



Mae Sot Education Project

Volunteer Application and Selection Process for 2024

Objective: To select three students (aged 18-26) as volunteers to participate in the *Mae Sot Education Project*. MSEP volunteering normally involves 6-month placements in Mae Sot. We will accept applications for 3-months in situations where academic program requirements impose limitations on students' availability, but given the project's limited capacity, will show preference for volunteers seeking 6-month commitments.

Applicants accepted as volunteers will be asked to make a contribution of \$1500 to the project to help defray expenses. \$1000 of this amount [non-refundable except in extraordinary circumstances] will be paid upon acceptance at the beginning of February. The balance will be paid at the time flight reservations are made for Thailand (in late April). See the note at the end of this document for more information on expenses.

Selection Committee: To be comprised of three members of the project committee and one external member of the community

Application and Selection Timeline:

- ***Application Period – September 2023 – January 5th, 2024***

Interested students will find information and application forms on the web site: <https://maesoteducation.ca>. They must complete and submit their application form and other documents electronically by sending them as attachments by email to msepapplications@gmail.com. On campus contacts Angie Petittlerc (Bishop's Writing Centre) and Murray Johnston (Champlain Faculty) will also be able to answer questions. Students may also contact Project Coordinator, Mary Purkey at marypurkey@gmail.com for information.

- ***Short Listing; interviews – January 5 – January 19, 2024***

The selection committee will meet soon after the application deadline, will review all applications and shortlist candidates based on pre-determined selection criteria. Short listed candidates will be contacted and interviews will take place during January.

- ***Tentative selection – January 22, 2024***

The selection committee will contact references, hold second interviews as needed and select volunteers. Selected volunteers will be asked to submit \$1000 of their financial contribution to the project. A contract will be signed with each student-volunteer, and preparation will begin. Individuals who are tentatively accepted may be asked to have a health examination and submit a medical examination form before final acceptance.

NOTE: In late January 2024, students selected to participate must be prepared to immediately begin following a preparation course including TESL and cultural/political material that will be offered by members of the Project Committee during the winter term. Details to be announced!

Selection Criteria and Description of Responsibilities for Student Volunteers:

Requirements

Students chosen for participation in the *Mae Sot Education Project* as volunteer ESL teaching assistants in Mae Sot, Thailand, will satisfy these requirements:

- Are currently enrolled in a program of study at Champlain Regional College – Lennoxville or Bishop's University **or** are recent graduates of either institution;
- Will be aged 18 to 26 at the time of departure for Thailand;
- Demonstrate a strong interest in social justice issues, international cooperation and world affairs;
- Demonstrate interest in working with youth;
- Can provide evidence of their autonomy, self-reliance, and resourcefulness;
- Work well as part of a team;
- Show evidence of intercultural sensitivity and adaptability;
- Show evidence of emotional maturity and good judgment;
- Have a high level of mastery of spoken and written English, including the ability to write a feature story for publication;
- Show willingness to fundraise;
- Are in good mental and physical health.

Assets

These traits will be viewed as assets in candidate selection:

- Prior international development experience or travel in poor countries;
- Experience working with an organization: report writing, fundraising, etc.
- ESL/EFL teacher-training or teaching experience;
- Have prior experience leading activities for children and demonstrated effectiveness in working with children;
- Musical, artistic or athletic interests and skills;
- Residence in the Eastern Townships;
- Knowledge of Burma/Myanmar and Thailand and of issues related to forced displacement of people.

Responsibilities

Students selected to participate in this project must be prepared to undertake the following:

Before departure for Mae Sot, Thailand – winter 2024:

- Be available to receive some training in doing ESL learning activities for/with youth and in providing administrative assistance to an organization – across cultures;
- Attend cultural and political preparation briefings;
- Do some practice in journalistic writing;
- Self-teach elementary Thai (with tapes, web resources);
- Engage in fundraising towards their participation in the project;
- Inform themselves regarding political and economic conditions and regarding inter-ethnic relations in Burma/Myanmar and on the Thai-Burmese border;

- With support and guidance from the Project Committee: plan their travel; lay the groundwork to address, on their return from Thailand, Bishop's campus and community organizations, as well as high school groups, and begin writing for regional media;
- Have a physical examination and all necessary vaccinations.

In Mae Sot, Thailand, from June through August, 2024 for 3-month volunteers; June through December 2024, for 6-month volunteers:

- Integrate into the Mae Sot community and into Burmese organizations and schools for migrant youth from Myanmar;
- Provide assistance to a Burmese community-based organization Sot as needed;
- Assist in teaching of English, lead activities, model teaching techniques;
- Write at least two short articles/stories for publication in Eastern Townships media (electronic or on paper) and/or for the project newsletters;
- Prepare materials for outreach and for talks about their experience to be given on their return.

Note: Depending on MSEP's capacity, a winter time period may be made available for School of Education students engaged in internships. Arrangements will be made on an individual basis.

On return, during fall 2024 or winter – spring 2025:

- If returning to the community, make presentations to Eastern Townships community organizations (and possibly schools) and on the Champlain-Bishop's campus;
- Write articles and/or give interviews for regional media using a variety of electronic or paper approaches.

Note: Bishop's students will need to communicate with their program head regarding requirements if they wish to receive credits for participation in the project. Champlain students will need to communicate with the Champlain administration regarding excused absences if any are involved. As a community-based project, MSEP has no control over institutional policies or practices.

A Note on Expenses:

Volunteers contribute \$1500 to the cost of their Mae Sot Experience. In a wish to make the project available to more students, the project also raises funds collectively to support their activities at migrant learning centers. It covers rent and on-ground transportation in Thailand as well as visa-related expenses and in addition provides a monthly stipend of \$200 CAD, which is sufficient to meet most basic food expenses. However, inevitably, individual volunteers make different choices regarding spending, and the project cannot be expected to cover all daily expenses.