Is It 10 Years Already?

Sometimes, one needs to take a step back in order to look at things from the outside, rather than from the familiar inside. Stepping outside of the glass bowl has become a more regular event for me over the last couple of weeks. Why? Am I unhappy with how things are going at Child’s Dream? Am I getting detached from our daily work or is it an opportunity to be able to reflect on what has happened so far? It’s definitely the latter and there are plenty of reasons to reflect. On the 22nd of October 2013 we will celebrate our 10 year anniversary. Yes, 10 years of community development work and support for countless children in desperate need of better health or education!

I remember well the decisive Friday 27th June 2003, when I pulled myself together and, with sweaty hands and a fast-beating heart, walked into the office of my supervisor at UBS Singapore. I handed in my resignation letter after nearly 20 years of service and left for the weekend, already questioning my action of a few minutes before.

Some days later, I found myself stripped of my office mobile phone, my office access badge, my company credit card, my frequent flyer status and, most importantly, the social prestige I had so far enjoyed. It felt like standing on the edge of a carpet and somebody was pulling the carpet from under my feet with full force.

What I did not realise back then was that I was not falling off the edge of the carpet, but that I was standing on a flying carpet, and thus flying towards an uncertain, exciting and promising new chapter of my life, which was about to unfold.

We have planned, implemented and run over 200 projects and programmes since our humble beginnings in 2003. We have built more than 100 educational facilities in Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and in the North of Thailand, benefitting tens of thousands of children. With every new facility, we get closer to our dream of providing access to education for every child in our area. Thanks to your support, thousands of youth have either completed high school or vocational education and more than 200 university students have received scholarships. In the field of ‘Health’, more than 1,000 children have been helped with life saving operations and many more will follow. Tens of thousands of children have received vitamin A and de-worming treatments and many more are protected under our Malaria Control Programme.

Looking back at the last ten years makes me tremendously proud; not just proud of what we have done for our countless beneficiaries, but also proud to have the privilege of working with the most outstanding team ever. Many thanks to everybody on the team for being part of our big Child’s Dream.

Please mark your diary:
Our official 10 Year Celebration event will take place in Chiang Mai on Friday afternoon, 1st November 2013.

Marc T. Jenni
Co-founder
Child’s Dream News

Welcome and Goodbye

Since we published our last newsletter, Yee (our caretaker), Waan (Children’s Medical Fund), Bank (Laos Team) and Nui (Thailand Team) have left us. Our office volunteers, Pamela Lewis and Peter Barta, as well as our two interns, Gap and Orn, have completed their assignments. Ben Loth has finished his English teaching assignment at Samoeng Pittayakom School. Many thanks to these team members who have greatly supported our cause.

People who have newly joined us are our two office volunteers, Thomas Faverau and Rubina Hassan. Our new employees are Chaisriha Tritrapron (nickname “Phang”) in IT and administration support and Nan Kwai (nickname “Goy”), replacing Waan in the Children’s Medical Fund.

A special welcome goes to our newly appointed Child’s Dream Association board member, Madame Jeanne Barras Zwahlen. Jeanne formerly acted as a board member for diversethics Foundation (integrated into Child’s Dream on 1.1.2013). We have known Jeanne for many years and feel exceptionally honored to be able to continue counting on her valuable advice, inspiration, wisdom and her wonderfully constructive optimism!

Six Cars: 90,543 kilometers

We have five cars based in Chiang Mai and one car based in Siem Reap. Last year, our six cars drove an amazing 90,543 kilometers: 24 wheels on the road for our causes in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. We are not yet able or allowed to take cars into Myanmar, but, as a result of the rapid changes, we will probably see this happen soon. After all, the direct distance from Chiang Mai to Yangon is only 346 kilometers, while it is about 600 kilometers to Bangkok.

Special Feature

Supattra Matakoon (Nickname: Koy)

- Field Coordinator Laos

I worked with many local NGOs after I graduated from university such as weaving groups, the Organic Farm Association, street children, beggar children, a community theatre group and an HIV network. Finally, I began working with Child’s Dream. I don’t know why I like to work with NGOs or this kind of job. I only know that I feel happy. I can meet many people, villagers, farmers, children, new friends. I can go many places for meetings, training, study tours and I can learn many things from people I work with.

I started with Child’s Dream Foundation with short contracts (6 months) as a researcher for collecting information to find out if Child’s Dream should have its own children’s house (similar to Baan Gua Fan) or not. After 3 months we found the answer and Child’s Dream decided to support other children’s organisations which had more experience of children’s houses than ourselves.

I think I am very lucky that Child’s Dream gave me an opportunity to contribute my capacity with the Basic Education Team as Assistant Laos Coordinator. This job challenged me a lot and I learned many things from working here: English language, how to drive, how to negotiate with stakeholders and contractors, how to manage our work, how to think, how to plan because Child’s Dream has big space for our ideas to think and create our activity.

I like travelling, I like to work with the communities, I like to see children. These things make me happy with my job. Time has run so fast! Five years already I have been working here. I think it is not long and we still have many things to do to improve education for the children we work with and also improve our work. Sometimes I faced difficult situations or serious things, but when I passed them or I solved the problems, when I see the villagers or children smile, it makes me happy and proud of myself. Thank you very much Child’s Dream and my colleagues for letting me work here and make my life more meaningful.

- Koy -
Case No: 1000 — Children’s Medical Fund

When we told Shin Thant Phyu’s mother that her daughter is the 1000st case of the Children’s Medical Fund Programme, she was so excited and said that her daughter is very lucky. She is very grateful to all those involved in helping her daughter and other children. She said she will take the very best care of her daughter. She hopes that the Children’s Medical Fund Programme will continue to help children in need forever.

Shin Thant Phyu is a two year old girl who suffers from cardiac disease. Her family comes from Bagan Division, Myanmar. She was born prematurely (at 7 months). Her mother noticed that her lips and toes were blue and that she was short of breath. She also appeared to be fatigued. Doctors in Yangon diagnosed her with cardiac disease, so she had to take medication. Doctors at a private clinic in Myawaddy, Myanmar then suggested that she would need to go to Mae Tao Clinic in Thailand to get treatment and an operation so her parents took her there. Her mother said she prays that her daughter can be treated and can be healthy soon.

Shin Thant Phyu means “pure”. Her parents named her that because she was born prematurely and suffers from many health problems. They hope that one day she can be free of all health problems and be “pure”.

Expansion of Children Medical Fund to Laos

It is not only Burmese children whom Child’s Dream cures from severe congenital diseases by funding them to have surgery in the hospitals in northern Thailand. We also often get requests from Chiang Rai hospitals which have Laotian child patients whose parents have brought them across the Thai - Laos border for better treatment and who need our help.

These requests are increasing so we have decided to expand the Children’s Medical Fund into Laos by doing a survey in the four provinces of Boe Keo, Udomxai, Luang Namtha and Xaínabouli and by discussing with the provincial hospitals and the Laos Ministry of Health on how we can work together to help more Laotian children.

From 2010 to 2013 we have had more than 50 patients from Laos and the number of patients is getting higher. After surgery and treatment, these children go back to their country to enjoy a better quality of life which includes education and the ability to play and laugh with their friends.
Your Child’s Dream Team

Going Beyond the Basics –
Bridging the gap between basic and higher education through our High School Scholarship Programme

With a small intake of only 16 scholars when it was piloted in 2010, the High School Scholarship Programme has since expanded geographically and grown exponentially in numbers over just three years. Today, more than 230 scholars from Cambodia, Laos and Thailand are supported in continuing upper secondary education. 2013 is a special year, as we celebrate the graduation of our first intake of 16 scholars who have successfully completed their upper secondary education and now plan to further their education. Completing upper secondary education is essential as graduates will have more opportunities to pursue higher education and access more and better job options. Also, in the long run, they will be more empowered to make better decisions for their lives and be better equipped to support and foster their own communities’ development.

However, students’ continuation rate from lower to upper secondary level is still very low due to the scarcity of schools that provide upper secondary education in rural and isolated locations. Often, students who wish to continue education have to leave their homes and move to bigger towns or cities after completing lower secondary school. Many families simply would not be able to afford the cost of schooling and living and their children would therefore have to discontinue school, were it not for our scholarship support, which covers the full cost for the three years of education. This programme also offers scholars the opportunity to develop their characters through various activities that are designed to guide them on their personal journeys towards achieving their ambitions and life goals. By providing our scholars with leadership skills and encouraging them to assume responsibility in their communities, they can then become role models to other students and promote the importance of education. For approx-imately USD 700, each scholarship covers school fees, stationery costs and living expenses that a middle school student requires for one high school academic year.

Introducing ‘Child’s Dream Comes True!’
– our latest staff member?

Our brand new Child’s Dream elephant is 1.5 m tall and arrived at our office on 3rd June 2013. Its name is “ A Child’s Dream Comes True”. This wonderful object was designed by our volunteer Lilly (Liliya Pogodina), produced in cooperation with the Elephant Parade House in Chiang Mai and generously donated by Nicole and Ben Cavalli from Singapore.

Looking for the special Christmas Gift?
Dreaming about owning an Elephant? ‘Child’s Dream Comes True’ is now available in our store in four different sizes. Other lovely Christmas presents include: postcards, greeting cards, cookbooks introducing recipes from all our team members, flip-flops, and, and, and... More details on our Facebook page - https://www.facebook.com/childsdreamfoundation.

Connect with us!

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