



PEACE • EDUCATION • ASPIRATION • RESPECT • LOVE • SMILES

**NO CHILD  
NOWHERE AT  
NO TIME  
SHOULD GO  
HUNGRY.**

**- PROJECT PEARLS**

**2021  
ANNUAL REPORT**

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## OUR VISION

NO child at no time, should go hungry! No child should be hungry for nutrition, education, shelter, medical services, and opportunities to achieve their full potential.

## OUR MISSION

To help the poorest of the poor children to have a better life by giving them PEARLS: Peace, Education, Aspiration, Respect, Love and Smiles through education, empowerment, nutrition, nourishment, and healthcare.



# OUR TEAM

Meet our Philippine Board of Directors! A group of passionate and compassionate individuals who have each volunteered and created a positive impact in the communities we serve! Their guidance and assistance help us fulfill and sustain our mission and advocacy.

## Board of Directors (Philippines)



Marie Young



Ma. Lutgarda Vallefas-Calupaz



Rita Dela Cruz



Adrian Soco



Sidney Snoeck



Sylvia Araneta



Stephanie McGuire

# Full-time Staff and Core Team

**MELISSA VILLA**

Co-Founder & Executive Director



**FRANCESCA "ChiChai" MATEO**

Co-Founder & Volunteer



**MONICA ACLAN**

Deputy Executive Director



**PEACHY ABELLON**

Education & Literacy Program Director



**GINNY MATABANG**

G.R.O.W. Program Director



**JONALYN PEREZ**

US Executive Administrative Assistant



**KAREN BEBLAÑAS**

Development & External Relations Manager



**NESTOR DALINA**

Community Manager - Bulacan



**JAY-R PANAGSAGAN**

Community Service Program Manager



**MELISSA BENDANILLO**

Social Worker





## Full-time Staff and Core Team

**RON JASON PASCUAL**

Social Media Manager



**DIANA NUÑEZ**

Scholarship Program Coordinator - Tondo  
& Time-to-Learn Teacher



**DIVINE DEGOLLACION**

Community Manager - Tondo



**SALOME "BEBE" SORIA**

Assistant Community Manager - Bulacan



**MAY BAYLON**

Assistant G.R.O.W. Coordinator



**JOY SABENICIO**

Community Manager - Cavite



**JUAN VILLA**

Hunger Relief Program Manager



**JONALYN ANDIA**

Assistant Community Manager - Tondo



**CHERYL PIBTE**

Scholarship Program Coordinator - Bulacan  
& Preschool Teacher



**MARY GRACE CEZAR**

Bulacan Preschool Teacher





# Volunteer Coordinators, Community Teams, and Interns/Part-timers

**LOWELA LAGAT**

Scholarship Program Coordinator -  
Naic, Cavite



**JENIFER CARDENTE**

Scholarship Program Coordinator -  
Zamboanga Sibugay



**PRINCESS DIMARANAN**

Volunteer Admin Assistant



**JEDDA PUNZALAN**

After School Program Coordinator



**CHRISTINE SIM**

Brain Booster Program Coordinator



**CHARISSE PARCHAMENTO**

PEARLS Social Media Intern



**BEA MARBELLA**

G.R.O.W Social Media Associate



**TONDO CORE TEAM**

Community Volunteers



**BULACAN CORE TEAM**

Community Volunteers



**CAVITE CORE TEAM**

Community Volunteers



**ZAMBOANGA SIBUGAY CORE TEAM**

Community Volunteers



# MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

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Dear Project PEARLS Family,

Year 2021 was a very challenging and extra heart-breaking for our communities due to the longest lockdown Philippines has in response to COVID-19. Millions of urban slum dwellers in Metro Manila which includes our community, a hard lockdown means no work. No work means no food. Our Manila community lives on and off garbage; and because restaurants and businesses are closed, there are no garbage where they can scavenge for recyclables including food.

Parents and grandparents get in line as early as 2 am for Project PEARLS Covid-19 Hunger Relief. They get in line on mud and garbage to ensure to get the only meals their family will have for the day.


COVID-19 also forced parents to be teachers; and their homes became schools. Challenges include parents are illiterate or didn't finish grade school or high school; their homes are not suitable and equipped for learning. Project PEARLS equipped its Learning Center with high-speed internet, computers, laptops, printers and all the school supplies our scholars need so they don't get behind with schoolwork.

Our Project PEARLS families were more worried about starvation than getting COVID-19.

The silver linings? Project PEARLS Bayanihan community of donors, sponsors, partners, individuals, staff and volunteers, scholars stepped up to meet our primary goals of reducing and preventing children's malnutrition; increasing the number of meals and feeding days; improving academic performance of our scholars. We exceeded our goals for the Holiday Toy Drive and "Adopt a Family This Christmas" Campaign.

We are very grateful and very blessed to all of you, our PROJECT PEARLS HEROES for making us survived 2021. We are hoping for your continued support in the coming years.

In gratitude,



Melissa Villa  
Founder/Executive Director







**OUR PROGRAMS**

# OUR PROGRAMS

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The core programs of Project PEARLS are guided by the first four **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** of the United Nations. We believe that our humble contribution can make ripples of positive change that can help in making our world a better place for us and future generations.

## Our Guiding Principles



## Our Core Programs



### Education & Literacy

We have Scholarship Program for more than 600 students in our four communities: Tondo, Manila; Bocaue, Bulacan; Naic, Cavite; and Zamboanga Sibugay. We also have LitClubs, LitMoms, and different community-based learning activities that further enhance the literacy, artistic, and social skills of children and youth.



### Health care & Nutrition

We have the Hunger Relief Program in our communities to ensure that children have at least one healthy meal a day. We bring medical and dental services to the communities in partnership with other organizations. We also provide financial assistance for emergency, medical, and social services.



### Empowerment through Skills Development

We empower women in the community by giving them the resources and opportunities that they need for a sustainable livelihood through the GROW Program. We also provide opportunities for community members to develop their capacities and skills by immersing them in different kinds of workshops and training.





# **EDUCATION & LITERACY**

**Scholarship Program  
LitClubs and LitMoms  
Webinars for Scholars**

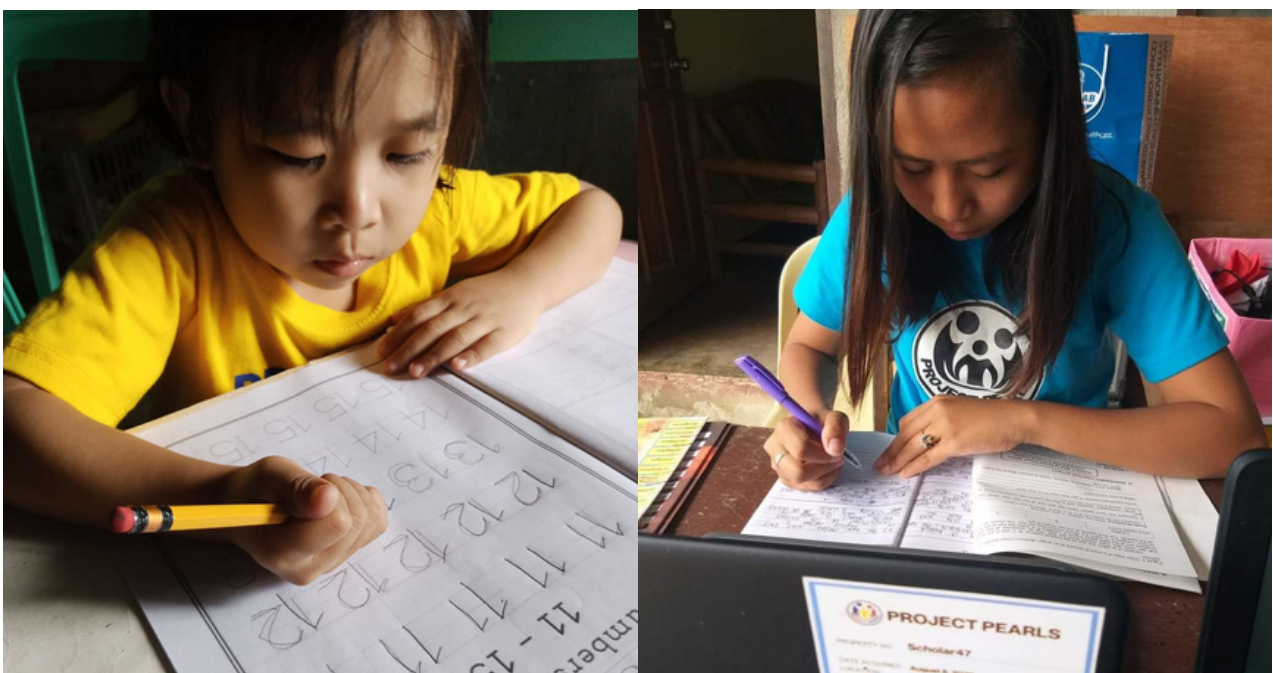
# SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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The core mission of Project PEARLS is to help children and families who are in the poorest and most vulnerable sectors of society to have a better life. We believe that education is one of the most powerful and transformative tools that can help break the vicious cycle of poverty.

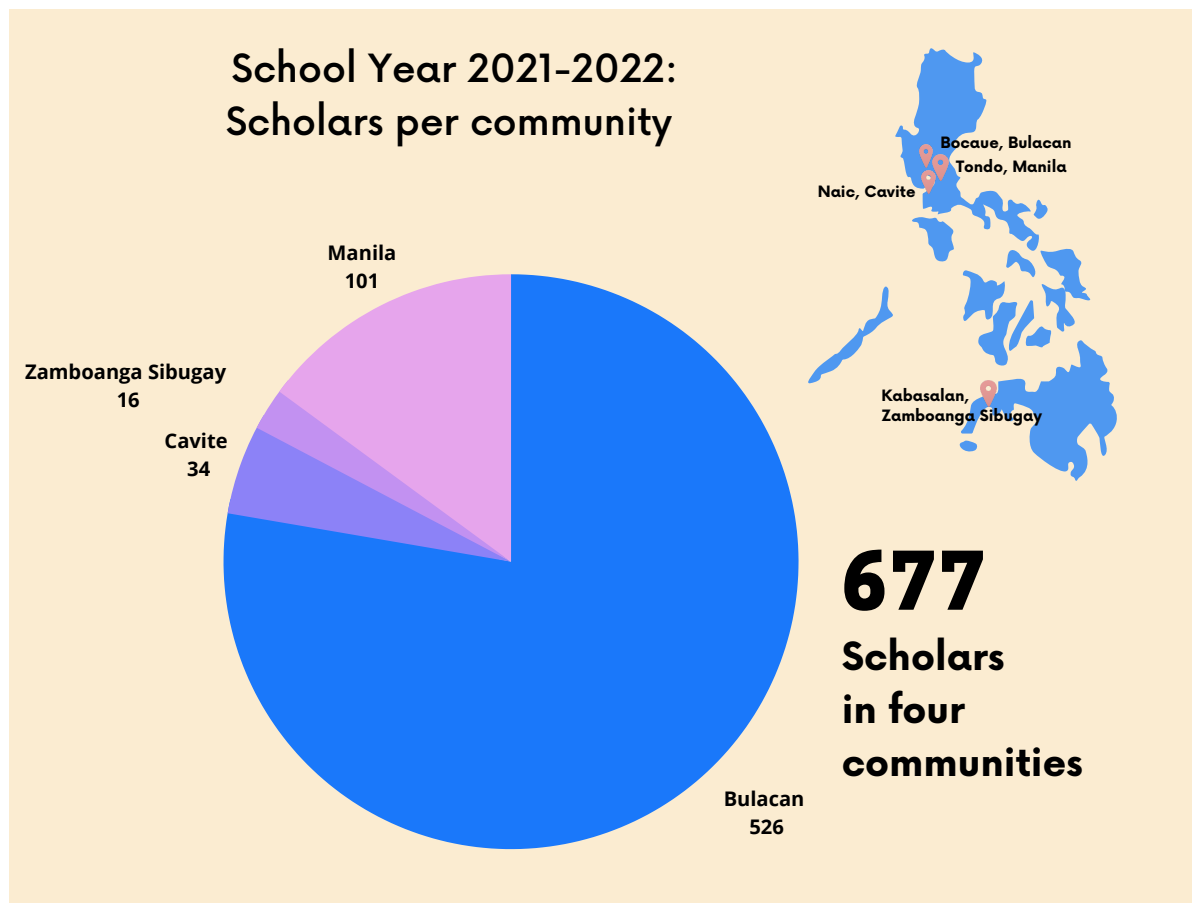
The path laid down by poverty is one that is filled with barriers and with limited opportunities for growth. Due to their harsh economic situation, the priority of families is mainly on their day-to-day survival: where to get their food, how to pay for utilities, where to get medical care, and the like. Because of this, it is a hundred times harder for them to focus on their dreams and long-term goals. Poverty is more than just economic deprivation. It robs individuals of the opportunity and freedom to work on their personal development.

Education hones our capabilities, knowledge, and skills, thus opening up possibilities and opportunities. However, social and economic barriers can hinder one's access to quality education. This is where Project PEARLS Scholarship Program comes in. We provide educational investments and communities of support so that children and youth can feel confident and empowered to create a better future for themselves and for their families. Through the power of education, they can be positive agents of change in their own communities and in our country as a whole.

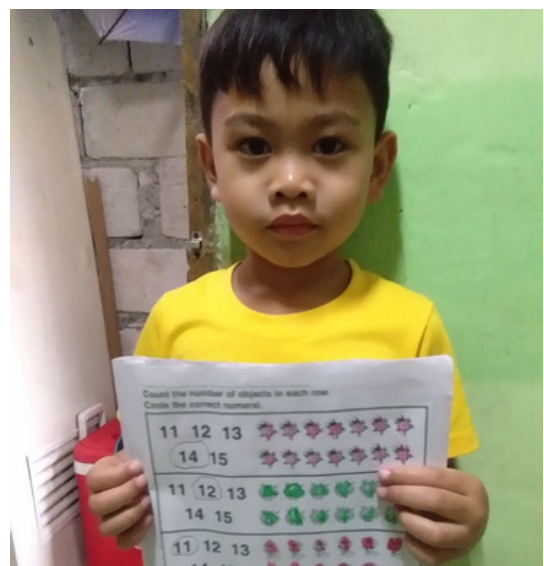


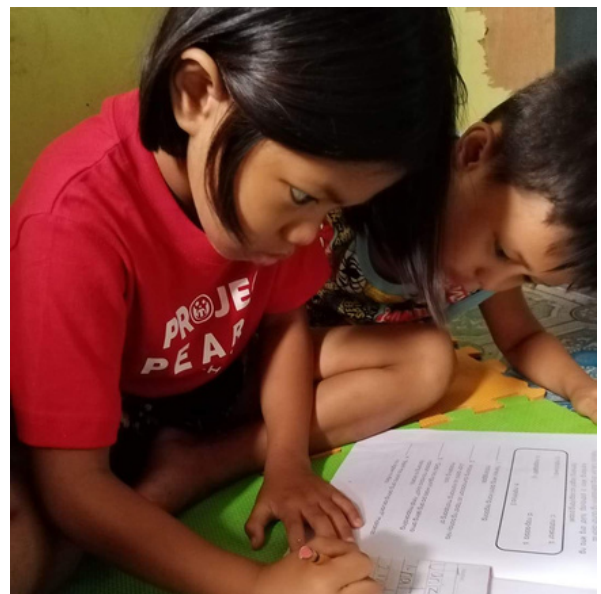
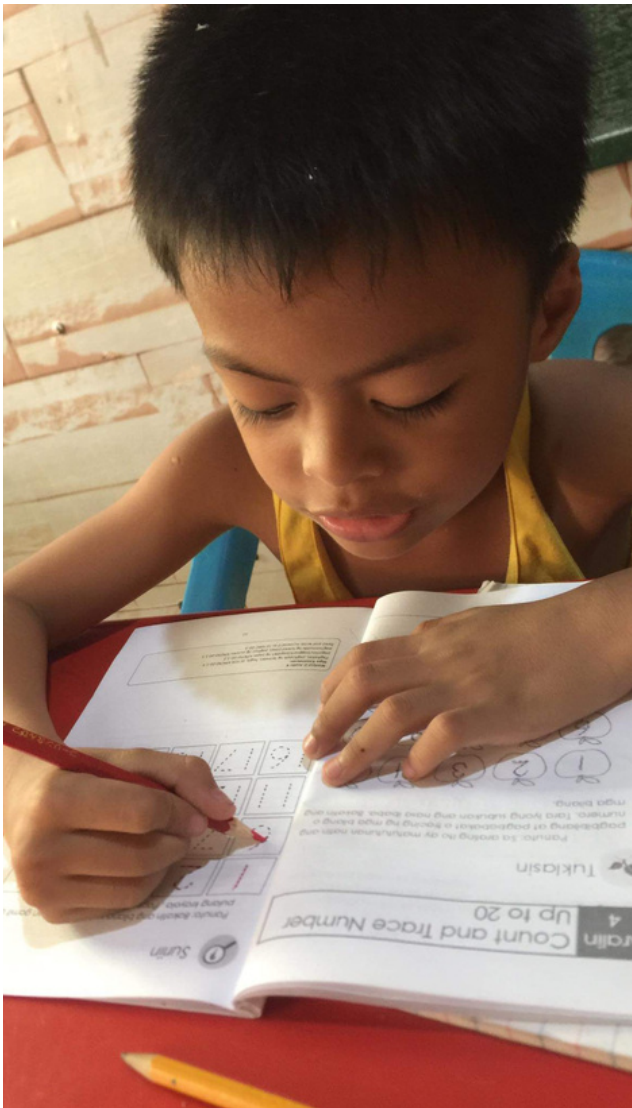
## Education in the New Normal

Together with our education heroes, Project PEARLS supported **677 scholars** this school year 2021-2022. The scholars received support in the form of school supplies, transportation allowance, food allowance, vouchers for school projects, and various online learning opportunities. We also provide them with healthy grocery packs every month to help their families and to ensure that they have healthy meals.



We continue to adhere to the Covid-19 safety and health protocols for our Nursery and Time-to-Learn scholars and teaching staff. Our scholars continue their schooling through the modular distance learning setup. Our teachers prepare the lessons and activities that the kids do at home. At the end of the week, the parents will submit the answered modules. The teachers also communicate with the parents and children online to provide guidance for the lessons.



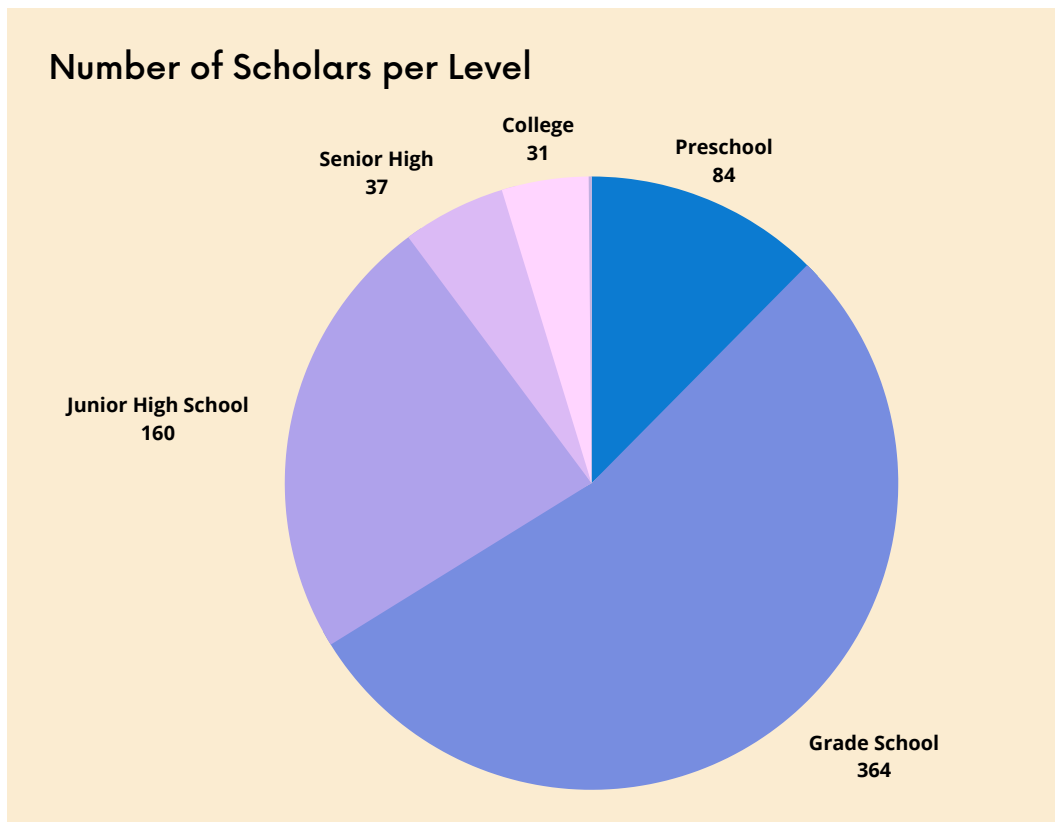


Elementary and high school scholars enrolled in public schools are also following the modular distance learning being implemented by the Department of Education. It is a combination of weekly modules and online learning through Google Meet and Facebook Messenger. In March 2022, some of our senior high school scholars were allowed to attend limited face-to-face classes.

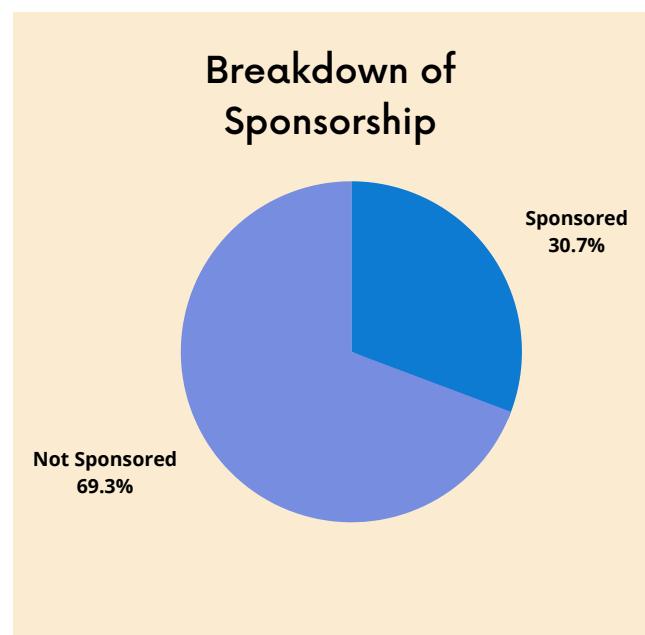
With the drop in Covid-19 cases and more people getting vaccinated, the limited face-to-face classes aim to support the students in their lessons and other practical activities that became limited because of the online classes.

Same as last school year, college scholars still attend their online classes through Zoom , Google Meet or Microsoft teams. The universities and colleges also provide them with their own online platform. We provided the scholars with laptops that they can use for their classes and other school requirements. Our communities are also equipped with laptops, printers, and internet connection which they can use during the online classes.





The biggest number of PEARLS scholars are in the preschool and grade school levels, with a total of 448 scholars. We place a high value on early childhood education as this lays a foundation that is crucial for the child's future success. This is the time when children develop cognitive and literacy skills, and learn about values and social skills that are important for lifelong learning. In junior and senior high school, we have 197 scholars. This school year, we have the most number of college scholars. Our college scholars are enrolled in various courses such as Education, Agricultural Technology, Information Technology, Dentistry, Business Administration, Psychology, and Criminology.



More than 30% of the scholars are sponsored by different organizations and individuals. We are able to support the other non-sponsored scholars through our general fund acquired from public donations and grants.

## Message from the Scholars

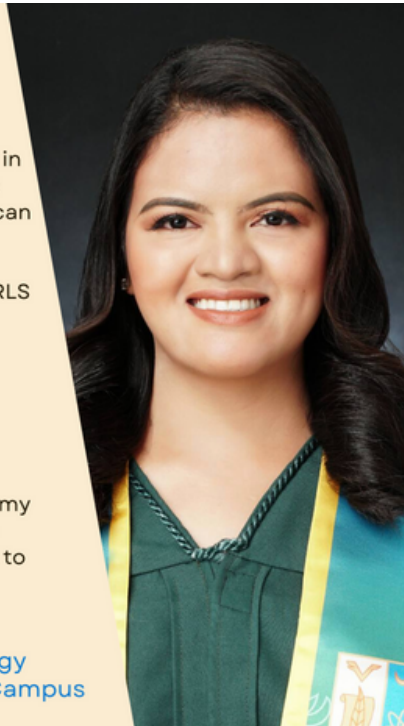


I used to live in the slum community in Ulingan, Tondo, where I used to pick and sell nails and charcoal so that I can have my school allowance. I did not dream big. I did not envision myself studying in college, but Project PEARLS gave me the gift of education and opened doors to the world I never thought I would reach.

I am thankful to Project PEARLS for giving me the opportunity and for teaching me to become a better person. Now, I am in the last year of my college, and I am looking forward to having a decent job and giving back to the mission of Project PEARLS.

**Princess Soria**

**Bachelor of Science in Psychology  
Far Eastern University - Manila Campus**



I remember when I was still in Grade 9, there were people who went to our school giving scholarship opportunities. I was one of those children who got selected for a scholarship. I was so happy because Project PEARLS chose me to become one of their scholars. The opportunity you gave helped me a lot and paved the way for me to also help other people. Because of you, I am able to achieve my dream. Right now, I am about to graduate and become an Agriculturalist. Since 2015, I was a Project PEARLS scholar and I am thankful because I am part of this program. Thank you so much!

**Kim Mikel Bacolod**

**Bachelor of Agriculture Technology  
Western Mindanao State University - Siay Campus**



We are so proud of Princess and Kim Mikel for their dedication and hard work to achieve their dreams. They are among our seven college scholars who are set to graduate this year. They are proof that when we work together, we can help in giving opportunities and tools that will empower a person to carve their own paths toward a brighter future.

# LITCLUBS AND LITMOMS

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**202** LitClub Members in Bulacan, Cavite, and Zamboanga Sibugay

**42** LitMom Members in Bulacan

**7** LitClubs in the communities

**1** LitMoms Club

## LitClubs and LitMoms At Home

With the global pandemic affecting all our face-to-face programs, LitClub continues to do “at-home sessions” in 2021. Our LitClub kits include the materials and modules that are all aligned with LitWorld’s curriculum. These are distributed to the members, and the discussion and interactions are done via their respective Facebook Messenger groups. We are overwhelmed with the response of the members through these home kits and we have seen how they continue to work on their creativity through writing and illustrations. We look forward to re-opening limited face-to-face sessions by 2022.





## World Read Aloud Day

Every first Wednesday of February, our LitClubs celebrate **World Read Aloud Day (WRAD)**, together with our long-time partner, LitWorld! World Read Aloud Day was started by LitWorld in 2010 to highlight the power of reading aloud in building literate communities and in sharing our stories. For WRAD 2021, it became a family affair as parents read to their kids using the reading materials given to them. Our Nursery and Time-to-Learn scholars also celebrated this meaningful day together with their parents at home. And like in the previous years, we partnered again with the National Library of the Philippines for the online WRAD Celebration.



## International Day of the Girl



### October 11 is International Day of the Girl!

The is an international observance day declared by the United Nations that aims to celebrate the power of girls, promote gender equality around the world, and amplify the voices of girls. Together with Global GLOW and LitWorld, we celebrated this day in our communities. As we face this global pandemic, we highlighted the strengths of the young girls in our communities through self-portraits and words that best describe them. Our preschool and elementary scholars, together with LitClub and LitMom members, showcased their artistic works through drawing and powerful words. We also distributed hygiene packs to girls and moms as part of raising awareness about self-care and good hygiene.



# WORKSHOPS & WEBINARS FOR SCHOLARS

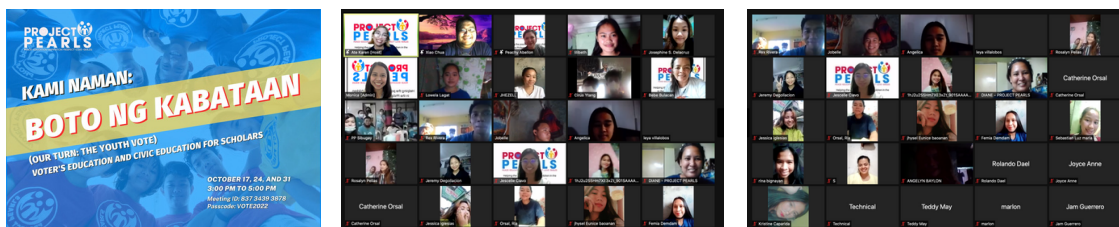
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## Youth Career Orientation in partnership with Mondelez International



(May 18, 2021) Our college and senior high scholars attended the Youth Career Orientation Seminar hosted by the "Impact4Good" Team of the Mondelez IBS-Manila Center. The scholars gained valuable insights and knowledge about the different careers that they can pursue. We are grateful to Mondelez for this partnership!

## "Kami Naman: Boto ng Kabataan" (Our Turn: The Youth Vote) Voter's Education and Civic Education for PEARLS Scholars



(October 17, 24 & 31, 2021) This three-part online voter's education and civic education aimed to teach our senior high school and college scholars the power of their vote in addressing social issues. Through this webinar, we hope to empower our scholars by giving them the knowledge that they need so they can make informed decisions in the upcoming national elections.

We are thankful to our speakers, Ms. Patricia Rose Angelu Hidalgo and Prof. Xiao Chua, for discussing important topics about democracy, the government, and Martial Law. Our Deputy Executive Director, Monica Aclan, and Executive Administrator, Karen Viel Beblañas, also spoke about the social issues we are facing right now, good and active citizenship, and the relevance of social movements.



# **HEALTH CARE AND NUTRITION**

**Covid-19 Hunger Relief Program  
Emergency, Medical, and Social Services**



# COVID-19 HUNGER RELIEF PROGRAM

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It has been a year since the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted our lives in unimaginable and unexpected ways. Until now, many Filipinos are still struggling to cope with the immense challenges brought about by the pandemic. The various community quarantines and work closures have left thousands of our fellow Filipinos jobless. Among them are those working in the informal sector such as drivers, garbage scavengers, vendors, construction workers, and other daily-wage earners.



**Meet Nanay Nelia**, 66 years old and a resident of Helping Land, Tondo, Manila.

She is one of the many families who have been pushed even further into poverty because of the pandemic. Every day, she goes to the Project PEARLS Center in Tondo so her family can have food to eat.

*"Often, we do not have food because my son lost his job. He finds it difficult to fund a job right away due to his disability. He has metal plates in his leg and hand due to an accident. He is also a single parent."*

*The Project PEARLS Hunger Relief Program has been a big help to us. Back then, we have nothing to eat. When my grandson found out that there was feeding here, my grandson told me to get food so that we could have something for breakfast. The feeding program helps people like us who are struggling in life."*

.....

*"Madalas mawalan kami ng makakakain dahil nawalan ng trabaho ang anak ko. Hindi din po s'ya makahanap ng agarang trabaho gawa ng kanyang kapansanan. Meron s'yang bakal sa hita at kamay dahil sa isang aksidente. Siya din ay isang single parent."*

*Napakalaking tulong po sa amin ang feeding ng Project Pearls. Noon po, hindi kami nakakakain. Noong nalaman po ng apo ko na may feeding dito, inaya ako ng apo ko na kumuha ng pagkain para daw may almusal kaming dalawa. Nakakatulong po ang feeding ninyo sa mga tulad naming naghihirap sa buhay."*

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## 315,000+ MEALS SERVED

In 2021, we served more than **315,000 meals** in our three communities in **Tondo, Bulacan, and Naic**. Spearheaded by our Community Leaders, our community volunteers are the on-the-ground team who are mainly in charge of cooking, purchasing from the market, serving, and cleaning. The hearty and healthy meals help the families survive this pandemic crisis.

We have been doing daily feeding program in Tondo even before the pandemic to ensure that children have at least one healthy meal in a day. This is part of the "Feed the Tummy, Nourish the Mind" program where we conduct learning activities for the children after the feeding. When the pandemic crisis broke out in early 2020, we knew that we needed to intensify our efforts to help families and children who are desperate for food and essentials. In most urban poor communities, families were more afraid that they will die from hunger, and not from the Covid-19 virus. Aside from the daily feeding program in Tondo, we also started the Hunger Relief Program in our communities in Bulacan and Cavite. Every week, we serve more than 9,000 meals in three communities: five times a week in Tondo, Bulacan, and Naic. This is made possible by the hard work of our community volunteers and the generosity of our partners and donors.





## 6,000+ GROCERY PACKS DISTRIBUTED

In addition to the meals that we serve, we also augment the needs of the families by providing them with grocery packs. This is a big help for the families whose income sources have been severely affected by the pandemic crisis. Their meager incomes can barely cover all basic needs (utilities, school supplies, rent, etc.), thus, receiving the grocery packs is a big help for them. It provides the families with healthy and hearty meals.



## 180,000 DOSES (1,000 BOTTLES) OF MULTIPLE MICRONUTRIENT SUPPLEMENTS

In partnership with our long-time partner, **Vitamin Angels**, we turned over 180,000 doses or 1,000 bottles of multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS) to our partner clinics and organizations. Our partner clinics distributed the supplements to pregnant and lactating women during their pre/post-natal check-ups. The MMS helps in the healthy development of the babies during their critical first 1,000 days, and it also lowers the health risks of anemia for pregnant women. We thank the following clinics and organization for partnering with us in this important program: Northville V Birthing Station (Bocaue, Bulacan), Batia Health Center (Bocaue, Bulacan), Malainen Bago Health Clinic (Naic, Cavite), Vitas Health Center (Tondo, Manila), and Upskills Foundation (Tondo, Manila).



# EMERGENCY, MEDICAL, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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## PHP 882,906 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR EMERGENCY, MEDICAL, AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Aside from our core programs that focus on education and hunger alleviation, we also provide financial assistance to scholars and families in our communities who are experiencing personal crises.

We recognize that living in poverty impacts not just the economic capacity of a family but also their overall capability to be prepared for medical issues, emergencies, and other forms of crisis. They do not have the social security or safety net that can help them overcome such challenges. In response to this, we provide assistance to those who are not able to afford medical care, burial expenses, medicines, and other necessities. We also provide financial and in-kind assistance for food, clothing, home repairs, and other urgent needs that affect the well-being of the child and the family.



This year, with the help of our donors, we were able to allocate almost a million pesos worth of assistance for various medical and emergency cases, burial expenses, food allowance, transportation allowances, home repairs and house rent, and other essentials such as diapers, milk, and medicines. Our Social Worker conducts home visitations, counseling sessions, and interviews to ensure that we are able to provide adequate support for the families.





## SEED OF CHANGE PROJECT

The **Seeds of Change** project was conceptualized to provide small capital funds to help families start their own enterprises or further expand their existing businesses. By providing them with capital, they can kick start a small business that will help their family grow economically. Twenty families in our communities were identified as the recipients of this assistance.

We conducted interviews and counseling to ensure that they have the commitment and perseverance to pursue their businesses. To ensure sustainability, they are also paying back the capital without interest. The seed money that was paid back goes to the programs of Project PEARLS. Through this project, the families were able to establish small businesses such as sari-sari store, burger stall, vegetables and fruits stall, rice retailing, laundry product reseller business, and others.



## Psychosocial Interventions

The pandemic crisis has negatively affected the mental health of many people, especially the youth. In response to this, we are conducting a series of psychological therapies and counseling with some of our scholars and community members. This aims to help them cope with the drastic changes and challenges in their life. The counseling sessions also aim to improve their personal outlook and behavior with other people and to guide them in addressing their personal challenges. We believe that everyone, regardless of socio-economic status, has the right to access mental health services. We recognize that mental and psychological well-being is important in the holistic development of a person.





# EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- **G.R.O.W (Giving Resources & Opportunities to Women)**
- **Community Savings Club**
- **Special Webinars for Community Members and Staff**



# **G.R.O.W.**

## **(GIVING RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO WOMEN)**

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GROW stands for Giving Resources and Opportunities to Women. It was established in July 2019 as an empowerment and livelihood program. The program aims to give resources and opportunities to women in the relocation community in Brgy. Batia, Bocaue, Bulacan. These women are mothers, grandmothers, and sisters of Project PEARLS scholars. In 2013, the National Housing Authority (NHA) relocated the families from the slum community of Ulingan in Tondo, Manila to this new community. Housing was provided but no source of livelihood or income was introduced. Thus, these families were hungrier in Bulacan than they were in Tondo. GROW aims to address the lack of livelihood skills and to help women realize their value and full potential. GROW focuses on nurturing and empowering women and girls so that they can be socially and economically empowered. We believe that empowered women empower women.



We are so proud of our GROW Nanays for leaving their comfort zones and dedicating time and effort to learn new skills and improve their capabilities. After two years, they have grown to become more confident and empowered. They have learned different skills such as candle making, sewing, upcycling, and macramé. They are also earning their own income that helps their families.

## New Products

Despite the challenges of running an enterprise during the pandemic, our GROW team managed to create new products that our customers love. This year, they added the following new products to the GROW collection.



Top (L-R) Hiyas Face Mask Strap, Coaster, Lolita Rag  
Bottom (L-R) Norma Rag, Gift Bundles for Mother's Day/Father's Day, Sibol Plant Holder

Christmas Bundles: consist of 5 different categories, curated from G.R.O.W's line of products. For every Christmas set sold, a part of the proceeds will go straight to the Adopt-a-Family or Hunger Relief program of Project PEARLS. (Online Catalog was launched and made available on the website).





## New Partners and Collaborations

We are so grateful to meet new partner stores that help us to showcase and promote our products.

**Kalikhasan Eco-Friendly Solutions** distributes natural-based products with the ultimate mission of helping people to lead a more earth-friendly and more sustainable life. Derived from two words – 'kalikhasan' meaning 'nature' and 'likha' meaning 'to create' – their products are ideal for lessening our carbon footprint. The GROW products that are upcycled from scrap materials perfectly line up with Kalikhasan's core mission.



**The Good Store** is a marketplace that advocates local community-based or cause-driven enterprises. It aims to help social enterprises promote their advocacies and products, while also making it easy for consumers to find products that are meaningful and sustainable. The advocacy of GROW of empowering and helping women is truly aligned with the core values of The Good Store.



Aside from partnering with local stores, we also actively collaborated with other brands to create special products bundles.



In celebration of Mother's Day, we collaborated with three amazing local brands in creating special gift packs: **Barako Mom**, **Bee Harvest Manila**, and **Blooms Artisan**. We bundled the coffee and tablea from Barako Mom (a Batangas home-based coffee brand), and the tea and honey from Bee Harvest Manila (a local tea brand from Mindanao) together with the Agwa Mug to create a customized gift set. Beautiful dried flowers from Blooms Artisan made the Tanglaw candles even more unique and personalized.

**Ikigaimarie** was started by a young Filipina artist who uses her talent in creating commissioned portraits. We are so grateful to Ikigaimarie for choosing GROW as the beneficiary of her "portraits for a cause". The portraits were also printed on Agwa Mugs, tote bags, and t-shirts.



**Slow Co.** is a Manila-based brand that focuses on plant care and accessories. As more and more people become more engaged in gardening during the community quarantines, we took the opportunity to create bundled products that plant-titas/titos surely love. Our beautiful Likha macramé plant holder, Muni-muni pots, and Halo-halo planters were packaged with Slow Co.' plants, plant sprays, and accessories.



## Training Workshops

In celebration of Women's Month, we conducted two workshops and a family planning session to advocate for women's welfare, rights, and development. On March 12, **Ms. Shirlie Bernabe-Alicante**, life coach and mompreneur, led the first workshop entitled, "**Self Discovery Towards Transformational Leadership.**" Ms. Shirlie's workshop emphasized the importance of having core values, motivation, and inspiration. She ignited the fire of leadership within the participants and emphasized that "leadership begins with self-awareness."





Together with our long-time partner, **Likhaan Center for Women's Health**, we held a Family Planning Session in Bulacan to give women free access to different birth control methods on March 13. This health care session also raised awareness about women's reproductive rights. We are thankful to Likhaan for always being with us to serve women in marginalized communities.

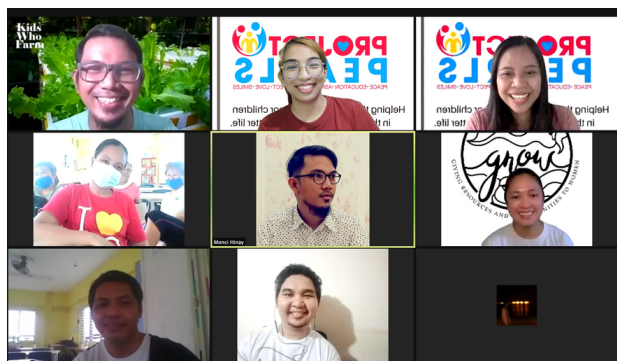


The last part of the month-long celebration was the “**Kabalikat sa Negosyo**” training workshop of **Ang-Hortaleza Foundation, Inc.** The GROW team and other aspiring entrepreneurs in the community attended the workshop from March 16 to 19. The participants learned from Ms. Kate Conde-Sabanal, Sir Victor Perez, and Ms. Cheryl Tagarao about the basics of entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and other related topics that will help them become better entrepreneurs. At the end of the workshop, they presented their own business plans. A cooking contest was also held to showcase their ability to work with a team and to come up with unique recipes that they can also use in their food businesses. We are grateful to Ang-Hortaleza Foundation for helping us hone the skills of the women in the community!

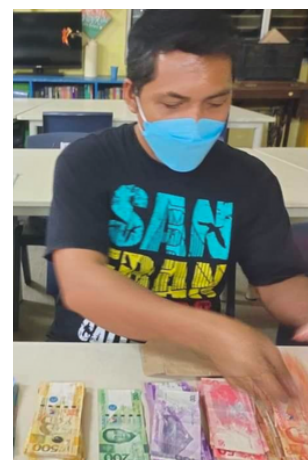


# GROW AND PEARLS COMMUNITY SAVINGS CLUB

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In partnership with **Team Hyperlokal Kapital** (a joint project of Kids Who Farm and Golden Age of Life Society), our community team in Bulacan established their very own **Community Savings Club (CSC)**! To prepare them for the formation of their CSC, they attended a series of online training sessions about financial literacy and policy formulation with the guidance of Muneer Mahinay of Team Hyperlokal Kapital. The CSC aims to provide its members with savings, access to loans, and social funds.



After a series of online training and six months of savings, our Bulacan community team and G.R.O.W. artisans were able to accumulate a total of **Php 152,000** from savings and loan service fees.

We are grateful to Team Hyperlokal Kapital for empowering and teaching our community teams about financial literacy and the value of savings. Next year, we will also be training our teams in Tondo and Naic so they can also form their own Community Savings Clubs.



# SPECIAL WEBINARS FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND STAFF

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## AEAdvocacy Week: Building Bridges (NGO Awareness Webinar)

organized by the Ateneo Economics Association and iVolunteer Philippines (April 16, 2021) Our Deputy Executive Director, Monica Aclan represented Project PEARLS in this online event where various NGOs and social enterprises were given the opportunity to promote their advocacies and programs to the youth from different schools.



## Bayani Learning Series

organized by iVolunteer Philippines

(April 17; June 26; July 31; and Aug. 8, 2021) Our staff joined this series of webinars where iVolunteer invited industry experts to share their knowledge on different topics. The first learning session entitled, "The Future of Work: Remote Work Setup in the New Normal", discussed effective remote work setup and productivity guide, and technical support that is available for nonprofits. In the second session called "Fundraising in the New Normal", effective fundraising strategies and how to plan for fundraising programs were discussed. The third session, "Project Management and Impact Measurement", aimed to help NGOs to be more effective and impactful in their communities by utilizing project management frameworks and skillsets, and impact measurement guidelines. The last installment of the learning series focused on "Adaptive Leadership for Nonprofit Organizations."



## One Tondo Bakuna Orientation

organized by Likhaan Center for Women's Health and One Tondo Community

April 24, 2021. Our community members and staff attended this webinar hosted by Likhaan to further enhance their knowledge about Covid-19 and the vaccines. The discussion about the immune system in relation to vaccines provided important information that we used to encourage community members to avail of free vaccination.

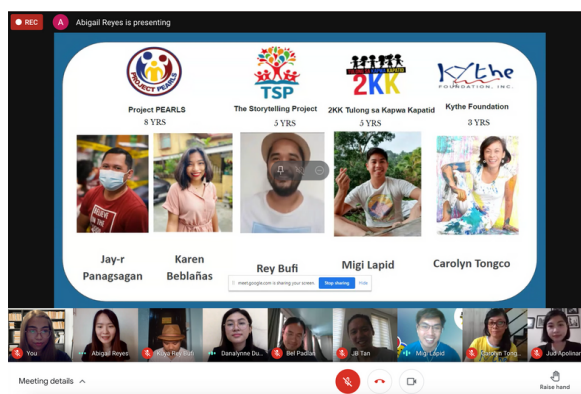


## iVolunteer Hackathon 2021

organized by iVolunteer Philippines

(April 24, 2021) This webinar gathered tech professionals and enthusiasts to help develop iVolunteer's website and improve volunteer and NGO user experience. Our Partnership & External Relations Manager, Karen Beblañas, and Community Services Manager, Jay-R

Panagsagan, joined as panelists to help the developers have a deeper understanding of the partnership between NGOs and iVolunteer. They also shared insights on how to develop solutions that can improve the volunteering experience, such as gamification, attendance tracking, social media, etc.



## Hands-On Manila's Webinar Series for Partners

(May 2, 27 & 31 2021) This webinar series tackled different topics that aimed to strengthen the skills of Hands-On Manila's partners so that they can further grow their mission and advocacies. Our PEARLS team (Monica, Jay-R, and Karen) participated in these learning sessions that focused on: Email Excellence, Speak to Persuade, and Effective Virtual Communication.



## Vitamin Angels' Program Partners Virtual Conference



(May 12-14, 2021) The objective of the virtual conference was to facilitate the sharing of experiences on Vitamin Angels micronutrient supplementation and deworming and to identify strategies to strengthen partnerships with government agencies. Our Deputy Executive Director Monica Aclan, Partnership & External Relations Manager Karen Beblañas, and Community Services Manager Jay-R Panagsagan represented Project PEARLS at this conference.



## Learning Without Borders: Pursuing Inclusive Education in Rural Areas

organized by Institute for Solidarity in Asia (June 4, 2021) Our Education & Literacy Program Director, Peachy Abellon, was one of the panelists in this webinar that discussed the status of public education in rural areas amid the pandemic. The online event gathered major stakeholders to amplify the discussion on retooling the national



educational system to become a more effective, resilient, and inclusive one. Through these conversations, it aimed to address education inequality and ensure that no student is left behind.

## Mental Health Wellness webinar for Project PEARLS Staff and Community Members

(June 25, 2021) The drastic changes in our lives due to the pandemic have drastically impacted our mental health and overall well-being. To address this, we organized a Mental Health Wellness webinar, led by our ASP Coordinator Jedda Punzalan who is a registered psychometrician and a faculty



member of Far Eastern University. In this webinar, our staff and community volunteers learned about the importance of talking about mental health issues and the different steps that they can do to take care of their mental health.

## GoodFood4All: Feeding the Urban Poor webinar

organized by The Global Shapers Community (July 10, 2021. Hosted by The Global Shapers Community, this webinar talked about the different corporate and organizational initiatives aimed to address urban hunger. As one of the speakers, our Deputy Executive Director Monica Aclan, talked about how we were able to establish and sustain the Covid-19



Hunger Relief Program by engaging with partners and sponsors and by empowering community volunteers. This event was also organized as an Independent Dialogue under the United Nations Food Systems Summit.

## Usaping Bakuna, Usaping Pampamilya

organized by Unilab

(June 19, 2021) We recognize the need to support the government's effort in encouraging mass vaccinations in the fight against Covid-19. In line with this, our staff and community members attended this online talk show organized by the External Affairs Division of Unilab, Inc., and in partnership with the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines and the Department of Health. This online event highlighted the importance of Covid-19 vaccines and it also addressed vaccine hesitancy and debunked myths with factual information from health experts. On August 28, another online talk, entitled "Tanong ng Bayan: Sa panahon ngayon, paano magiging protektado ang pamilya ko?" was organized by Unilab Inc. to inform Filipinos on how to keep their families protected and healthy amid the pandemic while encouraging the availment of Covid-19 vaccines.



## Social Workers' Response to a Changing Environment

organized by the UP-PGH Medical Social Service

(Sept. 30, Oct. 7, and 14) Our Social Worker, Melissa Bendanillo, and Deputy Executive Director, Monica Aclan, attended this 3-part

webinar organized by the UP-PGH Medical Social Service. The webinar featured ten guest speakers that discussed various topics such as new innovations in delivering social services amidst the pandemic, ethical issues concerning social work, and mental health issues.







# **BAYANIHAN**

**Bayanihan para sa Bicol**  
**BayaniHAN (Bayani for the Homeless,  
Abandoned, and Neglected)**



# BAYANIHAN

## (BAYANI FOR THE HOMELESS, ABANDONED, AND NEGLECTED)

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3,500 MEALS  
3,000 FACE MASKS  
1,600 ESSENTIAL KITS  
(SLEEPING MATS,  
UNDERGARMENTS, HYGIENE  
KITS, ETC.)

We started the BayaniHAN program in 2019 with the aim of helping families and individuals who are living on the streets of Metro Manila. With this program, we want them to know that they are seen, heard, cared for, and loved. During the first Pop-up BayaniHAN, we partnered with St. Arnold Janssen Kalinga Center and other partners and donors to provide much-needed services such as medical and dental check-ups, haircuts, and restaurant-style meal service. We also distributed food packs, towels, and clothes.



At the height of the pandemic crisis in 2020, we had to pause the program due to the community quarantines. On June 27, 2021, we relaunched the BayaniHAN program with the help of our main partners, **The City Eats** and **ADM**. Our volunteers went around the streets of Manila once a month to distribute hot meals, face masks, hygiene kits, and other essential items. We also engaged and listened to their stories and experience living on the streets so that we can get to know them and learn how we can serve them better.





# BAYANIHAN PARA SA BICOL

## (TYPHOON RELIEF OPERATION IN BICOL)

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### 300 FAMILIES RECEIVED:

- Grocery pack from Telus International
- 3-in-1 towel set
- Sleeping mat
- Teddy bear from SM Cares
- Clothes from Twilo
- Clothes from Liza Macuja
- Diaper and sanitary napkin
- Kids' face mask from Eye Know Right/Legazy
- Children's Multivitamins

In the last quarter of 2020, Typhoon Rolly (international name: Goni) and Typhoon Ulysses (international name: Vamco) brought immense destruction in many areas in the Philippines. They were considered the strongest typhoons to hit the country amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. The onslaught of the two typhoons resulted in fatalities and millions-worth of destruction of houses, infrastructure, and agriculture. To help families and communities that were affected by the calamities, we immediately launched an emergency fundraiser. Through the help of our donors and partners, we were able to provide various relief packs and hot meals to more than 1,700 families in Rizal, Marikina, and Cagayan in November and December 2020.



At the beginning of 2021, we were still receiving donations for the Typhoon Fundraiser. Because of this, we were able to visit **Brgy. Buang, Tabaco, Albay** on February 19 to conduct a relief operation. Situated just a few kilometers away from the Mayon Volcano, this community was one of the most affected areas during the onslaught of two super typhoons. The Barangay Council helped us to identify the 300 most indigent families in the community. Each of them received relief packages to aid them in their recovery: grocery pack, 3-in-1 towel set, sleeping mat, clothes, diapers, sanitary napkins, face masks, and teddy bear and multivitamins for children. We also turned over 50 bottles of Vitamin Angles multiple micronutrient supplements (MMS) for pregnant and lactating women to Brgy. Buang Health Center.







## **OTHER SPECIAL PROJECTS & EVENTS**

- **Inauguration of the Dream Center**
- **11th Anniversary Celebration**
- **Christmas Adopt-A-Family and Toy Drive**

# INAUGURATION OF THE DREAM CENTER

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When the families and children in Ulingan, Tondo were relocated in 2013 to the new community in Bulacan, our dream was simple: to build a PEARLS Learning Center, just like the one we had in Ulingan, that will serve as a safe and educational space for our scholars. With the help of our partners and donors and the support of the land developer, Baque Corp., we were able to turn this dream into a reality. Our Nursery scholars can now learn in a conducive environment. And in 2019, because of the generosity of our partner, Archipelago Builders, we were able to build the second floor of the Learning Center! It now serves as a mini library and computer center where our scholars can do their online classes, research, and other educational activities.



The PEARLS Learning Center in Ulingan, Tondo.



When the families were relocated from Ulingan to Bulacan, a dream of building a new Learning Center was born.



The PEARLS Learning Center in Bulacan was opened in 2013, and in 2019, we were able to build the second floor of the Center.

This year, another vision came to fruition. The tireless efforts of the inspiring student leaders of **Future Faces**, an organization based in the International School Manila (ISM), helped us to raise enough funds to build a new multi-purpose center in Bulacan! We call the new center the "**Dream Center**."



The **Dream Center** will be the venue of our empowerment workshops and training. It also houses a state-of-the-art kitchen that will greatly help our Hunger Relief Program.



Truly, this is a generous gift from Future Faces that will benefit the children and the families in the community. Our deepest gratitude to the Future Faces team - Sarina Malik, Samantha Rose Concepcion, Erika Rae Poturnak, Saskia Jane Giraud, Luc Giraud, and their teacher, Winnie Wong, for making this possible. We are also thankful to FabTech Kitchen, Green Antz Builders, and to everyone who donated to this project.

# 11TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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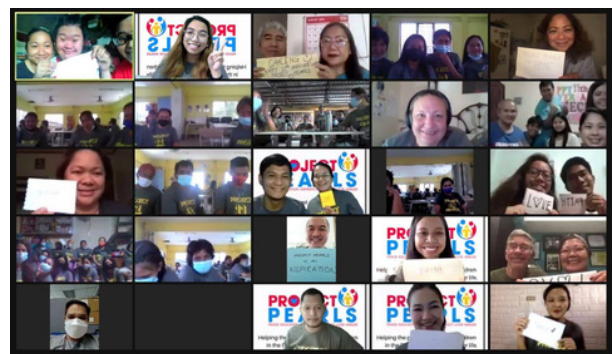
It has been eleven years since our Founder & Executive Director, Melissa Villa, together with her family and friends, first set foot in the slums of Ulingan in Tondo, Manila. The intention was simple: to help children through nutrition and education. It started with simple feeding program and later on, with more volunteers and sponsors coming in, we were able to establish learning programs such as After School Program and Brain Booster Program. We also built a Learning Center that housed our first batch of 42 preschool scholars. We also started a weekly feeding program for 200 to 300 children in the community.

Now, the number of scholars have grown to almost 700, from preschool to college. We are also serving more than 6,000 meals every week in our three communities in Tondo, Bulacan, and Cavite. In 2019, we created our livelihood and empowerment program for women – GROW or Giving Resources and Opportunities to Women. The number of children and families multiplied by the hundreds, and along with this, our programs, staff, and volunteers multiplied too. These milestones would not have been possible without the support of our Heroes from around the world – our volunteer, sponsors, donors, and partners. Happy 11th PEARLS Anniversary to all of us!





In celebration of our 11th year, we distributed hundreds of grocery packs in our communities in Tondo, Bulacan, and Cavite. We are thankful to the following partners and donors for making this celebration meaningful: **Philippines Business for Social Progress (PBSP), Give2Asia, RiceAid, Rise Against Hunger Philippines, RFM Corporation, Selecta Philippines, Ang-Hortaleza Foundation Inc., Ms. Ellen Go, and other donors.** We appreciate everyone for making sure that no one in our communities would go hungry amidst the pandemic.



Our volunteers, staff, partners, and community members also gathered virtually to celebrate this achievement together. Aside from sharing stories from the past eleven years, it was also a time to express gratitude and appreciation for all the support and love that we have received through the years. Thank you so much for supporting our mission of helping the poorest of the poor children and their families have a better life!



# ADOPT-A-FAMILY AND TOY DRIVE

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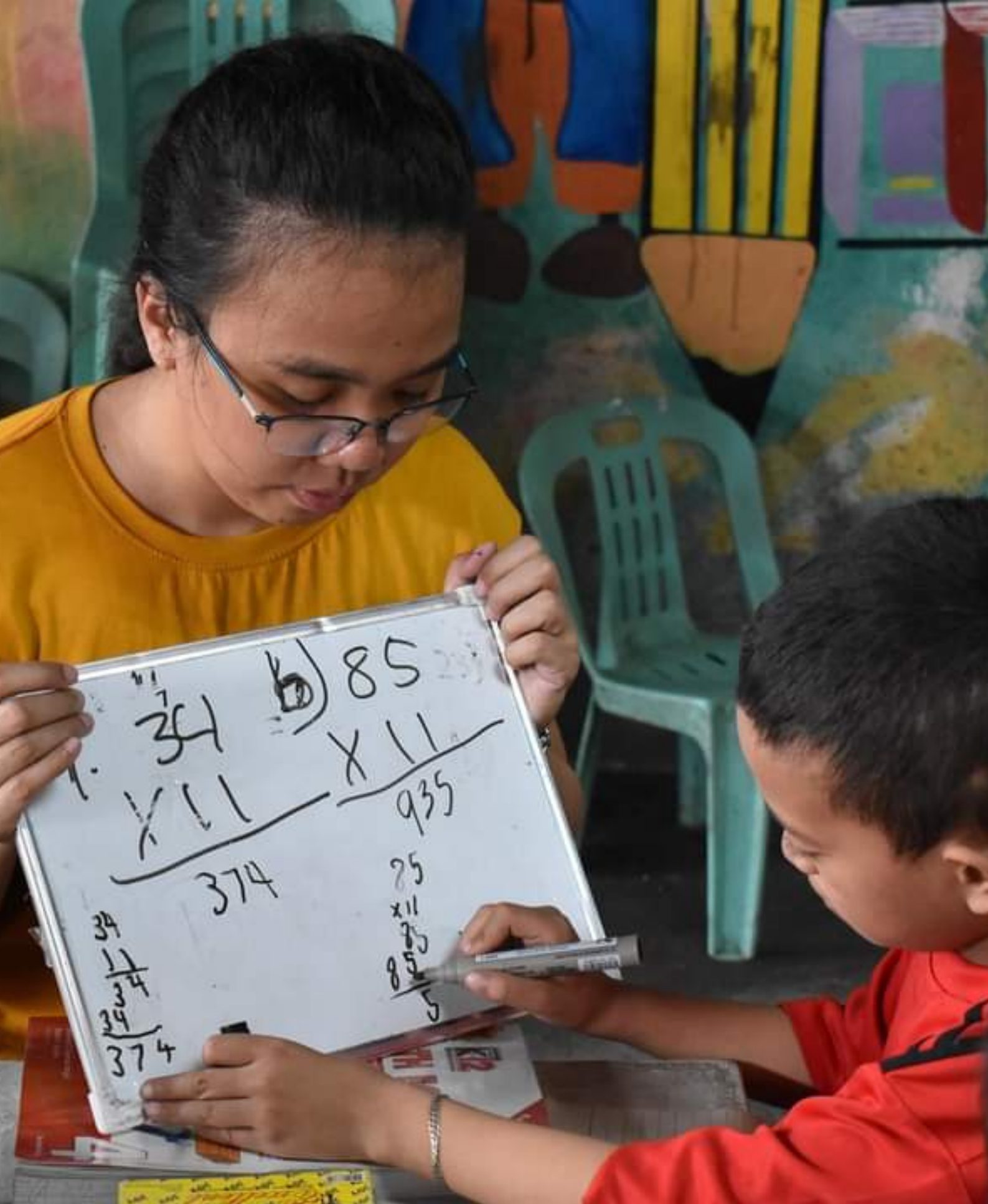


Christmas is one of the most-awaited and most wonderful times of the year. However, we recognize that it can also be a challenging, if not a sad time, for families living in poverty. Because of this, it has been our yearly tradition to spread love and joy every Christmas in underprivileged communities through our **Adopt-A-PEARLS-Family** and **Christmas Toy Drive** campaigns. This year, we are so grateful to our donors and partners for helping us reach our goal! We distributed 1,700 Noche Buena packs, 2,000 sets of face masks and alcohol, 1,500 grocery packs from our partner, Charity4Love, and over 4,300 gifts to children. These were distributed in Helping Land, Tondo; Bocaue and Pandi, Bulacan; Naic, Cavite; and Kabasalan, Zambonga Sibugay. We also reached out to children and families living on the streets of Manila by providing them with toys, sleeping mats, blankets, face masks, alcohol, and hot meals.

We are truly thankful to all our Adopt-A-Family and Toy Drive Heroes for making Christmas extra special and meaningful!







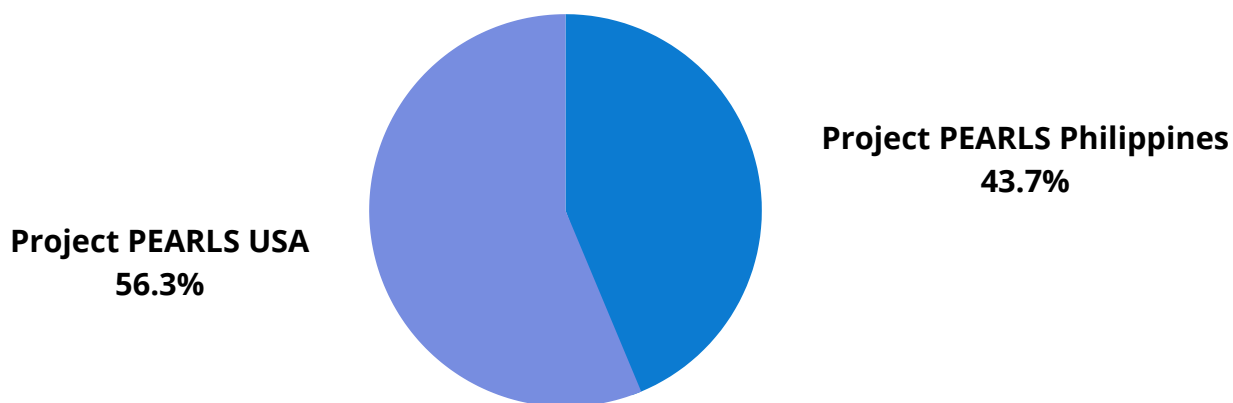
**THE YEAR IN NUMBERS**

# Financial Highlights

Total Donations = PHP 20,446,461.00

Philippines Local Donations:  
PHP 8,934,605.00

Transferred from  
Project PEARLS USA:  
PHP 11,511, 856.00



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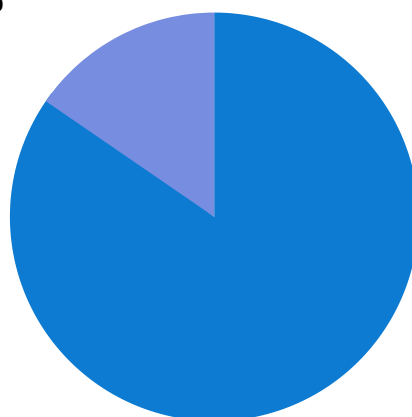
## PHILIPPINES Program Costs & Administrative Expenses

Program Expenses:  
PHP 15,322,301.00

Admin Expenses:  
PHP 2,794,252.00

TOTAL EXPENSES:  
PHP 18,126,552.00

Admin Expenses  
15.4%



Program Expenses  
84.6%





## OUR HEROES

**We are grateful to all the Education Champions, Hunger Warriors, and Life Changers who have supported our programs. Because of your generosity and compassion, we are changing the world - one child, one family at a time.**





[www.projectpearls.org](http://www.projectpearls.org)



Project PEARLS



@projectpearls



Project PEARLS



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Helping the poorest of the poor  
children in the Philippines to  
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