



Newsletter

Our Mission

To empower marginalised communities in the Mekong Sub-Region to shape their own future. We achieve this by working with communities to improve health and education for children and socioeconomic opportunities for families.

Our principles

Focus on the needs of the beneficiaries

Promote and protect the rights of the child

Use resources efficiently and effectively

Acknowledge and value diversity

Maintain full transparency and accountability

Reflect on and continually improve our work

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Times are changing and we are constantly striving to keep ourselves and Child's Dream as up to date as possible. The internet has become an integrated part of our lives and more and more people are using it every day. Thanks to new technologies, people can access the internet from almost everywhere in the world. It can even reach people who do not have safe drinking water, basic health or a school to go to. Recently we visited a couple of monastic schools in Burma together with some monks. When we had asked whether they could send us some of their photographs by mail - assuming that they do not have access to the internet anyway - the monks readily replied by asking if they could share them on "Google documents" instead.

The internet has not only become important for our field work, but also for our goal in keeping our supporters and friends informed about our activities. It has always been our vision to allow everybody, who is interested in our work, to be involved in one or the other way. Our Child's Dream website is obviously an ideal tool to achieve this goal. Therefore, we have just released the 3rd version of our website www.childsdream.org, which better explains our objectives and makes navigation much easier. With more than 100 projects under our belts, it became a bit complicated to navigate through the huge amount of information. In addition, we had launched Child's Dream on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/childsdream). Yes, I know, everybody is annoyed by the constant messages from Facebook, but everybody still keeps using it. It is like the Backstreet Boys' albums in the nineties. Everybody bought them but nobody dared to tell their friends. The Child's Dream Facebook is a more casual version of our website and gives users a backstage experience.

At the same time we had been secretly working on an idea, which we have had for a long time. As with so many other useful ideas, this idea was given to us by friends. Over the years, many visitors had asked about Child's Dream souvenirs and we had to let them leave with lots of impressions but empty handed. Over the last few months we have been working on a Child's Dream Shop, with an interesting range of products. The aim of our store is not only to strengthen the Child's Dream brand, but also to raise awareness for other organisations, which are doing good work, and to help them generate income for their activities. Therefore, we have put together a best selection of articles from like-minded

organisations that produce certain products to fund their activities. Thanks to the help of Claudia and Oskar, our two volunteers, we were able to establish the online store at no cost. A professional photographer had also donated his time. Since we are not sure about the actual demand for these products, we have only ordered a limited quantity first, so that we do not run the risk of sitting on a huge inventory. However, if the demand is higher than expected, it might take a few weeks for the product to be finally delivered to your doorstep.

We truly hope that this store will help us spread the name of Child's Dream and several other like-minded organisations, so that we in return can provide the safe drinking water, basic health interventions or school buildings to those in need.

By Daniel Siegfried, Co-Founder

Child's Dream News

Goodbye & Welcome

July 2010 marks the start of a new chapter in Ajan's life! Mr. **Bumpen Sawaengdee** – to be more formal – had retired at the end of June 2010, from his position as Head of the Cambodian Project Team in our Siem Reap office. Together with his wife Sino, he had established KAKO, the organisation which was formally integrated into Child's Dream in 2009 and subsequently renamed "Child's Dream Akphiwat Khmer".



Ajan in "full-action mode"

We sincerely thank Ajan for his outstanding work, commitment and enthusiasm which he had put into all his work. We wish him all the very best in this new chapter of his life, where he will have much more time to look after his two children and tend to his fantastic garden.

At the end of April 2010, **Yuth** (Yutthapong Seubsakwong) has left us to pursue a new professional career, eventually taking up a course at graduate level.

Since the beginning of this year, we again had a fantastic group of dedicated and very hard working volunteers. A big thank you goes to **Jasmine Spalt**, **Simon Stieger** and **Otto Simon** who had supported our project **Youth Connect** in Mae Sot and to **Hermann Vallaster**, **Regula Peter**, **Alex Pomi**, **Jessica Willis**, **Oskar Valles** and **Claudia Dietschi** who had strengthened our team in Chiang Mai. Our current volunteers are **David Easton**, **Phetchompoo Chirasak**, **Angie Au Yong**, **Dennis Lerchl** (all in Chiang Mai) and **Michele Dubois** at Youth Connect in Mae Sot. **Chris & Liz** from **bikeabout** are currently teaching English in Tomato Village.

In addition, our team was also enriched by three new full-time employees: **Nui** has started working in early May and now represents 50% of our Northern Thailand team. The other half of this team is **Jack**, whom you may know well since he was our former IT manager. He has changed from our administration to our project team. **Tha Wah**, who joined us in mid March, has been building the most inspiring children playgrounds for children all over the Mekong Sub-Region. Last but not least, **Jollys** who joined us mid June is supporting Thomas in his work along the Thai-Burmese border. A warm welcome to all of them!



Nui



Jack



Tha Wah



Jollys

100 and still going STRONG!

Just a few weeks ago we have started our 100th project. Amazing that within only 7 years, we have managed to reach this magic number. One of our staff had calculated, that if we progress at the same speed, it would mean that in 63 years, we will surpass the 1,000 mark. I guess by then the next generation of Child's Dream family members will be responsible for the implementation. Luckily, one of our caretakers, Aem, is pregnant and is expecting her second girl any moment.

By the way, the 100th project is the "**Karenni Post Ten Arts & Science school**" in the Karenni refugee camp in Mae Hong Son, Thailand.

Lucky Team Members

In July, Nui, Jack and Daniel were involved in our first ever car accident. It goes without saying that all of us who were in the office were shocked to our core when we got to know about this accident. It was as if our worst nightmare had come true. When the rain had started, the roads became as slippery as soap and the car had started to spin, went off the road and rolled over three times. Luckily, nobody got hurt and all three of them could leave the car with only a few scratches. We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you very much to SK Dream Japan for their very quick action in helping us to replace the broken car.



Driving Lesson Number One: Never park your car like this!

Annual Team Workshop

Our 2010 Child's Dream workshop had only one topic: FUN! Squeezed into our five cars, equipped with materials for the games and with great anticipation, the 30 Child's Dream team members (everybody from the Siem Reap and the Chiang Mai office, including little Emmy) left for the three days/two nights trip to Wat Chan, an eco-lodge near Pai, in Chiang Mai Province. Only our two cats stayed behind in the office ... and probably threw a party with the mice while we were away.

The following brief video sequence filmed at this workshop should not be taken too seriously, but again, we really had fun. Lots of fun! Please [click here](#) to watch it on Youtube.



Project News

Closing the Gap with SEG

Social Entrepreneurship Grant (SEG), our latest programme aims to provide grants to ambitious individuals who have recently finished their specialised training or degree programmes.

Individuals may apply for a one-time grant in order to launch their initiatives. The idea is for the grantee to use the funds to create an ongoing programme with a positive social benefit. They must address a need in their communities. We aim to give them the opportunity to put their theoretical education into practice by empowering them to create and operate an enterprise of their own design.



Back in spring 2010, we have granted the first support to Ayu Chuepa (Lee). Lee was awarded a grant of roughly USD 18'000 to establish his own social venture. Lee, an ex-employee of Child's Dream, originates from a very remote Akha hill-tribe village in the North of Thailand. This impoverished

community grows coffee among many other crops, but has no means and knowledge to efficiently market their products. Lee's social coffee venture is to address these issues by assisting local coffee farmers in production, marketing and sales of the coffee.

More information can be found on the website of [Akha Ama](#).

Please note that this programme is run by our sister organisation, [diversethics Foundation](#).

Evaluation of our Health Programmes

How can a river make such a big difference?

When we travel to the Thai-Burmese border, only a river separates Burma from Thailand geographically. However, this river, or essentially the border that it represents, makes all the difference: the difference between living in security or living in fear, being legally documented or simply non-existent, being able to grow rice and sustain oneself or having to rely on relief aid, being able to move around freely or being confined to one's recently relocated village. We could continue on with this list forever, as it became so apparent to us when we visited a target village to evaluate two of our health programmes.

Although Child's Dream's main focus is on education, we feel that our health programmes are crucial for the overall success of our strategy. By supporting health interventions we strive to give children opportunities to grow up healthy and study in schools that we are supporting. We thereby aim to prevent more children from coming into Thailand as

illegal migrants or refugees. Many of these children will often be separated from their families and become subjected to abuse, especially because of their lack of legal status in Thailand. We strongly believe that the support of these health programmes combined with the supply of stationery to almost 1,000 schools with 60,000 students in the Karen state will effectively prevent this migration into Thailand and help the communities to build a foundation for their future development.



It is a wonderful privilege to observe first-hand, the incredible impact that the [Malaria Control Programme](#) and the [Basic Health Intervention Programme \(BHIC\)](#) have on the local population. Thanks to these two programmes, the villagers can receive free basic health care services, which include immunisation, Vitamin A and de-worming for children, and preventive measures against malaria, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections for the whole village population. We have met with the Village Health Supervisor responsible for the implementation of BHIC in this village. She is a very well respected elderly person. She told us that they do not want to leave the village unless they have no other options. Thanks to BHIC, the villagers not only have health care but, even more importantly, 'hope'. By the way, both programmes have passed our interim evaluation with flying colours and we look forward to continuing our support for them in the future. Both programmes are supported by our sister organisation, [diversethics Foundation](#).

Water Systems and Playgrounds

It has always been our aim to stay in touch with our projects and to constantly monitor their development. Staying connected means getting to know each other better, subsequently allowing further needs to be identified. It's been a while back since we had observed that clean drinking water is an issue for many of our remote projects. Hence, we decided to start providing drinking water to some of the projects that are most in need. Our water systems come with a tower and a filter system. The towers are produced by a vocational training center in Mae Sot and the filter systems are sourced from the [SkyJuice Foundation](#) in Australia. So far, we have installed two systems in Laos and one in Thailand. You can see the detailed projects by clicking [here](#). Installation of another 10 water systems is currently in the planning phase. One system costs roughly USD 6,000.





Happy with their colourful playground!

Installing playgrounds in some of our well-run schools and kindergarten is the second initiative that we have started a while back. Tha Wah, one of our staff, was previously trained by another organisation to build safe and fun playgrounds. Playgrounds are not only important tools in early childhood development, they are also very well appreciated by older children. Seven playgrounds in Thailand have been built so far and another four are in the pipeline. We will also extend this programme to Laos and Cambodia. It's also a good way for donors to adopt a smaller project since an average playground will cost roughly USD 1,500. Please see the complete list of playgrounds by [clicking here](#).

Charuwan Phaisantham

With the introduction of a new newsletter tool as well as the release of our new webpage, we have decided to start featuring our staff individually in the years to come. Charuwan Phaisantham (nicknamed Tai) was our very first employee and has started working for us more than 6 years ago, in June 2004. Here is her story:



***When I heard from Marc that I had to write a story about myself and my work at Child's Dream for this newsletter, I thought: "How can I make this short???"! Actually, it is not short at all. I have just started my 7th year at Child's Dream about two months ago. Time flies fast and it will never stop. We just have to make the best of it, right?!!

Not long ago, I had the chance to visit some of the first Child's Dream Projects in Northern Thailand. I have visited [Childlife](#) in Mae Sai and [Yabauyaya](#) in Thachilek, Burma. Some of you might remember these projects, and some may not, even some Child's Dream's staff don't know about these two projects. They were our very first projects. I used to work with Childlife before working with Child's Dream and that is where I had learned about NGO work and NGO life. It was a great feeling to be back again, to see the children, to see how they have grown up and now have a good education. Most of the children still remembered me and ran to hug me when they saw me walk onto the project site. I could remember everyone's faces but could not remember all their names, some of the older kids have become volunteer staff to take care of the smaller children. It was good to see that Childlife is still running and that children have a good education there. Then, I went to visit Yabauyaya

with a staff from Childlife. It was good to see that our building is still there and still being used as a "Community Center".

However, some of the first projects in Mae Hong Son had caused some problems since we were inexperienced back then. We had built EMFS nursery school on land belonging to other people and had signed a contract that we did not have to pay for rent for five years. Now, after the five years are over, the building will belong to the owner of the land and we have to pay rent. At that time we (Daniel and I) thought that, "Ohh!! Five years is a very long time and it is good that we do not have to pay rent for five years. Great!! Let's do this!!" We thought that five years in the future was far away and we were not sure if Child's Dream would still exist!! So we did not worry too much. Now, five years had passed and we have to start paying rent to the landlord of EMFS from August 2010 onwards.



A visit to Yabauyaya Learning Center

Working in Siem Reap from July 2008 to June 2009, was also a great experience for me. It was my first time to live outside of Thailand and I was the first expatriate staff of our organisation. Living in a different culture, where people speak a different language and eat different food was not easy. Every day, I had to find some chili to add to my food. I had learned a lot from Ajan and Sino about Cambodia. And I had worked with the local staff and some partner organisations to help Cambodian children and to find a way for Child's Dream to support Cambodia.

In January of this year, I became the Head of the "Basic Education Focus Group". In this function, I have bigger responsibilities and it is a big challenge for me to overall manage the Basic Education team, to manage all the projects, programmes and activities running under "Basic Education" in all our target countries. However, this big task keeps me busy and I am willing to improve myself and I wish for my work to be a success. I have seen the past six years of Child's Dream, where we had good and bad situations (as everywhere) and I am looking very much forward to see the future of Child's Dream. I promised "Dek", the smiling sunny logo of our organisation, that I will see him grow up to be a good organisation to help children in the future. I will keep my word and try my best!!

I hope you've enjoyed reading my 'short' story. Thank you very much for reading it. The longer version will be a sequence of my diaries which will be a book – not only a story - of Tai and Child's Dream. I hope I can write this book one day when I retire. ☺***

By Charuwan Phaisantham, Head of Focus Group "Basic Education"

Alternative Ways to Help Us

It's amazing for us to observe over the years, how incredibly creative people can be, when it comes to raising funds for charity. We would like to share some outstanding examples with you, about individuals who went the extra mile (sometimes literally) to help others and thereby became our 'Child's Dream Heroes'.

For example...

... a gentleman who usually wears his hair VERY short and who lives in Hong Kong decided to let his hair grow for a period of six months to raise funds from his friends who were willing to support him...

... a crazy team of sports fanatics who got almost killed by running the unbearable 'Marathon des Sable' to raise funds for us...

... another Hong Kong gentleman who participates in nearly every globally available 'Iron Man' race for our cause...

... the British couple who decided to start cycling from New Zealand to the United Kingdom in support of our work...

... a Swiss Fitness Center chain who combines 'healthy living through sports' with fundraising by involving their club members and letting their centers compete for the largest customer contributions...

... oh, and we nearly forgot! Some people stick very strictly to the law, with 'zero tolerance' for their neighbors if they cause tremendous noise during the construction of a house or simply by not complying with some construction details. In exchange for not taking their neighbors to court, we have benefitted greatly from a sizeable donation in a number of cases, as they endured the noise for our cause!

We should also not forget the ones who had replaced the sending of Christmas cards or gifts or those who had decided not to receive them any longer, in favor of children in need.

Being more creative than buying, probably another, piece of jewelry for the birthday of a loved one can result in 50% funding for a new primary school - or three classrooms in Cambodia.

An increasing number of wedding couples had decided to relinquish wedding presents in favor of donations to Child's Dream, e.g. in form of a playground in a Thai school. We have observed the same interesting trend amongst friends of ours, who celebrate their birthdays.

Lastly, the recent 'undeclared asset' problems of non-Swiss clients of Swiss banks apparently made some clients wonder: '*...Why don't I just give my funds to charity instead of declaring them?*' What a relieving way to close such a bank account ... ☺

Thank you very much

We want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our big and small 'Child's Dream Heroes'.

THANK YOU all so much for your trust and support and your outstanding ideas. Whether your support is in monetary form or by morally supporting us, it all ends up in much positive energy, which will continue to power our Child's Dream engine.



Your Child's Dream Team