

In the summer, I took part in the LaSER international opportunity to Thailand which was a life changing experience. We spent 2 weeks in Singburi, teaching and painting at local schools, a weekend in Bangkok meeting the Thai girl Guides, a weekend in Chiang Mai visiting an elephant sanctuary and the final week in Chang Rai staying with a hill tribe! It was a very busy and exciting trip, packed full of highlights and challenges.

The bulk of our service project was painting at a school. When we arrived at the school on the Monday, the walls had old, cracked paint and were pale and unexciting. We had the joy of taking charge of the project and changing the walls from old and plain to bright and exciting. We scrapped all the paint off, varnished the walls, painted them white, then blue, then got to design our own bright patterns and pictures. The heat helped as we were able to do about 5 coats in one day! We did an under the sea themed wall, a garden themed wall, an alphabet wall and a caterpillar with numbers on and a fruit wall. It was great to leave our amazing designs with them and see their excitement- we also painted the trefoil to leave our Guiding stamp with them.

I think the most rewarding experience of the trip was teaching and spending time with the children. They loved playing games with us and were very eager to learn. Teaching the children at the hill tribe was particularly challenging because many of them were the same age or older than us and they already knew some English, we had the task of working out what they already knew and attempting to fill in the gaps- it helped that they were so keen.

My favorite day of the trip was probably the hike whilst we were staying with the hill tribe. We hiked through the thick jungle for 5 hours and it was very hot and tiring. The views were absolutely incredible, the green mountains stretched on for miles. We stopped for lunch at the highest point of the range and we had fried rice wrapped in bamboo leaves that we carried with us. Our tour guide chopped down a bamboo stem and carved us all cups for us to have hot drinks. All in all it was a really great day and one that I will remember forever.

Another highlight of the trip was meeting the Thai GirlGuides in Bangkok, it was lots of fun talking with them and getting to witness Guiding in different countries which was inspiring and overwhelming.

An unexpected highlight of the trip was when our accomodation flooded! It poured with rain for ages until there was a river up to our knees outside our rooms and the water had started running under the door! Eventually we got to evacuate to a nice hotel for the night!

As well as our service project we were able to spend time visiting temples such as the reclining Buddah and Wat Pho, as well as feeding and washing elephants at an elephant sanctuary

I made many memories that will stay with me forever and I would like to thank LaSER for providing me with this incredible experience!







