



## **DUKEENGAGE IN INDIA - KOLKATA**

This program is organized by Duke faculty/staff in collaboration with DukeEngage.

**Program Dates:** June 18-August 12, 2017

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

**Service Focus:** Working with nonprofit organizations dedicated to working with underserved youth and children with special needs: providing educational and life skills training.

- Education/Literacy
- Disability Services
- Community Development/outreach

### **Program Leaders**

- Baishakhi Taylor, Dean of Students; Lecturer, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Middlebury College. Born and raised in Kolkata, Baishakhi current research focus on gender equity and challenges faced by third gendered people in India. She also teaches Globalizing Gender, a two hundred level class at Middlebury College.
- Jenna Mueller, Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Biomedical Engineering, Duke University. Jenna leads the flashlight curriculum that is used in this program.

### **Overview**

During the two months in Kolkata, students will work with nonprofit organizations dedicated to serving underserved youth and children with special needs. The program will focus on activities that will develop and deliver education/literacy, economic development, and life-skills training with emphasis on social enterprise.

DukeEngage Kolkata was started in 2010 and has been working with the same partners for seven summers now. Each year, along with different projects, DE Kolkata has worked on developing a curriculum for teaching individuals with special needs in a consistent and cumulative manner. The program also takes into account participants' and community partners' feedback to farther strengthen the projects. Based on such feedback, the program now provides an additional opportunity to teach local students in India and their families how to build a flashlight from recyclables.

The program provides participants a unique opportunity to learn about management of the nonprofit organizations in a developing country. The program is intentionally designed to foster understanding of methods and organization of selected NGOs in Kolkata, India. It seeks students who are interested in supporting these ideals and willing to reach out to these groups. With globalization, the coming decades will force our nation to face global challenges and understand cultural diversity at a much greater level than before. Leaders in political, economic, and social organizations will find that they need to confront the dynamic and evolving issues that escalating global change and social disparity are generating. Therefore, the need to evaluate and manage how we can make positive impact on people across the world will demand increasing attention.

A note on Kolkata: The city plays a critical role to the program. The goal of a DukeEngage program in Kolkata is to offer our students the opportunity for rich civic engagement experiences in community-based organizations that are working on these important social challenges in a city and also offers deep cultural richness and diversity.

Today, some of the most pressing social issues in India, including Kolkata, include: access to quality education for the poor, access to small loans for people with limited resources who wish to start their own businesses, unemployed youth, women heads of households in poverty, and access to quality health care for the poor. Kolkata makes an ideal site for

**DukeEngage 2017 Program Profile – India-Kolkata**

Duke students who are interested in civic engagement in South Asia, South Asian culture, and the impact of the three major religions — Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity — on everyday life.

### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

Participants in this program will work with organizations that play important roles in protecting and advocating for the underserved. Students interested in all aspects of management, poverty, social class and disparities, education and global health studies, and other fields will find this a rare and worthwhile experience.

By the end of the eight weeks, participants should:

- have a stronger sense of global collaboration
- understand how to lead with empathy
- gain a better sense of managing an NGO within the context of development
- have greater sensitivity to diversity
- have deeper knowledge of implementing social entrepreneurial projects

### **Service Opportunities**

Students will work with the following Kolkata based nonprofits:

- Tulipdale: working in a slum school
- Julian Day New Mission: an inclusive school
- Future Hope: provides education and shelter to Kolkata's street children

Through these organizations, participants volunteer in the following categories of service:

- Education
- Policy
- Intervention programs
- Advocacy
- Health
- Social Support and Network

Based on applications, the program director invites student to interviews. After initial selection, student applications are also shared with community partners and final placement is arranged. The placements often have no chairs, and students will have to be on floor. While there is AC at the guesthouse, the placements have no air conditioning facilities. Ceiling and table fans are available.

### **Program Requirements**

Language: None. Students will have the opportunity to learn Bangla at the local language institute.

Coursework: **None** but BME 290 is highly encouraged. Selected students who enroll in BME 290 during Spring 2017 will teach students how to make a flashlight with recyclable materials and renewable energy at Tulipdale and Future Hope. Students do not need to be in Pratt to enroll in BME 290. Students who complete this project in Kolkata will have the option to continue as a Global Women's Health Technologies (GWHT) fellow. See <http://gwht.pratt.duke.edu/> for more information about the GWHT Center and programs.

Other Skills: Prior experience with grant writing and research is helpful but not required. Prior teaching experience with elementary school children and experience with special needs populations will be an advantage.

Personal Qualities:

- Commitment to honest and ethical behaviors – actively seeks to understand and adhere to the values, policies, procedures, and protocols of DukeEngage and their host organization/community; lives up to commitments and promises they make to others.

- Ability to manage stress in novel environments – seeks to recognize and regulate stress reactions in themselves and calmly practice coping strategies that work for them; seeks help from others when they feel overwhelmed .
- Ability to work productively on a supervised team – responds to feedback and critique from co-workers and supervisors with maturity and openness to improvement; listens actively and communicates courteously; responds with patience and perseverance to new or unanticipated situations and obstacles; accepts responsibility for their actions; balances their personal expectations of the DukeEngage volunteer experience with the realities of working on short-term projects in cultural and workplace settings that are new to them .
- Self-reliance and self-confidence – understands and meets their own physical and emotional needs in new environments with an age; appropriate mixture of optimism and realism .
- Empathy and cultural sensitivity – effectively and respectfully communicates and interacts with people of different ages, races, religions, and cultures; demonstrates curiosity about the lives of others without judgment .
- Self-awareness – possesses an age-appropriate understanding of the personal strengths and weaknesses they bring to a DukeEngage project/program; able to articulate their beliefs and values, and to state authentically their personal motivation to serve as a volunteer; demonstrates an awareness of how others may view them in a variety of cultural settings .
- Problem solving and goal orientations – possesses strong analytical skills and an interest in producing deliverable end-projects for a community partner organization, e.g., complex reports, construction of buildings or physical structures, assembly/repair of valuable equipment, etc .
- Becoming Global – reflect an understanding that globalization is a process and this 8 weeks contribute to that process but not an end to it; acknowledge that globalization and becoming a member of a global civic society is a responsibility that is not hierarchical or embedded within a perfect system; ability to use circumspection .

## Program Details

Description of Community: Kolkata, previously called Calcutta or in the words of Dominique Lapierre “The City of Joy,” offers an urban experience in the Eastern Cone in a country that has been a witness to dramatic economic, social, and political change over the last two centuries. Muslim Nawabs ruled Kolkata until the British took over in 1757. It was the capital of colonial India until 1911, when it was moved to New Delhi. Located near the border of India and Bangladesh, Kolkata was dramatically affected by the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 as Hindus and Muslims flowed in opposite directions. Many Muslims remain in Kolkata today, constituting about a fourth of the city’s population of 15 million. In recent years, the democratic transition into socialism in the early 70s, the beginning of globalization through open-market policies adopted in the early 90s, and rapid economic growth based on the information technology have created a complex mixture of social benefits and challenges. According to a New York Times article, Kolkata is “India’s first global city. It is littered with the remains of many worlds: the rickshaws that the Chinese brought; an Armenian cemetery; dollops of jazz left by Americans in the war years” (May 3, 2009).

The lodging facility and the nonprofit organizations are located in south Kolkata within walking distance to public transportation, restaurants, stores, fitness center, shopping complexes, and parks. South Calcutta is the newer part of the city mostly developed in the 1940s, by the Bengali’s who relocated there from North Calcutta tired of the segregation between what the British developed as the white town where they lived and black town, where Indians lived. South Calcutta continues to be a safe residential neighborhood well connected with many good public transportation options including the subway system, trams, buses, taxis, and autos.

Housing and Meals: Each student will share a room with another DukeEngage student of the same gender. Each of these air-conditioned rooms includes: two beds, desks, television with cable, closets, and a bathroom. Laundry facilities are conveniently located in the dormitory. The staff at the boarding house will also do the laundry at a minimal charge. There is a gym within 5 minutes of walking distance available with a membership fee. Students also have the options to hire a personal trainer who will work with the students, twice/week for approximately \$40 for a month. This is not considered a programmatic expense.

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The guesthouse provides breakfast and dinner for the students. The guesthouse can also prepare lunch for the students to take with them to work, or students may buy their own lunch during the working days. The students can also buy snacks and other food items from the local stores all within two blocks. There are refrigerators in the boarding house for the students to share. Throughout the program local families will host dinner for the students. At these dinners, faculty from the local university, poets, activists, artists, entrepreneurs, and political leaders will also come and talk to the students. Students are not expected or encouraged to cook.

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:** Given the location of the lodging facility vis-à-vis the service placements, most students will be within 4-7 miles of their work site. Transportation will be provided to commute to work every day in groups of 5-6 as it the goal to place 5-6 students at the each placements. Within the city of Kolkata there is ample public transportation including: buses, trams, taxicabs, and subway. We would encourage the students to share a cab and ride together if traveling within the city outside of work. During program field trips, students will be driven in cars. Most program events will take place in the city and the students will travel together in rental cars driven by designated drivers provided by the transportation company. Students are not allowed to drive in India.

**Communication:** Students will have internet access in their rooms and are encouraged to bring a laptop. Most placements will involve time in front of the computer and students should have some internet access while at their placement. Students will also receive a cell phone during their stay in Kolkata.

**Opportunities for Reflection:** Students will be asked to maintain a reflective blog of the experience. As a group we will meet every Friday evening to reflect and share our experience of the week. The site coordinator will lead these sessions, and students will be expected to post frequently on the program blog. Reflection topics varies on a wide range of topics including cultural differences, challenges of non-linear society, and work ethics in underserved countries.

**Other Opportunities:** Each student works from 9am to 2pm at Tulipdale or JDNM. In the afternoon, students volunteer at Future Hope. Twice a week there is language class, and evenings are dedicated to working on group projects.

There will be limited time for personal travel and social activities. Every other weekend there are group enrichment activities. The following are examples of potential enrichment activities from which the program leaders will choose for group participants:

- Walking tour of Calcutta that bears history to the British Raj, its Victorian architecture, and the modern juxtaposition between the rich and the poor.
- A trip to the Victoria Memorial: The memorial built in 1906 to commemorate the rule of Queen Victoria over India, is a magnificent building that now hosts a visual display of the city's history along with important artifacts and manuscript from the British raj.
- Overnight trip to Murshidabad, the old capitol of Bengal when Kolkata was under the British rule. The students will experience the Islamic influence on the culture and life along with the tours of the Nawabs' palaces, libraries, and gardens.
- A day trip along the Hoogly River to explore the remains of the French and the Dutch colonies and the influence the pre-British colonizers left on Kolkata vis-à-vis India.
- Optional trip to the Royal Bengal Tiger preservation park, the only natural habitat of the big cats, in the Sunderbans mangrove forest outside of Kolkata (also a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

### **More Information**

- Calcutta: Two years in the City by Amit Chaudhuri
- India After Gandhi by Ram Guha
- Planet India by Meera Kamdar
- Argumentative Indian by Amartya Sen
- The Goddess and the Nation: Mapping Mother India by Sumathi Ramswamy
- One Illness Away by Anirudh Krishna
- Gandhi's enduring legacy: Ramachandra Guha at TEDxMAIS (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mwrwds9wM>)
- The Child Driven Education by Sugata Mitra ([https://www.ted.com/talks/sugata\\_mitra\\_the\\_child\\_driven\\_education](https://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_the_child_driven_education))
- Calcutta's Architectural Heritage (<http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/jul/02/calcutta-architecture-heritage-destruction-city-campaign-amit-chaudhuri>)

### **Curricular Connections**

Recommended faculty and their courses at Duke:

- Dr. Jan Riggsbee
- Prof. Sumathi Ramaswamy
- Prof. Anirudh Krishna
- Prof. Phil Stein
- Prof. Leela Prasad