

Impact Report 2019

Jojo's Sanctuary:
Building Family Dreams



jojo's sanctuary
THAILAND

About Jojo's Sanctuary

Jojo's Sanctuary was named in honor of Jojo, an 8-year-old boy who died as a result of child abuse. He was living in informal foster care with a relative who didn't have the skills to care for him well and didn't know a form of discipline other than physical abuse. We started the Building Family Dreams program to equip families with the skills needed for children to grow up in safe and nurturing homes in the hopes of preventing another child from suffering as Jojo did.



Building Family Dreams

Over the course of 18 months, we help strengthen family relationships as parents and children learn, heal and grow together. We alternate training workshops with family field trips. Topics include healthy family dynamics, good nutrition and financial management, while outings are to local destinations such as museums, swimming pools or waterfalls. We also provide grants to families in order to improve their economic stability with income generating activities such as sewing, opening a noodle shop, or raising livestock.



Sample Size & Location

Our pilot project of Building Family Dreams was done in the Lahu Pa Mai Dang village in the Doi Saket district of Chiang Mai. It consisted of 33 people from 8 families. We were introduced to this village by one of our co-founders, Orawan Phuankrugkaew, who had heard and seen of the difficulties this village faced. There was a high rate of school dropouts, teen pregnancy, children being raised in orphanages instead of with their families and high rates of poverty. We began doing child protection trainings for the village in spring of 2017. At the conclusion of these trainings, we asked the parents if they were interested in learning positive parenting skills. They agreed, and we did a 3 week training on Love and Logic parenting. During this time, we got to know some of the village council members, specifically Somboon. We shared with him our vision for the Building Family Dreams project and he presented it to the council, who then presented it to the village in a community meeting. The village council assisted interested families in filling out applications and decided on the families who would benefit most from the program.

We chose 7 families from the Pa Mai Dang village and invited an 8th Lahu family from the Mae Rim area of Chiang Mai to join and be our translators from Thai to Lahu for maximum effectiveness.

We conducted interviews in group settings and conducted evaluations through surveys and questionnaires at program completion. We also had the village council do weekly home visits and quarterly evaluations to track progress. We determined at the end of the program that the format for doing the evaluations was too detailed for the village members to follow, so we will be adjusting our evidence collection method in future programs so as to obtain accurate measurements of progress.



Family Imapcts

The number one reason for family separation in Thailand is poverty. Recent research indicates that up to 95% of the nearly 100,000 children living in Thai orphanages and children's homes have family who could take care of them. Fewer than 10% of these children live in government-run homes, and more than 50% of private homes are unregistered, with no oversight from the social welfare department. This leaves children highly vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and severe mental deficits.

In addition, the cost for a child living in a children's home is up to 8 TIMES more expensive than supporting a child to live with their family.

The goal of the Building Family Dreams program was to encourage and equip low income families to care for their children in the family home. When we began the program, every family either already had children living in a children's home, or was about to send their child or children to live in one. By the time we completed the program, only one child was living outside the family home and since program completion has returned to her family.



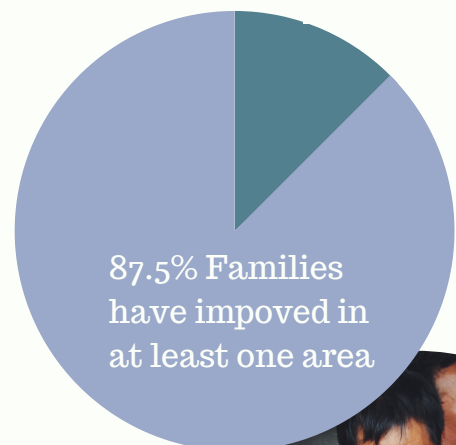
Cheapest
Safest
Healthiest

Family Impacts

Through regular home visits and accessibility of the Jojo's Sanctuary team and local village council, we helped the parents see the value of their culture and their important role in the lives of their children. All eight families report that they have either more hope or significantly more hope for the future of their family, 7 of the 8 families have learned new skills in how to relate to one another and 7 of 8 families report that they have seen their family relationships improve over the course of the BFD program. All families reported feeling safe or very safe with the BFD staff and that they could trust the staff. Seven of eight families were comfortable with the number of home visits they received

“Do you feel like you and your family have more value now?”

- *Our daily lives have improved dramatically*
- *I feel like my life and family has value now.*
- *I think we have lots of value! I know my family more and my family is closer now than before.*
- *Yes, more value and we are able to use the things we have learned when interacting with our families.*
- *We have gotten encouragement to not give up. When we went on field trips, we were excited to see new and different things and we were really impressed with all the places we went.*



Psychosocial Impact

A psychosocial impact is difficult to quantify, but we all know that healthy emotional and psychological well being is critical to a strong family and good parenting. We support mental and emotional health of the families by helping alleviate some of the major stressors parents face, including school tuition and uniform fees, livelihood and providing advice and assistance in dealing with difficult situations with their children.

Feedback from families: all the families reported having more hope for the future and that their lives had improved since starting the program. This reflects the positive outlook the families have gained through BFD.

“I was very glad for the economic empowerment program to improve my livelihood. We were very happy to join this program because we learned so many new things, did many new activities and spent quality time with our family.”

“This program helped our family learn so many things and have many experiences together. Thank you so much for Jojo’s Sanctuary and the staff supporting us this way.”

“I learned about how to live in harmony with my family and with others. As for my mental state, in my daily life, I learned how to rest in God’s presence and my family came to know God better.”



Economic Impact

Economic Empowerment Program

Financial instability is the main reason children in Thailand are placed in orphanages or children's homes. The families in Pa Mai Dang mainly make their living as day laborers, either in the fields or as housekeepers. We asked them to think about something they could do to give them a boost in their finances and write up individual budgets and how this would help their family become more stable.

The income generating grant is not a cash grant, but our BFD staff accompanied each family to purchase the supplies they needed to start their project. We also invited a financial planner to teach how to make a household budget and to track finances.

Many of the families cited this as a major benefit in their lives. None had ever made a budget before. Eight-seven percent of the families report using the financial planning skills they learned on a regular or semi-regular basis. Since beginning the income generating projects, 75% of families have been able to pay down debt and 63% have also begun saving money.

Income generating projects:

Raising pigs

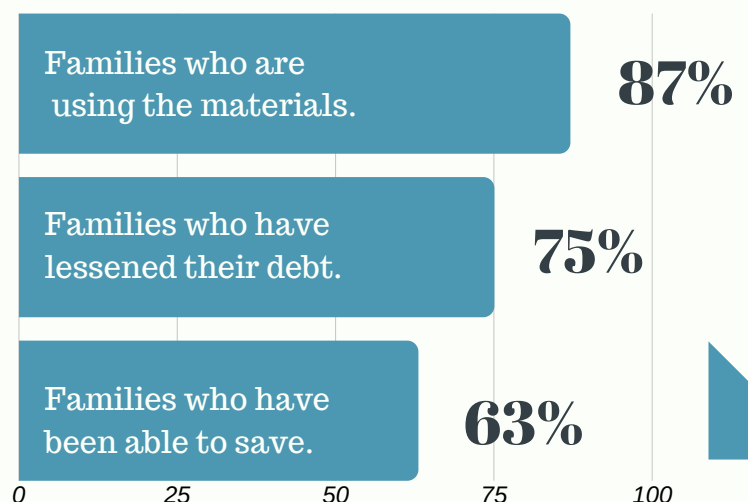
Raising chickens

Raising cattle

Sewing

Welding materials

Gardening materials



Educational Impact

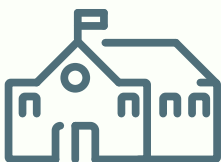
Education is highly valued in Thai society, despite the fact that Thailand ranks as one of the lowest in educational standards. Another major reason given by poor or tribal families for why children are placed in institutions is the lack of quality education in their area, or the lack of parents to be able to assist in homework due to their own lack of education. In addition to this, while education is technically free, parents are still expected to purchase school supplies, school books and uniforms, which can often be a daunting prospect, especially if a family has more than one child.

This is why our BFD program provides educational scholarships to cover the cost of uniforms and, if needed, assist with other school fees. The average cost of one set of school uniforms is around \$100 per child, with most parents in this village making about \$5-8 a day. This means it costs two weeks or more of salary just to purchase uniforms for one child. School books are an additional \$60 per semester. Rural schools have limited scholarships since most people in the area are poor, so this makes it even more difficult for them to attend school



100% of the families are now extremely or mostly confident that their children will complete the minimum education requirement of 9th grade. 63% plan to financially support their children to continue their education through 12th grade, with the remaining families having the desire to support, but being unsure of their financial ability to do so.

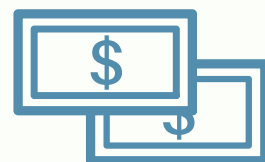
100%



63%



37%



Health and Nutrition Impact

Thailand has a social health care system that allows low income families to get a “gold card,” giving them access to basic health care for \$1 a visit. However, this is only available for Thai citizens, and since citizenship is an issue for people born in mountain villages, many poor or tribal families do not have access to medical resources. When surveyed, none of the families reported having learned about basic health and nutrition before this program. We invited a local nurse to come share about the food groups and basic health and safety issues, such as how much water to drink, how to maintain a healthy weight, and how to make sure food is cooked properly to avoid food poisoning. 100% of the families also report their family’s overall health had improved over the course of the program.

In the group, one child was born with severe scoliosis, but due to his lack of birth certificate from the village, his family had been wary of taking him to see a doctor. As a result, he was 11 years old and had never had a single physical. We took him to be examined by an orthopedic specialist, who signed him up for free physical therapy and scheduled a surgery to straighten his spine when he hits puberty. Another child had been passed through year after year of school but was in 5th grade and cannot read or write in Thai. We took his parents to have him be evaluated by the hospital psychologist. Another child is developmentally delayed and living with her grandparents who didn’t know how to help her. We helped connect her family with these resources as well.



Other Impacts

The issue of citizenship is an important one. Thailand remains one of the only countries where you are not granted citizenship by being born there. You must prove through documentation and verbal witnesses that you were born here. This can prove difficult for many people since they are born in the mountain village and not in a hospital and many adults cannot read or write Thai since they were not able to get an education as children.

This is one of the most important things we do. In this village, we have worked on four cases of children directly involved in the BFD program and five cases of children who are relatives of BFD families. Of these nine cases, five have been successfully completed with the children receiving their official Thai ID, or social security, cards. The other cases are still in process. We anticipate two being completed in January 2020, with the other two contingent on funding for DNA tests to prove their relationship to the parent or other relative with citizenship.

Every family surveyed said they would like to see the BFD program be provided for other families in the area, with the three village council members interested in teaching it in other villages themselves, while our team supports by planning outings and preparing workshop topics and speakers. Most families expressed worry that we would drop them now that the program has completed, but we assured them that we would continue to be available to offer advice and support and will do quarterly evaluations to track their progress and sustainability.



Conclusion

The Building Family Dreams pilot program was a learning curve for our team as well as the families who participated. Overall, we have seen remarkable improvements in the family dynamics and community support, with families coming together to assist one another. We look forward to providing this program to other tribal families and families who have been separated due to poverty so we can keep children where they belong: with their families.



"We may not be 100% successful, but our village now is much better than before and we have more hope for the future."

- Village Elder

For more info, visit our website:

www.jojosthailand.org

Or follow us on social media:



Facebook: Jojo's Sanctuary or @jojosthailand



Twitter: @jojosthailand



Instagram: @jojosthailand



Newsletter: www.jojosthailand.org



jojo's sanctuary
THAILAND