

VOLUNTEERS



This section is dedicated to all those who are interested in living a 'volunteer experience with Community Seva Center' s association is open to people of all nationalities and of all ages, who have already practiced or volunteer to do it for the first time!

We want to give indications to enable prospective volunteers to prepare to come into contact with a different world and to decide in advance which project participation: This section is a space open to advice, suggestions and corrections by all those who have already similar experiences, in order to propose some useful information to those who decided to volunteer in a foreign country.

Volunteer to not only help people in need: it is to offer something of themselves to others, their ideas, their strengths and abilities, often adapting to situations of life far removed from those to which you are accustomed.

It is therefore a 'challenging experience, especially in a context so different from ours, but amply repays the effort because it allows you to get closer to a' different culture, to learn from people who in turn will help to broaden their horizons and .

For years CSC collaborates with volunteers from all over the world and this cultural exchange has allowed both to grow and improve.

"Dear volunteers,

We are pleased to present Community Seva Centre, a 'non-governmental organization, non-political, non-religious and non-profit organizations, engaged in social action to

provide the opportunity for a decent life for the inhabitants of rural villages in the territories of Pondicherry and Kalvarayan Hills, State of Tamil Nadu.

Since its inception in 1990, CSC has worked with about 50 volunteers from different countries and involved them in his projects, benefiting from their advice and their initiatives. Our experience teaches us that it is often not easy to fit in a country with strong contrasts such as India, but in most cases the volunteers were excited because they felt stimulated by contact with the people and with the local culture and enriched the ability to offer concrete help.

We encourage anyone interested to come forward and contact us to live an active way to discover India 'and at the same time help his people! "

The staff of Community Seva Center

Volunteer Projects

Volunteers can participate in a project for a period of between two weeks and 12 months, choosing from those available according to their appurtenances, and capacity.

It is not compulsory a good knowledge of English: though in India is the most commonly spoken language at the national level in most of the villages where the projects are carried out only a few people know it. This obstacle can be avoided because the communication possibilities are endless, not only based on written and spoken language, and all in case of need to know how to use body language that we use regularly often without realizing its significance. A 'more opportunity to make new discoveries and nothing prevents you learn something in Tamil!

Briefly describe some of the projects you can join the volunteers, so that they can decide now what is best for them, but in any case the association meets every need, you can visit the various projects before choosing or participate in two projects simultaneously.

All your suggestions and criticism are welcome and serve to enhance the stay of the volunteers and the 'intervention of CSC.

And 'necessary for all volunteers respect the customs and the local customs and be tolerant in difficult situations or different from our everyday life.

You have to be motivated and not to expect an immediate confidence of the local population, but try to communicate and establish a relationship of friendship and cooperation.

Have to use your imagination and organize the work on the project continued without waiting for instructions, but seeks to cooperate and to propose methods and initiatives.

In case of any problem you can always count on the project coordinators and the entire staff of CSC, who will do anything to help you and to make your volunteer experience an opportunity for enrichment and well-being.

Education:

The nurseries managed by CSC have been created to ensure the development and the 'education of children aged between one and five years and to offer working parents a free service.

Volunteers can work in one of 16 kindergartens in the area of Pondicherry, working with teachers and proposing new activities, from 9:30 am to '1.

The children remain in the 'asylum until 3 or 4 in the afternoon after lunch but usually sleep up to' arrival of the parents, so after the 'first volunteers can spend on other things.

Lunch is provided in the 'asylum, where it is prepared by a janitor and generally consists of rice and vegetables, or in place of CSC, where it was bought in a shop.

Normally volunteers teach children the basics of 'English and math through songs, drawings, stories and entertain them by making them play.

The teachers speak little 's English and this can be a problem initially in' the organization while working with children is very easy to establish a good relationship beyond the spoken language.

If you feel led you can work in the evening schools of CSC, in which you teach English and other subjects to children aged between 6 and 15 years.

During the 'summer volunteers can participate in and organize the activities of summer camps.



Development of tribal areas:

In the territory of Kalvarayan Hills there is no infrastructure, schools and hospitals, and in thirty villages survive in hardship: for this Community Seva Center strives to build various structures and to provide basic services to the local population. In the village of Thalveniur has already been built a place of CSC, a well, a school and in 'August 2007 work began for the medical center and rescue. The 'short-term goal is to build an orphanage yet, a meeting room for women and the elderly groups, several toilets and a sewer system, after which it is expected to extend these services to other villages.

The work in this project is therefore essentially physical, but also to care for children of school volunteers help local workers to carry 20 kg of stones from the quarry to the place of work to collect the mud that make bricks, to carry 1 'water is necessary for life in the village and building drainage systems for the' rain water, or they can attend classes in the school helping the teachers and the kids entertained during their free time. Normally you work from 8 am until noon and from 2 to 5, but much depends on the season and frequency of rainfall. Volunteers stay in a room in the school, equipped with toiletries and beds, the 'water is a serious problem in these villages, so you should use that to wash the river and as far as the' drinking water CSC and volunteers provide to transport the tanks to the village.

The work in this project is therefore essentially physical, but also to care for children of school volunteers help local workers to carry 20 kg of stones from the quarry to the place of work to collect the mud that make bricks, to carry 1 'water is necessary for life in the village and building drainage systems for the' rain water, or they can attend classes in the school helping the teachers and the kids entertained during their free time. Normally you work from 8 am until noon and from 2 to 5, but much depends on the season and frequency of rainfall.

Volunteers stay in a room in the school, equipped with toiletries and beds, the 'water is a serious problem in these villages, so you should use that to wash the river and as far as the' drinking water CSC and volunteers provide to transport the tanks to the village.

Meals are cooked by a chef in the home of the 'association and consist mainly of rice, pasta, vegetables, fruit and sometimes chicken or eggs, given the lack of variety of foods in these lands, there is also a small shop to buy food .

The nearest village is at a 'hour of walking and Friday there is a market where you can buy various items local.

In these villages, very few people talk about the 'English and you should learn some word in Tamil to familiarize yourself with the population.

Usually volunteers remain in the villages of Kalvarayan between 1 week and 10 days.

CSC is working to improve comfort for the stay of the volunteers, but the project still has to be the most challenging among those offered:

However, if you have a good ability to adapt is a 'unique experience to live in close contact with tribal people, to help in practical ways, closer to their culture and discover a wild and unspoiled!



Ecotourism

Community Seva Center are trying to run an ecotourism project in the region of Kalavarayan Hills, which involve local people, volunteers and travel agencies that organize tour operators in the south of India.

The project aims to create trekking allowing tourists to visit this pristine area, to live in close contact with the population and discover the culture and the same way of exploiting the resources and promote the 'economy of the local community, creating jobs as guides for trekking, food shops and restaurants on the tourist routes, small boutiques to sell local products.

During 2007, the staff of CSC, in collaboration with the public and volunteers, worked to monitor the area, evaluating the possible routes, the distances between the various villages and making an inventory of the structures needed to launch 'initiative (accommodation tourists, dining, training guides and track the paths ...).

To date, the 'Association is working to make this project viable, which would benefit the people and valorizzerebbe the' environment of Kalvarayan Hills.



Office:

Manage an association such as CSC and coordinate a number of projects and people requires an 'incredible amount of administrative work: therefore the' aid of volunteers in this area is always welcome!

Most of the accounts and documents are hand-written in Tamil and are in most cases out of the reach of the volunteers, but they can be useful and help the association raise funds, organize new initiatives to publicize and raise awareness the community, improving the

office work and project management, propose and design new programs and interventions, contribute to enlarge the site of CSC and its communication tools ...

The ideas of an outsider to 'environment may be crucial, because they come from a culture and a different point of view!

It's then a job that requires initiative, imagination and ability to organize. A challenging job but that supports and rewards the 'work of all members of CSC.

In the office 'working hours are from 9 am to 5 pm with lunch break from 1 to 2, but the volunteers are free to manage themselves and to participate in other projects. .

You do not need any special qualifications but a good knowledge of the English language.

Preparing for Your Trip

The 'travel arrangements is the responsibility of the volunteers.

The nearest international airports are those in Pondicherry Chennai (Madras), about 3 and a half hours away, and Bangalore, about 8 hours, and the town is easily reachable by train or bus.

Visa

Volunteers must apply for a tourist visa, which is valid for 3 months, the Indian Consulate in Milan or to 'Indian Embassy in Rome. The visa is valid from the date of issue and not from the date of request and the waiting time to get it is around ten days, after which you can pick up in person or have it shipped. You can make extensions to the visa once you are in India.

To get a visa you have to apply for more than three months for work, and then contact Community Seva Center to have all relevant documents, a procedure is certainly more complicated.

It 'must be equipped with round-trip airfare for the controls to' customs and immigration office to 'arrival in India.

Vaccinations

There is no obligatory vaccination to enter India, but there are some "recommended" as tetanus, diphtheria, the 'B and hepatitis A, typhoid, cholera ...

The best thing to do is contact your local Travel Medicine of the 'Asl in your area and make an appointment with a doctor who will give you all the information correct and up to date in this regard. To find the center nearest consult the 'web address [www.simvim.it / centri_medicina.asp](http://www.simvim.it/centri_medicina.asp).

Also recommend that you visit www.viaggiasesicuri.mae.aci.

Insurance

Although India 'represents a destination "quiet" for tourists, there is always the risk of being robbed or lose your luggage or document.

We therefore recommend to aspiring volunteers to enter into a 'travel insurance to cover any costs of health, loss of luggage or expensive equipment (cameras, laptop, etc. ..), loss of the ticket or partial refund in case of cancellation trip.

There are many agencies that perform these services and we advise you to inform you in a travel agency or consult sites like www.europassistance.it, www.lonelyplanet.com, www.mondial-assistance.it

What to bring

Volunteers must first bring a lot of enthusiasm, adaptability and desire to discover and to make friends. If you are leaving your luggage with this experience will be very exciting!

Clothes do not need to bring many clothes as you can easily buy in Pondicherry or in other towns at a very reasonable: ten euro for two pairs of pants and shirts!

Keep in mind, especially for women, do not wear clothes that expose too many parts of the body, preferably with long sleeves and covering the legs, to adapt to local customs.

Bring sandals and closed shoes in case of rain and walk in nature, or buy them on the spot.

Medicines bring a first aid kit for travel, aspirin or paracetamol for fever, antihistamines for allergic diseases, a product for sore 'drive, d' air or sea; prepared against diarrhea and anti-nausea and antibiotic bowel; rehydration solutions, plasters, gauze and a thermometer, insect repellent and multivitamin tablets. Very important also mosquito repellents (sprays, creams, patches, spirals) and a good fly for peace of mind!

In places like Pondicherry you can find many types of Indian drugs, which are really cheap and are of good quality.

If you need to find special medicine in India, consult your doctor and later contacted CSC to decide what to do.

For malaria prophylaxis we refer to the advice of the doctors of Travel Medicine.

Equipment: a tourist guide is essential and we advise those of Lonely Planet, a bag sheet and \ or a blanket or sleeping bag (the weather is usually very hot but could be used in Kalvarayan Hills!), A flashlight or headlamp (frequent in India are the blackout!), a multipurpose boxcutter, sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat; photocopy of your documents and airline tickets in case of loss of the originals. Finally, a camera to capture the most important moments and a thought for Indian friends are waiting for you, such as food from your country, music or photo of your family!

Money

The Indian currency is the Rupee and is currently worth about 0.0164 Euros (1 Euro = 60.69 rupees).

In most countries of medium size you can change money or traveler's checks in banks or exchange offices (the 'euro is welcome!) And withdraw from ATMs with a credit card (Visa, Maestro, American Express and others).

Tourists are allowed to bring into the country a maximum of U.S. \$ 10,000 without declaring anything to 'customs office to' arrival.

Stay

Volunteers have access to the rooms of 4 or 2 two people on the ground floor of the 'house of the director of CSC, AKNehru, located in Pondicherry and close to the town center and the promenade (10 minutes walk and 2 minutes by rickshaw). L 'apartment has two bathrooms, fans, television, refrigerator, kitchen and a terrace where you can relax and drying clothes in front of the panorama. A woman carries a laundry twice a week at reasonable prices (5 rupees shirts and pants, from 7 to 10 rupees towels and clothes large).

Supply

Indian cuisine is very diverse and you can savor the flavor intense and spicy! Almost everywhere you can find vegetarian, vegan and non - vegetarian depending on your needs.

The 'staple food is rice, accompanied by vegetables, meat, sauces, breads, fruit.

In the days of "service" volunteers will be provided with breakfast and lunch, while other meals will be dependent on them. In Pondicherry there are restaurants to range from Indian to French and Italian!

It is recommended that at least the first week to avoid the food sold by street vendors, in order to give the stomach time to get used to Indian food and then you may want to opt for crowded places, an indication of good quality food.

It 's very important to pay attention to' water you drink! The most disease is transmitted via the own 'water rather than through the foods, which if properly cooked not constitute dangers! Drink more water bottles and check that they are properly sealed when purchased. If you take the drinks ask to be served without ice. CSC provides drinking water in the tanks' house volunteers and villages of Kalvarayan Hills.

Transport

The head office of Seva Community Center is located in the village of Pooranankuppam, 9 km from Pondicherry, and in the surrounding area are carried out most of the projects. In the morning, volunteers can travel in the car with the director and return in the afternoon by bus (15 minutes, 2.50 rupees) which stops at 10-minute walk from their home.

What to do in and around Pondicherry

Culture

Sri Aurobindo Ashram: Located in the center of Pondicherry and was founded in 1926 by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, the 'ashram offers a religious doctrine that integrates yoga and modern science and organizes many cultural and educational activities.

Churches and Temples: Pondicherry has several churches, built by French missionaries during the colonial period, and is said to have more than 150 Hindu temples as well as some Muslim mosques, among the churches worth the endorsement of "Our Lady of the Conception" , the Church of the "Sacred Heart", with its imposing Gothic and "Notre Dame des Anges", built in 1858, do not miss is definitely the Temple of Lord Vinayagar Manakula dedicated to Ganesh, the elephant which is a sacred being decorated and carried in procession during the holidays.

Pondicherry Museum: located in an elegant colonial building, a collection of sculpture from ancient dynasties and objects belonging to the colonial period.

Mamallapuram town less than two hours by bus from Pondicherry, is one of the most famous religious sites of 'South India with its temples carved into the rock and its rock carvings, there are still many artisans whose works are exported throughout India 'and the' Asia to adorn the temples. You can admire the stone masons at work, visit the ancient temples (the most famous are the Five Rathas, carved from a single block megalithic, and the Shore Temple, property of 'humanity), the museum of rock art and enjoy the beautiful beaches and the excellent seafood.



Auroville: only 10 km from Pondicherry is this international community founded by Mother in 1968 and based on the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. All 'founding act was attended by the President of the' India and representatives from 124 countries, who have paid into a 'urn a handful of earth from their nation, to symbolize the' union of all the people representing this community. Interested parties may visit Auroville, learn about its history, its philosophy, its organization, and admire the Matrimandir, the spiritual center of the town that contains a meditation room where the sun's rays are conveyed in a crystal by a sophisticated system of mirrors .



Entertainment:

Pondicherry was a French colony until 1956, and the architectural and cultural influences are revealed in the central regions, in the numerous restaurants serving European cuisine in trendy bars, boutiques and activities of French cultural associations still present. Locals include the Satsanga, Coffee.com and Rendez-vous.

Paradise beach: beach famous for its beauty, is reached by taking a boat at the Boat House Beach, on the road between Pondicherry and Pooranankuppam, or walk along the beach from the village of Pooranankuppam and watching the fishermen and their boats.

Goubert Market: every day a few steps from the center of Pondicherry can wander around this colorful and bustling market where you can find fresh fruits, spices, vegetables and many other things.



Waterfront: Walk in "European" style where you can see the 'ocean and refreshment in one of the many venues.

Botanical Garden: created more than 150 years ago, is a pleasant place to relax and enjoy the trees and from all over the world.

Activities: Pondicherry is possible to practice yoga in several centers, including the 'Ananda Ashram and Sri Aurobondo Ashram, Indian dances take lessons or learn to play an instrument like the sitar or tabla' Academy of Fine Arts Jayalakshmi, enjoy a massage with fragrant oils and essences, play tennis ...

Seva Community Center is at your disposal to help you engage in the best way free time during your stay!

We hope that these few indications can respond to your questions and stimulate your desire to live a 'volunteer experience'!

For any further information please write to: rosso.samuele @ tiscali.it or (in English) directly to the coordinator of the volunteer projects in India: csc_india_volunteer@yahoo.com.

EXPERIENCES OF VOLUNTEERS

"I participated during two summers in 2006 and 2007, projects of Community Seva Center as a volunteer and was a 'very important experience.

The first time I came in contact with the association randomly through an 'other Indian organization called FSL manages a variety of volunteer projects in the south of' India. I was fine and I was on friendly terms with Mr. AKNehru, director of CSC, and a volunteer in India. So I decided to repeat the experience the following year, having the good fortune to share it with two friends.

In 2006 I worked for two weeks in a kindergarten in the village of Pooranankuppam and despite my limitations with the language I was able to establish a relationship of friendship with the children I played all day with them and helped the two teachers to teach the rudiments of 'English through songs and stories.

Initially, my goal was not to participate in a project dedicated to children, as I felt difficult to interact with the children, but instead it was a really exciting that allowed me to figure out how to actually help those who need it you can just begin by giving a smile.

I also got to know the various projects created by CSC and understand the amount of work that involves the management of such an organization.

I went with AKNehru for two days in Kalvarayan Hills and I found a wonderful landscape where paradoxically whole villages live without any essential service: in those days had begun the construction of a school in the village of Thalveniur and I promised to return sooner or later to monitor progress and meet again with this population so hospitable!



Fortunately, the 'opportunity to return I was presented the' year and so I decided to commit another 2 weeks as a volunteer with Community Seva Center.

Together with two friends we worked in the territory of Kalvarayan Hills participating in an ecotourism project designed by another volunteer, a French guy: starting from the place of CSC in the village of Thalveniur every day we accompanied Ms. Poongori (coordinator of 'Association in this area) during his visit to various neighboring villages

to monitor the 'development of self-help groups. We have thus been able to draw a map of the area, to calculate the distances between the villages and assess the condition of the trails, creating some trekking routes possible and drawing up an inventory of all the structures needed to launch the project.

I could see for myself the progress made in a year with the construction of the school and play in your free time with the children who attend and they finally have the right to an 'adequate education.

Live for a few days in contact with an environment so different from ours, where there is no service, no means of transportation and communication, no assistance or entertainment, it was a 'very intense experience and cherish a lasting impression of' hospitality of these people willing to offer the best of what they have despite the poverty in which they live.

Also for this reason I decided to create this site and look in my little to offer help to build a better future for the people of Kalvarayan Hills ".



"Three or four months after I started this site I came back to India with my girlfriend the excuse to attend the wedding of a friend, a guy known in 2006 to 'internal Community Seva Center.

I plan to travel a bit 'in the south and so I spent a week with CSC but it was a great pleasure to meet again with Mr. Nehru and spend a few days in Kalvarayan Hills. Once again I was struck by 'hospitality of the people and I could see the organization's efforts in carrying out the project despite the lack of funds and logistical problems.

We played with the children of the school, which is now in full operation and currently has 160 students (compared to 40 last year '!), And observed the work of a family of Pondicherry came to Thalveniur to make on-site the building blocks to construction of the first aid center. We celebrated with the staff of CSC, the children and their families on the day of 'Independence, tried the jeep purchased as a means of transport in case of emergency and viewed the construction of a cistern for the collection of' rainwater.

Looking at these children, between 3 and 10 years old, getting up in the morning at 6 am to go to the river to bathe and do laundry I thought about how many things we take for

granted in our lives, without realizing how lucky we are but at the same time of what humanity has lost in our society so-called "developed".

And this experience I was again an incentive to try to offer practical help and made me realize that I do not get tired to go back to these villages again and again, because every time there is a lot to learn from these people. "

