5. Lang Ai Mee community

(Forest preservation, active community, join local school, activities with kids, foreign language and culture exchange, remote area...)

Lang Ai Mee community, Nakhon Si Thammarat province

DaLaa MTV project - code: 1704

Periods available: November 1st to February 28th, 2019 and May 1st to September 30th, 2019 at least 2 months

Expected number of volunteers: 2 to 4

HISTORY and REASONS OF THE PROJECT

Lang Ai Mee is a mountainous village of Nakorn Sri Tammarat province, Cha Uat district, part of Bantad Range Mountain. It is the watershed area giving birth to Cha Uat river flowing through the town of the same name and until the Chinese sea in Pak Panang district.

The first people came to live in this area in 1963. It’s a good area to plant rubber and fruit plantations. One of them was named Mee and gave his name to the village. In 1972, the government declared this area a national park and since then tries to forbid the villagers to live there and to use the natural resources, arguing that villagers are destroying the nature. (The same government who allowed before some companies’ concessions to cut all the forest rich trees species to sell abroad.)

Since that time, the villagers, about 60 families at that time, gather to fight against this decision and to prove they can live in harmony with the forest, the nature and can take care of it. Many volunteers’ activities have been going on in the village and now the community is very strong and responsible.

In 2002, they create a group “Ton Rak Paa Ton Nam” which could be translated by “Love forest and watershed” to gather now 157 families and 463 people. They made agreements together to preserve the forest, animals, water, trees, and organize activities together.

In 2014, the police border patrol helped to start a local school, so children can have education all the year along. In 2015 and 2016, DaLaa volunteers situated in Roywan Phan Pba project close to the place joined often activities with the school and the villagers. The princess and donators made it possible to create a new and beautiful learning center for the local children in the village (called the school).

After Roywan project was stopped in 2016, an active member from Lang Ai Mee, P Com and an active teacher close to the villagers, Crue Prakan, contacted us to request more volunteers to join their activities.
AIMS of the PROJECT

1- Exchange and learn language and culture with the local community.
2- Support the local group: Love forest and watershed.
3- Support the learning center on the foreign language aspect.
4- Help to give responsibility and harmony to local people in preserving their culture and way of life.

WORK AND ACTIVITIES

1- Learning center (=school): exchange language, activities with kids. The school will adapt to each volunteers’ skills.
2- Join and exchange activities about the local culture, occupation (fruit and rubber farming, using local material to make crafts like brooms…)
3- Take care of the forest and watershed: plant trees close to the river, look around for seeds species, tree nursery, and small dams to keep humidity…
4- Join with the women group to make processed food from the forest: chili sauce, kind of palm fruit to boil…

REQUIREMENTS

The volunteers should be ready to stay in a remote area (in the middle of the forest), to adapt to the local conditions with only basic facilities and with very few people able to speak in English. Volunteers should be able to handle spontaneous working environment and constant changes in the plans. The mentality and way of thinking is very different from the western world. There will often have activities with the children. To have responsibility for yourself, the kids and full involvement in community matters is a must.

FOOD and ACCOMODATION

Volunteers will stay in the villagers’ house, if possible with their own room. There will be simple mat, pillow and mosquito net. You will need to bring sleeping bag - more bedding materials could be an option in case you are not used to sleeping on the hard floor. Volunteer will be part of the family who will take care of them for everything including food, security and transport. During activities at school (most school days), the lunch will be offered there. There are 4 or 5 families who are willing to welcome the volunteers at their house. Local people eat rice (or noodles) 3 times a day with side dishes like curries, omelets, local leaves and vegetables. They agree to adapt to volunteers needs and tastes using the ingredients available the