

The NIAS Experience Part 1

Reflections on Nias Experiential Trip: 29 Nov – 3 Dec 2019

Daniel & Angie family with 3 boys (Elson, Eason & Enson)



For us, this mission trip was a chance for self-reflection and to ask an important question. Have we been blessed and privileged? Have our views changed and mindfulness improved after this trip?

Our mission trip was full of insightful and learning experiences. Almost every day, we had many sessions to engage with the children in doing daily chores, eating, singing, and interaction either through games or craftworks. We had soccer games in the

evening almost every day, origami on the 2nd day, sewing of bean bags, indoor games and celebration parties. At night, we had dinner, devotion and some nights we have parties with a lot of sharing.

We had abundant opportunities to hear many different voices and perspectives during our mission trip, experience the local culture and of course, some fantastic food tasting, thanks to Yung Kwang's cooking. Some sharing session brought everyone to tears, not of any bitter experience but just the feeling of missing each other as we were departing for Singapore.

We were also required to engage in 'serious self-reflection' regarding these experiences; reflecting on our adventures through different perspectives was an intellectually demanding task, though one who encouraged us to look back on ourselves in positive ways. We left Nias, Indonesia convinced that all of us had changed.

So far, how have we changed with what we've gained during our stay in Nias?

One important thing we have gained is the benefit of different perspectives from these experiences. Another is a sense of balance between things. We used to believe in right or wrong before, but now, we can accept a mixture of them. It is ok to walk barefooted, it is ok to be simple, it is ok just to be ourselves, and even basic necessities are considered luxuries as long as we are contented. We might not be able to enjoy the same level of self-reflection this mission trip gave to us if we followed a normal tour for leisure or sightseeing holiday.

We now yearn to respect different perspectives and appreciate living in Singapore. We must not forget, we are very blessed, and we should continue to contribute and share our experiences with more people.

We are amazed at the works done in Nias by Pastor Michael, Ibu Sintha and the social workers. We believe this is not possible without the Almighty God that we faithfully believe in. Loving Father, You are the source of every blessing in our lives. In our pride, we often imagine otherwise, but we know better. We do now. Thank You for all Your gifts.

Now we look to the future, how we can future-proof these for we need to ensure sustainability with the ability to continue to serve our Father through the children. We hope Pastor Michael and Ibu Sintha will get all the support required on human resources for them to keep reaching out to help more disadvantaged children. Believe us, Pastor Michael, Ibu Sintha and the social workers have done a work that we cannot achieve, they have raised not one to ten children but a school of them to be independent and prepared with essential life-skills. But they can only do so much unless they have more hands to help.

Danny & Mong family with 2 kids (Lucas & Celeste)

It was an amazing and unforgettable trip for our family. It was eye opening for us as it was our very first mission trip. And I dare say that it won't be our last. For our family, we don't speak and understand Bahasa Indonesia. But language has never been a barrier for us on this trip. I still remember on the very first day we arrived, the moment we disembarked from the vans, the children gave us a very warm welcome. Even though no conversations were made, we already felt the strong joy and excitement among the children through their smiles and small talks. Through the games and activities, we had with the children in the next few days; a bond was formed among us. From Pastor Michael and Ibu Sintha, we learned and understood the story behind some of the children. Even though underprivileged, these children showed no sign of that. Instead they are very independent and disciplined. The

youngest boy was only 4 years old. Even at this young age, he can take care of himself without much issue. He can bathe and clothed himself. He even washed his own plates after every meal. How many of our children wash their dishes after eating?

Another thing that really struck an impression on us is the children, though not sibling by blood, they take really good care of each other. And for our children, they would squabble over the smallest matter, sometimes even for hours. Such reflection is not to demean our children, but rather for them to know how privilege and blessed they are and hence all the more they shouldn't take things for granted.

Of course deep down inside, we all know that how the children in the home carry themselves are the fruits of the lifetime of work by Pastor Michael and Ibu Sintha. Pastor Michael and Ibu Sintha displayed the perfect example of obedience to God. Because of their obedience, they left for Nias and started on their missionary work for the children of Nias. Over the past 20 years, more than 700 children were raised



and taught by them. Many have grown up and are now professionals and even started their own families. I strongly believe that because of the love and care they got from Pastor Michael and Ibu Sintha while they were in the home, these children who had settled down, will nurture their marriage and family with the same love and values they received. Not only have Pastor Michael and Ibu Sintha helped

this generation, they are making a difference to the lives of the next generation too. Thank you, Pastor Michael, and Ibu Sintha for your selfless sacrifice over the years for the children of Nias. Glory be to God!

- We went with a heart to give, but in the end, we received much more.
- We went with a heart to bless, but in the end, we were blessed instead.
- We went with a heart to teach, but in the end, we were taught valuable lessons.

Our takeaway from this trip is the importance of discipline with love, and for the children to develop self-care and independence. Because when they are able to have self-discipline and self-care, they are able to better serve God and bless others. When we returned, we started to see a difference in our children. They started to wash their dishes after meals and also volunteered with the household chores. In fact for my little girl, she was happy to wash her own dish in Nias, as we didn't expose her to that before our trip. Throughout the trip and after the trip, our children started to understand the joy of serving.

We are truly grateful for this experience and would encourage families to embark on mission trips for it can be a life and mindset changing experience.

Editor's Note:

Part 2 of the NIAS Experience will appear in the January 2020 issue of The Vine. In this part, you will read Patrick, Samantha and Caleb's testimony of their Nias Trip.

In 2020, we hope to bring you more great stories and photos as The Multi-Media Ministry adds on 4 more members to its ranks.

