



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

Contact

Daniel Marco Siegfried
 Founder
daniel@childsdream.org

Marc Thomas Jenni
 Founder
marc@childsdream.org

Tel. +66 (0)53 201 811
 Fax. +66 (0)53 201 812

www.childsdream.org
info@childsdream.org

Address

Child's Dream Foundation
 238/3 Wualai Road
 T. Haiya, A. Muang
 Chiang Mai 50100
 Thailand

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I have always been a strong supporter of accepting and placing volunteers. Therefore, it is not surprising that I was asked to write this introduction to our latest newsletter. I strongly believe in volunteering because I can observe what a powerful change maker volunteering can be; a change maker not just for the individual volunteer, but also for the host organisation and its beneficiaries.

Without our volunteering programme, Child's Dream would not be the organisation it is right now. In fact, it might not even exist. More or less to this day, eight years ago I started my first volunteer assignment with a children's organisation in Chiang Mai, Thailand, full of excitement and readiness to embrace new ideas and perspectives. My host organisation was in a real mess with some serious flaws and irregularities, but it allowed me to discover a passion for doing social work. Although my first experience with volunteering was generally negative, I was able to learn a lot.

Child's Dream's positive values and guiding principles were very much influenced by this first negative experience elsewhere. We have accepted volunteers ever since the establishment of Child's Dream, starting with Marc and myself. It was only four years later that we finally agreed to draw a small salary from Child's Dream to cover our living expenses.

Volunteers have helped us in many ways to improve our work. They have built various databases (contact/donation management, scholarship management, etc.) to collect data and information in order to analyse them and produce reports. They have designed and still partly maintain our website. They have written reports and proposals for donors, helping with strategic questions and updating our presentation materials. Very recently most of Child's Dream's marketing materials got a completely new and fresh look. Also, our staff receive private English tuition, again thanks to the generous support of volunteers. But besides these obvious outputs, they have also provided an outsider's point of view, which helps us to continuously improve our work. In addition to these office volunteers, we have accepted many field volunteers who have left a lasting impact on our projects. Their assignments have not only improved the English of the students and teachers, but have also lifted the status of the schools and made schooling more interesting for the students. Many of our ex-volunteers also serve as outstanding ambassadors for our cause, around the globe.

I also believe that, upon the completion of their assignments, many ex-volunteers made certain changes to their lives; some radical and some less radical. But they would probably agree with me if I were to say that their volunteer experiences enriched them and gave them new perspectives when reflecting on day-to-day matters.

Unfortunately, volunteering has its downsides and in some places a really dark side. Many cash-strapped organisations have discovered volunteering as a means of income. *Voluntourism* has become very popular over the last few years, whereby volunteers are asked to pay for the experience. In fact, it became so popular and lucrative that some organisations have been established especially for this purpose. A recent article in The Guardian describes, 'orphanages as a booming business trading on guilt. Westerners take pity on the children and end up creating a grotesque market that capitalises on their concerns.' In Cambodia an official study found that just a quarter of children in these so-called orphanages around Siem Reap have actually lost both parents. The number of these orphanages has increased by 65% in the last three years. Many orphanages let tourists work with children. But think about it: how you would feel if a complete stranger were to come to your children's kindergarten to cuddle and care for your kids?

Last year I was invited to a Youth Forum in Taipei to give my perspectives on international volunteering. Taiwan, like many other developed Asian countries, has seen an increase of overseas volunteering by students, often organised by their schools. The conclusion of the forum was that volunteering is serious and should not be taken lightly. Long-term volunteer assignments tailor-made to the volunteer's experience, knowledge and education are more appropriate and impactful than short-term assignments that primarily address the guilt feelings of the volunteer. Short-term assignments can be impactful, enriching and fun, but the tasks need to be clearly assigned. Child's Dream selectively offers short-term volunteering opportunities, but we always put the wellbeing of our beneficiaries as our highest priority. A lot of consideration needs to be put into deciding an appropriate task, like building a playground or organising a fun children's day.

As a conclusion I would say that volunteering can be successful, but it needs to be planned carefully and an appropriate assignment needs to be identified. The volunteer needs to be ready for challenging work in an unfamiliar environment and in a different culture. As for Child's Dream, we value each and every volunteer. Since every volunteer absorbs valuable resources and time in the initial stage of the assignment, it is not only in our, but also in our volunteer's best interests to ensure that assignments have a lasting impact and really make a difference.

Volunteers do not have to pay for volunteering with us, but they do have to cover their own travel, food and

accommodation expenses. We want to give everybody who is truly committed to be the change they would like to see in the world. Although volunteering will never be one of our core activities, we will continue to offer volunteer placements as we realise their tremendous benefits.

by Daniel Siegfried, Co-Founder

Child's Dream News

Welcome & Goodbye

A very warm welcome to **Chennatda Nikonsantitham** (nickname "Joy")! Joy joined our Children's Medical Fund Team on the 1st May 2011 as an Assistant Coordinator. She now supports Ta and Waan taking care of our little surgery patients in Chiang Mai and Lampang.



In mid-June, **Savrann Vann** left our Cambodian office to take up a new position. Thank you very much, Savrann, for your support to our CDCO team in the past!

Child's Dream Annual Team Workshop

Our whole team spent three exciting [workshop](#) days in Chiang Dao, about one hour's drive north of Chiang Mai (17-19 June 2011). While last year's workshop was all about having fun, team building and imagining creative ways Child's Dream could operate in the distant future – 2040!, our 2011 workshop took a more pragmatic and systematic approach to developing scenarios for Child's Dream in the coming five years. Will we be obsolete? If so, what exactly might we become obsolete in? What will our beneficiaries' needs be in 2016? What new activities, structures, scenarios and needs will this mean for Child's Dream?



Project News

Thai-Cambodian Border Dispute

The border dispute between Thailand and Cambodia over the area around the Preah Vihear Temple has been going on since the very late 19th century. The recent break-out of fighting has affected four of our five schools in the Cambodian border province of Oddar Meanchey. We published a special newsletter covering this issue in May 2011. If you are interested in learning more about this dispute as well as how our work was or can be disrupted by it, please download the special newsletter [here](#).

Weather conditions

This year's rainy season has come unusually early, catching us by surprise. In fact, many parts of Thailand and Laos have suffered from severe flooding. Bridges have been washed away, landslides have come down the mountains and roads have become impassable. Our project teams got stuck more often than normal and trips were delayed or had to be rescheduled. We often had to change our travel routes due to the rain and its sometimes nasty side effects in rural areas. Also our foremen on the various project

sites were taken aback by the early and heavy rain. Although the quality of construction was not affected, the rain caused some delays as materials could not be delivered. We also had difficulties visiting some of our remotest projects, which meant that we could not pay our foremen on time for their work done. We normally pay the foremen on our construction sites based on construction progress. Early rain also means that the villagers have to work in their fields earlier, making it difficult for them to help us on the construction site.



High School Scholarship Programme

- in Cambodia, Laos and Northern Thailand

As a little twist from our usual community development work in the 'Basic Education' focus group, we have piloted a programme that focuses on supporting individual students who have the capacity to achieve more. This is a deviation from our usual community targeted projects, which support children and youth in accessing basic education. As schools which provide high school level education are sparsely available, especially in the rural and remote areas of Cambodia, Laos and Northern Thailand, the majority of students can usually only complete up to middle school level education. Hence, students with the interest and capacity to pursue high school education have to move to another village or district to continue their studies. Since expenses become prohibitive, only a very small number of mostly male students can continue down this educational pathway. Without a high school education, students will not be able to apply for university admission. Therefore, to bridge the educational gap between basic and higher education, we designed and piloted the [High School Scholarship Programme](#) in Laos and Northern Thailand in 2010. With approximately USD\$700, this scholarship covers the school fees, stationery costs and living expenses that middle school students require for one high school academic year. This year, we plan to also expand the geographical reach of this programme to include students in Cambodian schools.



KRCEE

- [The Karen Refugee Committee – Education Entity \(KRCEE\)](#) is a community based organisation operating in seven Karen refugee camps along the Thai-Myanmar border, focusing on refugee camp education.

Education for refugees along the Thai-Myanmar border is known for its quality. In fact, education in the camps is one of the factors that draw people from Myanmar. Compared to the warzones in eastern Myanmar, the camps offer higher quality, safer and more stable education. It's no

wonder, then, that parents are eager to send their children to one of the refugee camps for schooling. While much support is rightly dedicated to basic education up to high school level, students also need to be able to find employment to support their families or communities in general. Higher education in the refugee camps specialises in equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to enable them to seek employment or community leadership positions. The largest sectors of employment across these camps include the education and health sectors, followed by general employment by non-governmental organisations.

Higher education is, at best, extremely difficult to access in eastern Myanmar as it is almost non-existent; furthermore, refugees do not have access to this level of education within Thailand, thus leaving KRCEE to fill the gap by supporting higher education in the refugee camps.

With the support of educational NGOs and community based organisations, KRCEE has been overseeing educational developments across the camps. As most higher education schools were started by community members in the camps, schools often lacked structure and compatibility with other schools, making higher education a web of confusion for students and the community in general. KRCEE's main activities include arranging teacher training on methodology and subject upgrading, harmonising curricula across schools, coordinating material distribution to schools, general problem solving, and providing management and administration support including hiring new teachers. While not a government body, the KRCEE fulfils the same basic role as any department of education would in a stable government, but is unique in that the KRCEE power structure is arranged into committees to ensure community participation at all levels.

Child's Dream supports the following eight schools through KRCEE, as well as a small KRCEE administration budget to assist them with on-site visits and minor office expenses. One important justification for supporting KRCEE is that this community based organisation needs to build its capacity so as to be able to take on a leading role in developing education for their people, rather than being forced to rely on external experts; in short, funding KRCEE empowers Karen people to develop their education as they deem appropriate.

Schools supported under KRCEE include:

- Northern Karen Junior College (NKJC)
- Mae Ra Moe Junior College (MRMJC)
- Tanawthari Junior College (TJC)
- Pu Duplaya Junior College (PDJC)
- Karen Economics Development Course (KEDC)
- Engineering Studies Programme (ESP)
- Leadership and Management Course (LMC)
- English Immersion Programme (EIP)

Expenses covered vary per school, but may include: regular operating costs such as salaries, kitchen and food, health and hygiene, school office and administration, as well as irregularly occurring items like basic building construction or repairs, and textbooks. For EIP only, we do not cover running costs, but instead will support students' project proposals for their work experience practicum at the end of their year.

Child's Dream support to KRCEE is in addition to our support of schools in camps including:

- Leadership and Management Training College (LMTC)
- Pu Taw Memorial Junior College (PTMJC)
- Kaw Lah Junior College (KLJC)



NEED

NEED is a sustainable organic farm and training centre based outside of Chiang Mai, Thailand, and was established in 2006. In 2008 Child's Dream supported the construction of the classrooms, office and boarding facilities. After many visits to the centre to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of agricultural work, Child's Dream is interested in supporting NEED further.

NEED focuses on the sustainable agriculture issue because current mainstream agricultural practices are destructive. The use of chemical products such as fertilizers, pesticides and antibiotics poisons the environment and living creatures. This destroys the forests and pollutes the soil, water, and air, as well as reducing the number of living species in the ecosystem. It makes farmers dependant on products bought from the outside and puts unnecessary economic pressure on them, so much that many people quit farming and leave their families behind to go to the city in order to find work.

Currently, natural resources in Myanmar are concentrated along the borders with Thailand, China, Bangladesh and India - regions mainly inhabited by Myanmar's numerous minority ethnic groups. This combination of valuable natural resources and high ethnic diversity has contributed to political unrest in Myanmar and is shaping into an 'ethno-ecological crisis'.

Components of NEED

In order to address these agricultural, environmental and social dimensions, NEED undertakes the following primary activities:

Model farm initiative (MFI)

NEED's model farm initiative is a six-month professional development training programme in sustainable agriculture, environmental justice, community development and leadership for 20 Burmese youth from different ethnic backgrounds. Participants live, work and learn at NEED's sustainable farm and training facility. This year, the farm will add renewable energy production to its curriculum.

Village-level capacity building & community outreach

After completing the MFI programme, the students return to their villages around the country, where they begin to campaign the ideas of sustainable agriculture and conservation within their communities. One of the methods used is capacity building workshops, which students organise and facilitate for their peers and community members. NEED staff organise and conduct workshops in Shan State directly as well.

Additionally, MFI alumni collaborate with their communities to share what they have learned and experienced, and begin small-scale, environmentally-

sound agriculture projects. These projects include: traditional seed-collection banks, small-scale model farm operations and livestock breeding projects.

Research & Publications

NEED publishes an annual journal, Natural Light, on sustainable agriculture and environmental issues in Myanmar to address the lack of focused and accurate information pertaining to alternative and sustainable development issues in Myanmar. In 2011, this will focus on the agricultural crisis in Myanmar, complete with specific recommendations. NEED’s intention is that decision-makers and policy-makers to take note of the magnitude of challenges farmers in Myanmar are facing and take proactive measures to help curb the deterioration of agriculturally-based livelihoods.

Also published is a field-note newsletter, Green Life, which is a collection of articles written by MFI alumni. The newsletter provides an opportunity to engage alumni in the production of campaign materials related to sustainable agriculture, including developing a target-audience strategy, writing articles in both Burmese and English, and developing a distribution plan.



Social Entrepreneurship Grant

NEED has also become a partner with our [Social Entrepreneurship Grant](#) (SEG) programme and therefore, prepares and supports its students to apply for a small grant which acts a seed capital to start their own social enterprises. Applications received via NEED have included establishing model farms, a demonstration organic school garden, seed banking, and livestock breeding. Applicants are not guaranteed grants, but instead, will compete among other partner organisations’ students’ applications.

University Scholarship Programme – our Alumni

Back in 2006 we started supporting eight university students with full scholarships. Our student and alumni group has meanwhile risen to a total of 134. Currently, we are supporting 90 students who



study at various universities. 14 students dropped out since 2006 for a variety of reasons (among others, UNHCR re-settlement). We are particularly proud to already have 30 alumni who have completed their studies.

We are curious and eager to see where alumni work, once they graduate. Our grant letter explains that we wish students to “make a positive impact on their communities” and that “we expect students to use the skills they gain from their tertiary education for the good of their communities”.

However, this cannot be legally enforced due to the special circumstances and areas we work in.

Our first students graduated in 2009 and things looked promising. Would this positive trend continue? Staying in regular contact with alumni, who are often without mobile phones and rarely have access to internet in their rural areas, is a fairly big challenge. We tap every available source - e-mails, friends, siblings, class mates, Facebook and other social networks, etc. Every year in June/July, we take a closer look at where our alumni are, how they are and what they are up to. Of the 30 alumni contacted this year, there were only two we could not personally reach and one we have lost track of entirely. Luckily, their former class mates gave us some news about them. A brief overview shows:

Alumni	30 (18 women and 12 men)
Employed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25 (2 unknown) • 3 recently graduated and currently searching employment
Employment fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health/medics/nursing – 6 • Education – 12 • Community development – 4 • Miscellaneous - 3
Further studies at graduate level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 graduated at master’s level • 2 currently studying at master’s level • 3 currently considering further studies

Dear Alumni, if you read this, drop us a note (manuela@childsdream.org)! We are always extremely happy to hear from you. I hope you are all well and healthy!

Special Features
Bantarawan Chantra

(Nickname: “Tuu”), Senior Scholarship Coordinator

I graduated in business administration so I worked in a private company for 10 years. Every year, I had to think of how to make and increase profits. When it was time to change my job, I never thought that I would be working in a non-profit organisation. My life has been so different since I started working here with Child’s Dream. I am so happy that I can help people in need. I joined Child’s Dream in October 2007 as Senior Scholarship Coordinator.



According to my responsibility, I have learnt many stories from our scholars. It is challenging that I must also give some suggestions to them. New scholars have different issues every year. Now we have 90 scholars who are studying at 13 universities of Thailand and Hong Kong. This year we start giving scholarships to Laotians which makes me travel more frequently.

P.S. from Manuela: Tuu has an exceptionally sharp eye for mistakes in numbers and she has a very British sense of humour.

Children's Day



On a hot Saturday morning at the end of May 2011, we embarked on a monster task in Siem Reap, Cambodia: we hosted over 60 Credit Suisse Private Banking staff in one of our projects. It was the biggest organisational tasks our small field office in Siem Reap had ever faced. Since it was a challenge to organise an event of such magnitude, we were extremely pleased with the outcome. Driving to our primary school in Pong Ro Chas with two busloads full of excited and chatty bankers and bringing them together with more than 200 even more excited children was a highlight in itself. We split the bankers and the children into 4 different groups and assigned tasks to each group. Painting a recently installed playground, planting fruit trees as well as upgrading the vegetable garden were the more hands on tasks. Also the water well needed some finishing touches. It was truly funny to see bankers trying out their plastering skills, but the outcome was surprisingly good. Probably one of the most challenging tasks

was to entertain the youngest children. Many of the Credit Suisse female staff took up this challenge and the sheer pleasure of the young children could be heard all over the school ground: not just giggling, but also screams of joy could



be heard all the time. We finished off a happy, memorable and rewarding day by playing various games with the bankers against the children and, to our pleasure, the kids won most of the games ☺. A big thank you to our visiting friends from Singapore for making this a very exciting day for the many children and also for us.

Resource Centre Website

As our project portfolio grows, so does the content of our website. If you have not recently visited our website, please do so. You will see that we have restructured parts of it and created a '[Resource Centre](#)'. If you are looking for information which is not about specific projects or programmes, the Resource Centre is where to look. Besides all our marketing material, you will also find detailed information on our most urgent [funding needs](#). All our annual reports, as well as our annual highlights, are available from this new 'one stop shop'. Also, after eight years of existence, we have just – and finally! – released a new Child's Dream marketing folder. Last, but not least, ever since putting little movies on our own [YouTube](#) channel, this has proved to be very popular. It's an excellent way of getting a pictured idea of our work and putting some faces to our names.

Swiss National Day 2011

There is one day in the year when Swiss people all around the world celebrate their origins. This year, Child's Dream was invited to join the Swiss National Day celebration at the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangkok. It was a

wonderful opportunity to meet our friends at the embassy, eat some delicious Swiss food, drink some Swiss wine and listen to Maja Brunner singing traditional Swiss folk music. It is true that Swiss people living outside of Switzerland probably feel more connected to Switzerland than the ones living in the country. It was uplifting to see so many Swiss, old and young alike, coming from all parts of Thailand to celebrate our 'Swissness'.



Child's Dream was selected to receive the proceeds from the lucky draw. A total of THB 50,700 was collected during the event. We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Swiss ambassador, Christine Schraner Burgener, and her colleagues at the Swiss Embassy for their continuing support and trust in Child's Dream.

Luxembourg Tax Exemption

We are happy to announce that Luxembourg-taxed donors will be able to deduct their donations to Child's Dream from their taxable income. Simply donate to our Swiss bank account or use our secure and encrypted credit card facility and send us an email, requesting a tax certificate.

New items in our shop

Yes, Christmas time is coming up again soon and we have just upgraded our [online shop](#). Offering a little Child's Dream gift to your loved ones is not only an easy way to shop, but also it's a great way to support our cause. Among others, these new products have been added and are ready for you to order.



- Our very own 2011 Cookbook with favourites from all our staff
- A fluffy little Child's Dream Teddy Bear. All our little Children's Medical Fund patients also get one from us as a 'get well quickly' token.
- Sets of 12 Child's Dream greetings cards. They are a perfect way to send best wishes for the upcoming festive season.

And if you happen to be in Chiang Mai, please pay us a visit and shop in our onsite store. Happy shopping!

Thank you very much

Once again, a very big THANK YOU to all our donors and supporters, big and small. Thank you for living up to your commitments and continuing to support us. Thank you very much.

Your Child's Dream Team