



# Seva Mandir

## Volunteer Guide

Seva Mandir welcomes volunteers and interns from a variety of backgrounds, although relevant education and/or work experience within the field of interest is highly preferred. Former volunteers and interns include undergraduate students, graduate students, Ph.D.'s, recipients of fellowships, and career professionals, among others. You must be prepared to stay for a minimum of 2 months.

**\*\*It is recommended that you bring a printed copy of this guide with you when you arrive at Seva Mandir\*\***

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## 1. About Seva Mandir

**Seva Mandir means the ‘Temple of Service’.** It is a voluntary organisation that has been working with rural communities of Udaipur and Rajsamand districts for over four decades. It is present in 626 villages in the Jhadol, Girwa, Badgaon, Kotra, Kherwara and Kumbhalgarh Blocks of Udaipur and Rajsamand Districts. Since its inception, Seva Mandir has sought to help the impoverished ameliorate their lives, initially through focusing on education. Over time Seva Mandir endeavoured to tackle additional areas when it became clear that sustainable development could only be brought about by creating and strengthening the capacities of the rural population and encouraging villagers to become self-reliant and responsible for their own development. Accordingly, programmes now address the issues of livestock development, wasteland and watershed management, water resource management, community assets development, education, income generation, health, gender equity, and building of institutions. Seva Mandir’s primary objective is to empower people’s institutions to address the needs of their adherents more successfully.

Seva Mandir is staffed by approximately 300 full-time workers providing skilled services and promoting leadership within villages. These dedicated staff members form the backbone of Seva Mandir and represent the means by which self-reliant and autonomous village-level groups will be achieved.

### 1.1. Programmes and Departments

The following lists the various programmes operating from the Headquarters of Seva Mandir. During your time here, you will most likely be working within one of these departments. We hope that you will take some time to view our website, [www.sevamandir.org](http://www.sevamandir.org), in order to learn more about Seva Mandir’s programmes and areas of work.

Name of the Program	Intercom	In-Charge	Email (@sevamandir.org)
Volunteer Program	331	Indira Dey Charu Paliwal	pms@ charu.paliwal@
Natural Resources Development (NRD)	322	Shailendra Tiwari	shailendra.tiwari@
Women and Child Development (WCD)	340	Laxmi Thakur	laxmi.thakur@
Early Childhood Care Department	324	Victoria Haorokcham	victoria@
Education Program (EDU)	341	Yashaswi Dwivedi	yashaswi.dwivedi@
Village Institutions Program (VIP) or Gram Vikas Kosh (GVK)	319	Rimjhim Pandey	rimjhim.pandey@
People’s Management School (PMS)	331	Varsha Rathore	varsha.rathore@



Resource Mobilization Unit (RMU)	327	Aarti Shah	aarti.shah@
Computer Unit (Lab 1) / ICT	317	Narendra Thakur	nthakur@
Kunzru Library (Library)	302/342	Shruti Goyal	library@

\* These details are all subject to change.

## 1.2. Work/Office Hours

The best time to contact staff at Seva Mandir is between the hours of 10:30am and 5:00pm. Seva Mandir opens at 9:30am and closes at 5:30pm daily, Monday through Saturday. The second and fourth Saturday of every month is a holiday. Lunch break is 1:30pm to 2:00pm daily (though lunch breaks are flexible and often taken at different hours). The library is open from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00pm (5:00pm on Sundays and the second and fourth Saturday of each month), though the third floor, where volunteers tend to work, closes at 5.00pm. For volunteers and interns, working hours are more flexible than the schedule above. The intensity of one's work at Seva Mandir will depend on the extent of his or her fieldwork and personal time constraints. Volunteers are allowed to take leave with email notification to both their reporting officers and the Volunteer Coordinator; however, students/interns will only be entitled to leave as per the rules of their parent institutions.

## 2. Pre-departure Information

### 2.1. How can I apply as a volunteer in Seva Mandir?

The first step, it is recommended that people who wish to join Seva Mandir as a volunteer/ intern must fill the application form available on the website and send it to [pms@sevamandir.org](mailto:pms@sevamandir.org)

### 2.2. What can I expect to do at Seva Mandir?

Volunteers are assigned projects that attempt to take into account their background, interests, and skills, as well as Seva Mandir's organisational needs. Previous projects have been varied and have included: website development, fundraising strategies, literacy programmes, creative writing, photography classes, designing of health interventions, development of business plans for income-generating programmes, natural resource preservation, women's empowerment programmes, and evaluation and review of ongoing programmes. While projects can be decided upon prior to arrival, volunteers are generally encouraged to finalise project details in the first week of arrival, after having spent some time at Seva Mandir learning about the organisation in greater detail.

Seva Mandir's intention is to provide opportunities to everyone interested to learn about rural and tribal communities and contribute to their development interventions. Therefore, volunteers do not require any special background in development. Sometimes an individual's interests and the organisation's



priorities at that point in time do not match. In this case, volunteers are asked to take other projects or else work on their own personal interests but with less support from staff. Certain times, the assigned projects of immediate requirement of the organisation and volunteers will be requested to continue with them.

The Volunteer Coordinator at Seva Mandir assists volunteers/interns in their orientation and assignment of a project and reporting officer or mentor. Reporting officers are those who guide volunteers in their projects. Reporting officers are assigned as per the volunteers' main project. For example, if the project is education-focused, the reporting officer will be from the Education Department. While these reporting officers are the volunteers' main mentors, other programme specialists and field experts will also act as mentors, providing 'multi-level' mentoring. There is a limited number of English-speaking staff and resources, and although the goal is to match the skills and interests of the volunteer to a project, the project a volunteer is assigned will depend on the availability of staff (officers, mentors, translators, etc.) in the different departments. Therefore, please be patient and keep in mind that it might take some time to define your assignments and initiate work.

We hope that the relationship between the volunteer and Seva Mandir is mutually beneficial. The projects that you will be working on are a platform to promote learning and provide you with an insight into development practices. At the same time, your skills are most welcome, your work valued, and your contribution much appreciated. Even if your contribution is small (and you might feel this way if you are editing a report or conducting a small study), please keep in mind that you are positively contributing to Seva Mandir's work, and that we are truly grateful to have such valuable help. If you are not satisfied with your project or have any issues or concerns, please feel free to approach your reporting officer and Volunteer Coordinator. If you do not want to work on a specific project, you should mention this to the Volunteer Coordinator so that appropriate action can be taken.

Volunteers/interns can also contribute to the organisation by way of 'side projects' that help staff with their workload. Side projects often include editing reports, writing book reviews, performing data analysis, and writing proposals. Volunteers often spend time at a local school for visually impaired children or at a school for deaf and speech-impaired children. If you have any free time, you are strongly encouraged to contact the volunteer coordinator to take on these projects. Likewise, if you have any ideas for new side projects that could be implemented, these can be discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator.

#### **Rafe Bullick Memorial Foundation (RBMF)**

The RBMF was set up to honour and continue the legacy of Rafe Bullick, a long-term volunteer with Seva Mandir who tragically lost his life in a land-mine explosion while on a field trip in Sudan with Save the Children. RBMF supports activities ranging from promoting road safety, providing education scholarships and work with children with special needs.

Volunteers most often support the foundation through working with local deaf and blind schools, where they conduct activities with the children on sports, music, painting and drawing, etc.



### 2.3. What does Seva Mandir expect from me?

Being a non-profit organisation, Seva Mandir runs its volunteer programme with limited resources. While the organisation strives to provide volunteers maximum support, Seva Mandir expects volunteers to:

- Make the most of available opportunities
- Be self-motivated and take initiative
- Be patient when faced with frustrating situations
- Speak up to someone when there are problems
- Understand and reflect upon the mission of Seva Mandir
- Be flexible and open minded, both towards your work and in general
- Be enthusiastic
- Be respectful of the local culture and people

### 2.4. Planning your stay

#### 2.4.1. Duration

Volunteers can spend anywhere from two months to a year or more with Seva Mandir, observing and participating in rural development projects. It is our recommendation that volunteers stay with Seva Mandir for at least 2 months, but 6 months is an ideal length of time. It is important to understand that volunteers who have stayed at Seva Mandir for short periods of time have often found that by the time they have started to understand the nature of development work, it is time for them to go. Please also refer to the climate section of this guide to help you decide which months to volunteer at Seva Mandir.

#### 2.4.2. Arrival

It is preferable that you arrive at Seva Mandir on a working day (see work/office hours listed above), so please try to book trains or flights accordingly. Please email the volunteer coordinator with your expected time of arrival in Seva Mandir at least a week before you're due to arrive in Udaipur. The Volunteer Coordinator will put you in a contact with a current volunteer who will help you upon first arriving. In the email you should also enquire as to where you will be staying while here. This will make it easier when you arrive, especially if you arrive outside of working hours.

### 2.5. What paperwork do I need?

#### 2.5.1. Visas

Due to recent changes in Visa Regulations for India, particularly in volunteering regulations, it is important to **contact your local Indian consulate or embassy to ask them the type of visa required to intern as an "unpaid volunteer."** While official Ministry of Home Affairs regulations state that an employment visa is required, rules can vary between embassies and it is better (and cheaper!) to check before applying. Seva Mandir takes no responsibility for providing you with a visa and any visa information provided by us should



be corroborated by your local embassy. However, Seva Mandir can provide a letter of reference or letter of proof that shows you have an internship with us. In some cases if the local Indian diplomatic mission is non-responsive and the official requirement for employment visa sounds completely irrelevant to your situation, Seva Mandir had provided a volunteer contract, invitation letter and a copy of our NGO registration at the request of the consul and online application for employment visa under honorary service to NGO. (Seva MAndir's employer ID can be provided if necessary). We recommend volunteers to not obtain tourist visa for volunteering purpose as Seva Mandir will not be able to accept such applications.

**As Indian visas begin on the day they are issued and not the date of arrival**, it is important to consider this when applying. As complications can occur, it might be preferable not to book travel tickets until the visa has been issued, or, if applying for a visa beyond your planned length of stay in India, to apply for your visa early. Prospective volunteers/interns may wish to contact a current or former volunteer/intern with further questions and advice regarding visas. To do this, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Upon issue, please read the instructions written on the visa in your passport. Where instructions include registration with a local FRO/FRRO within 14 days of arrival, you are solely responsible to ensure that you do this. **Prior to departure from India you would then require a NOC (no-objection certificate) from the local FRO.** Penalties for non-compliance can carry fines, exit restrictions or even jail. Please see the guidelines below for registering with the nearest FRO to Seva Mandir:

### 2.5.2. FRO registration guidelines:

Volunteers from other countries will required to get themselves registered with the FRO (even if you are an OCI) **within 24 hours of their arrival to Seva Mandir.** Required documents (bring at least 3 of each) include: passport photos, 7 photocopies of your passport (both the photo and visa pages), proof of address (a letter from Seva Mandir stating where you are living), and a letter from Seva Mandir stating the duration you are working there. Registration experiences vary and the process can take some time. The location of the FRO office can be seen on the map of Udaipur, it is near Chetak circle at the Collectorate campus. If going by auto, ask for 'the Collectorate'. Upon arrival, walk to the right and around the back of the complex where you will find the FRO. **Responsibility for registering lies with the individual, not Seva Mandir.**

Expenses for commuting to FRO to be borne by volunteer him/ herself. If someone from PMS unit accompany to the FRO, all the expenses are to be borne by the volunteer.

## 2.6. What should I bring with me?

Almost everything you need can be purchased in Udaipur, but it may be useful to bring enough personal supplies to last you your first few days as you settle in. It is suggested to pack lightly in order to make your transit as easy as possible. The following list is not exhaustive, but volunteers' suggestions include:

### Clothes



- Several pairs of pants/cotton trousers/leggings/full length skirts and several shirts (which keep knees, shoulders, and chest covered and are relatively loose)
- A warm jacket/sweater
- Appropriate sleepwear
- Underwear
- 1 pair of sandals and 1 pair comfortable walking shoes (for hilly terrain)

### Health and Hygiene

- Sunscreen (High-SPF sunscreen can be difficult to find in India)
- Insect repellent
- Over-the-counter medicines (ibuprofen, antacids, diarrhoea medicine)
- Prescription medications
- Hand wipes/anti-bacterial hand lotion
- Personal hygiene items such as shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, tampons (hard to come by in Udaipur), soap etc. (at least for the first few days)
- Glasses, plenty of contact lenses, as well as a copy of your prescription

### Practical

- Towels
- Backpack for day trips
- Headtorch or flashlight
- Laptop (the campus has wifi and a laptop will ensure that you have access to a useable computer)
- Adapters
- Camera, extra memory cards, charger
- Unlocked phone (SIM cards can be purchased here if you already have a phone, but if not, you can purchase a phone here as well)
- Small combination locks for luggage
- USB/flash drive
- Sleeping bag (a warm one for winter) or liner (the dorms have blankets)
- Padlock (particularly for dorm lockers)

### Documents and money

- Passport and visa (and copies of both)
- 4 passport-sized photographs (you will need these for a SIM card for a phone)
- Insurance details
- ATM card & Cash (although most major debit/credit cards work at local ATMs)
- Printed copy of volunteer guide!

## 2.7. How to reach Seva Mandir

By air: The airport is 23 km from Seva Mandir. Flights arrive via Delhi or Mumbai. Prepaid taxis are available from the airport to Seva Mandir and will cost between 500 and 600 rupees.

By bus or train: Seva Mandir is located in northwest Udaipur, near the police station at Fatehpura Circle, about 7 km from the city railway station and the bus stand (should cost about 100 rupees by autorickshaw).

Most rickshaw and taxi drivers know Seva Mandir and Fatehpura Circle when you ask them to take you there. Expect to pay more at night.

## 3. Upon Arrival at Seva Mandir

### 3.1. What can I expect when I first arrive at Seva Mandir?

On arrival at Seva Mandir, you should come directly to the front gate of the campus to speak to the security guard. The guard will contact the Volunteer Coordinator; however, if you have any language issues, there is a telephone in the guard's booth where you can call Indira (09928447888), Charu (09079824553) or Varsha (07726845687) directly.

We will try to put you in touch with another volunteer that is staying in the same accommodation as you, so that they can meet you and take you to where you will be staying. If another volunteer isn't available, then a guard will show you to your accommodation. It is important that you know which hostel you will be staying in. Once you are settled, you should head to the People's Management School (PMS) office to arrange your registration. If you arrive outside of the normal office hours, the security guard is always there and will be able to help you find your accommodation. Again, it is recommended if possible that you arrive at Seva Mandir during the working week, which is from Monday to Saturday from 10:00am to 5:30pm (second Saturday of every month is a holiday), so that a staff member will be present to assist you.

The orientation covers a review of the organisational structure, programmes, and facilities as well as providing you with practical and logistical information. Please bring three copies of your passport and visa with you to the orientation to register with Seva Mandir and the local police (FRO). This is also a great opportunity to ask questions concerning prospective projects and to arrange meetings with various Program In-Charges. Orientation will cover the rules and reporting procedures to be followed by all volunteers. The meeting with your reporting officer/mentor usually happens within the first couple of days of a volunteer's arrival. Please expect the first week at least to be spent understanding the organisation and the assigned project.

Most likely, there will be other volunteers working at Seva Mandir and living in the same location as you. These volunteers are a great resource and can help you find your way around when you first arrive. If in doubt, head to the dorms and there will usually be another volunteer there to help! By volunteering with



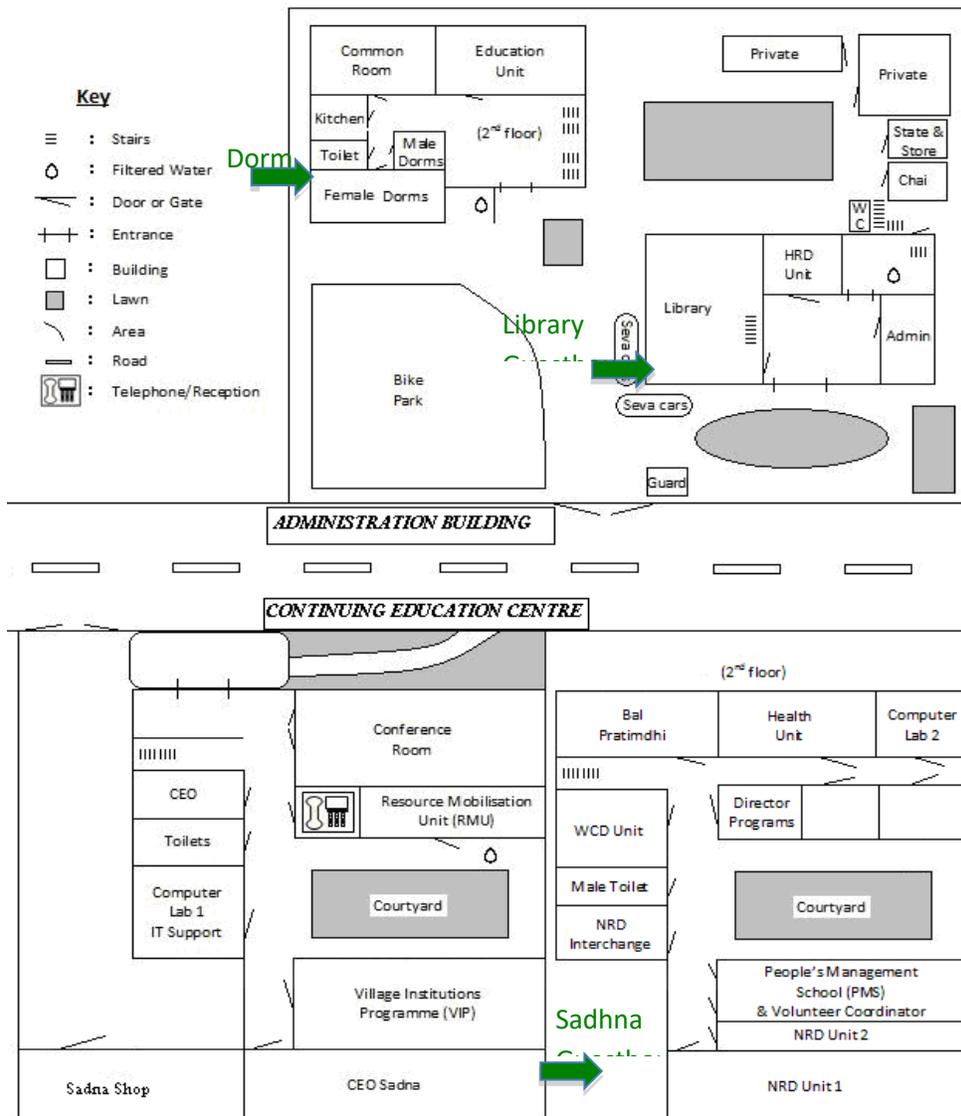
Seva Mandir, you agree to have your email and phone number shared with other volunteers for the purpose of exchanging information and tips.

### **3.2. Registration (for residency notification)- applicable for those staying for less than 180 days**

All overseas volunteers are required to fill out a 'C' form (residence notification) with the local police within 18 hours of your arrival to the city (this is not the same as the FRO registration). **Foreign volunteers are requested to contact the Volunteers Coordinator immediately upon their arrival to assist them in the process.** You will be required to fill in (handwritten) three copies of the 'C' form along with three copies of your passport. To save time, it is useful if you bring the photocopies with you.

### 3.3. Map of Seva Mandir

As the map below shows, Seva Mandir has two separate buildings, which are located across the street from each other. Upon arrival at Seva Mandir, you will usually be dropped off outside the main gates near the guard (who is there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).



### 3.4. Accommodation

Seva Mandir offers limited guesthouses and dorms for volunteer accommodation. These are provided free of cost to volunteers based on availability. Though options are liable to change, currently Seva Mandir provides two female guesthouses on campus, as well as single-sex male and female dormitories with 4 beds for males and 6 beds for females.



Additionally, some volunteers choose to arrange their own accommodation. This usually consists of a private apartment or homestay. A large number of options are available, both near to Seva Mandir and in other parts of Udaipur. The Volunteer Coordinator can provide details of some of the options available, though volunteers may benefit from doing their own research too.

The dormitories and guesthouses for volunteers/interns are fully furnished with shared kitchens and bathrooms (with bucket showers). Bedding and limited storage facilities are provided in all volunteer's hostels. Volunteers are responsible for their own meals, although at the guesthouses it is possible for volunteers to arrange to hire a cook (please contact the Volunteer Coordinator for further details). Please note that accommodation is subject to availability and requests must be sent to the Volunteer Coordinator prior to arrival.

### **3.5. What to do when...?**

While living in the dormitories or guesthouses, you may encounter certain issues, such as a light bulb breaking or running out of gas for the stove. In these situations, it is important to inform the appropriate people. The best way to handle such a situation is to write to Charu or call her at 09079824553. Also this is fairly easily remedied by talking to Mr. Kaushik (09829790371) for the hostels inside campus. A maid cleans the rooms every Monday to Saturday, & bathrooms are cleaned daily. Filtered water can be obtained from water coolers available in the campus. Rubbish is removed everyday; place it in plastic bags in the front porch.

### **3.6. Fieldwork and Interpreters**

In all likelihood, at least part of your time at Seva Mandir will be spent doing fieldwork and research such as interviews and surveys. Therefore, your project will probably require transportation and an interpreter. Your Reporting Officer should assist you with booking your first trip out to the field and connecting you to the necessary people at the Block Offices.

You are responsible for phoning around and booking an interpreter. The Volunteer Coordinator regularly circulates numbers for interpreters or you can ask another volunteer. During field visits, volunteers will be travelling in public transportation such as bus, rickshaw or jeep. Public transportation in rural India differs from that in western countries and can take some getting used to. Vehicles tend to be filled to maximum capacity, including people travelling on the roof or holding on to the sides of the vehicle. Seat belts are not available. If you travel by public jeep, bus or rickshaw, then you and your interpreter will pay for travel costs upfront. Travel expenses will be reimbursed by Seva Mandir once the appropriate paperwork is submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator. Your reporting officer will be able to inform you of the approximate cost of your journey.

Some interpreters have motorbikes which can be used for transport to field visits. The interpreter is responsible for ensuring they have sufficient fuel for the journey. In order for interpreters to claim back travel expenses, volunteers are required to monitor the number of kilometres travelled to and from

fieldwork. Motorbike helmets for volunteers are available from the office next to the chai canteen, if they cannot provide you with a helmet, contact Indira/Charu. Please note that it is mandatory to use a helmet while travelling on a two-wheeler and you need to make sure that your interpreter does the same.

Volunteers are required to sign their interpreter's time sheets and travel expense sheets. Please sign the interpreter's time sheet if, and only if, you believe it to be correct. This is the only method Seva Mandir has of keeping track of its interpreters, and the burden of trust falls on the volunteer/ intern to ensure the fair payment of interpreters.

Seva Mandir may provide a small living stipend to some Indian volunteers. Please note that stipends are not provided to any foreign volunteers. However, Seva Mandir reimburses approved travel expenses if they are related to your project and within Seva Mandir's work area.

### 3.7. Project-related guidelines

- You are required to inform the Volunteer Coordinator and your Reporting Officers in writing for leave.
- You are required to submit a soft and hard copy of your report to the Volunteer Coordinator before leaving.
- You are required to give a PowerPoint presentation of your work a week before leaving, known as Khula Manch (Open Forum).
- You are requested to attend Volunteers' Monthly meeting (every second Friday of the month for which emails will be sent).
- You are required to submit your No-Dues forms, Additional Information Form and feedback form before leaving (available from the Volunteer Coordinator).
- Project related local travel expenses can be reimbursed (Travel Allowance forms are available from the Volunteer Coordinator).
- Experience certificates will only be issued upon submission of your report (one soft copy), a soft copy of your presentation and your No-Dues form to the Volunteer Coordinator.
- You are invited to join our Yahoo or Facebook groups to share your Seva Mandir experiences.
- You are invited to write an article on your personal experience for the Seva Mandir Newsletter, please submit these articles to the Volunteer Coordinator before leaving.

### 3.8. Library

The library and its resources are available for all volunteers. A library card is available from the librarian and is required in order to check out books and reports. The 3rd floor is exclusively for staff and volunteers to work. No food or drinks (aside from water) are allowed in the library. Volunteers can bring in small bags.

You can access the Library Query to search for any particular book or report on the computer by going to 'Programs' - 'Seva Mandir' - 'Project Database'. This will allow you to access the library catalogue. There



are two computers available on the top floor of library. One is available to search for reports and read online reports and another is for internet. You can always ask another volunteer or member of staff for assistance.

### **3.9. Use of Computers / Internet**

Seva Mandir has a WiFi enabled campus and it is strongly recommended that, volunteers bring laptops for personal and work purposes. Limited printing facilities are also available in the computer lab. Outside of work hours, there are also a couple of internet cafes within close proximity of the office. The internet remains on 24/7 and can be accessed within volunteer accommodation on campus.

Instructions for computer use are included in the volunteer orientation. The Computer Lab contains the ICT Department for Seva Mandir and staff there will be able to set up the WiFi on your laptop.

Laptops can be issued on request for three days. You can collect the issuing form for the laptop from Computer Lab I, which should be submitted to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Power cuts and internet issues are fairly common. Most only last for a few minutes, but occasionally they will continue for several hours. Usually full day outages are announced in the morning of the same day on which they occur. The volunteer coordinator will try to inform you by email as soon as this information is made to known. However, there could be unannounced outages and therefore volunteers are asked to be prepared.



## 4. Useful information for Udaipur

### 4.1. Udaipur map



#### Key

- |                                       |                                   |                           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1: Seva Mandir                        | 8: Jagdish Temple (Old City)      | 13: Post Office           |
| 4: Fatehpura Circle (Tempo Stop)      | 9: Reliance Fresh (Supermarket)   | 14: GBH American Hospital |
| 5: Sukhadia Circle (Tempo Stop)       | 10: Lakeside Food Stalls          | 15: Railway Station       |
| 6: Chetak Circle (Tempo Stop)         | 11: Road to Hill Temple           |                           |
| 7: Hathipol (Tempo Stop for Old City) | 12: Foreign Registry Office (FRO) |                           |



## 4.2. Living Costs and Currency Exchanges in Udaipur

The living costs in Udaipur are fairly moderate compared to cities like Delhi and Mumbai. It is possible for volunteers to live off a monthly expenditure of around 5,000 rupees if eating in, staying in Seva Mandir accommodation and only travelling locally. However, most volunteers end up spending more than this through socialising, travel and shopping. A realistic budget for volunteers staying in Seva Mandir accommodation is around 10,000 rupees per month.

Those volunteers wanting to organise their own accommodation will need to budget extra. Most options will be in the range of 5,000-15,000 rupees per month.

Bank	Location	Service
Bank of Baroda, Bapu Bazaar branch	Near Parkview Hotel	Change money and travellers' cheques; withdraw cash on Visa and Access cards at 2% commission; open bank accounts
Bank of Baroda, Hospital Road Branch	Near Delhi Gate	Change money and travellers' cheques; withdraw cash on Visa and Access cards at 2% commission; open bank accounts
State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur	Opposite TVS Suzuki Showroom near Chetak Circle	Change money
Thomas Cook	City Palace Complex	Change money
Vijaya Bank	City Palace Complex	Change money
State Bank of India	Hospital Road	Buy "Demand Draft" (A Demand Draft is useful when paying for something in India by post).
Kay Travels and Tours	3rd Floor, Kay Mall, Panchawati	Change money

## 4.3. Mobile Phone Services

To buy a mobile SIM card, you will need a photocopy of your passport and visa page, a passport photo, and for Indians a proof of home address e.g. a driving license (for foreigners an authority letter from Seva Mandir as proof of temporary address is provided). Regulations are very strict for purchasing a SIM card and it will not be possible without *all* of the above documentation. Airtel is currently best for reception in the villages. Calling cards are usually cheaper for making international calls. Not all unlocked phones from



abroad will work in India. A cheap mobile can be bought for about 1200 rupees. Ask another volunteer for help purchasing a phone/SIM card. Airtel phones can receive a lot of junk messages, though this can be resolved by texting 'DND' to 1909.

Any SIM card registered by a foreigner will automatically expire after 3 months (though occasionally this doesn't happen). When the card expires all remaining credit will be lost. It is possible to get the old phone number back on a new SIM though, but this normally takes a few days longer than simply getting a new number.

#### 4.4. Post

There is a local post office near Fatehpura Circle for posting letters or postcards. The main post office is marked on the map, near Chetak Circle. The maximum parcel weight for shipping is currently 20kg (180cm max parcel circumference). Customs declaration forms are available at the counter. There are other small post offices around Udaipur, including one near the ticket office of City Palace.

Private Courier firms include: DHL (Shriniketan Complex, 380 Ashok Nagar, 313001 Udaipur) and First Flight (Near the Indian Airlines Office at Delhi Gate).

Address for receiving parcels and all other online shopping deliveries – Seva Mandir, Old Fatehpura, Udaipur (Raj.) India. Pincode – 313004.

#### 4.5. Language and culture

##### Culture

Indian culture differs greatly from most Western societies, so volunteers should be prepared to adapt accordingly to everyday life in Udaipur. Volunteers will be faced with new challenges regarding work-related norms and overall lifestyle. Some of these challenges may prove frustrating, but it is important for volunteers to keep their experiences in perspective and use them as a learning experience.

A few books that explore Indian culture and history:

- Fiction: God of Small Things – Arundhati Roy; A Fine Balance – Rohinton Mistry; Midnight's Children - Salman Rushdie; A Suitable Boy - Vikram Seth
- History: In Spite of the Gods - Edward Luce; The Great Moghuls - Bamber Gascoigne, India: A History - John Keay
- Regional: A Princess Remembers - Gayatri Devi; Inside the Haveli - Rama Mehta
- Development Related: Everyone Loves a Good Drought – Palagummi Sainath; Notes from Another India - Jeremy Seabrook
- Guidebooks: Lonely Planet, Rough Guides and many others publish guidebooks for India, North India and Rajasthan.



### Manners

Often in shops and people's homes it is expected that shoes be left at the door when entering, it is best to follow the lead of others or ask if you are unsure.

When talking to elders and professionals 'Ji' should be added after someone's first name as a sign of respect.

If you are sharing a cup or bottle, you shouldn't touch your lips to it.

You should eat either with cutlery or your right hand; your left hand should not touch food.

### Language

[www.learn-hindi.com](http://www.learn-hindi.com) is an excellent online resource for learning Hindi.

There will be challenges during your time at Seva Mandir and one might be the language barrier for non-Hindi speakers. English is not spoken at the village level, and communication can prove slow and challenging in and around the Seva Mandir main offices. Although in the city you will find that most people understand at least some English, you may find it useful to know the following words:

Hello, Goodbye:	namaste	Vegetable:	subji
Thank you:	dhanyavad	Cow:	guy
I see/good:	achcha	Pig:	suar
OK:	thik hai	Chicken:	murgha
Yes:	haa	Dog:	kutta
No:	nahi	Banana:	kela
Let's go:	chalo	Lentils:	dal
Stop:	rokiye	Milk:	dudh
Village:	gaav	Orange:	narangi
City:	shehar	Water:	paani
Farmer:	kisaan	Tea:	chai

### 4.6. Climate

For some volunteers, the climate in India may necessitate some adjustments. Located near the Thar Desert, Udaipur enjoys a cool, dry winter from November to February, and a mercilessly hot and dry summer from April through June. Winter temperatures range from 2° to 28° Celsius. In summer, the temperature generally reaches mid 40s Celsius/low 100s Fahrenheit, although temperatures have been

known to hit 50C/120F in some years in the past. Monsoon begins late June and lasts from July to September, after which temperatures begin to cool. Volunteers who have difficulties with extremely hot conditions may choose to plan their stay for the autumn/winter months. However, one should keep in mind that the houses are built to keep them as cool as possible during the summer, so you might be surprised at how cold it can get during the winter months at night! We recommend bringing some warm clothes and a warm sleeping bag for the winter season.

#### 4.7. Health

There are no vaccinations required to enter India, but several are recommended. Check [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel), [www.tripprep.com](http://www.tripprep.com) or [www.csih.org](http://www.csih.org) for information concerning vaccinations and disease. All volunteers/interns should consult a doctor and/or travel clinic before arriving in India.

If you do get sick remember people at Seva Mandir will not only be sympathetic but are also likely to have had similar experiences in the past. It is critical that volunteers let someone know about their illnesses. Seva Mandir recommends:

- Dr Ashok of Shreyas Hospital: located very close to the head office building
- American GBH Hospital: Most volunteers feel more comfortable going here. Past volunteers have expressed how they were well treated with utmost professionalism. However, this hospital is more expensive than Geetanjali Medical College and Hospital and volunteers have reported that the treatment is not any better.
- Geetanjali Medical College and Hospital, Geetanjali Medicity, Hiran Magri Extn, Eklingpura Chouraha Udaipur. Telephone: (0294) 2500000 – 07. This hospital has taken good care of volunteers in the past. Let them know you are volunteering at Seva Mandir.

You can also find good pharmacies in Fatehpura or go to Sharmas Medical Store in Panchwati. Please note that most “western” trade names have good Indian equivalents at a fraction of the cost.

#### 4.8. Safety

We strongly advise you to keep the Volunteer Coordinator, well informed (in writing) of your moves in and out of the city so that help can reach you if and when needed.

Though generally a safe city, volunteers and interns should be aware that there have been reports of assaults on women in Udaipur. All volunteers are recommended to stay in groups at night and women particularly should avoid walking alone, especially after dark. Whistles can be effective in dissuading would-be assaulters. Potentially dangerous situations should be dealt with in a loud and firm manner.

Dorms have lockers for valuables and money. Volunteers should bring a small padlock for these lockers. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring dorms are locked when leaving. Seva Mandir takes no responsibility for loss or theft of belongings. Never allow strangers into the dorms.

In case an incident occurs or you perceive any kind of threat, immediately ask for help.

#### 4.9. Dress/Clothing

In recent years Udaipur has become a little less conservative regarding clothing with more young people wearing western clothes. However, in Seva Mandir we recommend that you wear clothes that are closer to Indian culture such as salwar kameez and kurtas; long trousers and shirts are a western alternative. Please ensure clothes aren't too revealing, i.e. they are loose fitting and your knees, shoulders and chests are covered at all times. Wearing Indian dress is widely praised and appreciated. When in the field you are required to wear Indian clothes (long Kurtas and pants). Most volunteers purchase clothing in India to acclimatise to the culture and climate. Simple kurtas and pants cost around 500-700 rupees.

##### Tailors

There are ready-made clothing stores such as Big Bazaar (in Sukhadia Circle) or other stores, which are generally located in Hathipole and Bapu Bazaar. Celebration Mall has many higher end clothes shops. A good tailor called Jai Laxmi is located in Battiyani Chohatta, near Jagdish Temple. Also Bombay Fabrics (at the base of Jagdish Temple) is a reasonable place to have custom clothing made. Sonu tailor is also a good tailor located near the footbridge in the old city. Make sure you mention you're from Seva Mandir.

There is a more upmarket tailor located beside Cafe Edelweiss in the old city where western clothing such as dresses and coats can be made. They will also give a discount to Seva Mandir volunteers.

##### Cleaning

To wash clothes yourself, common Indian soap bars and powders are Rin bar and Tide/Ariel powder. You can get your clothes washed in about 2 days by the dhobi in Fatehpura for around 10 rupees per piece. Santosh at Guest House No. 3 (who works as a maid above Sadhna accommodation and above library) will also wash clothing for a monthly fee. Dry cleaning is available near Chetak Circle at 'Moonlight Drycleaners' near Vijay Photo Studios.

#### 4.10. Transport

**Tempos** (also called shared-autos or 7-seaters): An inexpensive (5 - 10 rupee per trip) way to get around Udaipur. They are shared large rickshaws that fit 6 to 8 people (or more depending on how tightly you are packed in!). Tempos run until around 8pm and are a good way of getting to the Old City and back (get off at Hathipol)

**Auto-rickshaws** (also called Tuk Tuks): Useful when Tempos stop and to get to specific locations. A ride to the Old City costs 70-80 rupees, but expect to pay more after 10:30pm.

Train tickets in India sell out quickly so it helps to be organised.



Useful numbers for travel within and outside of Udaipur:

Travel Agencies	Phone Number
Chetak Taxi Stand (24-hour Service)	2522711
Gayatri Taxi Stand	2529338
Kay Travels and Tours (Panchwati)	2525286
Shrinath Travel Agency (Udiapole)	2422204
Indian Airlines (near Delhi Gate)	2410999
Railway travel agent (Suresh Gogiani)	2520544
Pujari Tours and Travel (Old City)	097835-36506

#### 4.11. Food

A general guide to food is to eat lightly during your first week and stay away from unpasteurised milk and cheese. After this it is best to avoid eating uncooked food and ensure 'street food' is hot throughout when eaten. There is an abundance of fresh fruit. As a rule if you can peel it, you can eat it! Avoid fruit that is already peeled and exposed or ensure you wash it before eating it. Always drink filtered or bottled water. Filtered water is available from machines at Seva Mandir (as shown on the map).

##### 4.11.1. Grocery Shopping

There are three main grocery stores near Seva Mandir. Two are within 10 minutes of Seva Mandir near Fatehpura Circle and are marked on the map. The first is less than 5 minutes walk, on the left hand side on the way to Fatehpura Circle. The other is called 'Reliance Fresh' and is around 10 minutes walk from Seva Mandir – turn right from Fatehpura circle and it is on the left. Finally, 'Big Bazaar' is less than a 20 minute walk away and is off Sukhadia Circle (also marked on the map) – continue walking (or take a Tempo) from Reliance Fresh and it is the first right on the roundabout, on the left. All these stores sell basic groceries, the closest store doesn't sell vegetables, but there are numerous fruit and vegetable stalls outside of it.

JMB and Celebration Bakery are both located at Fatehpura Circle and offer a variety of sweets, breads and cakes. A second JMB located near the cinema at Chetak Circle sells good sweets and deserts. Good quality breads and cakes can be bought from Le Cakery, situated on Chetak Circle.

Indian beers, liquors, and wine can be purchased at Fatehpura Circle before 8pm, please see the map.



#### 4.11.2. Eating Out

There are numerous places to eat out in Udaipur and they change frequently. Current (2013) favourites include:

##### **Fatehpura Circle:**

- Devi Thali – Rs.60 all-you-can-eat basic Thali, decent food and relaxed atmosphere.
- JMB – Cheap food with a good range. A great selection of sweets are also available, along with the best samosas and kachoris in Fatehpura.
- Shikshantar – On Saturdays, organic food served by local NGO.
- Kuwar Kalewa – Non-vegetarian and vegetarian food available, along with beers and spirits.

##### **Celebration Mall:**

- International food chains eg. Mcdonald, Subway, Dominos.

##### **Lakecity Mall:**

- Pizza Hut, KFC.

##### **Sukhadia Circle:**

- Outdoor fast food court with a variety of cheap veg Indian and Chinese meals.

##### **Chetak Circle:**

- Shivali - Mid-range veg restaurant with Rs.80 all-you-can-eat varied Thali.
- Biryani House – Two establishments at Chetak, one selling take-away and the other providing a proper restaurant (get the chicken roll!).

##### **Old City:**

- Cafe Edelweiss - Decent continental food with great sandwiches and coffee.
- Whistling Teal– Excellent Indian food in a quiet garden setting (sometimes they add too much salt).
- Lakeshore – Cheap food and a great place to go for a drink.
- Millets of Mewar – Healthy organic food with a good range of non-Indian dishes.
- Govinda’s Café – Great coffee and a good selection of food and cakes.
- Jheels/Ginger Café – Good coffee downstairs and a nice restaurant upstairs.
- Upre – One of the nicest restaurants in the old city, both in terms of location and food. Located in Lake Pichola Hotel.



#### 4.12. Leisure

- Cinema: PVR Cinema in Celebration mall shows several Bollywood films and a western film daily. Ashoka Cinema near Surajpol is a smaller local cinema. Prices of tickets vary according to your choice of seat.
- Gym: Gold's Gym is located off Panchwati and offers a good selection of equipment for both cardio and strength training.
- Classes: Yoga, cooking and art classes are available in the Old City at a variety of locations. There is also a yoga class within 10 minutes walk of Seva Mandir near the Field Club.
- Sightseeing: There are many places worth visiting in Udaipur, including City Palace, Neemach Mata Temple, Fateh Sagar Lake, Sahelion Ki Badi, Dudh Talai and Sunset Point, Bagore ki Haveli, Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandal, Ahar Museum, Jagdish Temple and Shilpgram.
- Swimming: Some hotels offer daily passes to their swimming pools for around Rs.200. Recommended places include Shilpi Resort (next to Shilpgram), Karohi Haveli and Udai Kothi (both in the Old City).
- Bookstores
  - Crosswords – Good bookshop in Celebration Mall with a large selection of English books.
  - Pages – Bookstore located in Panchwati
  - Mayur (opposite Shakti Palace Hotel, near City Palace in Old City) offers a good range of contemporary Western and Indian fictions, Hindi-English books, Udaipur guides, plus wildlife and history books.
  - Suresh (half way down Hospital Road) has a good selection of fiction, non-fiction and academic books.
  - Pustak Sadan (near Town Hall in Bapu Bazaar, with Hindi Sign) is a good shop for historical literature.
  - Arya Book Store (opposite the Hospital) also offers a good range of books.

#### 4.13. Last words

We realise that you have come to Seva Mandir to contribute and you would like to see the impact of your contribution at the earliest opportunity. However, there are many things that are unpredictable and may cause plans to be postponed, and you might have to wait to get started. Please try to not get upset with the waiting period. It is only because something more urgent has come up. In such a situation please feel free to go to Varsha, the head of PMS, or others and ask for work to engage you. Such occasions when you may have free time might come again – once again do not get upset – just approach someone with your problem.

Your intentions to contribute are greatly appreciated but please do understand that the problems of poverty and development are complex and addressing them requires a great deal of time and investment.



Given your short stay – you may only be able to do a “small bit” but that “small bit” of conducting an evaluation, a study or editing a report will go along way towards improving Seva Mandir’s effectiveness. Take pride in your small contributions and make the most of this opportunity to engage and learn.



Detailed map





## 5. Past experiences from volunteers

Here are some reflections from a few of the many volunteers who have spent time working on projects with Seva Mandir:

\*

### Wendy

When I came to Seva Mandir, I wasn't really sure what to expect. I had no idea that it was such a well-established NGO, which has been doing development work in rural Rajasthan for over forty years. I was given an assignment within the Health Department, which involved documenting the experiences of village youth who had participated in Adolescent Health Camps. I would use the stories and pictures that I collected to produce an informative brochure that would illustrate the importance of the program.

My time at Seva Mandir passed too quickly. After three months, I felt like I had barely begun to crack the surface of the complex and fascinating community where I had been so warmly accepted. Speaking with other volunteers, I heard stories similar to mine. I found out that it was common for volunteers to extend their stay, or to come back to visit and volunteer again in the future. I myself hope to return someday, and to continue to contribute to this organisation where I have learned so much.

\*

### Anuradha

I came to Seva Mandir for my rural stint, as part of my management training with Hindustan Lever Limited. Life at Seva Mandir is so completely different from the frantic pace of my routine work and it gives me the ideal opportunity to think, feel and understand the relevance of work done in the development sector.

I aspire to make a career in Human Resource Development and this would provide me an additional perspective on the challenge it is to work with people who want for all the opportunities that one takes for granted. What makes my stay special is the knowledge that my smallest contribution would impact the end result so directly.

\*

### Rebecca

My time at Seva Mandir has truly broadened my horizons. It has given me the chance to practice skills I learned back in Australia in a totally different context. This has broadened my perspective on community development and I hope to be able to make use of this new understanding in my professional life back home.

\*



## Alfie

When I look back at my time here in India I am filled with so many fond memories. Both the people I have had the pleasure to work with and the many beautiful places I have seen have all contributed to my time here. Furthermore, working with Seva Mandir has benefited me in so many ways. As well as forming a connection with a world that had until recently only existed in my head as academic debate, my time at Seva Mandir has also exposed me to the realities of practically applying theories of development. Although the realities encountered could be frustrating, exposure to such experiences has deeply enriched my own understanding of development. I have spent the majority of time working in India feeling either lost or confused, but I have also learnt so much.

\*

## Joe

After four months of volunteering with the Communications & Fundraising department (otherwise known as "RMU") at Seva Mandir, I can safely say that my time here has been phenomenal. So much happened inside the last four months that I should first tell you what I didn't do. I didn't change Seva Mandir, I didn't save lives in the villages, I didn't learn Hindi, and I'm still coming to grips with the fact that I could spend the rest of my life here and still not understand India.

But I did meet an incredible group of people. The staff at Seva Mandir, while understandably busy, makes a valiant effort to include volunteers in their projects. It should be noted though that the enthusiasm of the staff towards volunteers is only the reciprocal of the volunteer's enthusiasm. Don't come here expecting for things to fall immediately into place.

When I arrived, I was told there wasn't going to be much for me to do until the following month. I pleaded with the staff member that there had to be something I could help with even if it was office work. Five minutes later I was having a conversation with Ms. Deepti the In-Charge of RMU and after four months of mostly office related work, I'm sad it's over. At least for now.

The lasting memories were the close relationships that formed between volunteers who came from a myriad of nations, academic backgrounds, and outlooks. It was incredibly rewarding (and probably healthy) to be able to relate our varied experiences at Seva Mandir with volunteers dealing with the same sense of trying to figure out our place in the organization, in India, and when things got really heady, in the world.

I'll be forever grateful for my time at Seva Mandir. I doubt I could've gotten more out of my time in India than working with an NGO of Seva Mandir's calibre. For that reason and many more, I hope to continue working with Seva in the future.



## 6. Useful Phone Numbers

Seva Mandir:	0294-2450960/ 2451041
Charu Paliwal (Volunteer Associate):	09079824553
Varsha Rathore (People's Management School Incharge):	07726845687
Tarun Verdia (Vehicles Coordinator):	09799144456
Satyavan Kaushik (Office Superintendent):	09829790371
Police:	100
Ambulance:	101
Fire service:	102
Inspector Office (24 hours):	0294-24410816, 0294-2411246*

\*This number is a direct line to the local police office

**We hope that this booklet has given you sufficient preliminary information about our  
Volunteer/Internship Program.**

**Seva Mandir**

**Old Fatehpura**

**Udaipur, Rajasthan 313004**

**Tel: +91 294 2450960/2451041/2452001**

**Fax: +91 294 2450947**

**www.sevamandir.org**

**Please contact the Volunteer Program team – Ms. Indira Dey [pms@sevamandir.org](mailto:pms@sevamandir.org) for any further  
details, queries, comments or suggestions.**