

## *Adventure's in Thailand – Queen Mary Expedition Fund Report*

During the summer I went to Thailand to become a volunteer teacher for two months and a half. I flew out of Heathrow on the 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2023 and I have reached Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi airport at 8 pm on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June. There a driver that was called by the company Gotoco came to pick me up and dropped me off at the first hotel which we were staying in Bangkok called Old Thai Heng. I was rooming with two other girls that were taking part in the programme, and I found out that I would be placed with them in a beach town called Hua Hin. Originally, we were meant to be there only for training, however, later on we found out that we would be staying there for the whole time in Thailand. After we moved and reached Hua Hin, which is approximately 4 hours away from Bangkok, we met the organisers and the staff members from the Thai partner company Xplore and they have provided us with training for a week prior to starting to work at our school, Beaconhouse Yamsaard School.

My birthday fell on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, and I decided to spend the whole day at the beach and the two other girls surprised me with a cake later at night and we cut the cake and celebrated at the rooftop on our first accommodation in Hua Hin. A week later after passing our training with a final training lesson that we gave to a class of 9 years old in a local school in Hua Hin, we finally moved to our temporary home founded by our school. Since in the whole programme it was only three girls, each of us were able to live in single apartments during our stay. Our apartments were big, with a kitchen, bathroom and balcony. We also had access to the outdoor pool, and it was such a cozy and beautiful place to live. After moving in, we started our employment with the school. We had to attend and enter the school at 7.30am and we finished our working hours at 4pm from Monday to Friday.

When clocking in and out, we had to scan our fingerprint so that the school could keep a record of our absences and presence, and we only had 3 sick leaves during our placement. Since we were employed as floating teachers, we did not have a set age group or class that we had to teach, however, we were responsible for mainly primary and kindergarten years. Our timetable was divided in a manner that would allow us to spend time in kindergarten in the morning since the babies leave school at 2pm and afternoon with the primary. During my employment, I was mainly instructed to teach science and maths even though there were days in which I had to teach subjects such as IT, Healthcare, Occupation, Physical Education and English. During our stay in Thailand, we were lucky enough to get national holiday that we used to travel around and visit many places.

We visited our work town Hua Hin, the beach town Krabi and its islands, the mountains in Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, and Bangkok. We also tried many new foods and new activities such as Muay Thai. Throughout our stay, we visited so many beautiful temples and learnt the similarities and differences that Thai Buddhism followed. The people we encountered were extremely kind and sweet and we felt so welcomed from the get-go. It was a beautiful and meaningful experience, and it allowed me to learn many things and to grow as an individual. I was also able to make new friends and meet other fellow teachers from all over the world. My stay in Thailand was one of the best and I really recommend others to take the risk and travel alone since it can be an eye opening experience like no other. On the last day that I had to come back which was the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September, I really did not want to come back because it also meant that I would have to separate from the many friends I made including the two other girls that I met thanks to this programme, since both of them live in other parts of England. I will for sure be doing something like this again soon enough. I would like to thank the Queen Mary expedition fund for making it easier for me to make this trip possible.

