



IMPACT REPORT

2019





Alexandra Russell
FOUNDER + EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



- 1. Maia Mounsher**
THAILAND DIRECTOR
- 2. Parinya "Paan" Jongpaijitsakul**
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS
- 3. Piangta "Pepo" Leepatanaku**
SURVIVOR CARE COORDINATOR
- 4. Arooned "Mon" Chermue**
OUTREACH WORKER



- 5. Alisa "Imp" Suwee**
CASE MANAGER
- 6. Nan "Khem" Khin**
HOUSE MANAGER
- 7. Kampon "Bop" Maijandee**
MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR, CASE
MANAGER + COMMUNITY EDUCATOR
- 8. Piyawan "Tu" Peangmon**
COMMUNITY PREVENTION
COORDINATOR
- 9. Somyot "Ton" Channa**
ACCOUNTANT
- 10. Narong "Rong" Khamjoy**
OUTREACH WORKER
- 11. Yuttapong Tiumsuk**
OUTREACH WORKER
- 12. Nang "Pon" Hseng Nyein San**
OUTREACH WORKER
- 13. Lani Hollander**
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (CONSULTANT)

our mission:

We **PROTECT** boys and young men by meeting their basic needs and **EMPOWER** them through education, training, and counseling – all to give them **FREEDOM** to choose a life beyond exploitation.





team member TESTIMONIAL

Kampon "Pop" Maichandee // MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR,
CASE MANAGER + COMMUNITY EDUCATOR (2016 TO PRESENT)

I first came to know Urban Light at the time when I was studying at Chiang Mai University as a 4th year student and at that time my professor suggested I take on an internship at Urban Light. At that time Urban Light did not have a counselor, and since Urban Light works with such vulnerable clients, I felt it crucial they be able to provide clients with access to mental health care.

After completing my 6-month internship with UL, and after graduating I was still interested in continuing to work with UL. I was interested in the challenge of providing mental health care for this particular group of boys.

In January 2016, I started my full-time work with Urban Light and my commitment to being the best counselor and case

manager to the clients they serve, all while pursuing my masters in psychology.

At first, working here, as I had expected, was very challenging – I had to adapt to working with a unique client population, and to my new role as a counselor. I had to learn fast and create...

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"...EVEN SMALL CHANGES CAN HAVE SO MUCH VALUE IN THE LIVES OF THE CLIENTS WE WORK WITH."

new counseling and therapy services from scratch that would be offered to our clients.

Each UL client has his complex and chronic issues which cause them sadness and pain. Of course, mental health condition such as trauma, PTSD, depression, anxiety has an effect on our client's well-being as it limits their success and impacts their daily life. UL's clients suffer extreme conditions and live in a constant state of survival mode which makes working with them quite challenging--it takes time to get through to each individual.

These particular difficulties and complexities helped me to understand that I must always strive to learn and develop my own skills. The harder the case, the more I dedicate myself to studying, understanding, and finding even more information to better serve UL client's mental health needs.

I remember when I started working at UL, hardly had two months go by and I had already read more books than I had in four years of studying for my bachelor's degree! I'm lucky that I have such a supportive professor

and supervisor at Chiang University's Department of Psychology. It's also a huge help that UL has such a strong team (a really strong team!) – it means we don't get too exhausted from this difficult and complex work.

I believe that what's important in working as a counselor, is having knowledge, techniques, and a positive attitude towards your clients. Something that I learned from working with UL's clients is how to manage my expectations, and the ability to observe that even small changes can have so much value in the lives of the clients we

work with. If we take it one small change at a time, we will be able to bring the clients we work with **"out of the narrow and into the wide – out of the darkness and into the light"** without getting lost, through the process of building relationships that are based on warmth and safety.





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2019 giving

a huge thanks

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Informal School of Chiang Mai | US Consulate of Chiang Mai
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การแข่งขันฟุตบอล 7 คน





URBAN LIGHT *hero*

**“Our Purpose Is To Inspire Fulfilling Lives,
Starting With A Focus On Health.”**

Athletic Greens is proud to support Urban Light in their mission to provide care & wellness to the young boys in Thailand who are victims of trafficking and exploitation. At Athletic Greens, we strive to support charities run by passionate people who are looking to improve the lives of their community. As a company focused on nutrition and health, we are particularly interested in helping provide exceptional nutrition as a foundation for success and recovery.

One of our core values at Athletic Greens is Respect and Empathy for All. We treat each other as we would like to be treated. That means showing respect and empathy for every person, regardless of their situation. The population that Urban Light serves in Thailand is a very marginalized group that needs extra care and support in difficult times. We feel that focusing our efforts on these often forgotten boys is an important and worthy cause.

**Chris ‘The Kiwi’ // FOUNDER OF ATHLETIC GREENS
+ URBAN LIGHT ANGEL INVESTOR SINCE 2011**

AthleticGreens



Chris is the most generous person I know. A huge caring heart, liberal with time and money and opportunities. He truly wants to help others become the best people they can be, and when it comes to kids, Chris can’t bear for them to suffer. Two of Chris’ great passions are personal growth and physical health. Urban Light improves the lives of boys in both areas, and so providing delicious, healthy meals was a natural collaboration.

Liana Ashenden // SISTER





2019 HIGHLIGHTS

Prevention // Protection // Partnership // Awareness

JANUARY

Jai Thep Festival x Urban Light Booth // **Awareness**

Thailand Children's Day // **Partnership / Awareness**

FEBRUARY

Life Skills Training with P'Paan // **Protection**

Urban Light Board Meeting, QTR 1, Remote Meeting

MARCH

ChildSafe Partner Meeting // **Partnership**

APRIL

- ▶ Songkran Swimming Excursion // **Protection**

MAY

Urban Light Ethical Tourism Workshop for Chiang Mai Community // **Partnership**

Good Touch Bad Touch Training // **Partnership / Awareness**

JUNE

Juvenile Detention Center Workshops // **Protection**

Urban Light Board Meeting, QTR 2, Remote Meeting

JULY

Urban Light Media Training // **Partnership**

Loreal x Urban Light Hair Academy // **Partnership**

Up! International x Urban Light Meeting, Switzerland // **Awareness**

AUGUST

Anti-Trafficking Awareness with Local Chiang Mai Schools // **Awareness**

SEPTEMBER

Mobile Health Clinics Holland in Community // **Prevention / Protection**

Good Touch Bad Touch Training // **Prevention + Partnership**

OCTOBER

World Without Orphans Forum

Speaking Engagement at the USAID, Washington, DC // **Awareness**

Speaking Engagement, Boston, MA // **Awareness**

Urban Caravan Dinner to raise awareness for Urban Light, Washington, DC // **Awareness**

Urban Caravan Dinner to raise awareness for Urban Light, Trout Lake, WA // **Awareness**

Annual Urban Light Board Meeting, Google Office San Francisco, CA

- ▶ A21 x Urban Light Walk for Freedom & Chiang Mai ATIP EXPO // **Partnership / Awareness**

NOVEMBER

Urban Caravan Dinner to raise awareness for Urban Light, Mumbai, India // **Awareness**

Harmony Foundation Symposium on Human Trafficking, Mumbai, India

- ▶ Mother Teresa Memorial Award Ceremony honoring Urban Light Founder Alezandra Russell, Mumbai India

- ▶ UL's 2nd Annual Football Cup, Chiang Mai, TH // **Partnership / Awareness**

Wonderfruit Festival x UL, Bangkok, TH // **Awareness**

DECEMBER

- ▶ Paul Cox Photography Auction @ 137 Pillars House, Chiang Mia, TH // **Awareness**

End of the Year Excursion for the Urban Light Boys, Floating Boat Houses, Chiang Mai // **Protection**

2019



volunteer

▶ TESTIMONIAL

Ryan Binkley // LONG-TERM UL VOLUNTEER (2016 TO PRESENT) +
MISSIONARY TO THAILAND (HIGHLAND CHURCH OF CHRIST - ABILENE, TX)

My initial experience of meeting many of the boys at the Urban Light drop-in center when I started volunteering three years ago was a bit disorienting. As an American missionary living in Thailand for over ten years now, I had grown to expect in certain social situations an automatic greeting with a “wai” (hands pressed together and raised to face), which is a show of respect from a younger person to an older. Yet, none of the boys looked at me nor “wai-ed” me those first few times.

In a hierarchical society like Thailand where everyone knows their place in relation to others, giving and receiving honor is of high value, alongside physical needs like food and shelter. In the eyes of most Thais, however, there is nothing honorable about the boys of Urban Light. Their first interaction with me was not a lack of manners or desire to show respect, but quite the opposite: they weren't confident that I saw them worthy enough to even play the honor-giving game.

I also noticed early on that the boys did “wai” people at the center - namely, the Urban Light staff. And after three years of being around the staff and boys I know why. The staff treat the boys who come each day not as problems to be fixed but as fellow human beings who are worthy of respect.

The boys at the center are not “street kids” or “sex workers” - they are friends, brothers and sons. In fact, Urban Light case workers serve as legal guardians

for some clients. Whether it is teaching them how to cut hair, offering a place to bathe, sharing a meal together, lending an ear in a counseling session or tending a wounded leg, the Urban Light staff show day in and day out that these boys are honorable and lovable.

While “honor” might not be one of the official services offered by Urban Light, I believe that empowering these young men to protect themselves from exploitation also includes restoring to them dignity and self-worth. When staff celebrate a client's high school graduation with flowers and pictures, attend the funeral of a client who died from alcohol abuse, or visit them in prison, they communicate that each one is a valuable human being, despite what society tells them. These acts may not make the annual report but they are just as important as Urban Light's other services.

Each time I play soccer with the Urban Light boys I am reminded how much this community has positively affected the self-esteem of these boys. On the soccer field there is no difference in social status. We play together as equals—laughing, smiling and teasing each other. Though in reality I am a horrible soccer player, the boys honor me by intentionally passing the ball to me, knowing that seconds later it will most likely be stolen. Now when I leave the soccer field many of the boys raise their hands to “wai” me.

We all know each of us is worthy of giving and receiving honor.

... EACH ONE
IS A VALUABLE
HUMAN BEING





2019 IMPACT

9 YEARS IN OPERATION

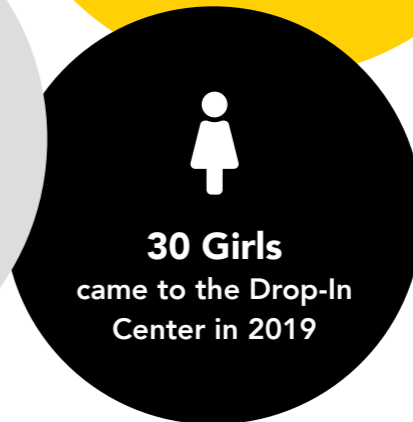
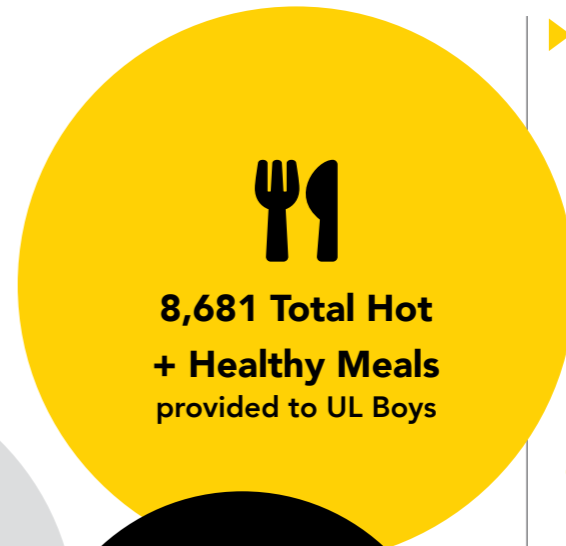


228 Visits

where services were received during Outreach & Community Outreach

4,759 Visits

from Boys that made it to the Urban Light Youth Center



▶ **3,098 Hot Meals**
served @ the UL Center

1,760 Hot Meals
served during Outreach

1,268 Snacks/Meals
served @ Prevention/
Community Development



Urban Light Staff
Members:

9 Thai Staff

2 Foreign Staff

**5 Volunteers &
Consultants**

***"Boys" refers to all male clients (boys and men). **In 2019 these services included screen printing, hair cutting, baking snacks, tattoo, general & sexual health, career & life clinic, art therapy, excursion, everybody in & upcycle. However, no English services were included as it was prohibited by immigration.*



► EDUCATION

of Boys enrolled in alternative education: **15 Boys**

of Boys enrolled in formal education: **10 Boys**

► HEALTH

of hours spent on medical case-management first aid, pharmacy visits and HIV screening: **138 Hours**

of Boys who received medical check ups: **43 Boys**

of Boys who received HIV & STI screenings: **29 Boys**

of Boys who received health screenings for other illnesses: **78 Boys**

of Boys who received mental health services: **59 Boys**

of on-site health clinics at the UL Youth Center: **7 Clinics**

of hours spent providing health education to UL Boys: **15 Hours**

► HOUSING

Boys who entered the UL Transitional Housing Project: **18 Boys**

Boys who received emergency Housing: **10 Boys**

► EMPLOYMENT

of Boys that received life skills training: **83 Boys**

of Boys that received vocational training: **82 Boys**

of Boys that got a job: **30 Boys**

► OUTREACH

of outreach locations: **12 Locations**

of hours spent conducting outreach: **260 Hours**

of Boys reached during outreach: **265 Boys**

of Boys who were referred out to other services: **12 Boys**

of condoms distributed: **7,720 Condoms**

of health kits distributed during outreach: **144 Health Kits**

of visits to jail, juvenile detention: **29 Visits**

of hot meals served at outreach: **2,493 Meals**





► COMMUNITY OUTREACH

of Urban Light satellite centers: **4 Centers**

of life skills workshops provided during community outreach: **38**

of children (0 – 18) that received services: **162 Children**

of families that received services: **153 Families**

► PREVENTION/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

of community & village chats/trainings: **22 Chats**

of elders + parents that participated in community chats: **307 Elders**

of youth that participated in youth programs: **65 Youth**

► AWARENESS + ADVOCACY

of Thailand speaking engagement: **25 Engagements**

of Global speaking engagements: **Thai (6), USA (12)**

of Travel & Tourism Trainings on Child Protection: **2 Trainings**

of followers reached on social media: **Reaches (83,259), Clicks (6,013)**

of people reached via speaking engagements: **Thai (3,098), USA (1,760)**



Harmony Foundation Presents
HARMONY
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2019
#YouthAgainstSlavery

CHALLENGE #1:

TRAFFICKING IN NARROWLY DEFINED TO ONLY TO CONFRONT
TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN LEAVING MEN OUT OF

CHALLENGE #2:

SHRINKING BUDGETS

CHALLENGE #3:

SILO'D NON-PROFITS CREATING DISCONNECT WITHIN THE
LIMITING OUR HUN

Urban Light



client SUCCESS STORY

"Rong*" // URBAN LIGHT BOY + LONG-TERM CLIENT

**Name changed to protect anonymity*

RONG* HAS BEEN COMING TO URBAN LIGHT FROM 2016 TO PRESENT

2019 was the first year that Urban Light saw two of its clients entering University. One of those clients was Rong. This is his story, of what he has overcome and how he got to where he is today.

Rong is 20 years old. His home town is in Chiang Dao district of Chiang Mai a two hour motorbike ride from Chiang Mai city. He is Lahu (an ethnic minority group in

Thailand), and has 3 siblings. Both of Rong's parents died when he was very young, leaving him and his siblings alone, parentless, and stateless. Being stateless, Rong still lacks citizenship, but holds an 'O' card which allows him a few benefits such as access to education and the ability to travel internally within Chiang Mai.

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Rong's family left Myanmar as refugees before he was born. Rong was born and raised in Thailand, and as such is entitled to Thai citizenship. However, his birth was not registered, and so to this day he remains stateless or invisible. When he was about 2 years old Rong was first taken into the care of an orphanage, and he bounced around different care homes until the age of thirteen.

From this point onward, Rong went to live with friends on the street, in the area of a local fresh-market, and worked in a warehouse. His job was lifting and moving boxes of flowers from 5AM to 10PM, for which he received around 150 Baht per day or \$4.78USD (half of the national minimum wage in Thailand).

Living on the streets and trying to survive, Rong was living in an extremely high-risk environment. That was until he met one of Urban Light's officers, who was able to help him in many ways, including providing healthcare, education, housing and counseling.

Since he has attended formal schooling, he has also benefited from Urban Light's Transitional Housing Project, with a safe place to live and regular visits from the Urban Light team. Over time his way of thinking shifted and his quality of life drastically improved.

In 2019, Rong completed his 3rd and final year at Vocational Technical College – learning to be a certified electronics technician.

Thanks to an ongoing scholarship with Urban Light, Rong is now in his first year studying Sports Science and Health Promotion at University of Chiang Mai. He is on his well on his way to achieving his dream of becoming a sports coach in the future!

In addition to his studies, and after passing his driver's license test with support from Urban Light, Rong has also taken on a part time job as a driver for Grab Food. His goal for the time being is to complete his bachelor's degree, so that he can find work that is stable in the future, and even gain Thai citizenship. According to Thai law, stateless citizens can only apply for their citizenship if and when they complete their University Education.

Of the last year, Rong added:

"I feel like everything is going well. Going to University, having somewhere to live, everything's okay. I feel grateful because if I didn't have Urban Light, I wouldn't get to have an education like this, I wouldn't have a place to sleep."

"I feel more like an adult now. I used to be a little kid, I used to only think about myself, and I used to let my feelings get in the way, but now I feel like I'm going in the right direction."

We asked if he felt proud of himself since he started studying at University, ***"Well, not yet" he answered with a smile - "I'm not finished yet!"***



**KEEP IT UP
RONG* – EYES
ON THE PRIZE!**





Let's get social



UrbanLight



UrbanLightThailand



BeTheLightUL

DONATE

URBAN-LIGHT.ORG

BE THE LIGHT, BE THE CHANGE

The identity and privacy of all Urban Light Boys is strictly enforced by the Urban Light Child Protection Policy which is strictly enforced and followed by all staff, visitors and partners. The word "Boy(s)" is used to describe our male clients, however Urban Light also serves adult men who are included in the annual numbers.

