

july to dec 2023



# More Precious than Diamonds

OUR FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND CYBERSEX CRIME  
IN THE PHILIPPINES

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**Our thanks to our key donors  
helping to underwrite our work in the Philippines**

**Jamoca  
Foundation**

**The Crossing**

**Penman & Johnson  
Families**



# impact numbers

**19,723 individuals** were reached through distribution of infographic materials in schools, community education, mobilization of students in universities, and online campaigns and activities

**4,711 new community advocates** were trained to be more vigilant and equipped to report cases of abuse as well as take steps to prevent online sexual abuse and exploitation of children

stop cybersex crime

**5,469 women** helped since our microfinance program started

**42 new women** were added in the past six months

**57 active loan groups** are running that serve as support and accountability system for the members.

microfinance

**147 children** are now back in school and regularly attending class

**300 families** received education on child safety

**7 partners** (other organizations and groups) have committed to work together with the Manila Slum Project

manila slum project

**16 trafficking survivors** were already successfully reintegrated out of the 22

Out of the 6 beneficiares who are still to be reintegrated: 3 are women trainees and 3 are trainee dependents

blessed project

**On track to reach our goal of 45% sustainability by June 2024**

Four major sources of income come from Microfinance, Sewing, Blessed Brigade, and in-country fundraising

self-sustainability



# Ending Generational Poverty

Weaving my way through the dark narrow path of a Manila slum, I could reach out my hands either side and touch the walls of the shanty houses, stacked side by side with each home being just a few meters wide and built mostly of old rusted tin, boards, or tarpaulins.

Amongst this sea of humanity, hundreds of families call this self-made community home. I was touched by the hospitality and welcomed in to visit a number of homes and hear their stories of the impact made by Captivating's Manila Slum Project. I sat on primitively made boxes for chairs, listened to stories of the mothers with tears in their eyes as they shared of generational poverty living in the slum and despair of living in such a harsh situation. I was surprised to hear a number of times of second or third generations of families that had called this slum home.

Many pray for and dream of a brighter future for their children – but have felt trapped just to survive and so in the past, force their children to help at work or stay home to mind the little ones while they try to eke out an existence. Around 147 families have been supported to keep their young girls in school rather than have them working in family business or begging on the streets.

During my visit to the slum, I was approached by this man in the picture, a local community (barangay) leader who sincerely thanked us for coming into their community and providing this incredible support to the children and being an inspiration to the mums to prioritize keeping their kids in school.





Over the past six months, Captivating's on-the-ground partner, HONOR 1000, received a number of recognitions from Philippine community leaders for the important work we are doing over a range of programs, which includes educating children of the dangers of online sexual exploitation, and livelihood development through microfinance. The Philippine House of Representatives hosted a movie screening for "Sound of Freedom" to raise awareness on child trafficking and invited HONOR 1000 to receive recognition and an award for their work in this area (more on page 19).

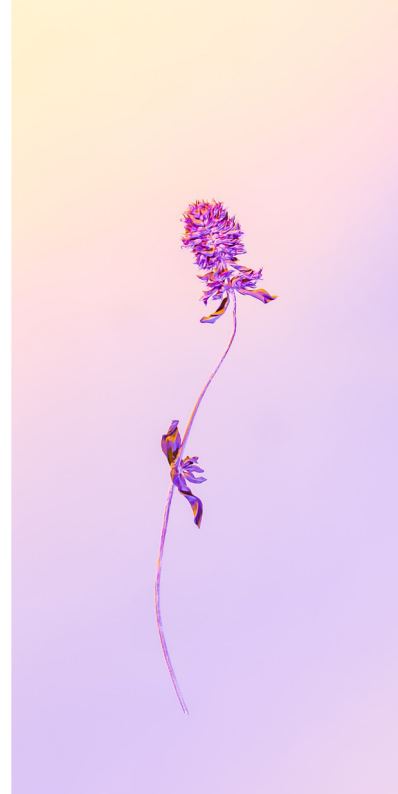
Thanks to you, our Captivating sponsors, for your support. Each of us doing our little bit is bringing hope into this otherwise hopeless situation. As we each contribute, we are making a difference in the world – at least for these families.

Blessings,



**Kate Brown**

**PROGRAM MANAGER | Captivating Philippines**





# Stop Cybersex Crime

## AND TRAFFICKING THROUGH EDUCATION

We strongly believe that education is the key strategy to systemic and sustainable change. The awareness and education program's aim is to reduce the future incidence of trafficking and cybersex crime through the implementation of targeted advocacy and community/school education strategies in "high-risk" locations.

During the July to December 2023 period, our on-the-ground team was invited to significant events in recognition of, or even to share, our advocacy against Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC). We started strong partnerships in schools and communities in Metro Manila and Region 3, as well as other NGOs. These partnerships will help us reach our advocacy goal for 2023 to see Captivating fund education and awareness programs reaching 30,000 women and students in locations considered significantly at risk of cybersex crime and human trafficking.

### JULY TO DECEMBER 2023

## impact

- **19,723 individuals were reached** through distribution of infographic materials in schools, community education, mobilization of students in universities, and online campaigns and activities.
- **4,711 new community advocates were trained** to be more vigilant and equipped in reporting cases of abuse as well as taking steps to prevent OSAEC. This group of community advocates is composed of teachers, community leaders, and representatives of organizations.



## 44 BARANGAYS REACHED BY OUR OSAEC SEMINAR

In our efforts to reach as many individuals as possible and increase their awareness to fight human trafficking, one of our social workers in the Philippines conducted an OSAEC awareness seminar among 108 social and barangay\* workers from a town in Bataan.

In May, one of the barangays received an OSAEC report which resulted in a police rescue operation. A mother was arrested for exploiting her five minor children, ages ranging from 2 to 17. During the operation, they confiscated several smartphones owned by the mother containing numerous child sexual abuse and exploitation materials. The media also covered this rescue operation.

Due to this distressing incident, the city mayor was moved to take immediate action by extending an invitation to our team in the Philippines to hold the seminar.

*\*smallest administrative unit of the local government*



All the municipal social workers and at least two representatives from the 44 barangays were in attendance. The police chief officer was also present, urging everyone to be aware of OSAEC.

***To our astonishment, the majority of the participants from the barangays were unaware of OSAEC.***

They might have heard and may have an idea about it, but they were in the dark about how rampant OSAEC cases had been in the country. After the seminar, they expressed their resolve to be vigilant, watch for red flags, and monitor their respective communities. It's encouraging that through partnerships with the local government, we helped increase awareness and a sense of responsibility within communities to create a safer environment for children and prevent future cases.

Indeed, it is only when we work together that we can be united to fight off the threats and intimidation of cybersex crimes and exploitation of children.





# Encouraging Families

In the midst of a typhoon in the Philippines, we, together with local partners and parents from the community, braved the rains and gathered for an OSAEC awareness seminar.

We visited a community that was affected by fire in September and had been living in an evacuation center for two months. As our partner organization provided meals for them, we spent time with the parents to encourage them to be vigilant in protecting their children from abuse and exploitation.

100 families were reached during this event. Aside from the challenging circumstances they have due to living in the slums, these families are further pushed into poverty by losing their homes and properties. This puts them in a greater risk of being lured into trafficking and cybersex crimes.





## *Empowering Students* **TO PROTECT THEMSELVES ONLINE**

Our organization is fully committed to expanding our OSAEC awareness campaign and reaching more schools in the Philippines. Since April 2023, we have been working towards our goal of reaching all public schools in Quezon City District 2.

Our PH staff met with the principal and guidance officer of Manuel L. Quezon Elementary School and shared our advocacy and commitment to safeguarding children against online sexual abuse or exploitation. The school officials immediately expressed their eagerness to host an online safety seminar.

We then conducted the seminar for 1,015 Grade 6 students, and distributed OSAEC activity and information booklets to 2,344 students, coinciding with the Children's Month celebration in November. Through this partnership, these students will receive relevant information, empowering them to protect themselves online.

The school principal, giving full support ever since our initial meeting with them, was also present at the event and encouraged the students to remain vigilant in safeguarding themselves online, especially considering instances where some students have reported receiving messages from strangers.

We are encouraged by the active involvement of schools, and we will continue to further our collaboration with more schools in our ongoing efforts to protect Filipino children from the threats of online sexual abuse and exploitation.

## ERADICATING POVERTY THROUGH

# Microfinance

We continue to closely monitor our HONOR Microfinance program by meeting with the staff face-to-face during our visits to Bataan. This time, we focused our discussion on the accuracy of the reports and the things that we needed to clean up and update. It is our goal that the reports our staff produce contain the data that we need and should reflect the realistic figures of what we can expect to recover, especially from old accounts. The discussion with the staff is still ongoing as we would like to make sure that all will be on the same page and will be committed to this effort.

By doing this, we will be able to see where we need to improve, and plan better strategies in the next couple of months in accordance with our goal to add 200 more women to this program every year.

We also looked at how each of the Loan Officers is doing with regard to expanding their reach and adding more clients. Although we acknowledge the challenge of the typhoon season, we also didn't want to lose our momentum, especially since we were in the last quarter of the year. Because of these ongoing efforts, we have added 42 new women during the July to December 2023 period, and there are currently 57 active loan groups or fellowships that serve as a great support system for our members.



### JULY TO DECEMBER 2023

# impact

- **28 women** successfully repaid their loans and are now considered *poverty-free*.
- **42 new women** were added in the past six months.
- **911 women** are with loans, in the hopes of eradicating poverty one step at a time.
- **57 active loan groups** are running that serve as support and accountability system for the members.







## APPOINTING COORDINATORS IN OUR MICROFINANCE PROGRAM

We continue to empower more women through our microfinance program in the Philippines. We opened a new microfinance group in Bayan-Bayanan, one of the barangays in Dinalupihan, Bataan. Initially, we hesitated to open a group in this area because of its distance, but we decided to pursue it after the pandemic to expand our reach and help more women. This is our first group in the area, and it currently has 15 active members.

Magdalena is the coordinator of our newest fellowship in the area and is a proud mother of eight children. While her eldest children have started their own families and left home, she and her husband are still working to send the rest of their kids to school. Their youngest child is only three years old and not yet old enough to attend school. Magdalena's husband works as a laborer in construction.

Magdalena is glad that our microfinance program opened a new group in their area, as she was also hoping to expand her small convenience store and add more items like chicken feeds to her store.

***She knows that it is a long road ahead, but our program is giving her the push she needs in this journey.***

We also support her in her role as the coordinator of the group, as a good fellowship requires an active leader to encourage and foster a good environment in the group.

The group in Bayan-Bayanan expresses their gratitude to Captivating for opening a fellowship in their area and helping it grow. They hope to continue this journey and help more women in their community in the coming months.



## KATE VISITS *Microfinance Moms*

In our effort to strengthen our microfinance fellowship groups and encourage our microfinance clients, Kate, from Captivating Australia, gathered some mothers and talked to them about their businesses.

They shared the challenges they are currently experiencing, such as competition from other stores and typhoons, among others. We then conducted a brainstorming session on possible solutions. Our clients were encouraged to be more creative in growing their businesses as well as studying their community's needs and how those could be potential ideas for business.

The fellowship group meeting is an integral part of our microfinance program. It is the avenue where, aside from providing loans, we can make sure that the mothers are succeeding in their businesses and more sustainably provide for their families. It is also where our clients can encourage one another. We believe that this is how we strengthen, not only one family, but a whole community.





## Priscila's Produce

When Priscila joined our microfinance program in 2020, she was only growing and harvesting stringbeans. This would give her an estimated income of PHP 5,000 per month (USD 89), which wasn't enough to support all of her four children.

With hard work and continued assistance from Captivating, Priscila started growing her farm and is now harvesting bitter gourd, coconut, and banana as well. Her monthly income also increased ranging from PHP 10,000 to 15,000 (USD 177 to 266).

Her variety in produce helps her to maintain high sales during different seasons and even during typhoons in the Philippines. She has also established regular buyers in the market who would buy her products in bulk.

Through hard work of our clients and generosity of our donors, we are able to help Filipino families break the cycle of poverty.







# Manila Slum Project

In June 2023, we started our second batch of beneficiaries, giving us a total of 147 children reached by our Manila Slum Project. Most of the children we talked to shared that even their own families have lost hope that they can continue studying, so they are forced instead to sell in the streets. The children have witnessed other family members, neighbors, and friends grow up begging and selling and assume that that's often what's expected of them too. Our Manila Slum Project aims to get street children back to school, and as much as we can, we want to encourage them to thrive and succeed.

We seek long-term sustainability by including a range of interventions for these communities, including life skills, capacity building, educational support, and vocational pathways. Barangay officials (community council) provided free use of their office building for the monthly distribution and quarterly gatherings with volunteers who run outreach programs for the beneficiaries.

We have gained commitments from corporate companies like Union Bank and HSBC Bank Philippines to be involved in our work in encouraging children from Ronas Garden, where the Manila Slum Project is conducted, to go to school. We are glad that more groups and companies in the Philippines are wanting to get involved in our cause of protecting Filipino children from threats of abuse and exploitation.

MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO OUR KEY AMAZING DONORS

**Penman and Johnson Families**

**Gold Coast Christian College - ST5K 2023**

**Captivating CEO Legendary Legends - ST5K 2022**

**Colin Hone &  
Carey McDonald**

**Davies Ventura  
Family Trust**

**TJ & Michele  
Smith**

**Paul Martino | AF Sourcing**

**John & Ann Bews**

**JULY TO DECEMBER 2023**

- **147 children** are now back in school and regularly attending class
- **300 families** received education on child safety
- **10 high-potential students** receiving leadership trainings and educational trips
- **12 mothers** participating in sustainability projects

impact

# Building Up Future Leaders

Aside from our monthly educational assistance for children and youth in the slum, our Manila Slum Project staff also spend informal time with the participants. We would join them in the streets or sometimes share a simple meal with them to help us get to know them better, get to know their stories and help create a positive influence in their lives.

In November, Trizia, our Manila Slum Project implementer, met with 10 of our student beneficiaries. They are the students we have identified that are really persevering in their studies and have potential to grow and develop as leaders in their community with further guidance.

In our discussion, the students asked for advice on available course options or career opportunities after graduation, and also alternative sustainable paths for them if they wouldn't be able to afford going to college.

They also want to discuss together the challenges they are currently experiencing in continuing their education and how we can help one another.

***We aim to build-up our student beneficiaries and guide them to a sustainable direction that can help improve their current living conditions.***



## MANILA SLUM PROJECT IMPROVES STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE



Our Manila Slum Project in the Philippines has been monitoring children's school attendance by working closely with their teachers since January. We are pleased to announce that 65 out of the 147 beneficiaries now have perfect attendance, and 74 have shown significant improvement in attendance by 81 to 95%. These are children who previously missed almost all school days and were forced to sell or beg on the streets. With the help of our Manila Slum Project, they are now back in school. One of these students is Angel.

Angel, one of the program's beneficiaries, is 11 years old and still in Grade 5. At her age, she should be in Grade 7. This is due to her frequent absences, which led her to stop going to school altogether last year. As the eldest child, she had to take care of her three siblings because their mother was always away. To provide for her siblings and herself, Angel sold sampaguita flowers on the streets.

With the educational assistance program provided by the project, Angel has been able to return to school and continue her education this school year. By attending school, she hopes to be able to help her siblings more. The Manila Slum Project aims to instill the importance of education in children like Angel and encourage them to go to school instead of working on the streets.

We are grateful to our supportive donors who continuously believe in us in making sustainable changes in these children's lives.







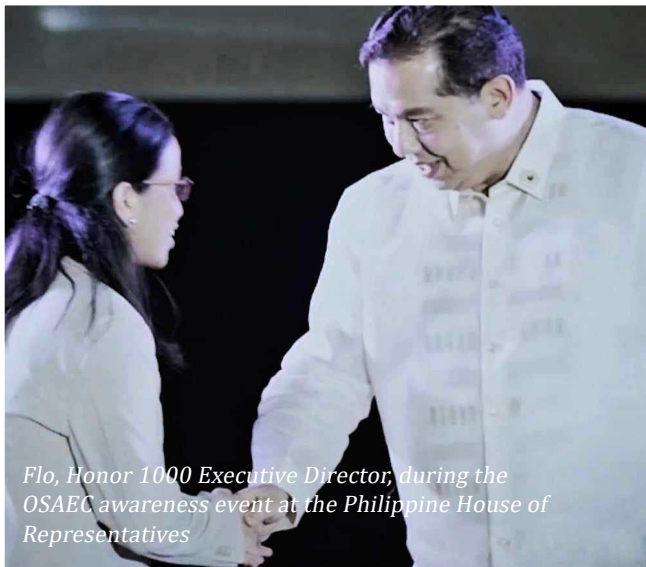
## Moms MOVING TOWARDS PROGRESS

Since we started our Manila Slum Project in January of 2023, we have seen some mothers' remarkable efforts to support their children's education. Aside from regularly attending school, these mothers would also encourage their children to attend reading and math tutorial classes, so they can really catch up and excel in school. They also started looking for more stable ways to provide for their families. One of them is Sherie.

Sherie is a sidewalk vendor at a nearby church. This has been her only source of income, which hasn't been enough for their household's basic needs. On other nights, she would scavenge trash outside restaurants for leftover food. Through our referral, Sherie is now employed as a caregiver for the elderly inside a private subdivision. With her new-found employment, Sherie is now able to provide enough food for her children, and her children can also focus on studying in school instead of begging or looking for food.

***We had been meeting with mothers like Sherie and introduced them to our Microfinance Program. By January 2024, these moms will become the first microfinance group in Manila!***

These mothers' efforts show us that with our support and encouragement, they are empowered to take steps towards progress.



*Flo, Honor 1000 Executive Director, during the OSAEC awareness event at the Philippine House of Representatives*



*Marie processing her application for housing benefits*

# The Blessed Project

Our goal for this project was to successfully reintegrate 22 young women and their dependents from Blessed Project, ensuring they will not be revictimized but also be positive contributors to the community. We are grateful to see the progress of these young women. Out of the 23 women, we have only three women who are yet to be reintegrated along with three dependents. All three women are trainees in the Blessed Sewing Enterprise. Two of them are in college, while the other one is in Grade 12.

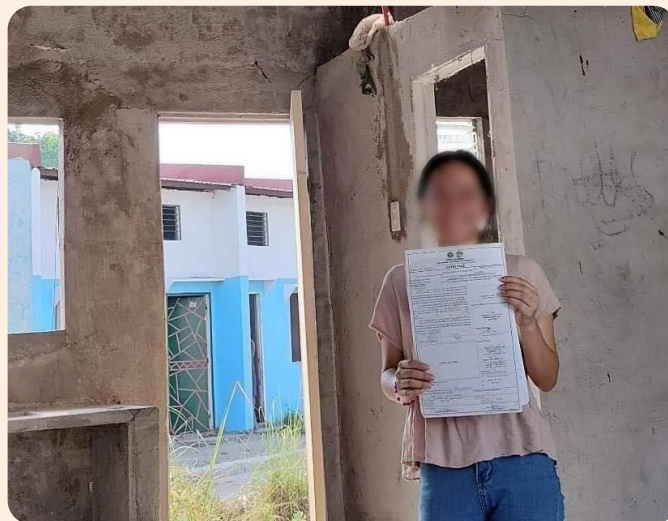
Aside from scholarships, they are able to support themselves by being employed in our sewing facility. All three of them are also actively involved in raising awareness against OSAEC.

## MARIE'S DREAM HOME

As part of our monitoring for reintegrated women from the Blessed Project, our social worker assisted Marie (name changed for privacy) in submitting an application to the National Housing Authority. This is in the hopes that she would be one of the beneficiaries of their housing program.

***We are happy that her application got accepted and was recently awarded her very own house and lot.***

The house would need some repairs and furnishings but this is definitely a huge step towards a life of dignity for Marie and her family.



## Sound of Freedom

In recognition of our support for rescued victims of OSAEC and human trafficking, the Philippines' House of Representatives invited our HONOR team to a special screening of the movie Sound of Freedom. It was definitely a powerful time as our staff joined some of the country's top leaders in a special gathering.

The event aimed to raise awareness against child trafficking in the country. At the end of the movie, members of the Congress called for a strong resolve and vigilant effort to fight this heinous crime.

Together with this call, HONOR 1000 Movement was recognized as an organization that is already addressing this issue and advocating for protection of Filipino children.





HONOR 1000

# Self-Sustainability

One of the challenges we are facing is the saturation of other microfinance organizations in our current locations. Other microfinance programs have increased since we first established ours in the country. In response to this, we are exploring new ways to expand by reaching a new barangay, and planning towards creating a pilot group within the community of our Manila Slum Project.

Our program is not only challenged by economic factors but also by our country's monsoon season. In July, we had three tropical cyclones that affected the country. In the last week of August, super typhoon 'Goring' just exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility while another tropical cyclone, 'Hanna,' entered. These typhoons are affecting the Northern Part of Luzon, near our Microfinance and Sewing Programs. Our staff continuously monitored our clients and gave updates on the conditions in their areas of flooding. When it became too dangerous, as our loan officers were riding motorcycles, collections were canceled for the day to ensure the safety of both our clients and staff.

After many challenges, we are back on track with producing products for our major partner, Winki, and we hope this will give the sewing business more income toward sustainability goals.

## goal

By 2024, Honor can fund 45% of its total operating budget.

- » July 2021 to June 2022:  
25% of the total operating budget  
**(ACHIEVED)**
- » July 2022 to June 2023:  
35% of the total operating budget  
**(ACHIEVED)**
- » July 2023 to June 2024:  
45% of the total operating budget  
**(ON-TRACK)**



## TRAFFICKING SURVIVOR IS NOW A

## Sewing Manager

Our head sewer manager, who's been with us since we started our Blessed Project, had to retire this quarter. Before he left, we made sure that Jelyn, a human trafficking survivor, is ready to take on his role.

Jelyn is one of the very first clients referred to the Blessed Project when we started last 2015. She graduated from our program after two years and continued being employed in our sewing project. She was able to support herself, rented her own place, and after some time, established her own family near the Blessed house. We are so excited that she is now our manager and in charge of overseeing the other women in the Blessed Project.



## SHARED VALUES

At the onset of the new academic year, a local school within the community reached out to us to make custom uniforms for their teaching staff. The sewing staff and trainees then meticulously sewed 46 uniforms. We're happy to be chosen as their uniform supplier, ***not just because of our commitment to quality but because of our advocacy, which also aligns with the school's values.***

We are also happy with the completion of yet another project with Winki Suits. Blessed Sewing Enterprise had diligently manufactured a total of 337 quality sweatshirts for them and is transitioning to another phase of partnership.

We look forward to meeting more partners who support both our advocacy and sustainability goals. In this way, we can keep giving employment to survivors of human trafficking, empowering them with meaningful work and a chance to rebuild their lives.

YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

today

Contact [andrewc@captivating.org](mailto:andrewc@captivating.org)

Donate to this project through our website [www.captivating.org](http://www.captivating.org) and receive tax deductible receipts for Australia, US, NZ, or Hong Kong donations.

Speak up and spread the word about these projects to your family, friends, and business networks.

If you have any query regarding this report, please contact [kayla@captivating.org](mailto:kayla@captivating.org)

