



Child's Dream

A charity organization supporting children in need

www.childsdream.org



Our objectives

We aim to prevent child exploitation (child prostitution, child labor, child soldiering and trafficking) and migration through

- improving living & health conditions and education standards;
- raising the awareness of child trafficking among families and communities;
- helping children to take pride in themselves and strengthen their self-esteem
- cultivating a better attitude towards life and society and
- encouraging the children to love and respect their own customs and culture.

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Newsletter

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Have you ever looked into eyes that beg you for something to read? What do they look like? It is obviously not their color, but this distinct expression of undivided attention, untamed curiosity and eternal eagerness and everlasting hope. We have seen this expression on countless occasions and it always saddens us to meet bright teenagers, eager to learn and absorbing information like a sponge, but without any opportunity to quench their thirst for knowledge.



But even more important than to still their individual thirst for knowledge, are the wonderful side effects of education and their impact on the communities. Education is the foundation not only for a sustainable development of a community, but also for peaceful coexistence. Over the last 100 years the world has never seen so much hatred, greed, conflicts, wars, violence, genocides and terrorism as can be currently found in the world. Therefore, it is important, now more than ever, to educate our children about tolerance, diversity and gender equality. The children should be able to think critically in a broadminded way and should be able to reflect on themselves and their actions.

Call us dreamers, but this is exactly what we are trying to achieve with our educational projects. There is a reason why the children we support are in need and distress and with almost no exception it can be attributed to lack of tolerance and education. And unlike other development efforts, education is enthusiastically asked for by the children and their parents. Every now and then, we have Western teachers volunteering with Child's Dream and they find it so motivating to teach students, who actually don't have to be forced to learn.

In particular with the start of a scholarship program for underprivileged youths and the implementation of a college for Burmese refugee teenagers, we contribute to a new generation of more tolerant and educated leaders. *By Daniel Siegfried*

Organizational News

The increasing workload demanded every bit of our motivation, which is as high as ever. With European shoe size 32 and 35kg on the scales, **Khun U** is a



Welcome U!!

bundle of energy and humor helping to reduce our individual workloads. She joined us in June in her role as an Office Manager. Her vast accounting knowledge combined with her working experience in the NGO field, made her the most suitable candidate. As an Office Manager she is assisting Marc and Sallo in administration and on the fundraising side. Welcome U!

During our most recent trip to Vietnam to finalize our strategy on how to operate in Vietnam, we obtained the 'License for operation' from the People's Aid Coordinating Committee (PACCOM), the Vietnamese government body responsible for NGO work. This license will allow us to assist the people of Vietnam.

We are delighted to be once again accepted as a partner in **UBS Singapore's match-giving scheme** called 'Donate As You Earn' or simply DAYE. UBS and many of our other corporate sponsors have realized that their success not only depends on the skills and resources of their employees, but also on the health and prosperity of the communities in which they operate.

Scholarship Program

The pre-screening done by our partner organization resulted in a list of 60 applicants, who all deserve to be supported in their further studies. Their backgrounds are similar. From a very young age, they have been struggling not only for education, but also for their survival. Most applicants come from the conflict areas in Burma and were forced to relocate numerous of times, often having no other choice than to leave their belongings behind. While reading their essay about their families, we realized ones again how devastating and real this conflict is



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between the ruling Burmese military regime and the ethnic minority armies.

With the establishment of a scholarship program, we allow the brightest and smartest teenagers to continue their studies in accredited universities. Out of 60 applications, only 9 students were accepted. We analyzed their academic records, their general motivation and their dedication to the subject selected. There are two reasons for initially only selecting 9 students: Our budget is limited and we want to gain some experiences with this new program first.

For the academic year of 2006/2007, Child's Dream supports 4 female students and 5 male students from various ethnicities (3 Mon, 1 Kayan, 2 Karen, 1 Arkan, 1 Kachin & 1 Shan). The students are aged between 22 and 29 years. They study a variety of subjects (1 Nursing, 2 Education, 1 Psychology, 3 Political Science and 2 Communication Arts) at different universities (in Thailand: 3 Assumption, 1 Ramkhamhaeng, 1 Mission College, 2 Rangsit, 1 Bangkok, Hong Kong: 1 Hong Kong Polytechnic).

Child's Dream keeps in close contact with these students. Quarterly meetings are scheduled to evaluate their progress and assist them in their studies. The initial feedback is that they are overwhelmed by all the amenities (like a toilet with running water) the tiny dorm room at their university has to offer. One a bit stronger scholar shyly asked for a small increase in his daily food allowance from USD 2.00 to USD 2.40. He embarrassingly admitted that he needs to eat six bowls of rice a day in order to stay fit and healthy and he also told Marc; 'I'm not a tiny girl'.

It is our goal to significantly extend the program in the years to come by selecting more students for the subsequent academic years.

School in Snor Village, Siem Reap, Cambodia

As Cambodia tries to recover from the devastating effects of a prolonged civil war (1979 – 1998), very limited financial support for development is provided by the government. Even the most basic public infrastructure such as electricity, clean water and concrete roads only reaches as far as tourists go. The limited infrastructure available in rural areas was predominantly built by foreign development agencies (mostly from Japan). However, the most disturbing fact is that after the war, local people don't trust each other anymore. Everybody is fighting for his/her own survival, which makes it difficult to develop rural areas based on community efforts.

No matter how hopeless the situation might be, there are always determined individuals who have not given up and keep on trying to bring a change to their society. In Siem Reap we found such two individuals in Sino and her husband, Ajan Bumpen. Their vast experience in working with children in Cambodia, combined with

their genuine enthusiasm and passion, convinced us to work together with KAKO, which is headed by the couple. We were introduced to KAKO (Khmer Akphiwat Khmer Organization) by TOPS (Taipei Overseas Peace Service), one of our long-time partner organizations in Mae Sot. In fact, KAKO was originally established by TOPS and was handed over to Sino and Ajan a couple of years ago. It is essential for Child's Dream to have reliable and knowledgeable partners in Cambodia to help us implement and monitor projects.



Community rally for the new school!!

Just 21 kilometer from the glamorous 5-star hotels, the chic wireless internet cafes and the trendy nightlife of Siem Reap is the Puok district, where only 20% of the population aged 15 and above can read and write. Only 7% of the children finish primary school. 60% of the 154 villages in the district have no school facilities.

We visited this region twice and if you happen to drive your pick-up truck towards the direction of a school, dozens of children will hang on to your car standing on the bumper and running boards while clinging onto the roof-rack, door handles and wipers. A picture often seen when Indians travel by train. But it is a clear sign that schools are very often out of reach for the children in the Puok district.

Together with KAKO, Child's Dream is building a primary school in



The children from the Snor Village

the impoverished Snor village. Most of the 163 children aged between 7 and 14 years have no opportunity to attend school as the next closest school is too far away. KAKO has been conducting a Non-Formal Education

Program in this village since 2002 and is very well-connected to the village leaders and the local authorities. The Ministry of Education will provide the teachers as well as the text books whereas the villagers will provide labor to clear the land and help with the construction.

We aim to broaden access to education and help the children of the Snor village to new opportunities and a better life in general. The school with its 3 classrooms and library will measure 288m2. The construction started in early July and is expected to be finished in September, depending on the rain.



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Project Round-up

LMTC Arts & Science - Last month the whole Child's Dream Team took part in the official inauguration celebration of the college. It was a wonderful event and we had the chance to meet all the 60 students for the first time. Together with a company in Singapore, specializing in sustainable energy, we are planning to provide solar energy to the college soon.



Group photo with the students on the day of the opening.

Damnok Toek - The construction for the three residential houses in Poipet/Cambodia is completed and the children, who could not be re-integrated into their families, will move into their new and comfortable homes soon.

KWO & KNWO Child Development Program - The renovation of the nursery schools in the three refugee camps is completed for this year. Soon we will start the second phase, which entails buying warm clothes and additional school uniforms for about 3300 pupils.

How you can help us

With the start of the scholarship program (see above) and the coverage of the running costs for some projects, Child's Dream's ongoing financial commitments have significantly increased over the last couple of months.

Therefore, should you have a fatty piggybank, whose slaughtering has been long overdue, now is the time to take out your hammer, the shovel, the circular saw, the axe, the rolling pin or whatever suitable tools you prefer to make the kill. Some people actually prefer to reverse over it with their cars in order not to have to watch the cruel act. Why do they make the piggybanks look so cute?!

This newsletter is just a snapshot of our work, but we hope it was informative and a somewhat entertaining read.

Not even the best-chosen word and the sharpest picture can replace a first-hand experience. We encourage you to visit us in Chiang Mai. We are most happy to bring our world a bit closer to you.



Your Child's Dream Team