

## **Dominic Sulston - Personal Achievement Award with YWAM**

With the aid of the FOWS Personal Achievement Award, I have been able to spend 5 months with YWAM, a Christian organisation which focuses on aiding young individuals to perform missions on an international scale. During the 5 months of the programme, YWAM aims to develop these individuals in both their faith and knowledge to prepare them for wherever they may be going in later life. Each school is taught during a 'lecture phase' for 3 months and is then split into different teams for the 'outreach phase', where each team of 8-10 students travel out to different parts of the world to be missionaries.

In my experience, this meant going to Bangkok, Thailand. The Red Light District of Bangkok is widely known for being one of the biggest hotspots of sex trafficking in the world and our team went to bring aid to a small organisation which lies in its heart. The majority of our work focussed on building relationship with the women that would come into our building, so that they would know that how they are treated outside of our friendly and loving enclosure was not how they should be treated. In a more practical sense; this meant that the girls on my team would organise a beauty shop, where they would talk to and encourage the girls whilst doing their hair and makeup, whilst the men would look after their children who would range from newborn to primary school aged. Alongside this, during the nights where the area was the most lively, we played acoustic music directly onto the streets, causing various people to come off the streets out of curiosity to listen to our music and to talk to us. Another of the more important and personally impactful activities during our 6 weeks was visiting the Immigration Detention Centre (IDC). Here, any trafficked women who had been given 3 month visas by their trafficker would be put in this jail after the three months had lapsed. We were able to visit some of the women within the centre, bringing with us Bibles, sanitary products and books to be with them until their release; which may only occur if someone donates enough money for them to be flown home. Our team was elated to see three women get home during our stay in Thailand. This was a great opportunity for a change of perspective; whereby we as a team have become so much more thankful of what we have in the world and have become inspired to never stop pushing towards getting more of these women back to their families and homes.

Alongside these ministries, I was also able to teach piano to some of the workers at the Cafe in which we were based, most of which had once been trafficked or otherwise involved in the sex-industry of Bangkok. I took on 3 students during our 6-weeks in Bangkok and was amazed to hear of 4-hour practices after I had taught each of them. Their resilience to continue practicing amazed me and I am excited to hear how far they have come in the music.

To conclude, I will not have been able to help with or experience any part of Bangkok if I had not had the support of the Personal Achievement Award from FOWS. I am truly grateful and I hope to visit my friends there again soon.



A photo my team and I on our last day in Bangkok, and one of my band playing music