

SAMBHALI TRUST - General Information sheet for volunteers



Location: Jodhpur and Setrawa village, Rajasthan, India

Setting: Urban and rural

Subject Areas

- *Literacy* - teaching Hindi, basic English, maths
- *Health Education* - Health, nutrition and practical advice on diet, reproductive health, AIDS awareness
- *Human Rights* - Women's and Dalit rights
- *Vocational Training* - Practical workshops teaching new skills
- *Personality Development*- Gender equality strategies, integration into society, confidence building, discussion groups, counselling, leadership
- *Training for future employment*- approaches to finding work, pursuing their own goals, basic business training
- *Social Activities* - field trips, cultural outings

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 socialising 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 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 genders and castes.

There are now many projects that Sambhali Trust is running, but the two main projects that volunteers can get involved with are:

1. Jodhpur Empowerment Project

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 11.30-3.00pm. 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 teacher and foreign volunteers it aims to teach basic literacy, English, vocational training and hold a variety of workshops in educational topics. The Payal Sewing Centre is the second Jodhpur project which has 30 women who are focusing on learning different sewing techniques and are also taught English by foreign volunteers from 2.00-5.00pm.

The course includes the following:

- Teaching Hindi, basic English and Maths
- Workshops on health issues, nutrition, AIDS awareness
- Seminars on women's rights
- Vocational training in different sewing techniques including embroidery, silk-screen printing, block-printing and tie and dye
- Personality development, including equality issues, integration with other castes, confidence building
- Future employment - looking at future work possibilities, what are their interests; how to pursue their own goals, basic business training
- Social activities - every Saturday, sports activities, field trips or outings

Opportunities for volunteers

Any area of interest or expertise that enhances the programme above

- Teaching Maths, English, Arts and Crafts or any other topics that volunteers have expertise or interest in
- Develop workshops on specific topics such as health issues, women's rights, personality development, counselling or basic business training
- Organise outings and field trips
- Assist with writing of the annual report (March/April)

Requirements

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

2. Setrawa Project

This project is based in Setrawa, a village in rural Rajasthan, 108 km west of Jodhpur. Setrawa is a village of a mainly merchant population and the Sambhali School was established 3 years ago initially to provide basic education for girls who couldn't afford traditional schooling. Now, classes are held for primarily young girls between 6-12 years old to improve their basic English they learn at school. Extra tuition is needed because they need to pass their English exams to stay at school, so two older students are now employed by Sambhali Trust to help these young girls. There is also a women's sewing group which also acts as a drop-in centre, where women can discuss various issues as well as learning sewing techniques that may help them to become financially independent later. With the help of volunteers we run health camps, and hold a variety of workshops including those on health issues and nutrition. The school runs 5 days a week. The programme is as follows:

- Sewing class for older women, learning sewing techniques is held 11.00-1.00pm
- Extra tuition classes in English are held between 4-6pm to enable children to pass exams

The Sheerni Project is a Micro-credit scheme which has also been established in Setrawa in November 2009. At present there are 39 women in 3 self-help groups who are saving a regular sum of money each month to enable them to receive government loans in order to start their own businesses. Vocational training and a variety of workshops on health, business training etc are given to these women on a 6 month rotation.

Opportunities for volunteers

- Teaching girls between 6-12 years old English
- Teaching Arts and Crafts activities to women
- Organise workshops on health issues, nutrition, women's rights
- Help design other village improvement projects

Requirements

- Desire to live and work in rural setting
- 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

Note: Responsibilities offered to each participant will be proportionate to their level of experience. Participants who are new to development work may predominately support and assist current project agendas, while those with much more applicable experience may be able to assume greater responsibility. Research projects are strongly encouraged to support each programme's objective because minimal resources are currently allocated for research.