The Year 2017: in many ways an extraordinary, but also challenging year for all of us at Child’s Dream.

One would assume that, after having been in operation for more than 14 years, a certain consolidation is setting in and things become a bit more routine, hence boring. We also often hear the questions, “What’s next, Marc and Daniel? After 14 years of building up and running Child’s Dream, monotony and boredom must be weighing you down”. Trust us, NOT AT ALL!!!

2017 was yet another outstandingly interesting and fulfilling year, but it was also one of the most demanding years when it comes to the workload on all of us. Thanks to our amazing team members, the heavy workload was mastered with ease and never before were so many projects implemented, programmes run and improved, and beneficiaries reached. All three of our focus groups progressed in their work, so we want to share a few highlights of our working year, addressing beneficiaries in Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

In September, our “Health” group had reason to celebrate. The Children’s Medical Fund Programme accepted its 1,500th child for treatment. Close to five million US Dollars were spent on this life-saving programme since its inception in 2006. Without the incredible dedication of our health team, many of these little children would have perished.

Our “Basic Education” team has made big leaps forward in 2017. What started with building schools and boarding houses back in 2004, resulted in tens of thousands of children having access to education for the first time. But then, it is not just about providing access; it is increasingly about the quality of education and the relevance of what is taught. Our increased focus on quality and relevance will further strengthen the educational systems of our target countries.
Creating responsible leaders and specialists is the main focus of our “Higher Education” group. Change makers will be able to sustainably and positively shape the future of their respective countries. We are happy to see that our past success in Myanmar is more and more filtering through in the other three countries. In 2017, the first ever Alumni Conference was held in Laos, a sign of a maturing scholarship programme.

On a more macro level, we finalised our strategy for the coming five years and revised our vision and mission statement to be more precise and to the point.

Vision: Empowered people responsibly shaping their communities
Mission: Improving health and education for sustainable development

And as a Child’s Dreamer, we certainly always hope that some of our own dreams become true. Having worked in Myanmar and with Burmese beneficiaries for over 14 years, one such wish became reality in 2017. Child’s Dream Myanmar Association, registered in Yangon, was born in the summer. Not in our wildest dreams, some years ago operating under the radar of an oppressive regime, did we think that our own charity registration in Myanmar would ever become a reality.

On the sad side, we are certainly disturbed and distressed by the recent events in Rakhine State, Myanmar. We truly hope for the future of the country that this humanitarian crisis can be solved quickly without inflicting any further damage on people.

Though we have said this again and again, our tremendous impact on tens of thousands of children and youth would not have been possible without the very generous support of all our donors and friends. Having such a loyal, engaged and caring donor base means the world to us. Many, many thanks!

Finally we want to close this report about 2017 with a big thank you to the most amazing team on earth. We are proud of each and every team member in the Child’s Dream family and thank you all for your tremendous dedication to helping children and youth in need. You are our heroes!

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much!!!

Have a happy and healthy 2018.

From The Field

Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education (DARE) Network

Described as a country with the world’s longest civil war, Myanmar has been suffering from ethnic conflict for many years, one of the main factors that contribute to its stunted economic growth. While tensions between the insurgent ethnic groups and the Myanmar army are ongoing, the spread of drug and alcohol problems in rural villages in Myanmar is also a concern. Alcohol and drug related problems, such as domestic violence and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases are breaking families apart, and children are the most affected. Denial and ignorance also exacerbate the matter.

Located in a remote village in Kayin State, the Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Education (DARE) Network Centre renders free treatment services, including drug and alcohol detoxification and rehabilitation, awareness training and
Building a school is easy, but to make sure that it runs well afterwards is much more challenging. Unfortunately, most NGOs that build schools, however, often neglect the essential post-implementation capacity building of teachers and principals because it requires a lot of time and human resources and therefore, is not a priority for them. This may sound absurd, however, it is much more attractive and also easier to raise funds for a school building than for teacher training and capacity building.

Child’s Dream has been and will always be different. As of end November 2017, we have built 244 schools and 69 boarding houses and we are still in touch with each one of these. In addition we evaluate every school and boarding house three times; after implementation, after 2 years and 5 years. Through our frequent visits we have the chance to give feedback and discuss ideas on how to improve the school’s education.

A few years ago, our Laos team started to geographically group our schools into clusters and systematically provided training to school principals and leading teachers. This has now evolved into a well-designed teacher capacity building programme over three years. In the first year, we conduct training to help the principal and teachers to design a school development plan. In the second year we select a model school from the cluster and facilitate a peer-to-peer learning experience on how to manage a school in a remote area with limited or no financial resources. In the third year we assist the principals and teachers to build a network and establish indicators and an evaluation system for their schools. The results are remarkable. Principals and teachers are more motivated, feel inspired and empowered and can lead their school into a promising future.
This year we are proud to report that we have not only continued, but also expanded our Alumni Activities Programme (AAP) from Myanmar to Laos. The AAP is an annual conference of University Scholarship Programme (USP) alumni and final year students from their respective programmes.

The main reasons why we support this annual gathering between students and alumni is to promote networking between them, to assist in securing employment, to give a chance to learn about new and important issues related to their country and the work that fellow alumni are already doing, as well as to introduce a network of organisations having a positive impact on the development of their country to give inspiration.

The fourth annual AAP conference for USP Myanmar was held in Yangon from 5 to 6 August 2017. 102 students, alumni, and representatives of partner organisations attended. The conference focused on “Power of Networking” highlighting “Youth empowerment and employment” in a plenary discussion, including guest speakers from the Myanmar House of Representatives, Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Association, the Centre for Vocational Training, and several large businesses. There were thematic group discussions including: Education, Health, Social Science, and Economics. Students also discussed ideas on income generation and other activities they could do.

The first annual AAP conference for USP Laos was held in Vientiane from 21 to 22 October 2017. 69 students, alumni, representatives of partner organisations, and the Laos government attended. The conference focused on employment and social development awareness. There were short sessions on: Higher Education, CV Writing, Interview Techniques, Sustainable Development Goals, Proposal Writing, and Social Entrepreneurship Grants. Guest speakers from organisations talked about new ways of learning and community work, volunteering, and life-long learning.
Higher Education - Aims at creating leaders and specialists who work towards the development of their country

Basic Education - Aims at increasing access to quality education

Health - Aims at reducing childhood mortality and improving health and hygiene in schools and communities

- 5,953 children learned about health and hygiene
- 4,845 community members received drug prevention and awareness education
- 1,538 children have received life-saving operations and medical interventions

- 247 school buildings built so far
- 681 high school students supported in 2017
- 138,599 students and teachers in Myanmar receive stationery

- 2,849 trained to become future leaders
- 6,394 students received vocational training for employment
- 427 university scholarships awarded

- 427 university scholarships awarded so far
- 500 target support by year 2020
- 2,000 target support by year 2020
Finally we have a Child’s Dream Ambassador for Germany! Please meet Stephan Thiemonds from Cologne, a frequent traveler in Asia for work. Stephan travelled with our team twice this year. If you wish to read about his thoughts on our work, please enjoy his reports here (German and English).

Our second hero in this story is Ta, our Head of the Children’s Medical Fund. She successfully negotiated a 63% discount with Suan Dok Hospital for Hein Min Latt’s many treatments. Thank you, Ta, for taking such good care of our patients as well as our expenses!

Our Heroes

Our little eleven month old patient, Hein Min Latt, a boy from Shan State in Myanmar, has been able to go home with his mother after long months in the ICU ward of Chiang Mai Suan Dok Hospital.

Hein Min Latt was born in Loi Pang Koi, close to Keng Tung on 18 November 2016, as the youngest child of four. A local doctor there suggested to his parents to take him to Thailand to get treatment because he suffered from multiple heart conditions. His parents tried to treat him with traditional medicines, but nothing improved, so they borrowed money from their neighbour and brought him to Mae Sai Hospital, Chiang Rai Province in Thailand. There, a doctor referred him to Chiang Rai Hospital immediately, due to his very bad condition. He was admitted in Chiang Rai Hospital, and was stabilized there for transfer to Chiang Mai. In Chiang Mai, he had two heart surgeries and stayed in ICU for three months and 14 days. Then he stayed at the pediatric ward for a month and finally he was discharged on 9 October 2017. He no longer needs oxygen therapy. These were very difficult months, not only for him, but also for his mother who was not allowed to continuously stay by his side while he was in intensive care. Our little hero recovered well, and is back at home with his family. He will have to come back to a Chiang Rai Hospital once a month for another five months for medication, and will have a next bigger health check in Chiang Mai in February 2018.

The 2017 highlight was definitely the approval of our charity status by the government of Myanmar. Who would have dreamt of “Child’s Dream Myanmar Association” seeing the light of day after so many years? We are now very much looking forward to broadening our initiatives in the country.

Approximately 140 guests gathered at the Anantara Hotel Chiang Mai in the evening of 11 October. The top sales people of SEVENFRIDAY watches and their families got together for their annual fun and game gathering. Marc and Daniel acted as jurors of ten group performances. The proceeds of the sold merchandise (sun glasses and bracelets) was donated to Child’s Dream. Thank you, SEVENFRIDAY!

Our little eleven month old patient, Hein Min Latt, a boy from Shan State in Myanmar, has been able to go home with his mother after long months in the ICU ward of Chiang Mai Suan Dok Hospital.

Hein Min Latt was born in Loi Pang Koi, close to Keng Tung on 18 November 2016, as the youngest child of four. A local doctor there suggested to his parents to take him to Thailand to get treatment because he suffered from multiple heart conditions. His parents tried to treat him with traditional medicines, but nothing improved, so they borrowed money from their neighbour and brought him to Mae Sai Hospital, Chiang Rai Province in Thailand. There, a doctor referred him to Chiang Rai Hospital immediately, due to his very bad condition. He was admitted in Chiang Rai Hospital, and was stabilized there for transfer to Chiang Mai. In Chiang Mai, he had two heart surgeries and stayed in ICU for three months and 14 days. Then he stayed at the pediatric ward for a month and finally he was discharged on 9 October 2017. He no longer needs oxygen therapy. These were very difficult months, not only for him, but also for his mother who was not allowed to continuously stay by his side while he was in intensive care. Our little hero recovered well, and is back at home with his family. He will have to come back to a Chiang Rai Hospital once a month for another five months for medication, and will have a next bigger health check in Chiang Mai in February 2018.

The 2017 highlight was definitely the approval of our charity status by the government of Myanmar. Who would have dreamt of “Child’s Dream Myanmar Association” seeing the light of day after so many years? We are now very much looking forward to broadening our initiatives in the country.

Approximately 140 guests gathered at the Anantara Hotel Chiang Mai in the evening of 11 October. The top sales people of SEVENFRIDAY watches and their families got together for their annual fun and game gathering. Marc and Daniel acted as jurors of ten group performances. The proceeds of the sold merchandise (sun glasses and bracelets) was donated to Child’s Dream. Thank you, SEVENFRIDAY!