



BAAN DOI Newsletter

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Content of this issue:

A new building is built on site. Why and how is described here.

Guido Brüggen from Germany has worked as a volunteer for two months. In his very personal article, he reports about his experiences with us and talks about the further development of BAAN DOI.

With the enlarged team we are well-suited for the upcoming tasks. An introduction

Dear BAAN DOI Friends,

Only recently we have realized how quickly BAAN DOI has grown. In October 2009 we moved in with three children. At that time we had a bamboo hut, a kitchen and a children's house. Oh yes, toilets and showers were there too. When we look around now, we are amazed at how beautiful and big our orphanage has become.

We are so grateful for all the support and the enormous commitment of the many donors and helpers, the foundations and charities, the partner associations and the BAAN DOI staff.

And the journey continues. BAAN DOI grows and thrives. In order to be able to take our

children safely to the hospital and to the school, a minivan was donated by the "Kindernothilfe Austria". In October 2016 BAAN DOI was successfully registered as a foster home by the Thai government. To meet the government's high demands was a challenge. For example, additional employees had to be recruited in order for this milestone to be reached.

With gratitude we look back to the year 2016 and look forward to new children, new supporters and new challenges.

We wish you all

Merry Christmas

and a Happy New Year

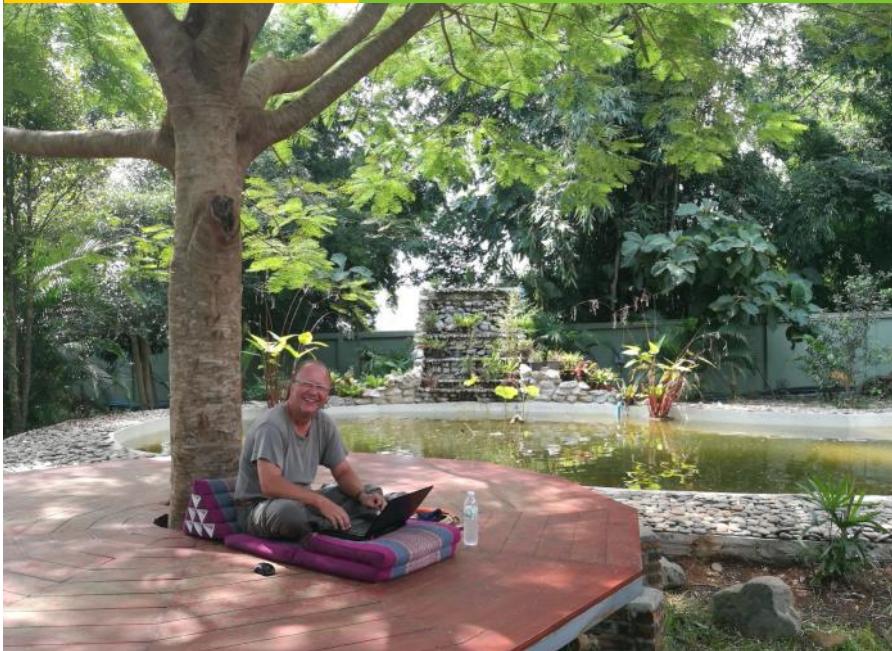
Graziella and Barbara

With the new minivan the children are safely and comfortably transported to school



Graziella and Barbara with their daughters





Guido at his favorite workplace

It is always now! A report about my experience.

In September 2016 I came to BAAN DOI for 2 months to help as a volunteer with the construction of a school building. I would like to report about my experiences during this time. Hello, I am Guido, 53 years old, member of the BAAN DOI Germany association, and living close to Cologne.

3 months on the road, of which 2 months in BAAN DOI. I've never been away for such a long time, even though I have traveled to Thailand every year for the last 10 years. I was very excited and a bit anxious. Does this work with the language? Do I really have to eat rice every day? How is that with the people there? I really did not know anyone.

I was welcomed warmly by everyone. With the children, I feel how good BAAN DOI is for them. Not only because they are now well fed and nurtured in a healthy environment and can go to school. When they laugh, play, make nonsense, when I watch them, I see happy children! Children who are no longer afraid of tomorrow. Children who have dreams again, and want to have jobs like doctor, cook, tour guide, teacher or astronaut.

And, of course, there are also tears. Often, they are silent. But I notice directly that the life of these children is different than I am used to from Germany. Their past, the loss of their parents, their illness sometimes catches up with them. Especially in these situations, the particular strength of BAAN DOI is evident. In moments like these, the whole team around Barbara and Graziella helps the children with their great love as well as with professional actions.

Guido has not only provided excellent quality photos, with his diverse talents and his positive attitude he was an enrichment for the whole team.

We all at BAAN DOI have taken Guido to our hearts, because he always spread good mood and always had an open ear. So no wonder that we were loath to let him go.

Sometimes it is enough to just hug a child for a while and show him that he/she is loved. Another time it is necessary for the caretakers, the psychologist or the social worker to look after a child more intensely. All of this goes hand in hand.

The team works very professionally. This is also necessary due to the size of BAAN DOI. Because BAAN DOI is growing and has in the meantime successfully been registered as a foster home by the Thai government and been highlighted as a role model for other institutions. An important step so that the children can continue to look positively into the future.

BAAN DOI also grows in space. Then, I came to help to build a school building in clay. This has become necessary in order to teach the children who cannot attend a regular school at the BAAN DOI orphanage. Before we started, really hard physical work was necessary. Thanks to all the people who have already pounded and painstakingly formed more than 2800 clay bricks manually and by footwork before this year's rainy season.



*Trip to the creek*

But not only that, thus the land expanded with an additional ground to provide the children supported by BAAN DOI with a social and professional perspective - an opportunity for a better adult life.

Over the last few years, it has become increasingly apparent that the direct help for children at BAAN DOI is only one side of the coin. Although the children have come out of the misery, are now medically and mentally cared for and provided, have a roof over their heads, receive education and healthy food. But what happens then?

The first children have now become young people on the step to adult life. At some point, these young adults are too old to continue to live in the Orphanage or continue to be supported in the Family Outreach Support program. They must then take care of themselves, learn a profession and realize their dreams - to which they have been encouraged at BAAN DOI. How should that work?

In a society that out of ignorance and fear neglects, people who are affected by HIV, and sometimes also are stateless, these people have little chance to have a normal life (see also the article in the BAAN DOI Newsletter of December 2015). So then, should all the love and care for the children be in vain? That cannot be! We all are responsible to lead the children into a self-determined future in which they can continue to live as well as before.

What a task for BAAN DOI! So far, the task was to provide for the children with adequate care. The additional task for the future is, to reduce the stigma of HIV-

affected people in the Thai society. So, it is no longer "just" about the children who are living here, but about a much larger group of people. In order that the people here in the region get more knowledge and understanding. This is why the prevention center is going to be built on the new land. In cooperation with other local and regional NGOs and, above all, with government agencies, work against the exclusion of people affected by HIV will be done. A vocational and training center will also be set up to help the children take their first step into their independent life.

A great vision and a necessary task!

And what does all of this do to me? Well, first of all, there is really rice almost every day. But anyway, it does not matter. And if I want to eat something else, then I also get this here in and around Mae Sai. With the language it is more difficult. It is not enough to know "hello", "please", "thank you", "yes", "no" and just a few simple sentences and the numbers to be able to communicate with the people. Even if I tried my best. Although everything always worked out - somehow - but it is quite exhausting and unfortunately not enough for a real discussion. Good that there are people who speak a bit more English. So I had some really nice days and fun evenings.

Thank you all for showing me that it is worth to have a perspective and to laugh, but also to cry. Life is sometimes not easy, but still worth living.

Because, "It is always now!"





First there was the idea then the model.

What is being built there?



Guido Brüggen helped to build and finance the building

Whoever is visiting BAAN DOI at the moment is magically attracted by this new construction site. It is something special, beautiful and creative. This becomes clear at the first sight of the construction. There they are busy with clay, stones, large wooden poles and glass bottles.

For BAAN DOI, it is important to support the children individually. Most of our children go to the village school or for high school in the next city. In classrooms with 40 students, however, teachers are not able to meet the individual needs of the children, and many children show learning difficulties. BAAN DOI also has a few children who do not go to the formal school because of deafness or a handicap. These children are supported at home in the orphanage.

In order to better meet the needs of these and other children, we are currently building a clay house, which will then serve as a school room or a resource room (so the specialist term). A resource room is a room equipped with stimulating, challenging and supporting materials, which gives all children the opportunity to learn in accordance to their interests and talents.

Imagination and curiosity are the driving force behind independent learning, and that is exactly what will be expressed in this clay house. The round shapes, the sculptured walls and freely designed light elements should stimulate the imagination and inspire our children.

Responsible for the construction is Albert Marcos from Spain. Albert has loved working with his hands since he was 12 years old. As he, four years ago, discovered building with natural materials, he knew that this was the right thing for him.

A dream becomes true. It is such a beautiful house, where we all can help and co-operate. In winter, it will be warm and cool in the summer. I am already looking forward to seeing our children in there. Thanks a lot to everyone involved.

Barbara Meisl





Our “foreman” Albert Marcos

Everybody has been involved in the construction, really everybody. From the BAAN DOI children and volunteers to construction workers. Even the management team finds a balance to their everyday work by helping with the building. Before the rainy season 2,800 clay bricks were made from soil, sand, rice husks and water in manual or foot work. Of course also the children were very enthusiastic. Especially the little ones loved to help with the pounding - and looked very funny afterwards.

In October, after the end of the rainy season, the actual construction began. For the round building, with a diameter of 10 meters, mainly natural materials are used. The beautiful stone built foundation also protects against termite infestation. The now stone-hard mud bricks are walled up between wooden poles. To get a bright room, many glass bottles and large windows are integrated into the walls. The roof construction is something very special, a "reciprocal roof", in which the wooden poles mutually support each other. This construction was also something new for our workers from the village. With a lot of perseverance, Albert managed to turn skeptical looks into amazed looks.

Another major challenge is the type of roof tiles to be used. Because we want a beautiful house made of natural materials, we will even build our own kiln to produce the bricks ourselves.

The next step, where the children particularly look forward to, is the design of the exterior walls. Here they may again participate with modeling and painting. Then there will be a story of an elf and a dragon to discover.

I would like to thank the people at BAAN DOI who gave me the chance to build this house. It is a challenge, especially the communication with the workers, but I feel very good here and all take care of me very well. This environment helps me to remain patient and do my work well.

Albert Marcos



With a great team ready for the next development

First, the very good news ahead: BAAN DOI is now recognized by the Thai government as a foster home and has even been highlighted as a role model for other institutions. However, it was necessary to meet a few conditions within a short time. One of these was the employment of a psychologist and a social worker.

A number of additional employees have joined the core team, of whom some have been active for BAAN DOI from the beginning.

Jetiya Pootawee

Nickname Bew*, Psychologist

Kongkiat Suriyadetch

Nickname Kong*, Social worker



We are very pleased to have these two young and dedicated people on board. They spread good mood and have established a good contact with the children within a very short time.



Saowaluk Junwong

We would like to emphasize that the two-man management team has now become a three-man team. Ae*, who has supported Barbara and Graziella from the beginning, and who is also the founding member of the Thai association, is now a full-time staff member and, responsible for the establishment and operation of the planned prevention center.

At the moment, she is busy investigating HIV-new-infections and teenage pregnancies in the province of Chiang Rai, because there are currently no reliable figures. This way BAAN DOI is going to be even more connected with other institutions and NGOs.



Pimphirai Mayer

A former employee has also returned. This is a great pleasure to us, because Sim* wanted to work again at BAAN DOI after her education. "It was a decision from my heart," she says herself. Because of her great heart and quiet nature, Sim is very popular with the kids and the team.



Chindarat Yanan

Sand* has been very well received since she started in June. The trained special education teacher is primarily responsible for the children, who cannot attend regular school because of their handicaps. Usually you can see her sitting with the children at a table and handling cut-out letters, colorful worksheets, scissors and glue.



*All Thai people have nicknames with which they are addressed in daily life. Only on official occasions they are called by their full name.

Thank you very much

