

# *the* **epic** ADVANTAGE

## Student/Faculty Collaborative Research Experience

**EPIC ADVANTAGE: Social Development and Women's Empowerment in Mysuru, India**

**Dates: June/July 2019 (4 weeks)**

**Leaders: Rajaram Krishnan and Lakshmi Hariharan (Srushti Foundation, India)**

**Credits: 3 credits (credit/no credit)**

**Application Deadline: October 15, 2018**



## Description of Experience and Research:

In this project, Earlham students will work alongside students from Srushti Degree College. The program is located in the villages in Melapura Panchayat in Mysore District, Karnataka, India. Students will spend four weeks in one or more villages around Mysuru, Karnataka to work on issues using a holistic social approach in the areas of women's empowerment, childhood education, and youth education. They will begin in the school where a focus will be on improving the English skills of the children. Our group will also serve as catalysts in supporting young women to develop skills to lead them to the possible development of home based micro-businesses. The third part of the project is to work with youth in the villages to develop trusting social relations and to strengthen their English skills.. The third part of the project is to work with youth in the villages to develop trusting social relations and to strengthen their English skills.

## Faculty:

**Rajaram Krishnan**, is a Professor in the Department of Economics at Earlham College. Raja grew up in India where he finished his B.A. (Economics) from the University of Madras, before coming to the U.S. to pursue a Ph.D. Rajaram's academic interests are in the areas of economic development, environmental economics, and globalization. He has previously led the Earlham Kenya Program (2002) and the now dormant Earlham South Asia Program in 2005, and the Earlham London Program (2016). In addition he has led student collaborative research programs in Singapore (2008), China (2016), and just this past semester led a collaborative project with students in Bengaluru, India. He is also sure that he will not repeat his experience of leading August Wilderness which he did in 2013.

**Lakshmi Hariharan**, principal of Srushti Degree College founded Srushti Foundation in India. Srushti has worked in more than 500 rural villages, in Karnataka, enabling young people to spearhead change for their younger peers in their learning and development. To nurture this creative and innovative capacity of young people, Srushti started Srushti Degree College, (in 2011), aims to provide quality education at affordable fees. Lakshmi has deep experience and success in working on projects which involve women's empowerment in a rural setting in Karnataka and has an intimate knowledge of the village(s) where we will be carrying out our program. In addition to being an education and social development activist, she is an accomplished Bharata Natyam dancer.



### **Expectations for Students:**

Students should be interested in one or more of the following issues - rural and social development, women's empowerment and micro-entrepreneurship. Students should be comfortable (or at least not be uncomfortable) working in teams in a cross-cultural setting. The program will be very useful for students who in the future are interested in the Peace Corps, working in rural settings in a developing country context, or want to do further study in women's studies, or, economic and international development. We encourage all who seem interested to apply.

### **Dates of Experience:**

#### **June/July 2019 (4 weeks) Travel To and From Site:**

Ideally students will arrive at the same time into India (to be determined) but are free to make their own plans at the end of the program. Travel will be discussed after students are accepted to participate.

### **Application Dates:**

Applications can be received from students starting on Sept. 15, 2018. Application window closes on Oct. 15, 2018.

### **Link to Application:**

Apply in Handshake

### **Preparation:**

Students will be required to take a 1 credit EPIC Advantage Orientation seminar during the Spring 2019 academic semester. This seminar will provide the necessary background and travel logistics for students to maximize the experience. Class meeting dates/times will be determined in the future.

### **Student Eligibility:**

Rising Sophomores, juniors, or seniors are eligible to apply.

### **Cost to Student:**

This experience is funded as an EPIC ADVANTAGE opportunity. Funding includes travel, room and board, and other expenses required by the program. Passports and immunizations as well as other personal expenses will be covered by students. Students who are accepted and withdraw after January 15, 2019 must reimburse the college for all expenses committed on their behalf.

**Program plans subject to change.**

**Program Policies:** <https://earlham.edu/academics/off-campus-study/program-policies/>