**Volunteer Doctor Role with Daughters Rising**

***Providing Health Education and Medical Support in Rural Hill-tribes in Thailand***

**Co-ordinators: Dr Amy McGowan; Dr Mairi Cameron**

**Volunteer Organisation: Daughters Rising**

**Project Base: Chai Lai Orchid Eco-Lodge; Mae Wang; Chiang Mai; Thailand**

**Objective:**

The charity organisation, Daughters Rising, has been initiated to support and aid development in isolated, rural communities in northern Thailand. Many of the communities supported by the organisation are of Karen and Kayan origin and have multiple problems limiting their access to health care. The role of a volunteer medic, within the project would be to provide mobile medical clinics in these remote communities as well as supervising ongoing development of a sustainable health education project.

**Background:**

In northern Thailand, access to health care is limited for many many of the hill tribes and villages. They are restricted by their isolated locations, financial cost of accessing clinics as well as fear of discrimination from the Thai health care system itself. For these reasons, medical support for these communities is largely non-existent and the role of a volunteer doctor would be to provide mobile medical clinics and provide advice and education to the village communities.

Many of the health care problems within these communities relate to poor understanding of hygiene and health. This has led to the communities being unable to take responsibility for their own health and have had little interaction with health care professionals.

Health education programmes have been established and well validated across the UK for many years. From nursery school education programmes to senior citizen awareness campaigns there has been increasing support of making education a priority to empower individuals to take control of their own health and wellbeing. Health education programmes have yet to be established within these rural locations. This has resulted in the Daughters Rising programme initiating a basic health education programme in these communities and in the local schools.

The health education programme has been initiated in 2015 with the aim to set up a sustainable, annually repeated programme. This is to be run as a senior medical student elective project, with 1 or 2 medical students volunteering to provide the health education programme. is to run the health education programme with the school and with the village women. The health education project that has been established will aim to introduce basic health and wellbeing topics, as well as describing the role of the “doctor” and other health care professionals. The project is also designed to provide more in depth teaching on certain aspects of illness; particularly infectious diseases prominent in the area as well as basic first aid and life support training. The volunteer doctor role will be to provide medical support to the communities and also to oversee the medical student elective project. The medical students will be expected to assist with the clinics and be supervised by the volunteer doctor for this. The doctor will be expected to provide an assessment of the medical students on their elective and provide them with support for their health education project.

The volunteer position provides medical experience in rural communities as well as providing more in depth experience with particular infectious diseases within the northern Thailand area. The doctor will also be expected to learn about particular tribe cultures and traditions as many of these can oppose the advice and treatment we would routinely provide.

**Content:**

The medical student elective project will be run for a 4-8 week period. Volunteer doctor positions are available throughout the year for variable lengths of time, usually several months. If timings are appropriate then you will be placed at the volunteer programme at the same time as the elective students, however if your availability is outwit that time frame then you can be placed at the project at other times. Accommodation and food is provided as part of the volunteer programme and you will be placed at accommodation within Chai Lai Orchid Eco-Lodge, where the Daughters Rising project is run, or at a nearby village in the volunteer house. During your stay you will be expected to conduct medical clinics in the rural villages, approximately one mobile clinic visit per week, and occasionally may spend several days staying in some of the more remote villages providing medical care. Transportation to these locations will be provided and a translator will be available. Informal teaching sessions with some of the Karen community working within Chai Lai Orchid itself will also be encouraged, for example:

* What to expect in a doctor’s appointment
* Physical Examinations by the Doctor
* Hygiene and basic introduction to infections
* Emergency Situations: Collapses; Choking; Analphylaxis and what to do
* Basic Life Support
* Common Medications: Anti-pyretics; Antibiotics; Pain-relief medications
* Maternal health- looking after yourself during and after pregnancy
* Basic introduction to sexual health and common gynaecological problems
* Dental Hygiene

If your volunteer time is conducted alongside the medical electives you will be expected to mentor the students during their health education project. They will be conducting the health education lessons within Chai Lai Orchid and within the villages and the Mowakee school. You will also be expected to encourage their input for the medical clinics and allow them to assist when appropriate.

The aim of the medical doctor within the Daughters Rising programme is to try and establish a sustainable health education project within the rural hill communities, as well as providing necessary medical care and advice to this at risk population.

Application:

-1 x copy of current CV

- 1 x cover letter stating why you are interested in the project