



Child's Dream

A charity organisation 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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Christmas-Newsletter

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Although we still apply the same level of professionalism to our work as we did back in our banking days, there is not much that our previous jobs have in common with our work in Child's Dream. But every now and then we can draw certain parallels.

Many years ago I read a book called '*In Search of Alpha*' explaining to the reader how and where *alpha* can be found. In a financial context *alpha* refers to mispricing of investments that allows an investor to make a profit by selling (or buying) an investment at a higher (lower) price than it is worth. *Alpha* can often be found in investments that have low research coverage, are inconvenient to evaluate or are against investor trends.

So what has *alpha* got to do with our work? Well, instead of looking for profits we are seeking for the highest possible positive social impact we can achieve with our resources. Hence, we are constantly looking for '*social alpha*'. So where can we find '*social alpha*'? The best place to look for it is in areas of extreme remoteness, where other NGOs would not want (or dare) to go, because it is simply too inconvenient. But '*social alpha*' can also be found in more urban areas. Just like the financial industry, philanthropy is also affected by trends. This can mean that those most in need can miss out. However, by being contrarian and focusing on target groups that are neglected - mostly due to social prejudice - we can efficiently and effectively reach out to those children and support their needs. This is the theory!

Reduced to practice, things look like this:



'Are we there yet?' My two colleagues are clearly enjoying my anxiety; both have a big grin on their face. They know that they have been doing a good job because it takes a lot for me to be uncomfortable. But now my butt is numb and my neck is aching. We have been bouncing around on dirt roads in the middle of 'Laotian Nowhere Land' for over five hours now. A few hundred years ago I would have been afraid of falling off the edge of the earth any second. We have been working our way from the district's main town to the main village of a community of nine villages. About every hour we have been passing a village triggering another of my 'Are we there yet?' questions. With every village left behind the road condition gets worse.

Logging is big business here, with any benefit totally by-passing the local communities. All they see is an endless stream of monster trucks carrying their forest and natural resources away. What is left behind is a naked wasteland exposed to erosion, impassable roads and angered villagers, who have relied on the forest as a source of food supply for centuries.

Due to the rain of the previous day the dirt road turns into a knee-deep mass of sludge. Despite the 4WD we are skidding from one side of the road to the other, bouncing off the mud curbs on each side which prevents us from going off the road. After turning another slippery corner a big mud hole awaits us. Regardless of the excessive speed and power to make it through the hole, our car comes to an abrupt, but not entirely unexpected, stop with the undercarriage completely stuck in the clay and all four wheels spinning uncontrollably. We jump out of the car equipped with rubber boots, which we were prudent enough to buy the day before, and shovels and we start digging. The humidity combined with the high temperature leaves the air muggy. Within seconds we are covered with flies and mosquitoes that linger around the muddy pools. After almost an hour of digging a monster truck comes to our rescue and frees us. We can continue according to our plans and reach the village, where we intend to replace a shack with a proper school building. While driving there, I wonder how we will manage to



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transport the construction materials under these conditions - the rainy season has not even started yet! However, as we are going the extra mile, so does the community. They use all their available resources to help us bring the materials to their village. The hospitality of the villagers is overwhelming. Their sincere gratitude can be felt from the moment they reach for our hands to welcome us until we look back in the rear-view mirror watching the whole village waving goodbye.

I am very happy. All the pain and discomfort is long forgotten because we found another 'social alpha'. *By Daniel Siegfried*

Every dollar counts



Being able to make our organisation grow is a direct result of the donations we receive. Thank you very much again to all our valued donors, small and big, for your trust and your support. Growth also means many smaller

donors asking us whether their US\$ 50, Euro 20 or CHF 100 really make a difference to children in need and whether they really help our organisation. Please rest assured that it is these small donations that make all the difference to the operations of our charity. More than 50% of our total donation volume are 'smaller' donations. Together these donations contribute a huge amount. They provide the life line of Child's Dream and allow us to do our work.

Bigger donations are always highly appreciated. Although they often mean less flexibility, they help us to implement larger projects and are equally as important.

For many of our smaller projects, we cannot justify submitting a ten page proposal to a potential donor. Writing such a proposal to build five toilets for US\$ 500 would trigger enormous administrative expenses. We are proud to only spend about 6% of our donations on administration. We try hard to keep the administration ratio low, so we heavily rely on all our smaller donors to fund such smaller projects. We look very much forward to receiving even more 'smaller donations' in the future.

Our new home

Finally !!!

We moved into our new office at the beginning of October 2008 and on the 23rd of October, about 120 guests joined our office opening celebration in Chiang Mai.

Searching for an ideal plot of land, securing the funding, buying the land, choosing an architect, getting all the necessary permits from the local Thai government and then finally building the office were major tasks this year. We are all thrilled and very happy to finally move into our permanent and last premises. The new office is great, giving us all enough space, light and quiet corners to work in a focused way or have a meeting. The office has space for roughly thirty employees and volunteers so our current 25 employees are enjoying the extra space for a while. As said before, our new office was not financed with donations received over the last many months. It was always very clear to us that we had to secure funding purposely for the new office.

Thank you very much again to our three main donors, The Maitri Trust, Mr. Adrian Fu and family as well as Mr. Satake for their very generous support.

Organisational News

You might wonder whether you will see another, 'bigger' team picture yet again. Yes, you will. And guess what? We have new staff members!

Since our last newsletter (apology for this long delay) in December 2007 twelve new team members have joined us. Shortly after New Year, **Heather Grieve** joined us from Australia as a 'Volunteer Public Health' in charge of all our health-related projects. In February **Chalach Mongkolsoemsakul** (nickname Jack, our new IT manager) and **Thomas Brittner** (our first non-Thai employee, Project Manager Mae Sot) joined us.



In April **Chaveewan Kwansuk** (nickname Meow) started her assignment with us as an Administration/Office Manager, in May **Supatra Matakoon** (nickname Koy) joined us as a researcher. In mid June **Worakam Tirasarichote** (nickname Dio) came on board as our 'Senior Project Manager Northern Thailand', in August **Sujinda Noppachararuk** (nickname Yee, our new housekeeper replacing Sai Tong) joined us. In September **Benjapon and Akarapon Thumsawat** (nicknames Aem and Pon) started work as our new caretakers; they also live on our office premises. In September, **Sallo Polak** officially changed status from 'very long-term volunteer' to employee in his new 'Communication Manager/



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Donor liaison' role. At the end of October **Waraporn Intasaen** (nickname Ta) joined us as our new 'Programme Manager Children Medical Fund', working out of Mae Sot, and also in October **Chanapong Sattayaluk** (nickname Nam) came on board as our new driver for the Children Medical Fund. Last but not least, on the 17th November **La-lad Sengtarkdad** (nickname Aoy) joined us in her new role as 'Project Manager Laos'. She will work in our Chiang Mai office for about six months and then start building up our Child's Dream field office in Savannakhet, Laos.



Our team in Siem Reap / Cambodia is growing too, counting five team members plus currently one 'expatriate' staff from Thailand. Our longest serving employee, Tai, is currently in Siem

Reap to support the growth of our Cambodian field office.

A very warm welcome to all our new staff members!

To find out more about all our staff members please visit our website www.childsdream.org.

Thanks to the great help of **Rafi Freuler** a new re-designed webpage for Child's Dream was recently launched. Thanks to improved technology, our webpage allows easier maintenance and handling of some processes. Thank you, Rafi, for making our lives easier and more efficient.

Thanks also to all our other dedicated volunteers who helped us this year: Gideon Polak, Cornel Bartholet, Bryan Clapper, Gwen Chew, Matthias Ragaz, Sandra Smith, Rebecca Young and Nora Suter.

Welcome Hong Kong!

As communicated earlier, we strive to open up new donor markets, giving supporters even more incentives to help us financially. By adding Hong Kong, donors based in this country are able to deduct their donations from their taxable income. The government of Hong Kong already confirmed our tax exempt status and acknowledged us as a 'Hong Kong registered and tax exempt charity'. In order to keep our administration ratio low, we decided to setup **Child's Dream – diversethics Foundation** as one legal entity. Having a combined approach with our sister charity *diversethics* Foundation considerably reduces the cost of running these two legal entities. Hong Kong is joining Switzerland, Australia, USA, Canada and The Netherlands as countries where tax effective giving to Child's

Dream is possible. Please visit our website for instructions on how to give 'tax effective donations' in the countries mentioned above.

Welcome The Netherlands!

Our 'tax exempt status' as a government registered charity in the Netherlands was confirmed just a few days ago and is effective as of 1st October 2008. We are currently in the process of opening a bank account in the Netherlands. We kindly ask our Dutch donors to contact us before making any donations where tax receipts are required. Only donations received into our Dutch bank account will be eligible for Dutch tax deduction so please bear with us for a moment.

Many of you might ask '*why The Netherlands?*' The Dutch charity law is very progressive and, therefore, it was attractive for us to set up a legal domicile in the Netherlands. Furthermore, Sallo Polak, our 'Communications Manager and Donor Liaison' is Dutch; he supports us in accessing the Dutch donor market.

The next step is to join '*Transnational Giving Europe*' to allow more European based donors to receive tax receipts. Setting up this process will take some time. We will inform all our donors again in our newsletter as soon as this arrangement is in place.

Project Updates

Reporting on projects is becoming increasingly difficult. Our growing team is able to initiate more projects and in turn make an even bigger impact on children's lives. That's exactly what we are here for but the disadvantage is that we are not able to regularly report on all our new initiatives in our newsletters. We really encourage you all to frequently visit our website and read about our work.

Cyclone Nargis Update, EAT, Burma

As you know from our 'special newsletter', Child's Dream - together with its sister organisation *diversethics* Foundation - initially supported the relief work with US\$ 200'000.--.

According to UNICEF, 40% of the victims were children and as always, children are and were among the most vulnerable in this disaster. Lack of access to clean water, poor sanitation, inadequate shelter and poor nutrition pose particular threats to children. This leads to an increased risk of diarrhea and other infectious diseases, which can be deadly to children living in precarious conditions such as these. Up to 90 percent of the schools in the affected areas were damaged to some degree. This affected some 3,000 primary schools and more than 500,000 pupils.

Our partner organisation (EAT) estimates that they were able to reach about 182,000 people in 87 different villages during the first two months after the disaster. On average 5,800 people per week



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received food and clean drinking water, about 8,665 families received temporary shelter and supplies, 43 villages received cleaning equipment, 11,600 persons received clothing and shoes and 26,900 received hygiene packs. Currently, the number of EAT teams (support teams financed with our financial contributions) is 29, with estimated beneficiaries of about 40,000 people. The challenge in the second phase is to meet the communities' wishes to rebuild their villages combined with long-term recovery efforts, while at the same time providing basic relief needs until the rehabilitation plans come to fruition. Child's Dream and *diversethics* Foundation supported EAT with another USD 150,000, 48% of this is for food, 25% for livelihood rehabilitation (agriculture, fishery, etc.), 11% for safety and education of children, 9% for temporary shelters and the rest is mostly for administration.

This will now conclude our emergency relief efforts. We may consider supporting the affected communities in 2009 by assisting with 'rebuilding efforts'.

Loi Tai Leng, Burma

In 1996 a massive forced relocation campaign was conducted by the Burmese military regime in Shan state. Over 100,000 people fled to the Thai border for safety. There were many children who were permanently separated from their family during this time.



In 1999 a Shan Internally Displaced People (IDP) camp was setup in Loi Tai Leng. Loi Tai Leng is located on the Thai-Burmese border in a very remote area. In 2000 a school was established in the

monastery in the IDP camp. At this time there were 80 students and by 2006 the number of students had grown to 662. The monastery no longer had the capacity to support this large number of students.

In 2006 Child's Dream decided to support the building of a school to accommodate the growing number of students, a school office, a canteen, a kitchen, toilets, teacher's accommodation and furniture for the classrooms. The parents offered to provide labour to build the school. Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) agreed to cover the running cost for the kindergarten and lunch for all students. Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) agreed to fund the teachers' salaries, meals for the orphans, administration and school maintenance costs.

Planning for this project commenced in 2007. The leveling of the land has been completed and the construction of the new school buildings started in April 2008. Unfortunately, the political situation

in Thailand as well as the cyclone Nargis put considerable pressure on the border region in Thailand. Bringing construction materials over the border became impossible, slowing down the implementation of the project considerably. Instead of sitting and waiting until access is allowed across the border again, we decided to be proactive and change the construction materials from brick and mortar to wood. Wood is widely accessible inside Burma and does not have to be transported over the border. We now hope that progress can be achieved over the coming months so that the project is fully implemented in the first quarter of 2009. The good side of all these problems is that the change in construction material reduces the overall budget from US\$ 60'000 to about US\$ 35'000.--. Obviously a wooden structure is not as long-lasting as a concrete structure but we have to work with what we have.

Pong Ro Chas, Cambodia

Back in 1979 there used to be one class room for grades 1 and 2 in the village of Pong Ro Chas. The villagers used one building as a school. The building was originally a kitchen used during the Khmer Rouge regime to prepare meals for people during forced labour. In 1979 the building was slightly rearranged and used as a classroom. However, two years later, a heavy storm hit the region and destroyed the former kitchen. Ever since then the students need to walk to the next school, which is located in the neighbouring village three kilometers away. There are quite a few reasons why many parents do not allow their children to walk this distance twice every day to attend school: the road is dangerous



due to the heavy traffic, during the rainy season flooding is frequent and especially for the girls, the risk of being kidnapped and raped is high.

Because of this, the majority of children living in Pong Ro Chas and its neighbouring village Tanor have never attended school. Instead they help their parents in the fields. Boys sometimes have the opportunity to study in the temple.

Child's Dream agreed to build a school with five class rooms (360 m2) and two toilets. One half of the plot of land, on which the school will be located, was donated by one person and the other half purchased by the villagers. It will be a government school for grades 1 through to 5 and the Cambodian Department of Education, Youth and Sport will provide teachers and stationery.

The budgeted costs for the building are about 235,000,000 Riel (approx. USD 57,000). The implementation started in October 2008. We expect the construction to be finished in April 2009.



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Boarding House in Phang Kham, Thailand

Phang Kham School was established in 1971 by a Royal Thai Princess. In February 2008, there were 263 Thai, Burmese, Pa-o, Shan, Wa and Lahu children studying at Phang Kham School. Most of the students originate from migrant or internally displaced Burmese families.

In 2003 the Mae Hong Son local government established a boarding house on the school grounds. There are 93 students staying at this boarding house. It does not have the capacity to support additional students.



In 2006 the Pa-o National Development Organization (PNDO) held a meeting with the community and surrounding villages to discuss the future education needs for all children in the area. One outcome of this meeting was a request for a new boarding house to allow the children from the villages inside Burma to attend school on a regular basis.

At the end of 2007 Child's Dream Foundation agreed to fund the construction of a new boarding house outside the school grounds to support another 100 students. For this project we have also agreed to fund food and essential supplies for the boarders as well as teaching materials for the school until a new donor can be found. The teachers and the education committee of Phang Kham village agreed to take responsibility for the security of the boarding house. The parents of the students have offered to assist with parts of the construction. The budgeted costs are approximately US\$ 75'000. US\$ 20 is the monthly cost per student living in the new boarding house. This includes all food and sanitation materials.

Children Medical Fund

2008 has seen substantial growth within the Children's Medical Fund Programme. Since the beginning of the year we have supported the provision of specialised (often life saving) care to over 210 children from Burma. With this growth expected to continue, Child's Dream has incorporated a number of changes to make the programme more efficient, more sustainable and ultimately put it in a better position to support more children from other disadvantaged populations. Over 70 % of the children we have treated in Chiang Mai have had debilitating and/or life threatening birth defects. Because of this, Child's Dream has decided to scale up the program, fully integrate it and specialise in this area of congenital conditions. Of course, there will also be some contingency for emergency cases that fall outside this criteria. We have employed our own nurse, based in Mae Sot. She is responsible for screening, selecting and transporting the children

from the various health organisations along the border including those working inside Burma. We have also employed a staff member in Chiang Mai to liaise between the hospital and the safe house where the families of the children stay and to provide translations when required.

2009 will be another busy year for us, as we hope to expand the programme to other areas of need.

Project round up

Big steps in Laos

In the past, we frequently reported on our work in Laos. Since many of the schools we build are similar, we just want to give you a numerical summary about our achievements so far.

We cover three provinces in the South of Laos. A total of nine schools were finished and handed over to the communities this year. Another ten schools are very close to completion and we are confident that most of them will be completed by the end of this year and are also "in full swing" by then.

Another six schools are fully financed and construction started in November 2008. This is not all. Our project team is continuously liaising with communities who are in need of educational infrastructure. Furthermore we have decided to go beyond building schools in the very remote and poor communities we work with. We are currently exploring ways to assist these communities with other areas of need. For example teacher training, school health, alternative energy, etc. This new approach is currently in a pilot phase. We will keep you updated about our experiences.

Hopefully we will be able to open a field office in Southern Laos in the first half of 2009.



Alternative ways of helping us

Running a charity is not just about spending money on projects in order to benefit children but also about maintaining and carefully managing the administration around it. Not having a strong and stable administrative 'backbone' would ultimately result in failure of the organization. On the flipside administration including salaries and travel expenses cost money and thus reduces the amount of funds available for direct help at the community level. We rely heavily on receiving services for free or at reduced prices and this



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keeps our administration ratio low. We are very proud that we are able to maintain an administration ratio of around 6% but this requires your help. Please let us know if you have extra Frequent Flyer Miles or Hotel Loyalty points that could be donated to charity.

Only thanks to people and friends like you we are ultimately able to run Child's Dream and to make life better for many children in need. It is not just the financial support we receive but also your recognition for our work, your moral support and your trust. We are very proud to have you all on board with us.

Thank you very much!

From our entire team we send you our very best wishes for the upcoming holiday season and a happy and healthy start into the New Year 2009!

Your Child's Dream Team