

## Volunteer at GVNML Laporiya Campus from USA

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"I'm Daniel, aged 22, from New Jersey, USA and in 2009 I spent two months volunteering with GVNML in Laporiya village. I was looking for a rural locally-run development NGO and I heard GVNML was one of the best when it came to peoples' empowerment, and environmental, economic, and social reform. After speaking with GVNML staff, I had a hunch that the organization was dedicated, unique and constantly working to find new ways to engage local communities.

My experience with GVNML went beyond my expectations, not to mention the unforgettable hospitality of the entire Singh family. I primarily worked to compile GVNML's annual report, which entailed lots of research and becoming familiar with the various branches of the organisation. I also provided computer support, translations, and helped apply for several grants. I worked alongside the office staff and attended GVNML sponsored functions and events.

One of my goals in working with GVNML was to improve my understanding of Hindi. People were patient with me as I struggled to master the language, and my Hindi skills improved markedly over the summer. I relished the chance to live in a rural area and the challenge of living in a community in which I had to depend on others for even the smallest tasks. Other than having a transforming personal experience working, I returned home with a renewed faith in community organising. I am hopeful that a better world is not only possible, but in some places, well on its way.

My advice to others thinking of volunteering is do it, you won't regret it! Dive in head first, and help spread the GVNML's participatory and long-term commitment to rural development. I didn't waste a minute of my time at GVNML, and I am constantly thinking of ways to return to Laporiya."



Photo; GVNML Volunteer: Daniel Symonds