

RAMA FOUNDATION VOLUNTEER POLICY and AGREEMENT

1.1 Introduction

Rama Foundation's primary Object is to contribute in partnership with individuals, groups and organisations working at grass-roots level through empowerment of disadvantaged communities. It aims to advance education, health care and to aid in the relief of poverty in any part of the world (and particularly in India), and for those purposes only:

- (1) to send volunteers to other countries to share and develop their skills and understanding and to share their experience with others on return,
- (2) to undertake or assist in works and projects of all kinds; and
- (3) to educate the public concerning the nature, causes and effects of such poverty and suffering.

The most valuable asset of the Rama Foundation (RF) is its people. Our ethos is learning from each other, sharing skills and working together to make a difference.

The work of the Rama Foundation (RF) has attracted many interested volunteers who have made commitments to contribute hands-on to its efforts for empowerment of beneficiaries identified in projects located in India. The relationship between the trustees and volunteers is one that is built on trust and mutual respect. As volunteers become involved with the work of the RF, their CVs are shared so that all trustees and volunteers have full knowledge of the backgrounds and credentials of each other. All the volunteers RF sends to India are self-financed. Care is also taken that their presence does not put the local projects under any financial strain on account of their placements. Any funds raised for these efforts are spent totally for the direct benefit of the ultimate beneficiaries and not for any direct needs of the volunteers. Overall it is clearly understood that volunteering is done at one's free will and own risk with individuals responsible for their own care and are fully insured for placement and travel. However it is necessary for both trustees and volunteers to work to a Volunteer Policy so that roles and responsibilities of all participants are clear.

RF relies on and values highly the variety of qualities volunteers bring to the organisation as well as the time they give. These qualities include a wide variety of skills, expertise and varying life experiences, all of which contribute to the diversity and vitality of RF. RF's contribution to the lives of our ultimate beneficiaries is defined by the commitment, hard work and enthusiasm of its volunteers. While all this is expected from the volunteers, RF also aims to provide an enjoyable culture where being highly motivated also means having fun. It is committed to fair, clearly stated and supportive relationships with the volunteers. Above all the people at the core of RF aim to live to these values, not only in the way work is done but also in the way we treat everyone.

This Volunteer Policy is a framework which clarifies their role within RF and how they can be expected to be treated. RF is committed to develop policies, systems and behaviours that support the culture of high standards and expectations, where people are valued, respected and know they matter, where diversity is celebrated and oppression is challenged. We would like to thank the volunteers who help draft this policy and who make a valuable contribution to the review process.

1.2 Why we work only with self-financed volunteers?

RF believes that volunteers can make a significant contribution to the work and objects of the organisation. We recognise that it is not possible for all to offer self-financed volunteering but have chosen this way to ensure that funds, gifted for the purposes of direct benefit of its beneficiaries by donors, are fully used for this purpose without any deductions for administration and other expenses. RF recognises and appreciates that grass-root projects more than often operate under severe resources limitations and any additional financial burden due to volunteers would deplete these scarce resource(s). We are happy when volunteers, for example Newly Qualified Teachers at Cambridge University or medical professionals from Addenbrookes hospital, are able secure travel grants from other organisations for their placements. While RF is pleased to support these funding efforts, it will not raise funds for such purposes. Please also refer to The Rama Foundation FUNDRAISING POLICY and ACCOUNTABILITY OF FUNDS. Volunteers, who are not able to undertake self-financed placements in India, can make valuable contributions in UK.

1.3 Who is a volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who does not receive financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses for resources, etc. needed for carrying out the assignment performed at the request of, or on behalf of RF. The volunteer relationship is binding in honour, trust and mutual understanding only. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on the volunteer to attend. It is not intended to be a legally binding contract and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of the parties intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future. Volunteering is by invitation by RF.

1.4 Recruitment of volunteers

Volunteers will be recruited using an equal opportunities approach and using a variety of different methods. We recognise that it may be approached with offers of help from potential volunteers. In such cases a representative of RF will talk to the potential volunteer to discuss ways in which they may be able to help, and where possible and appropriate, an opportunity may be created. Potential volunteers are invited to describe their skills in writing by providing a detailed CV for circulation within RF and the placement organisations. In case of PGCE students, a formal recruitment process has been evolved with an aim to seek out volunteers who are able to contribute to our efforts given the difficult conditions on the ground and are able to work in a collaborative way with other volunteers and host placement organisation workers. As our current work is concerned with disadvantaged children, all volunteers will have to get DBS checked and sign up to The Rama Foundation Code of Conduct and Policy for SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN. It is the duty of all volunteers to be fully aware of this Policy and forward a duly signed declaration and a copy of their DBS Disclosure. If it is felt necessary, character references are obtained from professional sources.

1.5 Insurances and Health & Safety

All Volunteers must take out adequate individual insurance policy at their own expense to cover all risks associated with volunteering and travel, which includes having the necessary insurance to cover their professional work in India. Health and Safety during this is also their individual responsibility. Invariably, host placement organisations do not have such covers. All our volunteers are made fully aware of this and the need to exercise utmost care during

placements. Our aim is to provide conditions that are safe and healthy but often standards on the ground are far from ideal.

All Volunteers take on these assignments with this understanding and must therefore be immunised and carry all medicines that are recommended by their GP.

1.6 Volunteer Agreement

As a Volunteer, you can expect that:

- Your gift of time, skills and experience will be used so that you can make a difference to the lives of our ultimate selected beneficiaries.
- You will be provided with all the information and guidance required for you to carry out your volunteering.
- Your volunteering will be appreciated and recognised.
- You will be volunteering in an organisation that is non-discriminatory and aims to be more diverse.
- We will help you to resolve any difficulties you may have with RF and/or the organisation where you are placed.
- We will seek your views on our work as well as your volunteering and will keep you up to date with our activities.
- You are free to stop volunteering at any time by giving reasonable notice.
- You may report any concerns to the RF representative or the Chair of the Trustees.
- We will provide references upon request.

And to meet these aims:

- We expect you to carry out your volunteering within the terms agreed, within the law and the organisation's policies & procedures (as detailed under 1.1-1.5).
- We expect to perform personal duties with skill, care and diligence.
- We expect you to perform your duties professionally and not to behave in a way that brings the organisation into disrepute.
- We expect you to treat all individuals with courtesy, and with respect for their rights, duties and aspirations. Also be sensitive to different culture.
- We expect you to maintain confidentiality.
- We expect you to help RF to share your experiences upon return.
- RF may withdraw this offer to you to volunteer if the relationship breaks down.
- RF is not responsible for any loss and you are volunteering entirely at your own risk.

This Policy has been written to ensure that all Trustees and Volunteers are aware of their responsibilities and expectations in their role as Volunteers with the RF. RF thanks those who have helped in drafting this Policy and Agreement. We propose to undertake regular reviews (timing to be decided).

Name of Volunteer:

Signature of Volunteer:

Date: