



LIVING AND WORKING IN LAOS - A CROSS-SECTION

by Anna-Sophia ten Brink &
Siegfried Hadatsch

OUTLINE

- I. Introduction to the LGTC
- II. Tasks at the LGTC
- III. Life at the Bungalow
- IV. Life in Vientiane
- V. Traveling in Laos
- VI. Looking back

THE LAO-GERMAN TECHNICAL COLLEGE (LGTC)

- technical vocational school in Vientiane, Laos
- 5 different sections where students receive technical training
- students receive theoretical and practical input in their sections
- ties to Germany dating back to the 1970s



STUDENTS AT THE COLLEGE



TASKS AT THE LGTC

- Up to three volunteers working at the College
- Evening classes with students: Beginner, Pre-Intermediate & Intermediate
- Teacher classes: Beginner, Elementary & Technical English
- Tandem-Teaching with your tandem-partner: each volunteer works closely together with one English teacher at the LGTC
- Lesson planning, tandem-teaching, hospitation & reflection



LIFE AT THE BUNGALOW - A SMALL INSIGHT

- Volunteers at the LGTC share a bungalow together
- Located right next to the College and a short bike ride away from the city center
- Two bedroom with a bathroom each (and AC)
- Small kitchen
- Big living and working space (no AC, only ceiling fan)



LIFE AT THE BUNGALOW — A SMALL INSIGHT



- There are no glass panels in the window frames
- Tap water is unsafe to drink, so there is a water dispenser instead
- Roommates: Geckos & Cockroaches
- You never feel isolated: Birds are singing outside, the neighbors are talking, someone is listening to music or fixing something at the College across the street

LIFE IN VIENTIANE

- Vientiane is the capital of Laos, located next to the Mekong river
- Certain degree of “Westernization” present (compared to countryside)
- Only public transportation are buses and “Tuk-Tuks”, or you ride your bike (5 km to city centre, you can drive along the Mekong)
- Very diverse variety of international food (Italian, French, Indian, Vietnamese, Pakistani, Russian, German, Lao, Chinese) in relatively small space
- Shopping for food: different weekly markets with fresh fruit and vegetable or supermarkets, few “Western markets”

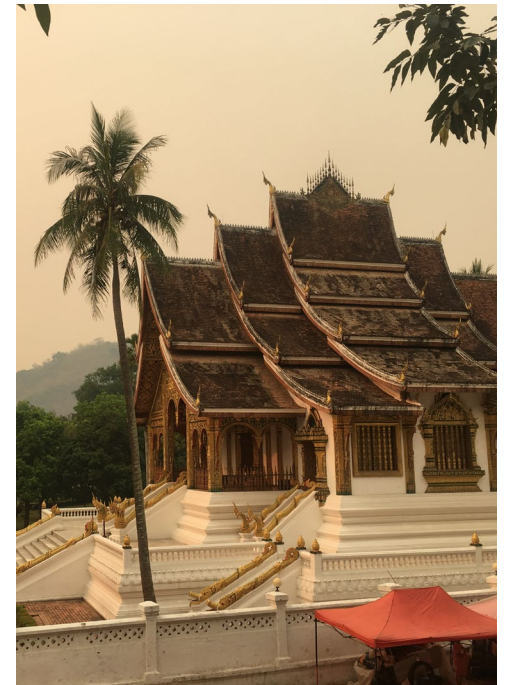
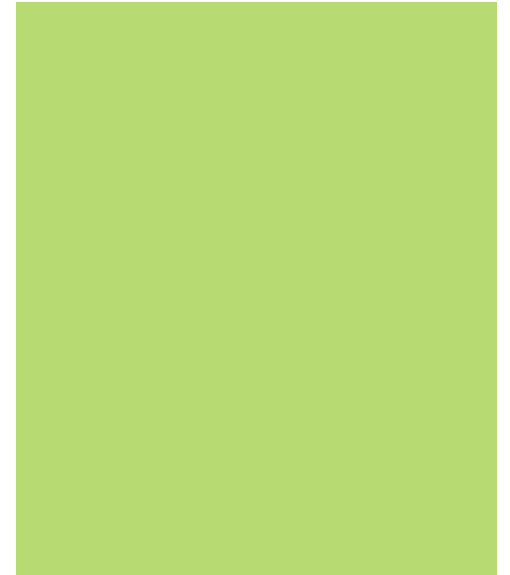


TRAVELING IN LAOS

As volunteers: opportunities for
travel on holidays

long-distance transportation:
(sleeper) buses, train (new!) &
airplane

Both “curated” tourist
experiences and insights into
proper Lao life along the way



LOOKING BACK

- Cross-cultural observations:
 - Experiences in the (teaching) workspace vastly differed: German “correctness” – Lao “flexibility”
→ “Bor Pen Yang” – “there is no problem”
 - Things we took for granted were nowhere to be found in Laos → general applicability for abroad!
 - Risk of explaining certain events through **lens of perceived western superiority**
 - personal experience: little initial culture shock vs. huge re-entry shock













...ANY QUESTIONS?