



LE SOURIRE DE CHIANG KHONG

NEWSLETTER 2016

EDITO

THANK YOU!



This newsletter is a prism of stories and issues from our daily lives.

In the first article, Prapapone and Barbara address the question of the reception and follow-up of children to whom we offer schooling.

Then you will discover life stories. That of Anoucha, the destitute child who became a mechanic and is aiming for university. That of his younger brother who unfortunately plunged into drugs. That of Soukania who, without schooling, would never have obtained a business diploma or a good job. That of his mother Sukram, who is involved with the local staff. Ninatcha's journey, the business student who gives her time to administrative work. That of her mother Lamdouane, our cook, and her husband Lung Phan, the precious handyman.

Le Sourire's educational approach is based on sports, especially if the young people themselves organise their sports day!

Two articles deal with water and fire, sources of both concern and energy. This is followed by the testimony of a team of Scouts and Guides from France.

In Switzerland, the Smile of Chiang Khong is actively seeking funds, whether through sponsorships, foundations, cities and towns, donations or initiatives such as that of La Providence.

Thank you all for your unfailing support. And happy reading!

Lisa de Beauregard, President

Reception and follow-up

What are our reception criteria? We are regularly asked this question. Here is what Barbara and Prapapone have to say.

"Faced with an ever-increasing demand, we stick to certain principles, the first of which is to know the child well before committing ourselves to a long-term schooling.

It is often a village chief, a school, or sometimes a missionary, who informs us of children who are particularly deprived or in the grip of a difficult family situation. We then contact the family and follow the child for at least two years before his or her final admission. Children are admitted immediately in cases of extreme urgency: orphans, victims of violence or others.

Generally, children enter the home at an early age and adapt to it without difficulty, in a natural way.

Throughout the year, we carefully monitor the children's academic school results to see what each child is capable of. The vast majority of our young people complete compulsory school. Some of them are taken back by their parents when they move, die in the family or for any other reason. We regret this very much, but we take comfort in the fact that they will not have remained illiterate and that the education they have received will help them on their way through life.

As teenagers, there are those who want to continue their schooling, aiming for a vocational school or even university entrance. The conditions are becoming stricter and the young people know it. This is also the age of teenage crises and periods of discouragement, phases that are resolved by dialogue, listening, patience, humour and by the awareness that these young people have of the opportunity that they have been given.

In general, our students achieve excellent results. excellent results. With the agreement of the school, we choose the places of work experience ourselves in order to ensure a high quality of practical training. The less gifted students go to extracurricular institutions that train them in manual and practical activities that are useful for their integration into the world of work.

Unfortunately, there are times when the contract of trust is breached. This is rare, but we do not tolerate any unacceptable behaviour such as repeated theft, uncontrolled violence, prolonged and unjustified absence from school or drug use. In such cases, we call the parents together to look for a solution and to set objectives for the young person to achieve. If they fail, Le Sourire stops its support.

With time and experience, we have learned the right balance of rigour and trust. The blossoming of all these young people on the threshold of active life is the best proof of this.
Your generous commitment is all the more precious to us. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for them !"

A sponsee in his village

Some of Le Sourire's children live in their village, as long as they have a minimum of family and school structure. Anoucha is one of them.



Anoucha and his younger brother were born in the nearby village of Chiang Khian. From an early age, Anoucha was curious, alert and thirsty for knowledge. However, his family's extreme poverty prevented him from attending a government school. Prapapone and Barbara learn of his situation when they pass through the village. They decided to help him and enrolled him in the village school.

The boy easily passed his primary education and completed his secondary education with enthusiasm. Then he entered the vocational school in Thoeng to become a mechanic. In the evenings, he finds jobs to help pay for his education. In order not to go home every night, he stayed in a temple and did odd jobs in the garden. On Saturdays, he often comes to the hostel to cut the grass with us.

After five years of training, Anoucha has just graduated and is waiting for a possible admission to the army. In Thailand, all young people are obliged to do military service; A draw determines the men of the continent. If fate decides otherwise, Anoucha will continue his studies at the University. The young man shows exceptional strength and we have every confidence in his future.

At the time, we intended to give his younger brother the same chance. However, after a few years, he suddenly lost interest in school, turned to games and pleasures and plunged into the harmful world of drugs. Together with the school, we intervened with him and his parents, to no avail. The day the teachers told us that he was trying to get his friends to use drugs, we stopped our support.

It is always with great regret that we have to take this kind of decision. It feels like a heartbreak. But the rules of the game are clear and we cannot support such behaviour under any circumstances.

Like daughter, like mother

Soukania, we met in Ban Sanchoum, a village supported by Le Sourire. She shared a miserable existence with her parents, living on the meagre produce of their own harvest. To improve the ordinary, her mother helped out in the school kitchen. Touched by their modesty, we proposed to

Soukania to send her to school, a proposal that the parents welcomed with gratitude.



The girl showed exemplary application in class and successfully completed her primary and secondary education.

Then she wanted to enter a vocational school. We had to negotiate hard with her father who did not see the point of his daughter's choice. By dint of insistence, we got her to train in the commercial field.

She passed her diploma with flying colours and found a good job in Chiang Rai.



In the meantime, the father's health had seriously deteriorated and the burden of the family had fallen on the shoulders of Sukram, the mother.

The farm work became too heavy and the meagre salary earned at the village school proved insufficient.

We then offered Sukram a regular job as a cleaner. Strongly encouraged by her daughter Soukania, Sukram accepted our offer.

Sukram accepted our offer and has been looking after the girls' changing rooms and showers for two years. She is part of our staff of local people and is loved and appreciated for her loyalty and pleasant character. One man's happiness is another man's happiness! happiness is another person's happiness!

Water



In Thailand, it is unthinkable to talk about agriculture without mentioning the royal projects launched to encourage the northern hill tribes to change their way of life. One of these is a model of food self-sufficiency by introducing fruit and vegetable crops as alternatives to opium poppy cultivation, using natural mountain water sources.

In the home, we are inspired by the logic of these projects designed by the King himself, a learned character who, from a very young age, has taken a great interest in the defence of the environment. He has surrounded himself with a scientific world and supports countless research projects in this area. Perfectly at ease in this environment, the King has the gift of communicating his ideas to his people by means of parables.



The famous project "the monkey cheeks" is a good example. Just as the monkey stores food in its cheeks, this project suggests building up natural water reserves. Rainwater harvesting systems are used to irrigate the rice fields to produce two harvests a year. This year, however, due to lack of rainfall, the government is only allowing one crop!

In addition to having two ponds on our land, we have created several ponds to store rainwater. On the ingenious initiative of one of our teenagers who goes to technical school, we have developed an ingenious pumping system with a simple bicycle connected to a pump. The water is drawn by pedal power and directed to the crops and gardens through a network of small channels.

Several such bicycles have been installed and, for our young people, watering is a game and a sport. There is never a shortage of candidates for pedalling !



The management of our water is of prime importance. We had to build five water towers, fed by three boreholes, and adapt our water system each time. A sixth tower is in preparation.

The installations are not immune to the intermittent earthquakes in the region. There have been cases where villages have had to replace theirs. We hope it won't come to that !





Fire threatening or contained

To clear and fertilise the land, the ancient practice of slash-and-burn is still very much alive in the minds of farmers. This harmful technique accelerates deforestation, makes the soil unstable, pollutes the air and causes a mist that irritates the eyes and respiratory tract.

In Thailand, all precautions should be taken in February/ March. Our teenagers know the danger of slash-and-burn and remind us of it every year.

We are in the middle of the countryside and surrounded by fields and forests. Before the fire season, we create a safety corridor around the perimeter of the property, 4 to 6 metres wide, free of all grass, plants, wood and other flammable objects. This fire prevention technique is proving effective and our young people apply it with great care.

In the hostel, cooking is still done mainly on a wood fire.

With the number of boarders constantly increasing, we have started the construction of a new, rational and efficient kitchen. and efficient kitchen.

Last winter was exceptionally cold. To keep warm, especially after the cold shower in the evening, the children lit little fires all over the place. Fire is their story, they know how to make it with anything, control it and put it out perfectly according to the rules.



Lamdouane's kitchen

Before becoming the cook at Le Sourire, Lamdouane was divorced and had two children. Her economic situation did not allow her to support her children, so they were entrusted to their father and left to their fate in an unhealthy environment. Lamdouane suffered enormously from her precariousness and her powerlessness to act. She finally found precious support in the person of Lung Phan, who became her second husband. The couple knocked on Le Sourire's door and we hired them. By serving family cuisine, Lamdouane won everyone's sympathy. As for Lung Phan, he drives the children to primary school, manages all the agricultural work and lends a hand with all sorts of jobs. As Lamdouane's standard of living stabilised, she was given custody of the children. Since then, her daughter Ninatcha, 16, and her son Noppone, 11, have been attending school with the help of Le Sourire and the little family is reunited in the home. Ninatcha has chosen the commercial field and is primarily interested in accounting. She practices her trade by providing valuable assistance to our administrative work. In addition, during the summer holidays, she found a trainee position with a fiduciary with whom we collaborate.

Sports day

As 22 February was a public holiday, the 180 children of the home took the initiative to make this Monday a sports day. They managed the whole event. From four o'clock in the morning, young and old alike woke up to bursts of laughter. The atmosphere is joyful.



A varied, rich and amusing programme is set up: a football match for the boys with a great team of girls, basketball, volleyball and taklo, a national sport where the players are in a circle and pass a hard ball, made of rattan, using all parts of the body except the hands. The little ones have a blast in playful jousts, designed for them by the older ones.



To encourage the players, the omnipresent supporters go wild in a noisy and humorous atmosphere, all under the benevolent eye of our staff, Pii Sor, Pii Niou and Pii Mine.

young people at lunchtime! They ran under a blazing sun, had fun and spent themselves like all the children in the world and in the evening they fell asleep, exhausted and so happy !





Scouts of France stay

"It is with the desire to discover a culture, to share strong moments but also with a little apprehension to plunge into the unknown that we arrived at Le Sourire de Chiang Khong on July 12th 2015. Barbara and Prapapone came to pick us up in Chiang Rai and, once we arrived at the home, the first exchanges with the children were quickly made mainly around different games. Then, all fear disappeared to make room for the discovery of the other. The evening itself was a particularly memorable moment as the children gave us each a nickname for fruits, plants and flowers. The contact, both with the children and with the staff, was easy despite the language barrier.

Our days were mainly filled with cutting, sorting and grinding corn, as well as various activities such as Thai cooking and fishing in the hostel lake. Finally, when the children came home from school, after their homework was done, one hour of daily work was devoted to the household. During this time, each of us would leave with a small group. These were privileged moments for us when the children guided us in the tasks to be done, opened up to us completely and taught us to count and to say a few words in Thai. We were marked by the confidence that the children and the staff had in us. They were able to show us the life of the home, accompany us in the tasks and give us motivation and energy. The end of the day was marked by a meal with the children, a time of prayer and then sometimes by games, ping-pong and frantic football matches in the rain.

We had the opportunity to go on excursions, including one where Barbara and Prapapone took us on a tour of the schools where Le Sourire sponsors children. During these excursions, Barbara, Prapapone and the staff were keen to introduce us to the Thai culture by letting us taste local specialities, seeing temples, villages and the Thai border at the Golden Triangle.

During and after our stay in Thailand, we took time to reflect on what we were experiencing and how we felt. We were struck by the respect the children had for us, but more importantly for each other and the things around them. It was amazing to see at It was amazing to see how close the children's relationship was between them, a bit like a family, and we called each other "big brother" and "big sister".

In the hostel, the children are confronted with responsibilities from a very early age, which allows them to develop their autonomy and their sense of responsibility. In this way, we found in the operation of the hostel, values inculcated within scouting, in particular the fact of trusting young people, of making them responsible so that they can blossom in their actions and that the older ones take care of the younger ones.

In the end, the experience did not end when we left. First of all, we left with a lot of memories, but above all, we left with a lot of growth from the time we spent with the children. Every day the image of the smile, the joy and the welcome of the children is with us. "

Elise, Tristan, Eva, Victoire, Henri, Charles-Lancelot

Nice initiative

A few years ago, Barbara brought back a bag full of black cloth strips beautifully cross-stitched by the children of Le Sourire de Chiang Khong. In the villages of northern Thailand, these embroideries decorate the clothes of men and women of certain ethnic groups.



Mireille Juillard, a member of the Association's committee, is meticulous and skilful with her fingers. She has come up with some very nice ideas for making different items with these very colourful braids. She presents cases for glasses, mobile phones, tablet bags, placemats and many other items in different places and markets.

The Hôpital de la Providence in Vevey, where I work, was kind enough to receive her twice before Christmas. A stand was set up in the entrance hall with information about the association, leaflets, photos of the home and the children, as well as the beautiful articles made by Mireille. The gift ideas were very popular with the visitors and staff. All the proceeds from the sales were donated to the children of Le Sourire.

Well done to Mireille. And if you want to see this beautiful craft and contribute to our action, come to Martigny to the Festival des Cinq Continents on 17 and 18 June 2016.

Nicole, membre du Comité



Film "Children of the Golden Triangle "

Claude Schauli's third report on the work of Le Sourire de Chiang Khong shows admirably the approach of Barbara and Prapapone. It can be viewed on www.lesourire.org or ordered on DVD for Fr 20 from the director. clschauli@bluewin.ch.

Picnic of Sourire

Invitation

The traditional picnic for sponsors and friends will take place on Sunday 4 September 2016 at the Mas de la Borgne in Bra- mois-Sion. Everyone can register on comite@lesourire.ch.

The Committee

Lisa de Beauregard, President, Geneva; Jean-Marc Juillard, Vice-President, Coppet; Roland Sprenger, Vice-President, Sion; Georges-Alain Zufferey, Treasurer, Sion; Nicole Fivaz, Blonay; Anita Fumeaux, Sion ; Peter Gautschi, Arbaz ; Thekla Gautschi-Michel, Arbaz ; Nathalie Jacquier, Genthod ; Mireille Juillard, Coppet ; Babeth Schlegel, Sion ; Willy Schlegel, Sion; as well as co-founders Barbara Gautschi and Prapapone Khotsanlee, in Thailand.

HOW TO HELP THE CHILDREN OF SOURIRE

...IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY

A sponsorship corresponds to the payment of 50 francs per month or equivalent in Euros

It allows a child to be welcomed into the home, fed, housed, educated, cared for and given free time activities.

When the family and school structure allows it, a child can be sponsored while remaining in his or her village.

An application form is available on the Internet. A simple contact with the association is also sufficient.

...ON AN AD HOC BASIS

Through a donation or the support of a project

CCP 17-185665-4 Le Sourire de Chiang Khong

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Le Sourire de Chiang Khong

The updated list of projects is available on request.

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A very warm thank you to Imprimerie Gessler SA in Sion for printing this publication.

At the request of loyal readers, we enclose a payment slip with the newsletter

THE TREE OF THESOURIRE

In the course of his life, every man should plant at least ONE tree, says a Russian maxim. Planting a tree is a gift to another age.

When we set foot on the site of the future home of the Smile, there were moors and rice fields as far as the eye could see. There was not a single tree to take shelter in, not a shady spot!

Today, the picture has changed completely. Dozens of trees, bushes and all sorts of plants have been planted. This is the work of the young people of the home who have ingeniously developed a luxuriant vegetation from simple cuttings, which they arrange and maintain with care. Mother Nature's gift to us is the abundance of birds of all kinds, magnificent butterflies, busy creatures and buzzing insects

and buzzing insects stop by in the middle of this quiet and beneficial greenery. Thanks to your support, our orchard has been enriched with fruit trees of all kinds.

We like to think of the Smile as a giant tree, planted with confidence, rooted in hope and growing with perseverance, nourished by a rain of incredible generosity. Surrounded by many good people, it shelters and protects a myriad of birds; some make their nest to stay, others leave and sometimes return, without forgetting the birds of passage... When they fly away to their future, we can see that they have grown, taking with them a richness that they will happily transmit beyond our hills.

A big thank you to all of you!

Prapapone Barbara

... and all their birds

