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Her Visiting Report

First, I would like to thank the Calcutta Research Group and all the people there for making the two week long internship program possible for me in the first place: Professor Ranabir Samaddar for providing me with some useful contacts and phone numbers; my friends Sanam Roohi and Ishita Dey for further guiding me around the city during their office hours and beyond; Mrs Chatterji for fixing my flights (and yet trying to reschedule them) as well as the rest of the staff at the office, who took care of me in the most hospitable way during my stay.

The internship consisted of helping out in the compilation of the Winter Course evaluation report at the office and conducting a brief study on the broad variety of NGO action taking place in the city of Kolkata.

As for the independent research, my original plan was to focus on one or two aid or human rights organisations more thoroughly during the two weeks' visit, in order to do a more participatory ethnographic study on the human encounters in the practice of care. My forthcoming Master's thesis touches the topic very closely and hence the interest in such a research question. For various reasons this plan could not be realised, however. Instead, with the help of the many contacts I received at the office, I got a chance to go and meet a range of NGO representatives working with issues such as human rights, disaster relief, health care, poverty reduction, education and children's needs.

The organisations included Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR); the Calcutta Samaritans; Indian Red Cross Society's West Bengal State Branch; Child in Need Institute (CINI) and Howrah Pilot Project – school in the former jute workers slum. Some organisations I only visited once, while often for long discussions with their representatives, while others I had a chance to visit on two or more days.

Although being a plan B, this small research project on the vast range of NGO work in Kolkata turned out to be an interesting and eye-opening experience in many respects. Not only was I perplexed by the sheer number of NGOs operating in Kolkata, but also impressed with their level of innovation and specialisation. Although I only visited few organisations only - representing a tip of the ice-berg if even that in the NGO activities available in the city – the visits evoked myriad observations and further questions regarding the politics of care and responsibility.

Also, the mere exercise of getting around the city – my field – spiced up my research adventure considerably. Somehow, the exhilarating experience of successfully using the Kolkata public transport on my own, or searching *and* finding addresses and buildings in different parts of the immense city brought the ever-present questions of space and locality into a more concrete level. And of course, the people I met during my visits are likely to be useful contacts also in the future and I am very grateful for them also for sharing with me their time and interesting insights.

I am writing this report back in Finland, in the room where I work at the university. The daily routines of balancing between my office job and completing the Master's thesis have taken over now, a month after my return. Thanks to the travel, the people I met and the things I saw, however, the routines and writing look slightly different now. The internship as well as the Winter Course were deep learning experiences, not only about issues of forced migration and politics of care, but also about myself and my ways of being

and seeing. I am very grateful to CRG for providing me with this opportunity to learn and truly hope us to collaborate also in the future.

