

COVID-19 UPDATE



Dear friends of Child's Dream,

We are going through an extraordinarily challenging situation so we hope that this newsletter finds you and your loved ones healthy and in good spirits.

SPECIAL ISSUE

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These are truly unprecedented times so we would like to give you a comprehensive update on how Child's Dream is handling the COVID-19 outbreak. The good news is that we do not yet have any staff or beneficiary who has been infected. We acted swiftly and stopped all international travel completely and reduced domestic travel to the absolute minimum two weeks ago. We also took immediate measures to increase hygiene at all our offices and to spread the work stations farther apart from each other. At the same time our management team and we worked on various contingency plans. We are as prepared as we can be.

Our office in Chiang Mai is closed due to the state of emergency and the call from the Thai government to close all non-essential businesses and allow employees to work from home. Our offices in Myanmar and Cambodia have not yet closed, but many staff took our offer to work from home to reduce the risk of infection. Luckily, Child's Dream is very process-oriented and technologically advanced, which makes it easy for our employees to efficiently do their tasks and serve our beneficiaries from home.

We also shared the latest COVID-19 news with all our partners and programmes and gave them recommendations on how to manage the situation. Our project staff are working tirelessly with their programmes to minimise the impact of COVID-19. We also reassured them about our commitment to support them, even if their activities cannot take place as planned, such as teaching, training, community outreach, etc.

Most of the schools we have constructed in our countries are now closed until further notice. Many of our higher education programmes have also halted their teaching and students have returned home to comply with government regulations. Universities in Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar are now also closed and our students study from home with some online instruction. The universities in Laos are still open, but probably not for much longer. All these educational programmes will restart immediately if the situation improves and government restrictions are lifted.

COVID-19 has probably the biggest impact on our Children's Medical Fund. Our partner hospital in Chiang Mai has been declared as the main COVID-19 treatment centre in the North of Thailand. The hospital has had to stop all non-emergency treatments to prepare for the outbreak. We can still send our imminent life-threatening cases, but all other cases must be postponed until August.

These are all manageable challenges, but we are certainly worried about the long-term economic consequences and the financial impact on Child's Dream. A significantly lower donation income would hit our beneficiaries very hard. So please do not forget about us in these difficult times. We are also anxious about certain beneficiary groups like refugees and migrants that are often unregistered and living in cramped spaces like camps or factories without access to health services. This means that, once again, the most vulnerable in society have to bear the brunt for something that is not their fault.

However, we also believe that this crisis presents us with a unique opportunity to come together as humans and develop a whole new set of values. This is truly a global health crisis and we are in this together! Now is the time to put aside our differences and our selfishness and act compassionately and look out for each other.

We can get through this together!

Stay safe, stay healthy and stay at home!!

Marc & Daniel

