

2015 Report



- In 2015 our Child protection and family support team worked with 124 families, supporting 259 Children and 157 adults.
- 114 Children have benefited from our social Welfare Support.
- 660 Children attended our prevention activities in local schools and community settings.
- 15 families attended our family camps.
- 102 Children were supported to start school or stay in school.
- 27 Children received support from our alternative care project

Thank you for making this possible

Child Protection and Family Support



We work to keep families together. We aim that poor families are able to provide adequate food, care and shelter for their children without having to place them in a local children's home or take them out of school to go to work.

This year we have provided counselling, financial help, family reconciliation, legal advice, advocacy (including for children with physical and mental disabilities), support with education, protection, opportunities to increase income and training for home based food production. As always a major area of support has been with access to medical care, advocating, translating and financial support.

Social Welfare



10 families have successfully used the training in home based food production this year. One large family is actually selling vegetables at the market each day whereas before they were spending money.

Each month we support around 20 families with additional food. Sometimes this is short term support to help the family through an acute crisis such as ill health preventing the main earner from working. In other cases we are committed to long term support such as with large single parent families who do not have enough income despite working hard.

Such families are high risk for school dropout or placing children in children's homes. We are slowly increasing the number of these families that we support.



We work hard to understand the root causes of poverty and how people survive on the smallest of incomes. The dry season brings work, collecting and drying grass for making brooms and the tapioca harvest. But with the rainy season just a few weeks away we are concerned at the impact of the world slump in rubber sales. Rubber is central to the local economy in Sangkhlaburi, but current prices are less than 25% compared to 3 years ago. There will be less work available this year, pushing more parents to consider leaving for the city or placing their children in a children's home.

Family Camp



The team ran 2 family camps in 2015. They are run at weekends so that children don't miss school. For 2 days and one night we take families away from the daily pressures they face and everyone stays at a good local resort.

Good food, good fun and a series of exercises to help parents and children understand each other more. Parents and children share with each other the challenges they face and draw strength from each other.

Before the camp we take a group photo for each family and we have these made into jigsaw puzzles. It's great to see families work together to build their family portrait.

Prevention



We ran 3 programs in 2015:

The World Starts with me is a 7 session course teaching young children about their body parts, about feelings, and about what to do if they don't feel safe. We assess the children before and after the training and can identify clear development in their confidence and their ability to recognise danger and to ask for help. 352 kindergarten children have completed this course in 2015.

Condensed 1 session World Starts with me run in 7 community settings in the school holidays, 181 children attended.

Power Plus 1 day session to build confidence and self-esteem with primary school children, 127 children attended.

Children with Special Needs

This year we advocated for a group of non-Thai children to access the provincial special needs school. This was the first time in the province that non Thai children had attended these schools. In more developed countries these children would probably be in mainstream school. But at this stage in Thailand it is not an option. It is

very exciting to see these children gain the same rights as Thai children, although we hope one day they will be able to receive the support they need closer to home.

We continue to support a small number of local children whose behaviour causes challenges for their parents. Working together on techniques to manage this positively and developing games and exercises to improve concentration, motor skills and communication.

School Support



We designed a new poster this year in Thai and Burmese language informing children and their parents about their rights to education and how to navigate the enrolment process for Thai school. We also gave our phone number for anyone needing help. We put up 250 posters in the weeks leading up to the new school year starting 16th May.



The team also held 30 informal information sessions in local communities sharing with parents how to enrol their children in school.

For parents with very low confidence, afraid because they have no ID card or who cannot speak any Thai we accompanied them for the enrolment process. We provided uniforms and transport costs for the poorest families with 102 children supported this year.



In 2015 we have been looking closely at why so few children are going to middle school and then high school. We looked at the average income of many local families and we can see that the additional cost of transport, more uniforms (high school requires several different uniforms in Thailand) and paying for lunch (free at primary school) is too much for families earning the standard local wage of 100 baht per day.

For the coming school year we are targeting 2 distant primary schools with very low numbers of children moving on to the middle school. We will meet them all near the end of this academic year and work with them to see their plans for the coming year. For those unable to continue in education we will visit at home to find solutions with them and their parents. This will include financial support to cover the increased costs compared to attending primary school.

In the future we hope to offer this support to children in all of the local primary schools. But this is what we can offer at the moment with the resources we have.



This year we have maintained our basic school in Sam Pan Rai, a remote rubber plantation.

By providing a teacher 3 days per week we aim to improve the Thai reading, writing and speaking ability of these children so that when their families move the children can readily attend the local Thai school.

20 children have attended the school in 2015.

The villagers built the school themselves when we offered to provide a teacher.

Alternative Care



Category	Number of children
Reintegration to family	8
Family tracing	6
Children leaving care	2
Maintaining Family links	2
Prevention of entering children's homes*	8
Other alternative care	1
Total	27

*Note – this is the number of prevention cases worked with by the One Sky Alternative Care coordinator. Many of the family support cases with the child protection team can also be considered to fit in this category but are counted under CP team data.

Children's homes worked with	3
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We have worked hard this year to educate ourselves and to develop an effective service to re connect children living in children's homes and to work towards reintegration of these children back to their families.

We saw the need for this work when we interviewed all 605 children living in the 17 local children's homes in December 2014. 90% of the children have at least one living parent and most told us that they live in the home because their parents are too poor to feed them and send them to school.

Our journey since then has taken us to London for training with JK Rowling's Foundation, Lumos, working on this issue in Eastern Europe for 10 years now. We are active members of the Thailand Convention on the Rights of the Child coalition working to raise awareness about the huge number of children living in institutions in Thailand. We have received regular training from the Residential Care Network based in Cambodia.

We face significant resistance from local children's homes to the idea that children could be living with their families. But the more times we go through the process of re connection and we see what it means to these families to be together, the more convinced we become that things must change and we will continue to commit our energy and resources into bringing more families back together.



Income Generation





Thank you to Children At Risk in Asia and the Missing Sock for keeping our income generation projects alive this year by selling our brooms in the UK. Also thanks to Ann, Julie-Ann and Richard for their ongoing support selling brooms in Bangkok. Giving families a chance to earn enough income and not to rely on charity maintains their dignity.



Highlights of 2015

Training with Lumos Foundation in London



We were very lucky for 3 One Sky staff to be accepted onto the 4 day training course on de institutionalisation (the process of moving from institutional care of children to family based care) with Lumos Foundation in London in July 2015. Lumos Foundation was started by JK Rowling 10 years ago.



“No child should be denied a family life because they are poor, disabled or from an ethnic minority. Lumos works to support the 8 million children living in institutions worldwide to regain their right to a family life and to end the Institutionalisation of children”

This was a great chance to meet with others from around the world and to learn and share together. Sometimes we feel very isolated in Sangkhlaburi as we work for change. But being part of a growing international network of professional organisations and sharing the same goals with them builds our confidence and determination.

Harrow School Exchange



This year we connected our friends at Harrow School with our close local partner Bop Htaw, a training program for young Mon teachers who will go back into Myanmar to teach in very remote and basic schools.

The 2 groups of students came together for 3 days, learning about each other's lives and working together to plan and run fun activities in a local school.

Thanks to Harrow School for their financial support to Bop Htaw. Improving the quality of education in villages across the border will eventually reduce the number of children leaving their families to live in Thai children's homes.

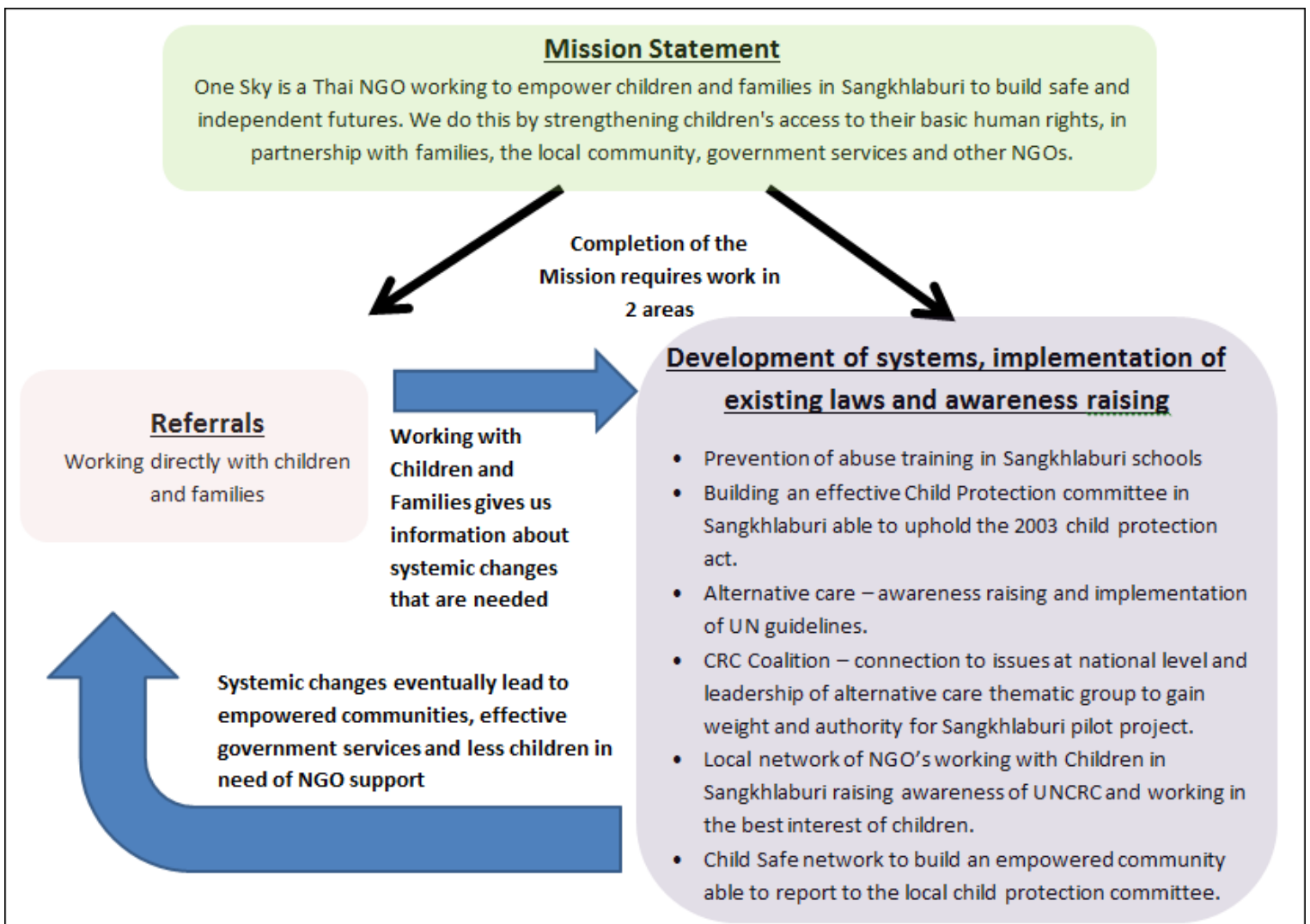
Gift of Happiness Foundation

We were happy to host Gift of Happiness Foundation again this year, with performances at several of our local schools.

This is the 3rd year we have worked together and we are always happy when Eddie and his volunteers come to Sangkhlaburi to spread a little joy and laughter



The Way Ahead



In 2015 we:

- Started the Sangkhlaburi working with Children network – trying to bring organisations working with children together and to raise standards.
- Advocated for special needs children with no Thai ID to be able to attend special needs school for the first time in Kanchanaburi province.
- Worked with the chair of our board to promote the need for an official child protection committee in Sangkhlaburi at provincial and government level.
- The provincial committee recently instructed Amphur Sangkhlaburi that it must uphold its legal obligation to form a child protection committee. We hope to see this happen in 2016 and for One Sky to be a key member.
- Translated an excellent comic book story about children living in children's homes in Cambodia – our Thai version is due for release in March.
- Made a short film in Thai language (Eng subtitles) showing the story of a family reunited after the children spent 4 years in a children's home. (To be released in March).
- Provided Thai subtitles for the most recent Lumos video narrated by JK Rowling.
- Provided Thai subtitles for a film called "Why not a family" made in Cambodia.
- Lobbied the central Thailand committee for child protection with the help of our chairperson and Child Line Thailand. We were then invited to submit our ideas in writing for a possible solution to the issue of unregulated children's homes in Sangkhlaburi. We are currently waiting for a response.
- We are working alongside colleagues in the national CRC coalition Alternative Care working group to lobby the Thai government to follow Cambodia's lead and to commission a national survey to quantify the number of unregistered children's homes in Thailand and how many children are living in them.
- Thanks to a lot of hard work from our volunteers Karen and James we have a great website www.oneskyfoundation.org the Thai version of the website should be live before the end of February.
- Thanks to leadership from our volunteer Karen, we have begun a mapping and research project reaching across the border into Payathounzou, the Myanmar town across from Thailand's 3 Pagodas Pass.

The opening of an official border crossing here is imminent and with many of the families we support living their lives on both sides of the border it is essential that we start to explore how we can support the early development of child protection services across the border.

We hope to draw on our own experiences of the last few years to support colleagues in Myanmar who are interested in becoming partners sharing the goal of supporting vulnerable children and their families.

THANK YOU for your continued support. This year more than ever we have received support from a huge number of people giving their time, expertise, energy, money and encouragement. Without your help none of this would be possible.

The One Sky Team
www.oneskyfoundation.org
February 2016.



Supporting Vulnerable Children and their Families.

