

International Volunteer Program (focus Asia) with Caritas in Belgium

Caritas in Belgium: who are we?

Caritas in Belgium is one of the largest international networks: Caritas Internationalis, composed of 167 Catholic organizations working together in 200 different countries and regions.

There are three Caritas organisations in Belgium that constitute Caritas in Belgium.

Caritas International Belgium is the organisation in charge of international solidarity, including relief, development aid and assistance to migrants and asylum seekers. It is also the largest and operational member of Caritas in Belgium.

Catholica Flanders (*Caritas Vlaanderen*) and **Caritas Catholica en Belgique francophone et germanophone** are regional umbrella organisations that on the one hand deal with thematic issues regarding identity, pastoral care, voluntary work and combating poverty, while also bringing together diocesan Caritas organisations, solidarity organisations (including Caritas International Belgium) as well as other federations of social and health care services (like hospitals, elderly care residences, child care facilities and others).

Vision and mission

Our vision

Caritas is at the heart of the Church's mission. Caritas is inspired by Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching and by the experiences and hopes of people who are disadvantaged and living in poverty.

We work with people of all faiths and those who have none.

Caritas strives for a world where the voices of the poor are heard and acted upon, where each person is free to flourish and live in peace and dignity and where our natural environment given by God is managed responsibly and sustainably in the interests of the entire human family.

***“The development of peoples depends on a recognition
that the human race is a single family working together...” (Pope John Paul II)***

Our mission

Caritas shares the mission of the Catholic Church to serve the poor and to promote charity and justice throughout the world.

Faith in action

We are inspired by the Gospels, by the teachings of the Catholic Church and by the hopes of people living in poverty. We encourage everyone to respond to humanitarian disasters, to promote integral human development and to advocate on the causes of poverty and violence. We animate Catholic communities and all people of good will in solidarity with the suffering of their brothers and sisters around the world.

Emergency response

Caritas responds practically to humanitarian crises such as natural disasters, conflict and the effects of climate change. We save lives, relieve suffering and help rebuild livelihoods and communities in the longer-term. This allows women and men in the poorest and most vulnerable communities to survive and recover from crises and to live in a safe and secure environment.

Transforming lives

Caritas promotes integral human development so that people in the worst off and most disadvantaged communities are free to flourish and live in peace and dignity. We work to ensure that our natural environment is managed responsibly and sustainably in the interests of the entire human family.

Calling for a better world

Caritas seeks a world where the voices of the poor are heard and acted upon. This is a world where women and men in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities are able to influence the systems, decisions and resources that affect them. They can then live under governments, institutions and global structures that are just and accountable.

Vision on volunteer work

For Caritas, volunteering is a main component of its identity. At Caritas, volunteers engage themselves, directly or indirectly, to help the most vulnerable because every human being has a right to live in dignity.

Its source of inspiration is the Gospel. The voluntary work at Caritas brings support to concrete needs on the field.

As an organization, we also want to contribute to an inclusive society, a society that integrates and respects differences.

We believe that working in another culture can be an added-value for the local projects and also for the volunteer to be more open-minded. To exchange and have contact with others develops people's mutual understanding, an open view of the world, to become more unified, to connect people and to embrace diversity.

Caritas Belgium has local partners in different countries that work with volunteers to keep the projects going. According to the needs and together with the partners, we define the position of the volunteer into the organization to have a positive impact both - for the volunteer and the partner. Therefore the volunteers carry out useful actions and have all their reasons for being

The volunteers should not focus on the idea that vulnerable people have nothing and do not have the capacity. The international volunteering is also not a holiday or "volontourism". Volunteering is not only about having a unique experience to put it in his resume. A volunteer travels in order to learn from the other.

***“Nobody is so poor that he has nothing to give,
and nobody is so rich that he has nothing to receive.” – Pope John Paul II***

Volunteering is based on a free and non-remunerated commitment.

Minimum requirements to become a volunteer

- Minimum of 18 years old
- To be a resident in Belgium (proof of residency)
- To have a good health (medical certificate) and a good behaviour (certificate of good conduct)
- To have at least a basic knowledge of English
- To follow the pre-departure and return training in Belgium
- To follow 2 weeks language class in the country
- To fulfill the participation fee (Annex 1). This amount covers partly:
 - Fixed amount (100€): The support of Caritas in Belgium: trainings, insurance, administrative work, support, facilitating,... in Belgium and in the field
 - Leftover:
 - 50% will go to the project
 - 50%: The creation of a “volunteering grant” for people who do not have the possibility to volunteer internationally. To have access to this grant, there is a procedure with criteria must be respected (Annex 2).
- To become a “mentor” for the next volunteer
- To ‘witness’ through articles, pictures, online diary ,... during and at the end of the volunteer assignment – it will be defined with the volunteer.

What Caritas in Belgium offers?

- Support before, during and after the volunteer work: training pre-departure, evaluation, facilitating for flight ticket and accommodation in the country,...
- A connection with our partner on the field who will help for the integration in the local life
- A volunteer work in a nice place
- A compulsory insurance:
 - Insurance of repatriation, that covers a part of the urgent medical care in the local country and the return flight ticket in case of a death in the close family
- Compulsory 2 weeks language class in the country - linked with our partners
- For volunteer work up to 6 months, Caritas in Belgium offers financial help for the extension of Visa and an exchange between volunteers (collective evaluation mid-term or end-term).

Responsibilities of the volunteer

- To accept and sign the agreement and charter of Caritas – in case of non-respect, Caritas reserves the right to stop the volunteer work and all expenses incurred will be paid by the volunteer.
- To purchase the flight ticket (round-trip)
- Expenses for VISA whenever required (except if the volunteer work is up to 6 months)
- All costs of the basic needs: local transport, accommodation, food,... if it is not covered partially or totally by the partner
- To execute his/her tasks as described in the “Volunteer Profile”
- Listen, respect and implement the guidance of the partner
- To follow the rules of the partner and the local traditions
- To respect local culture and to integrate in the local life

Timeline of the recruitment process

First Period:

From 04/09 to 24/09/2017	Publication on Website (3 weeks)
	<p>1) Registration via database:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In French: http://www.caritas.be/fr/engagement-volontaire/introduction • In Dutch: http://www.caritas.be/nl/vrijwilligerworden <p>2) Send CV + motivation letter to: a.vanderveken@caritasint.be and nhatruc.le@caritas.be</p>
Thursday 21/09/2017	<u>Info session</u> to explain the international volunteer program at Caritas Belgium: 43, rue de la Charité, 1210 Brussels
Week of 25/09 to 29/09/2017	Selection process STEP 1: selection of candidates
	<p>Communication to all candidates: negative or positive answer</p> <p>Appointment for intake by email</p>
Week of 02/10 to 06/10/2017	Intake in Brussels
	<p>Communication to all candidates: negative or positive answer</p> <p>Appointment for an interview with the partner</p>
Week of 09/10 to 13/10/2017	Selection process STEP 2: Partners' interview
Week of 16/10 to 27/10/2017	Final Decision of the partners
	<p>Communication to all candidates: negative or positive answer</p> <p>Appointment for administrative documents for the selected candidates</p>

Week of 30/10 to (depending on the departure)	Administrative meeting: agreement, insurance, flight ticket, Visa,...
(to be defined)	Training pre-departure for all (2 full weekends)
From November 2017	Departure to Thailand or Nepal

Second period:

End of December 2018	Publication on Website (5 weeks) and registration
End of January 2018	Info session
February to April 2018	Selection process + pre-departure training
May 2018	Departure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thailand • Nepal • Cambodia • Mongolia • Laos • Philippines

Annex 1: Participation fee

The participation fee will be divided in 3 parts and is for everyone:

1. A fixed amount of **100€** for Caritas Belgium: administration, training, support,...
2. **50%** of the remaining will go to the project linked with your volunteer work
3. And the other **50%** will contribute to the grant for people who do not have any opportunity to go abroad

Table of the amount:

Length of the volunteer	Amount of the member fee
Between 3 and 6 months	200 €
Between 6 and 12 months	300 €
> 12 months	400 €

Ex: if you are staying for 12 months, you will pay 400€ as a participation fee. The amount will be divide as following: 100€ (Admin) + 150€ (Project) + 150€ (Grant).

Annex 2: Criteria to have access to a small grant

Objective

The grant given by Caritas Belgium is a small amount that will support someone who cannot afford all the expenses required to volunteer abroad. This grant will not cover all expenses but aims to help meet the expenses of the volunteer during his / her period abroad.

The amount will depend of the length of the volunteer assignment and the country where the volunteer will go. The range of the amount is between 500 – 1000 €. Caritas in Belgium will at this stage only give one grant per year.

Criteria to have access to the grant

Here are the criteria that volunteer should fit to have a chance to get the grant:

1. Financial aspects:

- Do not have any other grants or financial help
- The income of family does not exceed the maxima income according to the table:

Number of person in charge	Maxima income (€)
0	20.000,00
1	26.500,00
2	32.500,00
3	37.500,00
4	42.500,00
> 5	+ 5.000,00

Note: If the parents are separated, the income will be the addition of the salary of both parents.

2. Social aspects:

- Age: between 18 and 30 year old
- The volunteer has never been abroad

3. Motivation letter

The letter clearly outlining the motivation for the volunteer assignment and requesting for the grant are important elements that will be taken into account into the final decision.

Procedure to ask for the grant

1. To send a motivation letter for the grant to: nhatruc.le@caritas.be
2. To add a copy of the income of the family and the certificate of family composition