



BAAN DOI Newsletter

No. 21 / June 2019

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project

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the right to citizenship!

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DOI children



Dear BAAN DOI Friends,

On 20 March 2009, 10 years ago, Barbara, Graziella and Saowaluk bought the land on which the BAAN DOI Children's Home is now located. What started with a cornfield is now a loving home for 18 children. In addition, further 46 families are supported in the Outreach Family Support Program. Prevention work and teaching life skills are also part of the BAAN DOI programs today. We are very proud that we have achieved all this. And for this we would like to thank all our supporters. None of this would have been possible without you.

We are looking forward to the next 10 years, because there is still much to do to accompany the children on their way to independence. Part of this is our BAAN DOI agricultural project. In this newsletter Barbara will update us on the latest developments of the project.

We also want to show you what it means to be stateless and above all, how difficult and complex the path to Thai citizenship can be.

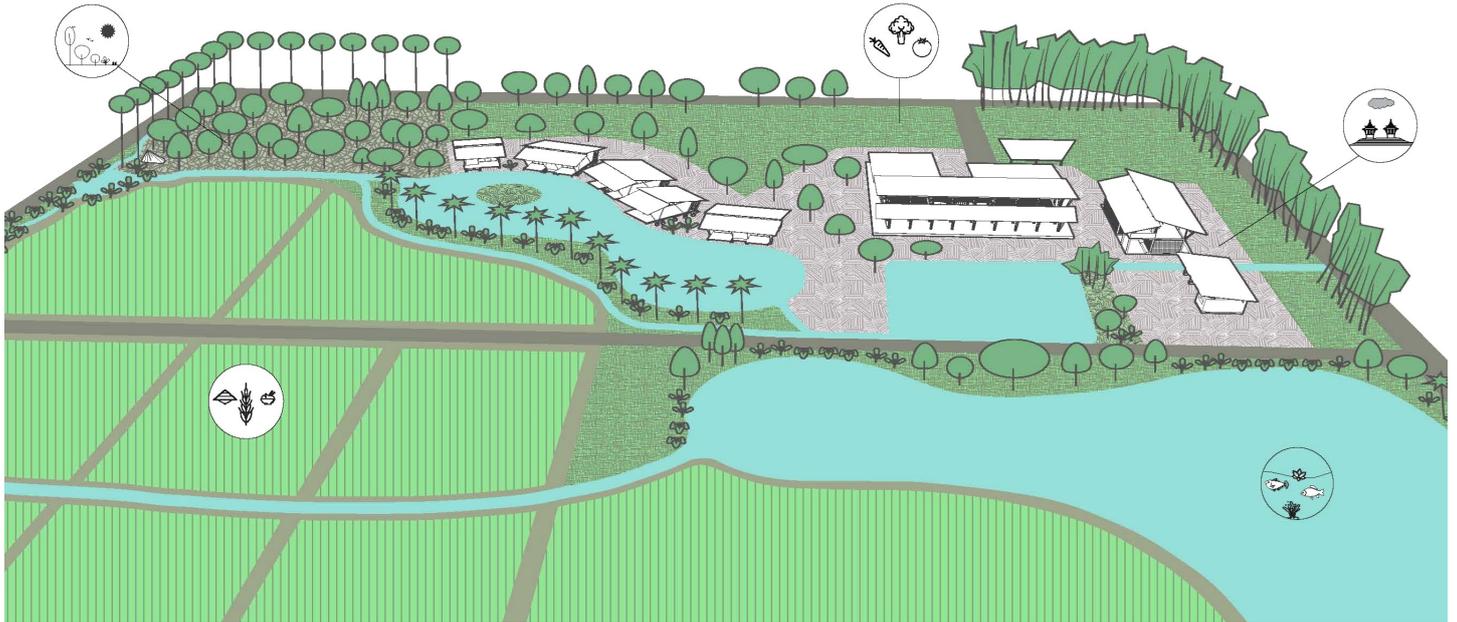
We are especially happy that the children at BAAN DOI have now started getting music lessons. You can read more about this in this issue.

Enjoy reading and have a nice summer,

Barbara und Graziella

Barbara (right), Graziella (left) and Saowaluk (middle) celebrate 10 years BAAN DOI.





Food for BAAN DOI - On the way to sustainability - further development



Dominik Abbrederis and the local team surveying the property

In the last newsletter we reported in detail about the research trip of the BASE-habitat team and our plans for organic agriculture. Now I would like to take a look at the progress of the last six months.

During the winter semester 2018-2019 the students of BASEhabitat, Architecture for Development, University of Art Linz, Austria, planned the project in detail and created the master plan (photo above), which reached us together with a contour plan for the earthworks. The site manager of BASE-habitat Dominik Abbrederis visited us in February/March for 3 weeks to discuss the plan and support our construction team with his expertise and decision-making power to precisely measure our site and implement the earthworks exactly according to plan. The most important thing was to perfectly manage the gradient of the water ditches from north to south, so that the water system and its inlets and drains would continue to function in the future.

A very positive surprise was that the moat at the highest point of our property is sandy and serves as a natural filter allowing clear, cold water to gradually fill all ponds. One of the most important factors for our agriculture is thus secured.

All earthworks could be carried out exactly according to plan. Furthermore, we built a bridge over the canal at the entrance of our property and a bamboo wood workshop

to prepare the coming construction work in October 2019.

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The Masterplan (above) was developed by BASEhabitat, Architecture for Development, University of Art Linz, Austria in cooperation with BAAN DOI.



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The first building will be a residential house for the family that manages the agriculture site. This includes a garage, water storage tower and a greenhouse. Dominik Abbrederis and the students of BASEhabitat are coming back to Thailand for the construction works from October to December 2019 and will work together with our local team.

In the meantime, we are planting bananas and bamboo on our property. For this we need a lot of fertilizer, which we produce from burnt rice husk, cow dung and microorganisms.

Together with our employee Wattana Piyarak (Dam), who is responsible for the agricultural project, we are in the process of setting up a tree nursery at BAAN DOI, where we will grow the trees for the property ourselves.

Our children can take part in all our agricultural activities and earn small amount of pocket money if they have time besides school. And when the question is asked: who will help to plant 380 banana trees on the weekend? Many hands are raised up in the air.

I am happy that our children are ready to support the community and the environment, because working in the humid climate, at over 40 degrees in the blazing sun, is quite exhausting and requires perseverance.

When I look at the effects of global warming and the future of all of us, it makes sense to go out and plant trees. In a few years the trees will not only give us food but also shade and fresh air.



Thanks to the crowd-funding campaign of our Swiss Partner Association and the support of Baan Doi Austria, KIWANIS Horgen Zürichsee and our Swiss friend Hans Locher, as BAAN DOI could implement the next important step in the agricultural project.

By purchasing a Toyota Hilux Revo (photo bottom right) that will be equipped with a roof and benches on the loading area, up to 15 people can be transported to work on the agricultural project.



Child protection officer Saowaluk Janvong at the workshop on children's rights.

According to the rights of the child - Everyone has the right to citizenship!

At BAAN DOI, the preservation of children's rights and child protection have highest priority. Therefore, it is necessary that the children know their rights and at the same time know to whom they can turn to, if their rights are disregarded.

This was the topic of a workshop on children's rights held in January, by our child protection officer Saowaluk Janvong, together with the childcare takers and other staff members of the BAAN DOI Orphanage. The children at BAAN DOI are fortunate that they receive very good care and that their rights are respected.

The BAAN DOI Orphanage and the BAAN DOI Outreach Family Support Program also support children who do not have Thai citizenship. Without this citizenship, their rights to education, medical care and social benefits are restricted. Thanks to BAAN DOI, medical care and education are guaranteed. The BAAN DOI staff also ensure that the children get the necessary documents to apply for Thai citizenship. This involves a lot of effort and hurdles,

but it is the RIGHT of the children and an important prerequisite for a positive future.

What it means to be stateless, and what efforts are involved in applying for citizenship, will be shown by the following example of Gai (name changed).

Gai was born in Mae Sai in the North of Thailand. His mother comes from China. During the political unrest in the south of China she immigrated illegally to Thailand. Gai was born at home and his birth was therefore not registered with the Thai authorities. The father was later declared unknown by the mother. Thus Gai had at first no possibility to obtain Thai citizenship.

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BAAN DOI is one of a few organizations in Chiang Rai Province that also takes care of children who do not have Thai citizenship.

In the Southeast Asian triangle; Thailand - Laos - Myanmar the problem of statelessness is particularly widespread;

Especially in the mountains of the northern Thai province Mae Hong Son where ethnic minorities live, who are stateless due to their origin.

Around 500,000 of them have no documents to prove that they or their parents were born in Thailand. In addition, more migrants are continuing to enter from Laos and Myanmar, leaving their home countries due to the political or economic situations.





Gai tells the BAAN DOI children about his way to Thai citizenship.



Gai has realized his dream of becoming a teacher.

The majority of people who do not have Thai citizenship are affected by extreme poverty and hopelessness, they struggle to access basic services and receive little support from the state,

This is where BAAN DOI comes in. In addition to the BAAN DOI children's home, 46 families are currently being supported in the Outreach Family Support Program. This guarantees that the children receive school education and medical care.

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Gai attended the government school in Mae Sai with other Thai children and at the age of nine he received a residence permit. So he was allowed to stay in the district of Mae Sai and visit the school. If he wanted to move outside Mae Sai, he had to apply for a permit. In addition, as a stateless person, he was not entitled to medical care and social benefits.

As a child, Gai didn't think much about it. He knew that he did not have Thai citizenship, but he did not know what this would mean exactly. Gai was always a very good and diligent student. The teachers therefore supported him in applying for citizenship, because only then would he have the chance of a good higher education.

With much support from the teachers and the perseverance of Gai, he was the only student without Thai citizenship who managed to attend the high school of the Chiang Rai municipality. His great dream was to become a teacher. At the time that he finished high school, however, it was only possible for Thai people to study to become teachers. Gai therefore studied mathematics first.

In 2008, amendments to the law were made, allowing those born in Thailand to apply for citizenship - but only if they have a Bachelor's degree. Finally, a chance for Gai! He then went on to study teaching at the University of Phayao, where it was possible for non-Thai students to attend. Whether or not, he would get a job as a teacher after his studies was still uncertain.

When Gai completed his studies, his fear was realized as he couldn't find a job but only an internship at a school in Mae Sai. Now Gai took his future into his own hands again:

The first step was to prove that he was born in Thailand. Witnesses had to be brought in and a DNA test had to be done. This alone cost the equivalent of over 500 euros. For many stateless families this is a fortune and they give up at this point. Even if they would have the right to apply for citizenship, they cannot finance it. Gai fortunately had the financial means, but had to wait five months until the DNA test results were available.

Only now could the official application be made and again a lot of patience was required. Gai had to wait a whole 2 years for everything to be processed and approved by the official authorities, until finally he held his Thai identity card in his hands. Only then did he get his long-awaited job as a teacher.

Gai was born in Thailand, but only at the age of 26 did he get Thai citizenship thanks to the support from different sides, a lot of perseverance and patience. And finally he has realized his dream to become a teacher.



The BAAN DOI children during music lesson with traditional northern Thai musical instruments.

Music lessons for the BAAN DOI children



On 21 March BAAN DOI had the great honor of welcoming 21 pediatricians and professionals working with children and young people. They came from all over the world, from 14 countries and 4 continents.

Their visit was part of an international training on comprehensive care and accompaniment of children and young people, which took place in Bangkok and Chiang Rai.

The BAAN DOI children's home offers orphans a safe home and a loving family. Every day, the child care takers and the BAAN DOI team work towards creating a good quality of life and positive future for the children. The individual needs of the children are taken into account, with a special focus on health, education and the participation of the children. The BAAN DOI children go to government schools and receive support with their homework and through remedial teaching. In addition, BAAN DOI offers the children many valuable developmental activities such as sports and games, music, gardening, yoga, handicrafts, etc. to develop their talents and strengths. Thus, laying the foundation on which the children can develop into responsible, independent and well-integrated members of society.

Thanks to the valuable support of the Austrian Embassy in Bangkok, traditional northern Thai musical instruments have been purchased and the BAAN DOI

children have been receiving music lessons since the beginning of the year. Mr. Sukam the music teacher, who has been playing northern Thai music since his childhood, is happy to have the opportunity to introduce the BAAN DOI children to the traditional music, and also share with them a part of their culture. For the children, it is a very nice opportunity to express themselves. And at the same time strengthen their sense of community and develop perseverance. As, on the occasion the BAAN DOI children performed for a group of 21 visiting doctors and experts, who work with children and teenagers. This was their first performance after only a few months of lessons, we were all especially proud.

(Photo below: The first "concert" with northern Thai musical instruments on the occasion of the visit of March 21, 2019.)



Thank you very much



BAAN DOI – Home and
Healing Center for
Children

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