

## **Experiential learning about rural health- a three day camp in Sittlingi**

Mainstream medical and health professionals' education does not provide opportunity for students to experience actual contexts in which health care is practised in rural India. The environment of medical colleges educates students in mainstream medical knowledge and practice in large hospitals and tertiary care. However there are widening disparities in health and poor access to health care particularly in rural parts of our country. There is mismatch between the settings where education takes place, and where health work is much needed.

There have been many experiments across the country in the NGO sector of providing health delivery systems that engage actively with the local context and are thus linked with efforts in related fields such as school education, food security, livelihood, housing etc (which are increasingly recognized as the social determinants of health). One such experiment is the work of Tribal health Initiative (THI), Sittilingi, Dharmapuri District, Tamil Nadu. Young health professionals like you can benefit from exposure to such experiments through the rural health camp. We hope such an exposure, may make you think about your role in addressing the country's health problems.

### **What is the rural health camp?**

The rural health camp is an experiential learning process for medical students, postgraduates and young doctors to expose them to the work of Tribal health Initiative. You will be exposed to the health work in the hospital, community health work, school education, livelihood and agriculture work of THI. You will talk to health workers, farmers, craftsman, villagers to understand their stories, experiences and perspectives. Through the observations, individual and group reflections and discussions, we hope that we can draw out together a broader map of the country's health problems and ways of addressing them. The process will be facilitated by a group of resource persons who have been committed to making medical education a transformative process as well as equipping students and young doctors to be more relevant to the context around them. We will start with health, but the discussions will move beyond health. We hope that through the group process we may understand ways of supporting you in your quest for understanding health problems and your role in society. The rural health camp will involve community living, getting to know and learning from each other.

### **Is this programme for you?**

If you are concerned about the country's health problems and want to move out of the confines of the medical college to see what is happening in the community. If you want to explore a different perspective to thinking about medicine, meet like minded people who think differently. If you are trying to find ways in which you can contribute to solving the problems of society, then this programme is for you.

### **Rural health camp programme**

- **Day 1** – Exposure to work of THI, discussing the interlinkages of health, group reflection
- **Day 2** – Field visits in small groups – seeing the real India; reflections in groups
- **Day 3** - Group reflection about health problems in the country, and ways forward

**Dates:** We are planning two such workshops in the following time slots – January 25/26/27 and March 29/30/31. You can opt for either or indicate your preference for dates. It will be useful if you can come on the previous night and the programme will finish at 5 pm on the second day.

**Number of participants:** 30 participants for each camp.

**Costs:** Each participant will contribute Rs. 500 for food and lodging for the three days. You will have to bear your own travel to and from Sittilingi. Scholarships are available in case of need – Please contact - Dr. Sara Bhattacharjee [09486369990; sarasuranjan@gmail.com]

**Resource persons:**

Clinical specialists, Community Health Professionals; Architects, Engineers, Educationalists, Agriculturists, Craft Experts

**Process of application:** Fill the application form and send it by e-mail by November 30<sup>th</sup> 2018. The seats are available on a first come first serve basis – so please don't delay the applications

**Contact e-mail:** Please send filled applications to the following email id – rsptribalhealth@gmail.com

For more details please feel free to contact any of the following HI – Regi – (9488344325) / Ravi (9677956752) / Jerry (9480169715)

- Vellore - Anand Zachariah – Phone (9486939504)

For more info on Tribal Health Initiative, [www.tribalhealth.org](http://www.tribalhealth.org)