



### **DukeEngage in India – Ahmedabad**

This program is organized by Duke faculty / staff in collaboration with DukeEngage. It is a new program for 2017.

#### **Program Dates**

June 1 – July 30, 2017

(Dates subject to change up until the point of departure.)

#### **Service Focus**

Participating in service-learning projects organized and operated by the non-profit organization SAATH, based in Ahmedabad, India, dedicated to freeing deprived children of rural migrant families from the urban labor market, nourishing and educating them; providing profession-based skills to slum dwelling youth; assisting women of very low income families in acquiring financial independence. ([www.saath.org](http://www.saath.org))

Service themes:

- Children and Youth services
- Education and Literacy
- Women's empowerment

#### **Program Leader**

- Purnima Shah, Director and Associate Professor of the Practice, Dance Program, Duke University . Ph.D. in Performance Studies and Ethnography, with research and teaching interests in Asian theatre intersecting with ritual and performance, gender in performance, psycho-spiritual practices in devotional theatre, South Asian diaspora, and performance theory.

#### **Program Overview**

Large number of rural populations who subsisted mostly on small scale farming and other services have been competitively displaced in the last few decades due to steadily rising inflation, financial debts, modernization and innovative farming technologies that are unaffordable to them. On the other hand, urban development, industrialization and booming construction industries have attracted millions of rural residents to migrate into urban areas for livelihood and employment in hourly/daily jobs. The majority of these migrant workers and their families dwell in urban slum developments and are unable to afford basic education, health care, nutrition, or vocations for their children, youth or women. This DukeEngage program, in collaboration with the Ahmedabad based nonprofit organization SAATH, will largely work on projects connected with providing better opportunities to these migrant communities, and with women and children of very low-income families.

SAATH has pioneered an Integrated Community Development Program that seeks to uplift, enrich and provide opportunities for the well being of slum residents, migrant laborers, minorities, underserved children, women and youth in urban and rural areas. Assistance is provided to these communities for access to health care, education, learning profession-based skills, employment, micro-financing small businesses, and acquiring affordable housing. SAATH engages in vocational training programs, with a goal to cultivate career aspirations and livelihood skills of youth living in slum areas and partnering with the Ahmedabad Electricity Company in providing electricity to these areas. It launched a 'Child-Friendly Spaces' program for liberating child-laborers and providing nourishment and education to them.

## **Proposed Learning Objectives and Outcomes for Duke students**

*Social responsibility:* Developing better cultural awareness, understanding and respecting cultural differences, learning to respect human beings who are less privileged, creating awareness for social issues; gaining new perspectives on and opening doors to a world that was previously unknown to them, taking the responsibility to give back to the society what they have gained from the world around them. Acquiring an understanding of the importance of the volunteer work; continuity of service learning engagement after graduation from Duke.

*Academic outcomes:* global learning, incorporating their service-learning experiences in their writing and research; acquiring new or improved language and communication skills. Service-learning activities will lend ideas for future careers in the field or inspire engagement activities on a larger scale. Participating in panel discussions, conferences and public lectures; advocating service learning to younger students. Using their skills and knowledge to bring in additional resources for the successful operation of the NGO projects.

*Leadership values:* Gaining self-confidence, sense of self-discovery through the service-learning experience and interaction with communities they serve; acquiring a sense of self-maturity through interactive community work. Transformation in their perspectives, decision-making, beliefs and world view. Gaining collaborative and team-work skills, devising and contributing new skills to the community as per their need. Gaining a better understanding of the functioning of the non-profit social sector and understanding how their service could make an impact on the communities they work with; inspiring those communities to participate in the service of uplifting their own community.

## **Service Opportunities**

Duke students will be assigned any one or two of the following SAATH projects based on their service interests, specialty areas, skills, and their career potential. Selections and placements of students will be made based on their resume, skills, service interests and individual interviews:

- *Child-Friendly Spaces* makes efforts to liberate children from the labor market and provides education and nutrition support to them, as well as to children of migrant construction workers. Daily classes are run within slum communities and on construction sites. Duke students assigned to this program will aid in child education (teach English, basic Mathematics, or any other field of study that they specialize in); research on and provide guidance for their proper nutrition; develop health awareness; schedule and teach regular physical exercises; teach any artistic discipline (song, dance, music) if applicable; and work with the SAATH office to raise funds for nutritive meals.
- *Udaan* focuses on orienting 18-35 year old slum dwellers, who are keen on seeking employment opportunities. Full time entry-level training in profession/career based skills is provided to these communities for at least three months. Courses in basic accounting, beauty salon services, management skills, basic computer skills, taxi/rickshaw driving lessons, etc., are offered to individuals in these communities. Efforts are made to find placements for those who have completed the training sessions. Duke students will work together with SAATH supervisors responsible for these projects in terms of teaching health and hygiene, and organizing, administering and helping with placement services. Students will also work with the youth communities to help them acquire the self-confidence and leadership necessary to go out into the world outside of their familiar slum areas. SAATH supervisors will act as interpreters / translators for this group when necessary.
- *Women@Work* provides training to women of low-income families with a goal to help them become financially independent. This project includes training in skills considered non-traditional for women, such as electrical service, plumbing, mobile repairing, taxi driving, etc. The aim is to break the stereotyping of gender roles at work. Placements are provided to the women who have completed training sessions. Women@Work also pays attention to making certain that underage girls do not drop

out of schools due to financial need. Duke students will work with SAATH supervisors leading these projects and assist these girls and women in achieving their goals. Students will help with teaching spoken and written English, basic Mathematics, computer skills, operating their bank account, health and hygiene needs, and with organizing and supervising employment placements for the trained women. They will help the young girls and women understand women's rights, educate and provide literature pertaining to 'Right to Information Act,' and help them acquire the confidence and leadership necessary to manage and maintain their goals. SAATH supervisors will act as interpreters/translators for this group when necessary.

- *Fundraising projects:* Duke students will work at the SAATH head office with a designated fundraiser, looking after the needs of all the current projects running at the organization. Using online tools such as crowd funding platforms and social media, students will assist staff in raising funds for various SAATH projects. Students will also assist with ideas for developing the SAATH Research Center and help with updating their website.

Duke students will work at the head office of SAATH and on appointed days, visit field-work sites in SAATH-provided vans for the above-mentioned projects, all of which are located within the municipal jurisdiction of Ahmedabad city. Each student group will be accompanied full time on project sites by a SAATH assigned (English speaking) Project Supervisor. Duke students will work full time from Monday through Friday, and on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of each month.

#### **Program Requirements:**

Language: Hindi is the widely spoken language in northern India. Basic level language skill would be helpful, but not required. Students will have daily language lessons throughout the two-month period of their stay in Ahmedabad.

Coursework: No prior coursework is required. Any level of study on South Asia and any coursework on Indian History or Languages and Literatures of South Asia would be helpful but not required.

Personal Qualities: This Program seeks students with the ability to work as a team, most particularly, the ability to work and interact with diverse populations of rural migrants, women, slum youth and children, SAATH staff and supervisors. There will be less private time and less scope for personal space than students may be used to, and students should be able to work in crowded situations. Qualities sought include:

- Commitment to and respect for the communities served together with SAATH.
- Commitment to ethical behavior; commitment to follow protocols and procedures of Duke Engage and SAATH; respect towards SAATH organizers and supervisors; commitment to follow the general expected etiquette of the local culture.
- Ability to work with the team; openness to improvement and feedback from co-students and supervisors; having patience in working with perseverance under unfamiliar environments.
- Maintaining self-awareness, self reliance, self-confidence and the use of good discretion at unexpected situations. Ability to manage stress in unfamiliar socio-cultural environments.
- An open mind and willingness to integrate with the global community during their term with SAATH, experiencing global cultures first-hand.
- Ability to do problem solving; possess analytical skills in producing the desirable outcomes for the served communities, for the organization and for students themselves.
- Large portion of Gujarati communities are vegetarian. Gujarat is a "dry" state and hence it would be illegal to consume alcohol without acquiring a legal permit. Students will comply with local laws and not involve in any risky activity outside the activities described in this program.

#### **Program Details**

Description of Community: Ahmedabad is spread on the banks of river Sabarmati and is the former capital city of Gujarat State located on the western coast of India. Nine bridges connect the old and the newer settlements of the city, sprawling on both the banks of the river. As old as a millennia, the city was formerly known as Ashaval (11<sup>th</sup> century) and later as Karnavati, and was named Ahmedabad by Sultan Ahmed Shah in 1411 CE after its capture by the Delhi Sultanate. Ahmedabad is renowned for its hand woven and printed textiles and became a textile hub during the British rule. The city is a thriving center for commerce with flourishing textile, chemical, pharmaceutical and other industries, providing employment to millions. Diverse religions thrive in this city with Hindus, Parsees, Jewish community, Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Jains residing here.

The independence movement developed its roots in Ahmedabad when Mahatma Gandhi established his ashram (residence and center for nationalist activities) in 1917 on the banks of Sabarmati (now a Heritage site). It is from here that he led his peaceful, non-violent Quit India movement against the oppressive British rule.

Ahmedabad is known for its architectural splendor, ancient and contemporary, which beautify the city's landscape: 15<sup>th</sup> century monuments namely, Sidi Sayed mosque with very intricate latticework windows, Jama masjid, swinging minarets, Naginavadi located in the center of the Kankaria Lake; 18<sup>th</sup> century Hindu and Jain havelis with intricate carvings; and contemporary architecture of the Indian Institute of Management designed by Louis Kahn; the city museum and Textile Association Building designed by Le Corbusier; the Calico Dome and Calico Mills Building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright; Center for Environment and Planning Technology and School of Architecture designed by B.V. Doshi, a disciple of Le Corbusier; Gandhi Ashram designed by Charles Correa; Alliance Francaise Building designed by Christopher Benninger; Ahmedabad Textile Industry Research Association and Physical Research Laboratory designed by Achyut Kanvinde and many more.

Ahmedabad is the sixth largest city in India and a very safe place for students. Monsoons generally set-in in Ahmedabad during mid-July. The temperatures may range from 85-100F, with periodic drizzles or heavy downpours.

Housing and Meals: SAATH organizers will make arrangements for Duke students' homestays with local families. The rooms will be furnished and secured with lockable doors. It is possible that the room may have to be shared with another Duke student of the same gender. Students will have access to a shared bathroom either within or adjoining their room. The room will have a ceiling fan but air-conditioning may not be guaranteed. Laundry service will be arranged by SAATH organizers. SAATH staff will try their best to make sure students are comfortable.

Families will provide students with breakfast, while SAATH will provide lunch and dinner during the entire program, including sightseeing and cultural excursions. Families will provide filtered drinking water. Choice of vegetarian or non-vegetarian food will be discussed with the Duke students in advance of their departure and assigned with families accordingly. SAATH will provide only vegetarian food, fresh from their kitchen at their head office or at each project site. Restaurants, groceries and provision stores will be easily available in the neighborhood area.

If you do not eat certain types of food for cultural, religious or personal reasons, please contact the DukeEngage office, [dukeengage@duke.edu](mailto:dukeengage@duke.edu), to discuss whether or not your dietary needs can be reasonably accommodated at this program site.

Transportation: The SAATH coordinator will arrange for airport pick-up and drop-off upon Duke students' arrival and departure from Ahmedabad. Homestays will be located in the vicinity of the SAATH head office. SAATH organizers will provide van services for Duke students' travel to project related field sites and a mini -bus for

sightseeing tours. Duke students are not advised to drive in Ahmedabad; taxicabs will be available to students for any other travel.

Communication: SAATH will provide a basic phone with local pre-paid SIM card. Duke Engage and SAATH will not be responsible for lost or damaged phones. Students will be able to use Wi-Fi and internet at the SAATH head office for free. Students are encouraged to bring their laptops. Students will be able to purchase internet dongles at a charge.

Opportunities for Reflection: Reflection sessions will be held once a week, every Friday afternoon with the Duke faculty program leader, SAATH project supervisors and advisors. Students will maintain an active log/journal of their experiences, questions, investigations, achievements, impressions, visions and inspirations for future service work and share these with the group each week. Duke faculty leader and SAATH advisors will lead the discussions. Students will regularly post comments on the program blog.

#### Other Opportunities:

A local certified language instructor will be assigned to teach spoken and written Hindi language to Duke students during their 8-week term with SAATH in Ahmedabad. Students will attend one-hour language instruction daily, Monday through Friday. This instruction will be instrumental in helping students be able to communicate first hand with the communities they serve. Local experts will be invited once a week to give guest lectures on various aspects of service learning, including developing careers in the field, Indian history and culture, literature, art, music and other related topics.

On select Saturdays when SAATH is closed, Duke students will be taken on one-day cultural tours to local historical sites in and around Ahmedabad city, such as the following. These tours will be organized and accompanied by a SAATH coordinator.

- Tour of historic Ahmedabad city
- Modhera Sun Temple
- Adalaj Step well (7 stories underground level)
- Calico Textile Museum
- Watch a 'Bollywood' movie (Hindi cinema) of their choice

The Duke program director will periodically invite Duke students to her family home in Ahmedabad for tea, coffee, or dinner, and to spend relaxed time with her family.

#### More Information:

Jagannathan, Shanti. *The Role of Nongovernmental Organisations in Primary Education: A Study of Six NGOs in India*. [Washington D.C.]: World Bank, 1999.

Panda, Smita Mishra. *Women's Empowerment Through NGO Intervention: A Framework for Assessment*. Anand, Gujarat, India: Institute of Rural Management, 2000.

Camerini, Michael, et al. *Kamala and Raji* [videorecording] DVD Disc 1, Watertown, MA : Documentary Educational Resources, 2007.

[Story of two women of the working poor who live in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Both moved from a background of deprivation to a measure of empowerment as representatives of a grass roots organization called SEWA, the Self Employed Women's Association].

Ramachandran, Vimala. *Getting Children Back to School: Case Studies in Primary Education*. New Delhi,

Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003.

Bhargava, Pramila H. *The Elimination of Child Labour: Whose Responsibility? A Workbook*. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003.

Rice, Rodney and Ruth Meehan. *India Working to End Child Labor* [videorecording] DVD Disc 1, Princeton, N.J.: Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2005.

Burra, Neera and Joy Deshmukh-Ranadive. *Micro-Credit, Poverty and Empowerment: Linking the Triad*. New Delhi; Thousand Oaks, 2005.

Huyler, Stephen P. *Daughters of India: Art and Identity*. New York: Abbeville Press Publication, 2008.  
[A collection of stories of twenty Indian women highlighting how they used creative expression as a means of empowerment].

Pandya, Rameshwari. *Women Empowerment Through Income Generation*. New Delhi: Swastik Publication, 2013.

*Women Welfare and Empowerment in India: vision for 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New Delhi: New Century Publications, 2008.

Garva, Radhaben and Sushma Iyer. *Picture This! : Painting the Women's Movement* [eBook of 147 paintings], 2013.

[From her home in a small village in the Kutch district of Gujarat, Dalit artist Radhaben Garwa has documented the rural women's movement in Western India and beyond through her drawings].

Razvi, Meena. *Empowerment of low-income women in India: Emergent Female Grassroots Leaders in Ahmedabad, Gujarat*. Ed.D. Thesis, Northern Illinois University, 2006.

Pal, Manoranjan. *Gender Issues and Empowerment of Women*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2012.

### **Curricular Connections**

Back at Duke, Prof. Shah will help students integrate their service-learning experiences with their respective academic disciplines and inspire students to further their commitments to community service at Duke and beyond. She is willing to mentor students in independent studies, Program II majors, or honors theses on topics related to their experience.