



## Vatsalya Guidebook for Volunteers and Interns

Thank you very much for choosing Vatsalya as your short-term destination for learning and growing!

Vatsalya has several programs involving various marginalized and vulnerable sections of our population. A visit to our websites [www.vatsalya.org](http://www.vatsalya.org) and [www.anoothi.org](http://www.anoothi.org) will explain the various activities we are involved in. Kindly read thoroughly about our various programs to help you choose where you would like to contribute and learn.

We also request that you read this guidebook carefully before filling in the application form. It describes the facilities and surroundings associated with the different projects run by Vatsalya. While those who wish to work primarily with children will stay in our Children's Village, others may be living in our city accommodations. Living in both these places will have different joys as well as challenges. Please read further for these details...☺.

This guidebook also outlines Vatsalya's norms and value system, which we kindly request you to abide by during your stay with us.

Once you have read the guidebook and are convinced that you are prepared to be with Vatsalya for a stipulated time, please fill out the separate application form and send it to [Jaimala@vatsalya.org](mailto:Jaimala@vatsalya.org).

---

### Accommodation

- **Living at the children's village in Achrol (Vatsalya Udayan):** If you wish to live close to where the children live, work with them, play with them and help out in various activities, it would be best to live right on the campus. You will be living in dormitories and sharing accommodation with other volunteers. Vatsalya Udayan is a typical village, away from the hustle and bustle of a city (nearest market is 2.5 km), it has an erratic power supply BUT provides clean and safe surroundings. It is a big campus spread over 8 acres of land and has, besides residential units, a school, vocational training units such as carpentry, bakery, tailoring and computer units, cattle for milk, vegetable farms, play grounds, etc.
- **Living in Jaipur:** It's a very limited space (two beds only) used as an office during the day and a guest-house at night. It may be a desirable location if you wish to work closely with the senior members of the organization in fields such as administration, accounts, fund raising, networking, proposal development and so on. It is right in the middle of the city, providing nevertheless safe accommodation. However, it can be said to be less than comfortable from the point of view of infrastructure and privacy during the day hours.
- **Living in Ajmer:** It is the same scenario as Jaipur.

## A glimpse of what it is to work in Vatsalya Udayan

UDAYAN means ‘to rise above’ and we are happy to welcome you to our family! Through this community of caring teachers, staff and volunteers like you, we are able to create an atmosphere that allows children previously living on the streets of Jaipur an opportunity to rise above the past, relish the present and prepare for a brighter and better future. With these goals in mind, we offer this guidebook to assist you in becoming part of our community. We hope this will make your transition as smooth as possible so that you can quickly take your place as the newest member of our Udayan family! Here are some basic steps to help you get started.

### Understanding Culture

India is an old culture and here at Udayan we follow many of the traditions. We do this not only to keep these precious traditions alive but also because over the years we have seen what a positive effect this has on the residents and visitors alike. Feel free to pursue your goals whilst at Udayan, but please remember you are in a different world, a different culture with different people. It's useful to take a couple of days to familiarise yourself with the surroundings, practices, students and staff. Observe the routines and activities, ways of doing things, dress codes, etc.. Vatsalya wants you to feel at home whilst experiencing a different culture! Small simple things like asking permission before doing something which is not part of your prescribed tasks, adding a suffix “Ji” after a person’s name, being aware of the fact that life has a different pace here, appreciating the flexible nature of our routine and a loving acceptance of the unpredictability of events will make your learning much more relaxed and allow you to be part of all that is around you in a positive and enriching way... ☺

### Daily Schedule at Vatsalya Udayan

The day begins at Vatsalya Udayan as early as 5.30 am in summer and sometimes as late as 8am in winter. Three meals are served (with two additional Chai-breaks for staff only) each day. A typical schedule will include school hours, sports time, craft time, meditation and prayer in the evening and occasional meetings, outings, music and dance nights and festival celebrations depending on the time of the year. Most of the daily activities are announced by manual ringing of a loud brass bell hung at the back of the kitchen. As a general rule, you can expect the following activities to happen at the Children’s Village from morning till bed time. The table also indicates how you could join in.

<b>Activities at Vatsalya Udayan</b>	<b>How YOU could get involved</b>
Wake-up bell	Wake the children up, help them brush their teeth, wash etc.
Work in the garden / cleaning the units	Join various teams for gardening and cleaning
Bathing, getting ready for school	Bathe the little ones
Breakfast	Help serve the breakfast, help the little ones wash/dry and clean their plates, etc.
School (7am to 12pm in summer and 10.30am to 4.30pm in winter)	Join the school team/teachers. You might also choose to help in the kitchen, paint or work in the tailoring unit during these hours
Lunch, rest, personal time if desired	If you wish, you can spend the rest hours with the children, sharing your life stories or listening to theirs... ☺

Vocational training activities as per chosen trade for 14+ age group and drama, dance, music for children up to 14. (NB some activities are dependent on the availability of the trainers)	Join the appropriate team/group of children and help them develop their abilities in the respective art or craft, share your skills and knowledge, develop learning tools if you can. The possibilities for innovation here are immense as we have scarce resources to learn various skills!
Sports as per schedule	Join in the teams for playing Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Cricket, Volleyball, Football, Chess, Carom, etc.
Evening prayer and meditation	Join in for an Indian spiritual experience!
Dinner	Join in serving the food, supervise washing/drying and cleaning of plates
Self-study/music/story-telling/farewell or festival celebrations	Join in as per the occasion...☺
Bed-time bell and lights off	You might spend half an hour with the children telling them stories before retiring to bed in your own units.

Volunteers are encouraged to spend the first 2-3 days getting to know the children, staff, daily routine, surroundings and timetable. Everyone's schedule revolves around the children's welfare which is our main priority. Once you are settled, you will be assisted in assuming your agreed role and work plan.

A normal daily schedule when working from Jaipur/Ajmer will be 9.30am to 5.30pm, six days a week. In the Jaipur and Ajmer guest-houses, a curfew operates from 9.30 pm while at Vatsalya Udayan you are expected to be in the campus by 5.30 pm in winter and by 7pm in summer-time. While working from Jaipur, you have an option of spending the weekend at Udayan. This way, while you can work on your chosen project from Jaipur, you can also spend some relaxing time playing with the children in the countryside after a busy week.

### Things you may wish to bring

- ✓ Insect repellent.
- ✓ Sunscreen and sun-hat.
- ✓ Flip-flops or sandals (everyone wears these!)
- ✓ Medicines such as Immodium, plasters, etc.
- ✓ Malaria tablets, depending on advice from your doctor.
- ✓ Towels, toiletries, toilet paper, lice shampoo and oil.
- ✓ Hindi phrase book, camera, journal and notebook.
- ✓ Bank card reader (see Payment Method section).
- ✓ Note that in winter it gets very cold so bring warm winter clothes e.g. down jacket, thermals, gloves, hat, socks, boots. Possibly a hot water bottle. Whereas in summer it gets very hot!

Check with websites such as [www.timeanddate.com/weather/india](http://www.timeanddate.com/weather/india) to get an idea of what the weather will be like.

If staying at Udayan, note that the Anoothi organization has a shop on-site with a small stock of toiletries such as toilet paper, lotion etc. for you to stock up. Otherwise the village of Achrol 2.5km away has a reasonable selection of shops.

## **Sleeping arrangements at Udayan**

The children live in three dormitories: Alankrit for the youngest children, Amitasha for the older girls and Aarohan for the older boys. Volunteers and interns working at Udayan live on campus in one of two dormitories, the girls in Kinshuk and the boys in Aarohi. The children are instructed not to enter your rooms, so please do not invite any children in; however, you may go to their rooms if they invite you or you desire to do so.

## **Washing and laundry at Udayan**

Toilet blocks are located next to each dormitory. These are western-style toilets, however you must not put toilet paper down them, a bucket is provided instead. There are no baths or showers but hot water is available and you can have a body wash by taking buckets of water into a locked cubicle. Please remember to bring your own toiletries and towels. There are facilities for hand-washing your clothes and towels but please bring your own laundry products. We take advantage of the Indian sun to dry laundry and there are washing lines outside each dormitory.

## **Clothing**

Western dress is acceptable, but please avoid low-cut tops or short skirts which are not considered decent in rural areas. Rather than bringing summer clothes from home, you can purchase kurtas from the Anoothi organization here. Our beautiful products are hand-made and cost much less than you'd spend at home. They are also much more suitable for our weather than western clothes. Remember that if staying at Udayan, you may well get involved in cooking, painting or playing in the sand, so bring some clothes you are happy to get dirty!

## **Food and water**

Vegetarian meals are served thrice a day and eaten communally in the dining-room or outside eating area. After meals everyone washes their own dishes. Udayan has its own fresh water spring which supplies safe drinking water used by everyone. Please do not keep food, with the exception of fruit, in your rooms. If you have special food requirements, please let us know.

## **Smoking**

Vatsalya prohibits smoking on any of its premises. At Udayan, please only smoke in the designated river-side area. NEVER smoke in front of the children. Many have worked hard to give up.

## **Outings from Udayan**

Whilst taking care of the children can be rewarding, we are also aware of how tiring this can be. From time to time you will need a break and treat yourself to an outing. Achrol village is a 2.5 km walk from Udayan. You can buy phone time in Achrol and there are two ATMs and limited shopping. You may also want to visit Jaipur by local bus or taxi (staff can tell you cost and timetables). At times it will be possible to arrange transport through Vatsalya for which you need to speak to your coordinator and sign the register accordingly. If you wish to leave the campus overnight you must write a note in advance stating times of departure and return. This is essential as the Vatsalya staff are obliged to report all arrivals and departures to the police station.

## **Gifts**

Many people ask us if they can bring anything when they come to Vatsalya for volunteering, internship or even for a brief return visit. While we are quite content with what we have, even though it may be very inadequate and insufficient at times, additional resources do bring joy to the children and those who serve them. We would suggest that you bring whatever you can collect from friends and family, such as crayons, colour books, copies, pencils, rubbers, rulers, sheets of drawing-paper, stickers, band-aids, antiseptic lotion etc. Please do not buy them as they are much cheaper here, so bringing a donation would be much more practical. We also accept old clothes, shoes, socks, winter wear etc. that no longer fit you or your family. You may inquire regarding any specific items in your correspondence about your visit and we will let you know our current needs.

Some volunteers make strong bonds with individual staff and/or children to whom they would like to give presents. We ask you to refrain from so doing. Please give your donations directly to the organization, so that we can distribute them suitably on different occasions such as festivals, birthdays, etc. Please **DO NOT** give any gifts to the children directly. Many of the children come from a background of begging so we like to make the concept of handouts a thing of the past. We want them to grow into responsible, self-sufficient adults.

## **Anoothi**

If you want to shop for souvenirs please visit the Anoothi shop at Udayan. Anoothi helps Udayan be self-sufficient by creating and selling our own handicrafts and jewellery. In addition we stock some items that Jaipur is famous for. Not only will this save you the hassle of travelling to Jaipur, you will be supporting our children's and women's programs and taking home souvenirs and gifts that reflect your experience here.

## **Events**

India is a country where there are always celebrations. Check with us before you travel to see what events will be celebrated during your stay.

## **Sharing your culture with the children**

We appreciate if volunteers and interns can make a presentation about their country or town during their stay here. This is a great opportunity for children to learn about diverse cultures and civilizations of the world. If you are able to bring any photos or items from your home country that might enhance the experience further for the children, then please do so!

## **Internet access**

At Udayan there is no WiFi and internet is only available from the laptop in the superintendent's office. We therefore request that this is used sparingly, e.g. for emails and online banking, and that you check whether the laptop is free to use in advance. WiFi and a laptop are available at our Jaipur office.

## **Board and lodging**

We highly value your decision to help us serve people better by sharing your valuable time, knowledge and skills. While we would wish this to be an experience for you without having to worry about expenses, we are unable to accommodate you free of charge. We continue to operate with very scarce financial resources and therefore we require volunteers to cover the cost of their food and accommodation and pay **\$20 per day**. This is for the first 2 months. The charges for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> months are **\$18 per day** and beyond 4 months it is **\$15 per day**. Please note that whilst this covers your personal cost of staying at Vatsalya, it also contributes in a **small but significant** way to the operational cost of the program. In other words, when you stay with us, you will also be supporting the cost of one child living under the care and protection of Vatsalya. We would request you to deposit this money **at the end of your stay**. If your stay is more than a month, then please deposit the money at the end of each month.

For volunteers from the USA, 50% of the daily fee is tax deductible. In that case the payment can be made through Namaste India Children's Fund, a 501(c) 3 not for profit corporation. You can find the details on the following website: [www.nicfund.org](http://www.nicfund.org).

## **Payment method**

Recent changes in bank regulations are making it problematic for us to accept volunteers' payments as Rupees in cash. Our preferred method is by online bank transfer. Therefore please bring your electronic bank card reader if required to facilitate this. Otherwise please check the latest situation with Jaimala or Hitesh before you travel

## **Duration of your services as a volunteer**

Volunteers are welcome to stay as long as they wish. However, applications are accepted initially for up to eight weeks. If a volunteer wishes to extend his/her stay, a statement indicating the purpose of that extension must be submitted by the volunteer. Upon review and discussion with the volunteer, a decision will be made on the merit of the extension and reviewed monthly throughout its duration.

## **Misconduct**

Your internship/volunteer services will be liable to termination by Vatsalya if you are found to have committed misconduct, disobedience, breach of trust, misappropriation or any activity which is prejudicial to the best interests of the organization.

## **Arrival at Udayan**

The Udayan children's village can be hard to find! For their first arrival, most volunteers choose to take a taxi from Jaipur. If so doing, go to Achrol, continue approx. 1km beyond the market to the top of the gradual hill, then at the tall red and white mast cross over the carriageway (briefly travelling against the flow of traffic!) to find the track to Vatsalya at the far end of the row of stalls on the right marked by a small sign. Alternatively, get the driver to ask local villagers or phone one of the Vatsalya staff. The taxi should cost around 1,000 Rupees from central Jaipur. It is also possible to make the journey to Achrol by bus from either Jaipur or Delhi if you are confident about where to get off and what direction to walk. On arrival at Udayan itself, ask for Mr. Babu Lal or Mrs. Geeta who will show you to your room.

## **People you should know at Vatsalya**

We will end this document by introducing you to some important contacts who will be working very closely with or around you. If you are not bringing a personal phone with you, you could give any of their phone numbers to your family and friends back home in case they need to speak to you or pass on messages for you while you are working with us.

- 1. Mr. Babu Lal Gurjar:** Babu Lal is the Superintendent of Vatsalya Udayan. An extremely hard working man, Babu Lal ji has great made contributions in bringing this residential facility to its present state. He is also responsible for keeping the campus and the children safe, is in charge of transport, takes major administrative decisions and also teaches in the school. His number is **0-90017-95464**
- 2. Ms. Shubhra Sharma :** Shubhra is Vatsalya's PR and Administrative Executive and works from our Jaipur office. She is the person you may contact for arranging transportation for local trips, and a sight-seeing tour of Rajasthan, Agra and Delhi. Also, when you choose a project based in Jaipur, she will be coordinating with you and facilitating your work. Her numbers are **0-90017-95465 & 0-99833-49010**
- 3. Ms. Geeta:** Geeta is the Housekeeper of Vatsalya Udayan and also works closely with Anoothi SHGs. She is a very nice, warm and caring woman, who ensures that your rooms are ready for you when you arrive. Geeta speaks little English but will not let that be a hurdle in relating to you, working with you and helping you to have a comfortable time at Udayan.
- 4. Ms. Jaimala Gupta and Mr. Hitesh Gupta:** They are the founder trustees of Vatsalya. Both Jaimala and Hitesh are extremely friendly, warm and well travelled individuals with a very good understanding of world cultures. They might also be part of your working team depending on what your project is. However, you can also proactively reach out to them if you wish to speak to them or in case of any emergency. Hitesh can be reached on **0-98290-13718** and Jaimala on **0-98292-12019**.

**Thank you and we hope you enjoy your stay with us!**