

## Liz Luxen

if you're lost in translation

The following is an extract of an interview between Steven Willeboordse of the New Samui Explorers and Liz Luxen, owner of Interpretation & Translation Center and the recently established Funeral Services.



Can you give some background information about yourself?

Originally I am from Düsseldorf in Germany. 28 years ago, as a gift for my graduation with outstanding grades, my family gave me a trip to Asia. I worked in the Philippines, Malaysia, and on Phi Phi Island where I was one of the first teaching instructors and one of the pioneers of female dive instructors in Asia, I became a PADI certified Master Scuba Diver Trainer and led over 500 students getting their PADI certification. I began to develop my skills of the Thai language translating dive documents, exams and information. Here I met my husband, one of the Urak Lavoy Sea Gypsies, who was operating as an underwater videographer. Like most expats living here, I completely fell in love with Thailand and started to experience a new life among the Urak Lavoy Sea Gypsies.

Together with my husband I started an outdoor company on the Andaman Coast called 'Wildside', which became a very successful venture.

Unfortunately, the Tsunami in 2004 destroyed our whole life and we lost everything. But like the expression 'every negative has its positive' says, the backpack of experiences of living with the Sea Gypsies gave me wisdom and strength to overcome this tragic experience in my life. I relocated on Koh Samui where I started working as a translator and interpreter for the foreign insurance department at the Thai International Hospital. Here I improved my high Thai and medical language skills which led to opening my own business in June 2005 as an interpreter for the people on Samui.

What does your work involve being an interpreter / translator?

On an island like Samui with many different cultures with different languages, there are always moments that people need advice, help or assistance because of language barriers. This can vary from a rather simple translation job to complicated court cases where I assist people with interpretation and translation. Being a certified translator, I read, write and speak Thai fluently which can make a big difference in important court cases. Everybody knows that one word in a court case can make a difference in 'guilty' or 'not guilty', so my role as a translator and interpreter in court procedures is significant in many situations.

To give an idea about my work, I offer people the opportunity to get direct interpretations at court hearings for all criminal and civil cases. I escort people to police stations to file reports or to questionings by crime investigators. If people have lawyer consultations I will get their point across and fully understand the legal procedures in their case. Due to my good contacts to the local government my escorts will pave the way for quick and easy access to the required documents, and service with a smile from the government officials in charge. In case of business meetings, multilingual escorts will guarantee, that you do not accidentally offend your partners, which will be disastrous for your enterprise. The value of face cannot be underestimated when dealing with Asians, Thais in particular. Furthermore, when people need to go to hospital, I am experienced enough in dealing with conflict situations and assist you in a crisis, explain the medical conditions, and translate the medical report for your insurance. My translation service comprises all kinds of documents, concepts, brochures, letters and all other written matter. In our team we have freelance translators/interpreters covering the following languages: Italian, French, Russian, Parse, Hebrew, Mandarin, Lao, Burmese and Japanese. My phone is never switched off, unless I am in court.

Do you ever have a moment for yourself?

Yes I do, although it's not that much. Because I found a niche on the island with my work it's not only on Samui where I operate. I also get calls for assistance from the neighbouring islands Koh Phangan and Koh Tao plus many

times I have to go to court hearings in Suratthani and Bangkok, my agenda is full with court dates booked until March 2012. But when I have free time I love to spend it with my son on the beach and I cultivate Orchids and pitcher plants as my hobby.

Talking about a niche, we heard you found another one?

Correct. I opened Koh Samui Funeral Services in 2008. Due to the considerable experience in assisting foreigners, very soon there was the need to expand my business. I was able to sell 3 Franchises in Pattaya, Phuket and Hua Hin. Further branches are planned covering the entire Kingdom. The idea to offer a funeral service on Koh Samui, Koh Tao and Koh Phangan in Suratthani province of southern Thailand was born of the need to assist the growing number of families and friends during time of bereavement. Thai style funerals are very different and for those who have seen the way a funeral is done locally, it can be a bit uncomfortable according to western standards. Therefore we offer different options such as bereavement counselling, logistics and accommodation for bereaved relatives and friends, Christian ministers, assistance with the last will and testament, property protection, preparation of the deceased, selection of coffin, urn and flowers and so on. Simply said; we cater for all religions and budgets. Our arrangements are designed in consultation with the deceased's next of kin to ensure each funeral is in keeping with the wishes of the family.



*during a funeral at sea*

Well, thank you Liz for time, any last thing you like to mention?

Yes, if any reader needs assistance, don't hesitate to contact us, as I mentioned before, my phone is on 24/7 and I am more than happy to jump in if people are lost in translation. You can reach me on 08 9473 2038. For more information you can check [www.liz-luxen.com](http://www.liz-luxen.com) and [www.samuifunerals.org](http://www.samuifunerals.org)

## police

Tourist Police	0-7742-1281
Emergency	1155
Nathon	0-7742-1095
Chaweng	0-7742-2067
Lamai	0-7742-4068
Maenam	0-7742-5070
Bophut	0-7742-5071

## hospitals

Bangkok Hospital Samui	0-7742-9500
Dive Recompression Chamber	0-7742-7427
Nathon Government Hospital	0-7742-1230
Samui International Hospital	0-7723-0781
	0-7723-0782
Thai International Hospital	0-7741-4400

## community

Samui Rescue	0-7742-1444
Immigration Office	0-7742-1069
Ferry (Donsak)	0-7737-1205
Airport, Samui	0-7742-5012
Airport, Bangkok	0-2132-1888
Tourism Authority of Thailand	0-7742-0504
Samui Dog Rescue	0-7741-3490

## lost or stolen credit cards

Amex	0-2272-0020
Master Card/Visa	0-2299-1990

## banks

Bangkok Bank	0-7742-1105
Bank of Ayudhaya	0-7742-0176
Thai Military Bank	0-7742-0360
Siam Commercial Bank	0-7742-0186
Thai Farmers Bank	0-7742-1200
Siam City Bank	0-7742-1110
Bangkok Metropolitan Bank	0-7742-0277
Krung Thai Bank	0-7742-1503
Government Saving Bank	0-7742-1119

## travel consultants

Travel Solutions	08-9873-7575
	0-7723-9007
	0-7723-9008