

Mae Sot and Borderless Dentists

After one month of our trip around Southeast Asia, seeing all aspects of it, I and my girlfriend hardly expected this time. With very basic image of situation around Burma border we did not have any expectations about how our volunteer work will look like. Probably because of word refugee which in my eyes represents something horrible, I was prepared for an even worse situation. After the first two days,



when we managed to get deeper insight into life around Mae Sot, the life of Burma and especially Karen refugees we were a little bit surprised; everything actually works quite well. It is true that starving people and people really needing help, are usually hidden from our eyes. After two weeks I can say that Karen everyday seems well mostly due to huge humanitarian and volunteer aid in this area. And even

if they are mostly not short on food, medicine and other basic life elements, they are still refugees. Their future is uncertain, their homes are far away, their movements are limited and their lives depend on help from others.

As a dentist, I tried to help as I could to Dr. Taka, who is doing a really good job here. His mission is spreading and not just providing basic and even some additional dental care to local people, his dental training already educated enough dental staff at different sites (clinic, camps,...) to create these settlements self-sufficient. Not enough, now he is doing his best to provide knowledge, habits and care to those who need it most - the children.



Numerous migrant schools are spread around Mae Sot, usually well hidden even to locals' eyes, providing basic knowledge to so many children. Teachers are enthusiastic individuals with energy and willingness to create children's life and future better. Why we and especially Maja is so in love with these little creatures is their innocence. Their life is just one big happy game and they are not actually aware of their situation. That is why I appreciate Taka even more, making their smile even greater is pure humanity.

By Miha



I really did not know what to expect from our volunteer work. Before we started I was asking myself: "Will I handle it? Do I have enough materials? Do I have enough knowledge to teach them?" It is difficult to describe all the feelings I got while working in Mae Sot. Everywhere I worked I felt very welcome. Children were happy to see me and interested in working and learning. It is really a pleasure to work in such circumstances. Being useful made me very happy and satisfied.



About refugee camp I get the same impression as Miha did. I was surprised how good it is organized, they have almost everything, but on the other side they do not have the most important thing: **FREEDOM** and **SAFETY**.

BLSO School: I was the first volunteer here. It is very poor school. Headmaster was really open and nice with me. She was happy (and also the children) when I asked her to stay a little bit longer. It was really great experience to work there. I will always remember one little girl, which bought a piece of watermelon (in front of school), which everybody could not afford, and kindly offered it to me. I was touched!

Heavenly Home: expected poor family with unhappy children, but surprise, they were the most smiling children on the world, open to the foreigners and interested in everything you show them. I realized, they like everything I like ☺, dancing, smiling, hugging and also artwork. So we dance, smile, hug and draw a lot ☺ and we were HAPPY!



Recreation center (Mae Tao clinic): I did not spend a lot of time there, however, also nice experience. Nobody spoke English there, even animators did not, so I used gestures. Sometimes I was surprised how they understand me just through gestures. I fall in love in this little girl (on the picture), you could see positive energy in her eyes.

By Maja

