

Our experience as a volunteer.

We are a couple and we live in Holland. For a long time we had the urge to go abroad for a volunteer project. This is the first time we could realise this cherished wish.

For 8 weeks we were at the Tungrakschool in the south of Thailand.



We prepared our trip with the local organisation Pure! and Andaman Discoveries in Thailand, Kuraburi. The need for the project was to teach English. We wanted to go together and we combined English lessons with music lessons, singing and dancing. In order to teach music, you need instruments. We send a mail to friends, family and shops and asked for a donation so that we could buy instruments and also some teaching material. We wanted to give interactive lessons, use the picture dictionary so they can see what you are talking about. We also wanted to contribute some necessary material for the school and the students.

When we arrived Nat, from Andaman Discoveries, came to the office. We could fill in the papers and she gave us the telephone number of Andaman and her own private number. It was a very nice feeling that you can call them whenever you have questions. She went with us to the store to buy a local sim card and some groceries before going to the teachers house where we would stay for the 8 weeks. Teacher Waew and the director came immediately to welcome us.

The first morning Nat came to school to translate for us at a meeting with the director and teacher Waew. We could ventilate our ideas about the English lessons, the music lessons, singing and the dance. Also our idea to have a performance in the last week of our stay. Teacher Waew will be with us at the lessons to translate the instructions for the students and together we could provide the lessons. In this way she could use her English skills and work on the pronunciation. We hoped that the school had a beamer to use a big screen. This was not the situation, but they had a big screen that we could use by connecting the laptop with an USB cable, Perfect!! So this became the new English room....

We started this same morning with Kindergarten 2 teaching colours. We used a rainbow and the last lesson of this week we made a typical Dutch flower: The Tulip! We made yellow and red tulips. We also dance and sing.



The first week we had to organise the music lessons, singing lessons and dance lessons.

We bought a keyboard with amplifier for the school and also 3 ukuleles. We got some recorders as a donation for the school.

Tuesday the first music lesson: a very big group of enthusiastic students:



We had to make groups for all the activities and different instruments, So this was the moment. As a lot of students were interested we made two groups per instrument. Every day after school one group. Twice a week Shahide gave dancing lessons at the same time that Hans was giving the keyboard lessons. Because we only had one keyboard Hans made a keyboard of carton so everyone had a keyboard to practice. As there was no day left over for the singing, we did that at Sunday morning.

The Ukulele was the most favourite. So we had to buy more ukuleles and we were glad that we had the money, so we bought 5 more ukuleles. The director had connections with a music store and we got them in two days. The school had 3 ukuleles and in this way we had 11 ukuleles to use for the lessons.



In this 8 weeks Hans had to teach the students and the teachers that were interested to read notes and play the instruments. Everyone that attended the lessons was motivated and that was a very nice experience. So for every instrument we practiced some music for the performances in the last week.



For the performances in the last week Shahide made a choreography on the song Happy from Pharrell Williams, and of course there was time for free dance.

During the English lessons we always made some time for music, exercise and dance. The students liked this very much and they all liked the Neymar Ballade. Boys and girls from 5 to 13 years, it didn't make a difference! It was really great to see how they could express themselves during these moments.



The English lessons we gave in these 8 weeks had different topics: family, daily routine in combination with time: a.m /p.m. /days/ months. Small conversation with directions, colours and fruits, occupations counting, human body, organs, medical emergencies. We used the big screen and also the blackboard. The students are eager to learn and active during the lessons, but we found out that spelling, writing and reading is the biggest problem. So we put more attention to this using an interactive program to learn the alphabet. They learn the best in an active way.



We also gave every student a toothbrush and toothpaste.





We contributed several times with extra fruit and vegetables. We made a first aid box with disinfectants, gauzes and plasters. For the kindergarten 1&2 we bought some underwear. Plastic fruit & vegetables for colors and counting and games about colors for the kindergarten.



Footballs, badminton rackets, shuttles and net. Kazoos for every student and other toys to play with.



In the 7th week we asked the staff to invite the parents. We organised some lemonade for the beginning and at the end everybody could get coco ice-cream! We had a donation of shirts from the Curacao all in one football world cup 2014 event. We had enough to give every student a shirt, we had to fit them per class and teacher Waew put the names in it for us in Thai. We kept them together per class to wear at the day of the performances. The director, teachers, cooks and the bus driver got a shirt.



The last week was intense to have the students ready for the performances, because some were also sick. We were very happy that Andaman Discoveries could come to the performances to translate for us, take pictures and film. 3 of the Andaman team joined us and of course they got a shirt to. The ten shirts that we still had, we raffled for the parents.

We decorated with the balloons we got from the healthcare when we went for the vaccinations.



We had the time of our life there! We could always contact Andaman Discoveries for questions or to translate for us. Everyone at the school was open minded, we could be ourselves, teach with passion and enjoy the spontaneous students! It was a tough moment to say goodbye to all those lovely students and everyone at the school. The students came class by class to say goodbye and gave us nice drawings with special texts like: I love you, I miss you, I like teachers, In my heart for ever.....so sweet!!



We miss you all !!

We will do our best to come back again!!!

Don't dream your life.....Live your dreams!

Hans & Shahide