

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"

Psalm 133:1

Community Murals

I've been involved with different kinds of peacebuilding efforts in Chiang Mai, Thailand. A recent project I worked with sought to transform communities through murals. The project found street artists in the community and asked them to paint in the daylight, safe from arrest.

The murals they paint have communal input and the images have given locals a sense of pride. 95% of the murals created through this initiative are left untouched and violence in the community statistically declines.

The owner of an Irish pub, a popular expatriate hangout, had a wall on the side of her bar that had been covered by graffiti and tagged by street artists. She offered the wall to the project and provided funds for the paint. The artists that came up with the design were from Brazil. The leader of the painting group was from Mexico and has lived in Thailand for 12 years. Another artist hailed from Australia and I came from America. The staff of Thai women at the pub helped us get organized and allowed us to use the bar facilities to set up the paint and brushes. They also helped us clean our brushes and provided us with water, newspaper, and towels. The Thai women kept coming out during their shifts and staring at the wall throughout the day. When they could see the mural come to life, they were excited and interacted more with us.

The wall was in a high traffic area, so we gained a lot of attention. People asked what we were painting and how they could get involved. Some people said nothing at all, but stood for a long time watching, taking pictures and videos. The artists ended up building positive relationships in the community that they are used to hiding from. It was amazing to witness how a group of people could build relationship in the community through art, and how easily art facilitated those connections.

Kristin Wolf teaches English with the Church of Christ in Thailand (CCT). Her appointment is supported by Week of Compassion, Our Churches Wider Mission, Disciples Mission Fund and your special gifts.



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