10 Years of Passion & Work
Child's Dream
It was a cold November evening in 2004, shortly before the end of a work day, when an e-mail newsletter by a small charitable organisation in Thailand made its way to my Inbox. I printed off the message, which would soon have a significant impact on my life, to read on my homeward train commute. After a few lines only, I was completely captivated by its content. My fellow passengers seemed miles away and I had become immersed in another world. By the end of it, I was certain that I would eventually work for Child’s Dream.

One thing led to another and in 2006 I embarked on a journey to Chiang Mai to start my yearlong volunteer assignment at the Child’s Dream office. Ever since my return to Switzerland, I have been, amongst many other tasks, in charge of newsletter translations. Still, and rather frequently, my surroundings completely fade away while doing these. In such moments I am keenly aware of what Child’s Dream has achieved in the past 10 years, but equally realise how much still needs to be done. I am very proud to be a member of the Child’s Dream family and continuously committed to support the children and youth of the Mekong Sub-Region towards a better future.

My best wishes for an interesting read of our 10 Year Anniversary Book. Accept this invitation and let yourself get carried away, too, and step into our world for a moment.

FOREWORD
BY OUR SECRETARY OF THE BOARD IN SWITZERLAND

ANDREA KLEINERT
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The most astonishing event for me is being able to write these lines for our Child’s Dream 10 Year Anniversary Book at all! Yes, 10 years! I remember very well the day the most amazing journey of my life started. It was late afternoon on Friday, 27 June 2003. 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. Minutes later, I was back at my desk looking out the window of the 11th floor of Suntec Tower 5 in downtown Singapore. The distance between the 11th floor and the ground became wider and wider and I immediately started to question my actions of a few minutes before. All of a sudden, jumping out of that window, in the metaphorical sense, scared me to death. Sure, my resignation from the banking industry after almost 20 years was not a sudden, but a very well thought-through decision. Still, my legs were shaking. What had I just done?

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 away from under my feet with full force. And indeed the carpet was pulled away: from friends to enemies, from co-workers to competitors, from a very structured life to no structure at all, from security to insecurity and, most importantly, from the well-known to the unknown.

What I did not see or realise back then is that the most interesting, fulfilling and amazing chapter of my life was about to unfold. I also did not realise that taking risks often results in big rewards. I was unaware that my strong belief that people could “fly” and not crash was not just a daily childhood dream, but was, in fact, about to become reality.

Looking back at the last 10 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: my Child’s Dream family. Lean back. Enjoy this book. Be inspired by the many stories that unfold in our 10 Year Anniversary Book!

Thank you Daniel, for making me fly!

“WE MUST BE THE CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD”
I cannot believe that it has already been 10 years since I got up from my office chair, holding my resignation letter in my hand, and made my way to the office of my boss. I remember it as if it were yesterday. It was a day when my heart and my soul, both infused with a burning desire to make a difference, teamed up to battle my rational mind. My mind did not stand a chance as I was neither afraid nor worried, despite the many uncertainties ahead. Actually it was the first time of my life I did not have a clear goal or objective to work towards. All I wanted was to do something meaningful that I could be proud of. This freedom and the seemingly endless time allowed me to explore my true passion and experience the beauty of life. Everything seemed more colourful and more emotionally intensive. I experienced so much joy and happiness that I wanted to share it with somebody. The choice was obvious—my long-time friend and soul mate, Marc. Little did we know what we had put in motion when we established Child’s Dream on 22 October 2003—my 25th birthday.

Today Child’s Dream is a product of many people’s visions, ideas and dreams. We have developed from a small children’s charity to an impactful development organisation that aims to empower the next generation to shape its own future. We have found the right balance between the needs of our beneficiaries and our donors and between a caring heart and a rational mind.

I also would like to take this opportunity to answer the two questions which I am asked the most.

What is your secret of success? Honestly I believe that our team is our biggest asset and an important contributor to our success. We were able to recruit people who not only share our passion, but also make Child’s Dream a lifestyle rather than a job. It is my privilege to be able to work with such a dedicated and caring team.

You have given up so much. Do you have any regrets? I have no regrets, nor have I given up anything. Quite the reverse: during the last 10 years I have gained all I have ever sought for my life.

"Because it just feels right!"

DANIEL MARCO SIEGFRIED
CO-FOUNDER
“They did WHAT?!” I loudly exclaimed to Susanna and Thomas Köchli one legendary night in Café Siam on Wellington Street in Hong Kong in October 2003. “They” refers to Marc and Daniel. Susanna and Thomas had just told me that Marc and Daniel had founded a children’s charity in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand. Two bankers? Running a children’s charity? In hindsight, that very moment was the start of a new love affair for me with an idea called Child’s Dream, which has persisted to this day. I was utterly intrigued! Provided our donor database is correct, I became donor #3. Subsequently I became volunteer #5 in 2005 and again in 2006 during my summer vacations. My volunteer experience in 2006 resulted in a decisive turning point in my biography. Marc, Daniel and I one evening sat in a local Chiang Mai restaurant under a corrugated sheet roof, sheltering us from a South-East Asian thunderstorm that certainly deserved its dangerous name. Our discussion was so intense that I did not eat a single thing, while Daniel was shoveling grilled meat, vegetables and vermicelli rice noodles into his hungry stomach. We discussed if I could add any value to Child’s Dream on a full-time, permanent basis going forward. So I was offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that had three fantastic aspects. Firstly, I would be able to go back to Asia, a thought I had been toying with after having gone back to Switzerland after some years in Hong Kong. Secondly, I would be able to explore my entrepreneurial spirit, which I was ready to do. Thirdly, and most importantly, I would be able to work in my fields of expertise of over 20 years, but for a very different target group: marginalised youth in South-East Asia. The offer lay in front of me like iced caviar on a silver platter; in short, an offer I would have been very stupid not to take. I joined Child’s Dream as the third management team member on 5 January 2007. My hair was still dark brown then. And, as you can see, I am still happily here and the grey hair is starting to take over …
OUR FOCUS GROUPS

HEALTH

BASIC EDUCATION

HIGHER EDUCATION
The focus group “Health” aims to reduce childhood mortality and morbidity and to allow children to participate in education. Our health programmes range from a children’s medical fund to provide life-saving treatments for individuals to community-based health interventions such as malaria control, immunisation of children, provision of vitamin A and deworming as well as a village health worker programme to address communicable diseases. In addition, we run a school health programme to improve health and hygiene in our schools.

**APPROACH**

In eastern Myanmar, over 50,000 people are protected from malaria by a comprehensive programme providing mosquito nets, treatment and education. 30,000 Burmese children aged below 12 receive vitamin A and deworming treatments. A further 10,000 Burmese children aged below 14 receive vaccinations and 50,000 Burmese are being taken care of by over 200 village health workers.

Each year the Children’s Medical Fund provides life-saving operations to roughly 150 children from Myanmar and Laos who suffer from serious congenital health diseases such as cardiac disorder and anal rectal malformations. These complicated medical interventions are either not available in their home countries or are too expensive for our patients.

**SUCHADA KOKANOT**

(Nickname: Mong)

Function: Head Health

I joined Child’s Dream in May 2009. For me, Child’s Dream is not just an office; half of my daily life is here and it always makes me laugh and smile when I think of what we have achieved together. My work fits my personality because my main interest in life is understanding, supporting and encouraging others. It is not an easy job, especially when our truck is once again stuck in the mud on a remote bumpy road, but helping to improve the lives of children gives me great personal satisfaction.

I try to interact with others on various levels whether it is teachers, students, government officials or office colleagues, even if their values and opinions differ from my own. I like to keep things well-organised, and enjoy making plans to help the children. I am excited about the many possibilities for the future!
Our main activity is building schools and boarding houses as well as providing scholarships to high school students to improve accessibility to education for all children. Water systems and playgrounds are also projects that we implement where we see a benefit for the school and the community.

APPROACH
The involvement of the community is very important to our work because, throughout the process, we need their assistance. We ask for contributions of some building materials such as wood, sand, and stone and also unskilled labour. The community will form a committee to check the building and the delivery of materials, to accommodate the contractor and to share in all the processes until the building is complete. We also support high school students with scholarships.

CHARUWAN PHAISANTHAM
(NICKNAME: TAI)
Function: Head Basic Education
My job at Child’s Dream is the first proper job I have had where I could earn a real salary. I used to work as a volunteer for a children’s organisation for some years before I joined Child’s Dream, and the feeling is totally different from my first working experience. It is also completely different from my educational background, as I have a B.Sc. in Physics which is not related to social work or the work at Child’s Dream. However, I enjoy working here a lot even though it was very hard for me at the beginning. I have learned everything from zero. Up to now I have been working with Child’s Dream for almost 10 years. I manage the Basic Education team with approximately 10 staff, but I still realise that I have to learn new things every day from the people around me.
The focus group “Higher Education” is responsible for assisting students to specialise in regards to both education and work skills. This focus group therefore supports a variety of training programmes, technical schools, vocational programmes, apprenticeships, university scholarship programmes at bachelor and master levels, and a small social entrepreneurship grant programme.

**APPROACH**

Two of the main goals for the Higher Education group are firstly to enable students to acquire relevant specialised education and work experience, and secondly—and more importantly—to encourage these students to apply their new skills towards implementing positive changes that contribute to the development of their community. We aspire to enable youth who have a basic education to go the extra distance needed to specialise through work and study to become a driver of change for their people. We achieve this by supporting a wide variety of programmes on an ongoing basis from model farms, to a hospital training centre, to a university preparation course, to a health worker course, just to name a few. Some students may even be supported to study at university for a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree, or they may apply for a grant to start implementing a project in their community immediately. The bottom line is that we positively affect community development through educating youth.

**THOMAS BRITTNER**

Function: Head Higher Education

Child’s Dream seemed the perfect place for me to bring together skills I gained from my bachelor and master studies, as well as from real experience travelling, managing, teaching, and coordinating. While what I could contribute to Child’s Dream is what brought me to work here, this is only half of my story; the other half is related to what I have and continue to learn along the journey that has kept me here. As the Head Higher Education my work spans Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar, and is varied enough that I am constantly learning new and exciting things!
THE YEAR 2003
After a visit to a street children's shelter in Chiang Rai, Daniel resigns from UBS.

Marc resigns from UBS.

Daniel and Marc decide together to establish a children's charity.

First home/office is rented on Patan Road in Chiang Mai.

First website goes live, first online donation is received in December.

Daniel and Marc buy "Noki", first project car.

On 22 October 2003 Child's Dream Association is legally born in Switzerland and soon after is granted tax exemption.
A very small guesthouse in the city centre of Chiang Mai was the first port of call after their arrival from Singapore in August 2003. It felt anything but homey, but shortly afterwards, this little room became the birthplace of Child’s Dream. Still, this was not the place actually to operate a charitable organisation, so a new home was soon found on Patan Road. This was not just their office, but also their first home in Thailand, equipped with a fully functioning kitchen. The kitchen came in handy since the daily lunch break could be taken just a few centimetres from their desk. Yes, desk (singular)! They shared one desk in their humble beginnings in 2003.

They shared not only a desk, but also a very slow dial up internet line. Since Marc is famous for being an email junkie, it was his daily privilege to download the emails first. This task took roughly an hour (since he also sneaked around in the daily newspapers) until an impatient Daniel demanded the cable. Marc obeyed, disconnected the dial up line, unplugged the cable and resentfully handed this precious piece of IT equipment over to Daniel. Then it was Daniel’s turn to go online. Quite regularly and to Marc’s great amusement, the dial up connection’s credit balance reached a critically low level until the line was cut. Back then, the usage was counted in minutes and not in megabites downloaded. What followed was a quiet hour in a lonely office for Marc since Daniel had to travel across the city to buy a new internet scratch card, giving them access to another couple of hours on the internet.

Child’s Dream has come a long way since its early days. Today, occupying our own building with 30 fully equipped desks shows a totally different picture. It is not just the 30 populated desks, but also the 30 desktop computers or laptops that are all connected to a highly sophisticated computer system. The following pages will fill in the gaps between the birth of Child’s Dream and our current work as an impactful little NGO. So, keep on reading and enjoy our 10 Year Anniversary Book.
It was love at first sight! Daniel and Marc were driving back from Mae Sai in a rented Suzuki Caribbean on a Sunday night in 2003. Back then, the two had to do “visa runs” to the Thai-Myanmar border in Mae Sai in order to extend their stay in the Kingdom. Shortly before entering the city boundaries of Chiang Mai, there it was: red and beautiful, parked at the street side. Immediately the two stopped and marveled at the sheer beauty of Noki. “For sale” was written across the wind screen. A short while later, Marc and Daniel were the proud owners of “Noki”, our very first Child’s Dream car.

I always remember Marc and Daniel very well. Both of them were so eager to learn and know everything about Thais. They loved to go out and practise so this is why both of them learned Thai very fast. We had a lot of fun with “tones” in Thai which make things different if you pronounce them in the wrong tone. Of course: laughter and laughter and laughter!
THE YEAR 2004
Marc and Daniel embark on their first fundraising trip to Singapore.

Geographical area is extended to cover the entire Mekong Sub-Region.

First project is started: a water system for "Childlife".

Swiss Embassy financially supports Child's Dream with USD 13,000.

Warm clothes are bought and distributed to 2,700 refugee children.

Charuwan Phaisantham (Nickname: Tai) joins the Child's Dream family as the first staff member.
With our first large donation of CHF 5,000 from Dominique Becht, we were able to realise our first project and at the same time keep a promise. Daniel visited a street children’s project called Childlife in May 2003 in Mae Sai, the most northern Thai-Myanmar border town. During his visit he also met Tai, who had studied nuclear physics, but had decided to volunteer for Childlife as a child care giver. At that time Childlife was just about to move to a new location outside of the town. Tai asked Daniel to write something in the new visitor book. After short reflection Daniel wrote that he would come back and help to support Childlife. Eventually this experience led to his resignation at UBS. If a nuclear physicist could do this, why not a banker?

A few months later, Daniel returned with Marc to discuss how Child’s Dream could support Childlife. At the new location the children had no access to clean water and bathed in the surrounding rice fields. Most children had signs of skin diseases. Thanks to the generous support of Dominique, now a Child’s Dream board member in Switzerland, we were able to commission a company in Chiang Mai specialising in water solutions to build a water filtration system, water storage and a 6 metre tall water tower. At the same time, we constructed a shower house that could be connected to the newly available clean water source.

During the implementation of our first project, we got to know Tai rather well. We became very fond of her. She had the rational mind of a physicist and the heart of Mother Teresa. One day, when we went back to Childlife to follow up on the water system, we were informed that Tai had moved to Bangkok to find a paying job so that she could support her brother’s studies. To cut a long story short, Tai is still working with us and leads the largest team, Basic Education, in Child’s Dream. And the water system in Childlife is still being used.
Marc playing with the children at Yabauyaya Learning Center, Myanmar.
As a former private banker, Marc was used to going on marketing trips to meet his clients and to sell the bank’s products. But this time it was entirely different. Flying from Chiang Mai to Singapore to “sell” the product “Child’s Dream” was a new animal. Nervous, but excited, Daniel and Marc met already existing donors and prospective supporters in order to update them on the activities. Sure there were stories to tell, but then Child’s Dream was a very young and still inexperienced organisation.

A million thanks to everybody for believing in us. Writing these lines is a privilege.

“**A MILLION THANKS TO EVERYBODY FOR BELIEVING IN US**”

**FUNDRAISING TRIP TO SINGAPORE**

**TOMATO VILLAGE**

In Thailand, behind the seven mountains, we did not find Snow White, but Benjamin, a Burmese from a long-neck Karen tribe. He prefers a hearty, homemade cigar rather than a poisonous apple. There, in the misty mountains high above Mae Hong Son in a place called Tomato Village, Child’s Dream built a small school for Benjamin to teach English to approximately 80 children from the surrounding villages. With improved English skills, these children have a better chance of finding jobs in the future. This school was fully supported by Child’s Dream until 2013, when the community decided to take it over.
THE YEAR 2005
2005

CHILD’S DREAM IS ESTABLISHED AS A THAI FOUNDATION AT THE PREMISES OF DR. MARC FABER IN CHIANG MAI

START CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDREN’S WARD IN THE MAE TAO CLINIC MAE SOT

FIRST OFF-ROAD CAR IS DONATED

SECOND OFFICE IS FOUND ON MUANDAM PHRANOT ROAD, CHIANG MAI

POTENTIAL VIETNAM EXPANSION IS EVALUATED BY PAMELA PHUA (TODAY A CHILD’S DREAM BOARD MEMBER)

FIRST PROJECT IN CAMBODIA IS APPROVED (DAMNOK TOEK)

FIRST OFF-ROAD CAR IS DONATED

SECOND OFFICE IS FOUND ON MUANDAM PHRANOT ROAD, CHIANG MAI
For the first two years, Child’s Dream mostly supported existing children’s organisations in the area of the infamous Golden Triangle. These organisations were caring for children at risk: orphans, street children, child laborers, substance-abusing children, children affected by HIV/AIDS and a combination of the above. Child’s Dream helped these organisations to improve the living and hygiene conditions as well as the learning environments for these children. Over time, we saw that more and more children were seeking protection and shelter at these organisations. Although we felt that it was important to help these children to integrate back into society, we realised that we were not addressing the root causes of the problems and therefore our work was not as effective and sustainable as we had hoped. When we listened to children’s individual stories, we found many similarities. Most of them were not able to attend school, came from broken families and suffered from poverty. This made us rethink our strategy and, as a result, we decided to focus our work on providing education to the children and youth in the most disadvantaged communities. To achieve this, we had to expand our mandate from the Golden Triangle to the Mekong Sub-Region. We wanted to bring education to the children and youth in their communities, so that they could live and grow up with their families and relatives. Therefore, Child’s Dream matured from a typical children’s charity to a development organisation focusing on education.

Our vision is to empower the next generation by equipping them with knowledge and skills so that they can lead self-determined development in their communities. Soon after we changed our mandate, Child’s Dream undertook extensive needs assessment trips to Laos, Cambodia and along the Thai-Myanmar border. At the same time, we sent Pamela Phua, a long-term Child’s Dream volunteer, to Hanoi, Vietnam to conduct a needs assessment and feasibility study. Only a few months later, Child’s Dream started to construct its first schools in Cambodia and Laos... and we are still keeping Vietnam on our radar.
Getting our first volunteer applications felt odd: people willing to work for us for free and for an extended period of time? But then, yes! We have hosted certainly more than 100 volunteers by now and more helping hands are lining up. To mention only a few: Stuart Thompson was the first to give Child’s Dream a new face by designing our second enhanced website. Ben Boesch, who at that time was an undergraduate student from Switzerland, helped us to improve our internal work-flows by developing a contact and donor database, which was used for many years and only replaced in 2012. Ben has come back to volunteer on several other occasions and is now one of our valued ambassadors in Switzerland.

With the construction of a children’s ward in the Mae Tao Clinic in Mae Sot, near the Thai-Myanmar border, our work in the field of Health Care took flight. This topic was, and will never be, our main focus, but we also realised that sick children are not able to enter basic education so the decision was taken to support a small number of health initiatives. So far, the children’s ward has served thousands of children and also acts as a hub for referring sick children to our Children’s Medical Fund: an excellent investment!
A dilapidated school building in Laos with dirt floor. Such schools cannot be used during the rainy season.
SCHOOL CHILDREN IN LAOS
THE YEAR 2006
First project trip to Laos
First meeting in Zurich with our pro bono auditor Max Mueller
First migrant learning center for Burmese children called Hsa Thoo Lei is completed in Mae Sot
Our sister organisation diversethics Foundation is established by Marc and Daniel
The first higher education programme called LMTC is launched in Mae La refugee camp
Children's Medical Fund is established providing life-saving operations
Snor, our first school in Cambodia is formally opened
Launch of University Scholarship Programme for Burmese students
Khanittha Khantasawee (Nickname: U) joins Child's Dream
Our first trip to Laos began on the 8 February 2006 and first required a 17-hour night bus journey from Chiang Mai to Ubon Ratchatani. We then took the local "songtaew" for 90 km from the city to the border, arriving at around 2 pm to meet Yong, an HIV worker who had volunteered to bring us into Laos to visit some villages which desperately needed school buildings.

The next morning, we hired a driver with a car that had a “passport” to enter Laos and drove to the first school on the other side of the Mekong River. From there, some senior villagers from Baan Khon Kaen met us and took us on a long tailed boat for 45 minutes as this is the only way to reach the village. The villagers were waiting for us and, after lunch, they brought us to the school. I was shocked as I had never seen a school in such bad condition before: no walls, dirt floor, leaking zinc roof so there was no protection from wet or cold weather. The principal explained to us that this school had very little government funding so the very poor parents, farmers and fishermen, had to supply their children with basic school materials. Therefore, often only one child per family could attend school; the rest had to work, either locally or in Thailand.

We stayed overnight and learned more about the village and culture. The community agreed to contribute sand and stones for a proposed building as well as transport the construction materials from the other side of the river. We did not promise them that we would support the school, but we told them that we definitely would come back to visit them again. That night we slept very well after a very long day and maybe because of some Laos whisky. We were treated like royalty at the village headman’s house. We got up very early in the morning and walked around the village to greet people and to see the very peaceful lifestyle in this remote place. We really fell in love with this small community.

Once back on the main shore, we continued to visit some other schools and spent about a week in Laos. Then we returned to Chiang Mai with sparkling eyes and could not wait to share our exciting experiences in Laos with the team. Later on, we went back to Baan Khon Kaen and agreed to support a school building of five classrooms, so this became our first project in Laos.

Actually, many other things happened throughout 2006. Many trips were great for us. This is one of the main reasons we enjoy working with Child’s Dream and have stayed for so long. We have the chance to travel to our projects at all the different stages. Survey trips give us the chance to find new areas of urgent need and to meet the people, talk to children and seek cooperation among different stakeholders to identify problems and solutions together. Implementation trips give us the opportunity to see the progress of the construction that we support and to see how the community commits and contributes to the building. Opening ceremony trips give us very happy feelings as we see the results of all our hard work, especially the happy faces of the children who will use the new building for their education. This makes us very happy and very proud to be part of Child’s Dream.
As our work grew more complex and became more community inclusive, the need for a second foundation emerged. Back then, Child’s Dream had a purely child-focused mandate and was not in the position to support adults and whole communities. Therefore, diversethics Foundation was established to complement our work. Our sister organisation served us well until we decided to fully integrate the work of diversethics Foundation into Child’s Dream at the end of December 2012, which also saves costs. Since then, we only operate under the brand of Child’s Dream.

In 2006, we decided to also support various health programmes that would help to reduce the unprecedented high child mortality rate in eastern Myanmar. We established a referral programme between the Mae Tao Clinic and Child’s Dream to refer young patients suffering from life-threatening medical conditions to Chiang Mai for treatment. Our Children’s Medical Fund has been saving hundreds of lives since. We also helped to expand the Malaria Control Programme run by the Karen Department for Health and Welfare (KDHW). Today this programme protects over 50,000 villagers from malaria.
THE YEAR 2007
January

Commitment for full financial support for Cambodian partner organisation KAKO

February

Land for permanent office is found and bought

March

31 NEW UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS ARE SELECTED

April

Construction of the first boarding house in Mae Nam Khun School in Northern Thailand

June

Support of the Malaria Control Programme in Eastern Myanmar to reduce childhood mortality

July

Construction of two very remote Thai schools is completed

August

5 new schools in Laos are completed during this year

September

Support for two additional junior colleges (PTMJC and KLJC) in two refugee camps is initiated

October

Manuela Celestina Bianchi joins Child's Dream

November

Panupong Kwuntong (Nickname: Arm) joins Child's Dream

December

Bantarawan Chantra (Nickname: Tuu) joins Child's Dream
The year 2007 marked the beginning of our intensive co-operation with Mrs. T. from Japan, one of our most dedicated and faithful supporters. As this text is written, our university scholarship database lists 214 student names. Of these, 54 students have graduated. Mrs. T. has funded 114 students since 2007, of which 35 have meanwhile graduated. Apart from her outstanding generosity granted to university students, Mrs. T. also supports one of our health programmes for children as well as two junior colleges in refugee camps (Pu Taw Memorial Junior College and Kaw Lah Junior College).

A year earlier we had been approached by a partner organisation whose funding for university scholarships had been substantially reduced. We were asked whether we would be interested and able to start funding university students who had a Myanmar background. After one successful pilot year in which we funded a very small number of students from our general donation pool, we felt sufficiently confident to approach donors for scholarship funding. We were extremely lucky at that time to be introduced to Mrs. T. who believed in our work and has generously funded our university scholarship programme since then.

The highlight of every Mrs. T. student’s year is the—by now famous—Mrs. T. Student and Alumni Party which takes place annually in a big hotel in Bangkok. The party celebrates students graduating in that particular year and serves as a networking platform, particularly for the newcomers. This year, 2013, we celebrated the sixth such event in the presence of Mrs. T. and her staff. Mrs. T.’s alumni have successfully entered the labour market to support their needy communities in Myanmar and in Thailand.

Thank you to all our fantastic scholarship donors who support change in South-East Asia, in particular Mrs. T!
At the beginning of 2007 we were nine staff and two people in finance: Marc and U. We didn’t have e-banking. Every time we needed money, we went to a Bangkok Bank branch, withdrew the money, put it into our ATM account, then transferred it from the ATM machine. When we had to make payments to our scholarship students, we made transfers by ATM! The transfer process required three minutes per transfer for each student. If we had to make transfers for 20 students, it took about 60 minutes for the whole process. Meanwhile, there were usually about 10 people in the queue behind U, pushing U to hurry up (and driving her crazy!!).

In 2007, we experienced unusually steep growth. Our donation volume grew by a factor of four, allowing us to hire more staff and start a number of new projects such as Baan Gua Fan in Chiang Mai, the large Children Development Center in Mae Sot, Thailand and projects in Cambodia. 2007 was also the year in which we started searching for a plot of land that would be our permanent home going forward. We approached potential donors who would be able and willing to specifically fund property outside the framework of donations for our beneficiaries. We are proud and happy that the Maitri Trust, Mr. Adrian Fu and Mr. Satake invested generously in our plan.
CONSTRUCTION OF CHILD’S DREAM’S NEW OFFICE BUILDING STARTS ON 17 MARCH

Emergency relief for victims of cyclone Nargis in Myanmar is provided

Integration of our partner organisation KAKO into Child’s Dream

Our new permanent office is opened with a big bang on 22 October 2008

First Regional Workshop Held in Kao Yai National Park

We move into our new office

Our current website goes online

Child’s Dream is officially registered and tax-exempted in Hong Kong

Chaveewan Kwansuk (Nickname: Meow) joins Child’s Dream

Thomas Britther joins Child’s Dream

Chalach Mongkolnooseakul (Nickname: Jack) joins Child’s Dream

Chareeowan Kwanouk (Nickname: Meow) joins Child’s Dream

Supattra Matakoon (Nickname: Koy) joins Child’s Dream

Chalreeze Mongkolsoemsakul (Nickname: Jack) joins Child’s Dream

Waraporn Intasaen (Nickname: Ta) joins Child’s Dream

Thomas Brittner joins Child’s Dream
The CDC Migrant Learning Center in Mae Sot has broken many records. It is not only the largest migrant learning center in Thailand, but also the largest construction project ever undertaken by Child’s Dream. The complexity of the migrant situation in Mae Sot, combined with the sheer scale, made it one of the most challenging and also most rewarding projects we have done. But let’s start from the beginning.

If you travel to Mae Sot, a growing, but troubled Thai town bordering Myanmar, to learn more about the Burmese migrant and refugee situation, you must visit the Mae Tao Clinic, which is at the forefront of addressing some of the most basic needs of the Burmese in the area. This is exactly what we did back in 2004 when we first travelled to Mae Sot. Ever since our first meeting with Dr. Cynthia Maung, the founder of the Mae Tao Clinic, Child’s Dream has been helping the clinic and its sister school, called Children Development Center, or CDC, with their infrastructural needs.

First we upgraded and expanded the old CDC Migrant Learning Center, followed by the construction of a new Child Inpatient Department for the clinic in 2005. Two years later, during a meeting with Dr. Cynthia Maung and a potential Japanese donor, we started to discuss the implementation of the new CDC school. In 2007, thanks to the generous support of SK Dream Japan, we bought an ideal plot of land and commenced the construction of two large double storey buildings with a total of 36 classrooms, a separate canteen and three toilet blocks. We also engaged an external engineer from the government to supervise and independently approve every step of the construction. With some delays due to the heavy rainy season, the new CDC School Complex was officially opened on 26 May 2009 with over 2,000 guests participating in the ceremony. Twelve hundred students from very difficult backgrounds were able to move to the brand new school with the famous green roof that can be seen from far away. Ever since, CDC has been the symbol for the importance of migrant education.
We have all seen and might remember the horrific images of Cyclone Nargis, which hit Yangon, Irrawaddy delta and Bago division of Myanmar on the 3 May 2008. Aid agencies initially estimated that 100,000 people had died and warned that this figure could rise significantly. We will never be able to say exactly how many perished during that unimaginable tragedy. Thanks to the immediate generosity of our donors, we were able to support the emergency relief operation (shelters, food, drinking water, etc.) with an amount of USD 200,000. Further funding was provided during the reconstruction period.

We are very proud of our newly constructed office in Chiang Mai. 2008 saw our own office construction site emerge! Thanks to three very generous donors who believed in our work, we were able to start construction of our new office premises in Chiang Mai. While at the beginning we inspected our construction site weekly, we started coming to observe progress daily as the building grew. The traditional Thai ceremony celebrating the posting of the first construction pole took place on 17 March 2008. On 2 October 2008, just six months and fifteen days later, our lovely building—now home to 30 staff desks—was ready for us to move in. One of the funniest situations while moving were four Thai movers in flip flops carrying our 400kg safe up the stairs to the second floor.

Cyclone Nargis hit Yangon, Irrawaddy Delta & Bago

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Our new office building grows and is officially opened on 22 October 2008.
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December

2009

The new MDC
Migrant Learning
Center opens in
Mae Sot.

Support of an university
preparation course
called Minmahaw Higher
Education Programme.

Annual Team
Workshop in
Chiang Rai.

Marc on Swiss
Television with
"10 vor 10".

Largest corporate donation
received from Credit Suisse
to support the construction
of 5 schools in Laos.

Sinoeuy My
joins Child’s Dream in
our Siem Reap office.

Suchada Kokanot
(Nickname: Mong)
joins Child’s Dream.

Yem Khlok
joins Child’s Dream in
our Siem Reap office.

We support school stationery to
over 50,000 students in Eastern
Myanmar through KSEAG.

The Basic Health Intervention
for Children (BHIC) programme
is launched in Eastern Myanmar.

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SONKRAN – TRADITIONAL THAI NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS 2009
Our first foray into Cambodia dates back to 2005. As one of our four focus countries, we were looking for solutions to enter the country in a meaningful way. Previous evaluation trips had shown the terrible situation some of these children face daily along the Khmer-Thai border in Poipet. Thousands of street children are abused as child labourers, many of them addicted to sniffing glue. Many of these unprotected children are at the mercy of child traffickers, often ending up in prostitution. It does not come as a surprise that our very first project in Cambodia was taking care of these border children by giving them shelter, a home and an education. Still today, Damnok Toek plays an important role for children at risk along the border. Since then our work in Cambodia has moved further inside the country. Since Basic Education is one of our main focuses, we decided for cost reasons not to establish our own legal entity, but to cooperate with an existing grassroots organisation covering that issue. We quickly found KAKO in Siem Reap and started cooperating. KAKO was in desperate need of funding and logistical support and we were looking for an established setup to support our intention of bringing education to the farthest corners of north and east Cambodia. So the match seemed perfect.

Though we have successfully built a number of schools in and around Siem Reap province, we have failed to integrate KAKO into the Child’s Dream family. While trying to achieve integration, the name was changed from KAKO to CDAK, meaning “Child’s Dream Helps Cambodia.” Though the management of KAKO was always in favour of integration, we recognised in 2010 that the endeavour would not be successful. The decision was taken to abandon the integration process in favour of setting up our own legal entity. Together with Yem Khloc, our current In-Country Director, Child’s Dream Cambodia Organisation (CDCO) was born in March 2011. Most of the previous KAKO staff joined our new organisation and, since then, we have built many schools in the five most eastern and northern provinces of the country.
Our Singaporean ambassador, Benjamin Cavalli, made an important career change in 2009. He volunteered for Child’s Dream while on a sabbatical between his corporate assignments. Benjamin supported the Myanmar university scholarship programme development and shared his valuable management experience with us. In his role as a Child’s Dream ambassador, Ben not only helps us greatly in terms of fundraising, but also his family generously hosts Marc, Daniel and Manuela at their house when we travel to Singapore for fundraising purposes. A great thank you to the entire Cavalli family for their outstanding hospitality and putting up with us for all these years.

We greatly underestimated the fundraising success of one of our donors in 2009. MAN Investments in Switzerland chose us as their charity of the year, thanks to the efforts of one of their staff members who knew us. In his role as a Child’s Dream ambassador, Ben not only helps us greatly in terms of fundraising, but also his family generously hosts Marc, Daniel and Manuela at their house when we travel to Singapore for fundraising purposes. A great thank you to the entire Cavalli family for their outstanding hospitality and putting up with us for all these years.

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In early September a huge number of MAN team members dived into the waves of Lake Zurich to swim for Child’s Dream, collecting funding from friends and family with every stroke they took. When we saw the text message on our phones early the following day indicating the six digit Swiss franc amount that had been collected, we could not believe our eyes. We thought this impossible, but no, it was indeed true!

A GREAT THANK YOU TO THE ENTIRE CAVALLI FAMILY
THE YEAR 2010
January 8, 2010: Buddhist blessing ceremony at our office

Lee starts Akha Ama Coffee

Saw Tha Wah (Nickname: Tha Wah) joins Child’s Dream

Jelly joins Child’s Dream

Ursula Bisig joins Child’s Dream

Chirasak Phetchompoo (Nickname: Gee) joins Child’s Dream

2010

We start to build drinking water systems and playgrounds

Ursula Bisig joins Child’s Dream

High school scholarship programme is launched

9 January 2010: We start project no. 100: Karenni Post 10 Arts and Science School High school scholarship programme is launched

The Child’s Dream Online Shop opens its doors

We start project no. 100: Karenni Post 10 Arts and Science School
In 2008 and 2009, Child’s Dream was growing in terms of staff and donations received, as well as projects, so there was a need to restructure the organisation. It was no longer possible for Daniel to directly lead, coach and monitor the entire staff in his project team. We urgently needed a middle management level, but how were we going to do this? First we thought that we should organise ourselves in country teams so we hired three experienced team heads to lead the Thai, Lao and Cambodia teams. We were hoping that the additional experience and expertise would harmoniously merge with the eagerness and motivation of our younger staff. However, we once again realised that Child’s Dream could not be managed according to management books. Our younger staff were trained to voice their opinions and speak out if they did not agree, which caused quite a headache for the newly hired team leaders as they were not used to being opposed by younger and less experienced staff members. In addition, we realised that working in country teams (silo structure), did not create an environment where people could easily share their experiences and learn from each other as everybody was focusing only on their projects in their country. After a painful few months, we decided to let go of the new team heads and promote some of our most experienced staff to become the leaders of what we call Focus Groups. We now have three: Health, Basic Education and Higher Education, each of which specialises in its own field and works across all four countries. In addition, we appointed four colleagues, who have the most knowledge and experience of our target countries, to be country specialists. These country specialists serve as advisors to each project manager when designing or implementing a project in a particular country. This simple, but effective matrix structure encourages the exchange of knowledge, experiences and opinions.
Three years after establishment, we are very happy to report that Akha Ama has grown into a very famous and highly successful social enterprise, supporting individual coffee growers by eliminating the greedy middle men.

With Akha Ama, our Social Entrepreneurship Grant programme (SEG) took off. Lee (Ayu Chepa), the founder of Akha Ama, was not only the first grant recipient, but also a former staff of Child’s Dream. Lee established his own coffee cooperative in his home village in the mountainous area of Chiang Rai province.
THE YEAR 2011
2011

Child's Dream organizes a fun children's day in Siem Reap for the Credit Suisse Singapore team.

May

New contacts and donation database goes live.

Universities in Bangkok close due to flooding; we evacuate students from dormitories.

Child's Dream supports most higher education programmes in all refugee camps through KRCEE high school scholarship camp in Thailand.

The filming of our documentary for Swiss TV starts.

Wheel2Wheel in Laos with Child's Dream

June

One day CD workshop at NEED farm.

July

One day CD workshop at NEED farm.

August

High School Scholarship Camp in Thailand.
2011 was a year of unprecedented and largely positive change in Myanmar. January saw the first convening of a parliament in over 50 years. Over 600 MPs met and chose Thein Sein to be the president of Myanmar, who was officially sworn in in March. At the same time, the State Peace and Development Council—the ruling military junta—was officially dissolved. Although the parliament was nominally elected, it was filled with former and serving military personnel. In May, the government freed 14,000 prisoners and commuted thousands more sentences in an amnesty, widely seen as a positive first step towards reconciliation. In August, peace talks were held with armed separatists along the Thai and Chinese borders. Also in that month, Aung San Suu Kyi met with President Thein Sein for the first time. In September, the Myanmar government lifted its ban on many websites, including YouTube and some run by critics of the army-dominated government. Also in September, Myanmar freed approximately 200 political prisoners, including several prominent dissidents, under a general amnesty for 6,359 prisoners and suspended construction of controversial Chinese-funded Myitsone hydroelectric dam, showing greater openness to public opinion. However, by October, reports surfaced highlighting that, although there had been positive political advances, it was business as usual for the armed forces which continued on their own path. In November, peace talks continued with major ethnic groups, while Aung San Suu Kyi announced her intention to run for elections in early 2012. In December, US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, visited Myanmar to meet separately with Aung San Suu Kyi and President Thein Sein and signalled that the US would improve relations as long as democratic reforms kept taking place. As the year closed, a peace deal with the Shan State Army was signed, although fighting with the Kachin continued to escalate, sending refugees into China. At the same time, Bangladesh continued to show impatience over refugees on its territory and urged the UNHCR to move them out.
In October the North Thai Team organised a scholarship student camp with 28 students from three secondary schools to encourage them to plan for what they want to be in the future. The students shared education experiences and had a lot of fun activities. They brainstormed, worked in teams and learned about each other. We spent three days together for these activities. The highlight of the camping trip was sharing experiences with three Burmese scholarship students from Mae Fah Luang University in Chiang Rai. All students were so proud to be Child’s Dream scholarship students. We all had a wonderful time!!!

Saw Tha Wah, our Assistant Field Coordinator, is an expert at installing water systems and designing and building the most fun, challenging and colourful playgrounds in our schools and boarding houses. We will never get tired of watching children screaming with excitement and joy once they take over a newly finished playground. In 2011 alone, Tha Wah built four children’s playgrounds in Thailand and seven in Laos. He is highly successful when using his fantastic broad smile to convince villagers, teachers and children to help him set up wooden poles, to cut up old motorcycle tires into shapes and to use lots of bright paint to finish off a new playground.
Every school deserves a fun playground.

Installing a clean water system is a real community effort.
THE YEAR 2012
January

- Thomas in Cambodia to visit NGOs in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh

February

- Opening of the Picturebook Guesthouse as a social enterprise in Mae Sot, Thailand

March

- Integration of diversethics Foundation into Child’s Dream

- Umpiem Refugee Camp Fire – Child’s Dream helps reconstruct houses

April

- Klo Say Wah (Nickname: Klo) joins Child’s Dream

May

- Nan Nyein Khan (Nickname: On) joins Child’s Dream

- Channary Chea joins Child’s Dream in our Siem Reap office

June

- Opening ceremony of FED’s United Learning Center in Khao Lak, Thailand

- Biggest single donation ever: CHF 600,000

July

- “Child’s Dream - Zwei Banker auf Sinnsuche” is aired on Swiss television

August

- CS donor and volunteer event at the Chiang Mai Zoo

September

- Moe joins Child’s Dream

October

- Our school health programme is launched in Cambodia and Laos

November

- Klo Say Wah (Nickname: Klo) joins Child’s Dream

December
We had known Peter Wuffli and Andreas Kirchschläger from the "ela-foundation" for quite a while before we finally found a project which was within the mandate of both organisations. But let us start at the very beginning of the story. Already back in the early days of Child’s Dream, we recognised the need for vocational training, a part of the educational curriculum entirely missing in South-East Asia. Both Daniel and Marc did not straight away start their adult lives with a university education, but entered their professional careers with a three-year vocational training in the financial industry. They only later completed their higher education. So it does not come as a surprise that Daniel commissioned a needs analysis of the vocational situation in the Thai-Myanmar border town of Mae Sot. Too many underprivileged youth from a Burmese background were entering the low income labour market without any chance of a better and self-determined life. As expected, the needs analysis showed a significant lack of opportunities for youth wanting to enter vocational professions. Patrick Kerns, who was commissioned for the needs analysis, was very keen to start a programme called Youth Connect back in 2007. Ever since, our Youth Connect programme has offered specialised vocational skills training and internships with local businesses, as well as a career centre to facilitate job searches.

It was always on our radar to add a guesthouse to the services of Youth Connect in order to offer training in the hospitality sector, an industry which contributes significantly to the Thai GDP. In 2011 we finally started construction of the Picturebook Guesthouse. Only months later, in June 2012, we opened the guesthouse with a big bang. Today, the Picturebook Guesthouse, our first social enterprise, not only serves as an educational facility for Youth Connect; it has also become one of the trendiest places to stay while in Mae Sot. Shortly after its opening, the Picturebook Guesthouse claimed position number one on Tripadvisor.
The School Health Programme was started in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in October 2009 to promote clean schools and healthy students. Our goal is not only to make education accessible, but also to improve the quality of life of the students and teachers who spend at least six hours a day in school. The programme trains teachers and educates students to understand the importance of health and hygiene. We have helped schools to change step by step such as Snor and Roka school where teachers and students plant vegetables, keep their kitchens and toilets clean and learn to wash their hands. This very basic hygiene, step by step, is extremely important to their health and well-being.

Overall, we were very happy with most of the schools’ performance and the impact of our work on Laotian children’s lives. In 2013, a similar evaluation trip will take place for our projects in Thailand.
THE YEAR 2013
**January 2013**: Child's Dream launches a customized project management database.

**February**: Tai's investigation trip to Myanmar.

**March**: Team investigation trip to Ko Chang for our October ten-year celebration.

**April**: Our Children Medical Fund accepts its patient no. 1000.

**May**: Tha Wah installs water systems in the north of Thailand.

**June**: Our Children Medical Fund accepts its patient no. 1200.

**July**: University scholarship interviews with applicants.

**August**: May 2013:

**September**: Our "Child's Dream Comes True Elephant" is delivered to our office.

**October 2013**: Child's Dream 10th birthday.

**November 2013**: Child's Dream open house event in Chiang Mai.

**December 2013**: Sreylin Chum joins Child's Dream in our office in Siem Reap.

**October 22, 2013**: Child's Dream team celebrates by going to the beach for a whole week. Offices in Chiang Mai and Siem Reap are closed.

**November 1, 2013**: Child's Dream open house event in Chiang Mai.
Oscar Schindler said, “Whoever saves one life saves the world entire.” This is exactly what our Children’s Medical Fund does – saves one child’s life at a time. This fund allows children aged up to 12 years with life-threatening congenital diseases to come to Chiang Mai for treatment. Most of our patients suffer from serious heart disease or anorectal malformations. These medical conditions either cannot be treated in Myanmar and Laos or are simply not affordable. We often hear heart-breaking stories of parents selling their farm, land and livestock, in other words, their livelihood, to pay for expensive, but ineffective medical treatment in their home country. Often completely broke, the parents then travel for days to the Thai border, hoping that a Thai government hospital or a health organisation will help them. Thai hospitals only treat Thai citizens for free, but foreigners need to pay and, if they cannot pay, the hospital will give them painkillers and send them home. Without our intervention, these children would eventually die a slow and painful death.

Since 2006, Child’s Dream has been running comprehensive referral systems with local health organisations and Thai government hospitals to facilitate the treatment of these children. In April 2013, Child’s Dream was able to accept its 1,000th patient onto the programme. This is not just an impressive number on the list of our achievements, but represents the fate of a thousand individual children.

Some question the social impact of this programme. However, in 2011 Daniel visited the Mae La refugee camp when suddenly a young girl approached him, beaming with a broad smile. He did not recognise her and looked confused. She lifted her shirt to show him the scar in the middle of her chest and smiled happily. She remembered him from her time in Chiang Mai, when she was being treated for a complicated heart disease. How are we supposed to measure the social impact of saving a child’s life? We like to think of Oscar Schindler.
After weeks of extensive shooting and months of cutting over 70 hours of film material, our 50 minute documentary was finally aired on Swiss TV in January 2013. The feedback was overwhelming. Many viewers got back to us that they were inspired by our story and now finally had the courage to change their own lives. We also received many donations which enable us to reach even higher. We want to express our gratitude again to the producers of the documentary as well as the many institutional and private donors who supported the production of the film.
Team Holiday at Ko Chang Beach
“CHILD’S DREAM, OUR PASSION IS OTHERS’ FUTURE”
We are very much looking forward to another 10 successful and exciting years in Child’s Dream, but we are also aware that challenges await us. Operating in the Mekong Sub-Region means operating in a highly volatile part of the world. We believe political instability, corruption and uncontrolled economic growth will be our main challenges. The world focuses on South-East Asia as one of the main motors for growth. This will not go unnoticed when it comes to our beneficiaries. Inequalities in income and opportunities will further grow, putting the region in the spotlight. Advancements in education will result in continuously lower acceptance of dictatorial and patriarchal political systems, increasing the chance of political unrest. We would not be surprised to witness a “South-East Asian Spring” in the decade to come.

Myanmar poses the biggest political risk while transforming from military dictatorship to democratic economy. The challenges to overcome are tremendous and will certainly affect our work. Repatriating 150,000 Myanmar refugees living on Thai soil, as well as integrating almost two million legal and illegal migrants into Thai society will be difficult. We are ready to contribute by helping to make this transition as smooth as possible.

Laos is slowly opening up to the rest of the world. The small socialist state is carefully evaluating its options, being sandwiched between two economic powerhouses, China and Vietnam. Our main responsibility here will remain to support the government in reforming its education system to enable children in even the most remote corners of Laos to reap the benefits of education.

Cambodia will see tremendous economic growth with the world increasingly seeing it as an affordable production site for goods for world markets. The main challenge will be to ensure that not only the rich and powerful profit from foreign investment, but also that economic advancement will benefit less privileged Cambodian citizens.

Thailand is well positioned as another economic powerhouse in South-East Asia. The main challenge for Thailand will be integration into the ASEAN Economic Community taking effect in 2015. Reforming an inadequate education system, tackling corruption and forming a well-educated and informed middle class will be crucial. We will definitely not run out of work! We are excited to play our role in helping all four countries to realise their futures.
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