

At the IIMC - live and colourful!

A Travellers Report

„Abroad among friends“ ...this could just as well be the title of my report as well.

I am absolutely not alone with this experience. For one of the specialties of the IIMC is definitely to make us foreigners and travelling „Volunteers“ from abroad feel at home and very welcome - even if this Welcome can sometimes be very lively and loudly and maybe a bit overwhelming .-)

A long time overdue was this visit of mine at the IIMC Mission in Kolkata.

Now, at last I managed it!

From 1st to 10th of February 2023 it was possible for me to visit the Project I worked for as a Volunteers at 2006 and cooperated with ever since. It is 17 years now, as Dr. Sujit kindly kept pointing out!

Now it was finally possible to be a guest to **Dr. Sujit and his wife Barnali Brahmochari** and accompany them during their work day.

It is very impressive how this married couple continue to shoulder the **running of the project together since over 30 years** by now. They willingly submit their everyday family life to it.

IIMC is obviously their joint hearts mission.

But apart from that:

The big **IIMC diversity** of the projects parts and departments had to be visited and appropriately appreciated:

The 34. IIMC school in Dakshin Kashinagar at the most far out end of the Ganges Delta, the huge and many-sided Dhaki Campus, the Micro Credit-Offices and the Cow Project.

The Women Meetings of „Woman Peace Council“ and the „Real Madrid Sports Project“ with its eager girls and boys.

And of course the five big Medical Ambulances Thegaria, Chakberia, Dhaki, Bamangachi und Challapara, most of them at the far off rural regions south from Kolkata.

The ambitious building site of Thegaria Outdoor Clinic in Sonarpur - this is today a big multi specialty medical centre, which is getting its 3rd floor at the moment.

Space for a future elevator already included!

The IIMC sponsored children.

The Handloom and Sewing works at the „Woman Empowerment Department“.

And last but not least the lively charming group of girls from the „Dishari“, the IIMC Orphanage. I immediatly felt them being cherished especially.

A whole lot of **local cooperations enrich the IIMC work** today:

Nursing Trainees from the Asia Heart Foundation and Doctors of a private Medical College, which support the IIMC work as „Public Health“-Volunteers.

Also a festivity from a state middle school in the neighbourhood had to be attended and a seminar for IIMC nursing apprentices.

Both times indian spontaneity was requested, when „Dr. Sylvie“ was asked to give a short lecture more or less unprepared. I hope I honoured the job duly to represent our German Support Group .-)

In many ways **Spontaneity and Patience alike are needed** in working and fostering IIMC.

Not only from the westernness co-workers. But so much more from the many indian volunteers and coordinators, that make this great work possible every day. The „extended IIMC family“ that is!

You can really call them that - the roundabout 150 people building the permanent IIMC team. Not only because they all work for a smaller salary than they would get in other jobs. But in particular because most of these people are with IIMC since 10 or 15 years or even since the founding of the project.

Moreover: **Many people stay true to the IIMC.**

Nurse Pritidi for example: The charming aged lady and retired IIMC nurse is one of the oldest IIMC participants. You can find her almost every day at the office of the Educational Department, where she owns a place of honour on the couch. At the same time one of the youngest IIMC volunteers is just of age and already working at the „Main Registration Office“. She is also a former sponsored child. Now she puts her energy and charm into coaching and supporting the international volunteers - she gives an ear to all their problems and has always a good solution at hand.

So the IIMC is **a multi generation project!**

It has grown steadily, it is well established and highly valued and officially the biggest NGO of all West Bengal with reaching more than 150.000 households throughout the state.

But at IIMC an open mind is also cultivated: Exploring new regions and work fields and inviting new ideas coming from the permanent colleagues just as well as from the poor people IIMC thrives to support in their independence.

There is a smooth transition from being one of the poor or vulnerable IIMC fosterlings to becoming an IIMC coworker and employee.

And that's exactly how a „self help project“ should be!

My visits from the newest IIMC schools in Dakshin Kashinagar and Dhaki to the oldest one in Hogolkuria - founded 1994 - showed me two interrelated things: The **ongoing enterprise and the true sustainability** of this Institution and its manifold projects.

The Institute of Indian Mother and Child of today is indispensable for the regions economic and public progress - just as it is for the social cohesion and spirit of so many communities.

I am very happy and maybe even a little bit proud to call myself a IIMC co-worker since 2006 and an IIMC friend. How exciting and beautiful it is to watch and support this good work develop a brighter future for so many!

Thanks to all supporting it with us!

Yours -

„Dr. Sylvie“
IIMC Germany