

# A CHARITY- ADVENTURE-ROADTRIP

## ON TWO WHEELS FROM BOMBAY TO GOA, THAT STARTED A MOVEMENT IN INDIA!

We are back from the craziest, most powerful, most exhausting, most passionate and most meaningful road trip we have ever done in our lives!

Niels-Peter Jensen (TV Host and extremesports athlete from Germany), Dface (World famous street artist from England), Ganesh Hinde (Artist and motorcycle enthusiast from India), Caro Fitus (Motocross racer from Germany) and Francesca Gasperi (Race legend from Italy) rode on Royal Enfield Himalayan, from Mumbai to Goa. The mission was to give away helmets to people in need and to show people how important and cool helmets are. But the whole road trip and the whole idea behind the charity project HELMETS FOR INDIA, turned into a powerful movement and started something unique and huge. This trip was the beginning of a big change in India.

## THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED ON THIS UNIQUE TRIP!

After 8 months of preparation, it was finally time to start the trip on 20.03.2019 by plane in the direction of Mumbai.

At the airport of Mumbai the team from all over the world met for the first time.

Although it was already in the middle of the night, the temperatures were unbearable. The next day they quickly realized that the planned tour from Mumbai to Goa would not be easy, the weather forecast for the next two weeks promised 40 degrees and more.

But before heading to Goa, there was plenty to organize for the tour, such as picking up the Royal Enfield Himalayan bikes provided by partner Royal Enfield. In addition, the first exhibition of helmet art works in the "Helmet Art Show" in the Bombay Art Gallery had to be prepared.



The day after their arrival, they finally met Indian artist and rider Ganesh Shinde, known as Miles on Canvas. With Ganesh they were brought together by Mallika Prakash, who has been shaping the project from India for many weeks. Typically Indian, Ganesh was an incredibly likeable type, initially very shy and reserved, but during the trip he thawed quickly and made sure that everyone could make their way without involuntary extra kilometers.

The first Donation of helmets took place the next day in Mumbai. The children of a primary school near the slums, who are on their scooters with their parents every day, were the first to be visited by the HFI team and receive helmets. "Already for these first moments, the expression in the eyes of children and parents, this gratitude and joy, made already all the work worth for me," remembers Niels-Peter Jensen visibly touched.

The helmets were not just handed out by the prominent drivers, they accompanied this with stories and lectures to inspire the children for the topic of helmet. "It is important to me that children not only understand the importance of wearing a helmet from an early age, but also see its coolness as an accessory. My boys at home find their helmets cool! ", Says the father of 4, NPJ.

Inspired by the huge success and great emotions of this first Donation, the team started the first exhibition of helmets the next day.

For the realization of the first "Helmet Art Show", it was a good idea to team up with Mallika Prakash, an Indian artist, engineer and motorcycle lover, who held her Moto Art Show in Mumbai for the second time this year. At this event, she would be exhibiting 10 artists from around the world who associate motorcycles in their artworks. The perfect platform also for the "Helmet Art Show" of Helmets for India, which contributed to the exhibition 20 works of art from helmets by international artists. Visitors from all over India traveled to attend the event.

The nascent custom and motorcycle scene in India does not yet know too many events and opportunities to meet and exchange. Even famous Indian TV and Bollywood stars came and made the event a huge hustle and bustle. The enthusiasm for the different and impressive works of art created from the helmets was overwhelming. This was only enhanced by the presence of such a famous artist as D\*Face. A terrific prelude to the project HFI and through the interviews for the press and blogs the next attention that was created.

The day after the "Helmet Art Show" the time had finally come to begin the charity adventure road trip to Goa.



After everything was packed, it was the greatest happiness for each individual to finally start the Royal Enfields. The love of riding a motorbike was what bound them all together. Riding a bike through a foreign country, feeling the wind, hearing the new scents and explore the beauty of the land.

The first stage was from Mumbai City to Pune. The 180 km, which the Navi announced, should be done in 2 hours, the drivers thought in their European naivety. But the locals of Motomachao just smiled and tried to make clear that it would take 7 to 8 hours more likely to arrive in Pune! If you have not been to India before, such a statement is very hard to believe, but reality quickly taught a better one! It takes an eternity in India through the massive traffic, which is just incredibly crazy. Millions of cars, trucks and bicycles squeeze through the smallest gaps. Wherever you look, only metal that struggles through the streets without rules. Traffic rules that have been learned in Europe do not exist here, no flashing, no right of way. Speed and audacity are ruling here. But they love their horns and the wild concert from them quickly became a familiar background noise. In addition to this left-hand traffic, for most of them unfamiliar. So the first challenge was to get used to all this as fast as possible and keep an eye on not being hit.

Before this was anchored in the mind, there were already several situations that could have ended fatal. Fortunately, all the helmets were equipped with the communication system of the sponsoring partner Sena and so everyone could watch after and warn each other in time.

There was no choice but to jump into the cold water, try to go with the flow and forget everything you once learned. The last 3 hours on the way to Pune lay in darkness, despite not decreasing traffic.

At around 9:00 pm they finally reached Pune. In retrospect, this first stage was probably the most dangerous test of courage for the entire team. Completely exhausted, but very happy and proud at the same time to have mastered this first stage, the adventurers were welcomed by the guys from Motomachao in Pune.

At the following dinner, these Indian Custom Painters spontaneously decided to join the rest of the road trip.

One of the guys, Atharva "Doc" Chohan, had suggested to shorten the second stage to stay a little longer in Pune and meet some customizers and motorcycle collectors.



The next morning they got up early to meet some guys from the Indian custom scene. First place was the "Club Retro Pune". The owner was a legend in India, Papa Bai was an elderly gentleman who had specialized in two-stroke with his son. His garage was an approximately 20sqm small room, packed with old treasures and tools, there was an old disassembled Lambretta scooter on a self-built stage.

After getting to know each other and hearing about the HFI project, Papa Bai showed us his collection hidden in another garage not far from his workshop. What they were allowed to see there, was a dream for every motorcycle lover. Jawas, Royal Enfields, Lambrettas, Yamaha and Vintage Bikes, which they've never seen before. The confidence in the HFI team deepened quickly and to top it all off, as well as a gesture of gratitude for what this project means for India, all of the team were allowed to ride their lovingly restored bikes. Caro and Francesca immediately got excited about the Yamaha, while Niels wanted to ride the 1951 Royal Enfield. "It was terrific for me, like a time travel, to ride this bike from 1951, having previously been on the modern Adventure Bike of Royal Enfield," says Niels enthusiastically.

After 1 hour of fun on Vintage Bikes, it was time to continue the mission. A few kilometers away, the second "Helmet Give Away" action took place. The action was in advance organized and promoted by „Team Driven India“, a motorcycle clothing and accessories store. Accordingly, the rush was great, there were many families on motorcycles and scooters.

During Helmet Donations one thing stayed in focus: it's so important not only to convey how much protection helmets offer, but also to show how cool helmets can be. So that you not only have to wear it, you also want it! Each and every one of the team made big effort to talk to the people to reach them. Therefore they had to start at the very beginning, because it took a lot of time to explain the parents how to put a helmet on and close it properly. Here it became really clear, that most people in India never really got in touch with helmets, not being aware of this possibility of protection against major injuries.

After 4 hours of successful helmet distribution, it was time to drive to the next overnight location.

Next stop: Pawna Lake. The Navi showed about 70km only, but having the experience of the last stage, they knew that even 70km will not even be completed quickly ...



Even though this was the shortest stage of the tour, it had it all! More than half of the distance was an off-road uphill and downhill, which again led to not reaching the finish before dusk. And that meant driving on an unknown off road for 4 hours in the extreme whirling dust of the front man. An incredible challenge! You could hardly see anything and so the first defect was inevitable: it hit Niels. It was probably a sharp stone that caused his rear wheel to lose air, allowing him to reach the house of "Doc" only at walking pace in the middle of the night.

Only the second day with the bikes on tour, everyone was already quite exhausted. Long days, scorching heat, unbelievable traffic and far too little sleep for the increased concentration.

It was not until the next morning that the goal achieved here could really be realized. In the middle of the mountains with an unobstructed view of Pawna Lake, beautiful and an incredible sight, far from any city. The sight paid for all the effort.

But sadly, the rear tire of Niels reminded the team not to continue to enjoy this unique view. The next stage, which was to lead to the coast, was already waiting, but before that the rear wheel of Niels Royal Enfield Himalayan had to be repaired. The next town was about an hour away, so the bike had to be stowed in the support vehicle. No easy task, because the bus was only intended to transport the helmets for donations and therefore was filled up to the ceiling with helmets of the partners.

A workshop was quickly found in the next town, but definitely not comparable to workshops we know from Europe! Hardly any tools to see, no tools. The soil was a dusty clay soil and hope disappeared immediately to be able to solve the problem here. Now you could clearly feel how spoiled you are in our countries actually! Because: after 30min the rear wheel was mended and installed again and the tire had air. We could not believe it, but the fact that the tire was perfect throughout the tour speaks well for itself ...

Even early in the morning the temperatures were unbearable, but the day's top values should still reach 48 degrees, and the upcoming distance of 156km to Pawna Beach was extremely exhausting. Regular stops were mandatory and again and again the Motomachao guys reminded us to drink water to avoid heat stroke at these temperatures. This made the progress through small villages and intervening off-road passages quite slow. Twice, rivers crossed the road which had to be crossed with converted fishing boats. Crossing a river with "Harihareshwar Bangmandla Jetty", an old wooden boat, was pure adventure, because the motorcycles were loaded with provoked ramps up on the



roof. But waiting time also provided the perfect opportunity to donate helmets to families. In addition, waiting gave everyone involved the unexpected opportunity to experience how the famous artist D\*Face passed the time by turning the tank of his Royal Enfield into a new piece of artwork with aerosols and jewelry he bought and collected along the way!

The next 80km to Aaravi Beach were fantastic! Traffic became less and less and no more highways. From now to Goa the way would only lead through small villages, where hardly any tourists are seen, through breathtaking nature, over mountain passages always towards the sea.

This country visually is really a dream for any motorcyclist, the road conditions are not as we know from our homelands, but if you include these complications, every kilometer is a treat for the senses and a challenge for rider and bike.

They reached Aaravi Beach before sunset and everyone was able to enjoy a well deserved swim in the sea before checking in into the wooden cabins, located directly on the beach. Ganesh Shinde, like every day, found a quite place to paint on a helmet from HEDON. Ganesh had immortalized the entire tour on a helmet. Every day a new sight was added and so a unique road book was created during the trip!

During the entire tour only local food was eaten, everybody became a fan of Indian cuisine and in Aaravi Beach the local food on the beach under the starry sky tasted even better.

The next morning we went back to the bikes early, we wanted to drive as many miles as possible as long as the sun was still low. That stage meant 130km to Guhagar with many small villages to drive through, winding passages and off road passages through the mountains again.

Not only the bad road conditions do not allow fast driving and demand more vigilance, it could also be a cow or a horde of monkeys on the road behind every curve!

On the 130km we met motorcyclists and families on scooters, talked to them and donated helmets. The tour demanded a lot from the team, but everytime, when the helmets were distributed to families and people on two-wheelers, there was this magical moment. This happy smile and the gratitude of the people rewarded for every drop of sweat. Receiving the emotions of the people was overwhelming!



Surprisingly, the route from Aaravi Beach to Guhaghar was super fast, probably because of the increasing adaptation to the conditions, actually the worse track conditions started to raise fun riding a motorcycle.

But at some point fun stopped, Dface, Caro Fitus, Doc and Niels-Peter Jensen drove ahead alone for a long time and stopped to have a drink. After a long wait, Papa G arrived and reported that Ganesh had strayed from the street and fallen. His bike had gotten a bit of a hit, but fortunately he only had a few bruises and scratches, no more injuries had happened. The rest of the group and Ganesh rejoined and the first thing he said was: "This Helmet just saved my life," pointing to the new NOLAN helmet Niels brought from Hamburg.

This event dipped the whole action of "Helmets for India" in bold letters, everybody knew: without such a quality helmet Ganesh would not have finished this tour, without helmet this accident would have ended differently for him!

This crash was a shocking experience for everyone, yet it made the whole team of Helmets for India even closer, because now everyone was even more motivated to point out how important helmets are!

„Helmets for India“ will not stop trying to make a difference!

## SAFE RIDE FOR EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE!

Another short night, but this next day a short stage, too! Only 80km to the destination Ganpatiphule. There, the next helmet donation was organized in a very special location right in front of the world famous Ganesha Temple.

Every day countless families come to this temple to pray, most of them on two wheels. Before all helmets could be unloaded from the bus, we went to the responsible police station to announce the action. After the "Helmets For India" project was declared and the skepticism was cleared, a special helmet donation action could start. The police assisted the team in the distribution and many people came who had already heard about the action from Indian daily newspapers. Again, the joy and gratitude of the people compensated the team for all the hardships!

Only two more days to Goa, but the road did not get any easier. It was 210km from Ganpatiphule to Malvan, experience told it would be an 8 hour drive and so it was. On the 210km only 4 stops were taken to drink and to donate helmets on the track. The decision to take the highway did not bring much effect, the asphalt frequently came to an end and the road lead over gravel and clay slopes.



According to the heat and dryness, it was so dusty like driving through dense fog, trucks paralyzed the flow and as if that was not enough, from time to time cows suddenly ran on the street, which caused many emergency brakes ... Finally arrived in Malvan the dinner didn't take long, because everyone wanted to spend the rest of the night to recover as much as possible.

Despite exhaustion and the upcoming joy of achieving the final goal GOA, , everyone was saddened by the imminent end of the adventure. Everybody fell in love with the land and people of India. It's just something special! The people are incredibly welcoming and very helpful, loving, but also very shy. No matter where you are in India, you can feel an energy, this positive way of life and this strong belief, not a bit pushy, rather reserved, but always present and experienceable.

For the final stage from Malvan to Goa only 150km remained, but the planned Welcome Party at the Royal Enfield Garage Cafe right in the hot spot of Goa still put pressure on time. The second exhibition of the "Helmet Art Show" was planned there, as well as a DIA Show about the trip.

The 150km to Goa meant pure pleasure, despite the constant heat, every kilometer was enjoyed, everything seen, scented and sensed was inhaled by every one. Arrived in time, two hours were left to shower, pick photos, and prepare the helmets for the exhibition.

The Royal Enfield Garage Cafe is a wonderful location, where you can experience the complete history of the cult brand and admire many custom bikes from Indian customizers. The good food and drinks there then rewarded for a successful exhibition and it took half of the night until all interviews for press were given.

For the first time we could sleep long, but the trip was not over yet. The last big helmet donation was still pending and something very special was on the plan.

For one year it has been law in India, that the person who directs a two-wheeler must wear a helmet. It must be said that rarely only one person is traveling on a two-wheeler, usually you see whole families, including cargo on a scooter. Still, hardly anyone wears a helmet at all and so the police in Goa now and then distribute traffic tickets to drivers who do not wear a helmet.



Niels had been watching this for a while and then drove with Doc as an interpreter to the local police station. After a long wait, the police president of Goa finally took some time and could be convinced of the idea to distribute helmets together. Honestly, the last kick of persuasion was a cool NEXX retro-look helmet with funky decals as a "gift" to the chief of police ... Today, helmets would be distributed to drivers instead of fines and police ! This action in the middle of Goa once again attracted a great deal of attention, which could once again be used to show how cool and important helmets are! And to give away free helmets to people in need in India.

UNITE AND DO GOOD!

## HELMETS FOR INDIA

- A MOVEMENT THAT WILL MAKE A CHANGE

