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Travelling on a Mission

Prabhhu Chawla | Published: 21st June 2014 07:44 AM Last Updated: 21st June 2014 07:44 AM

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Yogo volunteering at the Mother Teresa Foundation in Kolkata

No matter what the cultural difference, which country one is in and what personal baggage one may carry, one thing that remains common is the hospitality that one extends to a guest. Sure, technical differences may ensue in terms of how that hospitality is provided, but having been on the road for the past two years, two months and counting, Yogo is a testimony to human kindness.

A French national who set out of the port town of Marseille when he was 24, Nathanaël Leprette, who goes by the name Yogo, has been travelling on the currency of generosity and compassion. Using websites like Couchsurfing, his accommodation has been a combination of free boarding, hostels and temples! He actually celebrated his 26th birthday in the city on Friday with some Biryani and good conversation.

Currently being hosted in Hyderabad by the Saprass, an adventurous couple with a couch for any weathered traveller, Yogo is actually an ambassador of the Travel with a Mission (TWAM) organisation. Connecting travellers to schools and institutes, TWAM hopes to reach out to as many young and old minds through their wanderlust brigade who share their experiences with the many worlds they meet.

Explains Yogo, "The idea is to share the expertise these people have with whoever is interested. You could be a musician, you could be an engineer, or you could simply be a jester. You can meet people at schools, colleges, hospitals or wherever, as long as you are sharing."

For his part, the expertise that Yogo brings to the table is his degree in energy engineering with an emphasis on renewable energy. "Climate change is something that I'm really concerned with as I have seen its effect in my travels. We really need to work towards sustainable living and that is the message I try to leave with the many children I speak to."

To that end, Yogo has so far managed to travel without ever having taken a flight. While his first leg from Marseille to Turkey was done hitching a ride on a cargo ship, he's been walking, hitch hiking and biking his way across land. "I think airplanes are the worst. They release gases in a place

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where it cannot even be recycled. And it's not just that, they also release water which gets trapped in the atmosphere. It should be down here, where we need it and can drink it."

What has struck Yogo most is the general lack of awareness about global warming and climate change and the apathy among those who do know of it.

"It's very possible that one may not have heard of it. But among those who are aware, they simply shrug and forget about it; they feel there's nothing they can do. But just little things can amount to a huge change," he says emphatically.

So far Yogo has travelled parts of South East Asia including China, Cambodia and Thailand. Within India, he calls Kolkata his home – "It was my base city from which I travelled to Bangladesh, Nepal and Varanasi" – though he's visited southern cities like Chennai, Pondicherry and Cochin. From here he plans to travel to Bengaluru next, moving around Karnataka before he goes up the northern border. After India, he plans to travel to Africa.

When asked if he's set an end date to his travels, and Yogo beams, "When I started I planned the trip for 10 years because that's how much money I collected. I plan on going to Dubai after that to work and earn some more so that I can travel again. But I haven't really set a date to go back home."

Follow Yogo's journey, you can check his blog Ecole, World y Camino which translates to School, World and the way.

Website: www.ecoleworldycamino.org.




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