



From February to April 2017 Alice Barsanti, a psychology student from Italy volunteered at our school. Here she shares her experience.

*How did you hear about the school?*

My parents had met Kerstin Liebchen-Meades from the Australian [Bodhgaya Development Association](#) in February 2015 and via my parents and Kerstin contact was made with the principal, Sr Rashmi of PVS.

*What prompted you to volunteer?*

I'm in love with India since 2014 and I wanted to engage in a volunteer experience abroad.

*What were your daily activities?*

I would speak with in English and play with the children from the first to the fourth class.

*What was the main purpose of your stay?*

I was doing a practicum placement as part of my Italian university's course requirements.

*What were the challenges/opportunities?*

The main challenge was the language gap. But because of this I developed my skills in non-verbal communication. I really enjoyed the opportunity of getting to know a new culture, with its tradition and people.

*What were your observations on an intercultural /comparison to own Italian life with that of your experience in BG?*

School in India is totally different from what Europeans consider school to be. They have more collective activities, they celebrate more festivities and they really enjoy their time at school. This is not quite the case with Italian children I'd say. Children taught me how to smile every day, in every occasion and despite everything that might be challenging in their lives.

*How would you describe school life on a day to day basis?*

In my opinion school starts in a wonderful way, with meditation. This method let children fit in the daily work and also participate in school life as a collective. [Prajna Vihar school](#) is a place where children learn not only subject knowledge and content but also how to behave in daily life.

*What do you think might interest donors/supporters who read your report?*

I think donors should know that the school supplies children with basic needs but compared to other schools that might be funded differently, it is not enough funding and there should be more. Never the less, teachers provide an excellent instruction. I think it would be really useful to have more teachers because each class hosts around 50 students and this can be counterproductive for learning.

*Did you get a sense as to whether the school achieves what it sets out to achieve?*

I think principal and the teachers are really providing children with what they need and they are really helping families, so yes, they are achieving the best under the circumstances.

*Did you connect with anyone in particular? Would you recommend such a volunteer experience? Why? Why not?*

I connected with Kerstin, Sr Rashmi and Jackie before coming to India. The all were very kind and helped me a lot. I would suggest this activity to any person who wants to experience happiness. Children have the power to give you more than what you give them. So, I really recommend such a volunteer experience and I hope to come back soon.

