



Update 27

September 1st, 2006

Help NATR from the comfort of your own home:

All of these are part-time endeavors and would take at most a couple of hours a week.

For details see the bottom of the update, or email us...

- **Graphic Designer**
- **Website marketing promotion**
- **Handicrafts marketing (for the holiday season)**

Bodhi's Ramblings

NATR is an organization that strives to focus on the positive, an attitude that is reflected in our projects, our local relationships, and our working environment. As we have seen from the tsunami, however, change and loss are also an inevitable part of life. In late August I received news that Chris Barefoot, one of our long-time supporters and soon-to-be volunteer, passed away at his home in Fairbanks, Alaska. In the time I spent with Chris, I came to know him as a passionate and dedicated person who truly put service before self. As Chris's mother wrote in an email, "I am consoled by the fact that his last few weeks were so full of enthusiasm and excitement in planning for his work with you."

Our sympathy goes out to his family and friends, and we will hold Chris in our thoughts and hearts as we continue our work here at NATR.

Suwanna – Welcome Home!

This month we would like to bring Suwanna (a.k.a. Su) to your attention as a most incredible woman and valuable member of our team. Su is from Bak Jok village and lost her house, possessions, and many friends in the Tsunami. Since then she has been living in a small shack near the pier and has only this month moved into her new home. Su started with NATR as a part-time coordinator at the Bak Jok community centre. She then went on to lead the handmade card collective into the success it is today. She is now our programme coordinator for the handicrafts. This month saw two marketing trips to Koh Samui that, with the help of Rotary, included meetings with members of the Samui Hotel Association, which has given us some very promising results.



(Su with her daughter)

Project Updates

ACE Expert Program – Business Savvy and Ready for Action



This month the ACE Experts have enjoyed completing their marketing and business training led by the Institute for Small and Medium Enterprise Development. Thank you to Khun Thanan, Khun Kamol, and their team for sharing their expertise in small business.

The ACE Experts also had an opportunity to practice their newly acquired skills with the students from the University of Birmingham. The visitors were taken on tours of the local highlights in and around the villages, and several boat trips including one to a fish farm.

Other activities included picking local nuts and fruit and later preparing and cooking traditional dishes. Furthermore, the ACE experts are progressing rapidly in their computer classes. They have mastered excel this month and are proceeding on to power point in September.

Ban Talae Nok Community Centre – More Fun than a Barrel of Monkeys



Congratulations to Saroh (left) the community centre nanny who has successfully completed her training in childcare with the government. The Rababbai Group has identified BTN Community Centre as a model centre for private child daycare, and will be bringing staff from other day care centers to observe Saroh's work. This is due to its hygienic conditions, the available teaching materials and trained staff.

August has seen the creation of an after school aerobics club. The club is being taught by high school students and is for the younger children of the village. It is aimed at improving health at a time when many youngsters have taken to eating junk food. We also hosted radio station DJ's who taught kids between the ages of 15 and 18 how to present a radio show, and then put them on air!

Gaan, our community organizer, has successfully initiated the Senior Entertainment project with a small library of VCDs showing traditional Thai dance and the ancient art of Thai shadow puppets. There is a very positive reaction to this project as it is often not possible to include the elders in other community activities. August seems to have been elderly people month as the centre was also visited by a local health clinic employee to educate the villagers on care of the elderly.

Bak Jok Scholarships – Friends Around the World

We have received the following report from Hilary Sampson, who was on Koh Phratong when the tsunami hit, and has since been instrumental in raising support for the children of Bak Jok. We include it in the update to give our supporters a sense of the global community that makes our work possible.

“It's always great to hear all of your news and the continuing fantastic work you are doing in Kuraburi. Keep up the good work. At the end of last term I went into Tanglin Trust School, Singapore to chat about my experience of staying at Golden Buddha Resort and the events during and following the tsunami. The children were fascinated to hear about the trauma our family and everyone else on the island experienced at that time. I think they really took in the enormity of the help they are giving children the same age as them. They have drawn a picture of the world and stuck little pictures of themselves where they come from and produced a booklet of where they live and what they like to do. You should be receiving it very soon. You should have also received funds to pay for 18 disposable cameras to hand out to the children to make a record of their typical school day and home life. We hope in the future that Tanglin students and Bak Jok students will be able to meet up.”



Community Based Tourism (CBT) – Visitors Galore!

NATR bid a fond farewell to the remaining University of Birmingham students, who had been voluntouring with us for the past five-weeks. The trip not only increased the ACE Experts' self-confidence in terms of guiding and English skills, but also highlighted the suitability of voluntour and community service groups as part of our Andaman Discoveries project. The trip was a success and already we are planning an action packed program for next year's volunteers.



Many thanks to the delightful Johl and Smith family who came to us for a CBT tour in Tung Nang Dam village. Hiking through lush jungles, paddling through dense mangroves and being fed the most tantalizing Thai food were just a few of the highlights of the trip. We also welcomed our first group of Thai volunteers from Bangkok who joined the ACE Experts in Tung Nang Dam village at the new CBT Centre. They helped to design and paint a

community information board for the centre. Their translations were greatly appreciated and will be used in an information booklet for visitors to the area.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) came to visit NATR and was very impressed with our Andaman Discoveries and ACE Expert program. They have agreed to support us in several ways, including promotion and networking. The Assistant Director of TAT Phuket was taken on a tour of Ban Talae Nok village by the ACE Experts, who did an excellent job of showing the special guests their current CBT activities and homestay facilities, using all their skills that they have learned on the ACE course. The TAT visit highlighted the gradual integration of the ACE Experts into the current CBT program and how they are the future of successful CBT in the region. The ACE program and current CBT development are no longer separate entities, as the ACE Experts are becoming skilled and confident leaders.

English – the new *lingua franca*

Four minus three plus one equals two. No, NATR isn't offering arithmetic classes; rather, this equation describes our teaching staff over the past month! In addition to maintaining the highest quality English classes this side of Thailand, our remaining English teachers have been scouring the globe for new teachers. If you're an English teacher and you're reading this, we want you! (Check out our new webpage at www.northandamantsunamirelief.com/english.html for more information about our English program and details on how to apply.)



More voluntourists equals more speaking practice. We can apply this fundamental tenet to our ACE Experts and homestay families, who spoke with tourists and more tourists this month! Several villages hosted CBT homestays, most notably with the University of Birmingham students. For the ACE Experts it was a valuable chance to practice their classroom language skills in real-life contexts, and to receive confidence-building feedback from “farang” outside of NATR. It was also an opportunity to pilot the CBT English packs developed by our former and much-beloved teacher Helen. The English packs contain flashcards of basic homestay objects and offer several fun, ice-breaker game ideas that tourists can use with their host family to practice words and phrases in English. The packs have also been

translated into Thai, offering a mutual language exchange for both tourist and host.

Finally, the English team launched a third cycle of General English at TREC recently, which will further optimize and expand our six-month general curriculum. As these community classes are geared towards tourism-based professionals as well as the community at large, we've designed a curriculum of largely conversation-based language in relevant contexts. We're now conducting extensive feedback sessions (which include a field trip) with the students to further improve the relevancy of the course.

Computer Education – Technical Literacy in the Digital Age

The middle of August saw the completion of the advanced class's training, so congratulations and good luck to all of them. The government group have had a 70% success rate in their excel test and are now moving on to power point, and at least nine members of the group are turning up for every session without fail. The general group, open to all members of the public, has just completed their power point training with test results showing a thorough understanding, meaning they can proceed on to internet and email training. In the last few days of August, we began a class for high schoolers, open to 15 to 18 year olds from Kuraburi. This class has been received with enthusiasm and already has 25 participants. These young adults have been split in to two groups and have evening classes twice a week after school.

Chok Am Nuay – Donors wanted for doors and windows fund

Recently NATR was approached by the poor community of Chok Am Nuay to ask for assistance with the construction of a preschool. We bought the concrete and tiles for the floor, however the building is still without doors and windows. If anyone feels they are able to fund the purchase of these please get in touch...



Staff, Visitors, and Volunteers - Change is the only Constant

This month we said goodbye to four members of staff – Lak, Meht, Tuch, and Iang. NATR is grateful for their hard work - we will miss them, and wish them the best of luck in their post-NATR endeavours.

A big thank you for the hard work of Vaughn and Diana for the designing of www.tsunamicrafts.com. Design of the website is nearly complete, and we will be launching the website in September – more details in the next update. NATR was also lucky enough to host Diana for a brief volunteer stint in Kuraburi, where she applied her manifold skills to a wide range of NATR's projects, and managed to join in Bodhi's birthday shenanigans on August 12.

Also a big shout out to Paul and Olivia who have been working intermittently in the area since before the tsunami, and were with NATR for two weeks during their most recent visit to Thailand. This dynamic duo provided a wide range of services to NATR, including accounting, image management, project updates, and good company. Paul was successful in soliciting uniforms from the Liverpool Football Club (a.k.a. soccer, for all you Yankees) that will soon be presented to the Ban Talae Nok village team.

How you can help -

Volunteer postings are now available on the [NATR website](#).

Handicrafts Marketing – Outreach to Friends and Family

We have now also developed a do-it -yourself '**volunteer marketing kit**'.

The kit is full of all the essential items you need to help the Handicraft producers build new markets and generate some great Christmas sales! If you are interested please e-mail us your address and we'll post one off to you! Handicrafts make great Christmas presents!

Graphic Designer

NATR is in the process of preparing our Sense of Place Booklet – designed to showcase the culture and history of the local area from the perspective of tsunami-affected villagers. We are also creating an English language version, and are therefore in need of assistance with layout and formatting.

Website Marketing and Promotion

With the imminent launch of our handicraft and community based tourism websites, we would much appreciate guidance from anyone who can help our sites achieve higher visibility.

English Teacher

We are still in need of TEFL/CELTA /TESOL trained English teachers. This is a great opportunity for new or experienced teachers to consolidate the work we've already done and take the program forward in exciting new directions. If you know anyone who is interested in volunteering for a few months, please contact us!