

Week 10

My final week in Thailand was suddenly here. It's weird how fast ten weeks seem to fly by.



Monday, Volunteer Day 4

We started the day early with a visit in the little fishing village called Nam Kem. Nam Kem was hit extremely hard by the Tsunami and even if the houses there are rebuilt I'm sure the memories of this terrible disaster will never be forgotten. In Nam Kem there are two big fishing boats that got transported an incredible distance over land to where they are today. To me, even though I know the wave was huge, I still can't understand that these boats could be thrown so far away from the actual waterfront.

Monday afternoon was spent painting in Pakklong school again. We got unexpected help from a few students who all seemed extremely eager to help both Leah and Brad with their job. 7 year old kids with paint could have been dangerous, lucky for us and for their parents the paint was water based so no clothes were destroyed. Phew!



Tuesday, Volunteer day 5

On the Tuesday we went to the Elephant camp I visited a few weeks ago. Brad and Leah had never been on elephants before and they both seemed to enjoy it. This time I shared an elephant with Leah and it was a different one than last time. This elephant was a 37 year old female, brought up in Thailand, and ate around 300 kilos a day who liked to walk on rocky roads. Impressive stats for a girl my age! We finished off the elephant trip by giving our elephants a few buckets of bananas, two buckets are probably just like a small snack in the Elephant world. Tuesday afternoon we again spent in Pakklong finishing a few more rooms in the school. Even just a bit of colour dramatically adds some nice vibe to the rooms, I'm sure the school will look smashing once it's ready.



Wednesday, Volunteer Day 6

We had around 40 students that came to Pakklong today to have a last music class before we all headed back to Europe. We tried a new song, the Hokey Kokeyand it went down like a storm. Everyone loved it, kids, volunteers, Swedes and the teachers. I've never heard it before but was very happy and a great idea. While we were on the dance floor we also had a go on the Chicken Dance, then we introduced the harmonica and some brave kids had a go. The harmonica is a handy little instrument and the good thing is that you can't really play out of key!

Brad and Leah had brought some pens and art materials from the UK and we decided to try out their art skills by dividing the students into five smaller groups and give them a sheet of A1 paper per group to draw on. The theme was Britain, "What do you think about when you hear the word Britain?" It was probably a bit of a hard task as some of them might not know more about Britain than the flag and some football teams. The result was good though and the papers got filled with pictures, text and glitter.

Thursday, Volunteer day 7

Today was the last day in Pakklong for both me and the Volunteers. We had half a day on the building site and the afternoon was planned as a game day for the kids.

We had done serious preparations for the games with a treasure hunt for three different teams with separate maps, an egg race, a sack race and so on. It went well but to see 35 young kids jumping in bags on concrete is a bit scary and not 100% safe. To prevent them from falling we had to walk beside them while jumping just to prevent them from falling and only one kid fell and thankfully didn't hurt himself. After the games, everyone got ice cream and seemed very happy. Before leaving Pakklong for this time, Leah, Brad and myself went for a swim in the Pakklong river. The river is just the perfect swimming place. NOT. It is around 30cm deep and the bottom is full of sharp stones which at least makes me feel very old. The kids can of course run on this like if it was grass - very impressive. However today they showed us where the water was much deeper, hurrah, even we could go for a swim!). Swimming with 15 kids on a Friday afternoon in the middle of the jungle sometimes sounds like something you would never do but once you are there it seems like the most obvious thing in the world. Today the sun was shining and there were no giant snakes swimming with us so we had a great time. Pakklong, what a great place. ☺

Friday, Volunteer day 8

Today was the last day in Thailand for Brad and Leah and my last day in Ban Bangmuang school. We had a music class planned for the day. As many students were working with some living far away from the school we didn't get as many students attending as we'd hoped for but it was still great fun. After all the children's songs we have played over the last few weeks, we now attempted Beethoven's classic Ode to Joy and to my surprise the students had heard the song before and after just 15 minutes of practicing they played the whole piece. Result!!

On Friday afternoon Brad and Leah left for the airport on Phuket Island and from there to the UK. It was sad to see them go, both were great people and I'm sure they will remember their time in Thailand for a long, long time.

For me, my time in Thailand was suddenly coming to an end. I knew it would be hard to leave and I ended up going back to Pakklong and Thahan two more times before heading via Cambodia home to the UK. For me this has been the most fantastic opportunity I could imagine. For anyone that ever has the chance to go and do something similar. Go for it, you won't be disappointed!

To Melvin and Sharon from Festival Republic and Tajma, Noi and Sven from Cradle a very big thank you and to all students and teachers in Thailand Kittung mahk mahk, hopefully I'll see you soon. ☺

Ola