



# **Welcome to Thriveseed**

A Newcomer's Guide to Volunteering in Delhi

Last Updated:  
8/12/2016

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to bring  
education and empowerment to  
those who need it most.

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## 1.0 Introduction

Welcome to **Thriveseed**! We are a small non-profit organization supporting women, children and the surrounding communities here in New Delhi, India.

Past volunteers have put together this welcome pack to provide you with some guidance on the types of volunteer work you could be doing, as well as to give you the run down on what to expect during your time in Delhi. Our aim is to provide you with the best and most enjoyable volunteer experience possible, whilst also giving you the opportunity to make a positive impact on all of our projects.

We graciously *thank you* for leaving the comforts of home and taking the time to support our projects.

## 1.1 History

In 2003, Sonu Kaur saw the desperate need for quality education and positive influence in her community of Baljeet Nagar. Using her training as a teacher, she began teaching underprivileged children out of her family home. As the years passed by, more children came and left her classroom, and the program continued to grow.

By 2010, Sonu began exploring new ways to make a positive impact on the lives of those around her. Her and her husband, Raju, began counseling women and couples in their community through what is now known as the Women's Empowerment Program.

Since then, with the help of our dedicated supporters, Thriveseed has added educational opportunities for the women in our program, as well as Community Development projects to help improve the daily lives of everyone in the areas we reach, in addition to continuing to educate hundreds of children with the hope of a brighter tomorrow.

In light of this, there is still much work to be done in the slums of New Delhi, and a lot of the work cannot be completed without your help. Thriveseed really values the input of our volunteers: from the impact they have on the women and children, to the support they provide Thriveseed in helping achieve its goals and aspirations.

Together we can continue to see the people of New Delhi **THRIVE**.

## 2.0 Project Summaries

### Our schools

There are four Thriveseed schools based in four different slums: Baljeet Nagar (referred to as Main School), Nehru Nagar, Pandav Nagar and Zakheera.

You will need to take a pen when teaching at any of our schools (although Sonu almost always has spares) and are more than welcome to take any other teaching materials that you think the children could benefit from.

#### 2.1 Main school (Baljeet Nagar)

**School Building:** This school is held in a third-floor apartment in Baljeet Nagar, the most developed slum we work in. Temperature will be weather dependent as there is no air conditioning or heating, but it is inside. This is also where the volunteer apartment is located.

**Teacher:** This school is taught by Miss Babita. She is 19 years old and comes from Baljeet Nagar herself. She is currently taking a teacher training course.

**Students:** There are currently roughly 12 students who come on a regular basis, but this number will increase as more people get to know that the school is being held in Baljeet Nagar again. These students are very polite and well-behaved and are generally quite quiet. Their ages range from 6 to 14 years old. Many of these students also attend a government school, so they sometimes wish to do their homework in these sessions. There is a range of abilities, but in general the children here are the most advanced of all the students.

**Appropriate Dress:** You can dress comfortably although you should still cover your shoulders and legs.

**Hours:** 16:00 - 18:00 Mon - Sat

#### 2.2 Nehru Nagar

**School Building:** This is the biggest of the school spaces in the slums. Thriveseed rents a room in someone's home. This room can get very, very hot in the summer, so take plenty of water. As the classroom is inside, there are books kept here and there are also educational posters on the walls. In order to get to Nehru Nagar, you will have to walk over a heap of rubbish and navigate

around a lot of mud (particularly when the water has just been delivered) so it might be worth wearing shoes suitable for these conditions. The students take their shoes off in the classroom, but you do not have to do this.

**Teacher:** This school is taught by Miss Pooja. She is 20 years old and lives in Nehru Nagar slum. She is currently taking a course in design. She is involved in the Women's Empowerment Project in Nehru Nagar slum too and if you wish to buy a sari, she will fit you for it and co-ordinate its making. Occasionally her younger brother Angoush will come to collect you to go to Nehru Nagar slum.

**Students:** The students here are the liveliest of all the schools. They range in age from about 5 to 14, but some of the students sometimes bring their younger siblings, so it's not uncommon to have a couple of babies in the class as well. This is probably the school with the most students who come on a regular basis, so the class can often be split into an older group and a younger group which makes teaching a bit easier. The students in the older group are relatively advanced in ability while the younger group are still focusing on learning the alphabet and how to count.

**Appropriate Dress:** You should dress conservatively. Cover everything from your shoulders to your ankles.

**Hours:** 15:30 - 16:30 Mon, Wed, Fri; 15:30 - 17:00 Tues, Thurs

## 2.3 Pandav Nagar

**School Building:** This school is held in a small courtyard in front of someone's house. It's outside and can be a bit of a squash when lots of students turn up. The students sit on the floor and the teachers and volunteers sit on a bench. The students take their shoes off here too, but you do not have to. There are stones balanced across the open sewage system that you have to cross in order to get to the school building. Occasionally they can be unstable, so you may end up getting wet feet from time to time! Sonu will always accompany you when going to this school.

**Teacher:** This school is taught by Mrs Sonia. She is older than the other teachers (married and with children). Private troubles within her home mean that occasionally she cannot attend school. She comes from a community not far from Pandav Nagar, so knows how to deal with the students in language and actions that they understand.

**Students:** The children here come from very artistic families, so tend to learn visually. This is the school where the students are the most violent towards one another and the community

which holds the most traditional view towards the role of women. This is one of Thriveseed's newest schools, so we are still learning how to operate in this community without causing conflict. Many of the students here are still at the learning-the-alphabet phase of their education, although there are a few students who are more advanced.

**Appropriate Dress:** This is a very traditional slum, so you will need to dress conservatively. You should cover everything from your shoulders down to your feet and you'll need a kurta or shirt that covers your bum. You may feel more comfortable wearing a scarf too.

**Hours:** 16:00 - 17:30 Mon - Fri (on Friday the children practise yoga rather than their academic work)

## 2.4 Zakheera

**School Building:** This school is held in a very small courtyard opposite the teacher's house. The children sit on the floor in the courtyard and the teachers and volunteers sit on small stools just in front of the teacher's house. Sonu will always accompany you to this school and you will probably go on her scooter. You do have to cross the railway lines, but visibility is really good and you will see any trains from a long way off.

**Teacher:** This school is taught by Miss Rajkumari. She can never attend the teachers' meetings as she is not allowed to leave Zakheera. Luckily she is allowed to take a trip out of Zakheera once a day to attend university.

**Students:** This is probably the most deprived slum that Thriveseed works in and you will be able to see that in the students' clothing. They are, however, very respectful and always welcoming. They don't make excessive noise and always do what the teacher asks. Most of the students here are still learning basic English and maths, although there are some who have a surprisingly advanced level.

**Appropriate Dress:** This is a very traditional slum, so you will need to dress conservatively. You should cover everything from your shoulders down to your feet and you'll need a kurta or shirt that covers your bum. It is worth wearing a scarf here to cover your mouth when on the scooter and near the railway.

**Hours:** 16:00 - 17:00ish Mon - Fri

## 2.5 Women's Empowerment Program

The Women's Empowerment Program takes place in **Nehru Nagar** and **Pandav Nagar** slums. The project teaches the women of the slums many skills such as sewing, knitting, craft making, candle decoration, and even how to mix body lotions. We have also held counseling sessions with Sonu and the women in the past where they have discussed how to deal with domestic violence and the importance of education for themselves and their children (especially daughters).

	<b>Nehru Nagar</b>	<b>Pandav Nagar</b>
<b>Teacher</b>	Miss Pooja	Miss Komal
<b>Hours</b>	Mon, Wed, Fri 16:30 - 17:00	14:00 - 16:00 every day

Here is a list of products that the women have learnt how to make. They tend not to produce them when there are no orders as there is no real platform for selling these items, but they will happily make them for you or anyone you know who wishes to buy them:

- Handbags, strawberry bags
- Knitted hats, jumpers and scarves
- Stuffed toys
- Face cream
- Toy elephant, camel and peacock hanging ornaments
- Wire hair bands
- Babies' shoes, kurtas, sarees, trousers
- Candles

## 2.6 Community Development Program

This project happens only when the funds are available. As the title suggests, we aim to develop the slums in order to improve the well-being of everybody living there. Most significantly, in the past we have raised funds to build toilets in the slum of Nehru Nagar. These toilets made the most notable positive impact on the women of the community. Especially when their menstrual cycles begin, these toilets provide a private, clean place for them to go. We have also delivered tankers of water to the people in Baljeet Nagar slum during times of drought in the very hot Indian summer. In the future we hope to do more outreach work such as this.



### 3.0 Future Goals & Continuing Development

Here at Thriveseed, we are always striving for a better tomorrow.

Currently, we are working towards opening four primary schools (nursery through 5<sup>th</sup> grade) in the four slums where we already operate our humble schools. In theory, these schools would have their very own building, with toilets, computers, uniforms and books for the children, and even free lunch every day. Before this, we want to open one main elementary school where our older students can go to continue their education beyond fifth grade. This school would have many rooms, teachers, and resources for the children to begin learning at levels equal to those of children living in middle-class Indian families.

All of this future development is in the faith that our students will use the knowledge and skills we equip them with to begin making positive changes within their communities. This will include advocating for women's rights, greater care for the environment, more ambitious career choice, and beginning to alleviate themselves from the cycle of poverty.

We understand that future generations will be the ones to feel our impact most, but every small success story keeps us motivated to continue our work here in the slums of Delhi.

### 4.0 Social Media & Administrative Accounts

During your time as a Thriveseed volunteer, we ask that you help manage a few of our social media accounts. Once you have arrived and settled in Delhi, just ask Sonu for the logins and passwords for these accounts and you can begin posting!

Note: If you receive an important notification (such as a private message) on any of the Thriveseed social media accounts, be sure to notify Sonu, as the notification alert will disappear after you have opened it.

#### **WEBSITE**

The Thriveseed website ([www.thriveseed.org](http://www.thriveseed.org)) changes as our projects grow. If there is a significant shift in how our projects are going, it is important to try and update the website as necessary so that we can accurately represent our organization to the online community.

#### **FACEBOOK**

Our biggest platform for updating our supporters on our progress and reaching new audiences is our Facebook page. Daily posts should be made by volunteers regarding the activities of the

day in Thriveseed or a specific topic Sonu will bring to your attention. Please hop over to [www.facebook.com/thriveseed](http://www.facebook.com/thriveseed) for examples of these types of posts. Photographs are always an eye-catching addition, so remember to bring a camera to the schools.

### **GMAIL**

Occasionally, Sonu will ask volunteers to respond to e-mails from prospective volunteers via the Thriveseed Gmail account – [thriveseed@gmail.com](mailto:thriveseed@gmail.com).

### **INSTAGRAM & TWITTER**

In general, Sonu manages these accounts for Thriveseed on her own. However, if you have any ideas for these platforms please let us know!

### **FACEBOOK: THRIVESEED ACCESSORIES UK**

This account is actually managed by a previous volunteer (Stephanie) who continues to sell goods made by the women in our Women's Empowerment Program. It is worth visiting her Facebook page to see photos of the types of things our women create. If you will be flying from India to the UK after your stay, consider taking some objects back with you for Steph to sell.

## **5.0 Before Arriving in India**

There are a few things you should have sorted before purchasing your flight to India, which we have outlined for you in the following sections.

Tip: When packing **clothing** for your trip, keep in mind the values placed on modesty in many parts of India, especially when in the slums where we operate (see sections 2.1-2.4, under 'Appropriate Dress', for more information).

## **5.1 Injections & Medications**

Several months before your trip to India, we suggest you visit a health practitioner to discuss the various injections and prescription medications you should receive. After that, there are a few non-prescription medications that previous volunteers have found very useful:

- Probiotic Pills – to boost your immune system and combat illness before it strikes
- Electrolyte Pills or Powders – in the event you do get ill, these can help keep your body hydrated
- Anti-constipation & Anti-diarrheal Pills – every person's body reacts differently to India's distinctive cuisine, be prepared for either situation

- Antiseptic Cream – the shower water in India can irritate open cuts or sores, so a topical antiseptic will help prevent skin infections
- Mosquito Repellent – it is important to be aware of the dangers of mosquito bites during your stay, so bring along a topical bug-repellent to put on your feet and clothing whenever you visit the slums
- Inhaler (if you use one) - Breathing problems can be aggravated by the Delhi smog
- Pain & Headache Medications – bring as you feel necessary for your needs

## 5.2 Obtaining an Indian Travel Visa

Be aware, this can be a long and tricky process, so try not to leave it until the last minute!

As well, the Indian travel visa application process varies from country-to-country, so do your research and choose the option that suits your trip best. We have made some suggestion below to help you kick-start this endeavor:

### Tourist Visa

The easiest visa to obtain for most nationalities is a **tourist travel visa**: this process can entail visits to Indian consulate offices, filling out many forms, getting photos taken, mailing of application papers and your passport, and more. However, it is possible to obtain one for several months of travel in India.

### E-Tourist Visa

Eligible for select countries, this visa is valid for a short amount of time (about 30 days) but is reasonably simple to obtain online.

### Employment Visa

While it is suggested that volunteers in India obtain an **employment travel visa**, it is an expensive and cumbersome task. However, this type of visa is often valid for many months of travel in India at one time. If you decide to apply for an employment visa, you will need an official invitation letter which we will be happy to provide.

If you have any questions further regarding visas, please do not hesitate to contact the Thriveseed team at [thriveseed@gmail.com](mailto:thriveseed@gmail.com). We hope to see you soon!

## 5.3 Travel Insurance

It is highly recommended that you take out travel insurance before you arrive in India. A cheap and easy way to do this is to buy an international volunteer card, which must be done from your home country. For more information, follow this link: <https://www.volunteercard.com/>

## 5.4 Useful Resources to Bring Along

There are a few things you may want to consider packing in addition to life's essentials.

### **TEACHING MATERIALS**

Multi-coloured pens, a small notebook, and songs/games appropriate for beginner ESL students will all prove very useful to you in the classroom.

We encourage you to think about your role in relation to the children, and to establish relationships based around a practical involvement such as teaching English or another practical skill. Think about what you could offer: can you run an art workshop? Organise some games? Teach sewing or music? Many tasks do not need specialist skills, just a willingness to have a go.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

In the past, many volunteers have found their personal laptops and good-quality cameras to be very useful for completing online tasks for Thriveseed (such as making daily Facebook posts). However, a simple cell phone will do the trick in any situation.

As well, *WhatsApp* (a messaging app available free of charge for most mobile devices) is very popular in India and amongst the Thriveseed team, so downloading and subscribing to this service is suggested.

### **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

Upon arrival, Thriveseed will request one paper copy of your passport photo page, as well as your Indian travel visa. There is a printing shop nearby that will do it for a very low cost (see section 5.2). However, extra copies and pre-printed flight itineraries may prove useful during your stay in India.

### **GIFTS FOR THE COMMUNITIES**

We would first like to say that Thriveseed asks for no material gifts or donations from our volunteers. However, if you would like to bring some small, useful items for our women and children, we have made some suggestions of the types of things that are most valuable and useful to them:

- Notebooks (A4 or A5)
- Pens
- Pencils, sharpeners, erasers
- Colored pencils, markers, crayons
- Small toys
- Clothing for all sizes (from baby to adult) – keep in mind that these communities honor modesty, and the winter months here get surprisingly cold
- Fabrics, yarn, thread, buttons

Above all, come with lots and lots of enthusiasm! The only thing we ask of our volunteers is that they arrive with goodness in their hearts and positive thoughts in their minds.

## 6.0 Life in New Delhi

If you have never been to India before the culture shock can be quite jarring, but you are *never* alone here at ThriveSeed! In the next few pages, you will find a collection of useful information on what you will be doing within our organization, where to find your daily needs, how to travel around the city, and learn to experience India's rich culture like a pro.

### 6.1 Volunteer Accommodation

There are two types of volunteer accommodation available, or you can choose to find your own accommodation. Female volunteers may choose the homestay experience. This costs 100AUD per person per week which must be paid on arrival and you will stay with an Indian family (maybe even with Sonu), which is a great way to be immersed in Indian culture. You will be provided with two meals a day from your host family. Accommodation can be modest, with Indian-style toilet and shower facilities. At Sonu's home the facilities include a western-style toilet and shower and Internet access.

Sonu's home is located in a middle-class suburb in West Patel Nagar, close to the slums where the schools are located. You will be sharing the house with her and her family – husband, Raju, and son, Jolly – as well as other volunteers occasionally; Raju owns a business which keeps him busy in the afternoons and Jolly attends school early in the mornings. Sonu and her family are Sikh, so no meat, eggs, alcohol, or tobacco should be brought into their home.

For male volunteers and/or couples, it is also possible to stay in the school building in Baljeet Nagar. You will be provided with two meals a day, like in the homestay. There is also a western

toilet and shower. As this is a relatively new accommodation choice, there is currently no Internet access. However, Sonu hopes to install computers with Internet access soon.

## 6.2 Rules for Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of the Thriveseed family and we enjoy sharing our culture with volunteers from around the world. However, please be mindful that in having contact with the children, a volunteer's role is not to parent the children or be their best friend. Think about the relationships you had with your teachers at school. The role of volunteers is to be 'friendly' with the kids but not 'friends'. Although we understand that the children are infectious and you may become fond of them, we ask that you remain professional and remain aware that you will be returning home, leaving these children behind. Please do not promise to come back as chances are you may not and this would leave children feeling disappointed and let down.

There are also a few rules that we ask that volunteers respect:

- No Smoking or drinking alcohol in front of the children
- Absolutely no drugs anywhere anytime
- No outside visitors are allowed to Thriveseed or to the home-stay. Please do not bring visitors in (this includes tuk-tuk drivers, people making deliveries and friends)
- No gifts to be given to individual children. It is inappropriate and unfair to single out children in this way, and can create conflict and hurt for the children
- Please respect the other volunteers living at the home-stay by keeping the noise down after 10pm
- Be respectful of Indian customs and traditions by dressing appropriately: cover your shoulders and do not wear short skirts
- Do not kiss or hold hands in public or when in the home-stay accommodation

These rules are put in place to protect the children, volunteers, staff and Thriveseed. If these rules are not followed strict disciplinary action will be taken and if serious misconduct has taken place then volunteers will be asked to leave.

## 6.3 Typical Daily Schedule

During your time with Thriveseed, you will most likely be staying either in Sonu's family home, at a nearby home-stay or at our school in Baljeet Nagar.

Regardless of where you stay, most of your weekdays will be very similar in structure:

<b>9:30 – 10:30</b>	<b>Wake-up</b> <b>Served breakfast</b>
<b>10:30 – 15:00</b>	<b>Free time</b> - use this time to explore tourist attractions, go shopping, prepare for classes, or just hang out <b>Lunch*</b> * You are expected to make or purchase your own lunch. Fear not! In the next few pages you can find some restaurant and food shop suggestions from previous volunteers
<b>15:00 – 18:30</b>	<b>School time</b> - this time is reserved for volunteering - some of the schools begin at 3:00, others at 4:00, and end at different times of the day
<b>18:30 – 20:30</b>	<b>Free time</b>
<b>20:30 – 23:00</b>	<b>Served dinner</b> <b>Lights-out</b>

## 6.4 Purchasing Food, Water, Toiletries, Etc.

There are a lot of shops very near to Sonu's home where you can purchase your daily needs: *walk out of Sonu's back door and turn right, then a quick left will send you towards the main road where many of the shops described below can be found.*

Note: Many things in India's shops will have a fixed price printed on the package (check near the manufacturing/expiry dates, the barcode, on the bottom or near the lid). Remember that in any case, 10 or 20INR may sound like a lot, but it is not worth fighting over.

	<i>Shop Name</i>	<i>Sample Products &amp; Prices</i>
<b>Fresh Fruits &amp; Vegetables</b>	Street Vendors / Fruit Carts	bananas – 60INR per 12 oranges – 80INR per kilo apples – 100INR per kilo Note: these prices vary with the seasons
<b>Snack Foods and Toiletries</b>	Gurbachan shop Arora Milk	- cookies, crackers, spreads, instant noodles, juice, soda, water bottles, etc. - toilet paper roll, hand sanitizer, tooth paste, body soap,

	Products	shampoo, etc.
<b>Western Comforts</b>	Oriental Fruits Mart (Connaught place E block)	Lots of imported foods and toiletries that you will recognize. Reasonably expensive, but worth it if you need a reminder of home
<b>Stationery</b>	Flair Pens	- notebooks, drawing paper, pens, pencils, etc.
<b>DRINKING WATER</b>	20L drinking water bottles can be delivered to Sonu's home for you. You can use this to refill smaller water bottles, wash fruit and brush your teeth. It costs 165INR for the first bottle and 50INR for every refill afterwards. If you are out and about and need water you can buy 1L bottles of mineral water (safe for drinking) for around 20INR.	

## 6.5 Restaurants and Services

### Restaurants

<b>Dwarka</b>	Indian, South Indian and Chinese cuisine	Take the tuk-tuk or cycle rickshaw and ask for Dwarka restaurant Main Market
<b>Naivedyam</b>	South Indian	Take the Metro to Rajendra place, then take a cycle rickshaw to Naivedyam
<b>Domino's</b>	Pizza and sides	Order online directly to Sonu's home. International cards not accepted online, so pay cash on delivery
<b>Big Chill</b>	Italian cuisine (pizza and pasta)	Take the Metro to Khan market

### Photocopying and Printing

Go to **Arora Typing Centre** for all your printing and photocopying needs. 1 copy of your passport and visa will cost just 2INR.

### Purchasing an Indian SIM

You can purchase an Indian sim card from the Lal Mandir mobile shop, Sunjay electrician, which is at the entrance to Baljeet Nagar. We recommend using Vodaphone as it offers cheap rates, around 1INR per minute for phone calls to Indian Sims.

### ATMs



There is an ICICI ATM opposite the Arora Milk Products store (up the main road from Sonu's house). Otherwise if you turn left at the main road (past the fruit vendors) there is another ICICI ATM on the right after the first crossroads. ICICI bank accepts international cards.

## Laundry

Your clothes washing can be done for you on the weekends by Sonu's housekeeper, for 100INR. If you are only with Thriveseed for a short period of time, we ask you do not bother with washing as it is necessary to save water where possible (especially in the summer months).

## 6.6 Health & Safety

### **WATER**

Always drink bottled water. Only drink tap water if it has been boiled and be careful not to accidentally swallow any water when washing or showering.

### **FOOD**

Be very careful when eating food from street stalls and restaurants as this is where you can get sick. The standard of food hygiene is not the same in this part of the world as it is in your home country. Eating meat can be a problem, as you will not know whether the meat has been sitting out in the sun all day or is fresh. Be careful eating too much dairy from Lassie, yogurt and chai or other dairy products as foreigners also have a tendency to get ill from these types of things. Many people travel around India for months on end without ever getting sick, but many others will fall ill, so be careful and use common sense.

If you do get ill and it doesn't go away within a few days, you may need some antibiotics. Sonu takes her volunteers to a trusted doctor who knows her well. His name is Doctor Anand and he runs a practice near Sonu's house.

### **STAYING SAFE AT NIGHT**

There is a 20:30 curfew at Sonu's home. Please respect this as it is for your safety. India is not always safe for female travelers. Please follow advice given on websites such as Lonely Planet and Smarter Travel and use common sense when it comes to how to dress and how to act. We recommend that you stay vigilant at all times and if you have any concerns, please talk to Sonu.

## 6.7 Transit & Travel

### **WALKING**

Walking around New Delhi can be very confusing at first, but fear not, you will get to know your routes eventually! Do not be afraid to ask strangers for directions, but try to find women or officials to ask and never get sucked into a “tour guide” scheme.

To be safe, keep one hand on your bag when walking, especially in extremely crowded areas. Remember, traffic laws are rarely enforced here, so always be aware of the bike and car sounds closest to you.

### **BICYCLE RICKSHAW, TUK-TUK AND AUTO RICKSHAW**

Rickshaws and tuk-tuks are a great way to travel short distances that are slightly too far to walk, but too remote to take the Metro.

**Bicycle rickshaw:** The bicycle rickshaws in West Patel Nagar generally take a maximum of two passengers. The ride from Shadipur metro station to Lal Mandir or to Patel Nagar market costs 20INR for 1 passenger or 30INR for two. The bicycle rickshaws in other places can take more passengers (maximum four). For example, in Old Delhi you should pay around 50INR for journeys between the metro station (Chawri Bazar or Chandni Chowk), Jama Masjid mosque, the Red Fort (Lal Quila) and the spice market. As this is a touristy area, they drivers may try to charge you more, so negotiate the price before getting in.

**Tuk-tuk** (up to 4 passengers): These will take you from Lal Mandir (outside Sonu's home) to Shadipur metro station or to Patel Nagar market for 10INR per person. Hand over the correct amount on arrival.

**Auto rickshaw** (yellow and green; up to 3 passengers): The auto rickshaw ride will cost varying amounts depending on the distance you are travelling. There are set fares, although often rickshaw drivers don't like to use the meter. It is usually advisable to take the metro to the closest station to your destination and then take an auto rickshaw. This way, you shouldn't ever need to pay more than 50INR for the auto rickshaw journey.

### **METRO**

New Delhi has an extensive Metro system which is efficient and easy to use once you learn the basics.

The station closest to Sonu's home is called *SHADIPUR*. To get there you can take a tuk-tuk (10INR per person) or walk.

Sonu may have a Metro card that a past volunteer has left behind for you to use. Otherwise, these can be purchased at the Metro station (after going through security). The Metro card makes Metro travel extremely quick and easy, so it's definitely worth having one!

The cost of trips on the Metro are based on the distance you go, but extremely affordable. For example, a trip to *Connaught Place* (where an underground market, ATMs, many western restaurants and stores can be found) will cost only 10INR.

To get to the city centre you'll need platform 1 (direction Vaishali or Noida City Centre). There is a women only coach at the front of the train which you may feel more comfortable in than the other carriages which are predominantly full of men.

To get back to Sonu's home, get back on the [blue](#) line heading towards *Dwarka Sector 21*. Once at *Shadipur Station*, be sure to exit from *Gate No. 4*! You can then take a cycle rickshaw back to "IalMandir" or "29 Block" (20INR per person or 30INR for two). Either should drop you back at the entrance to Sonu's neighborhood.

## 6.8 Sight-seeing in Delhi

Monuments, parks and villages to visit:

Akshardham – an impressively large and intricately detailed temple, free to enter and easy to access via Metro. No cameras, cell phones, or large bags are allowed inside

Hauz khas Village – just a short rickshaw ride from the Metro, this small village is refreshingly developed featuring cozy chai shops, night-life bars, a deer park, and some cit ruins to explore

Lotus Temple – resembling the architecture of the Sydney Opera House, this impressive structure is a striking addition to the New Delhi horizon. Free to enter but advisable not to go at the weekend.

Lodi Gardens - a peaceful escape from bustling city life, this park is a great place to chill out at the weekends or before school. It is free and easy to get to with the metro and a short auto rickshaw journey.

Red Fort (Lal Quila) - an immense fort in Old Delhi which oozes India's history. 500INR to enter and an extra 100INR if you want an audio guide

Jama Masjid (Mosque) – a spacious mosque in the heart of Old Delhi which is free to enter, it contains a tower you can climb for just 100INR for a panoramic view of the city like you have never seen it before. But, leave your cameras and cell phones at home or else a charge of 300INR applies upon entry

Spice Market in Old Delhi – a bicycle rickshaw ride away from Chandi Chowk market, go here for shop-after-shop selling fresh ground Indian spices such as cumin, turmeric, spicy paprika, and all kinds of masala

Humayun's Tomb - 500INR entry may seem a lot, but this tomb is definitely worth a visit. It combines green open spaces with beautiful architecture and history. Take the metro and a short auto rickshaw ride afterwards

## 6.9 Weekend Getaways

Thriveseed encourages its volunteers to get out there and explore the beautiful experiences India has to offer!

*Train & Bus Tickets:* If you want to venture out of Delhi for day trips or visits to other cities, you will require a bus or train ticket. There is an International Tourist Office in New Delhi Railway Station which specializes in providing tickets to foreigners. This service is 100% legitimate and can be easier than doing it all yourself.

*Tour Planners:* If you want a tour that is a bit more personalized and care-free, then Thriveseed is here to help. We have several past students who now operate tour companies. These students have comprehensive knowledge of the places you would like to see, offer full or flexible itineraries, are available to help you any way they can during your tour, and so much more. Please let Sonu know if you are interested in these touring opportunities.

Past volunteers would definitely suggest the famous Taj Mahal in Agra, mighty Amber fort in Jaipur, spiritual and scenic Rishikesh, and grandiose Golden Temple in Punjab for weekend getaways.

## 7.0 Staff & Contact Information

### **Management Team**

**Mrs Sonu Kaur:** Founder and project manager of Thriveseed, Sonu's passion for helping people in the slums of Delhi is infectious. She hosts many of the female volunteers in her home, and co-ordinates all volunteers in India.

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**Skype:** sonu.kaur.bijral

**Website:** www.thriveseed.org

**Facebook:** <https://m.facebook.com/iamsonu.kaur>

**Mr David Umfahrer:** The chairman of Thriveseed Australia, David sometimes responds to emails from potential volunteers. He also manages the PayPal account and makes sure any donations arrive safely to Thriveseed India.

### **Thriveseed Teachers**

**Miss Babita:** Main school (Baljeet Nagar)

**Miss Pooja:** Nehru Nagar school and Women's Empowerment Program

**Miss Sonia:** Pandav Nagar school

**Miss Rajkumari:** Zakheera school

**Miss Komal:** Pandav Nagar Women's Empowerment Program