smiles of the region while getting a crash course in Thailand's economic, social, and political context.



# HEALTHCARE & HUMAN RIGHTS ITINERARY

CONTINUED...

## **DAY 4 - 10: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP**

**Location:** Chiang Rai

**Accommodations:** Homestays and the Mirror Foundation's volunteer center

**Transport:** Songthaews

After our Orientation we will take a comfortable air-conditioned night bus north to the small city of Chiang Rai. There we will be welcomed by our friends at the Mirror Foundation (an OG partner for more than five years), one of Thailand's most well-respected NGOs working towards improving the livelihoods of ethnic minorities.

We will get a firsthand look at how minority groups in Thailand live in the mountainous province of Chiang Rai, dotted with remote villages and graced with stunning waterfalls and dense jungle canopy. The villages, which are reached through hiking or driving on country roads, are comprised of different minority groups (e.g. Akha, Lahu, Karen) whose cultures and languages are quite different from mainstream Thai society.

In regards to healthcare, the biggest issue is that since these minority groups are not ethnically Thai, many lack access to citizenship. Without Thai citizenship, they are not entitled to Thailand's universal health coverage. Furthermore, due to the remoteness of these villages, access to healthcare facilities is often very difficult.

In our time working with the Mirror Foundation, our group will do a combination of the following:

- » Visit local villages and government-run rural clinics to learn about the challenges of providing healthcare in this part of Thailand.
- » Learn how traditional medicine is filling in the gaps in the hill tribes.
- » Visit primary schools and assisting Mirror staff in teaching hygiene to schoolchildren.
- » Work with local government workers, assisting in basic health checkups and recording details for future use.
- » Prepare a presentation of our observations for the Mirror Foundation.

Throughout our time working with the Mirror Foundation we will be staying in village homestays as well as at the volunteer accommodation at the NGO's management site in Chiang Rai. When we are off the clock we will have a chance to visit spectacular waterfalls, immerse ourselves in the unique cultures of these various ethnic groups, and spend our nights gazing at the stars with nothing but the sounds of the jungle lulling us to sleep.

## **DAY 11 - 13: DISORIENTATION**

**Location:** Chiang Mai

**Accommodations:** SK House

**Transport:** Songthaews

After a busy week of working with the Mirror Foundation we will take time to unwind in Chiang Mai and immerse ourselves in Thai culture - visiting beautiful temples and enjoying a cooking class. Chiang Mai will also serve as our Disorientation spot where program leaders will lead workshops on reflections and lessons of the program.

## **DAY 14: CHOCK DEE (FAREWELL!)**

**Location:** Chiang Mai

**Transport:** Songthaews

We will say our fond farewells in Chiang Mai before jumping aboard shuttles to the Chiang Mai International Airport to make our final journey back home to the U.S.A.

*"I have had 3 experiences in my life that I believe have defined me and shaped me to be a better, more aware person, and global citizen. OG is one of them, I cannot speak highly enough nor thank them enough. I consider myself blessed for the experience."*

- Seth Baker, Southeast Asia 2014





# WE'RE SERIOUS ABOUT SAFETY

As a well-established and experienced international service learning organization, Operation Groundswell takes active precautions to keep all of our participants safe and secure while overseas on our programs. We take travel safety very seriously. We recognize that every program and every partner we work with is different and has its own unique needs. That's why we always collaborate and coordinate to develop the appropriate protocols and policies.

## **PRE-TRIP:**

- » Based on national travel advisories, in-country reconnaissance, partner communication, and program evaluations, detailed risk assessments are prepared for each and every location included on program itineraries. These assessments take into account any potential safety concerns or security threats related to the environment/climate, political circumstances, transportation, food/drink, community service work, crime/delinquency, etc. and include the development of strategies to minimize or eliminate all possible hazards.
- » Safety and security circumstances on the ground are dynamic and as a consequence, Operation Groundswell also maintain near constant communication with local staff, partners, and other local contacts.
- » All Program Leaders undertake dry-runs of the programs within two weeks of participant arrivals. This process includes meeting with partners, confirming transportation plans, and completing on-site preparations. Risk assessments are then amended to include any circumstantial changes as well as the availability and capacity of health clinics and emergency contacts for each site.
- » Every participant is required to register with his or her respective government's travel agency.
- » To help minimize health risks, Operation Groundswell also requires every program participant to meet with a travel doctor before leaving their country of origin. Participants must be up-to-date with all the necessary vaccinations and equipped with any necessary medication for travel in country.

## **ON-SITE:**

- » Our Program Leaders are provided with real-time updates from the US State department and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs' Travel Reports and maintains daily check-ins with Operation Groundswell's headquarters to relay important information and ensure the health and safety of participants.
- » Program Leaders are proficient in the local language where necessary, Wilderness First-Aid certified and available 24/7 to deal with emergencies on-site.
- » Accommodations – All student accommodations are vetted to ensure that they are adequately safe and hygienic.
- » Transportation – Although Operation Groundswell uses popular modes of local transportation, students are only permitted to use registered vehicles and secure routes. Furthermore, travel at night is avoided whenever possible.
- » The Operation Groundswell Crisis Management Committee is on call 24/7 in the event of an emergency and will oversee the management of any crisis that may arise. The committee includes health care professionals and safety abroad experts trained in dealing with crises.

## **LIABILITY & INSURANCE:**

- » As a third-party contractor, Operation Groundswell takes full legal responsibility for in-country programming and extends its liability insurance to cover its partners and the program.
- » *\*\*We do require that all participants purchase their own personal emergency medical travel insurance and strongly encourage trip cancellation insurance. OG will provide participants with resources for purchasing insurance and OG staff will walk them through the purchasing process. Typically this insurance costs \$50-\$60 per person. Any participant who does not show proof of travel insurance will not be permitted to join the program.*



# PROPOSAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

## **LODGING:**

Accommodations this will be subject to change due to space/size limitations. In the event that we must find an alternative, we will ensure it is held to the same standards of comfort outlined in the proposal. Notification of any changes to accommodations will be sent immediately to the Partner Organization.

## **INDEMNIFICATION:**

Operation Groundswell shall indemnify, defend and hold the Partner Organization, its authorized representatives and employees harmless against any claims, liabilities, costs, expenses and demands that may be made by a third party, including trip participants and Operation Groundswell employees, for any loss or damage to such third party arising from the provision of the services under this agreement and any losses, damages, costs and expenses that shall be incurred or suffered by the Partner Organization as a result of, in whole or in part, the negligence or wilful misconduct of Operation Groundswell, its employees, contractors, invitees, agents or visitors. Operation Groundswell shall also keep the Partner Organization and its representatives indemnified in respect of any compensation payable to the employees, agents and contractors engaged by the Operation Groundswell or on account of any breach of contract, warranty, tort (including negligence) or otherwise of any of the Operation Groundswell obligations or agreement contained herein.

## **INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR:**

Operation Groundswell shall be an independent contractor, and Operation Groundswell shall not be, or be deemed to be, an employee, agent, partner or joint venture of the Partner Organization. Operation Groundswell shall not have the authority to make any statements, representations or commitments of any kind, or to take any action that is binding on the Partner Organization, except as explicitly provided for herein or authorized in writing via email.

## **LIABILITY INSURANCE:**

Operation Groundswell will extend its \$10 million liability insurance to include: The Partner Organization, its trustees, officers, agents, representatives, employees, faculty, students and volunteers.

## **PROGRAM FEE:**

The prices stated below are based on a minimum of 22 paid participants. If the number of participants falls below the stated number, Operation Groundswell reserves the right to readjust program prices in conjunction with the Partner Organization. The price does not include international airfare or travel medical insurance, unless otherwise stated.

## **PROGRAM CHANGES:**

In the event that on-the-ground conditions change and a program is deemed unsafe for student travel, Operation Groundswell will plan and price a new program that adheres to the Partner Organization's safety standard.

## **AIR TRAVEL:**

The Partner Organization will receive a time window for their flight arrival and it will be their responsibility to arrive within that window. Any participants unable to arrive within the set time or day will be responsible for meeting the group using their own funds.

## **RELEASE OF LIABILITY WAIVER AND CODE OF CONDUCT:**

Each participant will be required to complete Operation Groundswell's Release of Liability Waiver prior to arriving on the program. Failure to comply with the stipulations within the waiver will result in the dismissal of the offending participant.

## **TAX AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE:**

All taxes are included in the price. Prices are listed in USD and will not be subject to foreign exchange risk.

## **TRIP NOTIFICATION:**

Participants are responsible for the accuracy of their online application. Additionally, participants are responsible for ensuring payment terms are followed as outlined below.



# PROPOSAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

CONTINUED...

## **VISAS:**

Participants are responsible for applying for their own advance visas. The Operation Groundswell staff, which has considerable experience with visa procurement, will assist participants in their visa application process. Inability to travel due to a lack of proper travel documents (passports and visas) does not constitute grounds for a refund of program fees.

## **PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS:**

Operation Groundswell reserves the right to change or modify the program in any way so long as it is in the best interest of the group or due to circumstantial changes. Operation Groundswell will make program changes in conjunction with the Partner Organization and will notify participants of any changes made to the itinerary beforehand.

## **GENERAL POLICY:**

Operation Groundswell assumes no responsibility for events beyond its control, including, but not limited to, acts of God, war (whether declared or not), terrorist activities, strikes, civil unrest, government restrictions, illness, delay, or cancellation. Operation Groundswell shall not be responsible for personal or bodily injury, loss, or damage from any event caused by persons or companies, not directly or indirectly controlled by Operation Groundswell, including without limitation air carriers, bus companies, railways, hotels, subcontracted agents, or tour operators, except to the extent of Operation Groundswell's negligence or wilful misconduct in selecting and contracting with such persons or companies. Operation Groundswell does not assume responsibility for lost or stolen items.





A photograph of a long hallway in a temple, featuring a row of golden Buddha statues seated on ornate, multi-tiered pedestals. The statues are arranged in a perspective that recedes into the distance. The lighting is warm and focused on the statues, creating a serene atmosphere. The floor is polished and reflects the light.

# WHAT THE PROGRAM FEE COVERS

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

1. A well-thought-out program plan focused on the issues facing the specific region.
2. Experienced and passionate Program Leaders who remain with the group 24/7.
3. Accommodations - Operation Groundswell does not stay in five-star hotels. Instead, we prefer accommodations that closer match the atmosphere of the region we're traveling to. We have developed relationships with some of our favourite guest houses, homestays, and hostels and have verified that they are safe and hygienic. Options to upgrade are available.
4. Meals and snacks - All group meals on the program are included in the price. Participants will be responsible for any additional meals or personal snacks.
5. All in-country transportation including two transfers to and from the airport at the most convenient times.
6. All group tours, entrance fees, and daily activities.
7. Regular discussion and activities, planned by OG and led by our Program Leaders, to help participants bond with other group members while internalizing and reflecting on the experience.

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

1. International flights and any costs associated with them.
2. Miscellaneous hostel charges.
3. Trip cancellation and travel medical insurance (approximately \$60-\$100).

*"The OG experience is a humbling one. There is an unbelievable amount of work that goes into making these trips happen and I believe that I got the better end of the deal, with the knowledge and experiences that I came out of it with. The OG crew you show up with is more than just a bunch of random people. By the end of the trip, they become your family and great friends."*

- Bryan Adams, Haiti 2012



# PAYMENT AND FEE OVERVIEW

## PROGRAM FEES

\$1910.00 USD per person  
(including Community Contribution)

## PAYMENT BREAKDOWN AND TIMELINE

### 1. REGISTRATION DEPOSIT

An initial **non-refundable\*** deposit of \$500.00 USD per person is due on or before February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in order to secure a place on the program; however, as long as space remains on the program, OG will continue to accept participants after this date.

\*The deposit is non-refundable except in the event that Operation Groundswell cancels the program or is unable to place the applicant on a program..

### 2. PROGRAM FEE REMAINDER

The remainder of the program fee will be split into two equal installments of \$705.00 USD due on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

**PLEASE NOTE:** All program fees must be paid in full prior to departure. Payment extensions may be granted by OG upon request, but must be mutually agreed upon and confirmed by email with OG.

## PARTICIPANT CANCELLATION POLICY

1. The \$500.00 deposit is non-refundable except in the event that Operation Groundswell cancels the program.

2. The remainder of the program fee is fully refundable minus the \$500.00 deposit up to six weeks (42 days) prior to departure, and 50% refundable minus the \$500.00 deposit up to four weeks (28 days) prior to departure. At four weeks prior to departure, the program fee remainder becomes non-refundable.

3. In the event that Operation Groundswell cancels the program, Operation Groundswell will refund the full program fee, including the deposit. Operation Groundswell is not responsible for any other costs incurred in preparation for the program such as: flight, travel insurance, immunizations, or any other associated costs.

## PAYMENT METHODS

### PAYPAL

Upon acceptance to the program, participants will be emailed an invoice with instructions on how to pay their \$500.00 deposit online via PayPal. If a participant does not have a PayPal account set up, there will be an option to pay using a credit card without setting up an account.

For facilitation purposes, Operation Groundswell requests that all deposits be made through PayPal. After the deposit has been received, a second invoice will be emailed out for the remainder of the program fee, with an option to pay again using PayPal.

**PLEASE NOTE:** PayPal charges a 3% transaction fee on all payments. This fee will be included on the invoice(s).

### CHECK

Operation Groundswell will accept program fee remainder payments by check. Checks can be made payable to "Operation Groundswell" and mailed to our office at:

200-205 Church Street  
Toronto, ON, M5B 1Y7  
Canada

### LATE FEES

OG does not charge late fees for overdue payments; however, if a payment due date has passed and no extension has been requested, it may result in forfeiture of the participant's place on the program.



# BACKPACKING WITH A PURPOSE

