Dear Friends,

2023 marks our 25th year of existence. A quarter of a Century of life for our foundation, and 66 newsletters like this one, trying to recount our story over the years. When I started reading the very first ones again, I especially noticed one thing: our manner of caring for the less privileged in Manila has not changed. When I say ‘manner’ I do not mean the quality, the number of centres or the diversity of the actions carried out. All of this has, thankfully, greatly evolved since 1998, along with our learning journey on the field, thanks to the growing skills and expertise of our teams, with the constant development of both our programmes for the children of the slums, in order to continue to better understand and adapt to the crucial needs of children and their families.

However, the main ambition of our action has always remained the same. Whether it be with 200-300 children back in 1998, or more than 2,500 beneficiaries today in our centres; each child remains a priority, each one of them is loved and supported as if they were unique.

In a world which has experienced so much change and so many crises in 25 years, the direction we managed to hold steadfast as our only bearings would certainly not help us receive the medal for the most modern or shiny foundation, but I do hope it might help us receive a medal for the most sincere and loving foundation. It is with this sincerity, these emotions, and the love we share, that we have tried, for 25 years, and will continue to try, to tell you our story, and that you have shared in return, through your generous loyalty, for so many years. Thank you!

Happy birthday ANAK-Tnk and Happy Christmas festivities to all of you.

Pascal Breton - President of ANAK-Tnk

A Quarter of a Century and Much Love

The foundation is celebrating its Silver Jubilee this year and it is of course the word ‘gratitude’ that comes to mind spontaneously to all of us. 25 years of service to the poor, 25 years of development, enhancement, support, and expertise too, along the years… But above all, 25 years of learning from the least of us, extraordinary life-learning lessons. The foundation has considerably grown, as we now have 29 homes to welcome the street children and a dozen day centres in the slums, and yet it is above all our hearts which have grown. These tens of thousands of children who have come to the foundation and left again, have continued to show us the essence and remind us that only one thing is truly necessary: to love and to be loved. It is a common assumption for sure, and yet also a lesson of life of 25 years… full of love!

Father Matthieu Dauchez
Director of the foundation in Manila
Our Thanksgiving Action is Full of Tears.

“Blessed are those who mourn.” There are times when accepting the beatidues is assuredly harder than others. The long journey of family life is of course scattered with joy and trials. The one we have just experienced makes the scandal of Evil and its dead-end resonate painfully in our hearts once again. Why does God permit this? Glynzelle’s words to Pope Francis in 2015 sadly still remain a very true question today.

Jayson, a street child we welcomed to the foundation more than 20 years ago, chose to become an educator to help the abandoned children in the jungle of the city of Manila. His wounded heart became a soothing heart. He left us suddenly in September, leaving us with his unforgettable smile. He takes with him, however, all the love he gave to the smallest among us, his key to the door of Heaven. A life too short, but a life given. Our hearts give thanks for the exemplary life he led, but our thanksgiving is bathed in tears…

Father Matthieu Dauchez - Director of the foundation in Manila

Another Family Addition!

As you have read every year for the past 25 years, the foundation continuously grows to meet the existing and growing needs of the streets of Manila; and 2023 is no exception. In August 2023, the ‘Saint Tarcisius’ Boy’s Residential Home opened its doors to welcome 18 boys aged between 7 and 18, who, after months of stabilisation, return to a child’s life and the classrooms of the neighbourhood school.

Regarding our programme in the slums, the number of children we have helped also continues to increase, the buildings are too small and rapidly becoming too old. The foundation has thus launched several extension and renovation sites in order to welcome the children and their families in the best possible conditions, so that they may find in our centres the help and support they need in their slum. Our teams have been relentlessly fighting this extreme poverty for 25 years to bring dignity and hope to all these children, but let me tell you that by simply reading these lines you are providing your support that helps us every day. You are a part of this big ANAK-Tnk family.

Charles Cruse
HR manager in Manila

Finding Your Mother Again… After 15 Years!

John-Carlo was just 2 years old when he joined the foundation in 2009. J-C has grown older with the years, but a deep wound remained open for this lost and abandoned child. No news of his family, “The hardest”, he says, “is at Christmas when the other children visit their families, what about me?”

Yet, a few weeks ago, John-Paul, one of our street educators, miraculously found his mother’s trace. After positive feedback from our social assistants, a visit was organised for J-C and his mother to meet. A timeless, enlightening moment.

J-C walked confidently to his weeping mother, and hugged her tenderly. Magnificent forgiveness given, love can achieve everything. Since this meeting, J-C has been waiting for one thing alone, to return to see his mother for Christmas.

Élise Cruse
Communication and partnership manager

Franklin is a 15-year-old boy living with his parents in a tiny hut of just a few square metres, located in one of the slums where ANAK-Tnk is present. It is there that I first met Franklin two years ago, thanks to a community worker of our health programme. Indeed, the mission of these mothers of the slums is also to enquire about the families of the slums, in order to find the children who are most in need of help. Experience has shown that we must relentlessly reach out to those most in need, as the greatest misery is often hidden. Her mother survives by picking rubbish, leaving her daughter sometimes alone, sometimes with neighbours, but always with a screen, a kind of digital babysitter. The mother didn’t realise the impact the screen was having on her child. This is just one among many examples, as, at the end of the day, we are all concerned by the subject of screens, no matter our life, our revenues, or our country.

Franklin suffers from bone tuberculosis causing significant spine deformity, making him unable to walk. Franklin spends his days lying on a tiny mattress, on the bare floor, at the mercy of insects and rats which often bite him. This immobility causes huge bedsores which are difficult to treat. There are several shocking aspects about Franklin’s case. The most unbearable is certainly the injustice of the situation. Nonetheless, there is a beautiful relationship between the boy and the team in the slums, since the first encounter and with regular visits. Franklin, whose face was closed at the beginning, opened up gradually, now welcoming each person with a big smile. He has experienced ups and downs, both with his physical and mental health, but he surprises us and enlightens us with the way he bears his cross. Franklin is an example of how the foundation sets about helping a beneficiary. We are amazed by each individual commitment to bring the greatest compassion and adapted care to the most vulnerable.

The Impact of Screens… in the slums too!

To support families in the slums, we focus our mission on educating the youngest with kindergarten classes in the poorest areas of the capital. This is accompanied by practical workshops on hygiene, meals, with health check-ups. The programme helps more than 4000 beneficiaries. Our day centres have thus become places where the families of the slums can come and rest, meet people, find support, and train, as we ask the parents to participate in the project. In order to do this, we have created the MA-PA’s club which offers training to mothers and fathers. Topics are extremely varied and have evolved greatly over the past 25 years. In fact, this year we are adding, for example, a specific session on the impact of screens on a child’s development. It is a real problem, as screens are everywhere today. In our Aroma Day Centre, I met a 3 year-old girl who still can’t speak and does not seem stimulated. Her mother survives by picking rubbish, leaving her daughter sometimes alone, sometimes with neighbours, but always with a screen, a kind of digital babysitter. The mother didn’t realise the impact the screen was having on her child. This is just one among many examples, as, at the end of the day, we are all concerned by the subject of screens, no matter our life, our revenues, or our country.

Sally Muleta
Education coordinator, slum programme

LIWANAG like light

The Liwanag project started in July 2022 with the purchase of an 11-hectare piece of land by the sea where we transferred our farm for the street children to a temporary building. After just over a year of reflecting and preparing the plans, in September 2023 we had a very emotional ‘Groundbreaking’ ceremony to place our first cornerstone. We welcomed local authorities and members of the ANAK-Tnk office, along with the youth of our farm, to celebrate the launch of the significant works of the second and third steps of the project.

On the sea front: creation of an activity camp made up of a large number of bungalows and a large sheltered basketball court surrounding a large playground with many trees. This area by the beach will be able to welcome all the foundation in particular for its annual summer camp or for seminars, and can also be offered to other NGOs. The works are set to end in 2024.

On the farm front: definite construction of the ‘Our Lady of the Mount Carmel’ centre; a large house overlooking nature and the land of the farm, which will be a living area for the street children and the supporting teams. The works are set to end by Christmas 2023. These first two steps are the real launch of the beautiful ‘Liwanag’ project. There is a long way to go, however the place, between the sea and the hills, already looks like a lighthouse for the children of the foundation: a place for holidays, farming, and in the long run a place for training in the tourism industry.

Charles Cruse - HR manager in Manila

Franklin

Franklin is a 15-year-old boy living with his parents in a tiny hut of just a few square metres, located in one of the slums where ANAK-Tnk is present. It is there that I first met Franklin two years ago, thanks to a community worker of our health programme. Indeed, the mission of these mothers of the slums is also to enquire about the families of the slums, in order to find the children who are most in need of help. Experience has shown that we must relentlessly reach out to those most in need, as the greatest misery is often hidden. Franklin suffers from bone tuberculosis causing significant spine deformity, making him unable to walk. Franklin spends his days lying on a tiny mattress, on the bare floor, at the mercy of insects and rats which often bite him. This immobility causes huge bedsores which are difficult to treat. There are several shocking aspects about Franklin’s case. The most unbearable is certainly the injustice of the situation. Nonetheless, there is a beautiful relationship between the boy and the team in the slums, since the first encounter and with regular visits. Franklin, whose face was closed at the beginning, opened up gradually, now welcoming each person with a big smile. He has experienced ups and downs, both with his physical and mental health, but he surprises us and enlightens us with the way he bears his cross. Franklin is an example of how the foundation sets about helping a beneficiary. We are amazed by each individual commitment to bring the greatest compassion and adapted care to the most vulnerable.

Gaëtane Javel
Volunteer nurse, slum programme
Foundation Day - 25 years!

On the 28th September, about 800 members of the ANAK-Tnk family, children and staff, gathered to celebrate the foundation’s 25 years. A big surprise was prepared for the day: a whole day in an amusement park! Can you imagine the joy and excitement for all? The little ones and the older ones, and the park, bubbling with the enthusiasm of the children. All sorts of rides, roller coasters, Ferris wheel, bumper cars… all of us had an amazing time! For this day out, I was in charge of 2 boys: Prince and Justin, and it was my privilege to share their joy and lovingly witness their expressions when they watched the rides, especially Prince, who clung to me every time we started a ride asking: “When is it over?” and as soon as it ended, asking with a big smile: “Can we do it again??”

The rides were adapted to each age group, making sure this beautiful day would stay engraved in everyone's memory. Today when we go to the centres, the children tell us with amazement about their favourite rides, telling us how proud they were to overcome their fear and they ask us: “When can we go back?".

A nice tropical rain shower came to bless our foundation at the end of the outing, and a fireworks display brought this wonderful day to a close.

Gaëtan Javel - Volunteer in charge of material and food purchasing

An Amusement Park… to celebrate our 25th Birthday

“It’s really scary but it’s so cool”
Joshua on the rides, age 10

“I went higher than everyone else. I could touch the sky”
Jamaica on the Ferris wheel, age 12

“I was upside down, then back up, then down again, then up… and we all met for the fireworks at the end, everything was unbelievable, thank you!”
Anlene - age 17 on the bus trip back

“Fantastic! What moved me most was the solidarity between everyone, we managed to take all the disabled children on the rides”
Rose - Head of the St Josephine Bakhita Home for disabled girls

“We need to celebrate our 25th birthday every year!”
Justin - 6 years

Sacerdoce in cinemas

A 90-minute-long film by Damien Boyer, which tells the story of the journeys of 5 different priests, including Abbot Matthieu Dauchez (anak-tnk.org). It recounts the stories of each one: their choice of becoming a priest and the sacrifices that come with it, their apostolic daily life and their mission in the world. In France, or at the other end of the world, in their cassock or wearing a simple roman collar, young beginners, or wise old men: the spectator is thrown deep into the life of each person, their joys and their doubts; in short, into their privacy. A wonderful story of hope!

Watch it and watch it again here:
www.sajedistribution.com

You can help ANAK-Tnk.

To help the children of Manila, donate online through the website:

www.anak-tnk.org

You can donate in any currency and receive the corresponding tax benefit: France, United States, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium and Italy.

Did you know?

You can donate in several countries and receive the corresponding tax benefit: France, United States, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Spain, Belgium and Italy.