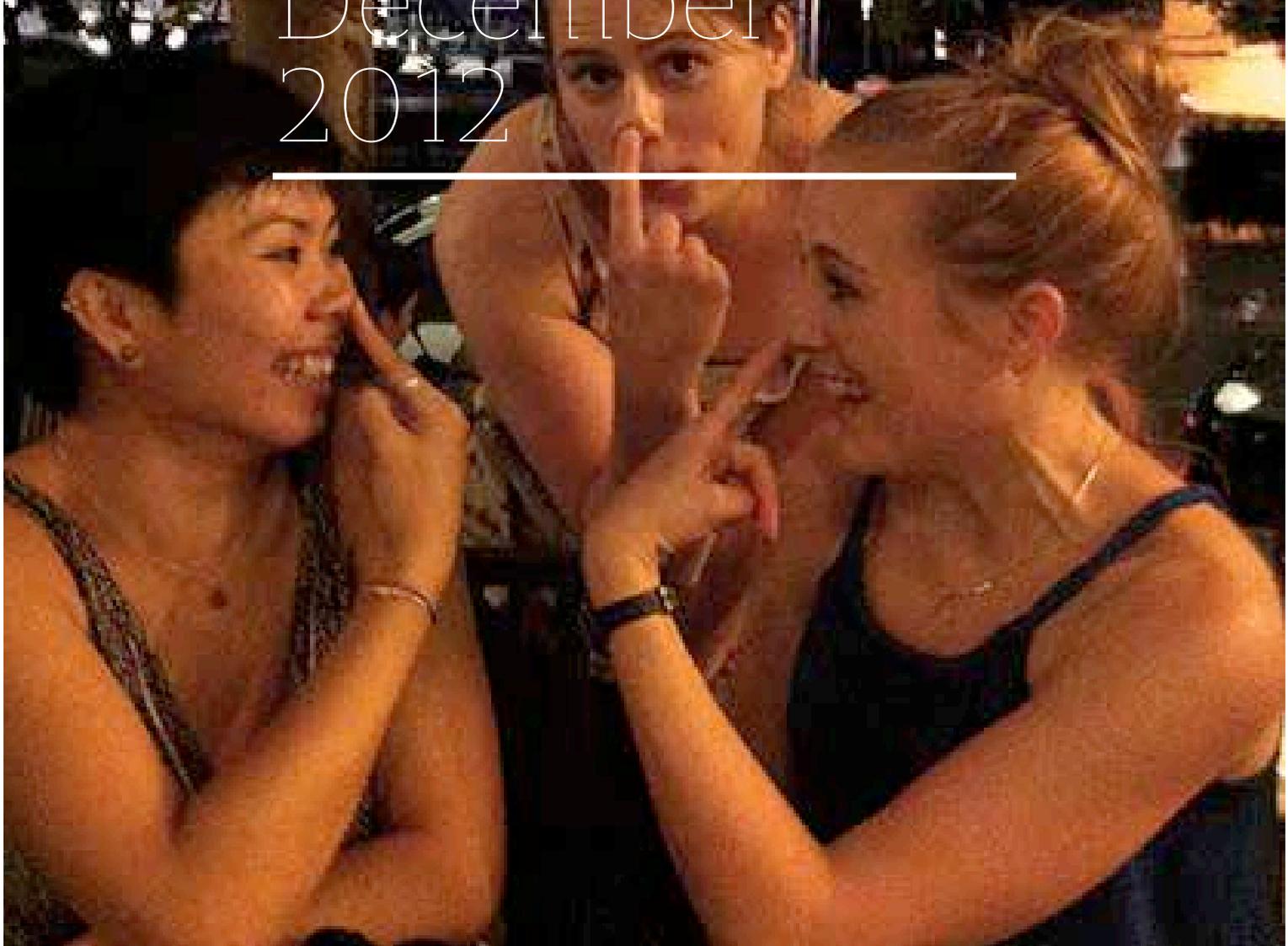


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Volunteer  
Report  
Dominique  
Ghilardi  
September till  
December  
2012

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# My incredible time with Child's Dream

I arrived in Chiang Mai not knowing where I would be staying, which isn't a problem in Thailand unless it is high season or some special event. The taxi driver (THB 120 fixed) dropped me off at Sompert Market and from there I started wandering around. Shortly after I found a guesthouse, Chok Dee, where I checked in and stayed for one month. This I wouldn't do again; living at a hostel when you are working isn't ideal, in my opinion. I should have done some research to find a room in a house which only takes long-term visitors. The second part of my stay I had a room for 3000 THB a month, which is a good price. I had my own bathroom and was able to do my own laundry: perfect. (find contact at the end)

I started working for Child's Dream the beginning of September. The first day, I had a turbulent ride with a tuk-tuk driver who drove me to a completely wrong area so I ended up fighting with him in the rain because he wasn't willing to take me any further unless I paid him more money. Thanks to Laura, whom I had met the day before, I knew this guy was wrong. I never took a tuk-tuk to work again.

- 0 | Who? Me? Angie, Laura and I on a Friday night
- 1 | One of my first weekends in Chiang Mai: Pi Koy and Pi Tai invited me to brunch. After eating, we played cards.
- 2 | Brunch here is a little different to ours in Switzerland
- 3 | View over Chang Mai
- 4 | Daniel invited us to the most special Raclette I ever had so far.



3



1

After finally arriving at the right place and being warmly welcomed by the whole Child's Dream team, it only took a short time to calm down, thanks to the lovely and charming atmosphere in the office. As Angie introduced me to the team, my first thought was that I never would be able to remember who is who. Being the first time in Thailand, everyone looked the same to me and their names sounded so similar, too: Pi Tai, Pi Tu, Pi Ta... how on earth could I ever remember all this? Luckily enough, it only took me a week to figure it out. Now I can't imagine how I could ever think that they all looked the same!

I made unbelievably great friends and had an experience that I wouldn't want to miss in my life

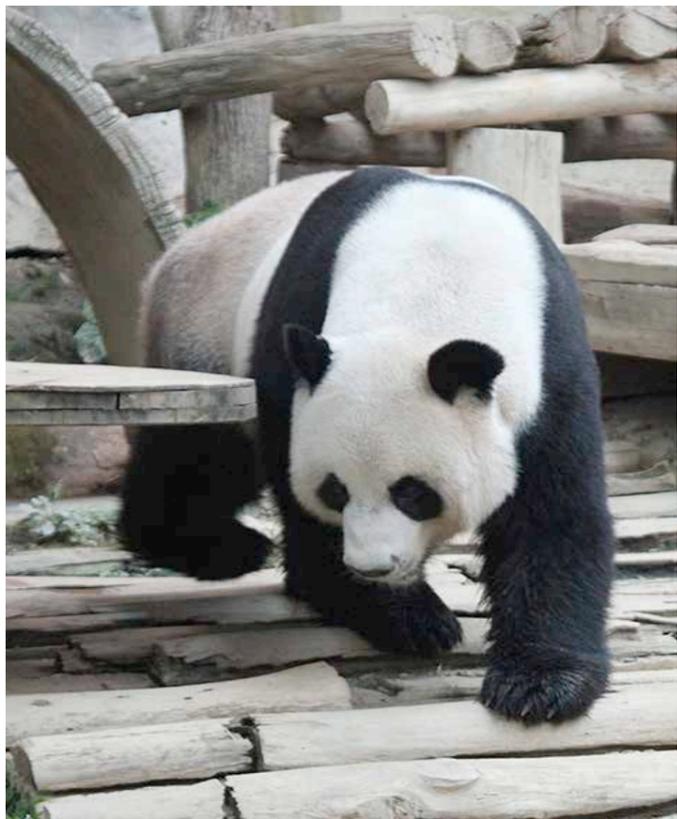
My job at Child's Dream was to design the annual report of 2012 and the 10 Year Anniversary Book. The team is very organised and was setting up my computer and logging me into the server almost immediately. I brought my own laptop with me because I wanted to be able to work with Apple, which is so much easier for me. I had a lot of freedom in my designs and was able to create a new concept based on the corporate design of Child's Dream.

My plan was to stay in Chiang Mai for six weeks and then travel around Southeast Asia for another 6 weeks. Enjoying my work and living in Chiang Mai made me change my plans. Two weeks after starting work with Child's Dream, I informed Manuela that I would love to extend my stay, if that was OK with her and the rest of the team.

- 1 | We went to the hospital to donate blood
- 2 | Pi U, Pi Tai and Nui having an afterwork snack
- 3 | Super serious Badminton



4



Thanks to my decision stay longer, I was allowed to join Pi Koy, Pi Gee and Pi Yee for a 10 day trip to Laos with Laura, another volunteer who was writing the text for the annual report. It was an amazing experience seeing the schools in Laos. I had read so much about the work of Child's Dream, their different education and health programmes, but seeing it, one to one, gives you a whole new perspective of how important the work of Child's Dream is. I was so impressed by nature in Laos, the children at school and all the lovely locals who are so welcoming and extremely friendly. It was a journey I never would have been able to do by my self.

Carzy, funny, hardworking, motivated, active etc... is how I would describe the team.

After settling in, I bought a bicycle to ride around the city and go to work. It is the easiest and most uncomplicated way for me, due to the fact that I couldn't ride a motorbike. I have left the bicycle at the office so following volunteers would be able to use it as well. Have fun!

Crazy, funny, hardworking, motivated, active... is how I would describe the office team. During working hours they are super-efficient, concentrated and motivated to maintain their projects. However, as soon it is lunchtime, things get madly crazy in the kitchen. They all get out their food, which they have brought with them and create a huge buffet with all the varieties of Thai food. I loved joining in and experiencing all these different new tastes. The huge choice of dishes goes

- 1 | The famous Panda of Chiang Mai
- 2 | The Administration Team went out for dinner and drinks
- 3 | We went to visit a fruitfarm
- 4 | Warm up Café is a Club were locals party on weekends



1



2



3



4

way further than the usual pad thai and green curry: I love it! It took me a while to get used to the extremely spicy food, but now I am addicted and love the burning taste in my mouth and sweating it all out through my red head.

Usually, after work, there will be a badminton session, but don't think for a minute this will be an easy backwards and forwards hitting the shuttle for pleasure. This is a serious workout. Gee will make sure you leave the court all sweaty. Due to the fact I never had played badminton before, there was a lot I had to learn, including how to count in Thai.

After seven weeks with the team in Chiang Mai, I went off travelling to Bali, Singapore and Malaysia. I had it planned and the flights were booked already, so I stuck to the plan. It was ever so interesting seeing and experiencing different countries in Southeast Asia. By no means are they all the same: each one is so individual and lovely in its own way. I had a fantastic time travelling, but as time went on, I couldn't wait to be back in Chiang Mai and able to spend time with the team before I had to go home. Coming back to the office I got such a nice warm welcome.

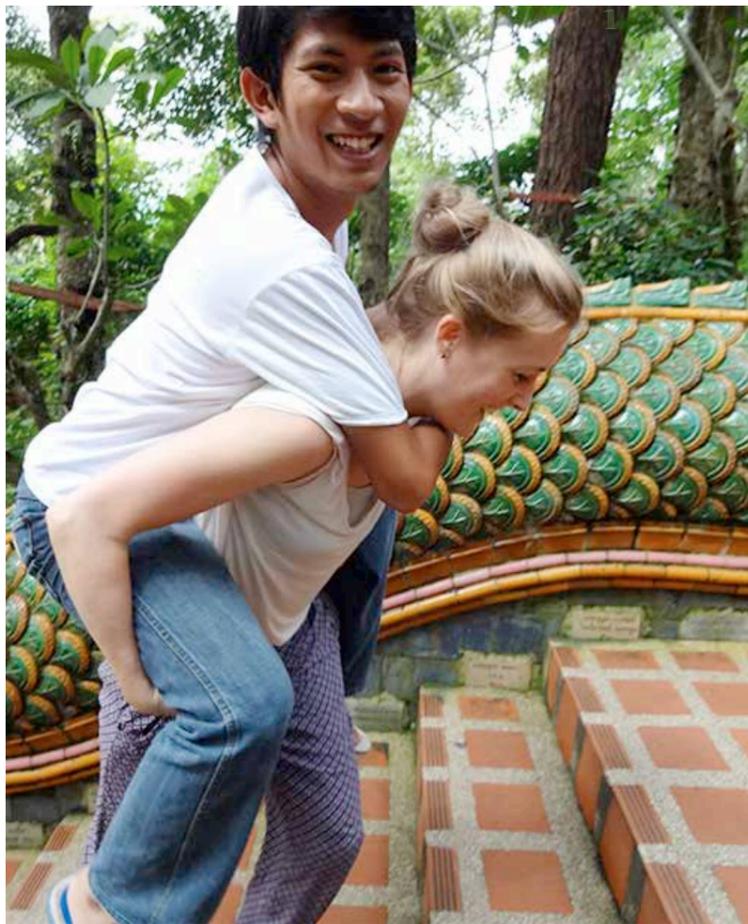
I made unbelievably great friends and had an experience that I wouldn't want to have missed in my life. Knowing I still will be doing freelance work for Child's Dream made my goodbyes a little less painful...and I hope to be back again after a short time.

1 | A sweet little girl at one of the nurserys in Laos

2 | I couldn't resist helping Tha Wah Building a Play-ground when we met him in Loas

3 | A school in Laos

4 | Kids at school in Laos



# A little information for you

## Simple things I would have done differently:

- I should have rented a room in a house, not a hostel, right from the beginning. It would have saved me a lot of money.
- I should have bought a bicycle straight away.
- I should have taken a Thai language course. Understanding people and being able to communicate makes life here so much easier.
- I should have saved more money before coming here so I would have been able to stay longer.

- 1 | OK. Sometimes the staff can be lazy as well
- 2 | Temple
- 3 | In Chiang Mai there are about as many Temples as there are 7/Elevens

## Very good places to stay

- 3 Soi Sri Poom 3 Road, Chiang Mai  
City Landlord's name: Tum  
Mobile no: 0812878706 3000THB/month.  
Very nice, clean. 3 Month is a Minimum
- Pak Mai