



INDIA: CARE FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES PROJECT

A worthwhile project, working with children with mental, physical or emotional disabilities that are in need of much love and attention. This is a challenging yet totally rewarding project and it will be hard not to fall in love with all the beautiful children!!

WHAT DO YOU GET?

- An exciting, never-to-be-forgotten adventure into Indian life and culture.
- New skills, more confidence, a greater understanding of a different culture, invaluable personal and professional development.
- An entry on your CV or résumé that will put you head and shoulders above most others in the job market.
- Experienced local staff with 24/7 back-up and support who'll meet you at the airport on your arrival - helps you **feel safe and never alone!**
- An in-depth Induction makes you **feel local straight away!**
- A unique insight into another culture – **see it from the inside** in a way you could never do as a tourist.
- An opportunity to **make lifelong friends from all over the world.**
- And best of all ... **an unforgettable experience!**



SUMMARY FACTFILE

Start Dates	All year round - You choose your start and finish dates (subject to school holidays, see chart below).
Duration	From 2 weeks up to 1 year, subject to visa restrictions.
Requirements	No qualifications required.
Price	For up-to-date prices, please check our website www.travellersworldwide.com
What's included	► Accommodation ► Food ► Meeting you at the Airport ► Transfer to your accommodation ► Transport to and from your project ► Full pre-departure support ► Local in-country team support and backup ► 24-hr emergency support.
What's not included	Flights, Insurance, Cost of Visas (a visa is required, but we'll provide necessary documents and assistance). Return trip to the airport.
Who can do this Project?	All projects are open to all nationalities. You need to be aged between 17 and 70+

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW:

The institute we work with was established in 1970 by Dr and Mrs Mary Thangaraj who believed that every child born into this world, irrespective of the conditions of their birth, have the right to live with self and human dignity. A lot of the children come from very underprivileged families, and so the love and care you can give them is even more important.

Students of all ages come to the centre – from babies to adults. An early intervention centre was set up in January 2008 to care for 50 children from birth until the age of 5. These children attend school from 10am – 3pm and their mothers (or grandmothers) stay with them throughout to gain a greater understanding of how to best care for their child.

Most of the children suffer from mental disorders like Downs Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy Microcephaly and Autism. Some of the children are epileptic, deaf and have learning disabilities or behavioural problems. The aim of the school is to help these students study; develop life skills; build their self-confidence and to raise awareness within society of the problems that these children face if they aren't given help.



The children speak very limited English so there will be a language barrier and it may make things a little difficult at times, however they are very enthusiastic about learning! Some of the teachers speak good English whereas other teachers have a limited vocabulary but they are very willing to learn more!

The centre caters for 160 intellectually challenged students; some of the older children help to look after the smaller ones and the majority of the children are provided with residential care and only go home during the holidays. A handful of the children are orphans and stay at the home during the holidays, and some of the children have just been abandoned by their families and they stay behind too.

The staff is very friendly and the centre is run by the nuns of St Anne's with Sister Selvy in charge of the school and the home. The school are in desperate need of help in caring for the students here. The school is funded almost entirely by donations and the staff is all on very low wages. Your work here will be enormously valued and appreciated by both the staff and the students.

The children at the school are very creative and they make greetings cards, glass paintings, bags, envelopes, pots from clay and vases. At school functions they have these items on display in order to make a little bit of money, which is then used to purchase more materials.

YOUR WORK

As the centre deals with a large variety of ailments and has many 'areas', you will need to be extremely flexible in the work that you do. Some of the activities you may be involved in include:

- Getting involved in the vocational classes and helping the children with sewing and embroidery
- Helping with arts and crafts
- Helping the children with their hand-eye coordination skills
- Taking part in yoga classes with the children daily as part of helping with their flexibility
- Getting involved with music and dance classes
- Helping children eat or go to the toilet
- Helping children with their physical mobility exercises
- Teaching English to the staff
- Helping the older children in the garden
- Play throw ball with the children at playtime.



You must be comfortable with assisting in a variety of areas in any other activities the centre requires of you – the list above is by no means exhaustive. You must be prepared to get your hands dirty but it is impossible not to fall in love with these beautiful children. This is an excellent project which volunteers really enjoy, but it is very important to use your initiative. You should ask for work if you feel like you're at a loose end and generally make yourself helpful in any way you can. The staff is very busy and the volunteers can't always be their top priority, so you'll need to be

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prepared to put yourself forward for tasks! If you can do this, you'll get far more out of your project – you get out what you put in. You will benefit from a few Tamil lessons to help you to communicate a little with the children – please ask your Project Coordinator if you would like to do this and they can book you onto a course.

School holidays in Tamil Nadu 2011-2012 (approx dates only as they vary depending on the school)

- Summer Vacation: 14th April to 3rd June 2011
- First Term Vacation: 24th September to 3rd October 2011
- Pooja Holiday: 5th to 6th October 2011
- Diwali Holiday: 25th to 27th October 2011
- Second Term Vacation: 24th December 2011 to 2nd January 2012
- Pongal Holiday: 13th to 17th January 2011
- Summer Vacation: 31st March to 4th June 2012

Exam periods in Tamil Nadu 2011-2012 (approx dates only as they vary depending on the school):

- Annual Exams: 1st to 13th April 2011
- Quarterly Exams: 12th to 23rd September 2011
- Half Yearly Exams: 12th to 23rd December 2011

LOCATION:

This project is situated in the bustling historical city of Madurai in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Madurai is known by many names; 'Jasmine city' for the famous jasmine flowers that are cultivated here, 'the city of Nectar', Legend tells of a river of nectar that flowed after blessing from Lord Shiva, and the 'Temple City', Madurai really does have a temple or shrine on practically every street but it is most famed for the Sri Meenakshi Sundeswarar Temple. Named after the goddess Meenakshi, it was built in the 17th century and is an enormous structure with 12 towers adorned with colourful images of gods and goddesses, imaginative creatures and animals. This magnificent temple is the religious centre of attraction and a hive of activity which you won't want to miss. This area is awash with pilgrims market stalls and impressive souvenir shops. Madurai is also famous for its rich textiles and fabrics and superb quality gold and silver.

Madurai oozes true Indian culture and if you want to immerse yourself completely in the Indian way of life; Madurai is definitely the place to be! Children will stop you on the streets to chat to you and shake your hand and even ask for your autograph! You will be in demand everywhere you go and you'll feel like a celebrity, such is the warmth of the Indian people. Madurai is also the gateway to many tourist attractions and close to the neighbouring state of Kerala.



ACCOMMODATION & FOOD:

Your accommodation could comprise of either staying with a host family or living in a Travellers flat. In either accommodation you may share a room with another Travellers volunteer. The accommodation you'll be allocated to will depend on which project you're doing and the number of volunteers there at the same time as you. However, if you have a preference for either a host family or staying in a flat, we will do our best to accommodate you.

Host Family

For a complete Indian experience we can arrange for you to stay with one of wonderful host families. All of our hosts are very welcoming and not only will be made to feel part of the family you'll also gain a great insight into Indian culture and customs. Many of our volunteers remain friends with their host families long after they leave India and in some cases they return to the country later especially to visit their family.

You may share a room with one other volunteer; and you will have an en-suite western style bathroom. Most of the showers in our host accommodation are cold water; however your hosts will boil water for you on request.

All of our host family houses are close together and just a few minutes' walk away from internet cafes, banks and snack shops and just a short auto ride into the centre of town. Our staff in Madurai also lives close-by.

All your meals will be provided and prepared for you by the family and it is mainly local fare allowing you to taste a varied selection of delicious south Indian dishes and exotic fruits. You'll also have access to the kitchen if you want to make snacks or drinks.

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In some of our host accommodation you will take your meals with the family, however in others you may eat alone or with other volunteers if there are in the same accommodation at the same time as you.

Volunteer Flat

Our volunteer flat is situated close to all our host families. This option gives you the chance to live within the local community whilst at the same time retaining your independence. This newly built flat is very modern, spacious, light and airy. It has a well kitted out kitchen and large lounge area with satellite TV, DVD and a good selection of DVDs for your entertainment.

You may share a room with one other volunteer; there is an en-suite bathroom with hot water and you also have your own private balcony!

You will be provided with a food budget giving you the option to either cook for yourself or sample the local restaurants. Eating out is extremely cheap in Madurai. Close-by is a Chinese restaurant and two hotels serving good value Indian meals and a few western dishes. There is a tasty vegetarian restaurant with excellent south Indian Thali's and Dosa's just a 10 minute walk away and opposite this restaurant is a great supermarket selling everything from groceries to clothes. Many of the hotels in town have roof top restaurants offering incredible views across the town with the dramatic Sri Meenakshi Temple silhouetted on the skyline. Most restaurants are good quality and you can sample north as well as south Indian dishes along with a small selection of western food. Vegetarian food is in abundance! Bakeries and snack shops are on every street and you must try the delicious fruit; there is so much choice; mango, pineapple, water melon, custard apples and jack fruit are so sweet and coconut water is also very refreshing.



VISAS:

For most nationalities visas are required, but don't worry we will liaise with you about your visa requirements, and make the visa process very easy.

FLIGHTS:

You have the option to arrange your own flights or we can assist you with your flight arrangements. If you would like us to do this for you, we will liaise with you regarding available flights and dates to suit you. All arrangements for your flight bookings/payments will be fulfilled by [Murray Rogers Travel Limited](#), ATOL No. 6856.

COSTS:

Please see the prices pages of our website [Full Price List](#). The price of this project is a reflection of the following costs:

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| ✓ Accommodation | ✓ UK administration |
| ✓ Food | ✓ Marketing (brochures, website design and maintenance, attending careers fairs, advertising, website listings and presentations) |
| ✓ Meeting you at the airport | ✓ Project Research/Site Inspection |
| ✓ Pick up from Madurai airport | ✓ Staff Training/Equipment |
| ✓ Transport to and from your placement, Monday to Friday only | ✓ Donations to worthwhile projects |
| ✓ Local in-country team support and backup | |
| ✓ 24hr emergency helpline | |
| ✓ Full pre-departure support | |

HOW YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

By joining a Travellers Program you enable us to keep donating money to worthwhile projects around the world; from clothing and feeding school children, building playgrounds or funding vital conservation research - your participation makes these donations possible.

For every volunteer, a donation is made by Travellers on your behalf into the [Bridge the Gap Foundation](#). This Foundation was set up by us to donate directly to particularly worthwhile and necessary projects for children and animals around the world, and partners with other NGO's to raise match-funding for worthy projects.

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COUNTRY PROFILE:

Officially Known as the 'Republic of India' (in Hindi known as Bharat or Hindustan), India is the seventh largest country in the world. With a mind-boggling population of 1 billion, India is an extremely vast country; full of hustle and bustle, with the unexpected at every turn. The constant multitude of humanity makes India a fascinating and inspirational travel experience which draws so many visitors back time and time again.

India, officially Known as 'Republic of India' (in Hindi known as Bharat or Hindustan), is the seventh largest and second most populous country in the world with a staggering population of over **1 billion**!! At times it can feel as if the whole population is in the same place at the same time as you! You will become fascinated with India, its cultures, its people, and the continuous stream of activity.

India is bordered on the north by Pakistan, China, Nepal, and Bhutan; on the east by Bangladesh, Myanmar, and the Bay of Bengal; on the south by the Palk Strait, the Gulf of Mannar and the Indian Ocean; and on the west by the Arabian Sea and Pakistan. At the bottom tip of the country at Kanyakumari, three seas meet – the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. Hoards of people converge to dip their toes in the 3 oceans!

The sights, sounds, and scenery of India are unique and amazing with grandiose temples, abundant wildlife, lush paddy fields, and stunning beaches. In the north, shrub-land, desert and the searing majestic Himalayas create a sublime backdrop and a visit to the 'Golden Triangle' to take in the magnificent Taj Mahal, the palaces, forts and deserts of Rajasthan is a must. In the south, magnificent temples and gorgeous beaches abound; India really is a diverse land of contrasts.

Religion plays an important role in the life of the country, and is one of the few countries in the world which have such an ancient and diverse culture. Their arts and crafts are world renowned with sport being one of their favourite past times, and cricket still acting as one of the most popular activities.

In the South of India winter starts around November and lasts until February. Temperatures rarely drop below 25C during the day but the evenings can be a little cooler. Summer, the hot dry season starts around April and continues till July. The latter half of May in Madurai is the peak of summer with temperatures soaring to 40C and above. There are two monsoons in the south; the first is the Southwest monsoon that occurs between 1 June and 30 September, although Madurai doesn't see too much rain at this time. The Northeast monsoon occurs between October and December; the rains can be abundant although rarely does it rain all day or indeed every day but it cause disruptions to the traffic and on occasions schools can be closed.

Alive with dazzling colour, humming with noise and overflowing with a sensual overload of scents, sights and sound; you are sure to be drawn in by the warmth and hospitality of the Indian people and mesmerised by the unique beauty and magic of this enchanting country.

From the lush jungles, quaint waterways and sunny beaches in the South to the dusty red deserts of Rajasthan and the searing majestic Himalayas in the North, India really is a diverse land of contrasts.

THINGS TO DO IN: SOUTH INDIA

- **Ride an elephant at Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary;** this is one of the top wildlife parks in the country and within easy reach of Madurai. You can go trekking through the jungle, take a relaxing boat ride to enjoy the stunning scenery and keep an eye out for wildlife; visit spice plantations, watch the local kathakali dance and top off your weekend with an elephant ride!
- **Visit the beautiful beaches of Kerala;** for a relaxing weekend on the beach, Kovalam and Varkala are a must. Kerala is the home of Ayurveda so get pampered by booking a massage, facial or a yoga course. Stay in a bamboo hut and spend the afternoon reading in your hammock and in the evenings tempt your tastebuds by the multitude of seafood on offer.
- **Explore the palaces and gardens of Mysore and Bangalore;** An overnight trip from Madurai is the stunning Maharaja's Palace of Mysore, on Sunday evenings it is lit with over 5,000 bulbs and is a stunning site. Bangalore is just 3 hours away and here you can shop until you drop; it has western shops, wonderful restaurants and nightlife galore.
- **Relax in the cool temperatures of Kodaikanal;** this hill station is just a few hours away from Madurai and is a cool relief from the heat of the city. Take a stroll through the beautiful shola forests, visit waterfalls, go horse riding, cycling or take out a pedalo on the lake. Don't forget to pick up some hand made chocolates and honey; they're absolutely delicious!

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HOW TO BOOK:

Please complete a [booking form](#) online or you can send a postal booking from our free brochure. When we receive this, we'll telephone you to discuss the details and then start the exciting process of planning your trip!

We do hope you'll join us and are confident that you'll find this an incredible experience. Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions - we'll be happy to help you plan your exciting adventure!

You may also be interested in other courses with Travellers, or do other projects in India – please visit our [website](#) for details of all our projects. In fact you can choose from over 300 projects in 19 countries!

Make a Difference – Get Involved!



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