



BAAN DOI Newsletter

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Dear BAAN DOI Friends,

Once again, it was time for me to write the newsletter for BAAN DOI. And I asked myself, what has changed that I would like to share with you?

One year ago in May, Graziella, the co-founder of BAAN DOI, went back to Switzerland with her husband Kan and their two girls, Felicia and Naari. Maybe you are just as curious as we are about what has happened in their life since then? Graziella will report on this in our first article.

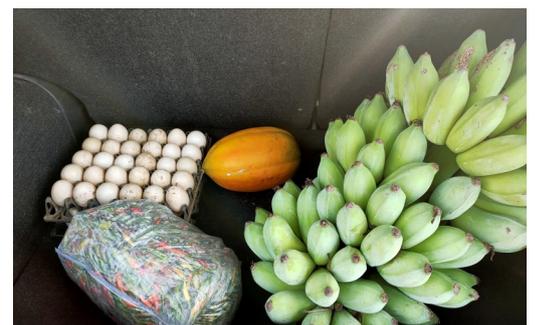
An everlasting constant in life is change and development. By taking small and large steps our children grow, sometimes they may step backwards and then take full leaps forward ... In the second article, we report about the youngsters at BAAN DOI who are currently taking a very big step: the transition to middle school, high school, or University.

Some changes happen by themselves, others need clearly defined goals and coordinated activities in order to bring them about. Our third article is about improving the quality of the soil on our farm, which we have put a lot of energy into over the past few months. This is how we transform our compact loam into loose, fertile soil that is full of life ... the first progress is already visible!

Have fun while reading!

Barbara and the BAAN DOI team

Duck eggs, papaya, chillies and bananas from our farm!





The whole family loves to eat raclette



Charity bike tour around Lake Constance

From 09.-11. In July 2021, volunteers from Germany, Switzerland, and Austria will cycle together around Lake Constance and collect donations for BAAN DOI.

BAAN DOI is in the process of establishing an organic farm for the purpose of self-sufficiency and for the education of disadvantaged children.

With your help we can raise funds to finance a tractor.

Our first year back in Switzerland

A report by Graziella Ramponi

I still remember well this feeling one year ago: our suitcases were packed, and we had all the documents we needed to enter Switzerland. Still, I was not sure whether our flight would actually depart and whether we would arrive in Switzerland as planned. I was really looking forward to our new life in Switzerland, but also very sad to leave BAAN DOI, the children, and my mother in Thailand.

But nothing stopped us, the trip went like clockwork, and we safely arrived at the airport in Zurich Kloten on May 15, 2020. We were very happy that Susanne Reisinger, our good friend and the president of the Baan Doi Switzerland association, picked us up at the airport and drove us to Engadin.

In our new home at Bever, we found an almost fully furnished apartment, which was possible through the many friends that supported us. We felt very comfortable from the first moment onwards. Naari and Felicia settled in quickly and made new friends. They also like school a lot and have learnt to speak a few sentences in Romansh...

I am very happy that Kan still likes it so much in Engadin. We enjoy the beautiful nature here: in summer we went hiking and cycling a lot and in winter we could meet the whole family on skis. The whole family is particularly fond of cross-country skiing.

However, the last few months have often been exhausting. My work in the nursing home was very demanding, especially in times of Corona. Kan had the opportunity

to work in a Thai hotel kitchen over the winter season. A new and exciting opportunity, but also a very challenging job for him. So, it was often a lot for me managing my job, meeting further engagements with the Baan Doi Switzerland association and the Neufeld Institute International, as well as caring for the children and the household. Therefore, I am really happy that Kan will be home through the summer. He has the opportunity to devote himself more to studying the German language and will attend an intensive German course.

Many people have asked me about the differences to our life in Thailand: it is a different life - two worlds that are not comparable. On the one hand the climate, food, mentality, and culture and on the other hand the values and way of life. We truly miss Thailand and the people we left behind, and we talk about it almost every day. Thai series, music and food help us to stay close to Thailand and I often notice that our children have a lot of Thai "genes". It is also a part of me, as I have both Switzerland and Thailand in my heart.





How you can help:

1. Cycle with us around Lake Constance! One, two or three days. You are also welcomed to look for your personal sponsors.

2. Sponsor! Donate a lump sum or an amount per kilometre of one or more participants. Donations in kind are also welcome! Depending on the amount, your company logo can be seen on a poster / banner, on the participants' t-shirts or on the tractor.

3. Help with printing or handing out the T-shirts at the catering stands, etc.

Information and registration at:

<https://baandoi.org/charity-fahrradtour-bodensee>

The connection to Thailand and BAAN DOI is therefore very important to me. Thanks to my work for the Baan Doi Switzerland association, the regular exchange and contact with Barbara and the children, I still feel very connected.

Working for the association is a lot of fun. The board of directors is very committed and motivated, which makes me happy and grateful, again and again, and I am moved by the support we receive. Unfortunately, due to Corona, we had to cancel or postpone many events. So I am all the more looking forward to the upcoming charity bike tour around Lake Constance in July. I hope to meet many of you there.



Neung and Nokia new at BAAN DOI



Neung in her university dress (top) and Nokia at the computer (bottom)

Our children are leaving the nest

by Barbara Meisl and the BAAN DOI kids

BAAN DOI is a new home to children from diverse backgrounds and of different ages. Our family is very colorful and vibrant.

We pay attention to the kids interests and strengths and support them to find an education that fits them well. Let us look at some of our youngsters, to see how they have grown, what paths they are choosing and how they feel about BAAN DOI.

The siblings **Neung** and **Nokia** came to live at BAAN DOI 11 years ago! It is lovely to see how supportive they are with each other and how strong their bond is. Neung is going to start her university education in July and Nokia will change to middle school.

Neung is now 20 years old and is going to study Management.

“I hope that the Management degree opens up opportunities for me. I have always loved to go to school and dreamed about the chance to go to university. I cannot believe that it is already time to move out from BAAN DOI. BAAN DOI will always be my home and I will continue to be there for my brother and all the others!”

Nokia is 13 and loves outdoor activities like swimming and fishing but also likes to spend time on the computer. This year he is starting middle school. At the moment, he sees himself being either a magician or working as a software developer in the future.

“BAAN DOI makes me happy, and I am proud to grow up here and be a part of our big family!”

A BIG THANKS to all supporters and child sponsors, who help us to finance the living expenses and educational costs of our children.

As some of our older children are ready to fly and will be leaving our home soon, we have some space for newcomers. We have already welcomed three of them, Zoon, Yim and Chang in May 2021.

Jo is 16 and has lived at our home for 6 years now. He is naturally very confident and loves to play music and basketball. In addition to regular school, he attends Chinese school in the evenings and on Saturdays, where all subjects are taught in Chinese. He is going to continue high school (10th grade) and Chinese school (9th grade), so he will have another 3 years before starting university.

“Baan Doi is like a bird’s nest where we can learn and develop in a stable, protected environment with rules and regulations but also independence. As soon as we are ready, we can fly!”



Jo with 16, playing guitar (left) and when he newly arrived at BAAN DOI (right)



Gorn joined BAAN DOI in 2014, now he is 17 years old. He has always been very caring of others and loves to help in the garden and care for the animals. For us, it was no surprise that he chose to attend a Vocational College for Agriculture. One year ago, he moved into the boarding home of the Vocational College in Chiang Rai and really likes it!

“I chose the Agriculture Vocational College because I wanted to learn more practical things. Thinking of BAAN DOI, it makes me smile, I have learned so many things at BAAN DOI and I really miss everybody.”



Poom was 8 years old when he came to live at BAAN DOI, that was 8 years ago and now he is 16. He has always loved to play football and repair the bicycles. Even though, it was quite a struggle for him to complete middle school, with all of our support he made it and we are very proud of him. That was an important step for him, as now he can learn what he is really interested in. For the next 3 years, he will train to be a car mechanic at a Vocational College in Chiang Rai and stay at a boarding home.

“I have always been interested in repairing motorbikes and cars, so I am glad that I will be able to do it professionally. For me BAAN DOI is my family, it’s good to know that there are people who are always there for me.”



Tong came with 10 years to BAAN DOI in 2010 and is now 21 years old. We found out that Tong is very artistic and always loves to dance, draw, cook and arrange things in the garden. After middle school, Tong started at a Vocational College to learn to be a cook and he is now continuing further studies in Marketing. Tong always felt like and wanted to be a woman and we are glad that she can now express her true identity.

“I chose marketing because I want to learn more about how to design business plans and practice accounting before starting my own enterprise.”

“Baan Doi is a warm home, which provides for everything, offers a lot of positive attention and the chance for a good education. For me, BAAN DOI is my family”.



... when they were kids.

Gorn, Poom and Tong today, and ...

Our three new kids: Zoon, Yim and Chang (bottom)

Do you want to help us to give children in need the opportunity for a brighter outlook to their future?

We are happy to give you more information about a BAAN DOI Child Sponsorship.

Please contact us via the Email:
info@baandoi.org





Nim, Amy and Nicha are good friends (right)



Nicha joined us in 2019 and is 19 now. She is a very friendly, positive person who loves to play guitar and do handicrafts. She is starting high school this year at a Vocational College for Fashion Design.

“To design and produce clothes seems to be a very useful skill to me. I would love to see people wearing the clothes I make and want to open an online shop.”

“Deep in my heart BAAN DOI feels like my second home. Here everybody takes care of and supports each other. If someone has a problem, we always try to find good solutions together”.



Nim is 16 and joined BAAN DOI in 2015. She loves to play guitar, work on the computer and cooks the best green curry ever! This year, she will also start high school and will study for the next three years at a vocational College for Digital Art & Design.

“I love to take photos and edit them. And I am very curious about all the new things I am going to learn at the Vocational College. A big part of the learning will be practical and that makes it even more exciting!”

“BAAN DOI is my home and family and the place to get advice and find motivation on difficult days. Often my friends and the caretakers at BAAN DOI help me to get over things by finding a positive attitude.”



Amy and her brother joined BAAN DOI in 2015, that’s also when Amy started with non-formal education. Her talent and willingness meant that she caught up to the 9th grade in just a few years. Now she is able to start high school at the Vocational College of Fashion Design in Chiang Rai. Amy is now 20 and very responsible, capable and often covers the work of the children’s caretakers when we need her.

“I choose Fashion Design because I love to design and sew things. I am so happy to be able to finally attend regular school and in addition learn something I really enjoy doing.”

“I feel very grateful for the care and guidance at BAAN DOI”.



Nicha, Nim and Amy today

The three young girls when they were new at BAAN DOI



Our Farm – How we are improving our soil

By Barbara Meisl

The soil at our farm was used for decades for the cultivation of paddy rice and eventually this resulted in a thick clay like soil structure. Clay is rich in minerals but very compact and consists of just a few living organisms. Basically, one can dig a hole anywhere on our farm and get a sealed pond.

This has positive as well as negative aspects. But with the bigger picture of growing organic vegetable and fruit gardens in mind, we knew our soil must change and that we needed to be the ones to make it happen.

Therefore, the first thing we did was a soil test, that showed us that our soil would benefit from adding lime to become more alkaline. After that, we planned how to improve our soil step by step by using the following methods:

1. Adding organic matter to the soil

Organic matter is both an indicator of soil health and a facilitator of it. Decomposed organic matter in diverse stages provides a structure that retains water, allows air to penetrate, roots to spread and supports a diversity of living organisms. We were lucky to get some waste products from a mushroom farm for free, small bags with saw dust, rice starch, corn starch and spores of different fungi. During a 3-month period, we transported many tons of waste material to our farm, which we unpacked and mixed together with goat manure to make our compost. Later we mixed the compost into our soil.



Everyone on the farm is happy to help ... here with unpacking the mushroom bags.

2. Producing and spreading EM

EM stands for Effective Microbes, which encourage growth and health in soil and water. To make it, we use 1 liter of EM that has already been produced, mix it with 1 liter of molasses and add 10 liters of water. The microorganisms break down the sugar and multiply so that it can be used after two weeks. We regularly produce EM and use it in our ponds, rice fields, compost, and water.



We reap the benefits of our work.

By appreciating and using all resources available to us, nothing becomes waste.



There are not only plants on our farm ... the children love to fish.



3. Producing biochar and charcoal

By burning organic matter like rice husk, bamboo, and wood with minimal or total absence of oxygen we get biochar and charcoal. We mix it with manure to “activate” it, because nutrients and microorganisms can be enriched in the activated biochar. After a few months, we then mix it into our soil. Biochar and Charcoal are both important to help store water in the soil, they also provide living space for microorganisms and in addition store nutrients which are slowly released later to feed the plants.

4. Additional water systems

We installed a few additional water systems at our fields to make sure the plants get enough water, and the soil does not dry out.

The process of soil development takes effort and a lot of energy. We see it as a sustainable future investment, as our soil will get better and better over time. The work on our farm strengthens our sense for community. and

Apart from the hot and moist climate, which can make it very exhausting, we really enjoy the activities at the farm most of the time.

We have already spent some lovely lunch and dinner times at our pond while watching amazing sunsets.





Thank you very much



BAAN DOI — Home and
Healing Center for
Children
Mae Sai, Province
Chiang Rai, Thailand
www.baandoi.org
info@baandoi.org
[www.facebook.com/
baandoi](https://www.facebook.com/baandoi)

