



Homeschooling and family life in a pressure cooker

Description

Tough competition is raging between two items:

Exhibit A: Homeschooling

Exhibit B: is just called me "Being with the children 24/7? Is it not crazy ?!"

The competition is formerly introverted and constantly extroverted.

Meaning "these are the two things that most concerned us before we left, and the two things most people ask us, before we left and now too.

From the moment we started telling people about the planned journey, two questions came back all the time. "And what about school?" and "You might find it difficult to be the whole family together all the time. Wouldn't you?" These questions repeated more times than I can remember.

At first it made me angry and impatient. How many times should I answer the same questions and comments? However, it is quite clear that these are inner voices that echo back at our faces inviting us to discuss this matter.

So let's talk about being together, the whole family, all the time, major part of the time "in the same room. It is not always possible in SEA to book two separate rooms for parents and children, whether for budget reasons or for safety reasons, and indeed much of the time we are staying in one large (or not so large) space all of us. The highlight so far was in Saigon. We stayed in District 1, the reasonable area to stay in this city if you come for a few days. That's where everything happens and it is very convenient to be close to everything, but well, it's also crowded. Guesthouses in the center of Saigon are very very crowded and on the top of that there was also confusion with the room order. We arrived and had to wait for hours for the room and then got one without shower and toilet and the guesthouse moved us on their own expense to another one, probably under the same ownership, with wonderful location but, how should I phrase this, well, I'm just going to say it : a tiny room with two double bunk beds. Just imagine. So much luxury! So much comfort! We did not know what to do about privacy. But you know what? Those were great days in Saigon full of calories burned since the room was on the fourth floor after we've been upgraded (or downgraded, depends how you look at it!) from the fifth floor!

And I am being asked, well, how ..? Arenâ€™t you going nuts? All the time! all the time with the kids in the same space?

Itâ€™s hard for me to admit but thatâ€™s the truth: No. Iâ€™m not going nuts.

It is even embarrassing for us to say that we even like it and that we found this part we were so afraid of turned out to be really nice and not difficult at all.

The children just flow with the situation. we are relaxed. Most of the time itâ€™s just nice. Sorry to disappoint.

They play, they do brothers-sister bonding together, they study amazingly, they are awesome at travels, they are funny and exciting and sometimes annoying but hey, so do we. In fact, I fear that we are even more.

And, when possible, as in the last example, we do enjoy some privacy.

This month we are staying in a rented house in Hoi An. I will not deny itâ€™s nice to have some more space.

There are toilet and shower in each room separately. There is a small garden where I sit and write at the moment. There is a TV but itâ€™s not rattling our minds out because it is in the living room and we do not have to be there when it is on (in some of the time). Itâ€™s fun.

But today I know I can tell, Wow, it is *also* fun. It is also fun to be together for a month, but also to be given some space for a month. This oneâ€™s fun and the other one too.

Now back to exhibit A. What about the school ??

Back home our kids went to a democratic school.

Our gifted elder spent a day every week in a special program for excellent students, which anyway ends in the seventh grade which he started this year.

Our central combined mostly external studies, meaning never showing up in classes, meaning we were called to school every other week, meaning mainly I was, meaning I cannot say I was not concerned for his studies even before we took off.

And the little one did a great first grade year and apparently when a child studies amazingly, you are still afraid when you take him out of school.

We took textbooks. We bought notebooks during the journey (it was quite challenging to find math notebooks in Thailand! Whatâ€™s up with you guys??). We set up users and passwords to online system that our school works with and with a lot of faith we were off.

So it turns out that:

The One is an amazing teacher.

Thanks to him they managed to advance dramatically in school.

When the Eldest solves equations with two variables, the first one to be gone is me, but the language lessons are my duty so I do not underestimate my humble part! And I also nursed each of them for two years, letâ€™s not forget that.

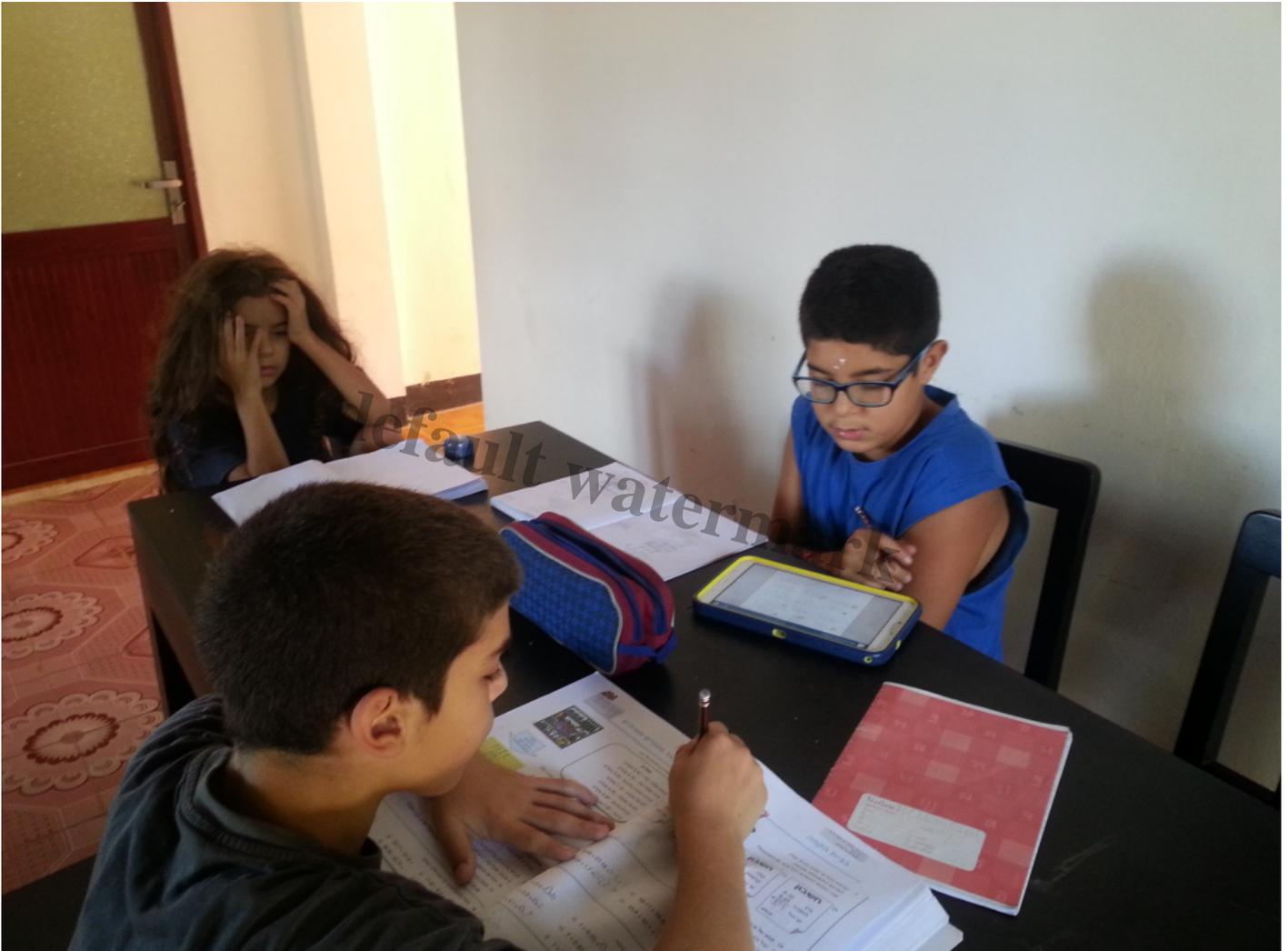
All the rest is done by The One and he does it wonderfully.

In four months the Central caught up with full year material and now every once in a while he checks with his teacher how much he is ahead of his class. Competitive little boy, I wonder who he is alike.

The Eldest decided he wants to learn programming on the top of the regular curriculum and now he and The One are taking an online course and enjoy it together.

The Little studies language and math amazingly. She also advanced with her English.

With a flexible study routine which has periods when they actually learn almost every day and periods of transitions and travel when formal studies are more seldom attended, it is possible to produce an excellent learning atmosphere.



Homeschooling. Studying the formal materials math, language and English

When dad has patience to feed the children's™ mind, mommy has a passion to feed the children's™ stomach and school is thriving.

I got you a brief interview with the hero of the hour, His Honor for you, Darling for me, in short The One: Not to mention the tremendous value of the informal curriculum and that happens during the journey. We learned a lot of history. We learned about the Second World War, the American War in Vietnam, the civil war in Cambodia. The children learn and communicate in English, understand what they are told and are able to express themselves every day more and more. Maybe their grammar is not the best with all the Present Simple and Present Progressive stuff but slowly we add the grammar part too with the formal studies. Geography we studied with our feet and from the internet. Life skills such as currency conversion (just ask them how much worth 1 Israeli Shekel against the Baht, Dollar, Riel and Dong, and see for yourself). We did some special projects such as a travel log, a presentation to friends that the children build during the journey. We learned PowerPoint and Excel on the road and

let them document the journey through their eyes, including averaging the ratings for the restaurants they have eaten at. How to be a self-contained in the world, how to get from point A to point B, what things to pack, how to find a tailor in the market to fix pants and more and more. I was surprised to discover how much I enjoy teaching them. Once the time is there and this is the main task I do at certain times of the day, there is no pressure around us and we dedicate all the attention, it is clear to me that we teach them better than any formal frame, as good as it may be. It is important to emphasize that we do not apply Unschooling. For example, to ensure good absorption of the material, we initiated rehearsal over of the material and also tests. We allow them time as much as they want to prepare themselves, choose when to be tested when they feel ready, without time limitation and with all the material available. The intention is not to test how they perform under pressure, but out of motivation to produce self feedback on the quality of understanding of the material.



Weaving lesson in Cambodia



Scuba diving lessons

For example, we had a test that one of them received a low grade and we talked about it, we tried to sort out together what should be our next steps put of intention to see how we avoid repeating this mishap â€¦ We scheduled another test. We identified where were the difficulties in both material and learning process, where the weak points are. We rehearsed accordingly and we got 94 on the next test but mostly we had a chance to go through the process together, create a sense of success and achievement without competition and earn great conversations down the road. â€¦



Leaning history and geography by foot. In Kanchanaburi Thailand over the Kwai river



Teaching is another kind of learning. In Cambodia talking with local students about Israel and practicing English together

And now to the victims:

The Eldest: "It is much better than school. You have privacy and no time pressure. When dad told us about that online programming course, I was so interested in it and really enjoyed studying the subject. I have just finished my second course. I plan to do additional courses on this site."

The Central: "To study at home is terrific but a bit difficult. We need to learn more. Daddy and mommy are tougher with me than the teachers at school but I learn fewer hours a day. I feel I am more advanced and in some classes I have a private tutor. Exciting, isn't it?"

The Little: "I have nothing to say about it. I do not enjoy it. School is more fun."

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1. School

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Author

nitzane@hotmail-com