



Volunteering at Sambhali Trust

Organisation Background

Growing up in Western Rajasthan, Govind Singh Rathore, founder of Sambhali Trust, observed countless instances of inequality between men and women and injustice in his home community. In a male-dominated Rajasthani society, women are often powerless to their husbands and need to adhere to social, cultural, religious and superstitious beliefs. Although they play a key role in establishing and raising a family, they are denied basic rights such as decision-making, education, health-care and family planning options. They lack confidence and basic socializing skills and are often subject to physical and emotional abuse that they are powerless to prevent or even object to.

In January 2007, Sambhali Trust was founded with the intent of helping to empower those women from the underprivileged communities in order to promote a sense of independence and self-worth and to lessen the gap between gender and castes. There are now many projects that Sambhali Trust are running including an empowerment programme, literacy programme and microfinance project.

There are 3 Empowerment Centres where volunteers have an opportunity of working:

Jodhpur Empowerment Centre

Sambhali Trust is based at Durag Niwas Guesthouse, which is 2km from the centre of Jodhpur. The classrooms are upstairs in a separate part of the guesthouse. This project seeks to empower women and girls mainly aged between 15-22 years old from the Dalit and underprivileged communities in Jodhpur, through a two-year course which runs 6 days a week, between 11.00-3.00pm. Under its 3 main aims of self-esteem, independence and unity, it has a broad programme. With the help of a full-time Arts and Crafts teacher, Hindi and English teachers and foreign volunteers it aims to teach basic Literacy, English, vocational training and hold a variety of workshops in educational topics.

Payal Empowerment Centre

This is based about 3km from the Jodhpur Empowerment Centre and takes 10mins in a rickshaw or 15mins on the local bus. The Payal Centre is the second Jodhpur project which runs in parallel to the Jodhpur Empowerment Project and has 30 women who are focusing on learning different sewing techniques. There is a full-time Arts and Crafts teacher, Hindi and English teachers. The hours are from 3.00-6.00pm.

The course in the 2 Empowerment Centres in Jodhpur is based around the 3 main aims of Sambhali; Self-Esteem, Independence and Unity and focuses on the following subjects:

- Reading and writing in Hindi, Basic English and Maths
- Comprehensive vocational training in different sewing techniques including tailoring, embroidery, silk-screen printing, block-printing and beadwork to enable them earn a living after they finish the course.
- Discussions on topics such as personality development, including equality issues, social and family issues, integration with other castes, confidence building, women's rights.

Opportunities for volunteers

- **Literacy** - Teaching Hindi, English, Maths
- **Vocational Training** - Practical workshops teaching new skills
- **Health Education** – Giving workshops on topics such as health, nutrition and practical advice on diet, reproductive health, AIDS awareness etc
- **Human Rights** – Develop workshops on Women’s and Dalit rights
- **Personality Development**- Gender equality strategies, integration into society, role-play, confidence building, discussion groups, counseling, leadership
- **Training for future employment** - approaches to finding work, pursuing the participants’ own goals, basic business training
- **Product Design** – Designing new products eg purses, bags, soft toys, jewellery, using local fabrics and incorporating the embroidery, block-printing and sewing skills that the girls are learning or additional skills that you can teach them.
- Assist with writing of the **Annual Report** (March/April)
- Any area of interest or expertise that enhances the programme above

Requirements

- Interest in women’s empowerment
- Prior experience in teaching, mentoring, counselling or youth programme development would be of benefit
- Good verbal and written communication skills

Setrawa Empowerment Centre

This is based in the centre of Setrawa, a small village of about 3000 inhabitants, situated 110km west of Jodhpur on the road to Jaiselmer. There is a Centre Administrator called Usha who is an ex-Sambhali student, an English teacher, Mool-Singh and a teaching assistant, Pushpa, who all live and come from Setrawa. The Centre has about 50 girls from 4-14 years old and we have now started taking a few boys as well into the classes for better integration. Extra English tuition is needed because they need to pass their English exams to stay at school.

The majority of children come from the village and the Dalit girls come from poorer families on the outskirts of the village, who have no access to water (the well is 3km walk away), which is why they start with hygiene activities before their studies.

Monday-Saturday

11:00 Dalit girls start coming to wash, brush their teeth and hair, etc.
12:00 Dalit Class* start
3:30 Dalit Class finish
4:30 After-School** Class starts
6.30 Lessons finish

***Dalit Class**

Monday –Friday

Class split between Usha teaching Hindi and volunteer teaching English to girls of different levels. Swap round groups each day.

Saturday

Workshop

****After-School Class**

Monday-Wednesday

Lessons split into a beginners' English, basic English and a more advanced class.

Thursday

Test

Friday

Cleaning school and Fun games eg educational games that encourage confidence, self-awareness or teamwork.

Saturday

Girls and boys - a workshop of the volunteers' choice; perhaps something short, punchy, that they can remember, find interesting, and then this can develop into an artistic or team-working day; encourage the girls and boys to work together

For ideas on workshops please also look at the reports by previous volunteers in Setrawa: <http://www.sambhali-trust.org/support/volunteers/amelia1.html>

"It's great if you have some chai (Indian tea) at as many girls' houses as possible to get to know the families and it is great for the parents to watch them speak English. Setrawa really needs a lot of heart and soul- it's exhausting but rewarding if you work hard".

Kerry Kisbey-Green, volunteer, June 2011

Opportunities for volunteers

- Teaching English to girls and boys between 4-14 years old.
- Organise educational workshops eg health and nutrition and Fun workshops such as arts/crafts and games. For examples, please see previous volunteers' reports on our website.

Sometimes the whole community gets involved in these workshops, especially if there is a competition and prize involved!

- Help design other village improvement projects.

Requirements

- Desire to live and work in rural setting with basic amenities
- Teaching or training background would be useful, particularly with young children
- Expertise in a craft activity would be helpful
- Basic knowledge of Hindi language, even few short phrases would be very useful