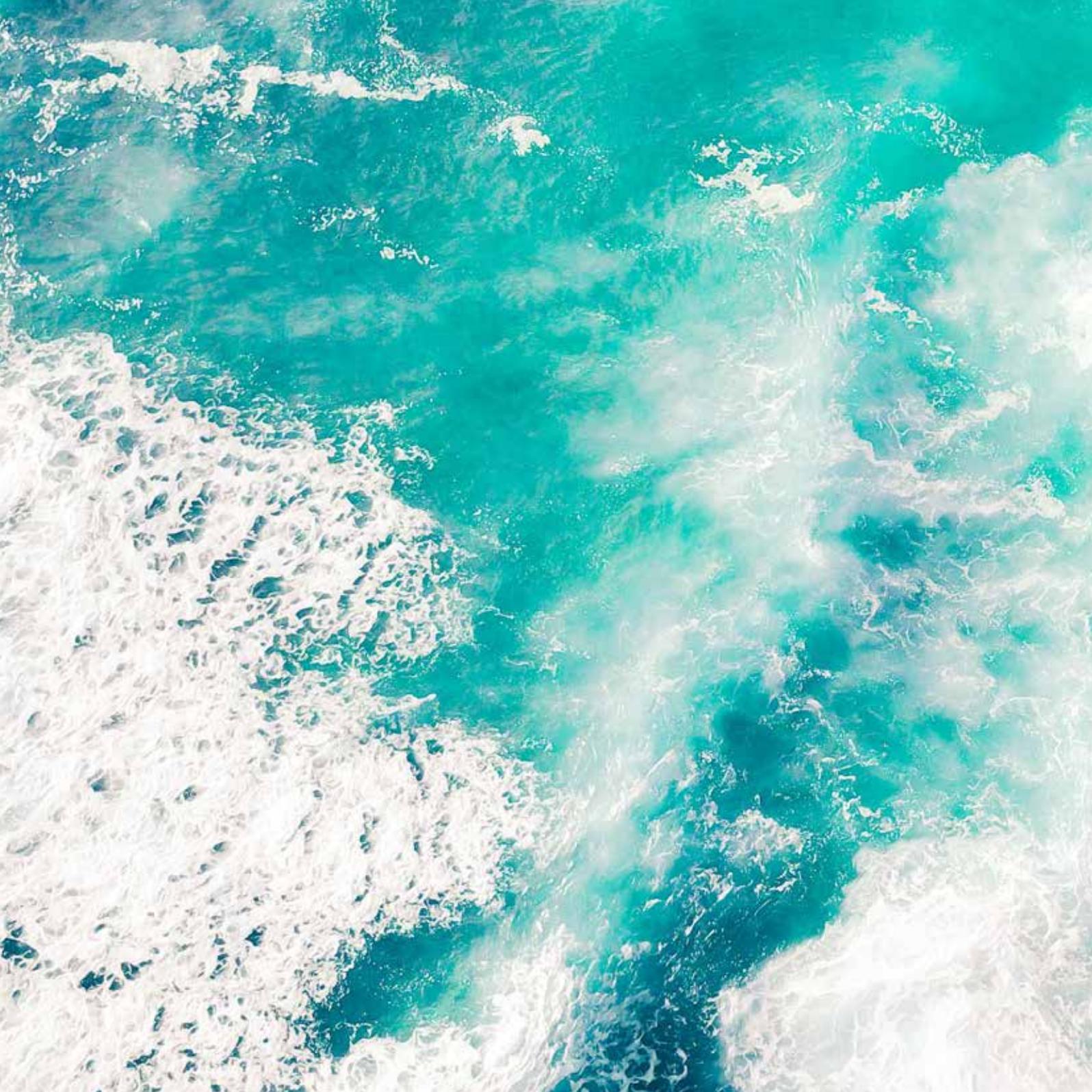


More Precious than Diamonds

OUR FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND
CYBERSEX CRIME IN THE PHILIPPINES



CAPTIVATING PHILIPPINES | JULY TO DECEMBER 2021





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Beauty in Broken

In Japan broken objects are often repaired with gold. The flaw is seen as a unique piece of the objects history, which adds to its beauty. There is beauty in broken! I love that about our work through Captivating – we see the possibilities, we see the places in individual lives and communities, that together with you as partners, we get to help restore and rebuild lives and communities that have exquisite beauty in the brokenness.



Reflecting back on the months between July and December 2021, we have seen so much beauty in our work with victims of human trafficking reintegrated back into families and their communities. The thousands of beads lovingly hand crafted into necklaces and swimwear products manufactured in our sewing project with rescued young women, supported by you and our Aussie swimwear partner Winki. Our facemasks were featured on Yabang Pinoy, a Filipino movement that showcases Filipino excellence. With more than 18,000 followers on Instagram, we are happy that our trainees' work is recognized as well as their stories of hope.

We've seen the beauty in the innovativeness of our hundreds of microfinance women who have adapted and sustained their businesses through harsh lockdowns and typhoons.

We are seeing our reach significantly increase in many Filipino communities vulnerable to OSAEC (online sexual abuse and exploitation of children) where we have distributed OSAEC information and activity booklets into school communities in Cotabato, Mindanao one of the nation's poorest communities with high incidence of child sex exploitation. We are excited to be expanding our reach through Blessed Brigade developing an online social media channel - engaging children in learning through play and storytelling all the while educating them about online safety.

These projects are having significant impact in so many lives and we really couldn't do any of it without you. Thank you for the legacy your support has made once again this year.

You are part of their restoration story too. Thank you.



Kate Brown
CAPTIVATING | Philippines Program Manager



KEY SPONSORS

Jamoca Foundation

The Crossing Foundation



Stop Cybersex Crime and Trafficking

THROUGH EDUCATION

Captivating fully funds the work of our Philippines based partner, the Honor 1000 Movement.

During school break in the Philippines, the team at HONOR held online discussions with various organizations about the dangers of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and how all can work together to fight it. We were able to establish partnerships with organizations from Metro Manila, Dumaguete (Visayas), and Cotabato (Mindanao). These are areas known to be OSAEC hotspots in the Philippines.

Online training for teachers and community advocates was also conducted. These individuals were invited to trainings via Zoom, while others send inquiries through Facebook to express their interest to be trained. Since the team started in August, online trainings were facilitated for six non-profit organizations and three public schools.

The online trainings and campaign aim to:

- 1. Strengthen the impact of the Anti-OSAEC booklet distribution.**

Given the current restrictions in the Philippines, we need teachers and staff from organizations to explain to parents, students, and beneficiaries what OSAEC is and how to prevent it.

- 2. Expand the reach to communities.**

We are located in Metro Manila, but this doesn't hinder us from reaching out to far flung areas. As such, we have partnered with organizations from the Visayas and Mindanao regions.

From **JULY TO DECEMBER**, we have reached a total of **4,175** INDIVIDUALS in various areas through the following efforts:

- **SCHOOLS EDUCATION CURRICULUM:** 1,351
- **COMMUNITY EDUCATION:** 1,678
- **UNIVERSITY MOBILIZATION:** 70
- **COMMUNITY ADVOCATES:** 8
- **SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS:** 1,068





Advocate against OSAEC

Through our partnership with another NGO in Manila, Perry, our advocacy officer, was able to share relevant information about OSAEC to parents and church leaders. A few days after hearing about OSAEC, one attendee of the event gathered the kids in her community and shared with them what she learned. Around 20 kids with their parents learned about the dangers of OSEC and how to prevent it.

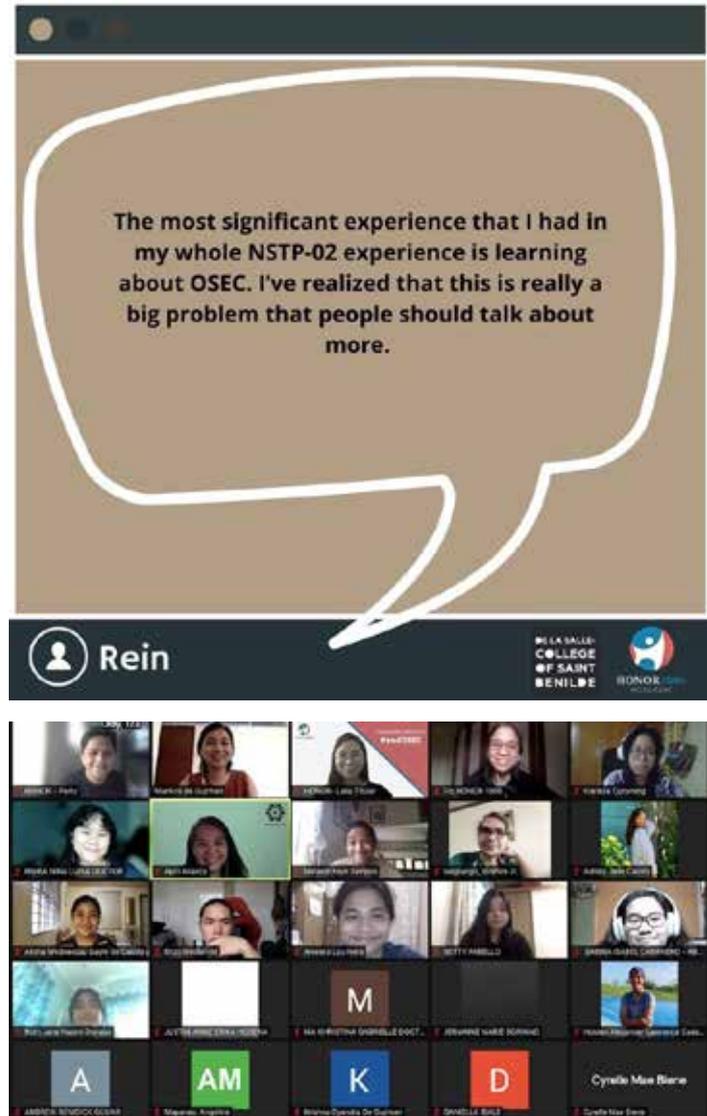
We are encouraged to have eager volunteers and partners who also want to protect children from exploitation.



Project Kamalayan*

A new batch of university students are eager to be involved in raising awareness against OSEC. HONOR Staff shared with the students the reality and dangers of OSAEC in the Philippines. Some of them responded that this was the first time they heard about the issue and they feel strongly that something should be done. In their little ways, they want to be a part of the solution and they are grateful to HONOR for giving them that opportunity.

Several months ago, students from the same university took part in the advocacy by launching Project Kamalayan, a Facebook page that aims to raise awareness against OSAEC. Our staff met with 40 students four times in a span of three months. The team assisted the students from ideation to actual implementations and production of output. The students created various types of content such as podcast, journal, storybook, infographics, and an online game. As a result, the Facebook page has 690 likes. We hope to continue growing this number as more content is posted.



**Kamalayan means awareness or consciousness in English*

Partners' Awareness Campaign Training

Over the past months, we have continuously increased and strengthened partnerships with various schools and organizations all over the Philippines through the Partners' Awareness Campaign Training (PACT). This has enabled the team to reach more students and communities and raise awareness of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC). After launching PACT in August, the team has partnered with at least three non-profit organizations from different regions who are working directly with students and/or poor communities.

In Mindanao, public school teachers have reached out to get involved in the fight against OSAEC after having observed students' unhealthy use of the internet. The teachers have distributed the information and activity booklets to their students.





In Visayas, local leaders from at-risk communities were mobilized and seaport anti-trafficking groups were set up. Seaports are one of the key locations where victims are transferred through and trafficked. Volunteer groups on these sites are keys to interception and rescue. The OSAEC information and activity booklet was used to discuss with volunteers the issue and dangers of OSAEC and how they can help prevent children from being exploited. At least 500 families were provided crucial information on OSAEC and how they can protect their children.



In Luzon, one public school in Metro Manila also distributed the booklets, reaching at least 23 teachers and 180 students and parents.

Such collaborations help us reach our goal to tap local leaders to be involved in our fight against OSEC and to be a resource to empower more communities in their fight to save their own children.

ERADICATING POVERTY THROUGH

Microfinance

Our projects in the Philippines continue to face challenges not only from lockdowns but from heavy rains and floods as well. Bataan province, where most of the Microfinance groups are located, was declared to be in a state of calamity due to the flooding that they experienced.

While still recovering from the heavy rains and floods in their province, Bataan faced another challenge as their local government decided to place the province in the strictest lockdown due to increasing COVID cases. As such, Honor Microfinance suspended its operations for two weeks. This was also to give relief to clients whose small businesses were affected again by the lockdown.

Operations continued after lockdown restrictions were lifted and staff was able to visit clients again and hold fellowships. Loan releases are continuous for clients that continue to perform well despite these challenges. Other efforts conducted to improve on microfinance performance are fellowship assessments and field monitoring.



Effects of typhoon that hit Bataan





FELLOWSHIP ASSESSMENTS

During one of the Microfinance staff's consultative training, Project Assistants were asked to evaluate and score the microfinance groups based on 1) attendance, 2) collection rate, 3) loans overdue (40 weeks), 4) peer support & pressure, 5) spiritual development, 6) leadership, 7) loan utilization, and 8) due process and business rate. Using a point system, client groups were categorized as Very Good, Problematic, and Crisis. This helps the staff see in which area the client groups need help on.



Microfinance staff conducting field visit to clients' businesses

FIELD MONITORING

Our Microfinance staff conduct loan utilization checks to make sure the clients are able to use their loans properly to grow their businesses. Before a new loan is released, the staff takes the time to visit their businesses and confirm their application. During this time, the women also receive encouragement and support.

With all the current challenges, we continue to give assistance to families from at-risk communities so they can be free from poverty. From July to December:



- **49 NEW WOMEN** received microloans
- **46 WOMEN** left the program and are **CONSIDERED FREE FROM POVERTY**
- **77 LOAN GROUPS** are active
- **1,905 WOMEN WERE IN THE MICROFINANCE PROGRAM** at the end of December 2021
- **OUR GOAL IS TO ADD 300 NEW WOMEN** to the program each year, resulting in **2,500 WOMEN BY JUNE 2024.**



A Mother Never Gives Up

Luisa is a single mom who perseveres to support her daughter. When she first joined the Honor 1000 Microfinance Program and started her rice cake business, it was also the time when lockdowns started happening in the Philippines.

Her small business failed and she wasn't able to pay up her loan on time. She kept going and asked help from our loan officers to give her another chance. She got her second loan and her rice cake business started picking up.

Now, despite constant change in lockdown restrictions, she is able to push through with her business and pay her loan on time and provide for herself and her daughter. She received her third cycle loan in September and she is progressing towards a poverty-free future. We hope that her business will continue to thrive.

Nenita's Farm and Livestock

Nenita joined the Honor 1000 Microfinance Project in 2021. She and her husband are both vegetable and rice farmers and are working together to provide for their four children. She shares how the typhoons and floods affect their harvest season. To ensure that even in the off season they will be able to provide and pay her obligations, they also have animals that they can sell. Through their hard work, she continues to maintain a clean record with the microfinance team. She is grateful for the support she receives for her small businesses despite this ongoing pandemic.



Marissa's Growing Business

Marissa was previously featured on our website for successfully claiming her third loan cycle and continuously growing her business.

We visited her store again where she sells charcoal and coconut besides basic needs. Despite recent calamities and lockdown restrictions, Marissa was able to keep her business afloat, and maintained her good record with us. Up until December, she was able to pay on time and to grow her savings as well. HONOR continues to support clients like Marissa who pushes forward despite what this year brings.

Saving for Her Family's Future

Mannielyn is a new member of the Microfinance Program. She joined the program in 2021 and has been able to pay her weekly obligations on time. She is a young mother of two and an owner of a small grocery store in her barangay (village).

She utilized her first loan to grow the variety of items that she sells and to be able to save weekly. With the recent challenges, Mannielyn recognizes the importance of saving and how it would secure the future of her family. She hopes to continue growing her business and to inspire young mothers to continue pushing forward as well. In December, Mannielyn successfully paid her loan.



A Role Model Working Mom

Ailyn not only sells groceries in her sari-sari* store but also offers her neighbors delicious home-cooked meals. With the capital she received from the Microfinance Program, she even increased the types of dish that she offers. She is grateful to her suki (loyal) customers who helped her business survive in this pandemic. Her husband is a tricycle driver who is also working hard so that they can provide for their four children. We are proud to be working with mothers like Ailyn who are diligently working to help their family and honestly serving her community.

**Sari-sari stores are small convenience stores located within small neighborhoods*



SURVIVORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND CYBERSEX ABUSE FIND REFUGE AT

The Blessed House

The ultimate goal for survivors of human trafficking and online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) at The Blessed Project is for them to be reintegrated to the community, or if possible, to their families.

The July to December reporting period saw a progressive pull-back from The Blessed Project Program in the Philippines. Following continued reviews of its impact, we found a decreasing number of government and police referrals being made to the rehabilitation home and no sign this would change in the foreseeable future. As such, the difficult decision was made to wind down our support.

The staff at Honor 1000 Movement have been working on the trainees' reintegration for the past months – visiting and interviewing relatives, checking on the neighborhood where they live, and following up with lawyers working on the trainees' legal cases. The main challenges for this process to happen are the unpreparedness of relatives to accept and care for the trainees, unsuitable environment within the community, and the slow legal process for those with ongoing cases.

Nonetheless, both the staff and the trainees themselves continue with their preparations. The trainees have been having regular video calls to build relationships with their new families. The social worker at Blessed coordinates with social workers in the community to ensure that the trainees will not be re-victimized and the families or relatives receiving them will not be overwhelmed. The staff works on the trainees' records and documents to ensure that they continue with their studies even after reintegration.

We are hopeful that through our help, we are able to equip the Blessed trainees to become survivors who will empower others as well. We will continue to come alongside the trainees as they face adjustments in their first year of reintegration.

- **12 TRAINEES EMPLOYED** (part-time/full-time)
- **8 TRAINEES CURRENTLY SUPPORTED** at Blessed, plus 8 dependents
- **6 OSEC SURVIVORS SUPPORTED** in the program



We will definitely continue to help and support existing women and children over the coming months as they reintegrate back into their families and communities.

We are grateful to those who have generously supported this program over the past four years. Our focus moving forward will continue more aggressively in prevention and education activities.



Pursuing a Life of Dignity through Education



“The Philippines is one of the five countries in the world that have not started in-person classes since the pandemic began, affecting the right to learn of more than 27 million Filipino students.” -UNICEF

Despite lockdowns and restrictions on face-to-face classes in the country, the staff at Blessed continue to assist and guide the trainees so they are not overwhelmed with the adjustments to distant learning.

And in August, we proudly celebrated our trainees' graduation! Two trainees finished senior high school and four finished junior high school.



Through our education assistance, we have seen their determination and motivation to achieve their dreams despite what happened to them in the past. Indeed, giving them opportunities like education helps in their healing and encourages them to pursue a life of dignity.

New Hope for Mari

What a year it has been for our trainee, Mari (name changed for privacy). She was pregnant when she was rescued from OSAEC and referred to The Blessed Project. It was a sensitive pregnancy especially during a time of pandemic. It was a difficult transition when she first arrived at the Blessed house, and she even tried hurting herself.

But she persevered.

She and her sister went to the Philippines' Department of Justice to pursue the case against their perpetrator. She gave birth to a healthy baby boy. She has also started on her online classes as a senior high school student and is excelling in her subjects.

We are happy to be part of her journey.





Celebrating Christmas at Blessed



We had our Christmas party at the Blessed House! The trainees had fun decorating mangers and Christmas dresses made of recycled materials. We sang Christmas carols and gave gifts.

Since most of our trainees will be reintegrated soon and we had to bid farewell to one another, it was also an emotional time. There was sadness mixed with hope and victory.



Preparation for Reintegration

The social worker at the Blessed Project visits the relatives of the trainees to see how ready they are to take care of these young women. Some relatives needed more time and assistance to prepare while some are ready and excited. HONOR is committed to keep on overseeing the whole process of the trainees' reintegration, giving support both to the trainees and to their receiving families.



Blessed social worker conducting home visits to trainees' relatives

Self-Sustainability for Honor 1000 Movement

Honor 1000 Movement aims to generate their own income to decrease ongoing reliance on Captivating. The goal is to achieve this through three income streams: (1) Microfinance profits, (2) Sewing Social Enterprise, and (3) in-country fundraising.

Combining all three income streams, our goal is to fund the following percentages of operating budget in the financial years:

- 25% by 2021/22
- 35% by 2022/23
- 45% by 2023/24

With the Microfinance Program going through challenging times due to COVID lockdowns and heavy rains and floods, the staff went through a three-day consultative training program to look at how to keep motivation of clients going.

During this time, the team reviewed current policies, looked at implementation challenges, and adjusted policies to be more appropriate to women's needs and help them succeed in their livelihood. One key takeaway from the training is that for projects to be successfully restored, each staff would have to take greater ownership of their roles – visiting clients' businesses, ensuring loan utilization, and following up on delinquent clients (with overdue payments).

As a result, the team made changes with the operations including (1) appointing a new branch manager who will lead close monitoring of the clients' businesses, (2) appointing a treasury officer who will be in charge of daily cash flows, reports, and other administrative matters, which will free up loan officers to visit more clients and handle more groups.



Growing Sewing Enterprise

The Blessed Project Sewing Enterprise just recently finished a huge order from their local partner! The sewing staff and the trainees at the Blessed House have been making uniforms for employees of a gasoline station. They were able to deliver a total of 254 pieces of pants and shirts in a little more than a month, leaving their client very much satisfied. This gave the social enterprise a good income of PHP 63,500 (AUD 1,731) that can help subsidize the needs of the trainees in the aftercare program. And just recently, the same company contacted the Blessed Project Sewing Enterprise again to make uniforms for the employees of their newly-opened branches.



As the Philippines' economy continues to struggle especially during this pandemic, partnerships whether local or foreign are greatly appreciated. The team is hoping orders will continue to pour in.



Blessed trainee making a Winki tote bag

Expanding Product Range

After producing Winki Suits' (one of Blessed Sewing Enterprise's foreign partners) recently-launched sweatshirts and another batch of tote bags, we are now nearing the final stages in the product development of Winki's tee shirt and wet bags – an addition to their product range.

We are grateful for partners like Winki who are committed in helping women survivors of human trafficking, taking the Blessed Sewing Enterprise with them as they continue to expand and grow.

Beads of Love

Inside The Blessed Project, women survivors of human trafficking and abuse learn employable skills such as sewing and baking. Here, the trainees are trying out a new craft – making beaded necklaces and bracelets!

One of their sewing clients requested the Blessed Sewing Enterprise to create accessories so they can give them away as gifts to their customers. They thought of asking the women to make something different from sewing where they can still showcase their creativity and craftsmanship.

The women enjoy and love making these beautiful pieces and expressing their hearts through the words weaved in each piece.



Strengthening Local Partnerships

Samaritana, a non-profit organization in the Philippines catering to women, invited Honor 1000 to discuss the possibility of Blessed Project producing face masks for them. After finalizing the samples, they've been ordering face masks from the Blessed Sewing Enterprise, and the trainees have been sewing the face mask orders themselves! They have produced a total of 750 face masks during the last quarter of 2021.

These face masks, along with other products got featured in YabangPinoy, a Filipino movement that showcases Filipino excellence. With more than 18,000 followers on Instagram, we are happy that the women's works are recognized as well as their stories of hope.

yabangpinoy



Blessed Sewing Enterprise's products featured on YabangPinoy



Liked by [lailailailers](#) and others

yabangpinoy "When young women are rescued from human trafficking, the road to recovery is a long and challenging one due to substantial emotional scarring and brokenness from unimaginable abuse. One aspect of rehabilitation that we offer is teaching livelihood skills particularly, sewing. The trainees learn this trade as a form of therapy, to learn a practical skill, and to earn an income for their personal needs. 100% of the profit funds the Blessed Project and our other advocacy projects.

#stophumantrafficking #honoreveryone #blessedprojectph"

Story and Products by [@blessedprojectph](#) #YabangPinoy

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