



# Child's Dream

A charity organization supporting children in need

[www.childsdream.org](http://www.childsdream.org)



## Our objectives

- To stop migration of Burmese children from their origin
- To prevent child labor, trafficking and sexual exploitation
- To cultivate a better attitude towards life and society
- To help children to take pride in themselves and strengthen their self-esteem
- To improve living conditions
- To encourage the children to love and respect their own customs and culture
- To raise awareness among families and communities of child trafficking

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## Newsletter

March 2004

### A Child's Dream Comes True!

After being in operation for about 5 months, our hopes, dreams and visions are now materialising day by day. It is incredibly motivating and rewarding to see how our idea has transformed into an organisation as effective as possible in helping unprivileged children in the 'Golden Triangle'.



Thanks to the financial and mental support of many of our friends and colleagues, we have now

entered the stage of really being able to help by providing much-needed infrastructure to several projects.

### Organizational News

Child's Dream is exceptionally pleased to announce that it was accepted into the UBS Singapore DAYE (Donate As You Earn) Scheme. With this program, UBS Singapore employees can donate money to a handful of approved charities directly via their payroll, and UBS matches the individually donated amounts. The fact that Child's Dream is the only non-Singaporean charitable organisation selected for this program makes us especially proud.

We are still in the process of establishing Child's Dream as a Hong Kong registered charitable organisation. However, this takes more time and resources than we originally anticipated. We will keep you updated about our progress on that front.

### Did you know that...

*Child's Dream is hosting a charity dinner at the Swiss Club in Singapore on May 3rd, 2004? Please contact us if you are interested in joining.*

## Water Treatment System for Childlife

After weeks of careful planning, double-checking and triple-confirming, the construction finally started on March 1, when the huge truck loaded with the bright blue 4000 litre water tank and the 12-meter tall support tower arrived at the Childlife site. During the course of the week and countless blisters later, not only has the water treatment system been erected and pipes of about 500 meter length have been laid, but also separate shower rooms for girls and boys have been built. Whether the kids on the site really think of this investment as a favour is doubtful, since we

still remember our own enthusiasm many years back when it came to taking a shower or a bath. Anyway, we are very happy to provide clean and safe drinking water and water for daily use to this project caring for about 70 street



children. The realisation of the water treatment system significantly raises the hygienic standard on the site and minimises the health risks associated with swimming in a contaminated pond. The rice paddies surrounding the site are treated with pesticides and many of these chemicals are washed right into the kids 'swimming pool'. Child's Dream has spent about THB 285'000 (approx. USD 7'100) to realise the water treatment system and the shower rooms.



*How dishes and clothes are currently being washed*



## Child's Dream

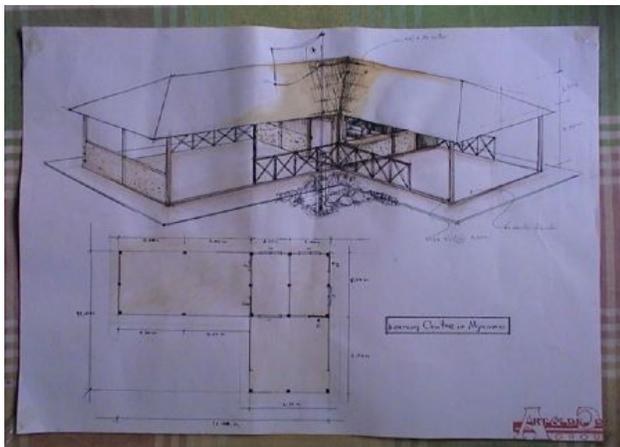
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### Did you know that...

*you could buy a Burmese baby aged below one year for USD 50 and aged above one year for USD 25 from a human trafficker?*

### School for Yabauyaya Village in Burma

As mentioned in our last newsletter, the Yabauyaya village lies just a few walking minutes away from the Thai / Burmese border and many children, who are currently looked after in the Childlife project, originate from this minority village. Every time we walk over the infamous bridge connecting Thailand and Burma and march uphill towards the village, we have a strange feeling. 'White faces' are usually not seen in this area of town and therefore your every step is being watched with suspicion. The border town itself is called Tachileik and is a major trading point for drugs and humans. On one of our more recent visits we were even followed by Burmese Intelligence since they suspected us to buy drugs in the minority village. This, we only found out weeks later after being informed by Childlife staff. The village leader wanted to apologise for the incidence which we did not even notice.



Construction plan of the school in Yabauyaya

This preventive project in this village will not only keep the children of this village off the street and will stop their migration into Thailand, but could eventually break the vicious cycle of this village through education. The project has been in our pipeline for quite some time already but was put on hold due to the lack of management capabilities to run the school. It was planned to daily send teachers from Thailand into the village but the political situation in Burma did not convince us that the border to Thailand will stay

open forever. Only a few years back, the Burmese army was firing gunshots into Thailand which triggered the closing of the border for many months. In order to avoid having a school without teachers (should this happen again), we were looking for somebody who can run the school from within Burma. During another trip to the Yabauyaya village, we got in touch with the regional team leader of World Vision Burma, who pledged his support in providing two local teachers, books and health care for the kids as well as community education. This made our hearts jump since this was exactly what we were looking for. On the same day, we were meeting two high-ranking government officials from the Tachileik province, who handed over some documents (though in Burmese language) to us. We were told that these documents outline the permission to use the identified land for the proposed school, as well as ensure our safety every time we set foot on this province's soil. We accepted with a smile and decided to bring them along; just in case. Only two days later, we crossed the border again with the same uneasiness, despite our life saving documents, in order to buy the construction material for the school. The proposed budget for this project is in the area of about THB 90'000 (approx. USD 2'300). It will take the villagers about one month to complete the infrastructure and we will update you again in our next newsletter – once the first school term has started.

### Did you know that...

*it is said that there are 10 'Speed' factories (designer drugs) within a 10km radius of Tachileik?*

### Field Opportunities for Poor Children (OPC)

We introduced OPC to you in our last newsletter but just want to quickly refresh your memory as OPC will play an important role going forward. This organisation was established in December 2002 by a couple of young Shan's (ethnic minority in Burma) with the goal to provide support for unrecognised refugee children in Thailand's Northern provinces. Currently OPC operates a very basic unfinished shelter and offers education for and protection to about 40 children. All children share the same burden of originating from ethnic minorities in Burma. Therefore, these children, aged between 4 and 12 years, have no rights whatsoever. About half of the children lost their parents, while others have fathers in prison for drug trafficking and mothers in prostitution. The majority of the children are girls since OPC realised that girls are more vulnerable to exploitation, especially child prostitution, than boys.





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After our first visit last December to Mae Hong Son, we met Khun Kham Chuen, manager of OPC, again just a couple of days ago in Chiang Mai over a pineapple juice, to which Thais strangely enough add salt. We were made aware of the urgency to start with the construction of the proposed shelter and training centre since it will be impossible for



heavy machinery to get to the site during the rainy season (June to November).

A piece of land has already been identified and is currently being cleared. The construction is scheduled to start during

our visit from March 11 – 13, when we will purchase the necessary construction material from a local store. Remember, it is our concept that money will not be paid to the project but rather directly to the shop, where the material is bought. The shelter will accommodate about 40 children with separate rooms for boys and girls. The new training centre will not only be used as a school, but also contains facilities for vocational training, so that teenagers can acquire practical skills needed to find a job.

In a second stage, we are planning to upgrade and extend the existing unfinished building into an infant care centre and office.

Some of you might still remember the funny name 'Tomato Village', which peacefully unites many ethnical minorities from Burma. We have agreed to help Benjamin, a Burmese who fled his home country many years ago, in his quest to teach English to the minority children by building a small school next to his house. The school will be supervised by OPC. Construction will start once the facilities in Mae Hong Son mentioned above have been completed.

The total estimated cost for these three projects is about BHT 1 mio. (USD 25'000). Just a few days ago, we introduced our intentions with regards to OPC to the Embassy of Switzerland in Bangkok in the hope for financial support. Their decision is expected within the next 3 – 4 weeks.

### **Did you know that...**

*if you were born to a Thai mother and a non-Thai (refugee) father, you would NOT be considered as Thai national?!*

This newsletter is just a snap shot of our work, but we hope it was informative and somewhat entertaining. However, in order to better understand what is going on in our lives, we encourage you to visit us in Chiang Mai. We are most happy to bring our world a bit closer to you.

Cheers,

Marc

Daniel