Love the children of the world
We travelled in February 2010 around in India for 1 month to experience the everyday life on some of the homes for children, which are supported by the Danish organisation, Children of the World, ICWS. This book tries to pass on some of the many impressions we got on this trip. We did not meet hopelessness or despair, but happiness and confidence. Children with hope and a belief in the future. Children with more love for life than we had expected. We saw a lot of nature which made us silent, and we met economically poor Indians with a great engagement and with a surplus of energy to give the children on the homestay. We were prepared to meet a totally different world. We also did meet this world. But we also met a world where we experienced, that what makes people get out of bed and start the day, is exactly the same as in Denmark: love for each other and for life. Both children and grown ups – we all had many questions we wanted to find answers to on the trip. We did get many of the answers – but new questions did arise.

Sara Luna, Marcus and Gabriel Camilla Blachmann & Charlotte Thon
Trip to India
Cows, hens and human beings are crossing the street. Dust everywhere. You need to keep an eye on everybody so you don’t lose contact with each other. The air is full of smells from human beings, animals and food.
India is the country in the world with the second biggest population, more than one billion people. It is more than 200 times the population in Denmark. There are rich people in India, but the majority only has very little money. Only money enough to buy a little food everyday.
They received us with open arms on the children homes. We were invited to explore the everyday life of the home and we shared happiness and sorrow with the children.

All are welcome
Day in the homes start at 6 in the morning. The girls go to the well to fetch water, so they can wash themselves before they go to school. They also fetch water to prepare the breakfast.
Hair plaits, school dress and an orderly pencil box. The older girls on the home are preparing to go to school. They put oil in their hair so it shines and then they help each other plaiting the hair.
The girls are sitting with crossed legs on the ground and are eating the breakfast. Their tin bowls are making noises against the ground. They are eating with their fingers and they are chatting about everything between earth and sky.

Have you tried to sit with your legs crossed on the ground and eat hot food with your fingers.
In the small classroom in the school all the small children are attending class. The children are sitting very close on the ground between the low blue tables. They are all very quiet when the teacher talks, and all wish to be the first who comes with the right answer.

When the teacher talks are you and your friends quite?
In the homes for children we visited, there are mostly girls. They are between 4 and 17 years old. Some of them have a mother or father, but they can stay with them, because they are too sick or poor to take care of their children. Some don’t have any parents at all. The children are very happy to stay in the home. They have each other and call each other for sister and brother.
Selvi wants to be an actress, and she dreams about being part of a movie, like the ones they are allowed to see in the television once a week. Akila wants to be a social worker, so she can help others.
In the home they are all one big family, but most of them have a bosom friend, whom they are especially close to.
There are children which needs special attention on several of the homes, for example if they are physically handicapped. They get special training and help, so they are able to manage everyday life better. If they are able to, they help in sweeping, gardening and taking care of the animals.

Do you know anybody who has a handicap?
The girls don’t have any toys, but they play with the geese and hens, which lives behind the home together with the cow. You are seldom alone in the home, but in the chicken yard you are able to find a corner where you can be alone.
All her possessions: clothes, tinplate, postcards, letters, pencil box and a teddy bear. All the girls are very proud of their suitcase. In it is all what they possess.

If you were allowed only to fill one suitcase with things, what would you put into it?
The girls are washing their own clothes at the washing place. They are taking water from a big pool and with a piece of soap they are rubbing the clothes until it is clean. We can hear that they are laughing while they are washing. They are splashing the cold water on each other while they are chatting and laughing. In the end they are hanging the clothes between the trees for drying. The bigger girls are helping the smaller ones.

Who is washing your clothes?
Brother Sebastian is the manager of the girl’s village, New Life.
He is also manager of a big organisation, which help poor people to a better life. Her he is with some of the children from the girl’s village, where all the children are orphans.
Do you know anybody who has dedicated their life to help others?

Auntie Margaret and Grace. They have been running a children's home for many years. They have dedicated their lives to help other people. They are now hoping to find somebody else to take over, so the home can be continued.
It is getting dark in southern India and the girls are sleeping peacefully. We are saying goodnight from the land, where the moon are laying down, and we wish the best to the Children of the World.

Good night
Famous five
Credits
Thanks to all who helped
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We visited 2 out of the 10 homes which Children of the World support in India.

New Life, which Children of the World have supported since 1996. This home was established with the support of Children of the World, and the manager is Brother Sebastian from the NGO St. Joseph Development Trust, SJDT. Around 100 girls are living in the home. Many of the girls are found on the street in the bigger town close by, a town where child workers are very common. The home also has a section for handicapped children, a new child village and a street child project and a family project with many women groups in the surrounding villages. Sebastian a competent manager and SJDT got a reward in 2006 as being one of the best NGO in Tamil Nadu. Guild of Service, Children’s Home of Kolagiri, which Children of the World has supported since 1976. This home is situated very beautifully in the mountains of Nilgiri. The home is managed by 2 elderly sisters, who also started the home. Work is going on to make a plan for new management. 35 girls are living in this home.