



## Baan Unrak Project - Neo Humanist Foundation

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Baan Unrak is a project registered in Thailand under the Neo Humanist Foundation (5008).



### To the Oliver Herbrich Kinderfonds & Amurt Foundations

**= Not only a place to eat but also a space for harmonious growth =**

#### Project Description Baan Unrak - Background

Baan Unrak is a non-profit, non-religious NGO registered with the Social Welfare Department located on the Thai Burmese border in Sangklaburi, Thailand. Founded in 1991 as a home for two needy children, Baan Unrak gradually evolved into a multi-functional foundation that encompasses various projects, including a home for children, a self-running primary school, a women's training center with facilities for sustainability, and an outreach program to the community dedicated to help those who do not have sufficient resources to get food or medical care. The house remains the major project of Baan Unrak, which provides love, food, education and medical care to nearly 140 children, mostly of Burmese, Mon and Karen descent.

Currently, Baan Unrak Children's Home consists of two buildings, one for boys and the other for girls. We lack a common area where the young people can meet, eat meals together and for other activities. We would like to build a multi-purpose space between the two houses to function as a recreational center for the Baan Unrak community.

#### The Aim of the New Project

is to create a multi-functional space that can be used for meals and physical activities such as sports and various creative performances and other social initiatives.

#### Beneficiaries

140 children of Baan Unrak and 10 single mothers

#### Specific Objectives of the New Project

Baan Unrak expects to get multiple results from the establishment of the dining hall and recreation center:

1) To provide a dry and safe place for children to use during the rainy season of six months. The space will allow children to eat in a dry atmosphere and to pursue recreational activities even during the wettest months when outdoor activities are almost impossible.

2) To encourage the children to develop their mental and physical balance.

Studies show that the presence of collective centers has many positive effects on mental health and development to the person. We are convinced that the dining hall and recreation center will encourage the children to try new initiatives, live a more dynamic life, help develop their capacity to take decisions and cooperative behaviors, and to motivate them to cultivate more meaningful relationships with one another. Achieving these benefits will be fostered by encouraging children to make use of the center as their own (for the dance and acrobatic groups organized by the children themselves) as well as continuous activities coordinated by volunteers.

Baan Unrak has always been committed to providing a healthy home for children. As a result we follow a vegetarian diet, do daily practice of yoga and meditation, and pursue a holistic approach to health care attentive to the needs of each child. The dining hall and recreation center is another project that seeks to offer a healthier environment (both physical and mental) to our children.

#### Description of the Building

The building is located in a strategic area between the two houses. It is well-ventilated and surrounded by beautiful nature. It covers an area of 300 square meters and is equipped with a good kitchen suitable for the preparation of food. The center allows the children to eat together in a dry and comfortable ambience even during the rainy season. The shape is octagonal with steel pillars. There is a roof with tiles of clay with steep slope that extends well beyond the pillars to prevent water from entering when it rains. There are no permanent walls or doors except for the area where the meals

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are prepared and distributed. Most of our children come from the jungle and feels much better if they can play and interact in an open area where the wind can blow freely on their faces. The security of the roof protects them from the heavy monsoon rains and intolerable heat wave during the dry season. The floor is a little elevated to avoid the moisture coming from the ground, especially in the rainy season. The security is guaranteed by a good hedge of protection that surrounds the entire building. The building is situated on a slope with a hollow space on one side. The space under the building has the predisposition for the storage of recycled water for domestic uses.

### The Time frame

The construction of the dining hall and recreation center took 15 months to finish. Ideally, we planned to finish the building of the dining hall and recreation center by the end of January so that we could have a good place before the onset of the scorching sun of the Thai summer (March - May) and of the heavy monsoon season in June but we faced many inevitable delays. The time frame depended on many factors including funding, the presence of skilled workers, heavy rains, electricity (we often have power shortages in Sangklaburi), etc.

### Problems Encountered

Construction started on July 2012, since then many different challenges came that slowed down the process. The lack of money to buy the necessary construction materials was often the problem. Few times construction was delayed while waiting for the money to come. Fortunately the German Foundation, Oliver Herbrich Kinderfonds and Amurt came to our help and made it possible for construction to continue. To find good workers was also a problem. Twice we have workers leaving to go back to their native Burma in response to the call for help from suppressed minority fighters. At the very beginning, due to our limited budget we had a simple structure built. When the help from Oliver Herbrich Kinderfonds and Amurt came we started to expand the too narrow kitchen already initiated. Extreme weather condition also contributed to the delay. In summer shortage of water and in raining season very strong rain fall has stopped us several times.

### Conclusion

After all the challenges and hard work, the new dining hall and recreation center stands beautifully in our little community. Everybody is happy to use the comfortable and safe facilities. The children have now more space to eat and play together especially during the rainy season. It's not just simply a place where food is prepared and distributed. It's a building that they can call their own for their group activities and social gatherings. This space encourages the feeling of collectiveness which is essential for the progress of the individual and society. It is the aim of Baan Unrak to give the basic needs of the children as well as provide a conducive environment for physical, mental and spiritual growth.

Sincerely,

Donata Dolci

*Donata Dolci*

