

Amanda C. Ortega- WorldTeach Volunteer Project Description

On October 1st, 2010 I will be departing to Nakhon Phanom, Thailand as a volunteer teacher with WorldTeach. WorldTeach is a non-profit, non-governmental organization run out of Harvard's Center for International Development that places recent graduates and professionals as volunteer teachers in under-resourced schools in developing countries. WorldTeach partners with governments and organizations to provide volunteers that meet the local needs of communities. I will be working fulltime as an English teacher for a year in rural Thailand, in the Nakhon Phanom province.

Thailand, as a newly industrialized country (NIC) has experienced rapid economic growth but this is seldom felt in its more rural areas. Nakhon Phanom's population is among the most underprivileged in the country. As an NIC, Thailand has a strong interest in internationalizing its education system; its Ministry of Education enacted in 1995 that English would be its first foreign language. English language ability is important, if not imperative, for citizens to become competitive members of the Thai workforce. The rural populations are at a competitive disadvantage due to their lack of English instructors, thus their students are not given the same advantages and opportunities that more affluent and urban schools provide.

As an English teacher in Nakhon Phanom I will first and foremost be an instructor of English. Second, I will be providing up to date resources and materials for the continuance of an English program after I am gone. A reoccurring problem in Thailand's instruction of English is that many of the teachers at the primary level hold education degrees in subjects other than English. This is especially felt in rural regions. My role, along with being an instructor, is to assist Thai English instructors with resources for an ongoing, confident and effective program. Finally, I am also required to implement extra curricular programs with the students that reinforce English skills, address a community based need, or assist in a program that the student's feel passionate about.