



Envision - The Alliance Canada

Short Term Mission Trip (STMT)

Overview Handbook

Phuket, Thailand



Hello!

We are so excited to have you join us in South East Asia for a Short Term Mission Trip. Our hope and prayer for your team is that you would encounter God on this trip. That you would see what God is doing in a different part of the world. That you would see how God is calling you to participate in His mission. In your time with us we trust that God will spark questions in your mind and you will leave with a changed heart.

We look forward to hosting you and want your experience to be the best it can be. We are not a hotel but we want to welcome you well! We intend to have your experience be a balanced one of getting an authentic Thailand experience. If you have questions or requests, please have your team leader reach out to us and we'll do our best to help you.

We have put together important information for your reference as you prepare to join us in Phuket. May God continue to guide us all as we all prepare our hearts for what He has for us all.

Blessings,

Teesha & Kurt Jones
Envision Coordinators
South East Asia Site



INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE ENVISION SITE - PHUKET, THAILAND

As a popular location for tourism located in Southern Thailand, this laid-back region draws many vacationers and “thrill” seekers. Phuket truly is a dream location but beyond the island's beauty, the bondage of sin and darkness offers a false promise to those looking for satisfaction. As a result, Thai nationals are exploited into the sex industry with small chances of escape. Our mission, by partnering with For Freedom International, in Phuket is to break the chains of oppression so that people have the opportunity to encounter Christ, live in freedom and change the world. Through Christ, we open ourselves to be used in restoration efforts for true freedom, Freedom in Christ Jesus.



MEET THE TEAM!

Envision Coordinators - South East Asia Site, Kurt & Teesha Jones

Kurt and Teesha have been involved with camp & youth ministry for the past 15 years. They enjoy being silly and embracing the joy God offers His children. They have a young son, Ezekiel, that also embraces that joy. Together they all enjoy spending time in God's creation through fishing, hikes, and exploring. They also enjoy learning about the diverse cultures around the world through a simple meal with others or exploring local markets. Kurt and Teesha both graduated from Ambrose University in 2017. They both have used their experiences and education to pour into the lives of many youth and young adults through places and programs like Camp Caroline, Camp Qwanoes, and Kaleo. They are fully committed, since 2024, to continuing their callings with The Alliance Canada, through their strategic initiative: [Envision Canada](#). They are your Envision coordinators for the South East Asia site and not only facilitate trips like yours, but they also run a 12 week gap semester experience called [Justice Semester](#). Not only is the following verse a key one for Justice Semester but also for how the Jones' want to live out their lives for the glory of God: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8 NRSVA)



For Freedom International (FFI) Partners

**Operational Director,
Mattias Bjorkvist**
**Vocational Training Director,
Viyada Bjorkvist**

Mattias is from Sweden, while Viyada is from northeast Thailand. They are passionate about serving God however He calls them to. Mattias, Viyada, and their son have made their home in Phuket, Thailand since 2008. They have an adult daughter that is studying abroad. God brought Mattias and Viyada to Phuket from Sweden in a very unexpected way, and it has been challenging but also a time of great blessings. They are thankful for how Jesus has been shaping and molding their family over the years, and also for how they are able to be used by the King of kings to expand His Kingdom in Phuket! If you want to hear more of their testimony, they would love to chat, just like the rest of their staff of For Freedom International.



Viyada Bjorkqvist



Mattias Bjorkqvist



Who is For Freedom International?

[For Freedom International](#) (FFI) exists to break chains of oppression, so that people have an opportunity to encounter Christ, live in freedom, and change the world. It started as a dream by The Alliance Canada to see the marginalized, vulnerable, and exploited set free from the injustice of oppression. Very few programs and NGO's are living out this important work in south Thailand. Through this partnership, change has been able to be made for many people through a variety of methods like education and investigation efforts with the Thai police force.

FFI believes in a holistic approach to giving people the opportunity to be free from oppression through prevention, intervention, and restoration programs. The staff, partners, and volunteers at FFI come from all around the world and they get to witness unity in this because they all desire for God's heart of justice and freedom to be made known in Thailand.

Ministry Efforts being made at For Freedom International:

- Investigative work in partnership with the Thai Police to stop the sources of exploitation (online intervention, compiling details of exploitation cases, etc...)
- Educational efforts (safe touch teaching & social media safety in schools, etc...)
- Training and partnership with Thai Police on Online investigation
- Vocational Training Program (VTP) for girls coming out of exploitation situations
 - ◆ includes practical training through FFI's Grace Salon & Cornerstone Bakery (VT students will serve drinks to STMT teams as part of their training & will provide opportunities for STMT members to experience their salon through hair washing, hair cutting, styling, and even nail care)
 - ◆ Includes English class as another way to gain practical skills for life
 - ◆ Includes a safehouse where all the students live life together in a safe environment, while being cared for by their live-in "house moms"
 - ◆ Counselling & intentional discipleship to not only begin the mental & physical trauma, but also allow God to heal on a spiritual level.

Ministry & Awareness efforts within the Envision-FFI partnership:

- Bangla Road Prayer walk and Patong Beach Evangelism (main red-light district)
- Interactions within programs at FFI
 - ◆ Assist in English class for VT students
 - ◆ Prepare and Serve Thai meal for FFI & Envision Staff
 - ◆ Spend quality time with staff & VT students at the salon & bakery
 - ◆ Listen to FFI staff testimonies & pray over them
 - ◆ Lead devotionals during daily morning staff meetings
- Overview of FFI and their ministry with Mattias and selected FFI staff
- Visit safe home & land project, hearing from selected FFI staff & praying
- Interact & serve at FFI's church partner, All Nations Church Phuket (ANCP)
 - ◆ worship team, children's ministry, tech team, and main sermon speaker



About the Trip

The purpose of these South East Asia Short-Term Mission Trips to places like Phuket is to foster an opportunity for God to be glorified through potential partnership and support, education through exposure, transformed worldview, and a nurtured heart for missions. This is not your typical short-term mission trip. The mission field in Thailand requires empathy, passion, and knowledge, and there is no better way to embody these traits than to join the people who are fighting to break the chains of oppression on a daily basis. This exposure trip will get you out of your comfort zone and assist in equipping you to live more like Jesus. We want you to see first hand how God is working in Thailand, through efforts made with our partners For Freedom International. We want you to be encouraged to take the next step in His plans for you. Start asking God, “How do you want me to grow closer to you through this trip? What does it look like in my life to trust you more?”



Below are some details of this exposure trip:

Daily Expectations of STMT team:

Quiet Time/Journaling/Personal Devotions – Intentionally spend time with God. You decide what this time looks like.

Team Testimony Sharing & Team Worship* – Team members sharing testimonies and starting the day with group worship.

Intentional Participation – Each day we'll be discussing a certain topic such as Buddhism or sexual exploitation, and this might involve some classroom time and/or activities & interaction. We expect that if you've signed up for this trip you'll engage in what is planned. What's the old saying... "What you give is what you get"? Let's be all in it together!

Team Debrief and Prayer – Take time with your team (sometimes with us Envision people 😊) to process things you are learning. End the day with team prayer.

Sample Schedule (for a 10 day trip, arriving on a Saturday):**

Day 1: Arrival & Orientation: Help sort out money exchange & phone plans, show you to your hotel, explore to fight off that jet leg, and spend time in prayer as we prepare the days ahead.

Day 2: Church & Fellowship: Have fellowship with the international church & explore Phuket.

Day 3: "This is Thailand": Overview of Thai culture, religion, & language. Making expectations clear.

Day 4: "This is FFI": Overview & History of FFI. Dive deeper into cultural & religious context.

Day 5: Listening & Interacting: Hear from FFI Staff and interact with FFI in a variety of ways.

Day 6: Serve: Assist, prepare, and serve FFI through English & cooking class and prayer.

Day 7: Prevention & Exposure: Visit Asia Center Foundation. Exposure & Evangelism at Bangla Rd.

Day 8: Explore & Serve: Beach clean up (with locals), Beach fun, and a day to explore!

Day 9: Church & Fellowship: Serve & have fellowship at church. Review & reflection time.

Day 10: Final Debrief and Departure Day: Thankful for what seeds God has planted.

Note

* For staff devotionals with FFI, we will expect that your team has prepared for multiple sharing opportunities (15-20 minute devotionals). Please note that who will share could change unexpectedly due to FFI investigations or sickness.

**As an expectation, please note that schedules rarely go as planned in Thailand. Days may switch up depending on weather, available lecturers and transportation situations.

General Information

Trip Cost (10 Day Trip, based on a 10-Person Team)

\$1,125 CAD/per person

- Includes insurance, housing, food, in-field transportation, day trip, project donation.
- Does not include flights, personal spending money

Money Questions

The currency in Thailand is the Thai baht (฿). Be prepared to bring any cash in new \$50 and \$100 bills as they have the best exchange rates. You could also bring new \$20s. You may wish to bring some spending money, depending on how many gifts you plan to buy. We would recommend bringing a few hundred bucks for gifts and snacks. There are 7- 11's & drink/snack stalls everywhere so you can buy snacks whenever you want during your stay. Credit cards can be used in Thailand and there are ATM machines available. Please check with your bank or credit card company about international fees and inform them of your travels prior to traveling.

Accommodations, Dress Code, Packing List, Cultural Awareness, etc...

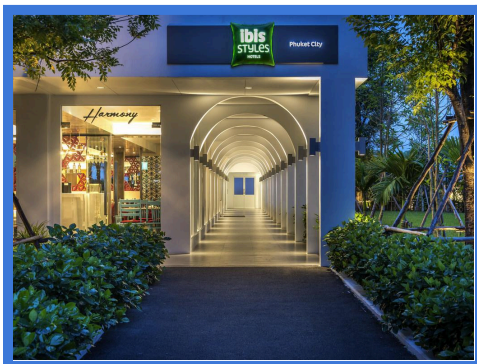
Food & Water

We will almost always be eating together, but when we are not, feel free to explore Phuket on your own and find a restaurant of your choosing. We want to show you the variety that Phuket has to offer, showcasing the wonderful cuisine that is Thai food. Please make sure to let us know of any allergies so that we can keep those in mind when we are exploring Thai food during your stay with us. Also, remember that it will be your responsibility to remain hydrated. It's not the easiest thing to do in Thailand, as you will sweat a lot due to the heat and humidity. We may have hot days in Canada but please be prepared that the heat will be different and it will be all the time. With that said, bottled water is very easy to obtain and is very cheap compared to Canada (for example, at 7Eleven, it is approximately \$0.44 for a single 1.5 liter bottle of cold water). Having a reusable water bottle is also a smart choice and there are many locations like FFI where you can fill it with drinkable cold water.

Housing

During your time in Thailand, you will stay at a hotel. There are a few places we recommend every group that visits.

- Royal P Hotel: Walking distance from FFI and All Nations Church Phuket (ANCP). Offers complimentary breakfast. Multiple cafes walking distance away from the hotel.
- Ibis Styles Hotel: Located in Old Phuket Town. About a 10 minute drive from FFI, ANCP, and Naka Market. About a 15 minute walk (6 min drive) to Sunday walking market. Does not provide complimentary breakfast (extra fee), but has a morning market right beside it virtually every morning (local Thai market).



Ministry Centre

This is the main building for FFI. All rooms are airconditioned. The main floor consists of our Vocational Training programs including the Grace Salon & The Cornerstone Bakery (there is a full kitchen & prep station behind the cafe). On the 2nd floor there is one classroom, a boardroom (majority of presentations will happen in this room), the administration office room, investigation & PR offices, dining area (we'll have a few meals on this patio area 😊), and access to the Child Advocacy Centre. The 3rd floor will give you access to the Child Advocacy Centre through one flight of stairs. With a different set of stairs you will also gain access to a dormitory that has been used for various purposes.



How to Dress

We are so glad you asked! In a world of fashion, trends and different cultural norms, you'll see so many different kinds of dress in Phuket. This is one reason why what you wear during your time in South East Asia is so important. We appreciate that many have reached out in the past to ensure their style was appropriate. Here are some helpful tips for what to wear and not wear in Thailand!

- In the Ministry Center it is good to keep in mind that this is a professional building and the FFI staff will be coming to the centre in their professional attire. With the variety of activities or ministry/cultural outings you'll do throughout your stay, casual wear is inevitable (painting project clothes, beach ministry clothes, etc...), but the risk is when people dress too casually while at the Centre. For example: shorts that are too short, leggings/yoga pants that are a couple sizes too small, crop tops, going braless during the day, spaghetti straps on shirts, low-riding pants, tank tops that dip really low on the sides, etc... Let's think: "modesty". We suggest a semi-professional wardrobe when you are in professional settings like FFI's Ministry Centre. That being said, we want you to be comfortable, so we're not asking you to show up in a suit and tie.
- When you're out in Phuket consider the following: you are representing Christ & FFI, therefore you want to dress in a way that represents well! In Thailand, the local people typically dress quite modestly. We don't expect you to dress exactly like the locals do, but out of respect, we hope that you might consider them and the importance of modesty in Thai culture.
- At the Beach: Two pieces are fine for girls. That being said, we would appreciate the avoidance of string bikinis, strapless bathing suits, and thong bathing suits when at the beach. Board shorts are best for boys, no tiny speedos please!
- Phuket is very laid back and touristy; so, shorts, flip flops, t-shirts, are great for everyday wear. However, Thai culture is formal. So, avoid being sloppy or immodest in dress. For Thai church clothes, please bring a nice shirt (golf or short sleeve casual button up shirt would work great!) and pants, with closed shoes (ladies - a long dress or skirt would be best).

Packing List:

- One Sweater
- Casual/comfortable shoes/flip flops & running shoes
- Clothes: casual shirts, More shorts than pants (at least one pair of pants for church), shirts/bottoms/dresses/skirts that are semi-professional or cultural sensitive, pajamas, swim suit
- Rain gear (you can purchase rain ponchos, umbrellas if needed)
- Toiletries (711 or places like Big C/Lotus will have most basics available)
- Medications: Medications like tylenol, generic allergy medicine, and imodium are easy to find here. We mean prescription medications, specific food allergy medicine, and preferred medicine like tums
- Feminine products
- Two forms of valid identification (passport & license)
- camera (optional)
- Cell phone & charger
- Headphones
- Sun screen & insect repellent (those are available but please note that sunscreen can be very expensive and a lot of options will have “whitening” added to the formula)
- Personal water bottle
- Dry bag (optional - could be very helpful if you are at the beach or on a boat)
- Bible/journal/pen.

Please Note: Phuket does have a lot of conveniences that we can get in Canada. Something to keep in mind is that what you are looking for might vary in brand name. If you have specific preferences on certain things like over the counter medications (tums, claritin, etc) please keep that in mind when packing. Try not to pack-procrastinate! Trust us, we know it's not worth that extra hassle 😊



Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity

“This is Thailand!” Overview:

Like any culture, there are basic “do’s and don’ts” in Thailand, but individual people will choose whether to follow them or not. Informality and general friendliness are characteristics in relationships of all ages, economic statuses, and social groups within Thai culture. Thai people are tolerant of almost all kinds of behavior and never expect foreigners to understand the intricacies of Thai social customs. By following a few simple rules for conduct, and adopting a few Thai ways, you can gain more respect and be more effective in regards to what you have to say and share to the people of Thailand. Just like you would really appreciate a foreigner taking time to understand some of your customs, we want to show that us North American foreigners want to respect Thai customs/culture.

For those visiting Thailand on a short-term trip, you are strongly encouraged to follow these recommendations.

Do’s & Don’t’s

Thai Greeting: How does each country represented here greet each other? In Thailand people do not normally say ‘good morning’, ‘good afternoon’, ‘good evening’ or ‘good night’. They greet each other with the word “Sawadee”. Also, instead of shaking hands, they put their palms together in a prayer-like gesture and bow slightly. It is customary for the younger or lower in status to begin the greeting. When taking leave, the same word and procedure is repeated. This gesture is called a “Wai”. If you are greeted with a Wai you should reply with the same gesture, though it is not necessary to return a Wai to a child. Think of a Wai as you would a handshake. Initiate a Wai because of sincere pleasure at an introduction. You will not cause offence if you Wai inappropriately in Thailand, but you may create confusion. Don’t return a Wai from waiting staff, drivers, or other help. You might hope to strike a blow for equality, but will in fact cause embarrassment. A Wai to your teacher (any kind of teacher) is definitely appropriate; any smiles you receive in return are of appreciation.

Loud Voices: Calling attention to yourself, pointing at people or things (esp. a one finger point), throwing or dropping things, and making big hand gestures all seem graceless to the Thai sensibility. Preferred modes of conduct are those that reflect the quiet, subtle, and indirect as opposed to the loud, obvious, and direct. Although southern Thai people can at times be alarmingly direct in their interactions with others. It’s good to remember that Phuket is not only influenced by its history as a major port, but also from its setting as an Island. It’s unique as it is similar to the rest of Thailand.

The Monarchy Remains Highly Respected: Throughout Thailand the Monarchy continues to be highly regarded. Visitors to the country must be respectful also of this. **Very Important:** Avoid disparaging remarks or jokes about the royal family (this is very disrespectful in the eyes of Thai people and you risk getting in trouble with the police). All Thai people love their king. If you want to know why, ask them politely. The national anthem is played twice a day (typically 8am and 6 pm) and also before every movie at the cinema. Everyone is expected to stand while it is playing (a lot of foreigners won’t do this and even younger Thai people may not participate in standing, but we will to show the Thai people that we acknowledge and respect their culture).

Public Displays of “Opposite-Sex” Affection: Are not generally acceptable in Thailand, although it is slightly more lenient in Phuket for at least foreigners & may be changing within the younger generation in some areas. Thai people are extremely offended by public nudity (as are many of us around the world). Thai people are modest in this respect and it should not be the visitor’s intention to ‘reform’ them. A polite man in Thailand will not touch a woman.

The Feet: In Thailand they are considered spiritually as well as physically the lowest part of the body. Don't step over people's legs (or any part of a person), even in a crowded place such as on a train; wait politely for them to move out of the way. Do not point things out or pick things up with your feet. Do not wave your feet around people's heads! If you accidentally touch someone with your foot, apologize. Food in Thailand is often eaten on the floor. Stepping over food is a real faux pas. Also, don't step over books. Do not stop a coin you have dropped with your foot, just let it stop on its own or stop it with your hand (not only are feet lowly but the King's face is on the coins!). Shoes are not worn inside people's houses or in some guesthouses and shops. A pile of shoes at the entrance is your clue to remove yours (socks are OK). To the Thai people wearing shoes indoors is disgusting.

The Head: It is considered sacred. Do not touch anyone on the head.

Show Respect for Religious Symbols & Rituals: Avoid touching spirit houses and household altars. Thai people, particularly those in rural areas, can be highly superstitious and may feel the need for lengthy rituals should you 'contaminate' their sacred areas. We don't have to agree with someone else's religious or ritualistic beliefs but we can respect them and not fear them.

Concerning Buddhist Monks: In Phuket, you will most likely only notice male buddhist (male Buddhist wear the orange robes and have bald heads) but there are also female buddhist's in Thailand (they wear white robes and also have bald heads). You should not directly look or make eye contact with any buddhist monks, or hand things directly to them. Remember always that every monk is looked up to and respected (even if they are a child). Women should never be alone in the presence of a male Monk (men are the same but with female monks).

Modest Dress & Clean, Neat Appearance: This will create a very good impression in Thailand. Keep up with your laundry and you will receive better treatment everywhere. Most Thai bathe twice a day. Always keep covered. Remember, you cannot expect ordinary Thai people to understand everything you say, or be able to express themselves perfectly in English. Use your interpreters.

Do not try to convince Thai people that you are poor: This is embarrassing & unnecessary. Being poor and having little spending money for your holidays does not equate to the average Thai person's financial status. If you run short on money while away from home reflects poor money management, not poverty. You may not be as rich as you would like to be, but to claim poverty after spending money on plane tickets (either your own or someone else's money, an amount that for some people matches their annual wage), is unhelpful.

A small amount of money does not magically assume a greater value when held in Asian hands. Many Thai people are wealthy. Poor Thai people (and economic migrants from Thailand's neighboring countries) own much less than you carry around in your backpack. There are very many people in our world struggling to exist through poverty.

Smile 😊: Thailand is known as the land of smiles. Thai people do not necessarily smile about the same things we do in the west. They smile for a variety of other reasons: To say hello or thank you, to make a request, to apologize, to smooth over bad feelings or to show embarrassment. While visiting Phuket, you will have the opportunity to interact with the culture on various levels.

Contact Information & other important info bits

SE Asia Envision Site Coordinators: Kurt & Teesha Jones

Email: kurt.jones@hostedsys.ca, teesha.jones@hostedsys.ca

For Freedom International Foundation Director: Mattias Bjorkvist

Email: mattias@ffith.org

For Freedom International Address

31 Soi 3, Phattana Road,
Tambon Talat Nuea,
Amphoe Mueang Phuket, 83000

Emergency Numbers for Phuket, Thailand:

Police	191	24/7	English support limited
Tourist Police	1155 or (+66) 076-219-878	24/7	English-speaking officers
Fire Department	199	24/7	Connects to nearest station
Ambulance	1669	24/7	Government emergency medical
Bangkok Phuket Hospital	Phuket Town	(+66) 076-254-421	Full-service, English staff
Phuket International Hospital	Bypass Road	(+66) 076-249-400	International standards
Vachira Hospital	Phuket Town	(+66) 076-211-114	Government hospital
Mission Hospital	Phuket Town	(+66) 076-237-220	Affordable care
Poison Control	(+66) 02-590-1994	24/7 hotline	
Mental Health Crisis	(+66) 02-713-6791	English counselors	