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Country: Germany
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Final Impression, July 2018

As my three co-volunteers from Germany I was sent by Volunta, a sub organisation of the German Red Cross, to volunteer one year at the Sambhali Trust. Throughout my time at Sambhali, I was involved in five different projects to empower women and children. In the beginning I started at the Fatima Primary Education Center where I taught children in a Muslim area in English and Maths. Later my projects changed and I went every morning to the Laadli Empowerment-Center where my students were women at the age from 16 to 55 years who I tutored especially in English and General Knowledge. In the afternoon I went to the Sheerni Boardinghome to support the 25 girls there with their homework and studying for exams. In May all of these girls went home for the holidays to visit their families so I stayed at the Laadli Center for the whole day to support the Primary Education in the afternoon. In the whole year I did many no-bad-touch-workshops together with Vimlesh, especially at the times when we had not enough volunteers. This project brought me a good insight in the Indian school system.

Working at Sambhali was always a great honour for me. The NGO and its founder are helping a lot of women and children and I am more than proud to call me now a part of it. The work was perfect for me on that fact that I want to become a teacher in future. Furthermore we had a lot of freedom in planning our lessons and workshops. During the whole year we gained a lot of knowledge in how to teach right through several workshops held by trained teachers from abroad. I had a good relationship with my local colleagues and the whole staff who were always there for me when I had questions or ideas. I always felt really supported and respected in my work.

Especially for me, who graduated from school last year with no experience in teaching, it was sometimes quite frustrating and stressful to suddenly have my own students to teach. It is important to keep your own expectations low and focus on the personal skills of the students. With every lesson and every workshop I gave them more and more knowledge even if I am not a studied teacher. Seeing an improvement is a slow process but after one year I see little children talking more and more in English and women behaving more self-confident. This is the result I was dreaming to see.

What I loved the most is that you get to know so many new people with amazing personalities. In most of the cases you are more than a teacher for the women and chil-

dren. Working one year together creates a deep and private connection with mutual trust. Leaving all these new friends after the year was quite hard but I promised them all to stay in contact and to come back as soon as possible.

Living in Jodhpur at the Durag Niwas Guesthouse was another thing which made my stay better. We never felt like guests there because everyone treated us like a part of their own family. We had a good connection with the staff of the guesthouse who always respected and took care of us. Furthermore we really felt like a part of Govind's family with his wonderful wife, his loving children and his strong mother. They all gave us the feeling that we are never alone there. Thanks to those people we found a second home in India.

The city of Jodhpur is beautiful. Although the climate in winter is quite cool and in summer very hot it is a good place to live. The city has a lot of things to do in the free time. From sightseeing and discovering nature over shopping to eating and going to the cinema Jodhpur offers many opportunities to spend afternoons and weekends. It always reminded me of my own hometown in Germany called Augsburg. I spend a lot of time in the blue city, walking through the small streets of Jodhpur and discovering architectures and people. The inhabitants of Jodhpur are very open, helpful and friendly. We never felt insecure or lost.

My decision for going to India was quite spontaneous but I will never regret it. The year was the best thing that happened to me so far. I learned a lot about the Indian culture and about myself. I am leaving this colourful amazing country, not for the last time, with a heart filled with many experiences, a lot of new friends and a new and stronger personality. I am thankful to everyone who made this year so special for me. Sambhali Trust needs volunteers. We are doing a big part of empowering the women and children. Even if it is only for a few weeks, every support is needed. Still I can only encourage everyone to stay as long as possible. Only with enough time you can really get into the culture and the people especially your students. But no matter if for short or long time every help brings hope to thousands of women and children and secures a more successful future for the Sambhali Trust.

