

Report, Volunteer English Teacher, Tomato Village, Thailand

This is the report about my experiences as an English teacher at Tomato village. I volunteered for 5 weeks and taught 5 days a week for 2 hours in the evening.

Tomato village is a quiet and peaceful village in the jungle near the border to Burma. Most people come originally from Burma and are from several tribes such as Shan, Karen and Hmong. Staying at the village was a step back into time as all animals walk around freely such as chicken and dogs, and the houses are simple, mostly made from wood. I liked waking up by the roosters and stepping outside of my own cottage to be welcomed by Benjamin's dog Phi Phi. My Cottage was situated next to Benjamin's house and the school so everything was very close. Benjamin is the head teacher of Community Learning Centre Tomato Village.



One of the two school buildings at CLC Community Learning Centre Tomato Village.

I went often jogging to the lake near tomato village which is beautiful spot because the lake is surrounded by hills with pine trees. The road to the lake is also beautiful as it goes through hills covered by jungle, and Phi Phi often joined me when I went walking or running. It is a very quiet and calm place, however people get up early and work hard, but they don't seem to have stress. Most people work on their own farms and as carpenter, in addition they make grass roofs and sell fruit, vegetables or rice.



The students and teacher.

The teaching was a great experience for me, I had never taught before, and have a degree in Mechanical Engineering. Benjamin let me very free in what I wanted to teach, he said you can teach about anything, he told me that it is important that the students try to communicate in English and that they get general knowledge. As most students know quite a lot of words but are not good in making sentences and using the right tenses my focus was on questioning and answering and making dialogues. In addition I did some mathematics with the students and told them about my home country The Netherlands. They also liked the game Hang Man a lot! We did it often at the end of the lesson.



The lake near Tomato Village surrounded by Pine trees.

I enjoyed very much staying in Tomato village, I learned a lot from Benjamin, as he has much life experience and knows a lot. It was for me an exceptional way for getting to know the local culture better. Whenever I have time I would very much like to go back, and stay for some time and teach English to the students.

Bastiaan

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