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May Newsletter 2021

In Solidarity With the People of Myanmar

FROM THE FOUNDERS

By Daniel Marco Siegfried

It is like going back in time! Since the military coup in Myanmar in early February, we have been experiencing so many déjà vu. So many things seem all too familiar from the period before 2010; the indiscriminately beating and killings of unarmed civilians including many chil-

dren, the brutal crackdowns, refugees fleeing the airstrikes, the communication problems and frequent power cuts, etc. The main difference is that in the past the atrocities were mostly targeted at ethnic minorities living along the country's peripheral borders. However, this time

the Myanmar military and police attack anybody, who objects the military coup including the Bamar (Burmese) people who live in the middle of the country and populate the two largest cities of Yangon and Mandalay. As a result, the people of the Golden Land have never been more united than now to fight a common enemy.

Despite the people's unity and determination, the future of the country hangs in the balance and nobody can predict the outcome of this ongoing conflict. And although there are many uncertainties, there is one thing that we are sure of; Child's Dream will continue supporting the people of Myanmar, no matter where or how. Compared to our humble start 18 years ago, today we are much better equipped to help with our own strong local Child's Dream team as well as many trustworthy grassroots organisations we work with.

We are fully committed to our health and education programmes in Myanmar as long as our partners are able to implement them. Our vast network of partners throughout the country is equally resolute to maintain their service to our beneficiaries. Many programmes have already been delayed by covid-19 and are now facing security concerns. Only a few programmes had to temporarily halt their activities while others relocated to safer areas or switched to online classes. Our partners especially the ones in ethnic areas have experience in working under adversary conditions and are very resilient and adaptable.

Besides our normal commitments in Myanmar, Child's Dream has already started some emergency relief support to people affected by the military coup including internally displaced persons (IDPs). We also expect thou-

sands of new refugees arriving in Thailand. We are currently providing food, shelter and medical support through our local network in Kayah, Kayin and Kachin State. Given the current dramatic circumstances we anticipate an accelerating need for humanitarian assistance over the next couple of months.

While the interventions by the international community are mostly toothless and often symbolical, we feel that it is our obligations to step up our support to the people of Myanmar. In order to do so, we need your help, as most of the support are unbudgeted emergency expenses.

During the last ten years of democratic progress Myanmar has seen an increase of life expectancy by 3.5 years. The GDP rose from USD 49.5bn to USD 76.1bn while the population living above national poverty line increased from 57.8% to 75.2%. During the same period gross enrollment rate in secondary schools improved from 48.1% to 68.4%. Some of this progress has already been undone by covid-19 and is now permanently threatened by the military coup.

The people of Myanmar know what is a stake here and that is why they are determined to put the military once and for all into its rightful place. They deserve our steadfast support in their struggle for a worthy future.

(PAKA) Participatory Development Knowledge Agency

LAO PDR

By Meghan Jones

PAKA works to create spaces for learning and sharing knowledge, and recognising the importance of gathering evidence from communities for advocacy. In 2020, Child's Dream began supporting PAKA to pilot a new programme aimed at developing an innovative college model in which students' learning is adapted to theories and tested in rural communities with the support of partner organisations. The programme aims to empower students to facilitate community projects based on what communities really need.

Students receive training from PAKA staff and partner organisations. They are then able to put what they learn into practice in a supported environment. The students document their findings, and their research contributes to adapting the learning curriculum

for the next generation of college students. In September of 2020, the first batch of students began their training. They spent three months learning about topics such as volunteerism, leadership, gender in development, community consultation, media communication for community development, and project proposal writing and management. The students then developed community projects to take place in four different provinces in Lao PDR, and are currently in the field implementing their projects and conducting research on their initiatives. With the first batch of students nearing the completion of their first year, PAKA is hard at work selecting the second batch of students, the future leaders in community development in Lao PDR.

Dreams Training Centre

CAMBODIA

By Aidan McAuliffe

One of Child's Dream's higher education partners, Feeding Dreams Cambodia (FDC), has defied the odds by securing employment for over 90% of its recent Dreams Training Centre (DTC) graduates despite the seemingly insurmountable challenges currently faced by the hospitality and tourism sector in Cambodia.

DTC offers a comprehensive curriculum of hospitality training and soft skills education for under-privileged youth in and around Siem Reap who, without this programme, would be vulnerable to working in dangerous and exploitative conditions. DTC strives to ensure that its students avoid this fate, and instead become part of the renowned hospitality sector in Siem Reap.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, Siem Reap saw a 99% drop in the number of arrivals at its international airport: a drastic blow to the city, which is home to over 50% of Cambodia's tourism-related jobs.

Upon completion of the 10-month intensive DTC programme, the graduates are supported by the centre in securing meaningful employment in one of Siem Reap's 4- and 5-star hotels and resorts – a process that is typically without any major obstacles. However, with the tourism and hospitality sector on its knees, how did the majority of the 54 graduates defy the odds and find employment upon graduation?

Mr. Makura Seng, DTC's General Manager, pays credit to the steadfastness of the programme, which follows the ASEAN standard in hospitality training as a baseline for assessing the students' competencies. He affirms that this, coupled with DTC's reputation locally, has given the graduates a competitive edge in a struggling industry.

This latest accomplishment of DTC and its graduates is no mean feat, and gives us further confidence in the centre's commitment to helping youth in Cambodia for years to come.

Home-Based Learning for Migrant Centre

THAILAND

By Meghan Jones

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been felt around the world, but they have been particularly damaging to the migrant community, leaving already at-risk migrant children even more vulnerable: Facing an increased risk of child labour, shortages of food and drinking water, a heightened risk of domestic violence, and widespread depression and anxiety, are just a few hazards migrant children might face. Home based learning (HBL) has been a crucial way to offset these challenges, keeping migrant children safe, engaged and connected to their Migrant Learning Centres with the teachers regularly travelling to their students' villages. With this they also ensured that migrant children in Mae Sot have the opportunity to complete their academic year.

Back in June 2020, Child's Dream responded to an initial call to action to support HBL for

migrant children in the Mae Sot area of Thailand. Mae Sot is located on the Myanmar border and has a high migrant population. We collaborated with our partners to support the transition of almost 10,000 migrant children to HBL, as migrant learning centres were not allowed to open, and there was a serious risk of migrant children dropping out of school and becoming child labourers.

In December 2020, we responded to a call to action once again to continue the support of HBL for at-risk migrant children in Mae Sot. Joining forces again with our partners, we continued to make sure that migrant children could receive educational opportunities after a second wave of COVID-19 hit Thailand. With the support of our dedicated donors and the hard work of our devoted partners, we were able to provide stipends and supplies to migrant teachers.

Empowered Youth as the Agents of Positive Change in Myanmar

MYANMAR

By Daniel Marco Siegfried

Child's Dream has been supporting the Myint-mo Education Foundation (MEF), formerly also known as Myanmar Community Academies Programme (MCAP), since 2013. MEF currently operates five academies in the following ethnic states: Kayin (Karen), Kayah (Karenni), Kachin, Shan and Chin. Their aim is to support potential socially-engaged youth from diverse backgrounds in developing their skills and abilities to make positive changes in their communities. They achieve this by running a 2-year intensive academic programme focusing on general knowledge, social science, English language, computer skills, social entrepreneurship, project management and community development. This will enhance the students' capacity to analyse local issues, increase their ability to

formulate creative strategies to make positive change and to make connections with groups where they can initiate community development projects.

MEF was recently included in our impact analysis and the results are very encouraging. Since their inception these academies enrolled a total of 977 students, of which 58% were female students. 85% of the alumni are working or furthering their education. 71% of working students are employed in the non-profit section in the field of education, gender protection and human rights, economic development and environmental sustainability. An overwhelming 86% of alumni have or have had a job focused on community development since graduation.

Tomato Village Women – Aoi's Journey

OUR HEROES

By Aoi Khampan

It doesn't matter where we come from; it's important where we go." My name is Aoi Khampan, I am a Shan ethnic who was born in Mae Hong Son Thai-Myanmar border. I grew up in terrible situations of politic, border-war and economic, for my family "survival" was the most important thing at the time. Fortunately,

I have a chance to taste the education and opportunity to go to school. Education is very important in my life, because it is a key to freedom and the only way to change our family to be better. I worked hard to be an educated person and to have an equal right as human being. Many times, we are being treated differ-

ently and discriminated due to our background being hill tribe children and stateless parents. I keep fighting and always thinking a person's value is in the outcome of actions.

Education changes my life a lot. My adventure started when I have received a bachelor degree full-scholarship from Child's dream and after 4 years I graduated from Mae Fah Luang University in Business Chinese major with 2nd Class honors. Those university years give me a lot of confident in the society. In Year2013-2015, I have obtained my master degree in MBA with full-scholarship from China Government. Since then I have opportunity to learn more about international society and business frame work. During my studies in China, I have done my internship training with Thai ministry of commerce in China as a business interpreter which allowed me to have a new experience. Learning is not only in the classroom; know-how

and you need to know-who. My philosophy is "be honest, optimistic, friendly, like to help others and enjoy the social activities" those are the most effective and easy way to find connection in our society.

I'm not the BEST but I'm trying MY BEST

I'm not a genius however I am a quick learner, more diligent and focused so that I can achieve my plans easier. Today, I have my own business and whenever people calls me Khun Aoi, boss, leader that sound reminding me of my hard-working mentality, these words cannot buy with money. I have not achieved my ultimate goal yet and still keep trying my best. Today I share my story in the hope of inspiration to you all. "Don't stop when you are tired, stop when you are done."

FROM THE OFFICE

Academic Excellence Awards

Congratulations to all our University Scholarship students who received an academic excellence award! Nine students study at Asia Pacific International University (Saraburi, Thailand) and one student studies at Thammasat University (Bangkok, Thailand). We are so proud of you all and your amazing accomplishments! Well done!

Impact Report 2020

237,034

direct beneficiaries reached by currently active projects as of March 2021

908,787

direct beneficiaries reached by currently active and inactive projects as of March 2021

831

active projects as of March 2021