

## Anna & Stien in Sri Lanka November 2019 - 3 december 2019

Leaving Amsterdam for three months to travel through Asia. The first month in Sri Lanka working at ISURU Pre-School will be the start.

We had a good first impression of the school. We arrived at the opening of the Annual Exhibition, all the crafts of the last year exposed in the ceremony hall. Young students in the age of 4-6 walked towards us and we got a handmade paper bouquet and a flower necklace. We were surprised by all the beautiful original crafts the kids had made.



The next week life went back to normal and the teachers gave us an impression of the upcoming weeks. So our life at the school started. Every morning we woke up at 7.30 am and we were offered small bananas by the nice old couple who slept at the office with us. We had the most amazing 5-minute walk to the school, where we first passed the beautiful train rail and were greeted by all the families saying, “good morning”. At school the day started with a morning ritual, the kids circled up singing a prayer and the school song. We were surprised about the concentration of the kids during this half hour morning ritual. In the Netherlands the kids would lose their concentration after 5 minutes.

After the morning ritual the kids got separated in two classrooms. One for the older kids and one for the younger ones. We helped with arts and crafts during the day. The whole month the kids were practising for the end of the year ceremony. So we did a lot of dancing and singing with them. So now we know all the songs by heart. Around 10:30 am there was breakfast, all the kids waited in line to get their food. If everybody filled their lunch box, the teacher said: “Now eat! and then they could eat.



We had a lot of free time which we well spent at our favourite places around the school. Only a 3-minute walk to Sugar Beach. Where we relaxed the whole day at the beach and along their beautiful swimming pool.

We had a local Tuk Tuk driver who took us everywhere. So if we were not at Sugar Beach you could find us at Wijaya. If you are lucky this is a perfect place to enjoy swimming with turtles. At Wijaya we saw the most beautiful sunsets enjoying nice food and fresh coconuts.

We spent two weekends in Unawatuna, a village nearby Thalpe! There was a nice beach with lots of good restaurants. A good place to take a weekend off.

Besides helping the teachers and the kids in class we also made two posters during our stay. First we made one of the alphabet. Next to every letter we made a little drawing starting with that letter. Every time we worked on the painting the kids circled up around us and started saying the drawings in English. So sweet! The second poster was about colours. They are now hanging on the wall in the classrooms.



We had a long weekend to Mirissa and Weligama, which is a big surf village one-hour drive from Thalpe. We met with our friends from Amsterdam and did a lot of surfing and partying. The best time to surf was during sunset with all the surfers on the water. After surfing we had dinner and a drink at Hangtime Rooftop, which is a good surfers spot. One day we rented a scooter and explored the beautiful area.



Our last project at the school was making a huge wall painting. We came up with the idea to make a world map. So that the kids could learn the world map in a nice and easy way. A lot of kids first thought that Africa was Sri Lanka haha. When we almost finished it there was one father who suggested to write Sri Lanka next to the country on the world map. Now it is also easier for them to understand where Sri Lanka is located.



Our last day at ISURU Pre-School we gave the teachers and kids a suitcase full of stuff from Amsterdam. Filled with pencils, (coloured) paper and stickers. They were all so happy with it. The teachers also gave us a present! A little handmade bag that they bought the last day in a village nearby! Thankful for these three weeks we left the school, missing the kids and teachers already.



The last night our Tuk Tuk driver invited us to have a farewell dinner at his place. He and his wife cooked a splendid dinner for us with all regional dishes. A very special end of our stay in Talpe.

Leaving our stay at school we had a small week to explore the rest of Sri Lanka. We wanted to do the famous train ride from Ella to Kandy so we first went to Ella. We spent a few nights in a nice hostel and enjoyed our stay in this cute town. The first day we walked to the famous Nine Arch Bridge, we were very lucky because we could see three trains crossing the bridge. The next day we got up very early to see the sun rise at Little Adams Peak. In the dark we arrived at the top of the mountain, little puppies ran towards us and we had the best view.



So we took the train from Ella to Kandy which was spectacular. The train was almost fully booked but there were luckily a few places left at the third class. We sat with the locals who gave us food and chatted with us. We had one day in Kandy before we left Sri Lanka to continue the rest of our trip.

We hope to come back soon!  
Such a beautiful country  
with lovely people!

Anna & Stien  
The Netherlands