


UBUD  
WRITERS  
& READERS  
FESTIVAL



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Ubud Writers & Readers Festival  
21 - 25 October 2026

[ubudwritersfestival.com](http://ubudwritersfestival.com)

    | @ubudwritersfest

# WELCOME!

This year, over 150 writers and speakers will gather in Ubud from 21 to 25 October under the theme *Samarasā: Awareness. Empathy. Action.*, drawn from Sanskrit philosophy and the harmony of *Citta* (mind), *Rasa* (heart), and *Karsa* (action).

Picture terraced rice fields stretching to the horizon, ancient temple courtyards, and open-air venues where the jungle presses against the walls and the air smells of frangipani. Ubud is not a backdrop. It is the experience itself. And our volunteers will be right at the heart of it.

None of it happens without them. Our volunteers are the first faces writers see, the steady hands keeping every session, every moment, and every encounter running seamlessly. Over 100 strong, they play an essential role in shaping the experience for everyone who passes through, from the world's most celebrated authors to first-time festival-goers.

The experience is fun, flexible, and full of the unexpected. Our volunteers pick up new skills, forge meaningful connections, and leave their mark on every person who walks through our doors. No previous experience needed, just energy, curiosity, and a genuine love of ideas and people.

This handbook covers everything our volunteers need to hit the ground running: the roles we offer this year, a step-by-step guide to the process, and all the important things to know before registering.

We cannot wait to welcome them to the team.



**Janet DeNeefe**  
Festival Founder & Director



# THE FESTIVAL

Held annually in Ubud, Bali's cultural heartland, the festival is Southeast Asia's flagship literary organization. Praised worldwide for its diverse and intimate program, the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival gathers over 200 of the world's most exciting writers, thinkers, and performers for five days of electrifying conversation, thoughtful debate, and joyful celebration of literary culture.

This year's Festival takes a fresh look at the world with award-winning authors and journalists, artists, changemakers, and innovators through an array of conversations and events—from author talks and panel discussions to workshops, literary lunches, live performances, late-night comedy, and spoken word galas—as well as book launches that celebrate literature and creative expression across disciplines.

The four-day programme will be guided by the theme *Samarasā: Awareness. Empathy. Action.*, which originates in Sanskrit philosophy and emphasises the harmony between *Citta* (mind), *Rasa* (heart), and *Karsa* (action). It invites reflection on how thought, feeling, and action can exist in harmony, with awareness bringing clarity, empathy building connection, and action turning insight into purpose.

# REASONS TO VOLUNTEER WITH US

1

## BE THE FACE OF A WORLD-CLASS FESTIVAL

Your time and talent in whatever role you choose brings to life Southeast Asia's largest, longest-running literature and cultural event, welcoming over 10,000 passionate storytelling lovers from around the world each year, and making that welcome extra special.

2

## LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Whether your role involves accompanying prominent writers and artists, emceeing events onstage, or working with our Media team to coordinate press engagements, you will pick up skills that can lead to new opportunities.

3

## JOIN A VIBRANT COMMUNITY

We might be a bit biased, but our team at the Ubud Writers and Readers Festival is world-class! Join a diverse and caring group of people coming together to put on this remarkable annual festival in the heart of Bali.

4

## GET TRAINED AND REWARDED

We will provide all the training you need for your role, along with some great giveaways including the official Festival T-Shirt, a Goodie Bag, a Certificate of Appreciation, and of course, a 4-Day Festival Pass for our main programme.





# HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

**As a volunteer for our festival, you bring energy and enthusiasm to a wide variety of roles. While joining us is fun and flexible, it comes with a commitment from both sides:**

## WHAT YOU BRING

- Be kind, courteous, and respectful to all festival patrons, staff members, and fellow volunteers.
- Arrive promptly for your shift, allowing extra time for any potential traffic delays.
- Respond promptly to messages and calls from the festival team.
- Expect the unexpected so be ready for ordinary duties outside of your actual volunteer role.
- Give your undivided attention to your assigned tasks, keep phones tucked away and save the socialising for after the show.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your work area, the venue, and the festival in general.

## WHAT WE BRING

By offering your time, you have our assurance that we are dedicated to creating a programme that is engaging and rewarding. We commit to being reliable in our dealings with you, building balanced rosters, providing all the training you need for your role, and supporting you with experienced supervisors throughout.

## AS A VOLUNTEER, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE:

- Meals on non-volunteering days.
- Flights or transportation to and from Ubud.
- Accommodation or additional expenses
- Visa and sponsorship support.
- Invitations to the Gala Opening and any special events outside your shift



# ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**Here's all the key information you need to make the most of your volunteering experience.**

## GETTING TO THE FESTIVAL

We provide a shuttle bus from Museum Puri Lukisan to the main venues at Taman Baca, operating a limited service with a few trips per day.

Motorbike taxis, known as Ojeks, are the quickest and easiest way to get to and from the festival venue. Ojek drivers are identifiable by name tags and are located near the small car park or at the transport center next to the ticketing box area. They can take you to any festival venue and vice versa during your volunteer shift.

*Please note: as a volunteer, rides are free of charge. If you encounter any issues or feel unsafe, let your supervisor know and they will contact management.*

## YOUR PLACEMENT

We do our best to match volunteers with roles that suit their interests, so be sure to highlight your preferences when signing up. While we aim to place you in your preferred role, we cannot always guarantee it as ensuring every area is covered is essential for the festival to run smoothly and safely.

*Please note: there may be occasions where we need to adjust your assignment due to unforeseen programme changes or volunteer unavailability.*

## YOUR SHIFTS

Flexibility is key, as we may occasionally need to adjust the schedule. You are welcome to swap shifts with fellow volunteers, but please keep your supervisor in the loop and make sure all shifts remain covered.

## WHAT TO WEAR

Casual, comfortable clothing is fine, though we recommend wearing your festival T-shirt. Some roles, such as MCs and liaisons, may call for slightly smarter attire.

## GET TO KNOW US

You'll get a Daily Schedule document ahead of the festival weekend, outlining the program. Get to know the venue and important people, like Festival Founders, patrons, the all-year festival staff, and all the amazing writers and artists joining us.

## FOOD AND DRINKS

For every five-hour shift completed, we provide one meal with a drink. Two shifts in a day means two meals. Please let us know of any dietary requirements when registering. Meals are served at the Volunteer Base Camp.

## KEEPING US IN THE LOOP

If your circumstances change and you are no longer able to volunteer, please contact your supervisor at [volunteers@yayasansaraswati.org](mailto:volunteers@yayasansaraswati.org). If you are unwell during the festival weekend or unable to make a shift for any reason, let your supervisor know as soon as possible.

## ORIENTATION DAY

On Tuesday, 20 October at the Festival headquarters at Taman Baca, you will attend a compulsory briefing led by your team leader. This session covers all the essential festival details, safety guidelines, and what is expected of you in your role.

Attendance is mandatory before volunteering begins. It is also a great chance to meet your fellow volunteers, settle in, and get ready for the weekend ahead.

## On the day you will:

- Sign your volunteer agreement.
- Receive your volunteer ID, T-shirt, and Goodie Bag.
- Meet your supervisors and fellow volunteers.
- Receive role instructions and have any questions answered.
- Please bring plenty of water and a packed lunch.

Once you are officially part of the volunteer community, you will be invited to join our WhatsApp group to stay connected and get support whenever you need it.

## SPREAD THE WORD

Follow us on social media and use the official hashtag **#UWRF26** to share the festival experience with the world, even when you are off duty.



# FIND YOUR ROLE

**Below are our 2026 volunteer roles. Keep reading if you want to learn more about each role. We recommend you remain open to performing multiple roles, as this increases your chances of being given a roster. If you are happy to help with whatever is needed, then please select the relevant box on the online form and consider yourself a star!**

- Archive and Coverage
- Audio Visual
- Book Launches
- Box Office (Ticketing)\*
- Floater
- Free Events (Festival Club, Climate Day and other free program)
- Film Screenings
- Green Room
- Information Centre
- Indonesian & International Writer Liaison
- Interpreter
- Main Programs, Workshops, Special Events
- Media Centre
- Moderator/MC
- Partnership Liaison
- Photographer
- School Program & Children and Youth Program\*
- Social Media Content Creator
- Videographer
- Volunteer Basecamp

*\*These positions might start before the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival.*

# VOLUNTEER ROLES

**We'll provide all the training you need for your volunteer role, so no prior experience is required.**

## ARCHIVE AND COVERAGE

You will support the Festival's content documentation and digital archive. Tasks include sorting and labelling photos and videos, uploading images to Flickr and other platforms, assisting with basic asset management, backing up files, and supporting the media team with general coverage coordination as needed.

## AUDIO VIDEO

You will be responsible for the safe setting-up, handling, and storage of AV equipment (sound systems, LCD screens, projectors, etc). Knowledge of the venue is a bonus.

## BOOK LAUNCHES

You will manage book launch events and liaise with speakers, publishers, festival attendees, and fellow volunteers. You will also assist with book sales and signings, and support post-launch reporting.

## BOX OFFICE (TICKETING)

You will assist with the sale and distribution of tickets whilst staying across key festival information. Fluency in English and Indonesian is essential, as is confidence handling cash and card payments and dealing with the public, occasionally under pressure. Previous retail or box office experience is helpful.

## FLOATER

As a Floater you will be on standby, ready to support whichever area needs an extra pair of hands. This is a brilliant opportunity to experience many different aspects of the festival, including plenty of behind-the-scenes action.

## FREE EVENTS

You will set up and manage Free Events at the Festival Club, Climate Day, and in the After Dark programme, liaising with speakers, artists, festival attendees, and fellow volunteers. You must be at least 21 years old to serve in this role.

## FILM SCREENINGS

You will support the Film Screening team with equipment set-up, liaise with speakers, festival attendees, and other staff and volunteers, and keep on top of headcount sheets.

## GREEN ROOM

You will work as part of a team providing general hospitality for both Indonesian and international speakers, and liaise with supervisors and festival management. A minimum of five hours per day is required. Fluency in English is essential and IT skills are a bonus.

## INFORMATION CENTRE

You will provide courteous and prompt assistance to festival visitors, handling guest queries, ticketing issues, and concerns, as well as managing the Lost and Found desk before, during, and after your shifts. Fluency in English and Indonesian is a real asset here.

## INDONESIAN & INTERNATIONAL WRITER LIAISON

You will welcome writers and speakers from Indonesia and abroad, support them before, during, and after their events, and help make sure they feel well looked after throughout their stay. You will also provide ad hoc support for festival management, MCs, and logistics, and may be called upon to translate and interpret in English and Indonesian. Flexibility, patience, and resourcefulness are a must, and a mobile phone is essential.

## INTERPRETER

You will provide translation during sessions and interpret for writers, guests, and media interviews in both English and Indonesian. Fluency in both languages is essential, as is confidence speaking in front of a crowd. Formal attire is required.

## MAIN PROGRAMS, WORKSHOPS, SPECIAL EVENTS

You will welcome and guide presenters and festival guests, and support the AV, MC, and logistics teams with tasks such as checking festival passes and ushering, whilst helping with safety management. As events take place across a range of venues in Ubud, use of your own vehicle or motorbike is essential for this role.

## MEDIA CENTRE

You will help facilitate all media engagements, greeting national and international press, assisting with photocalls, interviews, and press conferences, and acting as a point of contact for enquiries. You will also monitor and support our official photographers and filmmakers.

## MODERATOR/MC

You will keep sessions running to time, make announcements and introductions primarily in English (Indonesian is a bonus), and liaise with festival management on the spot when needed. Smart attire is required and may vary by session.

## PARTNERSHIP LIAISON

Working alongside the Partnership Manager and Production team, you will support stall vendors and handle their enquiries. A team-first attitude is essential. This is a fantastic way to get a real feel for the inner workings of the festival.

## PHOTOGRAPHER

You will document events and capture images for commercial use, taking on a variety of tasks set by the Marketing and Communications team throughout the festival, including occasional last-minute errands. Previous festival photography experience is a plus.

## SCHOOL PROGRAM & CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAM

You will lead educational workshops and information sessions for children, and liaise with speakers, MCs, the Box Office team, and other staff and volunteers. You will need to be comfortable in front of an audience and work well as part of a team. Creativity, humour, and flexibility go a long way in this role, and fluency in English and Indonesian is a real asset.

## SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CREATOR

You will take notes and collect interesting quotes from sessions, and create coverage including stories, live streams, posts, and video content across all festival social media and marketing platforms.

## VIDEOGRAPHER

You will capture events throughout the festival for use across our social media platforms and next year marketing materials. Previous videography experience is ideal. Flexibility and the ability to work to tight deadlines are a must.

## VOLUNTEER BASE CAMP

You will provide support for other volunteer teams and lead orientation sessions. Duties also include administrative tasks such as preparing and distributing information and forms.

# LEVEL UP YOUR ROLE

**If you have volunteered at our festival or any other event and are ready to take on more, consider joining our supervisor team. As a supervisor, you will lead and support a team of volunteers, taking ownership of a specific area across the festival.**

Here is what we are looking for:

- Previous experience volunteering at festivals in a similar capacity
- Availability for remote work one month before the festival, plus one week onsite before and during the event
- The ability to lead and motivate a team, working closely with the Volunteer Coordinator Team
- Punctuality, professionalism, and a genuine respect for those around you
- A commitment to giving your very best
- Confidence with scheduling and team management
- Willingness to write a report on your supervised area

*Ready to step up? Sign up as a supervisor volunteer through our website.*



# READY TO APPLY

**Brilliant! Here is our simple three-step process to get you started:**

- **STEP ONE: SIGN UP** Head to [ubudwritersfestival.com/volunteer](http://ubudwritersfestival.com/volunteer) and fill out our online form. Once submitted, you will receive a confirmation email at the address you provided. If it does not land in your inbox, do check your spam folder just in case.
- **STEP TWO: HEAR FROM US** Shortlisted candidates will receive an email from our Volunteer team by early August. This is your chance to ask questions and decide if volunteering is the right fit for you. If you are not shortlisted, we will still keep you in the loop throughout the process.
- **STEP THREE: GET READY** Attend our Orientation Day, where you will learn everything you need to know about the festival and receive all the training for your role. After that, you are all set to get stuck in.

## GOOD TO KNOW

- Telling us a bit about yourself helps us build a diverse team with a great mix of interests and availability. There are no wrong answers, we promise.
- Due to limited spaces, we can only accept a set number of volunteers per role. Once your role is confirmed, your schedule will be shared with you. Please be aware that changes to your role or schedule will not be possible after this point.
- We understand that plans change, so you may cancel without penalty up until Tuesday, 1 September by emailing [volunteers@yayasansaraswati.org](mailto:volunteers@yayasansaraswati.org). Cancellations after this date may affect your ability to volunteer at future events. Emergencies will always be handled with care and on a case-by-case basis.
- Schedules will be sent out by mid-September. Confirming roles and pulling rosters together takes considerable time and effort, so please make sure you are fully across all the requirements before applying.
- Orientation Day on Tuesday, 20 October is a wonderful chance to meet your fellow volunteers, ask any last questions, and pick up your welcome goodies.
- Once confirmed, you will be added to our WhatsApp volunteer group so you can stay connected with the wider team.
- If you need a letter from us to confirm your volunteer work for university purposes, simply drop us an email at [volunteers@yayasansaraswati.org](mailto:volunteers@yayasansaraswati.org).

# JOIN US TODAY!

Have you read the handbook and are you ready to be part of something special? Visit [ubudwritersfestival.com/volunteer](http://ubudwritersfestival.com/volunteer) or scan the QR code below.



Got questions or not sure where to start? Our team is always happy to help. Reach out to us by email and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

**[volunteers@yayasansaraswati.org](mailto:volunteers@yayasansaraswati.org)**

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