



Not just a Case Story



CASE STORIES BOOK

2021



In accordance with Baan Dek Foundation's Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy and ethical considerations in compliance with its data protection policy and law, all identifying information in this booklet has been changed.

In order to protect beneficiaries, especially those with sensitive stories, some of the images used purposely hide the identity of individuals featured.

Baan Dek Foundation thanks the children and families that participated in this project, and the Social Advisors' (case workers) tireless dedication and service to these families.



Introduction

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 in Thailand in February 2020, migrant families living in construction site camps have become even more vulnerable, as they live in crowded living environments and workers have experienced a significant drop in income due to an economic downturn. According to a recent survey conducted by Baan Dek Foundation (BDF), over half the participants are living extremely precariously due to a lack of savings. The second and third waves of the pandemic in January and April 2021 deepened these inequalities, and the number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase.

The objective of this book is meant to showcase some of the emerging complexities and challenges faced by BDF's Social Advisors (case workers) in the wake of the pandemic. These are not *just* case stories, but *real* stories, reflecting on the ground realities and

repercussions of the pandemic. This book is meant to bridge a connection between BDF's partners, friends and advocates with beneficiaries.

Thanks to the support of its partners, BDF was able to quickly implement its Emergency Response Plan during the most recent third wave of the pandemic, in collaboration with construction and real estate companies. As of date, BDF continues to provide emergency support to over 1,400 children and families, including essential donations of food and hygiene products. In addition, BDF provides tailored support to beneficiaries, including counseling, non-formal education, and school enrollment support. This book contains the stories of some of the children and families that BDF is working with during this difficult time.



S, 13 years old

S., a 13-year-old boy of Myanmar descent, was recently released from a juvenile detention center in Chiang Mai and returned to school, eager to continue his studies. When he was 9-years-old, the school informed him that his parents had passed away, leaving him orphaned and homeless. As a result, S. had a difficult time coping with the loss of his parents, and moved from one friend's home to another. He ended up living with a friend that he met at a football club, O., and O.'s family in a construction site camp.

BDF Social Advisors met S.'s temporary guardians at the camp and learned about S.'s situation and his determination to continue his studies. Though O.'s family is able to provide S. with a place to stay, they cannot afford to send him to school. BDF began providing S. with school support, and covered the cost of school enrollment, school uniforms, and stationery. BDF also helped S. enroll in school and obtain his student ID card.

During the current wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand, BDF provided S. with additional donations of food, hygiene products, clothing, and sports equipment so he can engage in constructive activities with

his friends in the camp. Due to prolonged school closures imposed by the government, S. struggled to remain motivated in his studies. He was not able to receive the support he needs to complete assignments at home, as his school does not provide online classes or after school support. Most of S.'s peers are a few grades below him and O.'s parents are illiterate, leaving no options for external educational support. In response, BDF has been providing S. with supplementary reading books and separate writing sessions to help him with assignments.

In addition, BDF also provided S. with basic necessities such as a rice cooker, an electric stove, a fan, a blanket, and a mosquito net, among other things. BDF provides S. with food weekly, support with medical fees as needed, and cash support for gasoline and essential items twice per month.

Moving forward, BDF will support S. to obtain his Thai ID card and train him to act as a Youth Peer Educator to help him gain confidence, build leadership skills, and make new friends.



M. 29 years old

M., a 29-year-old woman of Thai descent, works in a bar and struggles to care for her five children. She previously lived with her children in a single room and often left them alone without food. M. also had issues with drug and alcohol abuse. In July 2020, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security removed M.'s children from her home and placed them in a childcare facility on the grounds of child neglect.

Shortly after, the children's father placed the second and third oldest children with his sister while the oldest child stays with him in the south of Thailand. The two youngest children remain at the children's shelter. M. is currently unable to care for all the children herself, as the pandemic severely impacted the hospitality industry.

Due to the prolonged closures of bars and other entertainment venues, M.'s job remains unstable, and she does not earn enough money.

BDF is providing school support to the three oldest children, in addition to donations of food and hygiene supplies. BDF also supports M. in visiting her two youngest children at the shelter by providing transportation and arranging the visits.

M. plans to live with all of her children again as soon as she can afford it, and plans to go back to school so she can get a stable job. BDF is working with M. to achieve this goal by supporting her goal to become a nurse assistant by providing access to the alternative education system.



K, 4 years old

K., a 4-year-old boy of Myanmar descent, lives with his partners in a construction site camp in Chiang Mai. Both of his parents work in construction but they do not earn enough to support both K. and their disabled 13 year-old son, who still lives in Myanmar. In addition, the third wave of COVID-19 left K.'s mother jobless and K.'s father with less income. K. was unable to go to school and suffered from frequent skin infections from living in a dirty environment.

BDF enrolled K. into the BDF-run Tchin Tcho Nursery, which provides free childcare and education to young children in critical situations. BDF

provides K. with transportation to and from the nursery, quality education, and lunch each day. BDF also provides K. with hygiene support and access to vaccinations.

To support K.'s parents in caring for him, BDF is providing K.'s mother with life coaching, training on financial literacy, and training on other topics such as child development, child rights, and how to access public services. BDF is also providing K.'s family with emergency support related to COVID-19, including food donations, remote counseling, and emotional support.



J, 44 years old

J., a 44-year-old woman of Thai ethnic minority, lives in Chiang Mai with her two children, a 14-year-old boy and a 13-year-old girl. J. previously worked as a cleaner before losing her job in December 2020, and is unable to find a new job. J. also struggles with high blood pressure, lasting injuries from a past car accident, and trauma from over 10 years of physical and mental abuse inflicted by her husband.

BDF works closely with J. and supports her in covering the costs of housing, food, and hygiene products. BDF also helps J. enroll her children in school,

covers the cost of school fees and uniforms, and provides the children with a bicycle to get to school.

In addition, BDF provides J. with support in accessing medical care, and accompanies her to doctor visits for her high blood pressure. As she is in strong need of psychological support, BDF provides her with counseling and mental health support.



D, 11 years old

D., an 11-year-old boy from Cambodia, lives with his family in a construction site camp in Bangkok. D. came to Thailand to visit his family in 2020, but got stuck in Thailand due to border closures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. D.'s parents will not enroll him in a Thai school, as he is already enrolled in a school in Cambodia, so he maintains his studies through distance learning through social media platforms such as Facebook.

D. struggles with online learning and is unable to receive support from his parents, as they are unfamiliar with technology. D. also enrolled in school at a late age and is much older than his classmates. He is currently in grade

2, while others his age are in grades 5 or 6. In addition, D. and his family move to different construction site camps every three months to find new work. These challenges make it difficult for D. to keep up with his school work.

In order to keep D. engaged in his studies, BDF provides D. with homework support and non-formal education sessions to ensure his success in school. In addition, BDF provides D. with online educational resources appropriate for his grade that he can reference easily. BDF follows up with D. often and provides him with additional support whenever needed.



S, 17 years old

S., a 17-year-old girl, lives with her husband, child, parents, and four siblings in an urban slum in Chiang Mai. Her older brother is married with two children, and her other three siblings are still in school. S. dropped out of school in 2016 due to learning difficulties and financial constraints, as her parents were unable to cover her school fees. She later married and had a daughter.

BDF provided S. with sewing and handicraft training through the Dao Women's Empowerment Project, and life skills training through the Migrant

Empowerment Project to help empower her and build her capacity. S. decided not to return to school and get a job, so BDF worked closely with her to build her confidence. BDF supported S. in obtaining employment as a cleaner at a food supply store, and provided her with additional training and transportation.

S. is now taking care of her children and BDF also provides her with emergency support related to COVID-19, including donations of food and hygiene supplies.



K, 12 years old

K., a 12-year-old boy of Myanmar descent, lives with his disabled mother, aunt, and young sibling in a construction site camp in Chiang Mai. Since his mother is disabled, K. is responsible for taking care of his mother and his 7 month-old sibling and has never attended school. His aunt works in construction and is the sole earner of the family.

Due to the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand, K.'s aunt was forced to find a new job and began working at a construction site with another family that has a young son. K. was asked to watch the family's son

at the construction site, leaving K.'s disabled mother to watch her young child at home.

BDF provides K. with non-formal education sessions to prepare him for school enrollment, and hopes that he will be able to leave his role as a child caretaker soon. BDF also enrolled K.'s young sibling at a daycare center and provided his mother with training on parenting skills. In addition, BDF is providing K. and his family with emergency support related to COVID-19, including donations of food and hygiene products.



P, 14 years old

K., a 14-year-old boy from Cambodia, lives with his single mother in Bangkok. Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, K.'s mother took out a 90,000 THB loan to buy land in Cambodia and began building a house there. Since the start of the pandemic, K.'s mother has been struggling to pay back the loan and works late at a construction site every day so she can earn enough money for household expenses. She only earns 5,000 THB per month, which barely covers their needs.

K. has been enrolled in Thai public schools for 3 years, but enrolled in school late and is much older than his classmates. In 2021, K. and his mother

moved, forcing him to change schools and making it more difficult for him to make friends. Due to his struggle to make friends at school and his mother's busy schedule, K. began skipping classes. Without a social network or parental supervision, K. lacked the motivation to attend school and decided to stay in the camp.

BDF began working with K. in 2018 after enrolling him in school and is still working closely with K. to support him in attending school regularly. BDF provides school enrollment support and counseling, covers some of the cost of transportation to and from school, and offers non-formal education sessions.



A, 2 years old

K., a 2-year-old girl of Myanmar descent, lives with her grandmother in a construction site camp in Chiang Mai. Her mother, who also has a 7-year-old son, separated from her husband and left K. with her mother. K.'s grandmother has no income and has trouble finding a job, as she is over 55 years old and has diabetes. K.'s mother is in debt from legal fees and lost her job as a domestic worker during the recent third wave of COVID-19 in Thailand.

Due to the pandemic, K.'s mother lost her job and his father had reduced and irregular working hours. This placed significant strain on the family, especially K.'s mother. In response, BDF provided weekly counselling sessions with K.'s mother. BDF also enrolled K. into the BDF-run Tchin Tcho Critical Care Nursery,

which provides free childcare and education to young children in critical situations to support her early childhood development.

BDF provides K. with transportation to and from the nursery, quality education, and lunch each day. BDF also provides K. with emergency support related to COVID-19, including donations of food, clothes, diapers, and hygiene supplies, among other things.

In addition, BDF is working closely with K.'s mother and grandmother to help them care for K. during this difficult time. BDF provides the family with updates on the COVID-19 situation in Thailand, remote counseling, and emotional support.



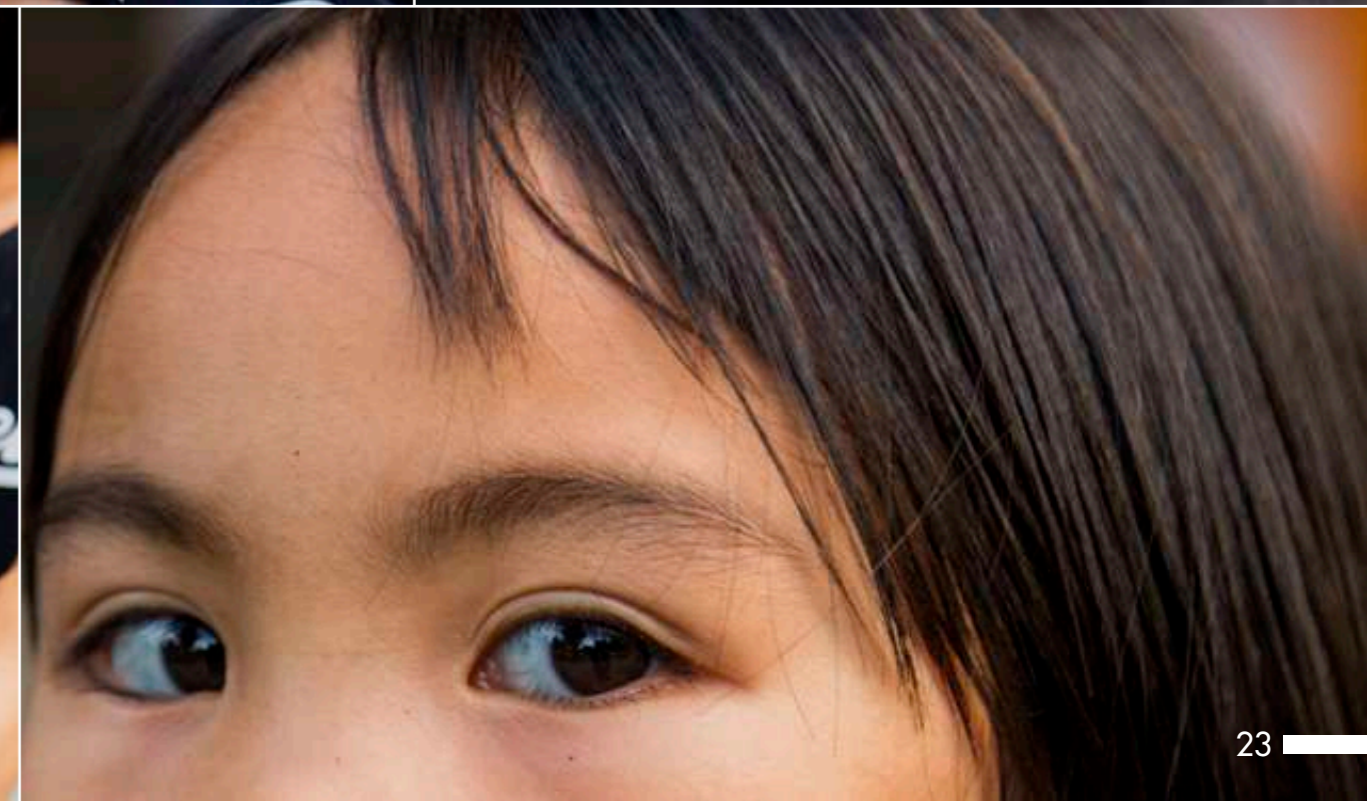
K, 5 years old

K., a 5-year-old girl, lives with her 68-year-old grandmother in a slum in Chiang Mai. Her parents separated and started new families, while abandoning K. Her parents do not provide her with any support so K.'s grandmother, who works as a food seller, is her main caretaker. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and her age, K.'s grandmother has been unable to earn enough money.

K.'s grandmother considered sending K. to an orphanage, but knows that K. is attached to her and has no one else. She committed to care for K., though K. gets bullied at school for only having a grandmother to care for her. In an attempt to earn money, the pair traveled to a nearby city to sell food there and live with

K.'s great-grandmother. K. dropped out of school during the move and once there, K.'s great-grandmother verbally abused her and K.'s grandmother was unable to earn any money.

K. and her grandmother travelled back to Chiang Mai, and K.'s grandmother took out a loan to cover living expenses. BDF began working with K. and her grandmother in March 2021 and supported K. with school enrollment. Since joining school, K. has improved her reading and writing skills. She has improved her social skills. BDF also covers K.'s school expenses and provides essential support, including donations of food and hygiene supplies.



N, 27 years old

N., a single mother of three children from Myanmar, lives in Chiang Mai with her family. The father of her children left N. when she was pregnant with her third child, and she was unable to work since she had to care for the baby. N. borrowed money from friends, relatives, and neighbors for living expenses, and sometimes begged for money on the street. N. eventually began working in construction, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only works three days a week and still does not earn enough to afford food for the family.

During the weekends, N. asks her oldest child to watch the younger two children so she can find additional work. She sometimes finds work doing small tasks

such as bagging groceries or washing dishes at a local food shop. N. works hard to earn enough money to send the older two children to school, but is struggling to do so.

BDF provides N. with counseling and emotional support, in addition to covering the costs of accomodation, food, and school enrollment fees for the older two children. BDF is also providing N. and her family with emergency support related to the third wave of COVID-19 in Thailand, including donations of food and hygiene supplies.





This critical support would not have been possible without each and every Social Advisor's (case workers) tireless commitment and endless hours to ensure that vulnerable children and their families are able to overcome adversity in the face of uncertainty.



Thank you!



WWW.BAANDEKFOUNDATION.ORG