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Final Impression, June 2016

So here we are: After 10 months of living in India, it is almost time to say good-bye. Goodbye to my wonderful hostfamily who made my stay in Setrawa unforgettable, good-bye to all the women, girls and children who I got to know in Setrawa and Jodhpur during the year, good-bye to the guesthouse and good-bye to incredible India. After 10 months of being in India, on one hand it seems to me like we've been in India for ages and on the other hand the time flew by. So many things happened in these 10 months so that if I had to describe all the things I would have to write a whole book. But I will summarize the last months...or at least try it:

As I wrote my first impression report, I wasn't really settled in yet. I think I needed at least 3 months to really feel comfortable and relaxed in Setrawa. But then, it was one of the best experiences I've ever had. Living with an Indian family for such a long time is not only a great experience. It is more than it! My hostfamily became my second family and I'm sure I will stay in contact with all of them. Meera was like a mother to me, she took care of Hannah and me when we were ill and we could/can always talk to her when we have any kind of problems. Furthermore she is the best Indian cook to me, so we were very lucky having the chance to live in her home. It was also great to get to know all the Indian traditions and to celebrate the festivals of Diwali, Holi and all the thousands of others together with my hostfamily. And one thing I'm really going to miss are the nights on the roof top in Setrawa. In the last months it was way too hot to sleep in the room, so we slept on the roof top under the sky full of stars. Staring at the stars, listening to the buses driving by and Meera who talks all the time.

Next I'm so satisfied with my decision to go to Setrawa and then finally to move to Jodhpur for the last weeks. Therefore I had the chance to work in the two projects in Setrawa and then two different projects in Jodhpur. In Setrawa I taught with Hannah some girls in English in the so called Sewing class and in the afternoon I had my own class, with the help of Pooja, where I taught girls and boys in English. I had a good time with them and we had a lot of fun together, but all in all I was a bit sad that Hannah and I did not have the girls from the beginning for our whole stay in Setrawa. They left in the middle of our time to go to college in Jodhpur. But then we got some new girls and I think it was good to teach them, because they could not even write the ABC. In the peacock class I had 3 to 6 children and I really liked them. But in the last weeks they did not come regularly because of all the weddings, festi-

vals and additionally their holidays. And I think that Hannah, Anna-Lena and I did some really good workshops for them which they found interesting. And then there were our four weeks holiday, which we splitted into two weeks. Two weeks in November and two weeks in April/May. I'm glad we decided to go to the south first and then to the north. So we had the chance to see two completely different sides of India. And of course, I can't and won't forget the meeting in Udaipur in January where we've got to know all the other volunteers who are volunteering throughout India. The visit of my parents and my brother was also a good time and I can't imagine how it would have been not seeing them for a whole year. After the two weeks off in May, I already had to pack my stuff for Jodhpur. It was really hard and tearful for me to leave Setrawa even though it wasn't for ever. I already came back for a weekend to visit my hostfamily, Hannah, Anna-Lena, Pooja, Suman and the peacock kids. Anyway it felt weird to leave and I'm a bit scared of the farewell from my hostfamily and Setrawa in July. For me the year in Setrawa/Jodhpur was a big bubble, far away from home and any future plans. Now, as the year is going to end, the bubble seems slowly to break. And this scares me, especially because I don't know what to study after India. But I guess I don't need to know it yet.

All in all, and I can't believe I just wrote my last impression report, I had the best time of my life and I'm sure I will come back, maybe even next year. Who knows?

In conclusion I feel like I have to thank all those I've got to know during my time here. So a big thank you to Meera and her great family, thank you to the children and girls in the Setrawa Empowerment Centre, thank you to Pooja and Suman, thank you to Govind and his family, thank you to the children at Sambhali Sambhal, thank you to the girls at ShaktiEmpowerment Centre and a big, big, big thank you to my "Volunta crew". The year would not have been the same without you!