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**Country: Germany**

**Volunteering period: August 2016 – July 2017**



### **Final Impression, July 2017**

I was sent by Volunta, a sub-organization of the Red Cross and spent one whole year volunteering at the Sambhali Trust. Throughout my time at Sambhali, I was involved three different projects to empower women and children through education and vocational training. In the mornings, I worked in a Women Empowerment Centre whereas I taught children in a slum of Jodhpur in the afternoons for the first half of the year, before I finally started working one off the just recently established Children Primary Education Centers. In these centres I gave English and maths classes every day and conducted weekly educational workshops.

Working at Sambhali has overall been an amazing experience. I chose the NGO because here I was able to be my own boss at work to a certain extent since as a teacher one can decide their own pace and methods with the students. It is important to figure out wants and needs of the students, especially in the women empowerment centres, in order to make the lessons fun and reasonable. I tried to strike a balance between class, time for discussion, informative as well as creative workshops and games.

Even though you could sometimes get frustrated because you might expect too much in the beginning, teaching is overall a very rewarding job. This applies especially to my work with the children. It was just so amazing to see their rapid improvements as well as to dance, sing and do handicraft with these bundles of energy.

What I loved the most is the fact that your students in the centres also become your friends. It was amazing to experience how they entrusted me with their stories and concerns. There was never a dull moment while spending time with them.

It did take time for me to get used to the organisational architecture of the NGO and I sometimes had struggle with that. I definitely realized how important good communication is and some perseverance might also be necessary at times to get things working. Nevertheless is Govind approachable and will for sure try to find a solution if there's a problem.

All of the staff members at Sambhali are extremely kind and welcoming and they made me feel comfortable in the NGO throughout the whole year. But I also often felt that the local staff should be more involved when it comes to workshops and

awareness training in the women empowerment centres as they are employed in the long term and have the most knowledge about the students and their environment.

Jodhpur has not always been an easy place for me to live in. I perceived the town as quite conservative and there aren't many social activities available for my age range. The climate is hot and dry and you won't find much green nature around. Nevertheless did I started to feel very comfortable in Jodhpur after a few months because I started to figure out the geographical situation as well as the prices and places to go for specific things. I even felt quite happy to come back "home" after going away for vacation.

Even though this year has not always been easy, it was definitely the most instructive year of my life so far and I don't regret a second of it. It's of utmost importance to always keep in mind why you're here: for the students! They're the ones who made this year so special for me. It was honestly an honour to work with such amiable, enthusiastic and kind women and children, they hold a special place in my heart.

I can only encourage volunteers to stay as long as possible since this is the perfect way to really get to know your students, build strong relationships but most importantly, to carry out as many projects, activities or workshop as possible and to really see your students improve.