

BRINGING ABOUT  
BETTER UNDERSTANDING

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- Working within a first-class Nepalese created and run children's hospital
- Experiencing a different vision of health care in a developing nation
- Sharing knowledge and ideas in an information-sharing network with fellow medical professionals
- Exploring a new side of yourself



The general ward at IFCH



# IFCH Exchange Program

THE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

## Program Structure

The time commitment for the program is flexible. The work can be full-time or part-time during this period, to allow for incorporating work from other organizations or clinical facilities into a daily schedule.

The program presents an opportunity to participate in a first-class children's hospital setting in Kathmandu city. Participants will have a chance to shadow experienced and knowledgeable doctors and nurses from Nepal. Highlights may include:

- Working in one specific department of the hospital, or rotating throughout the different hospital departments. This includes work in the OPD, ER, General Ward, Intensive Care and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit or Operating Room.
- Network and work alongside with dedicated and knowledgeable pediatricians, surgeons and specialists that visit the hospital weekly. This allows for an incredible opportunity to explore different specializations or areas of interest within the hospital setting.
- Following cases from initial assessment and diagnosis through any necessary testing, admitting and treatment, and being involved in the full patient experience.
  - Exploring tropical medicine, general medicine, and a public health system in a developing country, and health challenges through dialogue with health professionals in Nepal.

The program is very volunteer-initiated. Participants are expected to get involved in their work, do independent research to facilitate their learning experience, ask questions to those they are working with, and lead by example of the passion and interest for health and health care. Two requirements for an internship at IFCH are an open mind and a sense of independence. As the program is just in the beginning stages, there is no set itinerary of daily activities.

## Facilities at IFCH

- Paediatric and Neonatal Intensive Care Units
- Daily Outpatient Department
- Paediatric Surgery Department
- 24 hour Emergency Services
- 24-hour Ambulance Service
- 24-hour Pathology, X-ray and Diagnostics
- 24-hour Pharmacy
- Dental Department
- ENT Department
- Physiotherapy Department
- Intermediate Ward
- Inpatient Department complete with six wards:
  - \* General Ward
  - \* Special Ward
  - \* Neonatal Ward
  - \* Special and Private Cabins
  - \* Charity Ward
- Immunization Department
- Orthopaedic Department
- Canteen, Visitors rooms and children's playroom





Dr. Shakya with a patient at IFCH

**“Providing  
the best care  
for your  
child”**



A BABU Volunteer in the charity ward at IFCH

## International Friendship Children’s Hospital

**International Friendship Children’s Hospital (IFCH)** was brought to life in October of 2008. It was created by a group of dedicated Nepalese medical professionals who had a vision of creating a higher level and new standard of Children’s health care in Nepal. In the past year it has developed from a dream to a reality from the hard work of a group of people committed to change.

At IFCH, the care of the patient and his or her family is our number one priority. Children are able to get well in a clean and comfortable environment. It has high standards for our staff in regards to patient interaction, speed of service and the quality of care that is provided to our patients. This all leads to a better hospital experience for both the patient and his or her family members.

IFCH is a hospital that is accessible to ALL patients, regardless of social status or income levels. Subsidized payment plans help all patients get the treatment they need. IFCH understands that the financial situation of many families in Nepal is difficult, but this should not stand in the way of every child receiving excellent health care. At IFCH, this serves as their greatest challenge, but also their greatest purpose.

**The IFCH Mission is to:**

- To **assess** and **treat** each and every child in a **fast, effective and respectful manner**.
- To give a **high quality** of medical treatment to **ALL** children, from **low income to high income**.
- To maintain a **professional** and **hygienic** environment.
- To provide services for **health promotion** and **disease prevention** in the child population of Nepal.
- To provide **personal contact** with the patient and their family to give the **best care possible for your child**.

## IFCH Perspective

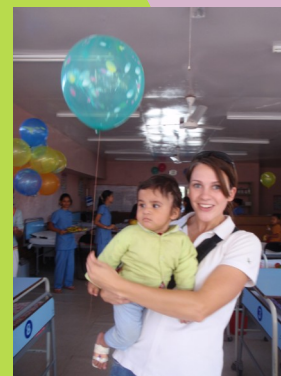
IFCH looks at this exchange as an opportunity for both parties. Dr. Shanta Shakya, the hospital director and leading pediatric surgeon at IFCH looks at international partnerships as a benefit to the hospital as well as the volunteers who spend time there.

**“Thank you for your interest in volunteering at the International Friendship Children’s Hospital (IFCH). As the name suggests, we thrive on international friendships situated within a developing country, there is much room for growth. As we grow, we want to learn from others so as to not repeat the same mistakes in healthcare development. We hope to provide you with a different perspective on healthcare within the operating constraints of a developing country so as to broaden your perspective as you broaden ours. We are eager to engage in the exchange of healthcare, administrative and life experiences to help us all work to provide the best care to the patients we see on a daily basis.”**

Dr. S. C. Shakya (MD, MS, PhD)  
Consultant Paediatric Surgeon  
Hospital Founder/Director

# Participant Expectations

- While in Kathmandu the program is largely participant-initiated. Volunteers are responsible for arranging their own transport, accommodation and meals. BABU may be able to offer suggestions about options for , but is not responsible for making these arrangements.
- BABU provides contacts in hospitals and will assist in setting up a placement, as well as convey the interests of participants. Volunteers are responsible for creating their daily itinerary and experience with the doctors at IFCH.
- Length of the volunteer experience in the hospital is flexible.
- We ask that each participant prepare a short informational presentation or public health presentation to present in Nepal, or facilitate a small project to undertake at IFCH.
- We require appropriateness of behaviour and attire while working at the hospital. Unexplained absences, arriving late for work or scheduled appointments, or inappropriate dress reflect poorly on the organization, as well as provide a poor example for other staff at the hospital.
- We also ask that upon returning from a trip you provide a short summary and evaluation of your trip. As we are a young organization, we need to know what is working and what is not in the program.
- Participants are expected to fund their own trips. In some situations, fundraising options may be available to participants based on the discretion of the BABU Board of Directors. This would allow for subsidizing of some costs such as accommodation.
- Participants may be asked to check on and inventory previously donated equipment that is at facilities in Nepal as an ambassador to the BABU program.
- BABU is not responsible for travel insurance and safety while in Nepal. Participants must make informed travel decisions.



## Typical Daily Routine at IFCH

**0600-0800:** Operation theatre (optional)

**0800-1000:** Morning rounds in wards

**1000-1200:** Outpatient department or work with specialists\*

**1200-1300:** Lunch

**1300-1600:** Outpatient department or shadow specialists\*

**1600-1630:** Break or day is finished

**1630-1800:** Outpatient department (optional)

**1800-1900:** Evening rounds (optional)

\*Depends of patient needs and doctor availability

## Participant Experience in Kathmandu

There are a number of options for **accommodation** while staying in Kathmandu. Most participants will choose to stay in Thamel, the tourist district of Kathmandu. This area provides a plethora of guest house opportunities at different rates. This can accommodate for budget options to more luxurious stays. Costs of guest houses can range from \$4 to \$50 per night, depending on quality, location and season.

There is also a variety of Nepalese, Indian and International restaurants **to dine in**. This is sometimes a nice option for those who are feeling a little bit of culture shock, or just wanting the familiarity of a western meal. Meals range from about \$1 for a traditional Dahl Baht meal of rice and lentils, to \$20 for more westernized cuisine. Care should always be taken when dining in restaurants as hygiene rules are not always followed. To avoid stomach issues, it is best to only eat cooked and peeled vegetables and fruits, and avoid drinking any untreated tap water.

Thamel also represents a variety of **shopping** options. Woolen goods, pashminas, rugs, musical instruments and clothing of every shape and size are available, but **USER BEWARE**. Costs vary depending on your willingness to bargain and the naivete in your eyes.

Everything from nightclubs to yoga schools to spa experiences are available within this area, and a sea of international faces and languages are always present. In the Thamel district the Nepalese people are more forgiving, but it is best to maintain a respectable dress. Women should keep their knees and shoulders covered, while men should wear longer pants. Tight clothing is often considered disrespectful and may constitute lewd looks and comments from some passers-by.

**Transportation** in Kathmandu is available by taxi, tuk-tuks, minibuses, regular buses and of course on foot. Walking from Thamel to IFCH is approximately forty minutes. It is best to walk in groups after dark, and take extra caution crossing streets as traffic is extremely dangerous and confusing in the city.



# NEPAL: Something for Everyone

Nepal is a country most renowned for its snow-capped peaks, with Mount Everest being for many a symbol of what Nepal has to offer. But spending some time in Nepal shows that this is a country of incredible diversity. From the sprawling metropolitan city of Kathmandu to the rural farming villages of the Terai, Nepal is a country with terrain as diverse as its culture.

From Kathmandu city, day trips are available to nearby Nagarkot, which on a clear day can provide a view of five mountain ranges, including Mount Everest and Annapurna peaks. Bhaktapur, one of the oldest cities in Southeast Asia, shows the crumbling remains of buildings some over three hundred years old, and is labeled a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city of Patan is an opportunity to explore traditional urban Nepal life, as well as a number of picturesque Hindu temples. Another suburb of Kathmandu, Boudha, is home to Bouddhanath, the largest Stupa in the world, and an amazingly tranquil site within the chaotic city. Buddhism enthusiasts might also want to visit Swayambunath, or The Monkey Temple. Only a fifteen minute walk from Thamel, this monkey-infested temple is also home to many Buddhist monks of different ages.

Escaping the city, Nepal is a 'Mecca' for adventurers and thrill seekers. Rafting down the Seti river is a common for those with an adventurous spirit, as well as kayaking. Pokhara, a city approximately four hours from Kathmandu by bus, is the jumping off point for the Annapurna circuit, but also has paragliding packages, motorcycle training courses, or a few days of serenity sitting on Phewa Lake.

A visit to more rural communities may be the experience some are looking for. It can present a different side and pace of life in Nepal. Many communities are only accessible after bumpy rides on public transport and a long trek, representing just a few more challenges the Nepalese people face daily.



*“But spending some time in Nepal shows that this is a country of incredible diversity.”*

## Trekking through Nepal

Nepal is one of the most vast and mountainous countries in Southeast Asia. It is most well-known for being home to the highest landmass in the world, the famed Mount Everest at 8848m of elevation. But Nepal is home to numerous mountain ranges, known by trekkers and climbers internationally. From the Himalayas, to the Annapurnas, the Mustang range, the Dhaulagiris, there are a number of ranges with varying ranges of difficulty.

There are hundreds of trekking companies to choose from in Kathmandu and surrounding cities. It is best to make an informed decision. Trekking permits (managed by TIMS or Trekking Information Management System) and certified guides are now necessary in many of the national parks throughout Nepal. Treks can range anywhere from a three-day hike from Pokhara to Poon Hill for a view of the Annapurnas, to a three or four week trek into Sagarmatha National Park to view the incredible Mount Everest.



## Reminders for Travel in Nepal:

- Many vaccinations are required for travelling to Nepal and other Southeast Asian countries—please visit a Travel Clinic for tips and advice on any vaccinations you need.
- You need a valid passport to enter Nepal, and it must be valid for at least **6 months past** your date of entry to Nepal.
- Travel visas are available upon arrival in Kathmandu for a cost (varying for length of stay, between USD \$40 to \$100. Two passport-size photos are required to obtain this visa.



# Kathmandu City



## The Thamel district at dawn

Kathmandu is an amazing blend of culture, sights and sounds. It is an amazing representation of Nepalese urban life. Sitting at the core of the Kathmandu Valley, the urban centre now has expanded to include the sister-cities of Patan and Bhaktapur to create a bustling metropolis city with a population of around one million.

Kathmandu provides a unique blend of the magical and intricate Hindu religion with the austerity of the Buddhism. A number of other religions and lifestyles, all practiced by the diverse population of Nepal give it a truly cosmopolitan feel. Home to a number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, it is more than just a jumping-off place for trekkers and adventurers. With time and exploration, there are many sites that can be enjoyed by visitors to the country, that can show what a day-in-the-life of a Kathmandu resident.

The thriving neighbourhood of Thamel is where tourists congregate to set up treks and adventures, find volunteer opportunities, or shop the many pashmina and woolen good shops that line the streets. Streets filled with busy taxis, busses, rickshaws and motorbikes leads to exciting experiences just trying to cross the road. Thamel is often an oasis available to escape some of the realities of hectic Kathmandu for a touch of western civilization.

Many people have a love-hate relationship with the city. Although Kathmandu can be a noisy, polluted and claustrophobic metropolis, there is more to the city than meets the eyes. And although the city itself is not generally a destination for most visitors, it can provide opportunities to explore the urban Nepalese culture. The mixture of affluence and poverty is amazing to the sense, and can open your eyes to urban poverty in a developing country.

*“... it is more than just a jumping-off point for trekkers and adventurers...”*

## An Opportunity to Help...



Nepal is considered one of the least-developed developing countries in the world, facing many challenges and obstacles in their work to better the quality of life for the 33 million people that live within it's borders. There are many opportunities to become involved in programs throughout Nepal that can have a positive impact on the lives of Nepalese people.

Aside from being directly involved in healthcare in Nepal, many international and national NGO's work in Nepal to better the lives of the people. With some research, there a

There are opportunities to work in other settings, including:

- Orphanage or group homes for children orphaned in Nepal, many from the result of a civil war that raged within the borders between political factions
- Working with street children, helping them work through drug addictions, and helping them move into group homes or training facilities where they can work towards find better opportunities for income than begging on the streets.
- Working with groups empowering women, helping them escape life on the streets, or offering them informal education to enable them to support themselves and their families
- Assisting groups that micro-finance projects to support impoverished families to get a step-up in creating an income to support their families.

Work with these groups can be incorporated into the time you work at the hospital, helping to expand participant's understanding of the status of Nepal.



# Frequently Asked Questions

## Who Can Apply

IFCH is looking for interested medical and nursing students and medical professionals. This includes doctors (working or retired), nurses, physiotherapists, respiratory therapists, surgeons and medical specialists.

We ask that students who apply are interested in medical science or health related studies. Medical professionals can take part in the program in a number of different facets. Participation in the everyday life of the hospital, sharing knowledge and experience with hospital staff is one option. Presenting seminars and sharing experience in any specialties that may pertain to the health and medical situation in Nepal.

## How to Apply

To apply, Please fill out the IFCH Volunteer Application Form found on the IFCH website ([www.ifch.com.np](http://www.ifch.com.np)) or at the BABU website ([www.thebabuproject.org](http://www.thebabuproject.org)). The form should be sent to [info@ifch.com.np](mailto:info@ifch.com.np)

If you would like to discuss with previous volunteers of IFCH, or would like to request assistance from BABU regarding fundraising, please contact [info@thebabuproject.org](mailto:info@thebabuproject.org). We will try to meet with interested persons or contact them on the phone to make sure that the internship experience is a good fit, and to help applicants prepare for their trips as much as possible.

## What are expenses for the program?

We do not believe that a volunteer should pay fees. Similar programs in Kathmandu city at the hospitals cost USD \$200 for a four week placement. IFCH has volunteered to host BABU volunteers for free. We believe that this program will be beneficial for both sides of the program. Airfare, accommodation and living expenses are not covered by BABU. These costs vary with the season of travel, and we may be able to help you with an estimate. Fundraising with tax receipts for donors for specific projects taking place in Nepal may be an option, and individual situations will be assessed at the organization's discretion.

Note: Medical students wishing to qualify this as a medical elective are kindly requested by IFCH to make a donation to the IFCH charity fund.

## What is the IFCH Charity Fund?

The IFCH charity fund is a pool of money collected for use by patients who cannot otherwise cover cost of medical treatment. The fund is exclusively accessed by patients in one of the three charity ward beds.

## When Does the Program Start

Volunteer work can take place any time during the year. Although BABU can facilitate and arrange placements and contacts in the hospital, they will not be in the city to facilitate day-to-day activities. IFCH can help you arrange your placement according to your schedule.

## How can I contact the hospital?

Please send all information inquiries attention Rabindra Basinet to International Friendship Children's Hospital Maharajgunj, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Email: [info@ifch.com.np](mailto:info@ifch.com.np)  
Phone number: 01-441-1134. I  
IFCH website is [www.ifch.com.np](http://www.ifch.com.np)

## How can I contribute to the hospital?

We have just launched several opportunities for you to help the children of Nepal by purchasing IFCH health coupons. Options are below.

- a) Free paediatric consultation
- b) Child health coupon
- c) Free child health checkup card

All money collected from these initiatives will go directly to the charity fund and be subtracted from the fund when used. If unused the money will remain in the fund for future use by patients of the charity ward.