I am sitting in “BreadTalk”, a well-known Singaporean bakery in Yangon’s newest and most modern shopping mall, Junction City. Looking around me, I only see luxury brand shops, like in any other cosmopolitan city. The giant, brand new Pan Pacific five star hotel is towering above this shopping mecca. This would have been unthinkable just a few years ago, given the sanctions imposed on Myanmar’s military regime. Indeed, this country is at a “junction”. Yes, this is the new and modern Yangon, but it is also still post-junta Myanmar. How can change happen to a place so quickly, and turn it into yet another carbon copy of the cosmopolitan lifestyle?

I just returned from Taunggyi, the capital of Shan State in Myanmar. While comparing the two places, I wonder whether there are limits to how wide the rural-urban disparity can become before places completely detach from each other. Our projects bring us to the most remote places possible, where children, youth and communities still struggle daily to make ends meet. In our work, we address the struggle for education, the struggle for development. Sadly, for many of our beneficiaries, their struggle is even more fundamental than this. It is the daily struggle for basic necessities such as clean water, electricity and affordable healthcare: a far cry from what is offered to people in modern cities such as Yangon.

In the past, NGOs like Child’s Dream addressed migration issues of people from Myanmar forced to leave their homes for a safer life in Thailand. Seeing no future under a brutal military regime, migration to neighboring countries seemed the only viable solution. Migration today has mostly economic reasons, rather than survival reasons. Soon we will face an entirely new challenge here of migration from rural areas to the big cities. This creates or increases another problem, that of the urban poor.
An urgent call for action is needed to provide rural Myanmar with options of education and improved basic living conditions. This is the only way we can reduce an increase in the urban poor.

I am addressing this topic today because many of our readers, donors and friends are discovering beautiful Myanmar during their holidays, often commenting on the huge progress the country is making and the more global lifestyle this creates. What one sees while travelling as a tourist is very different from the daily reality for the majority of Burmese. Please help us in creating better living conditions for the vast majority of rural people in Myanmar by improving their educational options, and by giving everybody a chance for a better future.

From The Field

Children’s Medical Fund – a Product of the Heart and Mind!

Our Children’s Medical Fund seems like an odd fit for an organisation that focuses mostly on education, but the decision to establish it more than 10 years ago came from dire need, the pleas of many health organisations and our ability to facilitate and coordinate these treatments, given our proximity to high-quality health services.

Since 2006, our Children’s Medical Fund has accepted over 1,700 cases. In 2017, we accepted 149 new cases and closed 72 cases, of which 92% were successfully treated! 94% of the patients came from Myanmar and the remaining 6% came from Laos. The large majority (81%) suffered from a congenital cardiac disorder while the rest were anorectal malformations (12%), meningocele (2%) and other related congenital disorders. All these health conditions are life-threatening and cannot be treated in Myanmar or Laos. Without our Children’s Medical Fund these young lives would simply vanish.

Our patients and caregivers are accommodated in our safe house near the university hospital while they are undergoing investigation and treatment. In the past we rented individual rooms to house our patients, but when the owner of the building came from Bangkok to visit our activities, he agreed to lease the whole building for multiple years for the same price as we paid for individual rooms. This allowed us to do major renovation to improve the living conditions and reduce the crowding. In addition we can now accept more patients. At the beginning of 2018 we also hired one additional junior employee to help us handle to additional patients.

Yes, sometimes some things do not fit into a strategy or a plan, but when there is such a wonderful opportunity, we have to be able to compromise if it truly makes sense. A difficult decision more than 10 years ago has now saved more than 1,500 children’s lives.
Each year since 2013, high school students of grades 10 to 12 who are Cambodian awardees of the Basic Education Scholarship Programme of Child’s Dream are given an opportunity to participate in the Scholarship Camping Programme that takes place in Siem Reap. This annual event usually lasts two to three days during December or January, soon after the 1 November start of a new academic year. The camping experience is currently limited to outstanding students with recorded scores for every academic subject standing at 40.00 and above, out of the perfect 50.00 points. With this eligibility, the number of beneficiaries is around 60 students out of the estimated total of 200 scholarship recipients from all the six host schools.

Through the programme, we wish to offer students educational support (planning for further studies, applying for jobs, etc.). We aim at boosting their of motivation with an exciting outdoor recreation trip, but also to reward their hard work and their perseverance, while engaging them in activities and competitions that promote awareness of “Youth and Social Responsibilities”, the focal goal of the event. The activities are themed differently from one year to another; the most recent in January, 2018, for instance, was Conservation of Environment and Natural Resources, in which a green concept was encouraged in daily practices such as shopping and cooking, and global sustainable development goals were advocated. Also, since students’ knowledge of career options is usually limited to becoming a teacher, doctor or policeman, visits to vocational schools and brief counseling sessions were conducted to allow students to see broader career choices more fitting to their passions. This can provide students with more prospects as they graduate and step into adulthood.
Starting in January 2018, our Higher Education team is pleased to announce our support for Feeding Dreams Cambodia’s (FDC) “Dreams Training Centre (DTC)”. We met FDC during one of our needs assessment trips in Cambodia where we try to understand the needs in Higher Education. We were immediately impressed by the great work FDC is doing by supporting basic education through its learning centre offering supplemental classes and activities for Cambodian children in Siem Reap. The challenge for FDC was how to support extremely vulnerable youth -often from shocking backgrounds - to obtain employable skills so they can provide for themselves and their families.

Consequently, Child’s Dream now supports the DTC Vocational Hospitality Training programme which specialises in providing training and work experience opportunities for youth. The course supports 60 students per year in a six-month course divided into four specialisations: Front Office, Food and Beverage, Housekeeping, and Cooking. At the start, students are supported to open bank accounts as part of a financial literacy course which encourages them to save income. Additionally during the course, monthly life skills workshops are delivered to prepare students to survive independently, and daily English language lessons are taught as well as general computer usage which are required by many positions in hotels. After this, students are placed into a four-month apprenticeship in a four or five star partner hotel in Siem Reap where students learn the highest work standards. Upon completion, apprentices are awarded a certificate of accreditation from the Department of Labour and Vocational Training as well as an additional certificate from the Department of Tourism. Finally, DTC assist students in finding full-time, quality employment.
Key Achievements

2017

CHF 7.1 million were spent on our direct project work (CHF 6.4 million in 2016)

300,000 individuals reached by our interventions (250,000 in 2016)

33 school buildings built

131 patients under the age of 12 were supported in the Children’s Medical Fund

659 high school and vocational students in the region (423 in 2016)

5.7% administration ratio (5.9% in 2016)

198 university students in the region (171 in 2016)

We built 8 boarding houses, 9 playgrounds, and 10 water systems

We have dramatically increased our Higher Education initiatives, mainly in Myanmar, and the first annual Alumni Association Programme (AAP) conference was held in Vientiane.

CHF 7.8 million funds raised in 2017. An increase of 11%! (CHF 7 million in 2016)
Our Impact

### Health
- **4,845**
  - Community members received drug prevention and awareness education

- **5,953**
  - Children learned about health and hygiene

- **1,538**
  - Children have received life-saving operations and medical interventions

**1,538**
- Life-saving operations provided so far

**2,000**
- Target support by year 2020

### Basic Education
- **247**
  - School buildings built

- **659**
  - High school and vocational students in the region

- **138,599**
  - Students and teachers in Myanmar receive stationery

**247**
- School buildings built so far

**350**
- Target support by year 2020

### Higher Education
- **2,849**
  - Trained to become future leaders

- **6,394**
  - Students received vocational training for employment

- **427**
  - University scholarships awarded

**427**
- University scholarships awarded so far

**500**
- Target support by year 2020
Our Foundation Board

We are delighted to announce that two esteemed ladies have recently joined our Thai foundation board. Associate Professor Avorn Opatpatanakit, Acting Vice-President for Societal Engagement at Chiang Mai University, as well as Ms. Padcha Mahatumarat, Deputy Director at “For Konthai Foundation”, Bangkok. We are very happy to welcome both ladies to our board. We are looking forward to a successful cooperation.

2017 Child’s Dream Yearbook

Our yearbook 2017 is finished. Enjoy remembering 2017 with us.

National Conference on Volunteering, Bangkok

On 9 and 10 January, Child’s Dream actively participated in the National Volunteer Conference at Thammasat University in Bangkok. Daniel was a keynote speaker to highlight the opportunities and threats of volunteering in the educational sector while our Basic Education team, together with our Thai volunteer teachers, facilitated a workshop about how to manage volunteers in the field.

CD Cars

In 2017, our Child’s Dream project cars drove an astonishing 158,592 km. This means they have surrounded the globe 3.95 times.

IT Equipment

The Swiss Cooperation Office in Cambodia donated 2nd had IT equipment to our team in Siem Reap. The equipment will be given to selected university scholarship recipients of Child’s Dream in Cambodia. We are happy to support them this way and wish them lots of success in their studies. Thank you very much dear team at the Swiss Cooperation Office!

Annual Reports 2017

All our annual reports 2017 are online now for all legal entities.