



URGENT FUNDING NEEDS



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Growing Up for More Impact

BY DANIEL SIEGFRIED

Since Child's Dream was founded 20 years ago, we have gone through a number of phases that have characterised our organisation's respective development stages. About four years ago we started a new phase – we can call it the 'Growing Up Phase' - which has been focused on the development of our own organisational capacity both from an operational and

from a programme implementation point of view. Thanks to a slower anticipated pace during Covid-19 we had the chance to spend more time on strengthening our programme and partnership management capabilities. Or at least this was the plan until we realised that Covid-19 and its unpredictability actually triggered more work than expected. Furthermore, the

military coup in Myanmar demanded more flexibility with regards to the support of our partners in the country, increasing our workload even more.

Despite all the challenges, we decided to go ahead and work on a new tool that assists us in managing our programmes and partnerships. We proudly call this tool the Child's Dream Programme Management Cycle (PMC) unlike the term Project Cycle Management (PCM) which is widely used in the international aid & development sector. But we are known to do things differently and not necessarily stick to textbooks.

Our PMC consists of five steps: Identification, Initiation, Planning, Implementation and Closing. It is designed to lead our staff through all the steps to strategically plan, manage and review programmes implemented by us or our partners. This systematic approach helps us not only to ensure the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of our work, but also to develop a long-term strategic vision for the programmes with a focus on 'Impact', rather than short-term 'Outputs'. It will also allow us to build stronger relationships with our partners and to invest in their organisational development and capacity building.

An important part of the PMC are the continuous Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) efforts of our work because we want to make sure that our programmes create the desired impact or, in other words, the intended positive change. The main objective of our impact evaluation is to get insights and feedback which allow us to continually improve our work for

our beneficiaries. As one of the founders of Child's Dream, this is very close to my heart. Child's Dream is my life's work and I must be sure that we can achieve the highest possible long-term impact with our limited resources. It is nice to know that we granted over 3,000 scholarships to vulnerable youth to complete a high school education, but have these scholarships helped them to further their studies, to find better jobs and ultimately to improve their lives? It is imperative that we know; and by the way, the answer is yes. We have just published our latest impact report and it makes me immensely proud to see what we have been able to achieve over the last 20 years.

According to some MBA textbooks, Child's Dream would be considered a maturing organisation by now, but I refuse this terminology in our case because it implies to me that we would slow down, be more settled and content with the status quo; however, we need to be anything but. The needs of our beneficiaries are not just constantly changing, but also increasing and this requires us to be on our toes and ready to respond. I prefer to think of Child's Dream still being in the 'Growing Up Phase' and I'm looking forward to putting our newly gained programme and partnership management capabilities to use for our beneficiaries.

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Opening an Office in Lao PDR

Last December we evaluated our first project in Laos for the fifth time. This time it was the 15 years after completion evaluation. Back in January 2007, we constructed our first school building for Khon Kaen village in the south of the country. Like the times before, the school passed our evaluation with flying colours.

Laos has always been one of our focus countries, but we implemented all our work from our office in Chiang Mai. This required our team to travel tens of thousands of kilometers per car every year. Finally, late last year, we decided with the feedback from the Laos team that Child's Dream is now ready to open an office in Laos. We are excited that all, except for two staff members, who will take on new roles in our Chiang Mai office, are happy to relocate to Laos. In May this year we signed a six year lease agreement for a beautiful office in the heart of Luang Prabang town. A few weeks later the current head of our Laos team, Suphattra Matakun, nicknamed Koy, was approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to be our new country director based in our new office.

Over the next couple of months, the team members will slowly relocate to our new office and start supporting our work from within Laos. We are thrilled about this new opportunity since we will be able to grow our work in Laos with closer access

to our beneficiaries. Please let us know if you are travelling through the beautiful town of Luang Prabang. We are happy to welcome you at our new location and bring our Child's Dream world a bit closer to you.

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Career Fair in Cambodia

Early in the morning of June 8th, the quiet grounds of Pich Chenda High School quickly became a hive of activity as organisations and businesses arrived to set up their stalls in preparation for the annual Career Fair. The event, organised by the Child's Dream team in Siem Reap, is a staple feature of our bespoke Career Planning Programme for high school students in Cambodia.

As the blazing sun shone down on the school grounds, almost 400 Grade 12 students from both Pich Chenda and Bour high schools started to trickle in, and the fair area was taken over by excited chatter and a wave of enthusiasm. Events like these are not commonplace in the Cambodian education system. Thus, the Career Fair has become a notable feature on the participating schools' calendars, normally attracting lots of interest and attention.

The one-day event is strategically held during the final year of the three-year high school programme as it allows students to explore what opportunities await them once they graduate. This year, 29 different businesses, organisations, and universities were in attendance to offer guidance on scholarships, further training, and career paths.

The Programme Manager for the Career Planning Programme, Sophean Un, explains the importance of such an event for this age group: "High schools in Cambodia don't have career guidance services, meaning that lots of students feel lost when it comes to choosing the correct career path. The Career Fair allows them to seek out more information about their career goals."

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Increasing Needs in Migrant Education

The ongoing political unrest and violence in Myanmar has forced numerous families to flee their homes, seeking shelter in neighbouring countries, such as Thailand. Families recognise the significance of education as a means of empowerment and future opportunities for their children. As a result, the number of migrant children in need of education along the Thai-Myanmar border has grown exponentially. Migrant Learning Centres (MLCs) have become essential in providing these children with access to quality education and enabling them to acquire crucial knowledge and skills. Furthermore, these centres serve as safe spaces offering a sense of stability and hope amidst uncertain circumstances. Royal Thai Government schools have also accepted migrant students, recognising the importance of providing equal educational opportunities for all children. However, their ability to accommodate more students is contingent upon the availability of adequate space and teachers. Additionally, migrant students often face many barriers to entering these schools, including a lack of Thai language skills and limited money for uniforms and transportation. One of our partners, the Out of School Children Enrolment Task FORCE, has supported over 500 students in overcoming these barriers and enrolling in the Thai mainstream education system over the past year.

Due to the deteriorating situation in Myanmar, MLCs are experiencing a remarkable increase in student enrolment; some of the MLCs we support have seen their enrolment numbers double (or more) over the past year. As a result, existing centres have faced the challenge of accommodating a larger number of students, often straining their resources and capacities. Increased support from donors is crucial to ensure the continued operation and expansion of MLCs. Donor contributions can enable the recruitment and training of additional teachers, the provision of learning materials, the improvement of infrastructure, and the implementation of innovative educational programmes. If you are interested in supporting our partner MLCs, please get in touch!

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Overwhelming Demand for Scholarships

The ongoing civil war in Myanmar is impacting our work in many different ways. Besides the increasing number of migrant students along the Thai- Myanmar border as highlighted in our Thailand feature, we have also seen the number of applications for our university scholarships for Myanmar students to study in Thailand surge by over 400%. Before the military coup, we received approx. 200 applications annually, but this year over 800 applicants competed for 25 scholarships. This is only four scholarship places for each one hundred applicants. To review these applications and select the most deserving and promising candidates is not only a daunting, but also a sad task. We know that behind every application is an anxious person desperately trying to advance their studies in the hope of a better life and an opportunity to contribute to the development of their community.

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And this is exactly what our University Scholarship Programme for International Bachelor (USPIB) delivers. We have been running this programme since 2006 and have granted 337 scholarships. An overwhelming 84% of our 216 alumni are engaged in jobs that focus on creating positive impact: they work in the field of education, humanitarian response, politics, human rights protection, peace and justice and environmental sustainability. They are truly agents of change and visionaries of the future.

A full scholarship to study at a reputable international university in Thailand costs roughly USD 8,000 per year or USD 32,000 to complete their bachelor's degree. We wish to increase the number of scholarships to respond to the growing needs of students from war-torn Myanmar and are therefore looking for more financial means for this meaningful programme. If you are interested in supporting a student, please get in touch!

FROM THE OFFICE



OFFICE EXTENSION IN CAMBODIA

We are thrilled to announce that we have moved to our new two-storey office. Just a stone's throw away from the old one, this larger space will accommodate our expanding Cambodia team and provide a spacious venue for training and events.

[PHOTO GALLERY +](#)

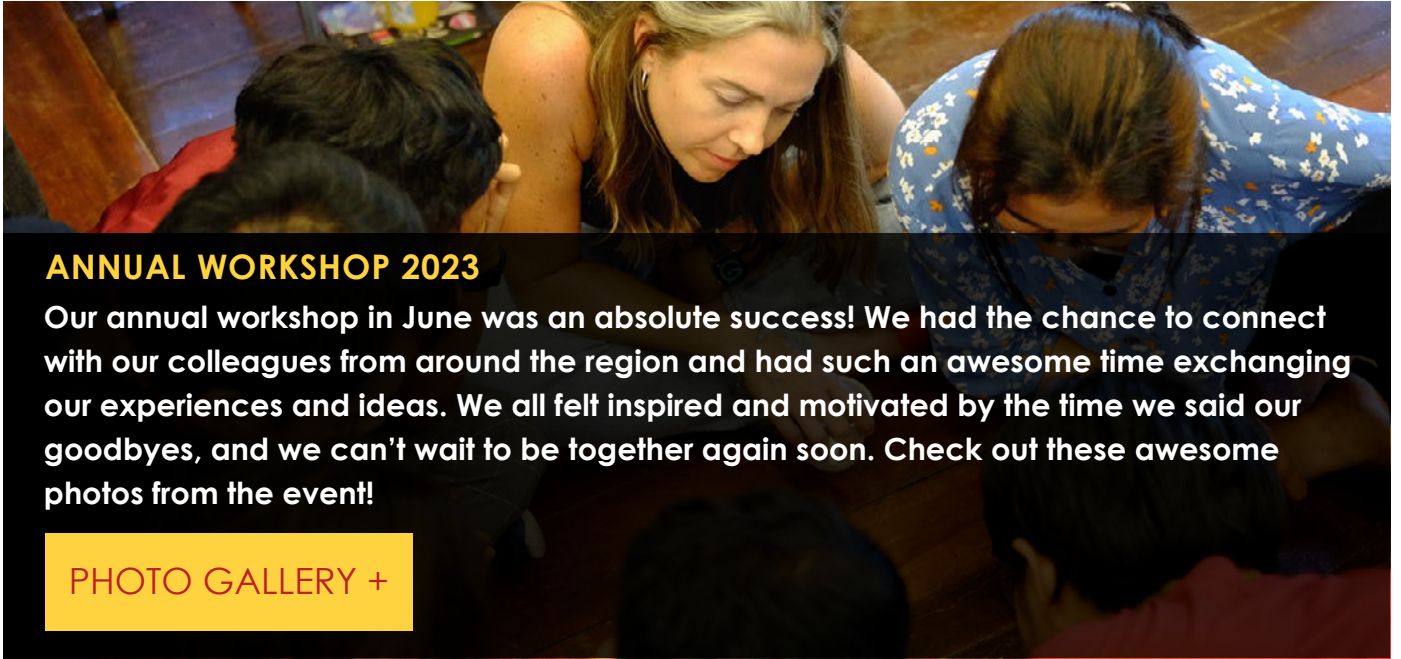
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ANNUAL WORKSHOP 2023

Our annual workshop in June was an absolute success! We had the chance to connect with our colleagues from around the region and had such an awesome time exchanging our experiences and ideas. We all felt inspired and motivated by the time we said our goodbyes, and we can't wait to be together again soon. Check out these awesome photos from the event!

[PHOTO GALLERY +](#)

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