

Salesforce Supports Indreni

Written by Sarah Morgan

In February 2019, a team from Salesforce London are travelling to Nepal to volunteer their time with Indreni. This is all thanks to the ambitious and driven Sally Kingston. The group will spend one week in Indreni's homes and schools, helping to improve the facilities and immersing themselves in Nepalese culture.

Marc Benioff, the philanthropic, Co-Founder of Salesforce and wife Lynne *"have a profound commitment to community and to finding solutions to some of society's most complex problems"*¹. They have instilled their ethos seamlessly into Salesforce, by encouraging employees to engage in charitable activities. Salesforce employees are allocated 7 paid days of volunteer time off annually, and are encouraged to be creative and motivated in the ways in which they make the world a better place.

Sally began working with Salesforce in June 2017, and has previously organised volunteer days at Forest Peace Farm, a farm in London that helps people with mental disability rehabilitate. In mid-2018, she began planning a trip to Indreni, encouraging fellow colleagues at Salesforce to join.

We interviewed Sally to get a better understanding of why she chose Indreni and what was involved in bringing her idea to life. Here's what we discussed:



Sally & Salesforce Employees volunteering at Forest Peace Farm

What prompted you to organise a group from Salesforce to take to Indreni?

I've had such an incredible experience both times I've visited Kathmandu to work with Indreni that I wanted to share it with my colleagues and give them the chance to have the same amazing experience.

Why do you think Salesforce were enthusiastic to get involved with Indreni?

We are lucky that the company we work for affords us 7 days a year to volunteer. The leadership are all very behind this idea so it wasn't difficult to get backing and interest in the trip.

How did you gather interest for the trip?

I initially approached a couple of my close friends and talked to them about my experience. I told them I would be organising a trip in the early part of 2019 and I would keep them in the loop.

I then sent around an email to a large group of people explaining my involvement in the charity and a brief overview of the trip I was organizing. I asked anyone interested to reply to my email and I would add them to an "information call" in a couple of week's time.

By the time the call came around, I already had 4 friends committed so only 6 spots left. 10 other people joined the call and a few couldn't make it. I showed them pictures of the kids, the school, the home and told them stories about the trips I've been on to bring it to life. I then showed a rough agenda of the trip and explained it would be both rewarding, active and fun. I created a google document after the call and created a confirmed and wait list with all of the info people needed about the trip. It seemed once the trip was full the demand increased!

How do you think the trip will benefit the team you're taking out?

I think the people on the trip will gain a lot from being out of their bubble and experiencing something completely different. The kids are incredible and the Nepalese people are so welcoming so it's hard not to fall in love with Kathmandu. I think the team will gain a lot from working with children who have come from

¹ Felsenthal, E. (2018, October). A new era for Time. *Time*, 192(13), 4.

extreme poverty, which naturally makes you re-evaluate the importance we place on such trivial things. This trip allows you to connect with people (both the kids and each other) on a deeper level than most of us do in our day to day lives which can be life-changing. The trip is physical and the days are full and while that can be challenging, it's also extremely rewarding. We work with people and get our hands dirty during the physical work, which is a refreshing change as most of us are sitting behind a laptop screen everyday.

Is there any advice you would give to somebody thinking about organising a similar trip with Indreni?

Start planning early. Ian and the team at Indreni have the blueprint for a trip ready to go so nothing will be needed from you to organise schedules and accommodation which can be time consuming. However, it's a big trip and people need notice and lots of information before committing and putting their life in your hands for a week! The easiest way for me was sending out the email with all of the info, setting up a call and sharing my screen so I could bring the trip to life and then adding people to shared documents and setting up a Whatsapp group etc. People like to be kept in the know! I've already seen peoples fundraising campaigns popping up on Facebook and LinkedIn which is great to see - when you have the right people on board, they won't need much encouragement after committing to come.

It's great to see a motivated, young employee taking the initiative to introduce a new idea into a big company like Salesforce and we're excited to meet the rest of the group. For most, it will be their first time in Nepal, which is exciting for the team on the ground in Kathmandu. Indreni board member, Ian Kingston, discusses the approach for volunteers, *"We strive to give groups a comprehensive experience of Nepal. The volunteers engage in a practical activity, such as painting or helping to build something in the schools or around the houses. They spend time with the kids; giving them exposure to westerners and then they get to experience the culture; trying authentic food, hiking up to 10,000 feet and exploring places off the tourist track that they normally wouldn't have gone to."*



Kevin O'Sullivan, Ram Hari (Indreni Founder) & Ian Kingston

Indreni's primary function in regards to taking out volunteers is to further educate the kids and expose them to international people, giving them an understanding of what the 'western' world is like. The aim is to give the children the opportunity to reach their potential, whoever or whatever that is. Indreni believes in every child having the right to fulfil their own individual potential.

We're looking forward to seeing this team of 10 embrace everything that Kathmandu has to offer and are excited for the impact they will no doubt make on the lives of these children.