



# UN

# Volunteers

inspiration in action

## IVD story competition runner-up: The environment At First Sight

by Linda Germanis

22 November 2009

**Bangkok, Thailand:** These photographs are some of hundreds of photos taken by Thai teenagers and children of the Saphan Phut Community in Bangkok, Thailand as well as volunteers during the photography training within the framework of the At First Project. The activities are taking place at the community learning centre when international volunteers come with their cameras to share with the youth photography experiences.

The pictures were taken during a thematic session about the role of the members of the community in environmental protection. The thematic session about environmental protection was inspired by the ICVolunteers Photo Contest 'Diverse Perspectives on the Environment, Citizenship and Volunteering'

([www.icvolunteers.org/index.php](http://www.icvolunteers.org/index.php))

Three photographs have been selected for the photo exhibition of the ICV Photo Contest 2009. The exhibition took place in Geneva from 7-30 October 2009. The pictures have been also included in the ICV Photo booklet ([issuu.com/cybervolunteers/docs/greenvoice](http://issuu.com/cybervolunteers/docs/greenvoice), refer to page 64-67).

The pictures have been taken and commented on by Natthanon Chaengsuk on the behalf of the At First Sight team. Natthanon Chaengsuk was born on the 6 January 1988 in Nonthaburi, Thailand, and now he lives in the Saphan Phut Community of Bangkok.

### About the At First Sight Project

Volunteers from UNESCO Bangkok, the International ATD Fourth World Movement and the Friends of ATD Foundation have jointly developed the project which is an activity under the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme.

The project aims to promote volunteerism and build a network of cooperation between different actors already active and committed to the development of the Bangkok's society. The At First Sight Project, through community photography, pursues the objective of presenting a series of photos taken both by



Saphan Phut Youth thoughts ... Life's journey: If we make it better, then our lives will be better. If we don't make better, the quality of life will deteriorate, like the path of one's life. Whether smooth or rocky, it is up to us. (At First Sight/UNV)



Saphan Phut Youth thoughts... Our differences reveal our distinct personalities: 1. Laziness, neglect towards the environment and community 2. Not knowing the value of things, wasting food. 3. Like brothers and sisters, plants have love for one another. A beauty to behold. And what about us? Can we be like this? That is, are we able to change our attitudes? (At First Sight/UNV)



# UN

# Volunteers

inspiration in action

international volunteers and members of the local community of Saphan Phut in order to show, as a symbolic dichotomy, how everything we are looking at can open a dialogue, whether between ourselves or with others. The At First Sight Project hopes to create a forum of understanding of diversities that populate every aspect of communities' life and culture.

Furthermore, through thematic photography sessions, the volunteers have the opportunity to raise awareness by the community members about development issues such as environmental protection, health education, etc. Each photography thematic session is followed by a comments session.

At First Sight avoids reworking reality through a critical approach and aims only to provide Bangkok's actors with a framework of pictures and commentaries through which it would be possible to restart a dialogue of cultural understanding. The 'dialogue methodology' suggested in the project gives different actors the opportunity to speak aloud and to give their own points of view on a common object.

Linda Germanis is a UNV volunteer intern Project Coordinator with UNESCO Bangkok. her assignment is fully funded by the Government of Italy.



Saphan Phut Youth thoughts... Order is here: 1. Our carelessness – taking things for granted 2. Brings rot and diseases into the community 3. Can create problems because we're throwing trash away carelessly. And when it overflows, we make a fuss if someone else throws garbage on the ground.



Saphan Phut Youth thoughts... A jar of water is many human emotions. Such as: 1. Store water in case it becomes scarce. 2. Water cleans and cools you down when it's hot. 3. Water is meant for drinking, but check first to see if its drinkable.



A water bottle that supports life: 1. Taking things for granted. Drinking and then throwing the bottle away. Or an act of not knowing how to put things back in place. 2. Not knowing the value of money and how hard it is to get water. 3. One can do many things with water (all we know is to drink-throw away-buy)