



INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

NAME

ROBERT THOMPSON

FROM

USA

TO

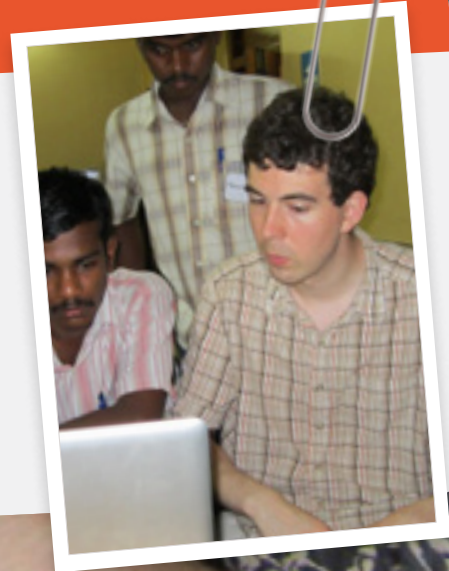
INDIA

PROGRAM

VOLUNTEER ABROAD



0123456789



Volunteering Abroad in India

We Can Impact Somebody

Robert Thompson returned home to the United States from his volunteer experiences in India very humbled. He noticed the contrast between poverty and luxury, between being appreciative and taking something for granted.

“I loved seeing the smiles on people’s faces after they received something that was of great value to them, whether it was our time with them or new knowledge and skills they obtained.... I have come back with a new perspective on who I am and the things that matter most in life.”

International travel often requires some willingness to go with the flow, which for anyone can be rewarding, despite the varying levels of comfort in doing it. However, finding a program that was well organized to minimize potential obstacles was easier for Robert, since he has Asperger’s Syndrome.

India Partners, which organized one of his volunteer programs, works alongside a broad group of indigenous Christian grassroots agencies in India focused on alleviating poverty and injustice.

“The leader of our team had made a very specific and concise trip agenda and made sure that everything would go according to plans.”

Robert volunteered in India three times, and each time he has improved his ability to be flexible.

“Admittedly, I would still have a couple panic attacks here and there. However, I learned that going out of my comfort zone, whether playing with the kids or doing little activities that I would prefer not to do, proved to be the most beneficial.”

He volunteered at the Agape Rehabilitation Center in Chennai where students with disabilities are taught computer courses and other skills for leading independent lives. Robert could relate this to his own experience; when he met his current workplace, Incight, they similarly encouraged him, challenged him, and gave him the confidence to dream big.

As the Chennai graduates were preparing for their job search, Robert and other team members arrived to volunteer for several days. Robert used his videography skills from his current job to assist them in creating videos in which they practiced their interviewing skills.

He later traveled with the volunteer team to Machilipatnam to participate in a water sanitation and hygiene project for several more days. They used prevention education programs to help train locals on how to cut down on the spread of disease.

“Going to India is one of the greatest things I’ve ever done. There are things that could go wrong on a trip abroad. Stuff can be misplaced, you may get sick, and you may do things that you really don’t want to do. However, you will gain something in the end that will be worth it. You will gain experience, wisdom, and humility. These three are essential to making you a person whom people will listen to and look up to.”



Check out Robert’s fundraising and trip videos

<http://youtu.be/SXHhSwn8OfA>

<http://youtu.be/pv8mnKWUcfk>