Children Of The Forest Foundation

Home and school for children's well-rounded education and well-being
The Situation

A grave, long-standing concern among Myanmar’s rural, ethnic minorities is children being vulnerable to broken homes, abandonment, abuse and child trafficking. In such hardships, having access to proper education is a luxury most of these children cannot afford.

Innocent victims of brutality and constant fear from military attacks, ethnicities of Karen and Mon women, children and entire villages have been forced to flee to Thai soil, living now with an estimated number of 2,000,000 along the border of Thailand and Myanmar as displaced stateless migrants.

Despite the new land, living condition is only marginally better as work is scarce and severely underpaid for the migrants. Modest nonprofit migrant schools have been important sources for fundamental education and certain skills for employability. However, as NGOs continue to cut their funding along the border due to more accessibility in setting up within Myanmar, migrant schools are increasingly under pressure to reconsider their options, leaving the children in a vulnerable situation as they still try to complete their education. Such challenging situation makes the work of organisations such as Children of the Forest Foundation invaluable.

Child’s Dream Foundation
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Children Of The Forest (COF) - Overview

Founded in 2005, COF is a Thai-registered foundation providing a variety of programmes that offer free education, health care and child protection to abandoned, abused and orphaned Karen and Mon children and teens living on the Thai/Myanmar border in Sangkhlaburi, Thailand.

In promoting education (formal and non-formal), COF strives to provide opportunities ranging from life skills for awareness and understanding of risks and exploitations in the working environment to academic and vocational lessons to strengthen employability.

We have been supporting the running costs of one of their main programmes – ‘COF Preparation Program’: A school of safety and bridging education.
How It Works

With 11 experienced and qualified staff, ‘COF Preparation Program’ offers a curriculum that balances academic learning and practices on technical, social and life skills as well as various vocational skills.

Broken into two terms during each academic year, students with ages now range from 6 – 24 are engaged in core and elective subjects namely:

- Language classes of Thai, English, Burmese
- Mathematics, Science, Social Studies
- Art and Sewing Classes
- Life Skills and Community Work
- Vocational Training Course
- Movie Appreciation and Criticism Programme to encourage in students critical and independent thinking, global general knowledge
- Agriculture Training Course of planting fruits and vegetables as well as raising fish. This is also a project for income generation.
How It Works

Other activities such as sports days and competitions, field trips, outdoor camping and national social events are also included as extra-curricular activities.

With an average of 100 enrolments every year, the programme has maintained a solid reputation over the years, and has achieved its status of being a satellite school to the local government school, allowing their pupils to be registered within the formal Thai education system and able to sit national examinations for recognised certificates and qualifications.

Annual Futsal Football Tournament between COF female students and Anuban Sangkhaburi School in December, 2017
Objectives

‘COF Preparation Program’ dedicates their work unconditionally to mainly:

- Ensure access to standard bridging education and legal documentations to allow an effective transition into the formal Thai education system
- Provide physical protection and emotional support to vulnerable children and youth in their daily lives with safe shelter, food and friendship
- Offer a framework of subjects and learning that enable students to become well-rounded individuals both personally and professionally through understanding oneself and others, knowledge of the world and different cultures
- Provide space for the students to express themselves and develop confidence and self-esteem with opportunities for creativity, team work and competitions.

This provision of an interdisciplinary education is paramount in allowing these disadvantaged migrant youth to develop and prosper, and enable them to see their potential and live a life of hope and aspirations.
Budget

The total amount of the foundation’s overall running costs is **USD 47,000** for academic year 2018-2019 (May – April).

Fund transfers from Child’s Dream to COF are made in four instalments (quarterly) during the financial year.

**Monitoring & Reporting**

Payment is proceeded quarterly at reception of narrative and photo reports as well as monthly financial & activity reports. Feedback is also obtained directly during regular visits by our local team.

We report to donor(s) on a semester basis and visits can easily be arranged.