

More Precious than Diamonds

OUR FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND
CYBERSEX CRIME IN THE PHILIPPINES

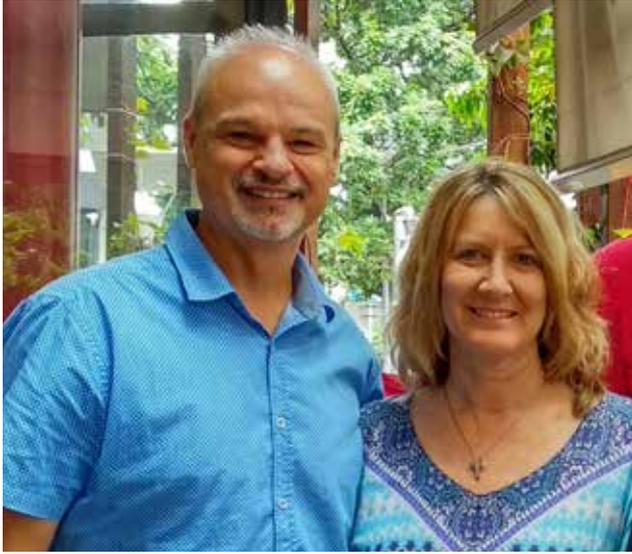


CAPTIVATING PHILIPPINES | JANUARY TO JUNE 2021



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Letter from the Founders

Dear Captivating Philippines supporters,

We are so happy to share with you our latest 6 monthly update on the work Captivating is doing in the Philippines to create life-changing hope. We do this through an amazing partnership we have with our on-the-ground partner, the Honor 1000 Movement - a Philippines registered charity fully funded by Captivating and our amazing donor base. We are so appreciative and thankful for all the support you have given over what has been a very difficult and challenging time with Covid-19 lingering on and impacting so many.

Work in the Philippines has continued to raise awareness and education on the dangers of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC), support for women and children who were brought to the short-term accommodation safe house for counselling and rehabilitation whilst a permanent home was found for them, and continuing to help families out of poverty through micro-loans. Unfortunately, in the second quarter COVID-19 numbers again impacted the Philippines, causing another lockdown. In fact, the Philippines has been the most affected of all project countries Captivating is involved with, and it's been tough on the team and those suffering. However, even during this time the team at Honor 1000 have continued to work offering support and assistance to those struggling to survive. As we write this update the Philippines is hoping their lockdown will cease very soon.

Through the ups and downs during January to June we are still pleased to share the following highlights:

- Just under 6,000 students and parents were supplied OSAEC information booklets
- 25 children who were brought to Blessed House for immediate care after being rescued from online sexual exploitation through the efforts of the Philippine Police and International Justice Mission (IJM) (see story on page 22)
- 61 new women joined the microfinance programs
- 227 women successfully left the microfinance program as they are now self-sufficient
- 2,302 women are currently part of the micro-loan program
- 16 young women and children are currently supported in the Blessed House

Stories of lives being transformed because of the dedication of staff and partners is a true testament to the will to never give up no matter how hard things get as precious lives are needing us to continue. They are waiting for hope!

You will see through the update many stories of girls/women being impacted and what we have been able to do thanks to your generous support.

- Speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves by raising awareness about Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) through education materials (see page 6)
- Taking action to support those who are in poverty by providing women loans through micro-finance initiatives (see page 10)
- Supporting those who have been broken by providing a safe and nurturing safe place (see page 18)



KEY SPONSORS

Jamoca Foundation

The Crossing Foundation



Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) has increased. “With the use of English, internet access and financial motivation, parents and relatives are the main traffickers of using vulnerable children (often their own) to transmit visual images of sexual abuse to perpetrators around the world. Children as young as 2 months are being used, with children’s ages range from 0-18, the median age of 11” [a study done by International Justice Mission, IJM, Online Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Philippines]. This hidden crime of online offenders sourcing vulnerable children through internet access is gaining momentum.

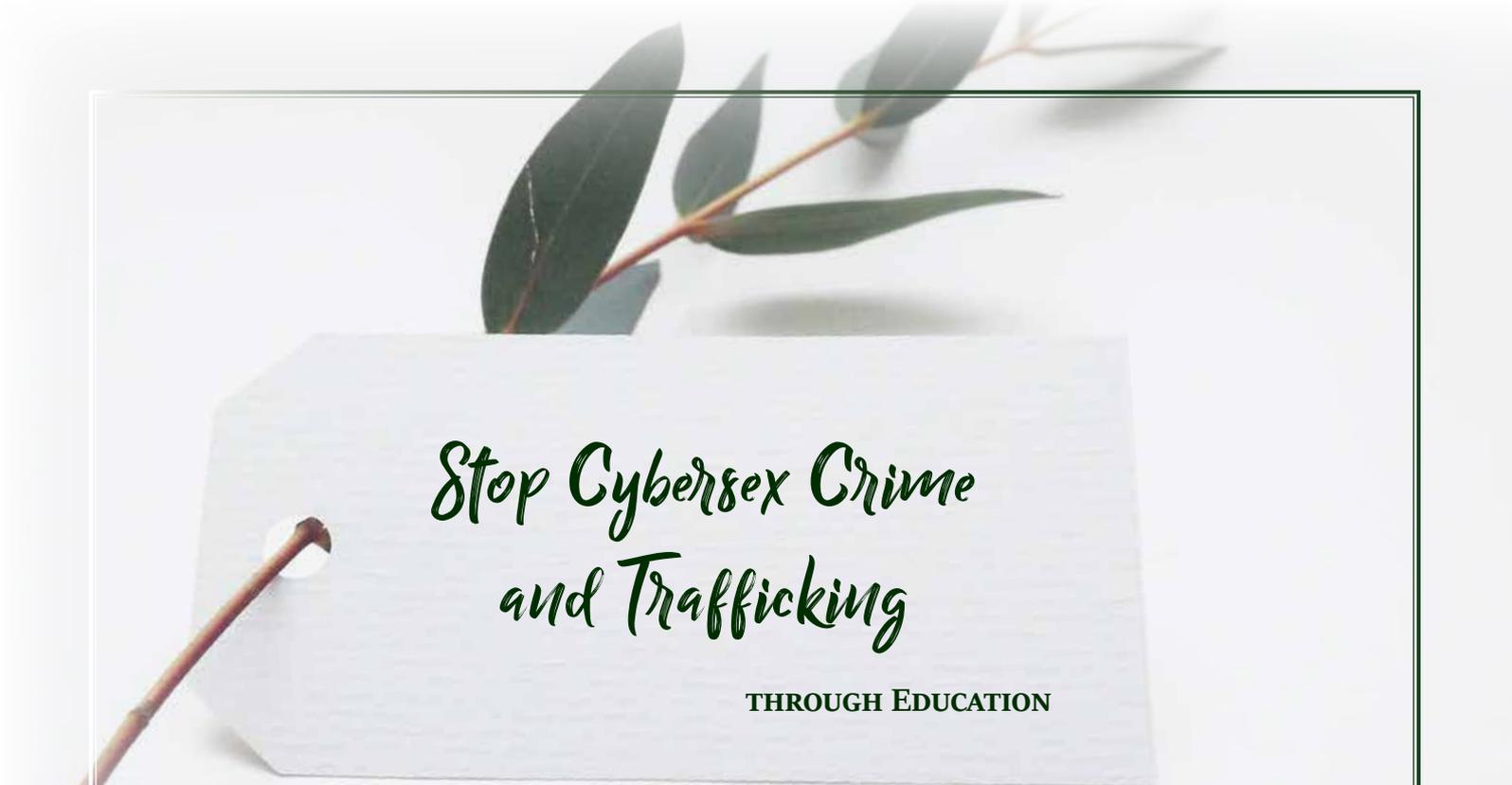
Our theme this year is “Together, We Are One” and the goal this year is to impact thousands of women and children who are in poverty, because at the heart of OSAEC are impoverished families. Raising up families to provide for their children with education and basic needs through microfinance loans allows good choices to be made and children protected from the horrors of sexual abuse. They need us to continue to join forces “together – as one” to speak up, provide resources and stand in the gap to stop this from happening to them. Together, we can do that.

Thank you for all your support and may you continue to know that you are making a real and lasting change in so many women’s and children’s lives.

With heartfelt thanks,

Andrew and Julie Colquhoun

Co-Founders | Captivating



Stop Cybersex Crime and Trafficking

THROUGH EDUCATION

Prior to when the physical world was halted by the pandemic and everyone shifted to the virtual world, the Philippines had already been identified to be the epicenter of online sexual abuse trade (UNICEF, 2021).

In a recent study conducted by UNICEF, they attribute the rampant cases of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) in the Philippines to widespread use of gadgets, irresponsible use of technology, and insufficient computer literacy of children and their parents, among others (UNICEF, 2021).

This is where our work and advocacy comes in. Educating school-aged children on the proper use of technology and how to be safe online is one of our key prevention strategies.

Prior to the pandemic, the team partnered with and visited public schools to conduct awareness raising sessions with grade 5 and 6 students.

However, since most schools in the Philippines are still closed following government restrictions, and students are still on a distant learning method, the team created an online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) information booklet which was distributed to partner schools for the children to go through at home.

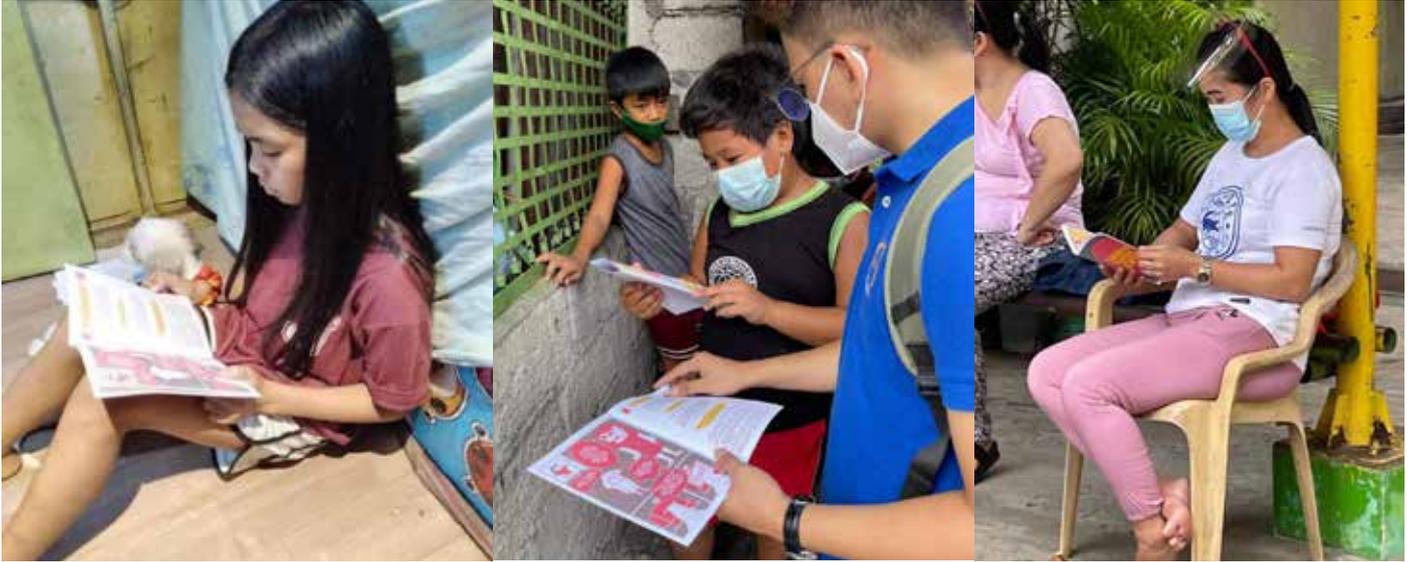
Likewise, parents and guardians are being involved and encouraged to watch over their children when using the Internet.

Source: UNICEF. (2021). National Study on Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines - Final Report. UNICEF.



JANUARY TO JUNE 2021 IMPACT

- **5,539 CHILDREN REACHED** through school infographic distribution and many home visits
- **410 PARENTS REACHED** through school infographic distribution and many home visits



Learning to Adapt amidst the Pandemic

Despite their own challenges during this pandemic, our parent and youth advocates in the province of Siquijor (an identified at-risk area) continued to meet children to teach them on how to protect themselves against OSAEC.

In Manila, after distributing OSAEC information booklets, the team conducted random home visits to ensure that parents and kids are going through and understood the contents of the booklet. The team discussed the material with the children and/or the parents and talked about any questions or concerns they might have.

After one of the distributions among Grade 6 students in a public school, we received an update from the parents themselves sending photos of their children reading the information booklets. Meanwhile, in another school, the teachers included the OSAEC information booklets in the students' required readings and encouraged parents to go through it with their children as well.

We are extremely grateful and proud of our advocates, educators, and parents who are eager and committed to protect children from exploitation.

Engaging Leaders in the Fight against OSAEC

The issue of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) is so complex that it needs to be addressed from various levels and sectors of the society – from homes to schools, from civic organizations to national government units.

One important part of our advocacy to fight OSAEC in the Philippines is to reach out and partner with government leaders.

In May, a mutual contact connected our field partner, Honor 1000, to the Office of the Vice President as well as the office of one of the senators. The senator has been a strong advocate against OSAEC in the Philippines and she recently filed a bill known as the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children Law or Anti-OSAEC Law that aims to strengthen the protection of children against cybersex crimes.

We hope that this opportunity will open up ways for us to collaborate and expand the reach of our prevention strategies.



Maricar, Siquijor Project Coordinator, briefing community officials on our advocacy

Honor 1000 Program Director, Flo, preparing letters for the Office of the Vice President and Office of Sen. Montiveros

ERADICATING POVERTY THROUGH

Microfinance

The Honor 1000 Microfinance Program operates in the provinces of Bataan and Pampanga. Both provinces were identified to be high-risk communities as these are located near port areas and “red light district” zones.

The Microfinance Program helps families from these communities take out small loans to either start or grow an existing microbusiness. This strategy aims to increase their stability, and permanently remove them from the risk of trafficking.

The lockdown last year caused a great challenge to our microfinance clients, with many defaulting with late payments.

Collections for the Bataan branch decreased in the past months as the women were striving to pay their loans without having to take out payment from their savings. In February, 13 accounts were closed in Pampanga before operations were transferred to a centralized office in Bataan in order to reduce operating costs. Nonetheless, the team remains hopeful that the capital released will be recovered by 2022 and that a new branch will reopen.

JANUARY TO JUNE 2021 IMPACT

- **227** REPAID THEIR LOANS and are now considered poverty-free
- **61** NEW WOMEN added during the past six months
- **2,302** WOMEN WITH LOANS
- **109** LOAN GROUPS



Microfinance women during their financial literacy training



New Opportunity for Mary Joy

This young mom received her first loan in our Microfinance Program in April. The prolonged lockdown in the Philippines continues to affect the livelihood of many Filipinos especially the poor. Many parents are resorting to pushing their children into sexual exploitation as a means to earn a living. But our new client, Mary Joy, is determined to care and provide for her two small children through a small store she will put up from her first loan.

Right on Time for Microfinance Mom

Nerizza is a young mom of three kids. She became part of the Microfinance Program just months before the pandemic. When lockdown was enforced, Nerizza persevered to knock on neighbors' doors and sell them food, which also helped the neighbors who could not go out to buy food.

She is very thankful that, through her small loan, she was able to provide for her family's needs throughout the pandemic while her food business continues to grow.



Catherine's Clothes

One mom's business grew from selling clothes to also selling food items. When lockdown started in the Philippines, Catherine let go of her rented space and instead set up shop in a small space beside their house. This allowed her to save rental fee and take care of her three children. She also posted items for sale online and would deliver sold items to her neighbors.



Returning Client Reopens Online Business

Maricel is a returning client. She closed her account previously to focus on taking care of her two little boys, both of whom are still under 5 years old. However, due to companies being forced to close during the pandemic, her husband's income was severely affected. They decided to reopen her online business.

She sells household items and delivers them to buyers once they confirm purchase online. With this setup, she minimizes contact and also widens her customer reach.





Stable Space for A Mom's Business

Marilou, a mother of two, smiles proudly as she stands in her secured space for her small eatery. She has been a microfinance client since 2019.

Marilou recalls how she would sell snacks in the morning and afternoon by roaming the streets and going house-to-house. When she joined the Honor 1000 Microfinance Program, she was able to secure more stability.

She now has a secure space to sell Filipino ready-made food and even basic grocery items. The space that she operates from is near a public transport terminal which ensures good foot traffic.

She is grateful for the trust given by our organization that has allowed her to achieve this growth even through this hard time.

Undeterred by Challenges

Being the eldest in the family and a young mother of two, Lyka is persevering to provide for her children and siblings.

She first got her loan in 2019 and is now on her third loan cycle. She has an online business where she maximizes the use of social media to sell plants and second-hand clothes. She is grateful to have joined the Microfinance Program before the pandemic because when lockdowns were implemented, she could no longer travel outside of their barangay (small district) which greatly affected her online business.

She needed to adapt to the situation. With the profit she saved from the growth of her online business, she started selling snacks with her husband. This was how they were able to provide for their family and siblings during the lockdowns. When collections for loan repayments resumed, Lyka was able to pay her weekly obligations on time.

Even with the unpredictable changes with COVID-19 restrictions, they are determined to continue their small snack vending business while Lyka is back on her online business.

Lyka wants to be a source of inspiration for her siblings that every effort, no matter how big or small, is a way to move forward, and that despite the challenges along the road, they can find ways to overcome those challenges together.





Commitment to Transform Lives

I've been with Honor 1000 Movement since 2017 as a Finance Assistant and Blessed House's Project Manager. I assist in budgeting and managing the expenses of the organization, as well as oversee the programs and services, and manage the staff at the Blessed House.

I was working in a corporate job when I was invited by Kayla (Honor 1000's Financial Controller) to work at Honor. I opened up that I was reflecting on how I wanted to work on something that helps people in need, which was different from what I was doing at that time. I was also looking into volunteer opportunities and outreach programs to join.

Upon learning about Honor’s vision and mission and its programs and services, I believe Kayla’s invitation was a confirmation of what I really wanted to do – to serve and help people.

Working in a non-government organization is not an easy feat. What keeps me passionate is Honor’s commitment to its goal to transform the lives of women and children put under its care.

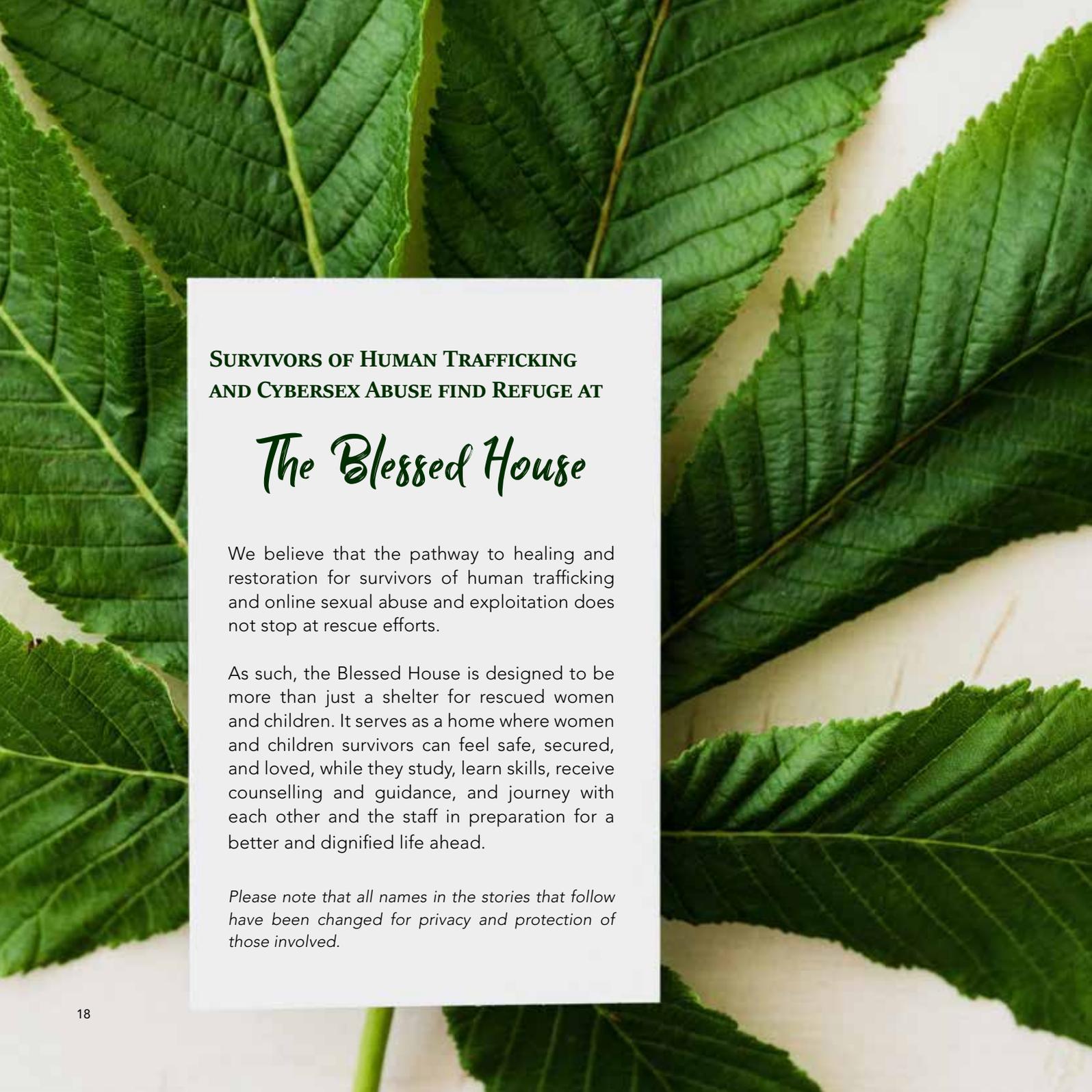
For the women rescued from trafficking, journeying with them helps them realize that there is a different path – a different and better life from the one they were used to. I’m glad I get to be part of helping them achieve that life of dignity.

Trizia C.

Trizia Corpuz

**FINANCE ASSISTANT | BLESSED HOUSE PROJECT MANAGER
HONOR 1000 MOVEMENT, INC.**





**SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING
AND CYBERSEX ABUSE FIND REFUGE AT**

The Blessed House

We believe that the pathway to healing and restoration for survivors of human trafficking and online sexual abuse and exploitation does not stop at rescue efforts.

As such, the Blessed House is designed to be more than just a shelter for rescued women and children. It serves as a home where women and children survivors can feel safe, secured, and loved, while they study, learn skills, receive counselling and guidance, and journey with each other and the staff in preparation for a better and dignified life ahead.

Please note that all names in the stories that follow have been changed for privacy and protection of those involved.

JANUARY TO JUNE 2021 IMPACT

- **16 WOMEN AND CHILDREN** currently supported at the Blessed House
- **25 CHILDREN RESCUED** from online sexual exploitation were received at Blessed House for aftercare support
 - **22 CHILDREN** are now living in alternate, long-term living arrangements
- **1 YOUNG WOMAN WITH 4 CHILDREN** are now living independently with support
- **2 WOMEN** were reintegrated with their families

In PHOTOS: The girls and staff at The Blessed House enjoy a day of rest and recreation outside the confines of the shelter. The prolonged lockdown has restricted the movement of the girls and staff for almost a year now. With the easing of quarantine protocols, they were finally allowed to have recreational time, which is very helpful in the girls' healing and bonding with each other.



Continuous Fight for a Safe and Dignified Life

Karen was under Blessed House's two-year program and was successfully reintegrated in 2020. As part of our commitment to survivors of OSAEC, we monitor them for one year to ensure their safe and smooth transition to a life back in the community.

Karen has an ongoing case against her perpetrators. Recently, she's been receiving calls offering her money so she would drop the case. Our staff met up with Karen to talk with her on what to do and assure her that she has our support. This encouraged Karen to not take the money and push through with the case.

However, not long after, we received another report that the community leaders were trying to pimp her out. Karen shared that she was offered a job but when she went to their office, the community leaders introduced her to a foreigner who was looking for a girlfriend. She refused and reached out to Honor staff for help.

After reporting the incident to the police, Karen and her family received threats from the community leaders as they learned about the police report. Karen's family decided to move to another place for their safety. Her situation is being monitored to ensure her continued safety.



Education: A Path to Restoration for Women Survivors

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE is one of the services provided to the women survivors at the Blessed House as part of rebuilding their lives. Although the pandemic has posed many challenges, we are proud of the women at Blessed whose desire to learn was not hampered.

In April, the new girls at Blessed were enrolled in the Alternative Learning System for the secondary level. This prepares them for moving up to senior high school by the end of the year.

IN MAY, WE CELEBRATED the graduation day of one of the girls. The Blessed House assisted Flor in her dream to become a policewoman. She took up Bachelor of Science in Criminology and persevered to finish her studies even after she was reintegrated a couple of years ago.

Now, she is reaping the fruits of her labor. Congratulations, Flor. We are so proud of you!

One of the girls at the Blessed House filling out her school application form



Flor proudly wears her police uniform

Immediate Care for 22 Rescued Children

Through partnership with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and International Justice Mission (IJM), 22 children who were all victims of OSAEC were rescued in the first quarter of the year. We have supported the immediate short-term care of these children. Of these 22, more than 50% are siblings and the rest are relatives (cousins). They were groomed and pushed into exploitation by their mothers and aunts.

For all 22 children, they weren't able to return to any relative due to safety concerns and they are now being supported in a long-term residential care facility, organized by IJM.

OSAEC as a family-based crime continues to pose many difficulties in the restoration of rescued victims.





Following Steps to Reintegration

Rica, Marie, and Josie are sisters who were victims of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC). They came to the Blessed House in the latter part of 2020.

With the help of International Justice Mission (IJM), the Blessed staff have been looking for relatives who can care for them and provide them with a safe and bright future. The Philippines' Department of Social Welfare identified an aunt who is able and willing.

The team assisted in the aunt's training and building a relationship with the girls. In the picture, the girls are on a video call with their aunt, monitored by our social worker.

One of the challenges for OSAEC survivors is that most of the time, the parents are the perpetrators. This disrupts the family life and care of the children. Having a close relative who is not a perpetrator and willing to care for the survivors is definitely a win.

Self-Sustainability for Honor 1000 Movement

Honor 1000 Movement aims to generate their own income to decrease ongoing reliance on Captivating. This will be achieved through three income streams: (1) Microfinance profits, (2) Sewing Social Enterprise, and (3) in-country fundraising.

Due to the pandemic, Honor 1000 deemed it best to merge the two Microfinance branches to help with reducing operating costs. The decision has also helped the team regroup and plan for next steps as many clients have been significantly affected by the pandemic.

Meanwhile, Honor 1000's Sewing Social Enterprise continues to explore partnerships with organizations to increase revenue streams, while the women learn new sewing techniques to expand the enterprise's array of products.

KEY GOALS

The goal is to raise the following percentages of operating budget in the financial years:

- 26% by 2018/19 - **Achieved**
- 34% by 2019/20 - **24%** (due to COVID)
- 35% by 2020/21 - **24%** (due to COVID)





Blessed Girls' T-Shirt Project

The girls at The Blessed House, who created and properly mastered making tote bags and pouches, have been trained on how to make t-shirts. What made it more exciting this time was that their project was to make their own shirts and apply the different sewing operations they learned. With very little support, they did an excellent job. This skill will be utilised further as we finalize samples for t-shirts and sweatshirt orders for a new product range.

Istorya and Good & Perfect

In March, Honor 1000 met with the people behind Istorya Creations, a local brand in the Philippines specializing in creating handmade, customizable jewelry and accessories. Honor got acquainted with them when they bought personalized necklaces as a Christmas gift for the girls at the Blessed House.

After learning about our advocacy, they partnered with Honor 1000 and decided to share 10% of their profit from their #WomenForWomen collection to the Blessed House. Moreover, Istorya also requested for the Sewing Enterprise to produce jewelry pouches for them.

Meanwhile, Good & Perfect, a faith-based art prints business is also sharing a percentage of their sales with Honor 1000. We are grateful for partnerships with people who are strong advocates themselves; more so, partnerships that offer opportunities for our network and social enterprise to grow.

Sample jewelry pouch created for Istorya Creations

Partnership with Samaritana

Samaritana Transformation Ministries, a non-government organization reaching out to women in vulnerable situations, recently invited Honor 1000 to discuss the possibility of the Blessed House Sewing Social Enterprise producing face masks for them.

After finalizing the samples, they've been ordering face masks, and the girls at the Blessed House have been sewing the face mask orders themselves!

The pandemic has affected the sustainability projects of NGOs; collaborative efforts like this need to happen so we can help each other out.



Sample face masks produced by the women at Blessed



Honor and Samaritana staff on their meeting

You can be Involved Today

Contact info@captivating.org

Donate to this project through our website 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 daniella@captivating.org



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