

# WHV – Western Ghats: A Cultural and Ecological Volunteer Program

## Western Ghats, India

## PROJECT DATES

Natural property inscribed on the World Heritage List (2012) 22 September - 01 October 2025

**THE SITE** - Older than the Himalaya mountains, the mountain chain of the Western Ghats represents geomorphic features of immense importance with unique biophysical and ecological processes. The site's high montane forest ecosystems influence the Indian monsoon weather pattern. Moderating the tropical climate of the region, the site presents one of the best examples of the monsoon system on the planet. It also has an exceptionally high level of biological diversity and endemism and is recognized as one of the world's eight 'hottest hotspots' of biological diversity.

**OBJECTIVES** - The project aims at preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the Western Ghats, focusing on the ecologically sensitive region and the Kaas Plateau. It seeks to engage youth, experts, and local communities in biodiversity conservation, document cultural heritage, empower local communities through sustainable eco-tourism, build capacity in environmental ethics, and promote sustainable development.

**ACTIVITIES** – The volunteers will be involved in a range of awareness raising activities including orientation and introduction sessions to familiarize volunteers with the ecological and cultural significance of sacred groves, the region's biodiversity, and local traditions. They will also participate in cultural heritage documentation through heritage walks and interactive exhibits, where they will collect oral histories and document cultural practices. Community engagement and awareness campaigns will be conducted in collaboration with NGOs to maximize outreach and impact. Furthermore, volunteers will explore the Kaas Pathar to raise awareness about its unique endemic species and the importance of their conservation.

**PARTNERS** – Elixir Foundation – Youth Empowerment.

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