



## Associazione Progetto Calcutta ONLUS

The application form is available at  
<http://www.calcuttaproject.org>

These pages include everything you need to know about the Calcutta Project.

If you'll be selected to join our project in Kolkata for a period of 5 weeks (if not otherwise specified). You must arrive at the end of the previous month, in order to start the monthly activity from the very beginning, to overlap with the volunteers that are already in Calcutta from the previous month and to have a good introduction on the project's activities and Calcutta life. From 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of the month is fine, if you arrive before there will be no problem; please do not arrive later than the 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous month..

**If you'll be selected you'll be asked to pay** Pay 150 € per month to the following bank account.

**Name of the bank: Banca Popolare Etica (branch of Milano, Pzza S Tecla 5)**

**Number of the bank account: 108504**

**Name of the bank account: Progetto Calcutta ONLUS**

Italians	Non Italians
<b>CIN = O (vocale)</b>	<b>EUR IBAN IT25 O(vocal) 050 1801 6000 0000 0108</b>
<b>ABI = 05018</b>	<b>504</b>
<b>CAB 01600</b>	<b>BIC code (or swift code) ccrt it 2t 84a</b>
<b>Account n 000000108504</b>	<b>Through "Casse Centrali Trentine" Bank</b>

The 150 € that you pay will be used for

- your lodging in the Calcutta guest-house for the 5 weeks period
- organizing expenses in Italy
- donation to the Project in India (go to [www.calcuttaproject.org](http://www.calcuttaproject.org) for further details)
- you'll receive a T shirt of the project in India (if available)

### Flight ticket:

- Book your flight as soon as possible: you must arrive at the end of the previous month, in order to start the monthly activity from the very beginning, to overlap with the volunteers that are already in Calcutta from the previous month and to have a good introduction on the project's activities and Calcutta life. From 28<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> of the month is fine, if you arrive before there will be no problem; please do not arrive later than the 31<sup>st</sup>.
- An Indian volunteer usually comes to meet you at the airport (you will have to pay a petrol fee to IIMC: 350 Rupees that can be increased depending on your arrival



situation). When you'll arrive to IIMC you'll be asked to pay a 100 Rs registration fee and a refundable key deposit of 500 Rs. 1 Euro corresponds approximately 50 Rupies

#### **Visa for India :**

Contact the Indian Embassy in your country to get a short stay tourist visa. In Italy the VISA is granted in one day and costs 50 €.

#### **Health Insurance:**

No insurance is provided by the organization. We strongly advise you to get your own travel health insurance. The organization has no responsibility whatsoever.

#### **Vaccination and Prophylaxis**

Contact your doctor or a tropical institute at least 6 weeks before departure. International guidelines suggest: tetanus, diphtheria, typhoid fever, hepatitis A and B vaccination, and strongly suggest malaria prophylaxis (proguanil and chloroquine)

#### **What to bring**

In case your luggage arrives late it is useful having an extra T-Shirt and a toothbrush in your hand luggage. You will need your own bed-sheets (or you can buy beautiful Indian ones) and in winter (November to February) a sleeping bag. It is better not to wear white clothes because they get dirty very soon. Any way, you can buy wonderful Indian clothes. You do not need medical clothes for the work in the Clinic, but you need long trousers. Other useful items: first aid kit, torch, hand disinfectant, mosquito repellent, sun lotion, money belt, walkman with some cassettes... Things that can be useful for the project are: antibiotic drugs (for example ampicillin), ORS (oral dehydration salt), needles (little one for children will be useful) for injection, bandages, anti-mycotic lotions, medical equipment or disinfectants. Bring something for the project **just in case you can have it for free** because it is possible to buy cheap drugs in India and for this reason **a small donation in money is more effective! If you collect some money before going to kolkata or after coming back please send it to the above specified bank account and specify how should it be used.**

Bring a passport photo (to make your file for the project).

#### **Culture shock syndrome:**

You will face an oriental culture, new and interesting life-styles. Be prepared because life is hard, there is a lot of poverty and pollution. India is a different world, the weather is terribly hot and wet in summer, things do not always go as you planned and you must be self-sufficient. Calcutta is huge and very crowded, but people are nice and friendly and there is a lot to see, so you will not get bored. We hope you will have a wonderful experience as it was for us.

**Indian Time:** Greenwich Meridian Time + 5 hours and 30 minutes.

#### **C ) ARRIVAL TO CALCUTTA**

##### **General remarks:**

At the Airport you will have to fill in the Immigration Card.

Then change some money at the airport money-exchange, and if you have previously communicated your arrival, there will be an Indian volunteer waiting for you just outside the airport, with your name written on a piece of paper. Check carefully and wait a little bit before thinking they didn't come to pick you up.



Pay attention to avoid all the primary hazards of Calcutta (simply ignore illegal taxi drivers and, if someone asks you if it is your first time in India, please say it is not).

## **D) YOUR STAY**

### **Rest House :**

We've recently modified the location of the Rest House. It is located in KOLKATA Southern district "Tollygunge", 45 minutes from the Indoor Clinic, which is in the countryside South of Calcutta. A smaller Rest House is located very close to this one. Volunteers could also temporary stay in the Indoor Clinic in the countryside.

The Rest house, compared to Indian standards, is a nice and friendly 3 floor building with open space ground floor & open roof terrace, a kitchen. In the past we had some problems with students not properly cleaning the rooms therefore please do your best to keep the place clean because it will be your home for one month and someone else will come after your departure. Avoid having mice or rats by keeping food safely in the fridge or cupboard.

There is a full time (24 hours) care taker and one cleaner who will always help you but to make your staying comfortable please cooperate with this people. You must be back to the Rest House before 11 pm.

Never invite any friend without permission of Dr Sujit or Barnali.

Please never give directly tip or money to the keeper and cleaner.

No alcoholic drink is allowed in the Guest House.

In the Rest house you will find a lot of material and information about your work left by former volunteers (to leave something after your stay please ask Barnali) as well as a India guidebooks, an English/Bengali dictionary, a basic book of tropical medicine "Where there is no doctor", some maps of Calcutta and other two notebooks entitled "Information about Calcutta" and "Information about the Project". Feel free to use this material but you are not allowed to take it away! You will have to observe some rules drawn by previous volunteers. Remember always to close the doors and check they are locked, there are thieves even in India. Do not wonder about noise every two hours during the night this is produced by the night guards taking care of the area. You will share the Rest House with some other volunteers. You'll have a bed either in the main Rest House or the smaller one that is located close to it or to the Indoor clinic. Remember that if there is overcrowding you have the right to have a bed. If this happens please politely inform Dr Sujit or his wife Barnali of the situation and they'll take care of it immediately. If the problem persists, please contact [af@calcuttaproject.org](mailto:af@calcuttaproject.org) . If you intend to stay longer than the period you were selected for you will not stay in the rest house without special permission from IIMC authority. There are two major possibilities to reach the Indoor Clinic from the Rest House in about 45 minutes.

### **Public transport:**

It is easy to get around by bus (avoid them during rush hours), auto-rickshaw, tram, metro (Mon-Sat: 8.15-21.30, Sun: 15.00-21.30; the only one in India, clean, not crowded, takes about 20 min to the centre) and taxi (check that the meter is on and prefer elder taxi-drivers).

### **Food and Shopping:**

Food is not included in the fee, but life cost in India is cheap. Lunch for 10Rp (with egg or fish for 15Rp) will be provided at the Indoor Clinic. Once in India please do not eat fresh vegetables, eat only cooked food, drink only mineral water or soft drinks. Remember the easy rule: cook it, peel it or leave it! Before eating grapes they should be carefully washed in a 0.1% solution of Potassium Permanganate available in any Indian pharmacy. In the area of Tollygunge and Garia there are fruit markets and plenty of shops, where you can buy everything, so do not worry if you have forgotten something at home.

Laundry is cheap and their work is very good or you can wash your clothes by yourself. There's a little supermarket near Tollygunge Metro station, on the way from Garia: there you can find some Indian foods and above all European foods, even if they're not cheap! In the same place there's also an internet café where you can have a membership if you go often.

**Communication:**

Phone: There are many Phone and Fax shops indicated by the sign STD/ISD/PCO. Connection is usually good and some of these shops even have call-back functions.

Fax: faxes can be received in the fax-shop near the Rest House.

E-mail: there are many e-mail places in Sudder Street (Park street metro station), one between Tollygunge and Garia (it is not very easy to find!) and also one near the Rest House, in the parallel road. (Charge is about 1 Rupees per minute, 10 Rupees minimum. 1 hour=30 Rupees).

**Language:**

The Indian national language is Hindi, the official language is English. Calcutta is the capital of West-Bengal State, where Bengali is the main language. It will be useful for the work in the clinic to learn a few Bengali words (you will find a small dictionary in the Clinic). All the doctors and nurses speak English. Since English is generally spoken in India there is no problem getting around! Anyway here is a list of Bengali words/ phrases that can be useful:

Hello= namaskar

Good bye = tata

Good morning = Suprovat.

Thank you = dhanyabad

OK = Thik acha

Go to pharmacy = oshud now

Doctor = daktar

Nurse = nars.

Student = ch'atro

Bottle = shishi.

How much? = Kato?

Sit down = boshu

Where is the pain? = bata Kothai?

Somewhere else? = Kothai ache?

I have finished = hoye gache

What is your name = apnar/tomar nam ki?

My name is = amar nam.....

I don't understand = ami bujhte parchi na

I don't speak Bengali = ami bangla balte pari na.

**Money:**

1 € = 52 Rupees (July 2003). There is a change office in Sudder Street. Next to Park Street Metro station there is a 24-hour credit card – cash machine. Depending on your life style (shopping, going out,.....) you will spend 100 € or more per month.

**Health:**

You can take preventive drugs against malaria and wear long-sleeve shirts, trousers and socks and during the night use a mosquito-net (long trousers are strongly recommended in the clinic to anyone, female and male, for cultural reasons). Indian pharmacies (there are plenty of them) provide any drug at low price. There is no problem in consulting a doctor; during your stay in Calcutta Dr. Sujit will help you. Someone say that you cannot avoid traveler's diarrhoea.

**E ) IIMC**

General remarks: Remember that you'll work just a few weeks or months in the project, so you'll only see fragments and maybe not the whole project. Remember that in nature no process is 100% efficient and IIMC can't escape the rule: you'll find some aspects of the project that



might not be working properly or that might be improved, the Indian volunteers usually know these problems better than you do (they live there 365 days a year) and are always working in trying to fix them. When judging the project consider also all the things that are working fine and if you have questions about any aspect of the project (teaching method, practical exercise, training of local volunteers etc) discuss them with Dr. Sujit in order to fully understand why things do or do not make sense. Please make clear arrangement directly with him, never arrange things with the local volunteers without previous consulting him. If you follow these rules every suggestion will be precious and welcome, and the relationship with the local volunteers will be wonderful.

Be aware that work is only productive with the right number of volunteers and you will realise that the project is not big enough to provide work to everyone. Nobody can participate to the project without being selected, so you can not go there with friends or relatives, they can not stay in the Rest House and can not work in the clinic. Sometimes the western volunteers work only in the Outdoor clinic and then they go back to the Rest House or to the city or they spend their weekend traveling to Puri, Darjeeling or Varanasi (Dr. Sujit respects the volunteers freedom, and he can not oblige you to stay). We assume this is not the right way to live an unforgettable experience. Calcutta, and India in general, are really wonderful to be visited, but please take your tourist time before or after your rotation period for IFMSA-IIMC. We strongly recommend to be full of initiative and questions, to become good friend with the Indian volunteers who are all wonderful persons (just pay attention to the cultural differences in particular with people of different sex, but we are sure you will have no problem).

Sometimes it can happen you feel there are few things to do, that the work you're doing in the outdoor clinics is not particularly useful or relevant and that free time is too much. This can be frustrating because you will feel yourself unuseful for the project. Please consider that the project must go on also without foreign volunteers (some years ago there were volunteers only in the summer months) and we are proud of that, because it means that the project is run by local people and can survive also without foreign volunteers support, and this means real development. However this is not wholly true, because the western support is still essential and contributes to make this project an international and high-quality project. We suggest you to be humble, not to expect to go to Calcutta to save lives. Consider carefully that your presence and the energy you put in what you do, more than the result of your work itself, gives moral support to the local volunteers and people and makes them feel they're not alone but have a backing support and help coming from all over the world. Moreover there are a lot of things that can be done beyond the simple work in the outdoors, and all depends on your initiative which we think should be very strong. If you have new ideas to promote, GO TO DR SUJIT and talk to him, he will tell you how to develop your initiative. Don't let other less motivated volunteers frustrate your initiative.

### **The philosophy of the project**

IIMC is conceived as an Non Governmental Organization that promotes development of the rural area of 24 South Parganas in West Bengal. Development means not only health aid. The mission of IIMC is different for example from that of Mother Theresa: both deserve respect, but they are different. Mother Theresa work is charity. IIMC work is developmental work. So the project is not only a health project. You'll soon realize it in your work in the outdoors: the primary health care is very very basic, and has not the aim to solve all the health problems of the population; it's a way to reach the poor people of the villages, so that you can better involve them in the other programs like education and micro-credit. Sometimes you'll get frustrated seeing always the same problems in the clinic, and it will seem to you that the treatment you are giving is like



a placebo. But this is also important, Sujit always says that 80% of medical intervention is in speaking with the patients and try to understand their real needs. On the other hand you cannot start in a village with micro-credit projects, first you have to offer something to the poor people so that they can trust you, and this is the main aim of the health activity. For bigger health problem the doctors always refer patients to bigger Calcutta's hospitals.

### **Dr. Sujit Brahmochary**

All western volunteers must have weekly meetings: the first is very important to have a good introduction (do not reach the project after the 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous month), and the last one is very important as well. Moreover there is "the meeting of the foreign volunteer" every week, on Tuesday afternoon with Dr. Sujit and all senior core group volunteers of IIMC. There is a book in the IFMSA volunteers room in the Indoor where you can read all the discussions of the past volunteers during those meetings. If you read it you can better understand what usually are the main problems and how to solve them (you have to update it, choosing one of you to write down the minutes). This meeting is a chance to discuss all the problems of the volunteers, in their work, in the rest-house, in the relationship with the Indian volunteers. You have also the responsibility to speak about new ideas or new little project you want to realize with the volunteers and to promote new initiatives. During your stay feel free to ask Dr. Sujit for evening meeting. Sujit is very special in his own way. especially out of working time, when he has not so many responsibilities, and his wife Barnali ( who is in charge for Educational Program) is wonderful too. You will enjoy to meet them, because they are able to transmit their enthusiasm to you and give you energy if you are feeling down.

Nobody knows the project like Sujit does, he is "the soul" of the project and the project is his "mission", he works hard for it till very late in the evening and he gave up an easy life in Europe to help the poor people of his country. Anyway he is not a missionary, he spends part of the morning for his private visits (he could earn double money in any other governmental hospital in Calcutta or working all the day for rich people). In the project apart from the other doctors everyone has learnt everything's about primary Health Care from Dr. Sujit and nothing was there 13 years ago. So when you are there you must think of what a obstinate, determined and eager doctor was able to do in a few years. Do not only focus on mistakes. Dr. Sujit is always busy but do not hesitate to contact him at his office and to ask for further information about the project or how you can contribute to the work (concerning the Educational Program consult Barnali).

### **Free time:**

Sundays is your days off. Sometimes in those days there are medical camps or other extra-activities, that you can join (sometimes you have to join them, anyway we strongly suggest to do it).

### **Certificate:**

At the end of your staying you'll receive an official certificate that you've been working for the Institute for Indian Mother and Child, that is a recognized Indian NGO. Please ask Dr.Sujit if he forgets.

### **F) Final Report**

While staying in Calcutta please think about the project and the organization (we strongly advise you to take the Evaluation Form with you in India and to fill it in day by day). Once back you **must** send us your Final Report within a month (refer to the questions of the Evaluation Form)



to help us updating our documents and giving suggestions. You can send it by e-mail to [calcuttap@ifmsa.org](mailto:calcuttap@ifmsa.org).

### G) Fund Raising

If you want to help us running the project or collecting some funds before going there you can bring the money to Calcutta and decide by yourself how to spend them and how to improve the project. Otherwise send them through this Bank account ("gift or donation or erogazione liberale")

**Name of the bank: Banca Popolare Etica**

**Number of the bank account: 108504**

**Name of the bank account: Progetto Calcutta ONLUS**

Italians	Non Italians
<b>CIN = O (vocale)</b>	<b>EUR IBAN IT25 O(vocal) 050 1801 6000 0000 0108</b>
<b>ABI = 05018</b>	<b>504</b>
<b>CAB 01600</b>	
<b>Account n 000000108504</b>	<b>BIC code (or swift code) CCRT IT84A</b>
	<b>Through "Casse Centrali Trentine" Bank</b>

### H) More Information

There is an excellent guidebook: "INDIA" by LONELY PLANET. Please consult it for information about Calcutta, the weather, the culture and travel hints. For more detailed information about: Aims of the Project, Local Needs, Baseline survey and demographic distribution, History and Description, Further developments, IIMC's Structure and Staff, what the Participants do, etc. please refer to the Long Description. You can get it from:

Internet

1. [www.calcuttaproject.org](http://www.calcuttaproject.org) Official Site of the Associazione Progetto Calcutta ONLUS and the SISM-IFMSA Calcutta Village Project. THIS SITE HAS AN ENGLISH VERSION (CLICK ON THE UK FLAG)
2. <http://www.iimcmisioncal.org>

If you're German please also go to <http://www.iimc.de/> and immediately email to Annika Siegmund  
[annika@iimc.de](mailto:annika@iimc.de)

If you're an Economic student/doctor please keep in touch with  
[af@calcuttaproject.org](mailto:af@calcuttaproject.org)



FURTHER INFORMATION FOR YOUNG MEDICAL STUDENTS ARE THE FOLLOWING

General remarks:

Please realize that you are not going to attend an organized clerkship or elective but a Primary Health Care Project in a developing country: make heart more ready than your brain.

For yourself bring:

- 1) Gloves (100 – 200 will be enough for your use)
- 2) a stethoscope
- 3) a small torch (to visit eye, ears ..)

Indoor Clinic

Every day, by rotation, one or two volunteers stay in Indoor, while the others go to the Outdoor, in order to do the dressings to the patients and the clinical round. Every volunteer take the responsibility of 2 or 3 beds, that means that she or he has to take care of the patient (e.g. if there is the need to take him to a city hospital), knowing his/her clinical situation. In the afternoon at least two volunteers has to stay in the clinic till 6 p.m.

Outdoor Clinic

4 outdoor clinics: Tegharia (Mon & Thu), Chakberia (Tuesday), Hogolkuria (Friday) and Kheadah (Saturday). Work starts around 9.30 a.m. when you meet in the Indoor-clinic, from where volunteers go by ambulance to one of the 3 outdoor clinics with doctors and nurses. The patients are already waiting there. Patients first see the doctor who writes in their outdoor card what kind of treatment they need (see the used abbreviations below) and the Indian nurses will help you with the treatment: anti-septic dressing, ear-eyes drops, open the abscess, taking blood pressure, muscular massage with relaxing ointment, i.m.- injection (tetanus, neurobion; a Vitamin and b-complex).

To be more self-sufficient at work, we advise you to learn about simple treatment of skin infections and wounds, i.m. injections and taking the blood pressure.

**IMPORTANT:** before starting to work the first time ask a volunteer of the previous rotation or better Ikbal the main nurse, to explain to you all the things you are supposed to do in the outdoors. They will be pleased to explain to you everything and you'll learn easily in a few days, improving everyday, don't worry.

ASD = anti-septic dressing: you have to use dettol (the white one ) and betadine (black liquid one) + soframycine/daktarin/daktacort/betadine(the solid one);

EAR/EYS DROP

CANDIDA MOUTH = drops in the month of the patients:

GV/MC the patient must have an empty bottle (shishi) that you have to fill with Gentiana Violet or mercury Chromes.

ID = open the abscess (at the beginning please ask nurse or a doctor if it is mature; there is nothing worse than opening an immature abscess, but please don't be afraid to also do these little surgery)

BP = Blood Pressure (sign the result on the Card);

EUTHERIA = muscular massage with ointment;



INJ = intramuscular injection (TT = Tetanus; Neuroboin; A-vitamin and B-complex sometime composed in the same syringe)

RPT = Repeat the same treatment as the last time.

It is important to sign with a "V" the things that you have just done.

Usually all the other names on the card are drugs that the patients have to take at the pharmacy (oshud). Change the gloves and do dressing whenever needed but remember that it is impossible to do it for every patient.

Volunteers come back to the Indoor Clinic at about 2.00 p.m. Here it's possible to have lunch with the local volunteers. In the afternoon you can work in the Indoor Centre.

#### Other Programs:

For more information concerning Indoor Clinic, Vaccination programme, ND (Nutritional Diet), Medical-Camps refer to Dr. Barnali (Medical Project) administrative work and Irrigational Project please refer to the Long Description or to Sukumar, for Finance and accounts refer to Palash and Mrs. Barnali (Sujit's wife, not dr. Barnali) for Educational Program when you are down there.

You can be very useful in organizing the contacts between the sponsored children and the foster parents if you help Barnali and the staff translating in your language the letters the sponsored children write in Bengali, in order to allow the communication between them and their sponsoring families (for Italian volunteers: we fixed at least 50 letters to translate in a month).

Best greetings  
The selecting committee  
af@calcuttaproject.org