



Child's Dream

A charity organization supporting children in need

www.childsdream.org



Our objectives

We aim to prevent child exploitation (child prostitution, child labor, child soldiering and trafficking) and migration through

- improving living & health conditions and education standards;
- raising the awareness of child trafficking among families and communities;
- helping children to take pride in themselves and strengthen their self-esteem
- cultivating a better attitude towards life and society and
- encouraging the children to love and respect their own customs and culture.

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Newsletter

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'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.' However, it is not about *giving* fish or *teaching* how to fish, but whether this man *wants* fish.

As we continue to expand our work into Cambodia and Laos, our approach to helping is evolving. We realize that working together with rural impoverished communities involves many more aspects of development aid than of humanitarian assistance. The key to sustainable and successful development aid is to carefully listen to members of these communities in order to better understand their real needs. What shall they do with fish if they do not like fish?! Too often we see international NGOs imposing their ideals and values on communities without paying much attention to the impact on the beneficiaries' culture, traditions and customs. That is when development aid turns to domestication or colonialism.

Education is known as an important factor of improving the quality of living in the long-term. With an illiteracy rate of up to 70% among children in some areas of Cambodia and limited education budgets in Laos covering teachers' salaries (around USD 20 per month) and a pack of chalk per semester, there is an endless need for education and schooling. Although our resources are limited, we do our best to broaden the access to basic education and have a lasting impact on the lives of the children in Laos and Cambodia.

Ever since we started to venture out into the rural communities of Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and the Thai - Burmese borderline, we have been recognizing the limitations of Child's Dream and its mandate that allows us to assist children only. Often it was heartbreaking and sometimes also inefficient to have no other choice than to decline our support for even the most basic needs such as water, electricity and health simply because adults would also benefit from our assistance. Therefore, we established a charitable Swiss foundation called *diversethics* Foundation that is no longer limited to supporting children only and focuses on community

development. Going forward, we can leverage the mandates of Child's Dream and *diversethics* Foundation to bring comprehensive and sustainable assistance to these remote villages. Please have a look at www.diversethics-foundation.org. By Daniel Siegfried

Organizational News

Luckily is not only our area of coverage expanding, but also our circle of friends willing to help us. We have been fortunate to secure a couple of new volunteers who can make a valuable contribution to Child's Dream and ease our growing workload. The following three Swiss recently joined us: **Andrea Kleinert** (special tasks), **Michael Sonderegger** (IT specialist) and **Letizia Lavizzari** (legal expert). In addition, we have accepted **Ayu Chuepa** as a trainee from Chiang Rai Rajabhat University.



From left to right: Ayu, Letizia, Andrea & Michael

As our ongoing financial commitments are growing, we are exploring new frontiers for our marketing efforts. Currently, we are working on **tax-efficient solutions for donations** from the United States, Hong Kong and Australia. We will keep you posted on these developments.

Laos

By simply taking a ferry from Mukdahan (Eastern Thailand) to Savannakhet (Southern Laos) and crossing the Mekong, one can easily experience 'time travel' first hand. Once arriving in Laos, time is set back by about 20 years. People, motorbikes, the few cars and it seems even the animals are moving



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slower. In general, time appears to be less important than in Thailand. Although the influence from its "bigger brother" in the West is everywhere, there is still the feeling of collectivism. The social fabric in the communities is very strong. Like in many other places along its way to the South China Sea, the mighty Mekong not only divides countries but also cultures, values, views and attitudes.



Since the revolution in 1975, years of isolation and economic deprivation have hindered the Communist state. Today, Laos is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Educational indicators are dramatically low and represent one of the main bottlenecks in sustainable development and poverty reduction. Insufficient classrooms, the lack of textbooks, educational supplies and teachers' books, are the main constraints in basic primary education.

Child's Dream tries to widen the access to education by building, upgrading and extending schools.

Naseng School

Naseng School is a government primary school for about 500 children in the Savannakhet province. The number of students has been steadily growing and the school's infrastructure could no longer accommodate all students at once. As a result, children can either attend morning or afternoon classes.



In addition, the school was built about 70 years ago and the infrastructure is only very basic. Even the newer double-storey building is in very bad condition. The roof is

leaking everywhere and many doors and windows are either missing or cannot be closed or opened anymore. Although the school receives a small amount from the government, it's not enough to do any renovation work.

Child's Dream decided to build a new school (280m²) with 5 classrooms and toilets and to renovate the existing double-storey school building. The estimated budget is approximately USD 32,000.

Sa Ming Secondary School

This project is another good example of our strategy to reach really remote communities, which otherwise nobody else would support. Not only is the Sa Ming village far away from everything, but also the road leading to it reminds us of a challenging stage of the 'Camel Trophy'. The community is in a distant corner of the Champasak province close to the Cambodian border.

The children of the villages around Sa Ming can complete grade 1 to 4 in their villages and then have to continue with grade 5 in a village nearby. If they want to continue their studies afterwards in secondary school they have to go



to Pathumporn, the next town, which is for most of them approximately 30 km away. Therefore, the community of Sa Ming village decided to build a secondary school to offer the students an opportunity to study close-by. Unfortunately, the budget was not sufficient to finish this ambitious project.



Child's Dream agreed to support the completion of the school building. The estimated costs are about USD 6,670. The project is expected to be realized until the end of 2006.

Khon Kaen School

People looking for Shangri-La can officially stop now. They anyway have been looking completely at the wrong place. Shangri-La is not in some secret hidden valley in Tibet, but lies on the banks of the Mekong in Southern Laos. To the distress of Khun Watt, who cannot swim, it can only be reached by long tail boats through a maze of little, ever-changing islands in the Mekong. Once reaching the shore, dozens of children playing in the shallow waters welcome the very few visitors, even the ones with a greenish face. After climbing up the bank, which is used to grow vegetables, one can experience the genuine Laotian hospitality at a laid-back village called Khon Kaen.





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About 100 families are living in Khon Kaen, each of them with at least two children. Since the school's capacity is just too small to accept all the children, only one child per family can go to school. In addition, the school building is in very bad condition. The corrugated iron of the roof is rusty and dotted with holes. There are no walls to protect the students from rain, wind and cold. During the rainy season or in the winter, it's often not possible to study because it's too muddy or too cold.



Child's Dream decided to build a new school building (320m²) including 6 class rooms for grades 1 to 5, toilets as well as a nursery. All the material will be bought in Pakse and has to be transported by boat to Khon Kaen. As with all of our projects, we ask the community to contribute. In Khon Kaen, the villagers agreed to bring sand and stones from the Mekong to the construction site. We expect the project to be completed in December 2006. The budget is roughly USD 33,800.

Pathumporn Nursery School

Compared to some other schools we have seen in Laos, this nursery school is well looked after. The teachers put a lot of effort and love into the maintenance and decoration of the nursery. One can feel that these teachers really like their profession and adore the children. With almost no resources, they are able to offer a nice learning environment in a very old, rundown school.

Pathumporn has the district's largest primary school with 450 students, who are taught by 14 teachers. The nursery school currently accommodates 80 children, who are looked after by 5 teachers. The school was built in 1970, and despite the nice decoration, the building is in very bad condition and urgently needs a renovation. Furthermore, the primary school's water system does not reach the nursery school and the teachers have to carry the water all the way to the nursery a couple of hundred meters away.



We agreed to support the renovation of the old school buildings, the construction of a kitchen and toilets as well as the installation of a water system. We expect the project to be completed in December 2006 with estimated costs of USD 10,600.

Project Round-up

Malaria Control Program – The health backpacker medics came back to Mae Sot for training and to get new supplies such as 4,600 mosquito nets, medicine and parachecks.

Primary School in Snor – The construction is progressing well and should be finished by middle of October. The opening celebration is scheduled for November 30th, 2006.

KWO & KNWO Child Development Project – We started the second phase of the project entailing the purchase of 3410 sets of warm clothes (pullover & trousers) as well as school uniforms. The distribution of the clothes and uniforms will take place in early November 2006.

How you can help us

Like in any other business, IT is also a concern to us. We try our best to keep up with the latest technologies to maintain Child's Dream's administration as efficient as possible without jeopardizing our lean cost structure. We have been relying on old secondhand laptops, which are perfect for computer training in our schools, but cannot cope anymore with the IT requirements in our office. Despite cleaning and upgrading the laptops regularly, their users can leisurely go to the toilet and make coffee while starting some programs or saving certain documents. Some of them also like to give electric shocks to their users making them jump in their chairs if they don't wear rubber slippers. Should you have a good secondhand laptop or connections to a company that has obsolescent models or laptops with small defects but still useable, please contact us.

Even though these newsletters are written in a way to let our friends, donors and colleagues participate in our work, we encourage you to come and visit us. We are happy to welcome you in Chiang Mai.

'If you want one year of prosperity grow grain. If you want ten years of prosperity grow trees. If you want one hundred years of prosperity grow people.'

Chinese proverb

Cheers,

Your Child's Dream Team

