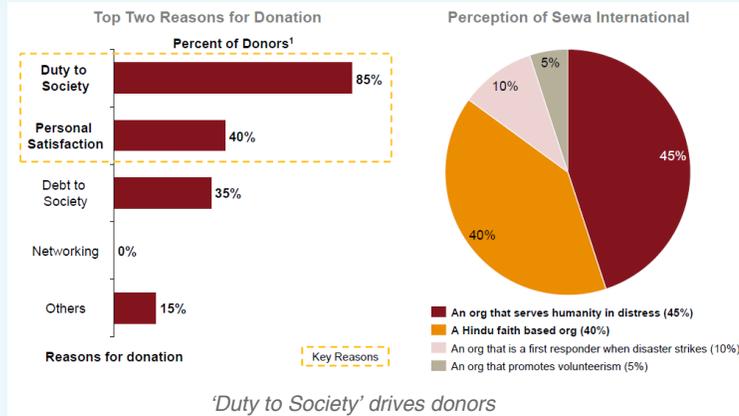


How are we Doing? Donors and Volunteers Respond



It is important that organizations take the pulse of its stakeholders and workers regularly to know how the organization is performing, and what should be its future focus and goals. In this context, Sewa International developed a perspective on the experiences and aspirations of key stakeholders – donors and volunteers -- by conducting a survey of 20 donors and 64 volunteers.

Cont. page: 3

Executive's Corner

Dear Sewa Supporters:

The year 2017 has been remarkable in the history of Sewa International. Sewa grew on all fronts: programming, personnel, and revenue funding. We added new chapters in Wisconsin and Minnesota, bringing our US chapters to 41. The flagship Family Services project with a fulltime National Coordinator resolved 53 cases across the US. Throughout the nation 51 health and community education workshops were conducted. A new ASPIRE program to tutor underprivileged children has now been extended to three cities.

We continued to build our IT systems and processes for growth in the Sponsor a Child (SaC) program by instituting a new website development to go live in February 2018. While the SaC program continued to build strength in both donors and beneficiaries, its geographic reach extended to 11 states of India and into four districts of Nepal. US donors enabled the building of 218 toilets benefitting 7,167 school children, primarily girls, and 3,405 families. Our back-office processes have been strengthened with an enhanced contact management system. Creating a Media Blitz Team to streamline our marketing communications has begun to pay dividends. A monthly newsletter that you are enjoying is one of the discernible results.

Disasters struck the US and the Caribbean in the form of hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. Disaster recovery, the signature DNA of Sewa International work propelled us to inspire 1,250 volunteers to move 687 people to safety in Houston, TX, cleaning up and rebuilding homes and spending 45,000 volunteer hours. The Greater Houston community entrusted Sewa to provide disaster case management through a grant of \$397,000 in November. Sewa reached out to our hurricane distressed brethren in

Puerto Rico and the Caribbean by providing solar lamps, water filters, gas-based generators of electricity, and food and other relief supplies. Sewa Board of Directors earmarked \$110,000 towards Caribbean relief and rehabilitation in Dominica, Antigua, and Barbuda as we continue to work jointly with our sister organization Sewa Trinidad & Tobago. Again, during the pre-Irma phase, Sewa Atlanta created history by bringing in 11 local Hindu temples in a joint coalition to offer free room and board to the displaced people from Fort Lauderdale and Tampa. Since its inception in 2003, Sewa has provided rescue, relief and rehabilitation services to those affected by 22 international and seven US natural disasters. In line with the growth of Sewa, the national executive board embarked on a nine-month strategic planning exercise with solicited structured and unstructured input from our volunteers, donors, board members, and our mission-oriented staff. This effort culminated in a two-day retreat to develop a five-year strategic plan which has now been authorized by the Sewa Board of Directors for implementation.

A large endowment gift of \$2.05 million from a long-term supporter of Sewa International indicates that the hard work of Sewa is beginning to pay off. Our revenue in 2017 is \$4.3 million, up from \$1.95 million in 2016, an astonishing 120% increase.

All this would not have been possible if not for you, dear Sewa supporter. In this spirit, I dedicate the success in 2017 to you and you alone. I am sure you will cheer along with me as Sewa marches towards a glorious future.


Prof. Sree N. Sreenath
 President
 

Serving the *Vanavasis* (forest dwellers) of Wayanad

Scenic valleys, dense forests and rugged terrain make Wayanad, Kerala, a natural abode of tribal people. Perched atop the majestic Western Ghats, the 823 sq. mile Wayanad District is home to 150,000 tribals, locally known as *Vanavasis* or forest dwellers.



Deforestation and low literacy have forced them into agriculture labor in recent decades. Poverty and unhygienic living conditions make malnutrition and diseases widespread among them as they seek to make a living in different conditions.

To serve these tribes, the Swami Vivekananda Medical Mission (SVMM), a non-profit organization, started a free dispensary in 1972 at Mutil in Wayanad. In the last four and half decades, the mission has spread its activities and reach multifold to serve the tribals.

Sickle Cell Anemia, a genetic blood disorder, is common among the tribal population in this region. It is characterized by red blood cells that assume an abnormal, rigid, sickle shape that is caused due to mutation in the hemoglobin gene, resulting in a risk of various health complications and shortened life expectancy. This was first discovered by Dr. Dhananjay Diwakar Sagdeo, and brought to the notice of the **All India Institute of Medical Sciences** (AIIMS), New Delhi. A diagnosis, treatment and counseling center is now operational at the SVMM base hospital.

To enable SVMM to take healthcare facilities to the doorstep of the tribals in the remote areas of Wayanad, Sewa International donated a Mobile Medical Van (MMV) to SVMM. The MMV commissioned in December 2016 has been put to good use to:

- take the General Practitioner, paramedics, and health workers from the base hospital to the hamlets and back -- to conduct scheduled medical camps (about 50 patients attend the camp every day);
- reach the remote tribal settlements to conduct routine diagnostic tests and distribute free medicines;
- take health workers to the settlements to replenish First Aid items and medicines, weekly; and
- ferry patients for specialist consultation, cancer detection tests, follow-up tests, and specific treatments available only at the base hospital and sub-centers.

“

The Mobile Medical Van donated by Sewa International is a boon to SVMM for conducting medical camps. The hardships faced by our team -- of poor roads, threat of wild animals, blood sucking wild leeches, scaling of hills and very often dealing with torrential rain -- is now overcome. SVMM is grateful to Sewa International for this noble gesture”.

Dr. Dhananjay Sagdeo
Chief Medical Officer, SVMM
-- the guiding force behind the medical team and serving the tribal population since 1980



SVMM's reach in 2017



150
bed hospital



6
diagnostic sub centers



11
specialty clinics



30
member medical team



11,300
outpatients treated



150
trained health workers



392
medical camps conducted



500
tribal settlements served



150,000
tribal beneficiaries

How are we Doing? Donors and Volunteers Respond

The survey included about twenty questions, and the main themes explored in the donor survey were:

- Why donate to Sewa?
- Donation experience with Sewa
- Future association with Sewa

The main themes explored in the volunteer survey were:

- Why volunteer with Sewa?
- Volunteer experience with Sewa
- Future association with Sewa

The major take-away from the donor survey was that 95 percent of the donors would recommend Sewa International to others, and 95 percent of the donors have a positive image of Sewa as a charity and philanthropic organization. Sewa International has successfully developed a strong brand with its donors, for 90 percent of donors would indeed donate again.

They also strongly prefer that Sewa focus on disaster relief, family services and ASPIRE projects in the future, as these three projects constitute the top three choices for 90 percent of the donors.

What drives donors to contribute to Sewa's efforts is primarily a sense of duty to society, followed by the fact that Sewa is a Hindu faith-based organization serving humanity. Duty to society motivates donors twice as much as any other reason.

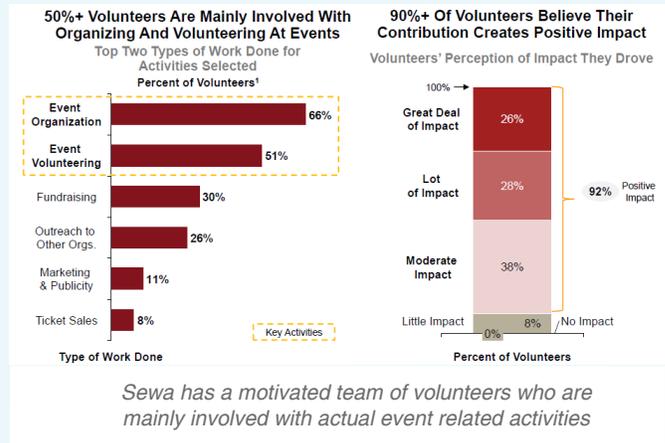
Among other findings from the donor survey is that 60 percent of them prefer to make "cause-centric" donations, and "disaster relief" motivates 75 percent of the donor base to contribute.

As to the donors' awareness of Sewa and the activities it is involved in, volunteers are the primary source of information. Eighty-five percent of donors believe their donation makes a positive impact on society, and the same number of donors considers Sewa as having a trustworthy and credible team that executes projects effectively.

A vast majority of donors have an overall positive image of Sewa and are willing to be Sewa's advocates to their network.

In terms of the volunteer perspective on Sewa, we found that 90 percent of the volunteers are driven/motivated by "sewa bhava" (wish/desire/motivation to serve).

Volunteers perceive Sewa as an organization that serves humanity in distress and that it is a Hindu faith-based organization. Social service offers them personal satisfaction, and more than 75 percent of the volunteers are highly satisfied with their volunteering experience. About 40 percent of the volunteers contribute more than ten hours of their time each month to Sewa International.



A vast majority of volunteers are deeply passionate about Sewa and they will volunteer again and/or be Sewa advocates. Ninety percent or more of them are likely to volunteer again, and 85 percent or more are highly likely to recommend Sewa International to their network of friends, family, and colleagues. An overwhelming majority (ninety percent) of volunteers believe that their contribution makes a positive impact, are happy with the work culture at Sewa and they are happy with their chapter/project leadership

Directionally, volunteers echo donors' sentiments and would prefer to focus on disaster relief, family service, and ASPIRE. Volunteers think Sewa can prioritize improving its program quality by increasing digital presence and by enhancing leadership competence.

The survey was designed, administered, and the results collated and published by Nidheesh Patel and Hira Fotedar. "With this survey we have taken an additional step in becoming a more professional charitable organization, and the results will help shape our programs and efforts in the future," said Sree Sreenath, President of Sewa International. "We are gratified by the results, and we are extremely grateful to our respondents."

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Shiv Mishra is from Kapilvastu District, Lumbini Anchal of Nepal bordering Siddhartha Nagar District of Uttar Pradesh, India. He is a science graduate from Awadh University Faizabad, in Uttar Pradesh. From his early childhood Shiv was inspired by his father to serve needy people in the community. When he was in high school, he lived in a temple, and *Atithi Devo Bhava* ("Serving guests is serving God") was the key value inculcated in his life while serving devotees on a daily basis. He currently lives in Dublin, OH with his wife Sunita, sons Sumit and Sushant, and daughter Sushmita.

Shiv Mishra's association with Sewa International started in 2008 when he was in Raleigh, North Carolina. The Bhutanese Empowerment Project was started to help new families. Connecting local Hindu community members to help the Bhutanese community in resettlement was well coordinated with great impact.

Shiv and his family moved to Columbus, OH in 2009 and has been coordinating Sewa efforts for the Bhutanese Resettlement Project. Working with other local organizations for school supplies drives as well as the Diwali food drives have been a great success. He organizes *Cricket for Sewa* at Cardinal Health -- an annual fund raising event with 100+ volunteers from Cardinal Health. Sewa International has grown to become a reliable Hindu faith-based charity organization in Columbus, OH with recent team developments. He is working closely with the Bhutanese community leaders to address many issues prevailing in the society. His focus in days to come is to build a strong team in Columbus and execute key events planned for 2018. During the summer of 2017 he travelled to Nepal and joined our National president Prof. Sreenath and international coordinator Shyam Parande during the inauguration program of the Dhading *Ama ko Maya* hostel and the ground-breaking ceremony of the *Nuvakote Ama Ko Maya* hostel.

Sewa Yatra



Sewa volunteers Jitesh Sevani, Kailash Gajara, and Nidheesh Patel visit the Samatol camp site at Mamnoli, in Mumbai, India

Sewa Yatra (Journey for Sewa) offers opportunities for an inspirational personal journey of self-growth and development. One can get a first-hand experience of the developmental work being done by Sewa International and its partner organizations in India .

- Witness the excellent work done by Sewa and its partners in Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Pune, and several other locations.
- Visit anytime of the year and spend a day for a gratifying experience.
- Check out the inspiring stories from past visitors on our Facebook page

Any Sewa volunteer, from the United States visiting India and wishes to observe a Sewa project in the city they may be visiting, can reach out to the Sewa Yatra Team on sewayatra@sewausea.org. For further details, visit <https://sewausea.org/sewa-yatra>.

Upcoming Events

Feb 16, 2018 : Katy, Sugarland, West Houston, TX – *Stop Diabetes Movement Camp*

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