Like every year for the past many years, we started 2014 with the resolution that we would make it a less busy year with less travel and fewer new initiatives. And guess what? We have been wrong once again. 2014 was a demanding, but exciting and highly productive year for Child’s Dream. It is no wonder that it passed with the blink of an eye. Although it just seemed like a blink, we were able to achieve a lot to further strengthen our presence in the region and to expand our support to even more children and youth in Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. With the global economy unable to find momentum and with low sentiment in Switzerland and Japan, our two most important donor markets, it is not surprising that from a financial point of view 2014 has been a tough year. Our donation volume will probably decline by the end of this year by roughly 10% and we will most likely spend more money than we raised. As of end of November, our reserves have been reduced by USD 600,000 as some of our new higher education initiatives in Myanmar are either un- or underfunded and, therefore, have to be funded through our general donation pool. This surprised us since Myanmar is on everybody’s mind and our innovative initiatives address some of the core social issues in the country, such as lack of teacher capacity, curriculum development capabilities, critical and creative thinking, community development skills and religious tolerance. If you are interested in supporting some of these initiatives, please contact us.

Given our solid financial track record and our ‘unaggressive’ marketing approach, Child’s Dream is often perceived as not needing funds, which is not true. Actually, it is a very difficult and delicate task to balance the finances of our size of organisation, especially since we do not have endowments and rely on donations from individuals. Despite the lower donation volume, we were able to keep our overhead administration costs below 7%.

On the operational side, we opened a small field office in Yangon with three employees. This office helps us to expand our work in Myanmar and to improve our support to various local partner organisations and their beneficiaries. At the same time, we also significantly upgraded our IT system. After many years in operation, we replaced our ‘banana’ accounting system with a new, enhanced and customised accounting database to further improve our back office efficiency.

We have also been very busy in the field. Besides building 16 schools and four boarding houses, our basic education team also launched five new computer labs in Laos and extended the scholarship programme to various vocational schools in Laos and Thailand. Our higher education team expanded its work in Myanmar and along the Thai-Myanmar border to provide the local youth access to higher education such as university and post-high school colleges as well as to improve opportunity for employment through our vocational programmes. Close to 10,000 youth benefited from these programmes. Our health team accepted more than 100 new patients into our Children’s Medical Fund, which provides life-saving operations for children with congenital diseases. We also successfully handed over the funding of the Malaria Control Programme to larger institutional donors.

All of this would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors from all over the world. On behalf of our beneficiaries, we would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your trust and friendship. Together we truly can make children’s dreams come true!

Daniel Marco Siegfried
Co-Founder
Welcome and Goodbye

Since our last newsletter, Muay has left us to join the Thai Ministry of Public Health in Bangkok. Muay won an admission contest and was selected as one of 35 candidates from an original group of 3000 applicants. Our congratulations go out to her. Also, Jollsy, Alexandra Hilble, Moe, and Nuh have left Child’s Dream. Nang Kham Aung and Nikone Phetphaithong are our new university scholarship coordinators, and Salakhit Kaewkham is our new assistant field coordinator for Thailand. Jack has moved from the Basic Education team to the Administration team, replacing Arm as an IT System and Office Administrator. Larissa Huber and Lorenz Altenhoff have joined us as new office volunteers for special tasks.

Special Feature
Sinoeuy My

I am from Oddar Meanchey Province, very close to Duong Raek Mountain and also close to Thailand. After I finished secondary school from Banteay Ampil District in 2002, I continued to study in the province. Every weekend, I went back home, 28 km away, to get some food and some money. It was the first time for me to live away from home, so I felt homesick. I successfully finished high school in 2005. After that, I just knew that I wanted to study at university in Seam Reap. But I didn’t know what subject I want. I don’t understand the entire subject; I don’t have any idea for support during the school vacation. Two months later the school started again and also the first time for me to go school and complete an application form. What is the new for me is I have a nice building to study in and I have a lot of friends now. After I study in university, I have opportunities to get a new job. On 1 October 2006, I am working as a researcher in a real estate company and on 1 February, 2009 I resign. It is a good time for me to complete the final exams and do the thesis with KAKO (Khmer Ackphiwat Khmer Organization). After I work on the thesis for three months I was an intern and after the next three months I am staff on 1 September 2009. I wanted to work with CD as I like to working with children and communities so I was responsible for the primary school scholarship and communities learning center. My background in education is project management, so this is the opportunity for me to improve my knowledge and also to know how to work with the communities, what they need and how I can help them. There is a big difference between people living in the city and people living in the remote area and actually I am also from the very remote area. In my work I have a bit of difficulty working with the children, it is difficult to communicate with them as they don’t understand what I say to them because all of them are the poorest and they really need to supported.

Sinoeuy My
Assistant Field Coordinator

Project News

Health

Basic Health Awareness Training for the Lahu Community

The focus group Health encourages CBOs (Community Based Organizations) to work sustainably for their communities and so cooperates with the Lahu Women’s Organization to provide basic health awareness training for Lahu communities to increase awareness and access to information about adolescent health and reproductive health rights among Lahu youth. The Basic Health Awareness Training covers four townships in Shan State, Myanmar. The project-aims at working with young people aged 12-30 to educate and empower them on reproductive health issues such as family planning, sexually transmitted diseases as well as puberty in general. Health education is the first step in preventing sexually transmitted diseases, problems of unwanted pregnancy, the spread of HIV/AIDs and gender inequality. The training is more effective in the communities due to schools in Myanmar not teaching about adolescent reproductive health as traditional cultural practices strictly forbid this. Also, the information does not reach the communities as most Lahu people live in mountainous areas where it is very difficult to access health care and health education. After they better understand these issues, they can prevent diseases and build healthy families and peaceful communities.
At least three highlights can be reported for the opening of Phon Hong Secondary School. It’s first of all not that Daniel and Marc travelled together to attend this celebration, though that is also very unusual; rather, it’s the fact that this is the biggest school we have ever built in Laos since we started our work back in 2006. The twelve fully furnished classrooms stretch over two stories. A fully equipped computer room as well as a science lab complement the classrooms. A nicely stocked library is also a first at the school.

The celebration was more formal than many previous events we have attended. The reason for this second highlight was the presence of the Deputy Minister of Education and Sport, Her Excellency, Madame Sengdeuane Lachanthaboun. It was certainly a great honour for us to have her chairing this important event. For our long-standing commitment to Laos and for our contribution to education, Madame Sengdeuane presented us with the ‘Cross of Friendship’ medal, a medal awarded by the Prime Minister of Laos in recognition of outstanding service to the country. Daniel and Marc were thrilled to have been recognised by the highest level of government. Our special thanks goes to Koy and Gee, our two project managers for Laos, who do an amazing job and made all this possible.

Thirdly and personally, it was very important to Marc and Daniel to be able to build this school for a very special donor from Davos. Many thanks dear friend!
Good news! Our very first Bitcoin donation has been converted to real cash! Thank you so much to our first donor, Stephan! What actually is Bitcoin? Bitcoin is a fair electronic currency based on algorithms instead of central authority. It enables users to manage their own funds and transactions, with no expensive fees or long waiting times. That means our beneficiaries get more out of each Bitcoin donation! You too can make a difference: send Bitcoin donations to https://www.onename.io. Child’s Dream Foundation (+childsdreamfoundation) on OneName and make a positive impact on the lives of children in the Mekong Sub-Region!

Air condition

Child’s Dream has AC now! air–con-di-tion verb \ˈer-kən-ˈdi-shən\ - to equip (as a building) with an apparatus for washing air and controlling its humidity and temperature. In Chiang Mai, the daily temperature varies drastically through the day, from cool mornings to hot, hot, hot afternoons. After six long years of waiting, AC has finally come to our office! Wooo~hoooo!

Ice Bucket Challenge

Look who’s doing the Ice Bucket Challenge! Yes, recently Daniel and Marc accepted the epic Ice Bucket Challenge from John Thompson! Considering the hot weather in Chiang Mai, it was the best time to freshen up for a good cause!

The Child’s Dream White Paper

After more than 10 years of operation, we felt it was time to document our working processes. The Child’s Dream White Paper was born (author Peter Barta). This is not an easy read, but it gives you a deep insight into the way we work. Please download the White Paper here.

Change in the Child’s Dream Foundation Board

We would like to express our most sincere gratitude to Mr. Vatit Hathaipassorn who served on the Child’s Dream Foundation board since November 2005. Khun Vatit has now stepped down as he is a nominated candidate for a local government position. Congratulations and many thanks!

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