

Dear Bamboo Schoolers,

the last 2 weeks have been by far the most challenging and physically painful for me so far.

Since it is quite a progress to obtain an official "NGO Visa" in Laos (have been waiting for 8 months), I got the information that mine would finally be ready to be picked up at the Lao-Thai border. So, once again, I embarked myself on the journey from Nong Khiaw to the capital, Vientienne (about 15 hours ride in total).

Once there, I crossed the Friendship Bridge into Thailand and later reentered Laos. My excitement was noticeable to anyone since having a NGO Visa means that I wouldn't have to extend my Visa every single month at the police station in Luang Prabang. But since nothing ever goes like we imagine it to do in Laos, this wouldn't be the exception. The paper that I presented was not the correct one. Bummer. That's life in Laos. But the surprises don't stop there.

2 days after arriving from Vientiane back to Nong Khiaw, I started to feel as if a mild cold would come over me. Little did I know that within hours that "small cold" developed into something I've never felt before.

I thought that during my 8 months living in Laos and having endured scorpion bites, bomb findings, extreme storms on top of mountains - that I would have seen it all. But I was clearly forgetting one main missing ingredient: Dengue.

Well, that's not what the initial diagnosis was in our hospital in Nong Khiaw (they don't have the hardware to detect it and therefore just test it "manually"). So I had to be taken to Luang Prabang by "ambulance". I didn't know what was worse: the ambulance or the dengue pain itself. See pictures attached.

Once there, since my dengue came in combination with vomiting and diarrhea, I had to spend 4 days connected to IV fluids and pain killers. I always heard terrifying stories about this infection and couldn't even imagine how painful and excruciatingly uncomfortable it is. Especially when all alone in a hospital in Laos.

Luckily, our former volunteers Silke and Klaus planned to visit me in Nong Khiaw during the same period that I was in the hospital and therefore were able to pick me up from it on my last day.

I am luckily starting to feel a little bit better, the fever is finally down and I am able to keep my food down, which is good because we have a lot of work ahead of us!

Please welcome Brianna (from the US) and her boyfriend Peter (from New Zealand) to the team! Brianna is a nurse and will be supporting the district hospital in Nong Khiaw and Muang Ngoy clinic for 5 weeks.

Peter will be assisting me to develop a sanitation training for the villages (mainly focused on washing your hands with soap).

On behalf of all of us we wish them a good start and are happy to have them on the team!

Happy weekend to everyone!

Isabel Montano



Fahrt im laotischen Krankentransport – ein Regenschirm verhindert das Schlimmste!



Hygiene sieht anders aus!



Oder so? – WC im Krankenhaus in Luang Phrabang.