April already? Amazing how time flies and, again, a new issue of our newsletter is out. Since this is our first wider spread communication this year, I want to take this opportunity to thank all our donors and friends for their amazing support last year. We truly hope that, together with all of you, we can achieve great things this year, also, and serve even more beneficiaries than ever before, making children’s dreams come true.

On a recent bus ride from Hpa-An to Yangon, I thought about the elements that make an NGO like ours successful. Certainly it is our dedicated team who play an instrumental role in our success, but our work would be impossible without the help of our many donors who keep our engine running smoothly. This is complemented by a continuous stream of fantastic and dedicated volunteers who play an essential and very powerful role in bringing Child’s Dream to new levels. For nearly all tasks, volunteering requires being physically present in Chiang Mai or in Thai schools we support. Only very rarely volunteers can accomplish a task remotely (e.g. translations). Coming from all corners of the world, volunteers support us, not only in our various projects as volunteer English language teachers, but even more in the daily operation of our organisation. It is not just their free work, but also their diverse backgrounds which add great value to our team. Their new ideas, working methods, skills or simply their characters and habits enrich our daily lives. We are tremendously grateful for this essential support. Volunteering is not to be taken lightly. It requires a significant commitment both from the volunteer as well as the host organisation. We require our volunteers to commit to a minimum of six months, financially covering their entire stay themselves. We are aware that this may be a burden to some, but the rewards of volunteering offset the cost involved. Since our start in 2003, we have gladly relied on about 120 volunteers, contributing a staggering 50-60 ‘wo/men’-years of work to Child’s Dream. It goes without saying that we would not be in a position to pay for this great work. The feedback we get from volunteers leaving is overwhelmingly positive, and we recommend everybody who is seriously considering to volunteer with us not to only look at our ‘requirements’, but also at the many volunteer reports on our website. These reports give true accounts of experiences gained and the ‘high- and low-lights’ of volunteering, as well as valuable tips before arrival. We encourage everybody to join us in our quest to help the underprivileged in our society. This life changing experience might even put you on a totally new career path, opening up a new world to you. Please click here to find out more about our volunteer vacancies and the requirements for volunteering. Hopefully we can welcome you, at some point, into our Child’s Dream family.
At the end of a narrow, unremarkable side street near the Chiang Mai University Hospital is a place where wonders truly happen! This is the location of the safe house of our Children’s Medical Fund, where our three dedicated nurses work tirelessly to save children’s lives.

In 2006, the Children’s Medical Fund (CMF) was established to support children diagnosed with serious congenital diseases to access advanced health care and life-saving medical treatment. The beneficiaries are children aged 0-12 years, marginalised by their life circumstances in Myanmar and Laos. Without the CMF support, most of these children would pass away within a few years or even months. These life-saving treatments are provided to the young CMF patients in various hospitals in Thailand, in the provinces of Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Lampang. Since the start of the CMF in 2006, a staggering 1,574 cases were accepted.

In 2016, a total of 132 new cases (114 patients because some patients have multiple conditions / cases) were accepted into the programme, while 178 cases were closed, 91% treated successfully. Unfortunately 6 patients passed away due to complications or late treatment. 91% of the patients were from Myanmar and the remaining cases were from Laos. Almost 73% of cases were cardiac disorders.

Since 2011, Myanmar has been on a democratic pathway, but it is a long and bumpy one. However, businesses and foreign investments do not want to wait. The government has just announced that it will have a record foreign direct investment (FDI) of roughly USD 7 billion in 2017. It is true that the living conditions for many Burmese have improved over the last six years. On the other hand there are still an estimated three million Burmese migrant workers living and working, often under inhumane, dangerous and demeaning conditions, in Thailand.

For many years, Child’s Dream has been supporting the education of Burmese migrant children along the Thai – Myanmar border, stretching from Mae Sai (most northern point of Thailand) to Sangkhlaburi (330km west of Bangkok). These migrant learning centres are important because they not only provide an opportunity for migrant children to continue their education while they are staying in Thailand, but also protect them for human trafficking, exploitation and abuse. They also play an important role in helping migrant students to integrate into the Thai education system.

We are currently working with five migrant learning centres that are supported by Child’s Dream to develop a strategy that focuses on sustainability, integration of students and accreditation. We expect that the situation of migrant workers in Thailand should gradually improve. This will create new opportunities for our migrant learning centres to improve their educational services and become less dependent on NGO support.
Cambodia has many challenges with education, including poor quality and low relevance. In an effort to improve and strengthen young Cambodians’ capacity for developing their community we now support Puthi Komar Organization (PKO) to implement a project known as the Future Leader Center (FLC).

PKO is located in Kamarkor village, Svay Por commune, Battambang, Cambodia and provides educational and psychosocial support to the province’s residents by developing and managing educational programs that respond to the needs in their community. FLC is a project which aims to build the capacity of young people in Battambang by updating their knowledge, developing their skills, and by ultimately preparing them to be able to face the challenges that are fast approaching as ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) integration looms.

More specifically, there are five main activities under FLC: teaching English and Thai as foreign languages, training in business skills, training in life skills, providing information to prospective young entrepreneurs, and lastly, career and business counselling. Courses generally run from two to three months in duration while trainings can range from several days to several weeks; this modular structure allows students to choose which parts are most relevant for them and which also do not negatively impact work schedules. A drop-in information centre and internet lab allow students to find information conveniently. Counselling is the capstone activity where PKO staff aim to support students with individual career and business advice and recommendations.

We hope that through the FLC, youth will be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to become successful leaders in Cambodia.

From The Office

Spring Cleaning!

Everyone at our Chiang Mai office rolled up their sleeves on Friday, 17 February to unclutter and clean our storeroom. All the 2016 documents which needed filing found a new spot in our shelves and look at the result. Stunning, right?
Child’s Dream Yearbook 2016

Look! Our Child’s Dream Yearbook 2016 is published. Great thanks to everyone who contributed to this by writing texts, taking photographs, drawing, designing, and proof reading again and again. Enjoy!

Board Meeting 2017

Our Thai board members met at the Child’s Dream Office on 24 March to review the past annual activities as well as to approve our 2016 audited accounts. Last year was another successful year for Child’s Dream and so we are looking forward to another great year to come. Thank you for all your continued support.

Annual Reports 2016

A boring topic for a change...all our annual reports are online now.
Higher Education
To support knowledge and skills transfer for quality employment and community development

Basic Education
To offer basic education for all in order to improve literacy and create alternatives to exploitation

Health
To reduce childhood mortality and improve health and hygiene in schools and communities

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