



Sristi Foundation

Empowering people with disabilities

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Sristi Foundation VOLUNTEER MANUAL

For the latest information see our website - <https://sristivillage.org/>

WHO WE ARE

About

Sristi Foundation was named after a Sanskrit word which means **creation**. Indeed, we want to create a world for those who are marginalized and people with intellectual and developmental disability, a world which they could call their own, and where everyone would be treated with equal respect.

To achieve this goal, we bought 8.39 acres of land in Thazhuthali Village (30 km from Pondicherry). There we started to establish our Sristi Village a self-sustaining and eco-friendly community (still upon completion) with our first members who already live, learn and work on the land. Through these two years experience, we realized that they had the chance to transform their lives. Besides, facts and figures reveal that in India, a large majority of people with intellectual disabilities live in rural area and do not benefit from any adequate training opportunity. This whole set of information and our own experience inspired us to launch and continue our activities.

Vision

An inclusive society where children and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are respected, valued and have choices to lead a holistic and dignified life together. Sristi Foundation believes in an inclusive and eco-responsible world, where everyone would be given the opportunity to reach his full potential regardless of disability, race, gender, etc.

Mission

To enable persons with disability and other marginalized groups to live as independently and as fully as possible through economic and social empowerment.

Scope

The target group consists of people who are intellectually disabled and who belong to marginalized groups.

Why Sristi?

If you dream of a world where every single person regardless of their disability is treated with respect and given every single opportunity to prove themselves and create a place where they can sustain using their own abilities, if you want to create such world of equality and compassion, if you believe in what we believe, then Sristi is the place for you. Here we create such world with creators like you.

Sristi's Core Values

- ✓ Inclusive Community: The community which consists of people from different backgrounds, some of them having some kind of disability and some of them without any disability, all live in a place helping each other in day to day works, surviving, progressing, learning and growing in to better humans.
- ✓ Eco-friendly: The place which doesn't affect the Mother Nature and help the earth to survive.
- ✓ Self Sustainability: The organisation which is marching towards self sustainability where it can survive on its own by producing and creating all its basic needs.

We believe,

- (i) Every single person has got their own ability and has at-least one skill which when worked upon can create wonders.
- (ii) Every single person regardless of their disabilities should be given a role and should be treated with respect.

HOW TO REACH

Our office lies in a village called Thazhuthali, which is around 30 Kms from the nearest city, Pondicherry. From there to reach Sristi Village, you have to reach a place called Kunamangalam which is around 3 Kms from Thazhuthali to which you will be guided to when you reach the office.

You can reach Thazhuthali from either Chennai or Pondicherry. There are also other routes, if you are not coming from these two places, just give a call to us, we'll guide.

Sristi Foundation/Jan 2017
www.sristivillage.org

From Chennai

There are buses frequently going from Chennai to Trichy or to Villupuram. You can catch any of the buses and get down at a place called Kooteripattu. From Kooteripattu, you can find buses to Thazhuthali village. Reach there and call us, we'll pick you.

From Pondicherry

Pondicherry being the nearest city and just 30 Kms away. You'll find lots of buses in this route. From Pondicherry you have to take a bus to Mailam and get down at Thazhuthali village. Reach there and call us, we'll pick you up.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

Housing

All long term and short term volunteers are provided with accommodation in the Sristi Village or at a separate house in the Thazhuthali village which we lovingly call "The Pink House". It depends on the volunteers to choose whether they want to stay in the pink house or in the village. Depending on the availability and their personal choice they are provided an accommodation.

The Pink House

Pink house is a rented house near our office in Thazhuthali village. You will have regular bedding, fan and clean toilet facility.

Inside the village

Inside the village we have a hut specially constructed for our volunteers. It would be once in a life time experience living in the hut inside the village. You have a clean toilet and bathroom inside the village which is built especially for the volunteers. You will get a table fan and mats to sleep on.

This kind of accommodation is generally given to people who volunteer in farm because it would be quite easier for them and to the management.

Board

Volunteers, volunteering for the foundation are eligible for full board – three meals per day plus morning and evening tea. In the exceptional case no food service is available; this will be communicated in advance. At Sristi we try to provide healthy meals. If anyone receives guests, it is possible for them to take meals at Sristi but only against a fee.

Transport

Volunteers are provided with a cycle each which they can use to go to places and there are buses frequently available between Thazhuthali and Kunamangalam, Thazhuthali and Pondicherry etc and the bus fares would be very minimum. But bus fares should be borne by the volunteers if they are travelling for personal causes and in cases where they'll be travelling for foundation or in cases when their bicycle breaks down, always and always Sristi takes care of that.

Medical

We at Sristi take health care as a primary issue. We make sure you never get ill, if at all in unfortunate situation, you get ill, we'll rush with you to the hospital making sure you stay healthy. We want your stay to be comfortable all along.

WHAT WE EXPECT

Work

Sristi has four divisions where you can volunteer your valuable time depending on your skills and interest.

(i) Sristi Special school

'Assist in our Special School to educate children with intellectual disabilities'

Sristi Special School has the objective to give children with intellectual disabilities who live in rural areas the access to the education they deserve and need. We try to teach every child according to her or his individual needs. The training is mainly based on teaching the children, skills they need in the daily life like eating etc., and improve their skills through games and artistic activities such as drawing.

Volunteers are a constant and important part of our school because they give us the opportunity to concentrate on each individual child in a better way and give each and everyone the attention he or she needs and deserves. New ideas that every volunteer brings with him or her are for us just as important as the love and attention the additional member of our team showers on our children. Volunteers help us a lot to improve the quality of our work.

Tasks

- Assist the teacher in handling the children
- Contribute own ideas, activities, games etc. to the curriculum
- Help the children with their day-to-day activities
- Assess the needs of the children and act according to it

Requirements

- Enthusiasm
- Willingness to work with intellectually disabled children
- Patience with the children and teacher
- Creativity
- Cultural sensitivity as you'll be living in the rural Tamil Nadu
- Willingness to put the children's needs over one self's

(ii) Sristi Village

'Helping with our eco-friendly, inclusive and self-sustaining Sristi Village'

Sristi Village is the main project of the Sristi Foundation. It is an inclusive, eco-friendly and self-sustaining village and farm where we give intellectually disabled and marginalized people the opportunity to learn skills in the agricultural sector. Through this we are also trying to generate income for our community. By helping them learn skills, we are helping them lead a dignified and holistic life where they can contribute something for their families and the society. Also, through our farm, we are trying to become independent and self-sustaining.

We use only organic, traditional South-Indian techniques to cultivate our vegetables and crops and include our intellectually disabled community members into every step of the cultivation process.

Volunteers are welcome to help on the land which includes taking care of the vegetable garden, helping with the day to day works such as watering the plants, helping with building up the infrastructure in our village, teaching the disabled community members new skills or initiating new projects such as a dairy farm or honey bee harvesting etc.

Tasks

- Help on our land with our Eco-friendly farming
- Teach the intellectually disabled community members new skills
- Initiate own Projects
- Work together with our community members

Requirements

- Enthusiasm
- Willingness to work with the intellectually disabled community members
- Patience with the plants and people
- Creativity
- Willingness to live in basic circumstances
- Basic knowledge about or at least interest in agriculture and organic farming.

(iii) Sristi Vocational Training Centre

'Help with our Sristi Vocational Training Centre'

In our Sristi Vocational Training Centre, we teach intellectually disabled adults skills that will enable them to generate their own income and become self-sustaining. Basically, we show them how to produce items for selling. Using mainly waste and recycled products, we are both helping the environment and keeping the cost prices low. The centre is currently producing doormats, cleaning products, candles, incense sticks and more.

Volunteers are welcome to introduce new skills and help the intellectually disabled people with learning and producing new items. Furthermore you are welcome to find new marketing ideas and possibilities to sell our products.

Tasks

- Teach intellectually disabled people handicraft skills
- Give assistance for disabled people while producing the items
- Introduce new ideas and skill trainings
- Help with tailoring class

Requirements

- Enthusiasm
- Interest in producing items for selling
- Interest in teaching intellectually disabled people handicraft skills
- Creativity
- Patience with the intellectually disabled people

(iv) Sristi Foundation Management

‘Join our Sristi Foundation Management team’

The Sristi Foundation Management is coordinating all the different projects, scheduling and conducting weekly team meetings, planning events, spreading knowledge about the Sristi Foundation in Social Media and other networks.

If you choose to work for the management you will be responsible for documentation, writing proposals for new funding opportunities or help to design flyers, posters or other promotional materials.

Volunteers will be mainly working on their own and therefore have the opportunity to be creative and include their own ideas into their work.

Tasks

- Assist with administrative works such as writing proposals
- Find new opportunities for fundraising programs
- Design flyers or posters for promotion of the projects
- Update the website, BLOG and social media for the Sristi Foundation

Requirements

- Enthusiasm
- Interest in working on the computer (best to bring your own laptop)
- Basic knowledge in text editing programs such as Word or Power Point
- Creativity
- Interest in organisation activities

General Rules

There are certain general rules we expect you to follow for your safety and for the reputation of the organisation.

Table of Contents

1. Safety
2. Energy
3. Communication
4. Guests
5. Relationships in the village
6. Cleanliness
7. Emergency Information
8. Prohibited in the village – Indian Law
9. Harassment
10. Workplace Violence
11. Alcohol use
12. Drug use
13. Smoke free environment
14. Saving environment

Safety

Going Out

Everyone who leaves and returns to the village will need to register with the security guard.

Considering this a village, it's highly unsafe to stay outside at late nights. So for the safety of everyone, everyone should return to the village before 9PM.

Energy

In order to limit energy consumption as much as possible all the volunteers are requested to save as much energy as possible. Therefore,

- ✓ Whenever you leave any room, please ensure that all electricity items are switched off, including lights, fans and computers, if any. Fans should not be unnecessarily switched on.

Communication

Cell Phones

All electronic equipment, including mobile phones, need to be switched off or at least be kept on silent during any form of assembly.

Guests

Relatives, friends or project related guests may visit Sristi Village, but only under certain conditions:

Day Guests

- ✓ All guests should be announced beforehand to the administrative manager.
- ✓ Guests must report to the guard on duty when entering the village.
- ✓ Guests should never be a distraction to Sristi community members, including their hosts.

Overnight Guests

In general overnight visitors on campus are not allowed. However, exceptions may be made on a case by case basis at the discretion of the management. If a guest is allowed to stay, they must abide by all of Sristi's Rules and regulations.

- ✓ You are responsible for making your guest feel welcome.
- ✓ You are responsible to ensure your guest follows the code of conduct.
- ✓ To ensure that every Sristi Community member knows who is in the village, all visitors must be introduced to everyone at the beginning of their stay.

If a visit, for any reason, is not in the best interest of the project (lack of time, lack of space, personal reasons, etc) Sristi management will make a final decision whether a stay is possible or not.

Relationships in the village

Due to interdependency and confidential matters, intimate relationships between staff members and volunteers, staff members and community members or volunteers and community members are a strict no.

Yet, certain things like love and relations are not restrictable because love can blossom anywhere, anytime. If two persons have mutual consent and if it doesn't affect the Sristi Management and works related to Sristi, then there are no restrictions as such.

Cleanliness

Littering

To ensure cleanliness, littering is considered to be misconduct. Please be aware that we are living in a shared environment.

Waste Segregation

These are the rules to ensure that the Sristi waste management policy can be maintained as well as to keep up cleanliness and hygiene in our village. You find waste bins at certain designated places in the village, use it and help community members get used to it.

Personal Hygiene

Volunteers are requested to maintain the personal hygiene in order to protect yourself and others from illness. Please remember you are living with a family at the village.

Emergency Information

First Aid/Medical Kits

A first aid emergency kit is available with the Members Associate. There is also a medical kit, with various medicines and medical supplies are available with the Member's Associate. If you are feeling unwell or hurt, you should contact the respective person immediately.

Prohibited in the village - Indian Rules

All the people staying in the Sristi Village have to abide Indian laws, rules and regulations. If anyone notices what is perceived to be an unlawful activity please report it to the General Manager or another member of staff immediately.

Drugs

In India, using drugs is illegal. Drugs are forbidden on and off the Sristi Village. All medicines the volunteers bring with them should be supported by prescriptions and medical reports.

Gambling

Gambling is legally not allowed and therefore not acceptable in the village.

Offensive behaviour

Offensive behaviour is not tolerated.

Religious activity

Sristi is a secular institute that welcomes everyone with or without a certain religion. To protect the project, no religious symbols or activities can be presented in or around the village in a visible or audible way. All Sristi's members have to respect all religious beliefs and non beliefs. Discussions with religious context should be avoided as much as possible to prevent inter religious conflicts. No one should feel forced to believe what others believe. According to Indian visa regulations any missionary activities within in India are prohibited, so volunteers should take care of this.

Harassment

Sristi wants to provide a harassment-free environment for its volunteers. Mutual respect, along with cooperation and understanding, must be the basis of interaction between staff, members and volunteers. Sristi will neither tolerate nor accept behaviour that is likely to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of an individual, or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

There are several forms of harassment but all can be defined as any unwelcome action by any person, whether verbal or physical, on a single or repeated basis, which humiliates insults or degrades. "Unwelcome", for the purposes of this policy, refers to any action which the harasser knows or ought to reasonably know is not desired by the victim of the harassment.

Specifically, racial harassment is defined as any unwelcome comments, swearing, racist statements, slurs, hurtful jokes, graffiti or literature or pictures and posters which may intentionally or unintentionally offend another person.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted attention of a sexual nature such as remarks about appearance or personal life, offensive written or visual actions like graffiti or degrading pictures, physical contact of any kind, or sexual demands.

If anyone is/are harassing you in any form, please don't be afraid to inform that to the General Manager or the Director.

Workplace Violence

Workplace violence can be defined as a threat or an act of aggression resulting in physical or psychological damage, pain or injury to a worker or a community member or a volunteer, which arises during the course of work. Further to the definition of violence, is the definition of abuse. Abuse can be verbal, psychological or sexual in nature. Verbal abuse is the use of unwelcome, embarrassing, offensive, threatening or degrading comments. Psychological abuse is an act which provokes fear or diminishes a person's dignity or self-esteem. Finally, sexual abuse is any unwelcome verbal or physical advance or sexually explicit statement.

Sristi has a zero tolerance limit with regards to harassment and violence. Volunteers engaging in either harassing or violent activities will be subject to discipline, which may include termination and possibly criminal charges.

If some kind of violence happens against you in any form, please don't be afraid to inform that to the General Manager or the Director.

Safety

In Village one should ensure the safety of their own belongings and if something unfortunate happens, they should inform the security in charge immediately. Security incharge has every right to check every place.

Alcohol use

Alcohol consumption is not permitted on the village/school at any time. Alcohol consumption outside the village entirely depends on the person. At all working times Sristi volunteers are expected to be sober.

Drug use

Use of illegal Drugs or dealing in or promotion of the same is not permitted in any of Sristi's premises: this means at the village/school or at the place where accommodation is provided.

For the purposes of this policy, illegal drugs would not include drugs prescribed by a medical practitioner, or normal pharmaceutical drugs for low level disease such as aspirin, paracetamol etc.

Smoke Free Environment

Smoking at Sristi Village is not permitted at any time. Outside of entrance gate is personal choice. Cigarette left-over's should be disposed of properly. Smoking outside the village at other Sristi Properties is permitted in a reasonable way but only in consent of all persons staying there. It should not impact the health of any other person.

Saving Environment

Sristi strives at keeping the village/school clean and environmental-friendly. All employees are expected to support this philosophy and follow the waste segregation rules around the village.