



## WHY PAY TO BE A VOLUNTEER?

Prospective volunteers are surprised to learn that many project- and intermediate organizations (like AMAIDI Volunteering in India), charge their volunteers a fee to participate. At *first*, this can seem ridiculous — Why should you pay money to work for free? Aren't you already forgoing income you could be making?

Here are a few things to keep in mind while trying to understand why the vast majority of programs charge international volunteers a fee:

1. The local organizations and projects with which you volunteer, have *limited resources* and are seldom able to subsidize your trip or cover the costs of hosting you, including housing, feeding and transporting you, among numerous other things. If they did have the financial resources to pay an international volunteer, it would almost certainly be more beneficial and cost-effective to hire a local person instead, someone who already knows the language and culture and is likely to stick around.
2. Identifying appropriate host organizations overseas and working with them is time-consuming, takes resources, and requires an experienced and professional staff for intermediate organizations, like AMAIDI. The costs of recruiting volunteers, producing literature, answering the phone, sending mailings and developing a website, are significant.

The fee you pay to AMAIDI is a *service fee*, covering:

- a) Volunteer placement with one of our project partners, including all the coordination, in-person visits and communication necessary with each local organization.
- b) In-country cultural introduction program with a basic Tamil language course, excursions to nearby points of interest, special events and discussions with local youth representatives.
- d) Professional, locally-based staff to provide orientation, supervision and guidance throughout your stay.
- e) Important documents, including subject related information, guidelines, orientation information, and in-country travel- and other information material.

If you still doubt the sanity of the above, feel supported by the words of the British scholar and novelist C.S. Lewis (1898-1963): “We're not necessarily doubting that God will do the best for us; we are wondering how painful the best will turn out to be”

Cheers!

Camille/AMAIDI