

In 2010 I won the BICC&I and the Jet Airways Scriptum Award with my project U-Turn for The Community Care Trust Organization (www.communitycaretrust.com). I have stayed in South India for 3,5 months working on my final project for school. In this period I've taught English, Athletics and Art in a school, orphanage home and a women development center in India. After 2 years the big moment arrived and I returned to the wonderful colors and cultures of India. My travel companion was Tomek, a friend of mine that has always been interested and supportive when it comes to my India projects.

We started our journey in Delhi on September the 10th. After a chaotic adventure at the airport, where we didn't find our driver and eventually had to take a taxi, we arrived in our budget hotel at the Main Bazar. The next day one of the founders of CCT was going to show us all of the main touristic attractions of Delhi. We had reserved 3 days to visit this region and had decided that (for us) the most impressing building of the world had to be included. The 12th of September Tomek got an utmost unique 23th birthday standing on the steps of the marvelous Taj Mahal.

After these 3 days we flew to Chennai. Here we had our first encounter with the wonderful bus system of India (CMBT). The traffic is chaotic to say the least but the bus system works amazingly well! We took the bus to Mahabalipuram where we stayed for 4 nights. We found a great little hotel with sea view. After the vibrant Delhi, we were happy to relax at the beachfront and explore the shore temples, Mandapas and rock carvings. The last time I was in India I had a teaching project not to far from here, being back gave me the opportunity to see the changes and visit people I met back then.

On September 17th we travelled with 3 different busses to Vikravandi, in the Villipuram District. This is where the orphanage is in which I worked 2 years ago. Every minute we came closer to the Sint Patrick's Home, the more nervous I became. We were driving through the beautiful green landscape of India and suddenly I started recognizing things. It was such a positive emotional feeling. When I saw and hugged the manager, the teachers and friends it was too difficult to hold back my tears. I felt reunited with my Indian family with whom I experienced so much! After greeting and meeting everyone I noticed the CCT had been busy since my last visit. They have expanded the orphanage and now have an English medium primary school. They increased the number of projects for helping the poor children of the surrounding villages. Over the 3 days we stayed there I felt like I travelled back in time. We taught the children some games, we helped them with their homework, organized Olympic Games with new bought sports material and experienced a lot of love and thankfulness. It was an emotional but superb reunion for both sides!

We wanted but couldn't stay longer. Our train was already booked and was taking us to Madurai. From the peaceful, calm atmosphere in Vikravandi into the noisy and boisterous city of Madurai. We planned coming here mainly for visiting the imposing Sri Meenakshi Temple, the Tailor market and the Tirumalai Nayak Palace. We enjoyed the many tall buildings by dining in the rooftop restaurants and taking in the panoramic view over the city.

The 3rd day we took the four-hour bus drive to Kumily. The low season allowed us to bargained our way into a magnificent guesthouse with a vast view of the wildlife. We spent 3 days tracking in The Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, visiting the spice gardens and thee factories, seeing a Kathakali performance and a riding an Indian elephant. Kumily was one of our greatest stays in India and another one that passed away too quickly.

A few days later we took the bus to Cochin, this meant 6 hours of mountain roads in a bus held together by the paint. Our backs felt soar and bodies were tired but Cochin presented us with yet another completely different India. We stayed in Fort Cochin for 4 days. We met some nice backpackers and a rickshaw driver who were all somehow related to the homestay we were in. Together we visited the famous backwaters and the Chinese fishing nets. We included a hiking trip to

the surrounding islands and the other touristic attractions on Fort Cochin. We were amazed yet again by the difference in nature and culture of India. Coming from the rather chilly, forest and mountain environment as a contrast to the sea-level land with scorching temperatures and little backwaters.

From Cochin we took the train to Goa. After the 12-hour ride we arrived in Madgaon train station at 2am. Along with the many other Indian people we waited there for the first bus to take us to Palolem, the busses start around 6am so this meant a long wait. Arriving in Palolem we noticed how "unready" it was, this meant we couldn't sleep in the famous beach huts. We found another nice guesthouse where we stayed for our final 8 nights. Since Goa was our last destination in our one-month adventure we decided to take it a bit slower and relax. We rented a Royal Enfield motorcycle and cruised all the beaches of South Goa, we took the bus to North Goa, visited the Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary and spent some quite time on the palm surrounded beach of Polem, WONDERFULL!

September 9th was to be our D-day. We took the plane from Goa to the domestic airport of Mumbai, and waited there for 6 hours until we were finally allowed to enter the international airport. After 9 hours flying we arrived back in cold and grey Belgium. Now I'm back I find it difficult to adapt the Belgium way of living, getting used to the simple way of living makes you think about the excess we have and expect in the west. This month passed too quickly but thought me allot, I'm extremely happy that I had the opportunity to go back to India and visit my project again. This experience has been made possible with the help of BICC&I and Jet Airways Scriptum Award. For that I'm very grateful!

Thanks a lot!!

