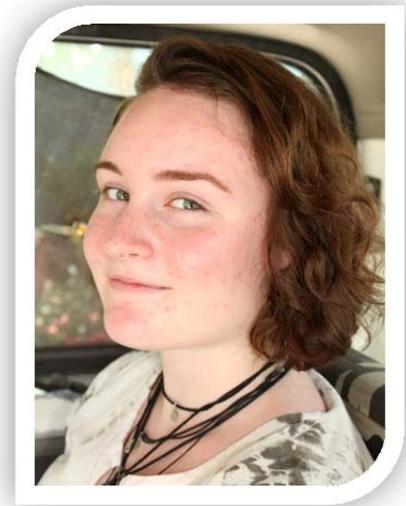


Name: Laura Kapphan (via Volunta)

Country: Germany

Volunteering period: August 2016 – July 2017



Final Impression, July 2017

My work at Sambhali:

I have stayed at Sambhali for one year, together with 5 other volunteers from my German organization. During my stay, I gathered more experiences than I might have got in 3 years of living in Germany. I am really glad to have come to Sambhali Trust, since it gave me the opportunity to have a better insight in the Indian culture than I would have by just traveling through India.

I worked in one empowerment center (Jodhpur Empowerment Center) in the morning and in the Boardinghome in the afternoon. In the end, I cannot tell, which project I preferred. Working with women and teenagers as well as with children was really rewarding for me. I made good friends with some students and the teaching atmosphere was really nice. We had a lot of fun together and in one year we could achieve huge progresses in their English skills as well.

By working with children and teenagers in the Boardinghome, the 23 girls there got really familiar with us. They put a lot of trust in the volunteers, which is important in order to go on trips together or help them with their homework. It will be very sad to leave all the nice people, which I have met through my work at Sambhali. All in all, I think, by empowering the women and girls in several centers in Jodhpur, Sambhali does a good job. It is a great opportunity for any volunteer, to experience Indian culture and to help underprivileged women and girls at the same time.

Working with my colleagues:

There is a Hindi teacher and a sewing teacher in every center, as well as three drivers, who bring the volunteers to their projects. I always felt comfortable, working with the two teachers in my pre-lunch center. It was easy to communicate with them and we became friends as well. The drivers are very nice and always cooperative, if it comes to buying material on the way. If there was any problem or question, Vimlesh Solanki was always happy to help. It was very nice, working with all of them.

My accommodation:

Throughout the year I shared a double room in the Durag Niwas guesthouse with another volunteer. Our room is one of the nicest ones in the guesthouse. The wallpaintings are very nice and you can see that there has been much effort in trying to decorate the rooms in a nice way. I felt at home in this room right away. The guesthouse

itself is very beautiful. Since I have been traveling for a few weeks in India, I can tell that Durag Niwas is one of the nicest guesthouses I have seen so far. The staff and the family, which also lives in the guesthouse, is very nice and friendly. Mukta always gives her best to improve things here and always takes complains or suggestions very seriously. Since she and her family also live in the guesthouse, I completely forgot sometimes that I am staying at a guesthouse, since the atmosphere here is very familial.

I could always approach somebody, if there was any problem. Durgesh, the cook, and the other boys working in the kitchen, are joking a lot with the volunteers, so it was nice to come together for the meals. The food in the guesthouse is okay. The quality varies a lot, but most of the time I liked it.

My impression of India:

At the beginning of my voluntary year in India, I had a cultural shock. The traffic, the people and the food were so different from what I was used to in Germany. I had to learn a lot about the Indian culture, before I totally felt at home here. Although I don't appreciate the mentality in India, concerning some aspects, I learned to tolerate the difference to my way of thinking. It was not always easy, but in the end, I am really glad to have experienced a totally different culture.

This year has changed my personality a lot. I almost identify more with my students' values than I do with those of my home country. It is not important for me anymore to have many electronic devices or a lot of nice clothes. I understood, by working with many poor girls and women, that it doesn't matter how much luxury you have, as long as your family is healthy and always supports you. This is definitely a way of thinking, which is missing in Germany. My family has become closer to me in this year, although they were physically distant.