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BASEhabitat Students share their experiences during the construction of the first guesthouse at BAAN DOI's farm.

After 2 years we could again organize a 3-day camp for all children, who are supported by BAAN DOI.

Julia Drazdil-Eder, who works at Kindernothilfe Austria came to join us for a week and wrote about the wonderful time we had together!



Dear BAAN DOI Friends,

2022 was an incredible great year for BAAN DOI! Because the entry requirements into Thailand were relaxed, and we were able to again welcome volunteers, students and friends at our home.

In spring 2022 we completed the construction of our Family House together with BASEhabitat and in autumn, which is beautiful Thai winter here, the students of BASEhabitat came to build the first guesthouse at our farm.

In our first article, they tell us about their time here at BAAN DOI, which was amazing for all of us.

Also the children and teenagers who are supported by our programs were finally able to meet again. During the October holidays, our team organized a 3-day seminar, which was an unforgettable experience for everyone.

Julia Drazdil-Eder, an employee of Kindernothilfe Austria, has

been supporting BAAN DOI for over 10 years and has accompanied our development ever since.

In October it was finally possible to show her BAAN DOI on site. Julia and Leonie Rachel from Vienna spent a whole week together with us and got an insight into our work at the children's home, the family support program and at the farm! In her very personal report, Julia shares her experiences with us.

We hope you enjoy reading our newsletter!

We wish you a Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year 2023!

Barbara Meisl & the BAAN DOI Team





Construction of the first guest house at the BAAN DOI farm



The adobe blocks consist of soil, sand, rice husk, rice straw and water.

During the holidays our kids got the chance to join the adobe bricks production.

With lots of enthusiasm, sweat and laughter they created hundreds of bricks.

We experienced unforgettable moments, the feeling of being part of something special.

Following the Family House project (first house) completion, the post-graduate team of BASEhabitat was invited to design the next stage of the BAAN DOI farm masterplan.

The students from this group are all qualified architects from almost every continent, who came together in common interest for further studies in socially responsible design using natural materials.

Our first meeting with Barbara from BAAN DOI happened online while we were in Linz completing our first semester. We were excited to hear about the foundation and all the important work that Barbara has successfully completed.

During that meeting Dominik who was leading the construction of the family house introduced us to the whole BAAN DOI farm masterplan and the work done by the master students.

The next step is to build four guesthouses, each of which has a bedroom with en suite bathroom and terrace with an outdoor kitchen facing the big pond. During our Three months long hands-on semester we will design and build the first guesthouse.

Following this introduction, we started our design process for the project based on the preliminary design proposed by the master stu-

dents. We decided bamboo is the best structural material to use on this project since it is easy to harvest and economical.

We also wanted to keep the guest house in a similar materiality to the family house. While in Linz, we began with an introduction to bamboo as a building material and tested different connections with models.

Since we already knew about the good quality of the local earth, we decided to use it as our main material and proposed a masonry structure out of adobe blocks, made out of earth, sand and fiber and dried under the sun.

All the students arrived in Mae Sai in the beginning of October and started their first day with a tour of the BAAN DOI farm.

Barbara introduced us to our translator Selena who immediately became part of the team. After that we started with our first adobe samples to decide on the perfect mix.

In the following two weeks, we produced 2500 adobe bricks during which we were joined by the kids from BAAN DOI foundation.

These days together were fun for all of us, especially as the mixing involved dancing barefoot on the adobe mix.



BAAN DOI and BASEhabitat cooperate to step by step realize the Masterplan of BAAN DOI's organic farm project.

The third team of BASEhabitat students joined us from October to December 2022, to construct the first guesthouse.

On the second week, the Thai construction team of Mr. Sak arrived on site and joined the process. With each day we could see progress in the number of bricks we could produce and, in the end, we managed to finish a week before the estimated deadline.

During our weekends, we could always visit the kids at the BAAN DOI Home to join the music classes or play sports together.

Before starting the next stage of our construction, we visited a bamboo treatment company, where we could also see the different techniques for using bamboo.

After this workshop we were confident in treating the bamboo ourselves.

During this process we were visited by a permaculture expert, Mr. Sandot Sukaew, who gave us a little lecture about the principles of his work. He accompanied us to the BAAN DOI forest land, where we harvested bamboo together.

After erecting the bamboo columns, terrace and roof structure, we started laying the adobe blocks on the foundation.

We finished the walls within two weeks together with embedded openings, plumbing and electrics. Jo and Werner joined us for a week, just at the right time and helped us in building the adobe wall, adding a lot of merry in the mix.

On these days, the BAAN DOI kids harvested the sticky rice and some of us happily joined in.

We are now in our final two weeks of this construction. We are making the final touches and adding in the details on such things as the floor, ceiling and wall plaster.

We are looking forward to completing the guest house and eager to hear the experiences of the guests who will stay here.

We are hoping they will enjoy and appreciate the warmth of the natural materials in the idyllic atmosphere of the farm, just as much as we have loved building it.

A big thanks to Barbara and her wonderful team, who have been such gracious hosts, making sure that our entire period of work and stay was nothing short of amazing - food, fun and positive energy.

BASEhabitat students



A camp with all our children

The BAAN DOI Outreach Child Support program (OCS) organized a camp for the 7th time at a close by resort from the 21st to 24th October 2022.

All together there were 107 participants, 17 children from the BAAN DOI home, 46 children supported by the OCS program and 44 relatives of the supported children. Usually the camp takes place annually, but the past few years we were not able to organize the camp like we had before. So, to see each other in person again, after such a long time, was really exciting for everyone.

The main objective of the event was to give the children from both projects the chance to get to know each other better and to create a space to enhance compassion and support for each other.

Some of the recreational program activities called “we are one” aimed to strengthen love, unity and the cooperation between the participants.

Besides the emotional and social component of the activities there was also a focus on the learning of new knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Rights and responsibilities of children
- Taking care of my health

- My educational goals
- Protection from online threats

The children had lots of fun and an amazing time together and gained important skills they can apply right away in their daily lives.

This year’s camp was really special, as the relatives of the children were invited to participate too. Our staff members brought the subject of “a loving and understanding home” into our circle and also child rights and child protection found its place.

Our network partner from Mae Sai hospital Mrs. Suraswasi Kantoora, a professional nurse with lots of expertise talked about the current problems teenagers are facing and how to meet each other with understanding and at eyelevel. Ms. Sunan Piamia from the ECPAT Foundation Thailand provided knowledge about child rights.

Many relatives of the children opened up and shared not only their own experiences and difficulties, but also ways how to deal with the adolescents.

The families felt encouraged by the talks and discussions and also grateful about the time spent together.

OCS Team

Our 7th camp has been even more special, as all the children and teenagers could meet each other again—after such a long time!





One week at BAAN DOI

The wrist is not locked, the bamboo mallet lies lightly in the hand, not too tight, not too loose. So that it can be easily slapped over the strings of the “Khim”.

Precise to elicit a clear, slightly vibrating tone from the Thai instrument. At least that's the theory that music teacher Kansuda is trying to convey to us.

However, the tone that comes from the Khim doesn't sound nearly as light and airy as the melody that Ying is playing next to us. So, after a few unsuccessful attempts, we give our mallets back to the far more talented kids.

We are visiting BAAN DOI and are allowed to take part in the children's music lessons on Saturdays. We - that's Leonie-Rachel Soyel, influencer from Vienna, and I, an employee of Kindernothilfe Austria.

For a week we can participate in the everyday life of the children and employees of BAAN DOI and get a direct picture of this project, which we previously only knew from photos, newsletters and reports.

Leonie-Rachel talks about our experiences almost live on her Instagram channel - to better make known BAAN DOI, Kindernothilfe and the project work here.

It is Sunday, 4 p.m. when we arrive at BAAN DOI. We are immediately surrounded by children, who are reticent at first - they have to see who is coming.

We are shown around, are allowed to look at the children's rooms, and look over the shoulders of a few children and cook Pa Tu as they prepare their meals.

Leonie is particularly fond of the trampoline - she is already making plans for a few hopping sessions with the children in the next few days.

After dinner and when we distribute our souvenirs - “Mannerschnitten” and other Austrian sweets - the ice is broken. The children who surround us, are excited (maybe that's because of all the sugar we've brought) and finally the idea comes up that we could end the evening with a tarot card reading.

Florian Fend, construction manager of the project BASEhabitat, who since October has been building the first of the four planned guest houses as part of the permaculture project, has now joined us - and is also willing to let Ying have a look at his future.

Conclusion of the first evening: It all looks promising!



Julia Drazdil-Eder works at Kinder-nothilfe Austria, one of our most important support organizations. For over 10 years she has been supporting our work and therefore we were especially pleased to welcome her and Leonie and show them our project.



Early on Monday morning we were picked up again by Florian and driven to the agricultural project with the BASEhabitat Project students group from the Austrian art university in Linz.

Our agenda for today is to take a detailed look at the construction plan and see what has already been. Above all, we plan to take photos of the progress on the agricultural project.



In the early afternoon we are back on the way to the children's home. Preparations are already being made there: the stalks and leaves of banana trees are piled up in a wagon, and the most colorful blossoms are gleaming in a basket.

The traditional Thai festival of lights, Loy Krathong, is coming up - and we still have to make the necessary floats out of banana leaves. This shows that we are not experienced hobbyists: Our "teacher" Ganya is very dissatisfied.

Imprecisely we fold one banana leaf section after the other, trying to follow her instructions.

With her, the handicrafts actually look very simple: fold, fold again and screw in with a quick turn of the hand - done. If she's not looking, we mess up. Otherwise, we'll

never finish. But after what felt like an eternity, our little floats are finished - and we get a lot of praise from the children, including Ganya.

All the children present their floats in the dining room in a colorful and beautiful way. Here they are stored until they can be used at the Festival of Lights the next day.

Tuesday, 8 a.m. Again we are picked up by Florian and driven with the students to the agricultural project.

This time we want to find out exactly what permaculture actually means. How does BAAN DOI want to become self-sufficient with all the vegetables that are being planted?

How does the water filtration work? And where does the solar energy generated by the newly installed solar panels go?

We have found the perfect teachers in permaculture leader Sandot and his assistant Tom.

They patiently show us how all the water is filtered through different tanks using only natural materials such as sand, gravel, coal and stones.





They show us how the required charcoal is made from the left over bamboo trimmings, how the newly installed battery now stores the solar energy from the panels and distributes it to the main house.

Then, they show us how the bamboo is treated: How bamboo is put in a pool with water, borax and boric acid and thus made termite-proof and therefore durable.

Next, we see how a biological cycle is created on the entire site, which plants keep mosquitoes away and which in turn are able to filter the pesticides used on the neighboring properties from the earth and water.

Finally, the crowning glory of our field day is the assembly of the two parts of the roof.

Together and with all their strength, the students and construction workers heave the roof bamboo construction onto the existing scaffolding. The roof looks magnificent - and our bamboo nails are right in the middle.

The huge, colorful crowd of floats gathered on the pond edge is also magnificent. We then launch the Krathongs into the fish pond with all the children and employees of BAAN DOI at the light festival in the evening.

The candles shimmer on the surface of the water as the small floats move further and further away - sent on their way with the most diverse wishes. And the lanterns that we let rise into the sky also create a magical atmosphere. The fact that there is still a lunar eclipse today makes the festival all the more beautiful.

Despite the fact that the evening at the Festival of Lights was long, our next day started before dawn on Wednesday.

At 6 a.m. we were already sitting on Cook Pa Tu's motorbike driving towards the fruit and vegetable market.

We want to be there when she goes shopping, and we want to see how she collects the ingredients for her daily meals.

She is very amused by our ignorance. We have actually never seen some of the things on offer before, and some things we don't want to recognize at all, such as the locusts for sale.

Back at the children's home, Pa Tu surprises us with a souvenir from the market: a rice and coconut pudding dessert wrapped in banana leaves, which I had already admired at various market stalls. A wonderful breakfast!



„Loi Kratong“, the light festival is a beautiful Buddhist celebration, to honor the water while sending little decorated banana floats out with prayers.



Above : We are visiting a family in a mountain village, that has been recently accepted by our Outreac Child Support Program

Below: on the way to the garden propety of the family.



Thursday, 9 a.m., we are on the road again - this time with BAAN DOI director Barbara Meisl and the two employees of the family support program, Archa and Bee.

We drive into the surrounding mountains. The program includes visits to various families of the Akha hilltribe minority group, who are supported by the family support program.

The stories we encounter today are touching.

We are in the tiny house of a family of nine living in a cramped space. The mother is clearly handicapped after a motorbike accident caused by someone else. She has had several operations.

The grandma is ill, and the grandpa sleeps and works in the field of a large landowner, so he is also not available to help. But then there is a ray of hope.

The family owns a large garden property, which we immediately set out to visit. It has a good location. It's right next to a stream, and has lush greenery and banana trees. Here we see potential for the organic cultivation of several grain and fruit varieties.

The harvest could be sold at a profit by the family and thus generate a good income.

We drive on and visit a single father with his young son. They share the fate of so many members of the Akha group: they live in Thailand without official papers, so they have no access to government aid or medical care.

The mother recently died, and no one really knows why. But one thing is clear: the pesticides that the father sprays while working on the orange plantations of a large landowner are in any case extremely harmful to health.

On our third visit, the success of the family support program becomes clear.

A single mother proudly shows us the sewing machine she bought with our financial support, which she now uses to make Akha bags. She has also set up a mushroom farm and sells the mushrooms at the market.

Her garden also provides the family with vegetables, fruits, and herbs. Supported by the continuous work, motivation and regular visits of the BAAN DOI employees, we could see what the families are able to achieve.



It's early Saturday morning and we're on our way to the children's home early.

This time we are riding our bicycles ourselves. Once there, we enter into the children's Saturday routine.

It's washing and cleaning day. The washing machine is running at full speed, the children are hanging out their laundry to dry, washing the windows, dusting, and sweeping the floors - all according to precisely defined "rosters".

Everyone helps - some quite naturally and willingly, others with a somewhat more tormented smile. After all, housework isn't always fun.

After lunch I try my hand at the bottle flip - and to the cheers of the children, I manage to throw the bottle with momentum on the first try so that it touches the ground again while standing. I'm excited.

During dance lessons, rehearsals for the Christmas performance begin.

And then we get another dance sample from the older girls - with loud music, the self-imagined choreography is practiced, not quite

firmly in the saddle, but with all the more enthusiasm.

Our last day of visit here in BAAN DOI has come.

We are already sad that the farewell to Barbara and the children is approaching.

But we want to enjoy the last day together on the permaculture site.

In our luggage we have a full harvest of lettuce and vegetables from the small garden right next to the children's home. It is for our lunch.



The BAAN DOI children all have their duties in the household according to age, skills and preferences.

Our home is spacious and diverse enough to find something for everyone!





When we arrive at the property, the first thing we do is plant a few small lettuce seedlings in the large, round lettuce bed.

The laughter is great when we can't even taste a pinch of it - we can't stand the Thai spiciness even after more than a week.

So that the next lunches are secured. Then it's time to harvest. We pick papayas and then get a little training - and again a big knife.

Luckily for us there is also a milder version of the food - which, by the way, tastes even better if a lot of it has been harvested yourself.



But the technique of shaving papaya for the classic Thai papaya salad looks easier than it actually is. After endless effort, the children take over the preparation again. Cocoa is ground from the harvested cocoa beans and made into a cocoa smoothie.

As our farewell approaches, we are nostalgic. It was a wonderful time here at BAAN DOI. And we definitely want to come back.

The children wave goodbye to us for a long time - the memory of our visit here will stay with us for a long time.

Nicha meanwhile wades in the water near the fish pond and "harvests" snails - also for a salad. And Ganya mashes the chili peppers with lime and other spices into a spicy paste.

Julia Drazdil-Eder





Thank you very much!



BAAN DOI — Home and
Healing Center for
Children

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