



Educational & Ecological Initiatives between Europe and India

Study trip to Indian Partner school
Queen Mary, Mumbai
July – August 2015

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Dear Reader,

This report is a summary of the activities and impressions that Judy Beppe and Dawn Milner had during their 10 day stay in Mumbai with EUMIND partner school Queen Mary School in Mumbai.

The purpose of the trip was to strengthen ties between Willem van Oranje College and Queen Mary with the goal to make concrete agreements for future exchange programs. The preparation for the trip included applying for and receiving funding from VIOS. With this application we specified what we would do and what the added benefit of the trip would be. In addition our expectations and wishes were discussed in a number of e-mails between Queen Mary and ourselves. This preparation laid the foundation for a well-rounded and productive visit.



We landed at the Mumbai airport just after midnight at the end of July. Even though it was very late, there was a lovely warm welcome with flowers and tilak by Mr Heri and Ms Dhun along with 2 lovely students.

After a day to transition to the Mumbai time zone and climate, our official visit began on the Saturday. We spent the morning being shown around the historical Fort area by Ms Dhun and Ms Vijaya. The information was detailed and very informative. We were treated to all forms of transportation, city buses, taxis and trains. At the end of the tour we returned to Miss Diana's family home for a lovely breakfast with Indian treats. The next day our visit to Mumbai continued with a visit hosted by Mrs Maniar and Ms Gloria. We saw many different highlights of the city such as Marine Drive, the Hanging gardens, the Sea Causeway, shopping districts and many different temples. With this introduction we had a good impression of how diverse and vibrant Mumbai is.





On Monday our official visit began. Since Queen Mary was in the midst of a test week, we visited another school, St Mary's, a Jesuit boys' school. Here we got an impression of the education provided from preschool to matriculation. What we observed was a disciplined school where students are given a lot of responsibility for their own learning. We visited classes at all levels of the school, preschool, elementary, middle and secondary. In talks with teachers, the

similarities with the Dutch and Indian situation regarding the student/parent relationship with the school and teachers were discussed. We introduced the EUMIND program to the school administrators for their future consideration.

On Tuesday Dawn and Judy visited Queen Mary for the first time. We were greeted with garlands, tilak, music and dance at the entrance of the school. From the moment that we entered the school and throughout our visit the warmth and hospitality of management, teachers, support staff and students was palpable. Everyone that we came in contact made us feel welcome and helped us in any way we needed.



The visit on Tuesday to Queen Mary included a general assembly with the older students. Then there was a tour of the school with visits to various classes. In the afternoon we accompanied a number of classes for a field trip to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalay museum, as part of their British Council International program.



The following day we were treated to more visits to different primary classes within the school. This was followed by the Inter-house Quiz competition. The great school spirit and good academic level of the Queen Mary students was very evident with this activity.

On Thursday we visited a number of middle and secondary classes at Queen Mary. The kinds of assignments and abilities of the students impressed us, which speaks well of the teachers' accomplishments. We also had the opportunity to teach a group. We chose to teach the 7th form Elocution class. Here we had the students prepare a short talk about their school based on videos made by our students.

On Friday, the visit to the school came to a close. In the morning we were guests to the annual prize distribution ceremony including various performance of song, dance and drama. In the afternoon there was a formal meeting of Dutch and Indian EUMIND teachers. Then students and teachers taking part in the EUMIND project met together. The visit finished with a lovely dinner on Marine Drive with the many of the teachers who had been a part of our visit.

Throughout the visit there were a number of briefings, meetings and discussions about EUMIND including Head teacher, Ms Mathias, teachers and students. We shared our expectations and ideas for communicating and collaborating. Teachers worked out research questions for EUMIND Regions. Students taking part in the EUMIND project had the opportunity to get feedback about their projects. These meetings allowed concrete plans to be made for future exchanges. The first step is the collaboration with the Regions project this school year.



To round of the trip Dawn visited another EUMIND school, Vibgyor High and discussed the Regions project with coordinator Padmaja Kutty and members of the Vibgyor teaching staff.

Impressions:

Queen Mary school offers the students a wide range of activities; academic, sport and cultural; which are meant to develop confident, well-versed young women bound for university. There were many opportunities for the students to perform and present in public. Students' accomplishments inside and outside the school are celebrated on a daily and weekly basis.

The school fosters a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the students. This does not mean that it is insular. The school has many programs and projects that focus on India and the world in general; for example Indian culture, world myths and legends, comparisons with different cultures. The students embarking on the EUMIND project were enthusiastic about the opportunity to communicate and collaborate with Dutch students.

Future Cooperation:

The goal of the visit to Queen Mary was to lay the foundation for future exchange between the schools. The visit gave us a lot of confidence that an exchange can be successful. There is an open communication between the Queen Mary and Willem van Oranje College. The aim is to have a group of students from Queen Mary visit Willem van Oranje College. That would be followed by a visit by Dutch students. The dates of the visit still need to be confirmed. Consideration needs to be made for the academic school year, such as exams, as well as the various vacation periods. The financial costs and financing of an exchange still have to be determined.

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