



More Precious than Diamonds

OUR FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING
AND CYBERSEX CRIME IN THE PHILIPPINES



CAPTIVATING PHILIPPINES | JANUARY TO JUNE 2022

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JANUARY TO JUNE 2022 *Impact*



ERADICATING POVERTY THROUGH MICROFINANCE

- **46 women** successfully repaid their loans and are now considered poverty-free
- **99 new women** added in the past six months
- **1,958 women** with loans
- **79 active loan groups**

THE BLESSED HOUSE

- **13 women and children** currently supported at The Blessed House
- **4 women plus 5 dependents** were reintegrated into the community, living independently or with their families
- **6 survivors** of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) expected to be reintegrated in the following months

STOP CYBERSEX CRIME

- **20,000 students and parents** reached through distribution of infographic materials in schools, community education, mobilization of students in universities, and online campaigns and activities
- **159 individuals, composed of teachers, community leaders, and representatives of organizations** were trained to be more vigilant and equipped in reporting cases of abuse as well as taking steps to prevent OSAEC.



TURNING DREAMS TO Realities

Recently a young woman, rescued from human trafficking wrote me a letter of gratitude for the support of Captivating and you as a supporter. As a teen mum her life looked bleak – entrapped, abused and no schooling. Through our support she has now almost completed high school, has a part time job, she lives independently and helps support her other siblings and young daughter.

She writes “Time flies so fast, I’m now enrolling my child into school. I’m loving my part time job and I’m looking at enrolling myself into a Hotel and Restaurant Management course – because everyone says I’m really good at it and I love teaching others. I’m a strong woman and I can reach my dreams”

“A single dream is more powerful than a thousand realities” (J R Tolkien).

That’s what we do together. We, at Captivating, help people’s dreams become realities.

Together these past 6 months we saw over 1900 women, supported through a microloan, climb the development ladder toward a more secure future and achieving their dreams.



KEY SPONSORS

Jamoca Foundation

The Crossing Foundation





Our Philippine's partner Honor 1000, has been working on developing a YouTube show to raise awareness to kids and families in the Philippines of the dangers of online exploitation with a dream for this to have national impact.

In the past 6 months alone, we have seen over 19,000 school students and community members participate in our education and awareness training program, to reduce the incidence of trafficking and cybersex crime. This is our dream to see the incidence of Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC) in the Philippines reduced from being the number 1 country in the world to being OSEC free.

We believe with your support that a single dream can be more powerful than a thousand realities.

Thanks for staying on the journey with us.

Blessings,



Kate Brown
Captivating | Program Manager - Philippines



THE Blessed House



Aside from rescue and aftercare services, Honor 1000 Movement also supports victims and survivors of trafficking and online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) through legal aid and support in the women and children's reintegration process.

We are happy that legal processes for rescued victims of OSAEC under our care are now progressing. The staff at The Blessed House initiated many follow up emails, calls, and visits to local leaders and partner organizations to ensure development in the trainees' cases. The team further supports the children by accompanying them in their court hearings, talking with them about how they're feeling before and after giving their testimony, helping them process their emotions as most of them are testifying against family members, and giving them courage to do the right thing.

As we assist OSAEC victims, we also come alongside the women who have been under Blessed Project's two-year program or longer. For the past months, the team focused on strengthening their employment skills as well as finalizing their school records so that they can continue studying even outside The Blessed House. The team also conducted family therapies to ensure that the women's families are ready to care for them. After reintegration, the team continues to monitor and assist the women as needed on their education, employment, and ongoing cases.

Captivating's financial support of The Blessed House will draw to a close at the end of this year. Our focus between now and then is for the successful reintegration of these women and their children back to families and into caring environments. The team at Honor will continue to monitor their progress.

All names in the stories that follow were changed for privacy and protection.



FROM VICTIMS *to Advocates*

Joyce and Mary are two of the women who stayed the longest in The Blessed House. It was very challenging for the both of them to recover and stand on their own feet especially when they have two more siblings who were also survivors of trafficking, 3 younger siblings who depend on them, Joyce having her own child at a young age, and their parents convicted of trafficking and drug abuse.

The support we have provided them and their dependents for the past years have been very precious and instrumental for them to rebuild their lives.

As they are finally reintegrated, Joyce and Mary are now both employed and continuing with their studies. Both of them are also involved in our advocacy work, helping us raise awareness against human trafficking.

Family THERAPY

One of the many ways The Blessed House helps women survivors in their reintegration is through family therapy. With the assistance of the social worker, the children and parents are given the opportunity to talk about their issues in the family that might have contributed to the children's victimization. Though Mia and Mae's parents weren't their perpetrators, there are still some factors in their upbringing that led to them being easily lured to exploitation.

The family therapy also prepares both the children and the parents to live together again – hopefully, this time, in a stronger and more harmonious family atmosphere.



PURSuing Justice

One of our reintegrated trainees won her case against her perpetrator! When Ria was reintegrated, she received threats and bribes to not pursue the case against her perpetrator anymore. Our support encouraged her and helped her persevere.

Finally, the accused was convicted guilty of trafficking and child pornography. He will be imprisoned and is required to pay for moral damages to Ria.

We're thankful that Ria's efforts and decision to pursue justice paid off.





A Chance TO MOVE FORWARD

Right after rescue, Rachel, Kat, and May were given immediate care at The Blessed House. Initially, they were going to stay in the center for only 3 months, but due to the pandemic, legal proceedings on their case were delayed.

Finally, after more than a year, they got the chance to move forward. The sisters met with their lawyer (from International Justice Mission) and a court official in preparation for their testimony in court. They will all testify against their mother who pushed them into exploitation. Aside from reviewing their case, they were toured around the court to familiarize them and reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed.

After testifying against their mother in court, the judge convicted the accused guilty of trafficking her own children and was sentenced to 45 years in prison. The whole process has been a roller coaster of emotions for the women – the anticipation, the anxiety, the heaviness of having to testify against their own mother, the grief, the relief, and the joy of finally being able to return to their home very soon.

We grieve but at the same time, rejoice with them. We are proud of their bravery and perseverance, and will continue to assist them as they rebuild their lives.



STOP CYBERSEX CRIME AND TRAFFICKING

through Education



To ensure that they are reaching the poorest-of-the-poor and at-risk communities, We have partnered with other organizations who share the same advocacy of fighting online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC). This helps in effectively expanding the reach of the team by distributing information and activity booklets and training parents and children, targeted through prior assessment by partner organizations.



Aside from training and distribution, we also conduct focused group discussions to ensure that the booklets are understood well by the children and parents.



As schools prepare to resume face-to-face classes, we are seeing increased opportunities to conduct online safety and awareness campaigns with children, parents, teachers, and school officials.

Protecting Children WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

In one online awareness campaign, a teacher for children with special needs shared that she received a report from a neighbor that a child with special needs was being abused in her own home. Initially, the teacher did not take action because she didn't know what to do. The principal of their school then invited all the teachers to attend the online training being conducted by our partner, Honor 1000 Movement.



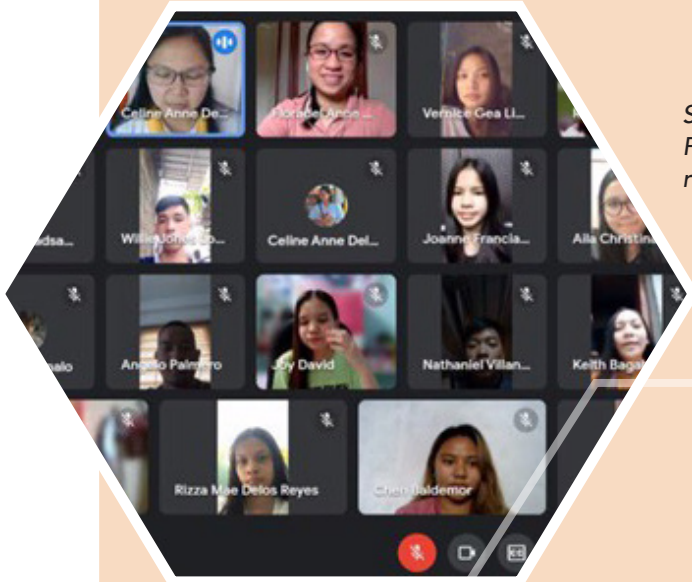
After the session, the teacher shared that she now feels empowered to act on the report. She gathered more information and found out that the child's mother would leave her daughter to a neighbor while she was out for work. This is when the abuse takes place.

Unfortunately, children with special needs can be more prone to exploitation because they cannot speak up or defend themselves. This is the concern raised by another SPED (special education) teacher, and suggested that parents of children with special needs also undergo the training to help raise awareness and for them to be better equipped in protecting their children.

Both teachers have expressed their commitment and are coordinating the schedule and logistic concerns to make the training happen.

Educating & Empowering the Youth

IN HIGH-RISK COMMUNITIES



Several children and youth-oriented organizations in the Philippines share our passion of helping children from at-risk communities.

Celine, founder of **Kwentuhan Series**, immediately saw the need to help the youth in her community know about the dangers of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) after attending Honor's Partners' Awareness Campaign Training (PACT). Upon knowing the seriousness of the issue, she invited 52 senior high school students (aged 16 to 18 years old) to a webinar and invited us to teach the students how to fight OSAEC.

**Kwentuhan (means "exchanging stories") Series is a local non-profit organization that promotes reading and helps children from poor communities have access to good education.*

After going through the PACT, staff from **Akap sa Bata** gathered more than 20 parents from their communities and shared with them the OSAEC information and activity booklet. The parents were thankful that they were given clear pointers on how to guide their children in using the Internet especially now that online classes are still ongoing.

**Akap sa Bata is a non-profit organization that promotes child protection.*



The team was able to reach 150 out-of-school children and their parents through our partnership with **SPECS Foundation**. During the training, the team shared facts about OSAEC in the Philippines and discussed online safety tips.

In a series of sessions, a number of children shared their experiences of strangers asking for their pictures online, strangers asking to meet up in person, and bullying online. All these children were given steps they could easily follow should these happen again. The parents also shared that they didn't know how to guide their children in using the Internet so the online safety tips were very helpful.

**SPECS Foundation is a Philippine-based organization that helps families and street children from at-risk communities in Metro Manila.*



Children International (a non-profit child sponsorship organization) assists thousands of children by giving them access to quality education. We now work alongside them in educating the children and their parents across their vast network about the dangers of OSAEC and how they can protect themselves online.

A total of 15,500 children from poor communities in Metro Manila are being reached with the OSAEC awareness campaign over this next period.

Poverty remains the one main reason for sexual exploitation in the Philippines. Reaching poor communities and teaching them how to fight against OSAEC, with the help of partnerships with like-minded individuals and organizations, is crucial in protecting children from abuse and exploitation.





Kapitbahay Sessions

Early this year, we funded the launch of a now called Kapitbahay* Sessions. It is an online magazine show that talks about the realities of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children or OSAEC. It aims to raise awareness to protect the most vulnerable children, while also empowering survivors of abuse themselves as they become advocates against cybersex crimes.

Young women survivors engage in meaningful discussions about OASEC with Filipino parents and families. Since the establishment of the show, multiple families and individuals have participated in the discussions, including university students, young professionals, a former television personality and an entertainment company executive. Getting people of influence involved in this project also helps us expand our reach.

We are hopeful this new initiative will grow and expand to influence thousands of lives in the future.

**Kapitbahay means neighbor in English*

TEACHERS TRAINED TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM OSAEC

We were happy to conduct our first face to face Partners Awareness Campaign Training (PACT) for public school teachers!

Eleven top teachers from an elementary public school in Metro Manila were trained about the realities of OSAEC and how to protect students from exploitation. Throughout the discussion, teachers were eager to ask questions and learn about how they can help. They agreed that their role as teachers is very important. They shared that most students share family problems with them. These 11 teachers will train other teachers and share with their students this important information and our activity booklet.



Honor staff meeting with school official in Region 3



After the session, discussion with the guidance counselor and lead teacher continued. The group talked about the possibility of amending their reporting mechanism under child protection. They will include our support hotline in their flowchart so it will be clear for the teachers of what to do in case they hear of OSAEC cases in the school.

Meanwhile, our team visited public schools in another region to talk to school officials about OSAEC. Through this effort, almost 3,000 students received information and materials about the dangers of online sexual exploitation.

School officials reported that more and more students are accessing pornographic content online and that there is a significant increase in harassment reports among students. They are determined to work together with us to protect the children under their care, and even suggested posting more informative materials about OSAEC in the school vicinity to raise awareness.

ERADICATING POVERTY THROUGH *Microfinance*

Our microfinance program aims to directly address the problem of extreme poverty, decreasing the attraction to high-risk practices of migration to find work—where women and children are easily forced to enter the sex trade and/or be exposed to cybersex crime.

In the province of Bataan, where our Microfinance Program first started, women undergo thorough assessment and training to ensure they pass the eligibility criteria and understand the program's benefits and policies. The microfinance staff conduct visits to know more about their living conditions and confirm the legitimacy of their businesses. This also helps assess their capacity to repay loans should they become microfinance clients.

When the number of reported COVID cases significantly decreased in March 2022, restrictions started to ease as well. With this, project officers were able to add new women clients, form a new microfinance group, and monitor clients and their businesses more actively.

Microfinance groups were able to meet face-to-face more regularly as well. These gatherings are important for the women to build relationships and learn from each other. We see these women as the change makers and positive influencers in their communities.

Captivating is now working with Honor to start expanding this program. At the time of writing, 20 new clients are being added to the Microfinance Program every month.



SUCCESSFUL *Business Shift*

Melvin received her very first loan in March. Her business is quail raising where she sells both the eggs and chicks. Before the pandemic, she used to sell rugs and pre-loved clothes but her income was unstable. She can earn up to PHP 2,000, (USD 35) only if she is able to sell all of her stock of pre-loved clothes, which is highly dependent on the demand for clothing. However, the demand for clothes decreased during the pandemic, and she needed to start a new business that would provide a more stable income.

She researched quail raising and even studied how to market it. She started with 100 eggs and was very happy with how they all sold out once she posted them for sale. After this, orders came and she needed help with more capital. This is how she found our program. One of her neighbors and friends is part of our Microfinance Program and has shared with her the benefits of low interest and good management. With this, Melvin went through the application process and is now part of the microfinance program!

With a more stable demand for quail eggs, she is assured of a weekly income of PHP 1,200 (USD 21). With this stable weekly income, she is now able to confidently expand her business focused on hatching the eggs she harvests. In no time, she will be earning - consistently - more than her previous PHP 2,000 a week. We are here for mothers like Melvin who are looking for partners in their growth!





Serving Families

SERVING COMMUNITIES

Lorna, a single mother of one, is on her first loan cycle. She joined the program in 2021 when she needed help to sustain her small business. Through the loan capital, she added more goods to her store like rice, food, and charcoal. Now, she restocks her store twice a week to meet the demands within her community. Her store operates daily and is open even until midnight.

We are excited for Lorna in her journey of growth. Her daughter is only 6 years old and by helping Lorna's business, we are also helping secure a safe future for her daughter as well.

Leni owns a small sari-sari store — up in the mountains. This is where she and her five children live. Because there are only a few stores in their area, she was able to gain a regular customer base and earn stable income. Using her earnings, she was able to transform their home from wood to concrete.

Leni's dedication can be seen as she crosses rivers, with her stocks in hand, to reach her store. She is grateful to be part of a Microfinance program that caters not only to the businesses in their town center, but also to small businesses in the mountains like hers. By supporting Leni, we are not only serving her family, but also her community who now have access to basic necessities closer to home.





Transitioning TO STABILITY

Before having a small sari-sari* store, Melannie earned income by reselling products and mobile prepaid load. Because her products were not necessities, she was hit hard by the pandemic and had to transition her business to something more stable. With her only child also entering senior high school soon, she knows that this transition is necessary.

Through the help from our microfinance program, she was able to put more stock in her store. She now sells snacks and drinks as well, and recently purchased a burger griller.

We will continue serving and empowering mothers like Melannie as they make bold decisions to ensure their children's future.

**A small convenience store usually attached to a seller's house*



Self-Sustainability

FOR OUR PARTNER, 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.

In line with this, the team at Honor and the Microfinance project continuously reviewed and revisited the organization's manual to ensure that everyone is reminded of the project's goals and policies, and see if these are still relevant to the clients' current concerns and realities.

Upon assessing the Microfinance performance for the previous months, the team saw that it might take more time for the branch's performance to return to its full capacity before the pandemic started.

With the rising cost of living in the country, it is understandable that the clients' businesses also need the time to recover and grow. As such, the team made the difficult decision of lowering the branch's operating costs by reducing the number of staff. The team wanted to make sure that the money acquired from client repayments go to loan capital for new loans and not to pay for operating costs.

GOAL:

By 2024, Honor is able to fund 45% of its total operating budget, with Captivating funding 55%.

- **25%** by 2021/22 (achieved 34%)
- **35%** by 2022/23
- **45%** by 2023/24



BACK-TO-SCHOOL, *Back in Business*



With the directive of the Department of Education regarding the shift from online classes to the progressive expansion of face-to-face classes, teachers from the schools in local communities are back and have been asking the sewing enterprise to sew uniforms for them.

The sudden closure of schools brought about by the pandemic has undoubtedly affected Honor's income. Hence, the decision to go back to school-based learning makes the team optimistic that more teachers and students will seek Honor's sewing services again.



Tailors of Blessed Sewing Enterprise examining the sample tote bags

Quality Products

FROM THE SEWING ENTERPRISE

Earlier this year, one of the enterprise's foreign clients introduced the team to another potential foreign client. After several e-mail exchanges on product ideas and details, the team finalized a tote bag sample and secured the client's approval.

They placed their order, and totes were shipped to them right away! The client absolutely loved and were so happy and satisfied with the quality of the products.

Meanwhile, a local clothing brand also asked the team to manufacture 300 shirts for them. The clothing brand has been Honor's client since 2021 and this is their fourth time placing a huge order.

With Honor's sustainability goal and social enterprise growth in mind, the team is thankful for both returning clients and new partnership opportunities, especially with brands that strongly support and believe in what we do.

MICROFINANCE CONSULTATION

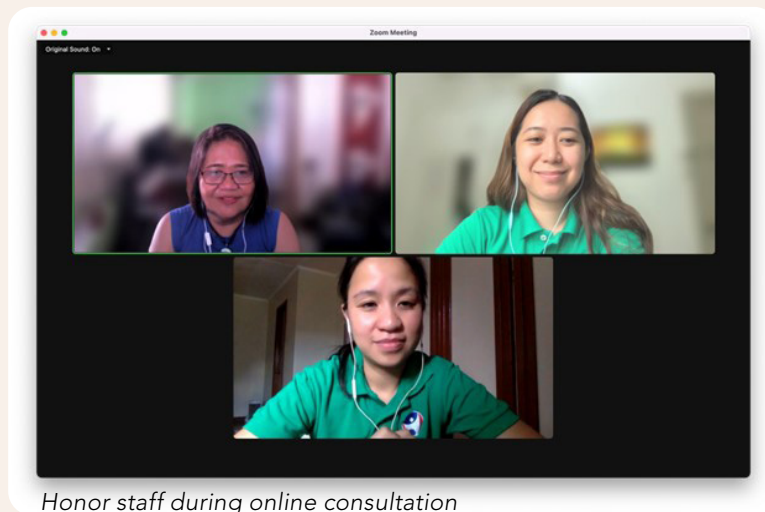
Honor's microfinance team recently consulted with Meliza, a rural banking and microfinance specialist with over 30 years of experience locally and internationally.

Upon learning about the Honor Microfinance Program, she offered her consulting services to the team for free. She acknowledged how the team's current efforts are in the right direction – focusing efforts on collection and reducing operating costs. Meliza also gave suggestions on what Honor can consider to be their next steps as they aim to recover from the effects of the pandemic.

The team will continue to consult with microfinance experts as they continuously improve the program and their services to the women in the Philippines.



Ms. Meliza (second from left) with Honor staff and trainees



Honor staff during online consultation with Microfinance expert

YOU CAN BE INVOLVED *Today*



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Donate to this project through our website www.captivating.org and receive tax deductible receipts for Australia, US, NZ, or Hong Kong donations.

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