

## Coffee Shop

Written by Hanna  
Schuster  
(A volunteer)



Hanna Schuster

One really special thing about School for Life - besides the loveliest students and a beautiful nature - is our own school coffee shop. Coffee for Life, how it's called, is runned by the students themselves, guided by one of our teachers, Kru Ou. The kids can learn there how to be a barista. That means, they learn the difference between arabica and robusta coffee beans, how to grow coffee and the further process, they learn about dripping and cupping coffee, how to use the espresso machine, what's good coffee and a lot more. They even learn how to make Latte art. And, of course, through the coffee shop they get to know running a small business. Last semester we had a special teacher giving these coffee lessons, where everyone, who was interested, could participate. The kids loved these lessons, sometimes they came in the evening and asked to practice again. So we had some nightly coffee tasting hours. And sometimes they even didn't drink their milk during the day, so that they could practice Latte art over and over again, until there was a perfect heart on our coffee or a cute panda head.

We recently moved our coffee shop to another building right in the middle of our campus. And although it's not completely finished yet, it's already open most of the time, so all our guests, teacher or volunteers can drink coffee when ever they like. And without being biased, I can say: the coffee they make is really good! :)

The project is going on for one and a half year now, but this semester is the first one, where the coffee shop is open all day - and runned by a new generation of young barista, our P5 boys. Until last semester, the older boys of the M3 class were responsible for the coffee shop, but when they graduated in March, they passed this responsibility to our younger students. Every child, who is taking care of the coffee shop, gets a little bit of money after a year for their work.

We grow our own coffee plants all over the campus, but they are still to young to be harvested. We need to wait two years for the first coffee beans but normally we wait another year, because otherwise the plants will have less beans in the coming year. We have to fertilise the plants every three month and in hot season they need water every day. So we still have to wait a little bit for the first harvest. The coffee shop team hopes that after being able to harvest our own coffee beans, they can start to dry and roast them in school, too, so that we have our own coffee.

The students really enjoy working as a barista and learn all about coffee and they get a lot of knowledge and experience out of it, so it's just a great project.

In 2015, *Khun Praewa Boonyawan*, a successful coffee entrepreneur, met the director of the School for Life *Khun Siriporn*. *Khun Siriporn* told her that the school's children and young people of Akha, Lisu, Lahu, Hmong, Karen and Thaiyai roots, had developed a strong entrepreneurial spirit, but had lower chances on the employment market than those from mainstream Thai society. For this reason, the school was backing the promotion of entrepreneurship. *Khun Praewa* was instantly supportive of this plan and offered her involvement – and thus it came about that *Khun Praewa* and *Khun Siriporn* chose 18 young people from the School for Life and trained them to become coffee entrepreneur. *Khun Praewa* provided the school with 3,000 coffee seedlings, and these have been planted all over the campus.

Since then, *Khun Praewa* has been leading the Coffee Project in School for Life. She set up a Coffee Shop on the campus with the trained young people for School for Life.













**School for Life Chiang Mai**

**185/3, Moo 4, T. Pamieng, Doi Saket, Chiang Mai 50220, Thailand.**