

International Volunteer Handbook



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About us



Mission Statement

Our mission is to unleash the potential of underserved children which will provide them with equal opportunities and make them valuable contributing members of our society.

Parikrma aims to bridge the gap that exists between the children who get a good private-school education and those who have access only to the sub-standard Government schooling.

We at Parikrma believe that the content of education is what builds it. It is this belief that leads us to provide top-class education to underserved children. Through this, we strive to bring down drop-out and low attendance rates by bringing about a change in the children.

1.1. Our centres

Parikrma currently manages four Centres for Learning in Bangalore.

- North:
Parikrma Centre for Learning, # 4/3 Hossohatty Layout Post, Sahakaranagar, Kodigehalli
- South:
Adobe Saraswathi Parikrma Centre for Learning, # 35, Ashoka Pillar Road, 1st Block, Jayanagar
- East:
Parikrma Centre for Learning Powered by Yahoo!, # 91, Railway Men's Society, Ramakrishna Nagar, Nandhini Layout
- West:
Parikrma Centre for Learning, No. 500, Chandra Building, Nanjappa Reddy Layout, Koramangala Village

The main Parikrma Office is within walking distance from the Sahakaranagar School.

1.2. Working hours

Monday through Friday | 8:15 am to 4:15 pm.

Saturday | 8:30 am to 12:30 pm (except the 2nd/4th Saturday of every month).

Centres are closed on Sundays.

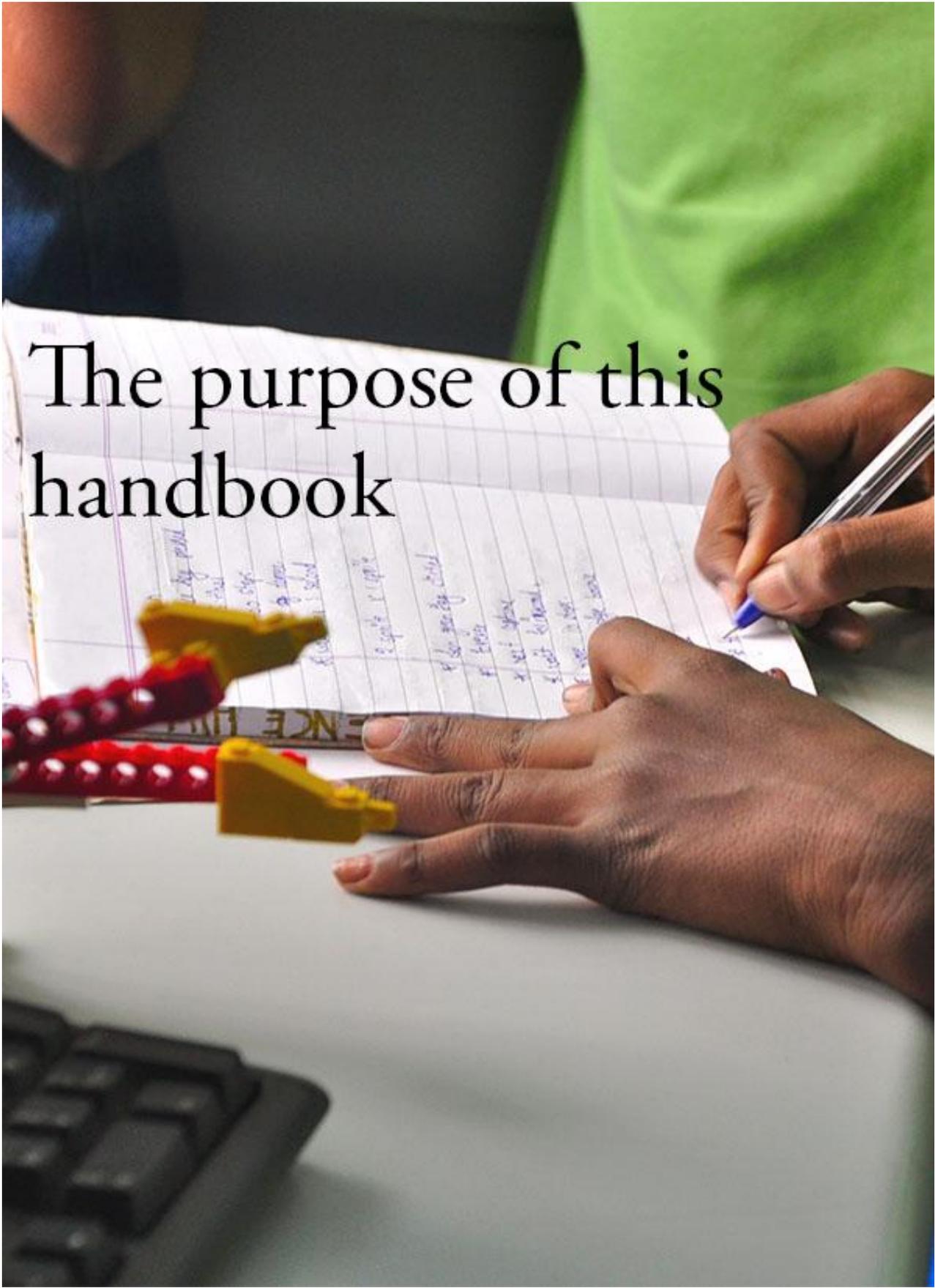
Class Schedule:

| | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| Breakfast | 8:15 am - 8:35am |
| Assembly | 8:40 am - 8:55am |
| Period 1 | 9:00 am - 9:40am |
| Period 2 | 9:40 am - 10:20am |
| Short Break | 10:20 am - 10:30am |
| Period 3 | 10:30 am - 11:10am |
| Period 4 | 11:10 am - 11:50am |
| Period 5 | 11:50 am - 12:30pm |
| Lunch Break | 12:30 pm - 1:00pm |
| Period 6 | 1:00 am - 1:40pm |
| Period 7 | 1:40 pm - 2:20pm |
| Period 8 | 2:20 pm - 3:00pm |
| Enrichment | 3:00 pm - 4:00pm |
| Departure | 4:00 pm - 4:15pm |

We expect our volunteers to be in school only from Monday through Friday, as we understand that you may like to take weekends off to travel.

Our office is open from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday and 9:30 am to 1:00 pm on Saturday (except on the 2nd and 4th Saturday). We are closed on Sundays.

Most of your work will take place during school hours, but it is possible that there will be some office or administrative work that you can do after school.



The purpose of this
handbook

We at Parikrma take volunteering very seriously as this is part of how we expose our children to the endless possibilities in the outside world. Hence we expect a serious commitment in return.

This handbook provides you with all the information that you will need about volunteering with Parikrma. We do hope that you have gone through our website (<http://www.parikrmafoundation.org>) in detail and have understood our model and our goals. If not, we urge you to do so before continuing to read the manual.

We have covered all the questions that potential volunteers have asked us and also what past volunteers at Parikrma have felt important to talk about to prospective volunteers.

If you have any questions that have not been covered in this handbook, please feel free to contact us at volunteer@parikrmafoundation.org.

Additionally, we encourage potential volunteers to contact those who have volunteered with us in the past. As they have already experienced living in India and working with us, their advice and information might be valuable for your future plans of volunteering.

Please do visit and “Like” the Parikrma Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/Parikrma>) to network with our alumni volunteers and to receive updates about our programmes.

Volunteer programmes we offer



3.1. Student volunteer programmes

At Parikrma, we welcome students from all walks of life to volunteer with us. We assure you that your experience with us will help you gain useful skills and create memories that will last for a lifetime.

3.1.1. Gap-year students

More commonly known as “gap programmes,” such volunteering activities are growing popular amongst independent young adults who wish to dedicate their time to service projects throughout the world. These programmes allow participants to develop leadership skills and gather experience before they establish their career.

Who can apply:

Students taking a yearlong break before joining university or starting a career are eligible to apply. You are not required to spend your whole gap year working with Parikrma; *the minimum commitment is 2 months.*

Programme duration:

2-11 Months



Programme details/structure:

These programmes start with the new academic year in June. The fixed duration of the programme helps volunteers and their respective school principals to plan the whole year for the class/students that the volunteers will be handling.

A well-defined course curriculum will be shared with the volunteers, according to which they are to plan their course of action. Therefore, candidates with any kind of teaching experience are preferred.

Teaching will be a major part of their job during their association with us. However, volunteers are also required to be a part of various post-school activities (see Chapter 6 of this handbook).

Skill-set required:

Strong communication and interpersonal skills, patience, understanding and a genuine interest in helping children.

Interest in extracurricular activities.

Volunteers are expected to be flexible and cooperative with students, teachers and staff.

Applicants with past experience in teaching are given preference.

Areas of volunteering:

- Teach-
 - Any number of subjects including music, theatre, environmental studies, literature, art, computer skills, etc.
- Lead a club -
 - Karate, ballet, photography, pottery, calligraphy, sports, etc.
- Tutor remedial students-
- Organise after-school activities to keep children productively occupied
- Organise an exhibit or event with the students-
 - Art exhibit, band performance, etc.
- Share and teach hobbies-
 - Magic, face painting, crocheting, etc.
- Aid other Parikrma departments-
 - Including Administration, Finance, IT, Resource Mobilisation

3.2. Social sabbatical volunteering for corporate employees

Corporations are now encouraging their employees to participate in more volunteering activities, which supplement their CSR. Volunteering helps develop soft skills that are instrumental in a business environment, such as problem solving, mentoring and communications.

Who can apply:

Corporate employees who are taking a sabbatical, solely for CSR activities.

Programme duration:

We expect a ***minimum commitment of two months time*** from our corporate volunteers. This helps us plan activities in advance.

Long-term volunteer applications are also welcome.

Programme details/structure:

The structure of the programme to be handled by volunteers will depend on the amount of time that they decide to spend with us.

Prior to the commencement of volunteering activities, a detailed plan will be chalked out by our team in collaboration with the volunteer.

The first week will be completely dedicated to an induction programme, wherein volunteers will get to spend time with each department that they are interested in. This will help them choose what area in which they'd like to assist, if they have not already decided.

Volunteers can choose work that is similar to what they are currently pursuing at their respective organisations, or they can choose a completely new branch of work altogether.

Skill-set required:

Skills such as strategic planning, problem solving, organisation and creativity are most preferred.

Technological skills can be used to coach students on basic computer operations and also for back-office work.

Areas of volunteering:

- Web design and maintenance
- Writing/editing documents
- Public relations
- Marketing/preparing marketing models
- Fundraising
- Brand management
- IT services
- Accounting
- Teaching
- Training staff

- Curricular planning/creating teaching models, etc.

3.3. Corporate volunteers

Corporations now attach an EQ (Emotional Quotient) to their CSR activities. Employees no longer see volunteering as a mandatory activity, and the value associated with volunteering is nowacknowledged and appreciated.

At Parikrma, we invite you to be a part of the Change.

We propose that employees visit any one of our centres as part of their onboarding procedures. This will help them gain some perspective about the future CSR activities that they can pursue with us, thereby allowing us to utilise their skills (both EQ and IQ) in imparting knowledge to the students of various levels.



Projects in the pipeline



Teachers and volunteers at Parikrma incorporate various creative methods to deliver their respective modules to the students. These techniques are to make learning fun and to get students involved in their lessons. However, subjects like Mathematics and Science are still dreaded by some of the students. Also, English being the only linguistic medium used at our centres, turning English lessons into something more relatable is highly important.

We invite our volunteers to come up with a lesson plan that not only delivers the required knowledge, but also encourages our students to give up on the fear of any subject, especially Mathematics.

Project Math:

The idea is to create a model for students in primary school, which will inspire them by making Math easy.

A relevant computer application or any other contemporary method of teaching Math can be developed.

Project English:

A similar model for teaching English is also needed. Something that is different from the current classroom lessons will help the students get rid of any apprehension that they might have. It will also give them the confidence to use English in their day-to-day lives.

Project Science:

Separate models for physics, chemistry and biology can be created for students for the lower- and middle schools, each of which may include class activities, interactive learning, etc.

In the future, these models can be shared with Government schools for their use.

Bangalore & the India experience



Bangalore is in the state of Karnataka in the southern part of India. It is a cosmopolitan city and is known as the Silicon Valley of India. In the 2001 census, there were 6.5 million registered citizens in Bangalore, but it is estimated that around 10 million people now reside here. As with the rest of the country, Bangalore is a city of sharp contrasts: many extremely wealthy, well-educated people live alongside multitudes of people, living in slums and toiling to make meagre wages to survive.

Volunteers generally find Bangalore an enjoyable place to live and work. It is a city full of culture and entertainment, and serves as a great hub for travelling as it is well connected by train, bus and plane.

Please browse these websites to know more about Bangalore:

- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangalore>
- <http://www.discoverbangalore.com/>
- <http://www.timeoutbengaluru.net/>

5.1. What to expect



India is probably very different from home, but the adjustment will come and you will be surprised at how quickly things that were once novel and foreign become commonplace. Acclimating to life in a foreign country can be a trying experience at times, but it ultimately is an exciting learning experience. You will undoubtedly grow in ways you could not have foreseen and gain a valuable, broader perspective.

Vibrancy and energy pervade every part of life in India, which can sometimes feel overwhelming but also exhilarating. Living and working in a country instead of merely vacationing there is a special opportunity to become part of a community and learn about Indian culture first-hand. This is especially true at Parikrma, as the children happily and openly accept the volunteers and form strong bonds with them.

Food and dietary supplements:

The food in India may differ greatly from that which you are used to eating at home, and you should prepare yourself for this change.

If you eat a lot of meat at home, you will definitely need to take some sort of protein supplement. Although meat is available at many restaurants, you may be eating far less of it than you are accustomed to as no meat is served at school. We recommend that you eat an egg everyday to compensate for the change in diet.

If you have any specific dietary needs, please inform us so that we may let you know if it is necessary for you to bring anything else from home.

Food in India is fairly inexpensive and groceries are readily available from local supermarkets. Depending upon where you eat, dinner at a restaurant could cost as little as Rs.60 (about \$1 USD) or as much as Rs. 500 (around \$10 USD).

Volunteers are welcome to join the children and teachers for breakfast and lunch at the school. We take great effort in providing simple but hygienically prepared wholesome, vegetarian meals for our children. In the southern states of India, it is believed that rice is suitable for healthy living and you will therefore notice that our children eat a lot of rice.

Be forewarned that the food may not agree with you in the first few days—some international volunteers find it spicy—but you will get accustomed to it quickly. While you adjust to the food here, you may want to bring biscuits or health bars with you to school to supplement your diet. However, we ask you to be discreet when doing so as the children are not permitted to bring outside food to school.

You will want to bring your own water bottle to school to ensure that you are drinking hygienic water throughout the day.

Outside of the school, we advise you to take precautions with what you eat. Avoid eating fruits and vegetables that have been washed, cut or handled by street vendors. It is best to wash and cut fruits and vegetables on your own. Also avoid eating food, especially meat, from street stall vendors, as preparation methods are questionable. In general, once you are here, you will figure out what food you are comfortable with as you try new things.

If you ever crave something familiar, Western or Continental fare is readily available at restaurants throughout the city.

You can rest assured, however, that the breakfast and lunch served at Parikrma are very safe. They are prepared in a very hygienic environment and we have never had a child, teacher or volunteer become ill from the food.

Accommodations:

Volunteers work in all four of our schools, which are in different parts of the city. We try our best to accommodate our volunteers in a manner that suits their budget. There are currently two options available:

VOLUNTEER APARTMENTS (generally for those working at the Sahakaranagar School)

We maintain several volunteer apartments to house our international volunteers. As we are a non-profit education organization, maintaining service apartments is not our main focus. Accommodations will be basic, but comfortable and safe as well as close to our Centres.

Please be aware that the bedrooms are doubles, and depending on the number of volunteers in the apartment, you may have a roommate. We will notify you in advance if this is the case.

Facilities in each apartment:

- 2-3 Bedrooms
- 2-3 Bathrooms
- Kitchen (equipped with cooking utensils, small stove, small refrigerator & sink)
- Electricity
- Running water (which is cold, but can be warmed by a water heater)
- Living room
- Clothes lines

We expect volunteers to sign a housing contract while they stay in our accommodations to ensure that everyone has a safe and comfortable stay.

Please inquire at volunteer@parikrmafoundation.org concerning rent details.

P.G. ACCOMODATIONS (Homestay with a family):

For volunteers who are interested in experiencing Indian culture even more directly, the organisation has contacts with some families that offer home-stay accommodations. In Bangalore these home-stays are referred to as P.G. (Paying Guest) Accommodations, which are common living situations for students and young workers. There are varying degrees of interaction with the family and privacy according to the specific arrangements. For example, some may include dinner with the family and a private bathroom. Another may have only a shared bathroom and a kitchen where you cook on your own.

If this is an option that interests you, please let us know well in advance of your arrival so that we may put you in contact with the hosts of a P.G. Accommodation with whom previous volunteers have stayed.

Coming with a friend or significant other:

Volunteers usually come independently, but you are welcome to come with a friend or significant other. For those who do come with another person, you may share an accommodation, but please know that you will have different activities at school and won't have constant interaction.

For those who come with a significant other, we ask you to make note of a few sensitive cultural differences. You will notice that public affection (even hand-holding) is essentially non-existent on the streets of Bangalore. As such, we ask couples to please be discreet and modest when at school and with the children.

.5.2. Visa and travel arrangements

Reaching Bangalore:

Many international flights fly directly to Bangalore. We recommend that volunteers fly directly into Bengaluru International Airport rather than flying into Delhi or Mumbai and connecting from there. The reason for this is that the connection (either by train or another flight) can be daunting for a first-

timer in India.

When you arrive in Bangalore, we will gladly organise for someone to pick you up from the airport and bring you to your accommodations. To arrange for this, please be sure to forward us your flight details and confirm that we have received them well in advance of your arrival. There will be a cost of Rs. 1,000 (around \$17 USD) for arranging this transport.

We do understand that cheaper flights tend not to fly into Bangalore. In these circumstances we recommend that you fly into Chennai, as the train ride from Chennai to Bangalore is only a few hours long.

Visa details:

If you are a non-resident Indian, you will need a visa to come to India. You can organise your visa through the Indian Consulate in a city near you. We recommend that you come on a Tourist Visa. However, if your stay is over three months, we can help you apply for an Employment (/Volunteer) Visa.

Some countries require a letter from the organisation in which you are planning to volunteer. If you require such a letter, simply send us a request by email to volunteer@parikrmafoundation.org and we would be glad to provide this for you.

When you apply for your visa you will need a current passport-sized photo and your flight itinerary. The visa should take about 3 working days to process; however this depends on your country of origin so we recommend that you begin the visa process at least two months before your departure to allow for any processing delays.

Preparing yourself physically:

You will need to get the following vaccinations and make sure your past vaccinations are still valid:

- Typhoid
- Polio
- Tetanus
- Hepatitis A and B
- Meningococcal Meningitis

- Anti-Malaria pills (Some doctors recommend that you take them, others do not. Bangalore is not a malaria zone, however if you plan to travel you might want to consider taking them)

For further information, you can book an appointment with a local travel clinic or check out the following

website: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/india>

5.3. Essentials:

What to pack:

Many potential volunteers want to know what to bring with them from home. Here is a list compiled based on suggestions and recommendations of former volunteers. Please note that Bangalore is a big city where you will easily find anything you may have forgotten or decided not to bring with you (i.e. heavy toiletries, linens, books in English).

Clothes:

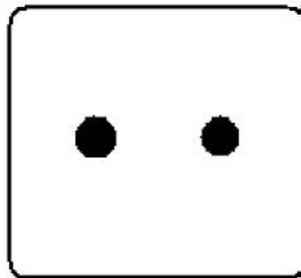
At school, volunteers are requested to wear loose clothing that covers their shoulders, legs, stomach and chest. We recommend that you do not pack too much as you can buy most of your clothes in Bangalore relatively cheaply.

- Female volunteers tend to wear a comfortable Indian-style tunic (kurta) accompanied with jeans, leggings, or other such cotton pants. Western clothing (i.e. t-shirts & jeans) is permissible; however shirts should not be low-cut or shoulder-bearing, and short skirts and shorts should be avoided.
- Most Indian men as well as most male volunteers wear Western clothing (i.e. collared shirts, tee-shirts, jeans).
- Shoes – A pair of flip-flops and a pair of sports shoes.

Other Items:

- Stickers and stamps for the children: Past volunteers have used these as motivational tools. Small rewards can be big reinforcements for completing assignments during the remedial program.

- Teaching aids: If you have any teaching aids that you find useful at home, you are encouraged to bring them along. These may include storybooks, flash cards, educational posters, etc.
- Photos: The children enjoy seeing photos of the volunteers' family and friends as well as of the countries they come from.
- Guide book of your choice: We recommend Rough Guide to South India, Lonely Planet, and Footprint South India.
- Camera
- Hand sanitizer
- Adapter: If you are bringing any electrical appliances from home, be sure to bring along an adapter to convert to Indian voltage. Indian plugs have two round holes.



- Vitamins : As the diet in India may differ greatly from what you eat at home, it is recommended that you bring some supplementary vitamins such as
 - Multi-vitamins
 - Iron
 - Protein powder (for non-vegetarians)
 - Calcium
- Medication: Bring a small First Aid kit in which you might like to include Imodium (for traveller's diarrhoea).
- If you are on any long-term medicine, make sure you have enough for the duration of your stay.
- Mobile phone: If you are planning an extended, we recommend that you bring your phone from home for which you can buy an Indian SIM card upon your arrival.
 - Please note that most American mobiles are locked and therefore not compatible with foreign SIM cards. It is easy and relatively inexpensive to purchase a new handset in India if necessary.

International calling cards are available as arerecharge cards for domestic calls and text messages.

Gifts for the children:

In case you are planning to bring any gifts or donations for the children (i.e.clothing or school supplies) please inform the Volunteer Coordinator in advance so thatyou can bring items that are needed and valued by the children.



Activities outside of school



Parikrma would like to ensure that your experience here is as rewarding and fulfilling as possible. For this reason, we do not limit volunteers' involvement to only school hours. The other areas that volunteers can assist us in are administration, fundraising and after-school care.

Administration:

The school office is open between 9:30 am to 5:30pm, Monday through Friday and between 9:30 am to 1:00 pm on Saturday (except the 2nd and 4th Saturday of every month). The administrative staff would welcome your assistance in updating children's medical files, organising child profiles, updating volunteer files and a slew of other projects that come up on a daily basis.

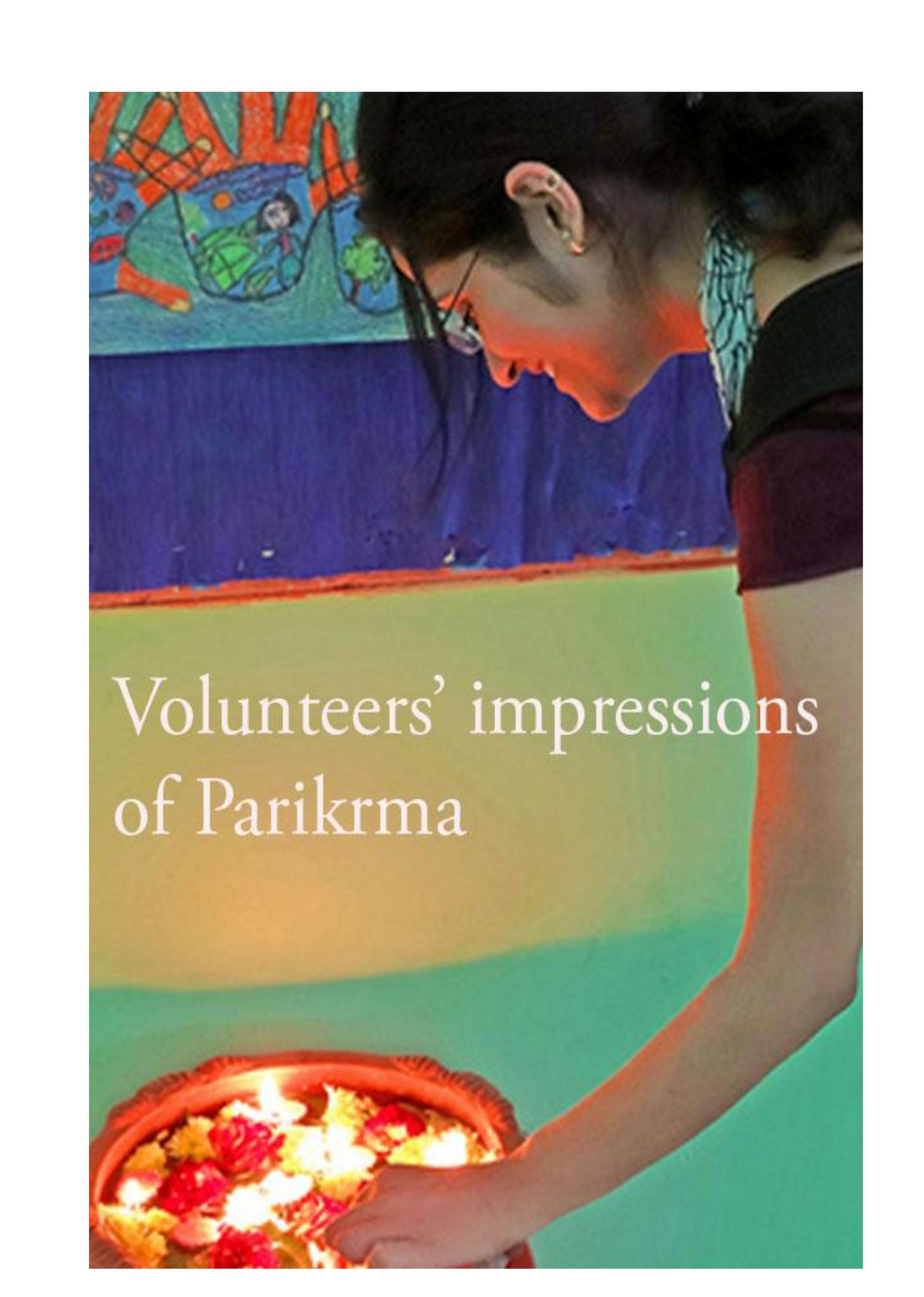
Fundraising:

There are many areas in the fundraising process for which you can be of assistance. This may entail preparing marketing materials or going to a corporation for our "Half a Day" fundraising events.

After-school care:

Some of our children need one-on-one attention in the areas of Mathematics and English. We ask these children to stay back after school for one hour during which a volunteer is assigned to work with them one-on-one. With the help of the teachers, the volunteer is guided on how to improve the child's understanding and academic performance.



A woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue shirt, is looking down at a brass bowl filled with flowers and a lit lamp. The bowl is held by her hand. The background is a colorful mural with a sun, a person, and a globe. The text "Volunteers' impressions of Parikrma" is overlaid on the image.

Volunteers' impressions
of Parikrma

Parikrma has a Facebook group <http://www.facebook.com/Parikrma?ref=ts>. We highly recommend that you join this group and set up connections with former volunteers who will be happy to answer your questions and give you advice.

Eleanor Murray and Kari Wylie

Ages 21 and 22; Glasgow University students, English and Irish

Between two of us we designed a First Aid Program, this I found extremely rewarding as I currently study Medicine at University so it was a fantastic opportunity to find out how traditional Ayurvedic practice integrated with that which I am taught.

No formal training had been given prior to this and according to feedback from the staff the sessions were extremely successful in increasing knowledge and awareness.

We were a little nervous before the sessions that the approach would be too technical or simplistic and patronizing; it was neither (quite a relief!). The actual events were accompanied by an adrenalin buzz, but what remained was a sense of achievement and empowerment, to have given the schools the skills needed to deal with medical emergencies.

It went so well that we taught 5th standard a toned-down version, which they were more responsive to and clearly enjoyed more than any other lesson I have taught them!

With Parikrma children it really is the best example of the more you sow, the more you reap, and the return on your investment of time and love is quickly rewarded.

Alice Mackenzie

Age 27, Teacher in Italy

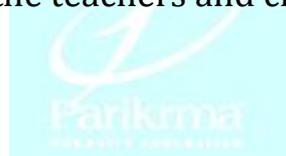
I can't really say I heard about Parikrma, I feel that I went out and looked for something like Parikrma. I'm a teacher myself, teaching English as a foreign language to both adults and children in Italy. I got to a stage where I wanted to experience teaching in a different culture dealing with children from very different backgrounds. I thought this would be a way to broaden my teaching knowledge and also an opportunity to share some of the skills I've picked up during my teaching career.

So with all this in mind, I simply got hold of the Internet and did many web searches. It's as simple as this: I opened up "Google" and typed in "teaching English India." I discovered the "teaching abroad website." I found many teaching positions on offer. I chose Parikrma out of all of them because of their convincing reply. As I was using the internet to communicate with Parikrma I was still a little worried so I decided to read as much as possible about Parikrma on their website. Now that I am at Parikrma I am so happy that I jumped at the opportunity to come and volunteer here. I love working with the children and applying my knowledge whilst teaching them. I am so busy teaching the children then I never find myself being bored. This is a very rewarding experience and I hope to come back next year.

Clara MacCallum Fraser

Age 18, Political science & music student, Canadian

It was a very fulfilling experience that gave me the opportunity to put a personality and a face to a community that I would have never gotten the chance to meet otherwise. My advice to potential volunteers is to keep an open mind and to be prepared to be overwhelmed and frustrated at times but on the other hand, expect to be taken in by the teachers and children with curiosity, affection and a peck on the cheek.



Anne Cobbett

Age 22, Taught History (Palaeolithic and Ancient Egypt)

The children at Parikrma had such enthusiasm and a spirit that would blow anyone away. I find myself unable to talk to anyone here about it as it isn't really something that can be conveyed in words. It is strange that as I sit in cold Montreal, studying at university (I went back to do environmental science), those smiles at Parikrma are still smiling and learning. They will go on to do great things and it is amazing to witness a small part of the experience. The teachers were so welcoming and helpful, as well as the administration.

Tuisha Desai

Age 24

Having worked with the children has really been great, I have been able to work with kids that really appreciate it and have received endless amounts of love all of them. These kids are hungry for love and affection, just a little attention from

anyone will put a huge smile on their faces for the rest of the day. I really hope one day life brings me back to Parikrma, to the kids!!!

Deren Temel

Age 24, Traveling English teacher

Parikrma has given me something to really care about. I know that I am tied to the school forever because those little kids all pulled the knot very tight. I loved the energy and the smiles of the kids and staff. The staff was an entirely respectable and earnest team. They are really doing a great thing with their time. It was wonderful to help them.

I had a bit of culture shock, but that was why I came to Bangalore! So I grew from the experience.

Joe Lim

Age 39, Singapore International Foundation volunteer

My first month passed very quickly. For a start, I was tasked to mentor a group of wayward children that most teachers simply do not have time for, because of the huge class size. The children I work with often have behavioural and discipline issues, or have learning disabilities such as ADHD and dyslexia. This is compounded by the fact that many of them come from a harsh environment where beatings and fights are common. I was constantly surrounded by them as they would vie for my attention, something they do not receive at home. Many a time, they deliberately get into trouble to get attention. To me, they were desperate for loving kindness and compassion.

Every single day was challenging, often due to the lack of space and funds. For instance, only students in Grades 8 to 10 have benches and tables to sit on during class. Grade 1 to 7 students attend classes by sitting and writing on the concrete floor. Brand new textbooks are a luxury and rarity, and I see many children without textbooks.

The cheerful faces of the students and staff, despite the spartan facilities at the school, made me respect the principal, teachers, volunteers and school cleaners at Parikrma. They could receive better salaries teaching and working at private schools, but they chose to stick with Parikrma because of their conviction in helping the marginalised. I hope my work helps bring a positive change in these young lives.

How to apply



If you are interested in volunteering at Parikrma, write to us at volunteer@parikrmafoundation.org, and attach the volunteer application form which you can find on our website along with your Curriculum Vitae.

We have a **selection process** on the basis of which we choose our volunteers. We look for volunteers with well-defined skill-sets suitable for each of the respective roles that they will be handling.

We feel that it is important to build a relationship with our potential volunteers. Please feel free to contact us with any questions, concerns or other inquiries.

Your position with us will be considered official once we have received your flight details and confirmed where you will be staying. If you require a letter of confirmation, email us regarding this matter and we will gladly provide one for you.

