



AUGUST 2022



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### FROM THE FOUNDERS

BY MARC THOMAS JENNI

MANAGING DIRECTOR  
PROGRAMMES - CO-FOUNDER

## Getting Ready for the Next Decade

Mentioning the next decade sounds like serious aging has kicked in. Does it suggest that Child's Dream is getting old and matured now? Most likely, but we feel as energetic and are as motivated as on day one, as we are gearing up and getting ready for the third decade of service to our beneficiaries. We can hardly comprehend it, but it's reality and next year, Child's Dream will celebrate its 20th birthday. Not in our wildest dreams would we have guessed in 2003 that we would be standing here like this 20 years later. Sure, we assumed and hoped to still be around, helping kids in need. But never would we have expected to have reached over 1 million children with over 900 projects implemented, having a

tremendous impact on our beneficiaries. And exactly this impact makes us proud of our team and motivates us to plan for yet another decade of passionate support. It goes without saying that all this would never have been possible without the great support of all our donors, whether big or small. Many thanks for that!

Tackling yet another decade needs planning. And planning we did in July together with our four man/woman strong Management Team. Finally, after 2.5 years of Zoom meetings, we could meet again face to face to brainstorm and discuss how to seize the issues at hand. During our retreat, we redefined our Vision and Mission as well as our Strategic Goals and we formalised what we mean with Child's Dream's Values and Culture. The world around us constantly changes and in order to keep on spending our scarce resources in the most effective and efficient way possible, we need to align our support with today's needs. One might ask why do we do this, given the success of the past and the answer is very simple: because standing still is never an option for us. On the contrary, we are driven and inspired by achievement, because we care!

As our name suggests, we are dreamers and we dream of a world where educated and empowered people responsibly shape and sustain fair, just and healthy societies for generations to come. This vision has led us to our new Mission Statement:

***We exist to ensure that children and young adults in the Mekong Sub-Region, affected by inequality, grow up to be healthy and have access to quality education and better employment opportunities. Everything we do enables them to live empowered and self-determined lives as equal and active members of society, with the potential to become responsible leaders of change.***

The above mission says it all and allows us to regroup our past and future work in eight Strategic Goals. This is a slight change from our previous three focus groups, 'Health', 'Basic Education' and 'Higher Education'. The new Strategic Goals are tangible, targeted and allow for an even more efficient allocation of resources going forward. Our December Newsletter will talk in more detail about the expected impact of these changes, so stay tuned.



## THAILAND

BY MEGHAN JONES

# The 2nd Asia-Pacific Regional Education Ministers' Conference

Child's Dream participated in the 2nd Asia-Pacific Regional Education Ministers' Conference, held in Bangkok from 5-7 June 2022. The conference was hosted by UNICEF Thailand, the Ministry of Education Thailand, and the People of Japan. A total of 392 individuals attended the conference from 42 different countries in the Asia-Pacific area.

We joined our partner organisation, Foundation for Applied Linguistics (FAL), and one of their supporting organisations, Pestalozzi Children's Foundation, in presenting on the development of Mother Tongue-Based Bi/Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in northern Thailand. The presentation highlighted the growing cooperation among stakeholders in Chiang Mai province and the efforts that have been made to digitalize MTB-MLE, including the creation of teaching videos on YouTube, graded reading e-books, and the use of mobile applications. The presentation also featured the important impact of MTB-MLE on children, and the need for policy changes to further advocate for MTB-MLE sustainability.

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***Foundation, in presenting on the development of Mother Tongue-Based Bi/Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) in northern Thailand.***

We also joined our partner organisation, Migrant Education Co-ordination Center (MECC), in presenting on Migrant Education Recovery in Tak province, Thailand. The presentation showcased how migrant students from five border districts along the Thai/Myanmar border in Tak province were able to continue to receive education throughout the challenges that were brought on during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through their presentation, MECC was able to share the voice of migrant children in Thailand and raise awareness about migrant educational issues.

In attending this conference, Child's Dream supported its partner organisations in sharing information about critical work that is being done in providing educational opportunities for disadvantaged children in Thailand. Along with presenting valuable information, we were able to learn from other presenters about important issues such as educational trends in digital transformation, social and emotional skills, entrepreneurship in education, the learner-centred approach, and competency-based curriculums.



## MYANMAR

BY ANA AND NI THAW

# Emergency Support of Alen Bum IDP High School in Myanmar

This past June, over 160 participants joined a two-day, online conference entitled “Post-Secondary Education: Realities and Possibilities” hosted by our partner organisation Mote Oo, in collaboration with Child’s Dream. The conference provided opportunities for participants to reconnect and explore sector-wide needs and solutions for post-secondary education in Myanmar, and highlighted the following themes: resilience in crisis, effective teaching and learning strategies, community and school engagement, and sustainable and inclusive school management and administration.

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Some highlights of the conference included a session led by Child’s Dream Managing Director of Programmes, Daniel Siegfried, and Mote Oo’s Curriculum Writer and Trainer, Jordan Pescrillo, exploring Child’s Dream’s past and current work to empower Myanmar youth and the opportunities Child’s Dream and the Conference Coordination Committee can offer to the post-secondary sector. Another highlight included a panel

discussion moderated by previous Child’s Dream employee, Wai Lin, entitled “Navigating Further Education: Scholarships and Study Abroad.”

The conference resulted in several important findings. The post-secondary sector is currently facing very significant challenges due to the pandemic and political upheaval, including restrictions on face-to-face teaching, access to finances and security concerns. Post-secondary providers are rising to these challenges and finding innovative solutions, including moving to online teaching when practical. Despite these exceptionally difficult circumstances, post-secondary schools have managed the continuous provision of education, thereby fulfilling vital education needs. As a conclusion, it was found that the sector needs greater levels of support, recognition, resource allocation, and capacity development.

Post-conference plans have been made to allow participants to continue to network and support each other, including a Facebook group for regular updates about school recruitment, job opportunities, scholarship opportunities, as well as teaching and management resources, a YouTube channel to review videos from the conference, and mini-grant opportunities from the Conference Coordination Committee.



## CAMBODIA

BY AIDAN MCAULIFFE

# A Better Future for Youth in Cambodia

We are always eager to get behind initiatives that have a defined focus on education, community development, and youth leadership. The Better Futures Programme by JWOC (Journeys Within Our Communities) in Cambodia embodies all of these elements; thus, partnering with this programme seemed like the perfect fit!

Based in Siem Reap, the Better Futures Programme supports Cambodian youth who are in a transitional period between basic and further or higher education. JWOC's theory of change is that providing education at critical points of transition allows youth to acquire the means and foster the motivation for both personal and community development.

Cambodian youth (those aged 15 to 30) make up about 30% of the country's population. Most of this group end up working in jobs that are dangerous, exploitative, or simply not aligned with their skills. With little to no access to information about the job market or appropriate career guidance counselling, they usually make wrong decisions and end up as an obsolete resource in the labour market.

JWOC mentors these students who are at a crossroads

and equips them with skills and insight that enable them to make an informed decision about their futures. They take classes in English and computer literacy, as well as more complex courses in leadership, critical thinking, and project management. Besides the theoretical elements, students undertake internships with partner NGOs, and public and private institutions to gain meaningful work experience.

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By matching their skills with the needs of the labour market, Cambodian youth are empowered to unleash their potential, leading to positive change for both themselves and their communities.



## LAO PDR

BY DANIEL SIEGFRIED

# Back in Lao PDR With Mixed Feelings

It was more than 2.5 years since our last trip to Lao PDR, so we were quite nervous and had to triple check our travel documents before we set off from Chiang Mai. We felt exhilarated to go back in the country which is almost a second home to us. We were also excited to finally reconnect with our partners and meet with them face-to-face.

But shortly after we crossed the border, we realised that something was quite different from the past: the prices for almost everything had increased by 20 to 50% while the Laotian currency has been devaluating against the USD and Thai Baht by more than 50%, making imports almost unaffordable. Most petrol stations were closed or they had a few hundred meters long queues in front of them. It became obvious that the country is facing a huge economic crisis. The combination of high external debt, the prolonged economic impact of COVID-19 and worldwide inflation caused by the war in Ukraine pushed the country to the brink. Now the people are struggling to make ends meet.

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The impact on children and youth is devastating. Many students are dropping out of school in order to seek unskilled and often dangerous work in neighbouring Thailand. We work closely with our schools and provide scholarships to prevent this. Also our partners are supporting vulnerable youth to upskill them so that they have better and safer job opportunities in the country.



## Our Impact 2021

In 2021, we are pleased to report that, despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic and political unrest in Myanmar, we were able to reach a total of 293,311 direct beneficiaries with our 890 current projects. "Our work is needed more than ever before and we are committed to continue serving our beneficiaries with the help of our valued donors and partners."

Read the Impact Report 2021 here > <https://bit.ly/3B5fn3r>

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## Best Support Intervention Design NPO – SE Asia

Awesome news! We are greatly honoured to be awarded as Best Support Intervention Design NPO – Southeast Asia by the Acquisition International (AI) – an international, monthly digital business magazine based in the UK. For more information, click here > <https://www.acquisition-international.com/winners/childs-dream-foundation/>

