

SAWASDEE

School for Life

Chiang Mai, Thailand



THE HANDOVER

There comes a point at which every development cooperation project which is designed to continue in the long-term has to face up to the question of handing over to local partners. The School for Life, now in its eleventh year of existence, was transferred over to 100% Thai management on the 15th of September 2014. In terms of development policy, this step was already overdue. International cooperation still continues to take place via the Board of the School for Life Foundation, but on campus, Thais will from now on take sole responsibility for educational, social, operational and financial affairs.

The School for Life was founded in 2003 through the German-Thai cooperation of Thaneen “Joy” Worravitayakun and Jürgen Zimmer. In 2006, Dominique Leutwiler from Switzerland became its General Manager, and until earlier this year led the project with a sure touch, contributing greatly towards the protection of the school in times of financial difficulty. The School for Life owes her the greatest of thanks. She based her management on international standards and ensured transparency and credibility, as her successes in fundraising prove. She was supported by Khun Anchana, who was responsible for the quality of accounting as well as being engaged in many ways in the School for Life and its children. She also deserves great thanks. The handover of the project to the Thais necessitates a team of people who want this too. Whether in Latin America, Asia or Africa, many cases of development cooperation have experienced this transfer to be problematic and it has often been at this point that the project gives up the ghost. In the case of the School for Life, however, a highly motivated and competent team has taken on the management of the project.

This team will now be presented:

Dr. Chatchai Sirikulpan, MA, Project & Business Development Manager

Previously the Director of the Asia Technological College in Chiang Mai with 2,500 students, he and his college have won the “Royal School Award” five times in a row, this being the highest award that a school can gain in Thailand. He sailed the oceans of the world with a Danish shipping company for ten years as a marine engineer, then studied education, taught at a school, did his doctorate on the subject of school management, and teaches at weekends at a university founded by monks. He is married and has one son who has studied information technology. One of the aims of the new project manager is to get the ever-developing School for Life nominated for the Royal Award in three years’ time.

Dr. Chalee Pakdee, MA, Director of Education Innovation

He has been a nationwide school inspector for many years, working with an emphasis on “evaluation” and “teacher training”. He is responsible for the implementation of the concept of the School for Life (<http://school-for-life.org/chiangmai/lernen-und-leben/>) and in particular ensures that the connection is maintained between the national curriculum and the projects in the Centers of Excellence, which in the School for Life Chiang Mai (unlike in the Hanseatic School for Life in Phang Nga) do not have their own buildings, but rather take place “under the tree”, i.e. outdoors. Chalee’s task, among other things, is to integrate elements of the school subjects into projects, to remix and enliven them, and to allow the award of “credit points” for the parts which have been outsourced. He works two weeks per month for the School for Life and has also taken on the role of sports presenter, funded by the Step Foundation in Freiburg. He is married and has two grown-up daughters.

Siriporn Hanfaifa, MA, Director of School and Family

She is the sister of Joy, the co-founder of the School for Life, and has been involved from the very beginning. She represents the history and the concept of the School for Life, is the confidante of the children and the benevolent spirit of the project.



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Not only the question of the handover of the management, but also the question of the long-term financing of the project were the subjects of discussion over recent months. This second question is answered variously by the different Schools for Life in Thailand: whilst the Hanseatic School for Life continues to rely on donations from Germany and is thus exposed to risks, the School for Life in Kapong which was first conceived of in 2005 as a school for tsunami survivors and is today the Yaowawit School, has intensified its efforts to develop income-generating projects. These include the guest area, camps with international schools and with volunteers, sponsorship schemes and agriculture. Additionally, donors continue to support Yaowawit School.

Thanks to its wide recognition in Thailand and the successful acquisitions of Dominique Leutwiler over the years, the School for Life in Chiang Mai received about half of its overall donations from local supporters in Thailand each year, including the Siam Cement Foundation. The other half has come from Germany; Rita Haberkorn, who used to be responsible for the acquisition of donations had similar successes up until her return to the German educational system. Also, thanks to the circle of sponsors, the current team in Germany with Anna Simone Wallinger, Dr. Ulrich and Kerstin Hofmann, Dr. Berndt Tausch, Thuy Tran Hong, Ralf and Petra Johnen and Peter Wolters, is successfully endeavoring to secure the School for Life financially in the long term. The finance model is based on sponsorships, once-off and regular donors, donations from foundations and – ever more importantly - on Social Entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurial activity in aid of charity has existed in the School for Life for a long time, especially through providing guest accommodation; a recent addition, however, is an external social entrepreneurship project named Brands Fashion, a medium-sized company established by Dr. Ulrich Hofmann with around 100 employees, which produces textiles and specializes in once-off designs. Ulrich Hofmann and his wife Kerstin started the “Shirts for Life” campaign, selling T-shirts with a specially-designed logo; for each t-shirt sold 1 Euro goes to the School for Life:



http://www.shirtsforlife.biz/school_for_life/

Also, for each piece of schoolwear, 1 Euro is diverted to the School for Life:

http://www.brands-schulkleidung.com/school_for_life//

The action has only recently begun: in January 2014, a sum of 1,170 Euros was transferred to the School for Life; in August 2014 this sum was 4,178 Euros. Long term, a significant portion of the monthly costs of the School for Life, which total approximately 800,000 THB (about €20,000), is to be generated by actions of this or similar nature.

When Muhammad Yunus, founder of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, spoke in Oslo in 2006 at the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony about the meaning and necessity of social entrepreneurship (or social business, he calls it), he described two types of companies: one company that makes a profit as usual and distributes its profits to the shareholders, for example, and another company that also generates profits, but uses these for charitable purposes. “Investors in the social business could get back their investment, but will not take any dividend from the company. Unlike the non-profit sector where one needs to collect donations to keep activities going, a social business will be self-sustaining and create surplus for expansion since it is a non-loss enterprise. Health Care for the poor, financial services for the poor, information technology for the poor, education and training for the poor, marketing for the poor, renewable energy - these are all exciting areas for social businesses.”

The entire speech can be found at:

http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2006/yunus-lecture-en.html

One company that adopts this approach in Germany is the Project Workshop Ltd., which was founded by Prof. Dr. Günter Faltn in the 1980s at the Free University in Berlin. The profits of its “Tea Campaign” went towards the reforestation of Darjeeling in cooperation with WWF (www.teekampagne.de). With its twenty institutions, the International Academy for Innovative Pedagogy, Psychology and Economics (INA), founded in 1996 as a profit-making company, is another example of social entrepreneurship (www.ina-fu.org).

The social teachings of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam differ only subtly in their philosophies of a social return of profits, though social entrepreneurship is not the same as the charity of the wealthy, requiring professional and imaginative economic action. Bringing a company into profitability is no walk in the park. If the majority of start-ups fall by the wayside, then (to refer to Günter Faltn’s recommended best-seller “Brain Beats Capital”, published by Hanser) – not only is an innovative idea vital, but also the “Entrepreneurial Design” and the awareness of core corporate competences whilst orchestrating and outsourcing components to external professionals in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed. In the mid-1990s, in a kind of advance ignition of entrepreneurship, Günter Faltn and Jürgen Zimmer sketched these “alternative entrepreneurs” in the book “Wealth from Below” (published by Aufbau Verlag); in “Successful Young Entrepreneurs” (published by Moderne Verlagsgesellschaft), Peter Goebel also described what distinguished the Swabian entrepreneurs he investigated: the power of reflection and perseverance.

The School for Life aims to significantly increase the generation of revenue for charitable purposes. There are various ideas about how this can be done: a profit-making farm of happier egg-laying chickens; a ranch that could be a worthwhile destination for families from Chiang Mai for weekend and vacation trips; the increased intake of groups of international schools by running “Green Camps”; the expansion of the guest accommodation by catering for “long-standing guests”, older guests who want to escape the cold of the Winter in their home country and experience the invigorating effect of happy children; the development of culturally sensitive travel, offering excursions off the beaten track of the tourist industry.

Teachers, by the very nature of their biographies, are not in the first instance entrepreneurs, and it would be too much to ask them to take on the task of securing the livelihood of their school. However, being involved in social-entrepreneurial activities to a reasonable degree makes sense because it’s an adventure - not only for them, but also for their student body. “Entrepreneurship education” has nothing to do with child labor; children are far rather inventors, and in their mini- enterprises they can playfully find out what it means to develop entrepreneurial ideas and to implement them at school or on the local market.

The children's daycare centre "Sparrow House" in Frankfurt Oder, Germany, provided an example of how this can be done; in the 1990s, after the reunification of Germany and the falling birth rate, it was supposed to be closed down by the local authorities; the kindergarten however announced to the city that it would generate the missing funds itself through social entrepreneurship. The children were infected by the entrepreneurial activities of the adults, developed their own ideas and implemented them on the local market. They sold home-made Christmas decorations so successfully, for example, that other stall owners complained about this competition to the person in charge of the market. The children learned how to stand on their own feet from kindergarten onwards.

Even if teachers can't be 24-hour social entrepreneurs, the foundation of an economically independent company makes sense - one which cooperates with the School for Life, practises co-branding, uses synergies and agrees with the school about what to do with the profits. This is a long-term concept, one which can only be realized step by step and is certainly not immune to setbacks. Further support through donations is therefore both reasonable and necessary. Here is a brilliant example of how social entrepreneurship will soon be implemented in the School for Life:

THE COFFEE-CONTRACTOR

Dr. Peter Foley (New York / Chiang Mai), a long-time friend and supporter of the School for Life, first discovered her: Pat, a 40-years-young businesswoman who was producing a real premium, top-quality coffee in Thailand, selling about 300 tons annually - most of it to Japan. On the 26th of October 2014, Pat came to the School for Life and told her story: at the age of eight she lost her mother and was on her own from then onwards. She became an entrepreneur because it was clear to her that she had to create her own job, and she wanted to provide employment for others too. She hasn't studied at an academic institution - she has learned from life. She is now a kind of "Professor for Life & Social Entrepreneurship" who wants to teach the children at the School for Life everything about coffee from now on, from the seed to cultivation and processing, quality control and marketing. She doesn't just want to give them the knowledge, but also the entrepreneurial know-how. A new social business is set to stem out of this for the school. Pat could have been a student of the School for Life herself; her path through life is like a picture-book with the title "The Entrepreneur with a Difference".



NEW MEMBERS ON THE BOARD OF THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE FOUNDATION

According to its constitution, the School for Life has nine seats for committee members. With five seats, the Thais form the majority, while four seats are provided for international members. The committee has the function of a supervisory board. In addition to four previous members, five new ones were added. An active committee has formed, consisting of volunteers who are ready and willing to take on this challenge of the work and responsibility that awaits them. These are the members:

Professor Dr. Apichai Puntasen, Eminent Professor of Buddhist Economics, long-standing member of the board of the “Foundation for Thailand Rural Reconstruction Movement Under Royal Patronage (TRRM)”, the previous funding body of the School for Life. Professor Puntasen taught at Thammasat University at the time when its students were the victims of a massacre by policemen and paramilitary groups in 1976, in which 43 students and two policemen were killed. Thousands of students were arrested and many more went into hiding, including Professor Puntasen himself. He then went into exile in Australia and taught at the University of Melbourne before returning in 1984 to the Thammasat University. He assisted the School for Life with success and wisdom from the very beginning. (More on Prof. Puntasen in: “Third diary on the School for Life and Beyond”, <http://school-for-life.org/chiangmai/tagebucher/>)

Chamnang Chanrueng, Senior Legal Expert at the Administrative Court of Chiang Mai, formerly honorary governor of 163 Northern Thai Rotary clubs, now director of Amnesty International Thailand. Under Chanrueng’s leadership, Amnesty International has just published a report on the situation of human rights in Thailand: “100 Days of Martial Law” (see: <http://www.amnesty.nl/nieuwsportaal/rapport/thailand-attitude-adjustment-100-days-under-martial-law>).

Nutchanun Natip, M.A. in psychology, senior manager at the International Airport of Chiang Mai, responsible for mass communication and “community relations”. Entrepreneur and owner of the “Lakeland Resort”. New Member.

Hatsaphat Promloy, M.A. in political science, manager at the International Airport of Chiang Mai, responsible for security. New Member.

Jetdarin Kongtako, B.A. in library science, entrepreneur and owner of “Apex Travel Service” in Chiang Mai. New Member.

Dominique Leutwiler, formerly General Manager of the School for Life, now director of the postgraduate project of the School for Life in Chiang Mai (city). See also “Third diary on the School for Life and Beyond”, <http://school-for-life.org/chiangmai/tagebucher/>.

Peter Wolters, retired school superintendent, director of the School for Life Institute at the International Academy (INA) in Berlin, head of a continuing education program for school management at the University of Potsdam. New Member.

Dr. Ulrich Hofmann, entrepreneur, founder of the company Brands Fashion and — along with his wife Kerstin - initiator of the action “Shirts for Life”. New Member.

Prof. em. Dr. Jürgen Zimmer, Department of Education and Psychology at the Free University of Berlin, co-founder of the School for Life Chiang Mai, President of the International Academy (INA), member of the Academic Board of the Carl Benz Academy in Beijing. He received the German Federal Cross of Merit.

THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE TEAM IN GERMANY

The team in Germany includes **Petra and Ralf Johnen** (who cover godparenthood), **Anna Simone Wallinger** (supervision of the sponsorship circle, communication, fundraising), **Peter Wolters** (School for Life Institute at the International Academy, “United Schools for Life” project), **Thuy Tran Hong** (accounting), **Dr. Berndt Tausch** (Step Foundation, Freiburg), **Dr. Ulrich and Kerstin Hofmann** (social entrepreneurship) and **Prof. em. Dr. Jürgen Zimmer** (concept development and implementation).

Some of the members of this group met in Berlin on the 13th and 14th of August 2014; Dominique Leutwiler was communicated with via Skype. At this meeting, “Change Management” was discussed extensively.

THE SHAUL AND HILDE ROBINSOHN FOUNDATION

The Foundation was founded in 1996 by Dr. Hilde Robinsohn, the widow of Prof. Dr. Shaul Robinsohn who died in 1972. The foundation focussed on promoting the School for Life from the very beginning. Shaul Robinsohn was one of the founding directors of what is today the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin (formerly the Institute for Human Development at the Max Planck Institute). Shaul and Hilde Robinsohn survived the Holocaust through timely emigration. The committee of the Foundation is comprised of volunteers. The School for Life owes the greatest of thanks to the Foundation. Its executive committee consists of:

Prof. Dr. Götz Doyé - retired Professor of Protestant theology, actively involved in the peaceful revolution in the GDR before 1989. Chairman of the Foundation.

Dr. Wolfgang Schirp - lawyer, co-founder of a large Berlin law firm that among other things represented many of the victims of the Berlin Bank scandal. Deputy Chairman of the Foundation.

Dr. Gerd Harms, former state secretary in the Brandenburg Ministry of Culture and culture minister for the state of Saxony-Anhalt.

Rita Haberkorn, senior teacher at the College of Social Education in Wiesbaden. She worked for four years at the Beluga School for Life and supported the School for Life in Chiang Mai in a voluntary capacity since 2004, both professionally and through fundraising in a variety of ways. She received the German Federal Cross of Merit for this work.

(see <http://school-for-life.org/chiangmai/zu-meinem-abschied/>).

Ulrich Griesdorn, senior officer at the German Center for Foundations, part of the German Benefactors’ Association for German sciences. The German Benefactors’ Association manages the Robinsohn Foundation and provides the Berlin School for Life team with advice and support.

THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE

Thanks to the sponsors, the donors and the “Shirt for Life” campaign, the financial situation of the School for Life has stabilized. However, this means running on a very tight budget. This scarcity is an incentive to develop smart economics: more self-reliance and more social-entrepreneurial activities.

THE LAND OF THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE

The campus of the School for Life is divided into the “lower” and “upper” grounds. The lower land with its sports facilities and agricultural area is owned by the School for Life Foundation. The upper land is secured through a free lease secured contract which was signed 10 years ago, and runs for 30 years. The contract, which was agreed between the landowner Sanit Hanfaifa and the former school funding body TRRM, was transferred to the School for Life Foundation four years ago. At that point, the contract was newly dated so that the 30-year term was extended for another 6 years and is now still valid for another 26 years - with the possibility of renewing the term again. For the landowner, this contract therefore represents a gift to the School for Life, as he will never get his land back. According to Thai law, regardless of whether it is purchased or leased, the land will remain at the disposal of the School for Life Foundation until its dissolution and will then fall to the state without compensation – all buildings included. This is another reason to wish the School for Life Foundation a very long life. The School for Life Foundation also owes Sanit Hanfaifa, the brother of Siriporn and Joy, the greatest of thanks.

THE POST GRADUATE PROJECT IN CHIANG MAI (city)

In Chiang Mai City, Dominique Leutwiler and Khun Anchana will be promoting the accommodation, care and support of young people who have left the campus of the School for Life in the Royal Forest of Doi Saket and need further social and financial support, whether it is because they are attending a college in the city, serving an apprenticeship, planning a start-up or want to study. The idea is to enable them to live as a community and support them on their way to self-employment. There are now many examples of graduates of the School for Life who have found their way and were supported by the School for Life or Joy’s House (www.joyshouse.net): Wow, who came from the street and is now studying tourism (see: “Beyond the Mountain”, in “The semi-controlled chaos” by Jürgen Zimmer, p.470), or Ott, who went from “Bad Boy” to polo player, or Pee, now a licensed tour guide, and who accompanied the German group on a special trip to the School for Life, Northern Thailand and Laos at the end of October and beginning of November 2014, (<http://school-for-life.org/chiangmai/blog/>).

Here you can see Dominique Leutwiler and a team of polo players!



Another case is Boy, who came to the School for Life in 2003 and struggled for a long time to cope with his mother’s death after battling AIDS (see: “The Sixth Sense”, in “The semi-controlled chaos”, S.472), falling into depression again and again and then failing his groom’s training; however, thanks to the mighty efforts of Khun Anchana, he is now studying English at University and wants to become a teacher. Boy as a teacher at the School for Life? He will be welcome. The “School for Life – City” will work hand in hand with the “School for Life - Farm” to support the young people who need this care, but will act autonomously in terms of staff and finances.

SOLAR ENERGY

For some time now, the engineer of the School for Life, Kyaw Hla from Myanmar, or “Mr. Jo” for short, has been examining which products can be dried using solar energy and will sell well. It is not dried fruits which fetch the best prices, but rather briquettes pressed from leaves and other appropriate waste. BAYER PLC has inspired this project. This necessitates a “Green House Solar Dryer” of considerable dimensions: 10 meters long, 8 meters wide and 6 meters high. This was developed in the Silpakorn University near Bangkok, and if funding is available, Mister Jo would like to take his team there, find out how it works, and organize the transport of this solar energy system to Chiang Mai. If this happens, the “Center for Technology, Crafts & Ecology” will no longer just take place under the tree, but rather also in this Solar Dryer, and children of the School for Life would have a lot to learn.



FRESH FROM THE PEN: "THIRD DIARY ON THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE AND BEYOND"

Jürgen Zimmer's third diary covers the period from the 8th of November 2012 to the 30th of May 2014, and covers more than just the School for Life: the range of topics extends from the eavesdropped conversation of three Viennese pimps on Phuket, to the question of why you shouldn't breed and sell Tokay geckos, to shooting a film with Jutta Benz, the great-granddaughter of car inventor Carl Benz and his wife Bertha, to the "Viennese government in exile" in Berlin, wedding celebrations with Burmese workers, obscure articles in the "Tip-Newspaper for Thailand", a baby that was born in a taxi, and the "Graduation Day" on campus. The School for Life nonetheless remains at the center! Click here for the diaries: <http://school-for-life.org/chiangmai/tagebuecher/>

READY STEADY COOK! - THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE CALENDAR 2015

The 2015 calendar is a fine publication. Kerstin Linnartz and photographer Carsten Sander produced it along with the chefs of the top class hotel "137 Pillars House" and the children of the School for Life Chiang Mai who cooked with them. Sarah Rempen designed the Layout. The Digital Centre Laserline in Berlin printed the first 750 copies for free, and Anna Simone Wallinger has also supported the Project.

It is a calendar with a difference: a famous Thai dish is presented on each page so that you can cook it from the comfort of your own home. It is a calendar that is marketable, in profits from which will benefit the School for Life.

Christmas presents? No problem: here is one that will tantalize the taste buds of any recipient. And it can be ordered here: <http://school-for-life.org/kalender-2015/>



cook for life **KALENDER 2015**

mit 12 leckeren Thai-gerichten
in deutsch/englisch.
Hochformat: 22 cm x 48 cm,
14 Blatt + Deckblatt + Rückpappe,
Spiralbindung, Aufhängung,
Monats-Kalendarium beschreibbar.
ab 24,50 Euro Brutto

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THIS & THAT

The **Step Foundation** in Freiburg is once again sponsoring the residence of two sports students. Sarah Dietze and Ramona Moser have taken on the task of promoting sports for girls, though boys are also included. With the encouragement of Sarah and Ramona, around 30 girls and boys want to join in the Chiang Mai Marathon, the little ones over a distance of 3 kilometers, and the older ones for 10 Kilometers. The run will take place in December, and training begins after the October holiday.

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This year's **Kolping group** from Germany has once again helped out on site: led by Dominique Leutwiler, its members took part in the renovation of the kindergarten children's family home; a lot of painting was done, and the children's beds, mattresses, and bedding were renewed. Many thanks! Here's more about the background of the Kolping Work Camps:

<http://kolping-jgd.de/Workcamp/Chiang-Mai/THA-7540/>



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Also, students from the **International School in Starvanger** paid another visit from the 30th of September to the 3rd of October 2014, and were invited to two parties: a birthday party on their first day and a farewell party on their last day. Although the school is located in Norway, their student body comes from a wide variety of countries. The group of 2014 brought pictures and handwritten greetings from the group of 2013, and these greetings showed how moving the visit must have been for them. An example: "Thank you so much for sharing your lives and culture with us. I have learned much about myself and others, and I am so grateful. Hope all is good." (Lotte). On this page you'll learn how the students of the International School in Stavanger are trying to organize these school camps: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/School-For-Life-Chiang-Mai-2013-2014/651928214833654>

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Paula Lopez, from Colombia, is a member of the team of the "United Schools for Life" and wants to found Schools for Life in Colombia and Ecuador. She attended a French school in Colombia, studied sociology in France, and has worked as an educator and education consultant in Germany for 15 years; now she is about to set off in search of new horizons. From September to the end of October she witnessed the "Change Management" at the School for Life in Chiang Mai, learning how each new School for Life has its own character and that each one calls to be invented anew.

THE HISTORY OF YAPA, TOLD BY DOMINIQUE LEUTWILER

“Yapa finished the 4th grade of the School for Life at 15 and then participated in the grooms project. He had never learned to read and write properly, and was so intimidated by this that he always wore a jacket with a hood at school, which he pulled up over his head and hid underneath. He did not speak to anyone. However, in the grooms project, his behavior changed, and through his work with the horses he found more self-confidence and interest in life. Yapa began to speak, often talking to himself. He has now developed an interest in learning to read and write, and has repeatedly indicated that he would like to catch up on those skills now. He struggles with making decisions and often fluctuates back and forth when he wants to do something new. Khun Anchana and I are giving him time. We are preparing him to become self-employed.

Yapa is a complete orphan. His mother died giving birth to him, and his father died when he was nine years old. He told us in hospital, they just let his Father die, simply turning off all the machines that were keeping him alive. He couldn't remember having any other relatives and often told us that he was completely alone. Since he had no identity papers, we undertook a few trips to the village he came from in order to find someone who could testify that Yapa was born in Thailand and thus had a right to legal papers. Fortunately, the chief of the village could remember his family and was willing to testify to that, and another member of the village was also willing to testify to his existence. The process of helping the children come by papers sometimes takes a long time, and we look how we can help the children on a case by case basis. During our last visit to the village a few weeks ago, someone told us that Yapa had two sisters.

When asked about this, Yapa had a vague memory of a sister who was at home when his father died, and that he awoke one day to find that she had disappeared. He had no memory of the other sister. For Khun Anchana, this was reason enough to embark on a search for the sisters — she just wanted to find another family member for Yapa so that he wouldn't be alone for the rest of his life. After much questioning, they found out that the younger sister, then aged 12, had tried to support Yapa and their father before he died by selling flowers on the street. The burden of their poverty and the situation was enormous, and after the death of their father when she was left alone with Yapa, she turned to a friend who was a drug dealer, and began to take drugs herself. She left her village and Yapa, whereupon a resident of the village brought him to the School for Life and he stayed there for six years in the belief that he had no family.

The sister was caught with drugs and went to jail. After five years, she had come to a point where she could now live without drugs again. In prison, she also learned of the existence of her older sister, who was in a worse state; in fact, she was told that her older sister was not a 'good' person anymore, and should be regarded as vicious and dangerous, and that all contact should be avoided. Unfortunately, the younger sister then experienced a relapse. In a recent urine test drug residues had been found, so the prison had given her the option of going to a four-month “boot camp” with the military as a last chance.

When Khun Anchana searched the prisons, she was told that the younger sister had been in “Wing 41” in Chiang Mai for a month under military supervision doing her “Boot Camp”. Khun Anchana informed Yapa that he had a sister, by now 23 years old, and that she had found her. Yapa could not believe it and wanted to meet his sister straight away. Khun Anchana contacted the officers and explained the circumstances, whereupon she got permission to come and visit with Yapa. When the officers informed the sister that she would receive a visit, she was utterly surprised and asked who would come to visit. She was told that a relative would come, but she said that she didn't have any relatives, and that it must be a mistake.

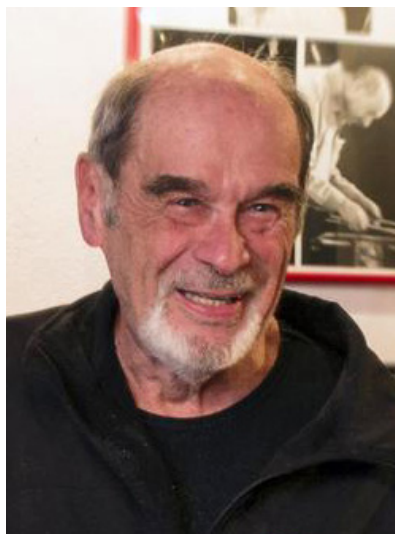
They then told her that her brother would be coming. Khun Anchana was there when they met and reported that both siblings were overwhelmed with happiness. She said there wasn't a dry eye in the room - some of the officers and soldiers who were present had cried too because it was so moving.

Both want to live together when she is released. Yapa is happy that he now has someone who can cook for him. The sister hopes that she can find work through us and can stay with Yapa. Like her brother, she can't read or write either - Khun Anchana has explained to her that we will help her to learn to read and write first of all. She is extremely motivated to leave her old life behind her - a sad life which was devoid of comfort or hope, but has now taken a turn for the better."



HERMANN DORFMÜLLER

1938-2014



HERMANN DORFMÜLLER - FRIEND, DEMOCRAT, SUPPORTER OF SCHOOL FOR LIFE

by Jürgen Zimmer

Once, when we were about 15 years old, we sailed across Lake Constance with a light breeze and sunny weather, from Wasserburg towards Constance. We slept the night somewhere on the beach, fished, had Lindau sausages with us and put them on willow sticks, held them over a fire of driftwood and watched as the cross-cut ends of the sausages puffed up and the fat dripped into the flames. The sail of our folding boat had an area of nine square meters, and pockets of air on both sides made it unsinkable. I grew up sailing on the lake at a time when neither sailing certificates nor storm warnings existed. Hermann sat up front, operated the jib, and when we hit a calm in the early afternoon of the second day, we thought that an offshore wind would come by the evening and we would be able to sail back to shore. I also thought I could ride out any storm.

It got muggy that afternoon. We drifted towards the middle of the lake at the height of Hagnau. Beyond Constance, in the west, a high black wall was slowly rising. The sun was still shining on us, but the water looked like lead and we began to worry about what we might face. The black wall approached, pushed against us - the first gusts swept against us and the lake began to boil. But we had decided not to reef, hoping to sail in front of the wind, at lightning speed, in the direction of Wasserburg. But this storm tore at the dinghies and tossed yachts against the walls of the lake bank; all we could do was to try and keep the boat on course with trembling knees and clammy hands. The waves had now become so powerful that they submerged our boat from behind and we were now sitting in a bathtub, cursing our carelessness. We were completely soaked and were getting colder and colder, and although we could just make out the jetties of Kressborn, Nonnenhorn and Wasserburg through the foam and rain, we didn't know how we would manage to land without breaking.

I steered us towards the men's outdoor pool which existed back then, just like the women's pool. The gravel should catch us - and thankfully, it did. We rushed up the beach, though we could hardly walk anymore, and walked across the meadow to the house at Pfannhalde. There, my mother was waiting, and she made us hot tea and gave us warm clothes and blankets. While we warmed up, we declared the sailing across Lake Constance a nautical masterpiece, though in reality the storm had driven us along like two corks - Hermann and me had only narrowly escaped.

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Hermann Dorfmueller (born in December 1938, died in October 2014) and I were friends since school days. I had escaped from a strict boarding school education in the fifties to attend the Grammar School on the island of Lindau. I experienced my first love, took advantage of previously unknown freedoms and along with Hermann, Walter, Leo and Uli founded the 'Red Thread'. Together we suffered the headmaster who was prone to throw his weight around, and retaliated by playing pranks on the chemistry teacher who had claimed that aluminium wouldn't feature in an exam – but it did.

In the evenings, we developed the art of building rafts, heading off to the men's pool laden with cardboard, scissors, candles, rope and empty jam jars to build little rafts from driftwood. The cardboard served as a sail, and a jam jar was bound to the mast and a candle inserted; the rafts were then sent off across the lake carried by the offshore wind. We fished illegally in the Argen and tried to catch crayfish in the Deger Lake. Hermann met Gudrun and Leo met Traute. And if my German teacher hadn't failed me for pedagogical reasons (German: A; History: E), I would have stayed by the lake and had a different experience of the world. Instead, I was exiled to Salem and had to find my way amongst youths who (as if 1918 had never happened?) were still pretending that they belonged to the nobility, or whose parents had inherited the wealth of three or four generations and only passed on the money, but not the entrepreneurial spirit.

Hermann Dorfmueller later became a secondary school teacher in Lindau-Reutin. His pupils continued to visit him years after because they so revered him and still sought his advice. He also became a local politician. He was chairman of the local Social Democrat association of Lindau, and in 1972, as chairman of the Young Socialists, was elected as a member of the local council and remained so for decades. The list of his political initiatives and successes is a long one. It is primarily thanks to him that the Lindau City Council, dominated by the CSU, decided to "back away from nuclear power", a symbolic act for a former imperial city. He was there when the shore of Lake Constance was measured by activists in Nonnenhorn and - contrary to the Bavarian constitution and its requirement of free access to the waters - only 291 out of 6,000 meters of shore were found to be accessible. He insisted on a plaque to honor the Lindau victims of Nazism over whom the cloak of silence had spread in the post-war period.

He successfully secured the creation of a Youth Centre, was involved in pushing for decent accommodation in government-funded transitional residences and was engaged in helping children with their homework. For many years he was actively involved in a German-French town twinning scheme and was the chairman of the jazz club in Lindau, which is still going strong today with its jazz evenings in the small and therefore often crowded cellar rooms of the "Zum Zecher" inn in the Bregenz Street. It was always a peaceful struggle fought with democratic means, whether it was about overcoming denominational schools or protecting the drinking water storage tank of Lake Constance.

In 2003, he was awarded the Georg von Vollmar Medal, the highest award of the Bavarian Social Democrats, named after the state chairman of the Bavarian Social Democrats who lived from 1850 to 1922. Years earlier, Hermann Dorfmueller was awarded the Socialist Hat, a prize that is awarded in the old hat making town of Lindenberg in the Allgäu region and recalls the time of the Socialist laws from 1878 to 1890, when the Bavarian Social Democrats wore black, wide-brimmed hats as a secret code. Other recipients of this prize over the years have been Erhard Eppler, Peter von Oertzen, Jean Ziegler, Regine Hildebrandt and Dieter Lattmann. In 2007, Hermann Dorfmueller was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit.

“From smugglers and police, revolutionaries and councillors: 100 years of the Social Democrats of Lindau, 100 years of town history” – this is the title of a little book which he wrote despite a sluggish city council and continued writing until the end of his life. I admired his critical love of his homeland, his sense of family, his modesty, his courage to hold high the flag of integrity and enlightenment, and his persistence when it came to changing conditions for the better. Hellmut Becker, once a lawyer in Kressbronn, defence lawyer at the Nuremberg trials and founder of today’s Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin once said that lakeside scenery is too beautiful for thinking. But that was only a clever-sounding punchline, because Hermann Dorfmueller’s life - as well as that of his companions by the lake - was and is dominated not only by thinking, but also by rethinking.

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The history of ideas of the School for Life has two birthplaces: Chiang Mai and Lindau. In Lindau, while she was calmly waiting for her life to end, my mother had the idea of a “concert for peace”. She gathered an ecumenical group around her, of which Hermann’s wife Gudrun was also part, and started planning. When the concert had been planned and the posters had been put up, my mother said goodbye and fell asleep for the last time. The concert took place on the day of her burial with an audience of about a thousand and a hundred musicians of all styles, in one of the churches in Lindau. Later we used the 20,000 Marks that had been collected to start the School for Life.

For years, Hermann Dorfmueller’s village drummed up support in Lindau for the School for Life, wrote reports in the Lindau Newspaper and formulated appeals for donations; he was a constant companion and supporter of the School for Life, without ever having been there. He was the mainstay of the regional anchor of a small international project.

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Hermann persuaded me to come back to Wasserburg to the Pfannhalde. At our age, he said, we shouldn’t postpone anything – and we could do so much together. I thought this was good advice and gave us another twenty years. Now he is no longer there. The moving date is set. The good memories of my best friend will accompany me until my last days.

ABOUT

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We look forward to your active support!

Hilde Robinsohn Foundation

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