



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### Before you sign up

We've put together some FAQ's that we hope will provide you with all the answers to questions you have about our placements.

If you have a question that is not answered below please contact [empower.founder@gmail.com](mailto:empower.founder@gmail.com)

### Safety, health and pre-departure information

#### 1. How safe is it to volunteer in India?

Volunteers may experience some temporary health problems in the first few days of your placements as your body adjust to the heat and different types of food. Generally speaking if you eat carefully at recommended places and drink only bottled water you should be safe from stomach problems.

In general, it is safer to avoid travelling alone at night. India is usually a safe place for women travellers; however, to avoid the risk of becoming a target of sexual harassment, you should be mindful of the local customs and traditions regarding dress code. All volunteers will be given safety advice about situations to avoid and appropriate dress before your departure.

#### 2. What immunisations/vaccinations will I need?

The Indian Embassy does not require any specific vaccinations for travellers to obtain a visa to India. However, we strongly advise that you consult your doctor regarding vaccinations that are recommended for your travel destination.

#### 3. Do I need malaria tablets?

Every individual is different and the risk levels vary considerably depending where you travel in India. We strongly recommend you consult your doctor to discuss your entire travel plans.

We advise all volunteers to bring their own mosquito net; this is not provided at your accommodation.

#### 4. Are there any particular times of the year when I can't volunteer?

Our volunteer placements run from August through to April each year.

**5. What age do you have to be to volunteer?**

Volunteers must be a minimum of 18 years old. There is no upper limit for volunteers; we only require that volunteers are in good health.

**6. Can I bring my own family to the program?**

Volunteers are welcome to bring their family members with them on the program. Each individual will need to complete the application form and pay the relevant fee.

**7. Who organises my visa for my placement?**

We will provide full visa support for UK applicants.

**8. Do I have to be from any specific country to volunteer in India?**

We accept volunteers from all over the world.

**9. When will I know specific details of my placement?**

As soon as we receive your application we will start to match your skills and experience to the projects that we are running at the time.

**10. How long does the application process take?**

Applications generally take a minimum of 6 weeks to process from receipt to you starting your placement. However, we recommend you allow at least 12 weeks for your application to be fully processed.

**11. How long can I volunteer for?**

Placements start from 2 weeks with some host organisations, others a minimum of a month. Please contact us for specific details. The maximum placement length is 3 months.

**12. Can I split my time between projects?**

Yes as long as you commit to each project for the minimum length of time specified by the host volunteer organisation.

**13. When should I apply?**

Ideally you should apply at least 12 weeks before your anticipated start date. Please refer to our terms and conditions regarding specific information on cancellation and postponement of placements.

**14. Do I need specific qualifications to volunteer?**

No specific qualifications are needed to volunteer.

**15. Can I contact previous volunteers?**

Yes we have a number of volunteer who would be happy to share their experience and answer any questions that you have.

Please also take a look at our volunteer testimonials and blog.

## **PROJECT LOCATION, ACCOMMODATION, FOOD AND IN-COUNTRY COSTS**

### **1. Who will meet me at the airport?**

We will send our own representatives to meet you inside the terminal building and will travel with you during the transfer to your placement accommodation.

### **2. Where will I be located?**

We currently work with two host volunteer organisations. One is based in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu and the other in Bangalore City. You will be living in close proximity to the project location in accommodation provided by the host agency.

### **3. Will there be other volunteers at the same time?**

Our volunteer numbers fluctuate so it is difficult to confirm the likely number of volunteers who will be there at the same time.

### **4. Do I need to pay for anything during my placement?**

Please refer to the “Apply now” section which details what is and isn’t included in your placement fee.

### **5. Where will I live?**

The accommodation for all our placements is provided by our host volunteer organisations. You will be living with a host family or in shared accommodation at your project location. We will advise you of this once we receive your application.

### **6. Where will I eat?**

All volunteers will receive 3 meals a day either at your accommodation or project placements.

### **7. Do you make provisions for vegetarians?**

All volunteers will be given the option of either vegetarian or non-vegetarian. It may not be possible to accommodate other dietary requirement but please contact us directly to check.

### **8. How do I get to the projects?**

All project transport costs are included in the fee you pay. The host volunteer organisation will arrange this transport for you.

### **9. How often will I be in contact with a member of staff?**

Your day to day point of contact will be the host volunteer organisation staff. Empower staff will also be available most days and will meet with you at least once per week to discuss your placement.

### **10. What do I do if I am ill?**

Contact a member of staff immediately who will advise you on what to do and accompany you to seek professional medical assistance if needed.

### **11. How can I contact friends and family at home?**

When you first arrive in India you will be offered the use of staff phone to contact home. Within the first 10 days of your placement you will be able to get a local sim card to use within your own phone. Please ensure your phone is unlocked before you travel.

## **PROJECT PLACEMENT**

### **1. How many hours am I expected to volunteer?**

Volunteers will be required to work approximately 30 hours per week.

### **2. What clothing is appropriate for the program?**

Volunteers need to consider the temperature for the time of year for their placement location. We will advise you of average temperatures and likely weather conditions during your placement and suggest appropriate clothing.

### **3. What support will I receive from Empower staff?**

On receipt of your application we will be your primary point of contact. We work closely with staff from our host volunteer organisations and ensure volunteers always have access to staff members in case of emergency, questions or support.

### **4. How will I communicate to the local people?**

All of our host volunteer organisation staff speak English and the local language and will be on hand to help with translations.

In some of our placements the host volunteer agency provide local language lessons.

### **5. Will there be an opportunity to travel when I'm there?**

You will have a minimum of 2 days off per week to travel and sightsee. Volunteers often take this opportunity to go on trips to local places of interest. Our staff and host volunteer organisation will be happy to suggest places to visit.