

General Guidelines for Volunteers

Namaskar and welcome! We are grateful for your interest and volunteer spirit. In this document you find important information, which will help you understand our beautiful project. Please read this document carefully, to sincerely sense whether you resonate with our culture and lifestyle. This is an important step in the application process. If all is ok for you, you can continue by filling out the Google form that has been provided by email. If there seems to be a potential match based on the form, the procedure entails two interviews. These moments are an opportunity for us both to explore whether we are a match on a cultural level (interview 1) and work level (interview 2). This extensive application procedure is an act of care. We care about you and ourselves, and aim to ensure an inspiring, empowering, and constructive experience for us both.

We found after all these years of community living, that living and working together, while moving through self-development processes, requires more principles and structures than a private household. As a general rule of thumb, we intend to ask ourselves "If everyone else was doing this, would it help or hurt the flow of the community?". Internally asking this question might help you too to guide your behaviors. You will find more specific guidelines below.

After reading the document, feel free to contact us in case something is disturbing you. There might be a good reason for it to be there, or who knows, you can provide a better idea given the need or situation that we identified.

Spiritual Practices: The practices follow the spiritual tradition of Ananda Marga. You are most welcome to join the morning and evening collective chanting (kiirtan) and meditations. Kiirtan and sitting in silent meditation together helps establish a sense of mutual connectedness and flow which is both pleasant and constructive. Additionally, yoga ásanās are usually done daily in a self-practice (vs. collective) way. The spiritual practices are optional. You can participate as much or as little as you want, though you are encouraged to join. There is also the freedom to engage in your own practices in your own way, as long as they are in harmony with the established spiritual flow. More so than engagement in the tradition of Ananda Marga, an open and respectful attitude towards the tradition, its culture, and its practices is absolutely required. In case of interest, regardless of where you are in your spiritual exploration, you are welcome to join and receive guidance to start or continue your spiritual journey.

Meditation Guidance: Dadas and Didis (monks and nuns), when present, are happy to teach you a meditation technique that you can use during the collective meditations.

Personal lessons and counseling are also available for those who would like to get into meditation more deeply or feel they would like some guidance on the spiritual path. To get the most out of the collective meditation sessions, request someone to teach you the techniques before you join the sessions. Often available on-site for counseling and meditation instruction for personal practice are Didi Mainjiira and Dada Mahaprajnananda, as well as Malati and Shiila. If you already have your own meditation practice you are welcome to continue with that.

Types of Volunteering: We distinguish different types of volunteering depending on the level of responsibility and commitment, and the involvement of a sponsoring third party.

- **Supportive Volunteers**

As a supportive volunteer you work in one of our teams for 6 hours a day, 5 days a week. A commitment of at least one month is required. This is the very bare minimum, as we have a strong preference for volunteers who are ready to commit to multiple months. Regardless of the exact length, we also work with an exploration month. During this first month we both have the time to experience each other and discover whether it flows well. To take care of the financial health of the project, we ask for a contribution of 210 euro during the exploration month (week 1 and 2: 10 euro a day, week 2 and 3: 5 euro a day). In exchange, you receive accommodation, three meals a day, and all the beauty (and, to be fair; challenge) that comes with living at Ananda Kalyani. Examples are spiritual guidance, collective meditation, kiirtan, spiritual teachings, support in your personal growth and expansion, living in the midst of nature, belonging to a community, and participation in interesting local events. After the first month, if we decide to continue together, the payment will stop.

- **Coordinating Volunteers**

As a coordinating volunteer you work in one of our teams for 6 hours a day, 5 days a week. You are the main responsible and lead the supportive volunteers in your team. A commitment of ideally a year and at least 6 months is required. In this case your stay (including accommodation and food) is free of charge throughout the exploration month, during which you get familiar with your role. This month is considered an investment for us both. Once you are flowing and fully embodying your role, you will receive a small symbolic monetary contribution each month.

- **ESC Volunteers**

Being an ESC volunteer means that you are sponsored by the European Solidarity Corps (ESC). Your stay at Ananda Kalyani would be completely free of charge, as the grant covers your accommodation and food. The grant even provides you with some monthly pocket money. Details on the grant can be found [here](#).

Having stated our general guidelines, it is important to know that we are open to customized agreements in highly exceptional cases. For instance, when someone is highly qualified and skilled in an area the project urgently needs help in or when someone cannot afford 210 euro for the exploration month, we are open to explore alternative exchanges and creative solutions. However, again, such customized agreements are exceptional.

Volunteering work: Regardless of whether you are sponsored or unsponsored, the working week is from Monday to Friday. You are expected to be present and available for 6 hours of work on those days. Saturday and Sunday are generally days off. Those with duties at unusual hours (e.g., Kitchen team, Events team, Agriculture) are required to be flexible in their daily and weekly schedule. Volunteers are expected to start working on time and follow the routine sincerely. We like creative, ambitious, and autonomous minds who manifest their work with a lot of love and communication towards those in their team and others.

Teams and Departments: In Ananda Kalyani, we distinguish various teams and departments. The teams take care of the daily business on the ground. The departments connect the master unit to the world as representatives of Ananda Kalyani's vision in a diversity of fields. Examples of teams are Infrastructure, Logistics, Kitchen, Human Flow, Visitors and Tourism, Communication, Events, IT, and Agricultural. Examples of departments are EcoAtivo (environment and ecology), FITO (fundraising), AMURT (social welfare), and Pequena Ilha Verde (children's education). We always aim to match the skills and aspirations of the volunteer with the needs of the teams and departments, so that both enrich each other.

Weekly Meeting: During our Monday mornings all teams meet to connect, work on team building, discuss practicalities, and share announcements relevant for all. Besides that, you might have weekly meetings with the team you belong to. Participation in the weekly meetings and accepting your tasks in your team is the minimum requirement for staying at Ananda Kalyani as a volunteer.

Room Allocation: There is a men's dorm and a women's dorm at Ananda Kalyani Master Unit. There are also dorm rooms in the community house called Casa Ananda, located in Paúl. During retreats or other events, volunteers may be requested to shift their sleeping place to make room for event participants. For this reason, please be prepared to move if asked.

Language and Behaviour: Polite and non-violent language and behavior should be maintained at all times. Aggressive behavior will not be accepted and if it occurs a volunteer may be asked to leave. We live with the ethical principles of Yama and Niyama from the tantric yogic traditions, that state a no-harming principle and benevolent communication. This requires us all to take (emotional) responsibility for the actions, attitudes, and energy we bring into the space.

General Cleanliness: Volunteers should keep their rooms clean and tidy, and their personal belongings properly stored. Please don't use your house slippers or shoes on the carpets in the meditation room. Please don't go to the meditation room with dirty clothes or dirty feet. Toilets, showers, and wash basins should be cleaned after use.

Dress and Appearance: Please remember that this is an *Ashram*, and therefore a spiritual center where monks and nuns should be able to live in peace. In order to preserve the ashram atmosphere and make it easier for everyone to stay focused on their spiritual development, everyone is requested to wear modest clothing. In the Master Unit we have a river that goes by the land, please do not take a swim there naked or topless.

Relationships and Intimacy: Conscious people naturally get attracted to each other and we don't wish to prevent that. At the same time, however, the ashram is designed to be a place where people can focus primarily on their personal and spiritual development. The ashram is also the home of monks and their trainees who are following a celibate lifestyle. Therefore we have separate rooms and dorms for the genders, and we ask volunteers to refrain from intimate relationships and excessive public displays of romantic physical affection during their stay. Couples who come to Ananda Kalyani can stay together if they are willing to sleep in tents or private rooms (if possible).

Use of Drugs, Alcohol, Cigarettes, and Non-Vegetarian Food: We wish to maintain a clean environment suitable for meditation and good health and lifestyle. Drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, and non-vegetarian food are not permitted on the premises. The sattvic diet also excludes particular foods. These include eggs, onions, garlic, and mushrooms. Please do not use these items in preparing food or bring them onto the property. You are welcome to enquire if you have any questions about this, or anything else.

Initiating New Projects: Volunteers are encouraged to propose and take responsibility for new projects which can help Ananda Kalyani become more self-reliant and regenerative (and more interesting and fun). Volunteers interested in staying at Ananda Kalyani longer term could also use such projects to generate personal income. Proposals for projects should, together with a feasibility study, be submitted in writing to the operational manager. The operational manager will forward the proposal to the executive committee. If the proposal gets accepted, then the volunteer will be permitted to take time from their daily work schedule in order to work on their project.

Fire Precautions: The majority of the buildings in Ananda Kalyani are made of wood. Please be extremely careful not to place candles or any other burning items on the floor or carpet without a saucer or some other adequate means of protection. Be careful with candles in rooms and always blow them out when exiting last. **ATTENTION:** absolutely **NO** fire between May and October, as HIGH FIRE RISK all over Portugal.

Lost and Found: There is a Lost and Found Box. Items left in the collective areas will be placed in this box and kept there for one week. After that, they will be moved into a larger lost and found box. After a week, they can be moved to the garage of CA and might become part of a give-and-take shop. Please take care of your belongings, and make sure you take them all with you when you leave.

Recycling: It is necessary to carefully separate different types of garbage. There are separate containers for general compost, organic, plastics, paper, etc. which are clearly marked. Please ask for help if anything is unclear or if you don't know where to put something. For residents of Casa Ananda: The big buckets that are outside on the balcony, should be taken to the Ananda Kalyani Master Unit and dumped on a specific place that you should ask the local residents about. Note: Please, be attentive to plastic stickers in fruit and tea labels. Take these out before putting the fruit and tea bag in the compost bin.

General House Cleaning: At the Monday morning meeting we decide who is going to clean what and tasks will be assigned. It is expected for all the volunteers in Ananda Kalyani to be part of this weekly cleaning. In each room, you will find the tasks that are needed to be done, and if not, kindly ask for guidance to one of the residents

Wood-burning stove: When you use the stove make sure you keep everything clean. Take out the ashes, broom the floor, and be careful with the carpet. Keep the wood organized. You will find instructions on how to use the stove next to it.

Kitchen: We have a lovely kitchen team making food for us, but we all help with the cleaning after meals which includes: washing dishes, drying dishes in the drainer and storing the dishes in the kitchen cabinets, sweeping the floor, removing everything from the table, washing big pan and serving containers, labeling with name and date what's goes to the fridge, folding the tablecloth, cleaning and storing kitchen counter, leaving it tidy, taking out the trash.

Please always put back the things in their proper place, don't leave them around. It is expected for all members to clean their own dishes.

Shopping List: We have posted in the kitchen a shopping list, if you finish something, like detergents, food, or gas, please write in the list so we can buy and please warn someone from the house in case of gas or other immediate thing that is needed to be bought.

Blankets and Cushions: Volunteers are expected to bring their own sleeping bag and come with their own warm clothing. Most of the people think Portugal is a warm country all year round but it can also be cold, bring warm clothes ESPECIALLY during winter when the nights are frosty! We have a limited number of extra blankets and sleeping bags which can be provided upon request. Please do not take meditation blankets and cushions for personal use.

Ananda Shop: We have some products, books, crafts, and CDs for sale in Ananda Kalyani, you can ask the price and buy them if you want. We also have for sale many items produced on our farm, like vegetables, fruits, jams, and other products. If you are interested, you can also buy these items to take back home.

Picking Vegetables & other stuff: We have different zones in the land for agricultural purposes. Some are intended more for selling outside and others for our own consumption. Many times we have orders from clients, and we are counting on what's in the land to fulfill those orders, so please do not pick vegetables without consulting first the team coordinator of agriculture.

Library: We have a library in the meditation room in Casa Ananda. There is a paper there for you to fill in with your name, the name of the book, CD or DVD you took, date of borrowing, and date of returning. These materials should only be used inside Casa Ananda. Please don't take them out, and always responsibly put them back in the same place. Items should never be borrowed for more than 1 month, so others can have the opportunity to use them also. In case it's summer and everyone is staying in the land, ask the operational manager if an exception can be made.

Power Consumption: Please turn off lights, limit water use, and close doors and windows wherever possible. In Winter or when appropriate, in order to avoid heat loss windows should only be opened for airing for a few minutes at a time. If you open a window please take personal responsibility for closing it.

Bicycles: We have some bicycles that can be used, please ask permission from one of the local residents at Casa Ananda or Ananda Kalyani before use, and always be responsible for them, keep them out of the sun, rain and keep them stored inside the garage.

Laundry: We have a washing machine and dryer. In order to save electricity and water please wait until you can fill the machine before using it. Please consult with local residents for instructions on using the washing machines. A good idea is to share a washing load with other members.

Vehicles: There are community cars available that can be used upon booking in advance. For the latest details on this procedure speak with the Logistics Coordinator. A general rule is to fill up the car up with the used amount of petrol. Additionally, we ask you to please drive slowly on the property and avoid raising dust. At last, always return the car as clean or cleaner than you found it.

Privacy and Personal Items: Long term residents may have marked areas in the refrigerators, kitchen cupboards, and other storage areas for keeping their personal food items and belongings. Please respect these signs and do not take anyone's personal food or belongings without permission. In case there is something that seems that doesn't belong to anyone and could be useful to you, use the main channel on telegram to ask the community.

General Awareness: We have regular visitors and wish to keep Ananda Kalyani looking clean and attractive. This can only be achieved if everyone takes responsibility and pride in keeping the place beautiful. If you find something out of place or dirty, or in need of attention, before asking or pointing it out to others, see if you can fix it by yourself. If we maintain a spirit of proactivity, it's much easier to live in a community.

Health and Insurance: Everyone coming from a European Union country should request in their home country the European Health Insurance. It's free (or almost) to get, and you get health coverage in Portugal. If you do not have this card, you need to pay for any kind of treatment (even emergency ones) in our Hospitals. You can, however, request the money back, once you are in your home country - depending on which country it is. If you are not coming from an EU country, or are staying for more than three months, please check in advance how to get health coverage in Portugal. *Please also note that we are not responsible for any kind of injury that might occur to you during your stay with us.*

Domestic Animals: We want our land to be a safe haven for wildlife and throughout the years we have been watching an increasing number of wild animals appearing on our land that we were not watching before. Unfortunately domestic animals, in particular cats, are a major threat to wildlife. According to some studies, cats are super predators for small mammals and birds especially but also small reptiles, etc, and we cannot at this stage accept volunteers that need to bring their domestic animals for this reason with some exceptions. *Please talk about this with our human flow coordinator before coming to see if there is any creative solution we can find for your situation, but as a generic rule we are not accepting domestic animals in the land.*

Lifestyle: Some volunteers come with the expectation of knowing what it means to live off-grid in terms of electrical energy, water, not using money, etc. Although we respect the projects that are investing in such strategies a lot, we have taken another path. We are engaged in doing a lot of work in the local and regional context, and we see it as an advantage for our goals to be connected to the grid in many ways: energy, economy, culture, etc.

We believe we are not the kind of project that will provide the off-grid experience that some are looking for. There are amazing projects that are dedicated to that, that will provide a much richer experience in that field. Having said that, you will surely experience a great connection with nature, and with a more natural way of living.

Inviting Your Friends: Please do not invite or bring anyone to Ananda Kalyani without first consulting with the Guests and Visitor's coordinator. As stated above we can only support a limited number of volunteers and visitors at one time, and we prefer to know something about people before they come to ensure a smooth stay.

Tools, Instruments, and Appliances: Please ask the Construction or Maintenance Coordinator before using tools and equipment. After completing your work it is important to clean and return your tools or appliances to their proper location. Tools should go to their specific place in the tool room, cleaning equipment to the cleaning room, kitchen utensils to the kitchen, etc. All personal belongings should be respected in the same manner. We have a lot of equipment that should be used only by those who are trained and already have been for some time in the project. For example: tractors, wood-cutting equipment, etc. Please ask the responsables before using such equipment. Simple equipment like a blender in the kitchen can be used without asking when done responsibly. Please, understand that, for a serious misuse of any equipment that results in damage, we might ask for some kind of contribution for its fixing.

Expulsion: Persistent disregard of the above conditions may result in volunteers being asked to leave the property.

Note: These guidelines may be revised at any time.

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