

### **Project Description: WorldTeach in Tamil Nadu, India**

This June, I will embark on a journey as volunteer with WorldTeach in Tamil Nadu, India. My role as a volunteer with WorldTeach will primarily be to teach English to orphaned children or children who come from families affected with leprosy. The position in life for these children in their society is stigmatized by their birth. I will be working in a school for a total of eleven months and I hope to help each of these children with limited opportunities build confidence, actively engage in learning, and have success in reaching their fullest potential.

The group of people that I will be working with comes from the lowest class of people within the not so talked about caste system. While India's Constitution does not officially abolish caste, it does outlaw discrimination on the basis of it. In some cities the caste system is beginning to dissolve, but it varies from region to region. For these "Untouchables," or Harijans, as Mahatma Gandhi called them, which roughly translates to "Children of God", their position in life and society is marred by the stigma of coming from this caste, as well as their affiliation with leprosy.

In India, placements in "English Medium Schools" are highly sought-after, and poor children from the lower castes rarely have the opportunity to attend them. With WorldTeach, I will be a teacher in a school open to all children, regardless of their caste. I will be working outside the classroom as well, helping solidify academic progress – especially with English skills. I will also participate in after school activities, creating programs to develop life skills to help the children gain the practical skills they will need to be successful in life. I hope to empower them and build their self-esteem, as well as to expand their sense of their place in the world.