





The year 2021 was the second year under the reign of the Corona Virus, bringing the world as we knew it to a halt. Lockdowns and restrictions have affected us all, but none as much as our children. In the Philippines, all schools have been closed for nearly two (2) years now, depriving an entire generation of children proper academic and social development, while exposing them to heightened risk of abuse and exploitation. Studies from around the world have unveiled that the pandemic has unleashed an unprecedented surge in violence against children. Unfortunately, our experiences locally only support the veracity of those findings. The need for strategic interventions to protect children is acute.

For most organizations, 2021 was another year defined by compromise and limitations. This has not been the case for Stairway. The following pages exhibit how we have played a crucial role in promoting and protecting children's rights through collaboration, networking and direct services at a local, national and international level. Through our e-learning platform and extensive network of government and non-government partners, we have reached and educated hundreds of thousands of stakeholders on child protection, particularly, cyber-safety. Considering the position of most of the training participants, it is safe to expect an exponential multiplying effect, when they cascade the education on to children.

There is another crisis on the horizon that threatens the future security of our children. Like the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate crisis knows no borders and can only be resolved through international cooperation. However, the disconcerted global response to the pandemic, compiled with decades of climate inaction, offer little promise to our younger generation that sustainable change will come from the top. Nelson Mandela said that Education is the most powerful tool we can use to change the world. We share his conviction and, after eight (8) years of running a program for Environmental Awareness for Children and Youth (EACY) in our local community, we have a basis for optimism. The involvement and active participation of thousands of children and youth have created a momentum. Last year, we saw several new initiatives that are indicative of a community taking ownership of a cause and building a movement, which includes children and youth along with a growing number of concerned adults.

The pandemic has taught us valuable lessons. We understand that sustainable change has to come from a critical mass of informed people, which puts two (2) years' setback in education of a whole population of Filipino children into an even darker perspective. Children spend more time online and are exposed to a tidal wave of uncontested misinformation that disdains scientific evidence and creates fear and division. We have seen the detrimental effects of misinformation and fake news firsthand amongst the most marginalized members of our community. In response, we plan to address both the growing divide in education and the growing threat of disinformation through new initiatives, in the coming years.

Stairway is much more than a Foundation, Inc. It is a global community of actively concerned people, whose collective efforts have been manifested in change over more than 30 years. We need that community now, more than ever, to follow our human instinct and push for protection of our children to be the top priority in any government. Together we make a difference!

With love, respect and appreciation,

Lars C. Jorgensen
Executive Director

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List of Acronyms

ALS	Alternative Learning System
ATI	Agricultural Training Institute
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BCA	Barangay Children's Association
BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children
BEST	Baclayan Educators and Storytellers
BTS	Break the Silence
BTS NN	Break the Silence National Network
BCD	Bureau of Curriculum Development
BCDCI	Bakyas Community Development Center, Inc.
BLD	Bureau of Learning Delivery
BMI	Body Mass Index
BMZ	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation, Germany
CALABARZON	Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon
CAMANA	Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas
CAP	Community Assistance Program
CDCLAA	Certification Declaring a Child Legally Available for Adoption
CEED	Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development
CEOP	Child Exploitation and Online Protection
CHEC	Children Health Educational Center
CI	Curriculum and Instruction
CLA	Creative Learning Activities
COMSCA	Community Savings and Credit Association
COP	Child Online Protection
COSP	Child Online Safeguarding Policy
COT	Crown of Thorns
CPC	Child Protection Committee
CPN	Child Protection Network
CPP	Child Protection Policy
CREDe	Child Rights in Education Desk
CRN	Children's Rights Network
CRP	Child Rights Programming
CSAAW	Child Sexual Abuse Awareness Week
CSAEP	Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention
CSAP	Child Sexual Abuse Prevention
CSP	CyberSafe Schools Project
CWC SACSEC	Council for the Welfare of Children Sub-Committee against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children
DA	Department of Agriculture
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DEAR	Drop Everything and Read
DepEd	Department of Education

DICT	Department of Information and Communication Technology
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DPCR	Directorate for Policy Community Relations
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EACY	Environmental Awareness for Children and Youth
EAG	Environmental Awareness for Children and Youth Advocacy Group
EACYp EACYp	Environmental Awareness for Children and Youth Projects
EAI	Education Assistance Initiative
FDAI	Foundation for the Development of Agusanons, Inc.
FDS	Family Development Sessions
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHP	Family Home Program
GCQ	General Community Quarantine
GSTC	Global Sustainable Tourism Council
HOPE	Heal our Planet Earth
IACACP	Inter-Agency Council against Child Pornography
IACAT	Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking
ICT	Information, Communication, and Technology
IJM	International Justice Mission
IMMAP	Internet and Mobile Marketing Association of the Philippines
IP	Indigenous People
KAMADA	Kabataang Makadagat
KNH	Kindernothilfe
LAC	Learning Action Cell
LCPC	Local Council for the Protection of Children
LGU	Local Government Unit
LSP	Learning Service Provider
MAO	Municipal Agriculture Office
MCCPC	Malabon City Council for the Protection of Children
MCPC	Municipal Council for the Protection of Children
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MELC	Most Essential Learning Competencies
MENRO	Municipal Environment and Natural Resource Office
MIMAROPA	Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MRF	Material Recovery Facility
MSWDO	Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office
NCCPC	Navotas City Council for the Protection of Children
NCR	National Capital Region
NEAP	National Educators Academy of the Philippines
NPMO	National Project Management Office
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPTI	National Police Training Institute

OSAEC	Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children
ORMT	Oriental Mindoro Resource Monitoring Team
OSO	Operations Support Officer
Pantawid	Poverty Alleviation Program
PCR	Philippine Community Relations
PGSTC	Puerto Galera Sustainable Tourism
PPSC	Philippine Public Safety College
PNP	Philippine National Police
RBE	Rights Based Education
RPMO	Regional Project Management Office
RIACAT-VAWC	Regional Inter-agency against Child Trafficking-Violence against Women and Children
RJJWC	Regional Juvenile Justice Welfare Council
RSCWC	Regional Sub-Committee Council for the Welfare of Children
SAS	Sea Adventure School
SFI	Stairway Foundation, Inc.
SHARE	Self-Help Approach Rights-based Education, Inc
SIDPh	Safer Internet Day Philippines
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
SCCRDFI	Simon of Cyrene Children's Rehabilitation and Development Foundation Inc.
SLM	Self-Learning Modules
SEC	Security and Exchange Commission
SMS	Short Message Services
SM-ZOTO	Samahan ng Mamamayan - Zone One Tondo Organization
SSTDI	Society for Sustainable Tourism and Development Inc
SNMPG	Samahan ng Magsasaka ng Puerto Galera
SPED	Special Education
TOT	Training of Trainers
UDM	Universidad De Manila
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
VAC	Violence against Children
WCPC	Women and Children Protection Center
WCPD	Women and Children Protection Desks
WCPU	Women and Children Protection Units

National Capital Region Office

Introduction

Stairway Foundation, Inc. (SFI or Stairway) has been in a continuous process of consolidation, strengthening and expansion, both in terms of programs and organizational development. In 2021, we formally organized our office in the National Capital Region (NCR) of the Philippines. What we used to refer to as the “SFI Manila Extension Office” is now officially known as SFI National Capital Region Office (SFI NCR Office).

With growing networks, partnerships and collaborations with non-government organizations (NGOs), government agencies, academic institutions and religious groups throughout the country, we established the office in Manila in 2011 to make Stairway more accessible and to enhance coordination and collaboration with both existing and potential partners. The role of our NCR office has grown exponentially and, currently, it performs the following functions:

1. Coordinates NCR-based operations and activities of the organization;
2. Develops, implements and manages various child protection projects and other initiatives;
3. Serves as a technical resource in building the capacities of individuals, groups and organizations on child protection work;
4. Leads and/or supports the development of innovative approaches on child protection, including the establishment of new linkages and partnerships; and
5. Represents SFI in inter-agency councils/networks via meetings and partners’ gatherings relevant to the organization’s mission.

Ten years after its inception, our NCR Office has developed and implemented more than 10 externally funded short-term and medium term child protection projects and initiatives, which include our CyberSafety Campaign/Child Online Protection (COP), Child Protection Policy (CPP) Development and other child protection initiatives on nationwide and international scales.

The Human Resource has grown from one office-based full-time staff member to a team of more than 10 full-time staff members. Systems, processes and standards in organizational management and project implementation have been developed and practiced in collaboration with our main office in Mindoro.

In 2021 alone, we reached more than 480,000 children and adults with awareness raising sessions and trainings through our different child protection projects and initiatives with key partners.

Stairway's E-learning

We started developing our e-learning platform seven (7) years ago, “translating” advocacy and training materials developed over decades to an online platform. Pre-pandemic, the promotion and introduction to this innovative child protection resource were challenging, as we had anticipated. However, with the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing all face to face training, we experienced a fast growing interest and demand. The e-learning has played a crucial part in our capacity-building activities in the different projects we implement. It is the reason that neither quality nor scope of our work has been compromised during the past two (2) years of the pandemic.

The e-learning platform is a dynamic force that we keep on expanding and trimming. In 2021, we developed a number of new courses, customizing content for specific groups such as teachers, NGOs and their local police and social welfare partners, hospital-based Women and Children Protection Units (WCPUs), organizations in other countries, and a local government unit (LGU) for the development of their Child Protection Policy (CPP), which is another pioneering initiative in the sense of purpose as well as delivery methodology.

Around 2,000 professionals (teachers, social workers, NGO workers) completed full-blown trainings with building of certain skill sets and evaluation of learning outcomes of the participants. While these online trainings that earn the participants points in their professional development are still in their infancy, the overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants strongly support our intent to use the e-learning as a full training delivery modality. It has unique properties in terms of wide scaling and consistency of delivery. It is also extremely cost efficient with minimal human resource required, once the modules have been developed and thoroughly tested. As it eliminates the need for travel, it is the most environmentally and climate friendly approach to training, which has been another determining factor in our strategic planning towards optimization of e-learning in our child protection work.



Break the Silence Consolidation Project and CyberSafe Schools Project (CSP)

The Break the Silence Consolidation Project is another DANIDA supported project geared towards consolidating the Break the Silence National Network (BTSNN); strengthening the network's partnerships with government partners, its capacity for training and advocacy, and developing new training materials and methods.

The CSP is a Kindernothilfe (KNH)/BMZ (Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation, Germany) supported consortium project, initiated and led by Stairway to further advance institutionalization of child protection in schools, complementing the BTS Consolidation Project.

Break the Silence National Network (BTSNN)

The activities related to the BTS National Network (BTSNN) have been challenged by the pandemic, but in close collaboration with the network's board and members, we continued to carry on with adaptations and adjustments to the new normal. Covering 13 of the country's 17 regions, the number of member organizations stands at 45, including 10 new members.

On February 9 to 11, 2021, the BTSNN held its 3rd Annual Conference entitled BUKLOD, TUGON, SIGAW: Child Protection During and Beyond the Pandemic. Among the guest speakers were the Philippine Vice-President Leni Robredo; Grete Sillasen, Ambassador of Denmark to the Philippines; Daniel Pruce, Ambassador of the United Kingdom in the Philippines; Patricia Bienvenuti, Child Protection Unit Chief of UNICEF Philippines; Lars Jorgensen, Executive Director of Stairway Foundation; Marie Stella Echano, Country Coordinator of Kindernothilfe Philippines; and Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez, Chairperson of the House Committee on the Welfare of Children of the Philippine Congress. ([Video message of Philippines Vice-President Leni Robredo](#))

Resource persons during the conference were Toni Flores, Child Rights Network (CRN) Coordinator; Ma. Erlinda Aguila, Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC); Atty. Samson Inocencio Jr., National Director of International Justice Mission (IJM) Philippines; Mary Grace Esteban, Program and Operations Manager, Stairway Foundation and BTSNN Managing Board Member; Edna Gado, Counselor and Case Management Officer from Talikala, Inc.; Mika Mendoza, Provincial Board Member from the Province of Ilocos Sur; Maria Isabelle Climaco-Salazar, Mayor of Zamboanga City; and Atty. Gil Aquino, Child Rights Senior Officer from the Department of Education.

It was the first virtual annual conference held by the network participated in by all its members. The annual conference is held early February of each year in line with the national observance of Safer Internet Day (SID) and the Child Sexual Abuse Awareness Week (CSAAW). As the line of speakers and resource persons suggests, it has become a highly recognized and well-attended event, which influences the national agenda on child protection.

A great number of activities and initiatives took place throughout the year as part of the consolidation and expansion process.

Partnership with Government Agencies

The engagements with key government agencies are essential in mainstreaming child sexual abuse and exploitation prevention in relevant institutional and sustainable mechanisms. With the government preoccupied with the COVID-19 pandemic response, it gives less priority to child protection issues. The pandemic is a health issue, but it has brought along new child protection concerns that push us to adapt our activities and strategies.

Partnership with the Philippine National Police (PNP)

Stairway has had a long history of collaboration with the Philippine National Police (PNP), specifically on capacitating police recruits/trainees on child sexual abuse prevention. However, with the constant change in leadership in the PNP, it has been challenging to establish continuity in our collaboration. For several years, we trained up to 10,000 police recruits annually, visiting every single training school in all 17 regions of the country. This took a serious toll on our human resources. It became evident that we needed to change strategy to institutionalize child protection into the Police Training Curriculum and make our intervention sustainable.

In 2021, we worked with personnel from three (3) different PNP units: the Women and Children Protection Center (WCPC), the Police National Training Institute (PNTI), and the Directorate for Police Community Relations (DPCR). Our focus has been on maximum utilization of our e-learning in our continued collaboration, and we are currently finalizing a Memorandum of Agreement on such collaboration, which is targeted to be launched in time for the National Safer Internet Day (SID) 2022 and the National Child Sexual Abuse Awareness (CSAAW) Week 2022.

One of the few face to face activities in 2021 was handing over the last batch of anatomical dolls to the PNP Women and Children Protection Center (WCPC), received by its chief, PB General Alessandro Abella and his staff. Over the past years, we have donated hundreds of these anatomical dolls, tailor-made by IKEA specifically for Stairway. As shared by the WCPD personnel, the anatomical dolls have been very effective tools during investigation on child sexual abuse and exploitation cases. They make it easier for children to narrate their stories and disclose more details about the abuse that they experienced.

Partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)

For the past few years, Stairway has had a productive partnership with the DSWD via its Poverty Alleviation Program (Pantawid), leading to successes like the integration of Child Sexual Abuse Prevention (CSAP) in its Family Development Session (FDS) Modules. The FDS educate and capacitate parent and youth beneficiaries on different family and social issues, including child sexual abuse prevention. Attending the FDS sessions is a condition for the millions of beneficiaries to qualify for their cash transfer.

We are currently working to also include CyberSafety into the FDS Modules, and we have been able to successfully lobby for the establishment of a Case Management System specifically for the Pantawid program. For more details ([link DSWD partnership](#))

Partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd)

Under the Break the Silence (BTS) Consolidation Project, the partnership with the Department of Education (DepEd) aims to increase child protection among students and schools. The DepEd, being one of Stairway's main partners, and Stairway explored multiple strategies to maximize the promotion of child protection within the school community. The aim is to ensure that child protection programs and standards are mainstreamed into the DepEd's existing mandates. In the process, we have worked directly with four (4) main units/bureaus, within the context of the BTS Consolidation Project and the CyberSafe Schools Project (CSP).

The Child Rights in Education Desk (CREDe)

The CREDe was created recently in order to ensure that the DepEd adopts a Child Rights Framework in basic education. Stairway has supported the initiative in several aspects, and we are currently discussing ideas on how to set up a DepEd Rights Based Education (RBE) course on Stairway's e-learning platform, utilizing one of our existing courses; ["I am a Child"](#).

The Child Protection Unit (CPU)

The DepEd CPU is also a newly created unit to ensure that child protection mandates are implemented effectively at all governance levels – from the central office down to the school level. Stairway and the CPU have agreed to work together in the areas of advocacy, capacity building and policy development. We have already formulated a “rolling plan” of initiatives under the said areas of collaboration and presented it to the DepEd CPU.

The last initiative in 2021 was Stairway facilitating a planning session with DepEd CPU in coming up with two (2) important internal documents/tools for the CPU – 1) A Child Protection Committee Functionality Assessment Tool, and 2) An Advocacy and Communications Plan for the DepEd CPU.

Historically, our partnership with the DepEd has focused on programmatic concerns, such as learning resource development and capacity building of personnel. However, in 2021, our engagement with the department on the area of policy lobbying was signified, as the DepEd agreed to start the process of finalizing its online [safeguarding policy for schools](#). This is an initiative that Stairway has lobbied for over the past few years.

We utilized our e-learning platform in capacity development of school-based child protection committees (CPCs). Gaps have been identified in terms of functionality of the CPCs and, to address this, we have started discussions and planning with the DepEd CPU for development and implementation of a training program specifically designed for CPCs. The program shall be carried out via Stairway's e-learning platform in order to maximize coverage and ensure consistent quality of content delivery. The initial development of training concept and design already started during the last quarter of 2021 and is aimed to be completed and implemented within 2022.

The National Educators Academy of the Philippines (NEAP)

In 2020, Stairway was granted an official status as a Learning Service Provider (LSP) for the DepEd. This was a significant step towards institutionalization of our child protection training programs for educators.

We have so far set up two (2) child protection courses for educators on our e-learning platform – Child Sexual Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and Child Online Protection (COP). The courses were piloted in 43 schools in four (4) regions, and covered 1,300 teachers through a 6-week training period, all done asynchronously. There were numerous challenges and adjustments made underway, but the results of the training were very promising. Here are some comments from the teachers after completing the training (quoted as is):

“Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to have this Child Protection e-learning training program. It serves as an eye opener for me as a teacher and as a mother at the same on how to handle this kind of situation if ever this things happen to my learner or in my own child. Very helpful and comprehensive training I’ve ever encounter. Thank you po so much Stairway Foundation. Salute po”

– teacher from NCR.

“The Child Protection E-Learning Training Program is an essential course to be undertaken in this day and time, especially since there has been a spike in the number of child abuse cases since the pandemic, isolating children with family members that are sexual offenders. It’s a program that must be given to learners as well for them to be fully aware of their rights and also to give them vital information that may just save themselves from potential dangers.”

- teacher from CALABARZON.

“This e-learning training program has taught me many things on child protection policy. The videos were an eye opener of the sad situation of our children, which is often taken for granted. Thank you very much Stairway Foundation for this opportunity.”

– teacher from Region 6.

With the promising results of the piloting of these courses, we are now in a better position to wide-scale the training program.

Curriculum and Instruction

Another significant development in 2021 was the establishment of a working relationship with the Curriculum and Instruction (CI) strand of the DepEd. Without the specific learning competencies identified, it is challenging to identify the specific curriculum competencies in relation to child protection in the current K-12 curriculum. Through our collaboration with the CI office, we move closer to child protection integration in the K-12 curriculum in the country.

Break the Silence CAMANA Project

with Samahan ng Mamamayan Zone One Tondo, Inc. (SM-ZOTO)

In March 2021, we concluded a 3-year child protection project supported by the British Embassy in Manila. Working in collaboration with the country's largest community outreach organization (SM-ZOTO) following a bottom-up development strategy, the project intensified child protection initiatives in three (3) cities in Metro Manila, namely, Caloocan, Malabon and Navotas, with a total population of approximately 2.5 million people.

We conducted an internal project assessment in January 2021, which captured the effectiveness of BTS sessions in influencing positive changes on the knowledge, practices, behaviors and attitude of recipients of sessions, including LGU partners, ZOTO partners, youth facilitators, core groups of children, ZOTO leaders, community adults and community children.

Based on the information gathered from the different groups, the project has resulted in positive changes, as observed in practices adopted in line with protective behaviors; increased community awareness on CSAP and CyberSafe, and a positive influence on attitudes and perceptions surrounding child sexual abuse and exploitation prevention and response. Satisfaction in the implementation is also manifested by the recommendation to continue the current initiatives of the Break the Silence (BTS) campaign.

Banking on the lessons learned and the positive results of the assessment, the project leans toward sustaining project gains and achievements together with the partners. Internally, Stairway already has mechanisms and complementary initiatives in CAMANA to intensify the BTS Campaign in the area even after the BTS CAMANA Project ends. These include SM-ZOTO's membership in the BTS National Network (BTSNN), the inception of the CyberSafe Schools Project with school partners' as part of the target groups and representation in the LCPCs.

Global Program on “Stopping Cybercrime against Children: More Safety and Protection on the Internet”

The Global Program is another consortium project supported by KNH Germany and BMZ, in which we work with two (2) NGOs from Indonesia and Nepal, respectively, as co-implementers. Stairway and the two other (2) NGOs have specific country goals which, combined, shall lead to a global impact in terms of child protection.

For the Philippines, the over-all goal is the improvement of child protection systems at the national and local levels through strengthened capacities of child protection institutions, namely, the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Philippine National Police (PNP), the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

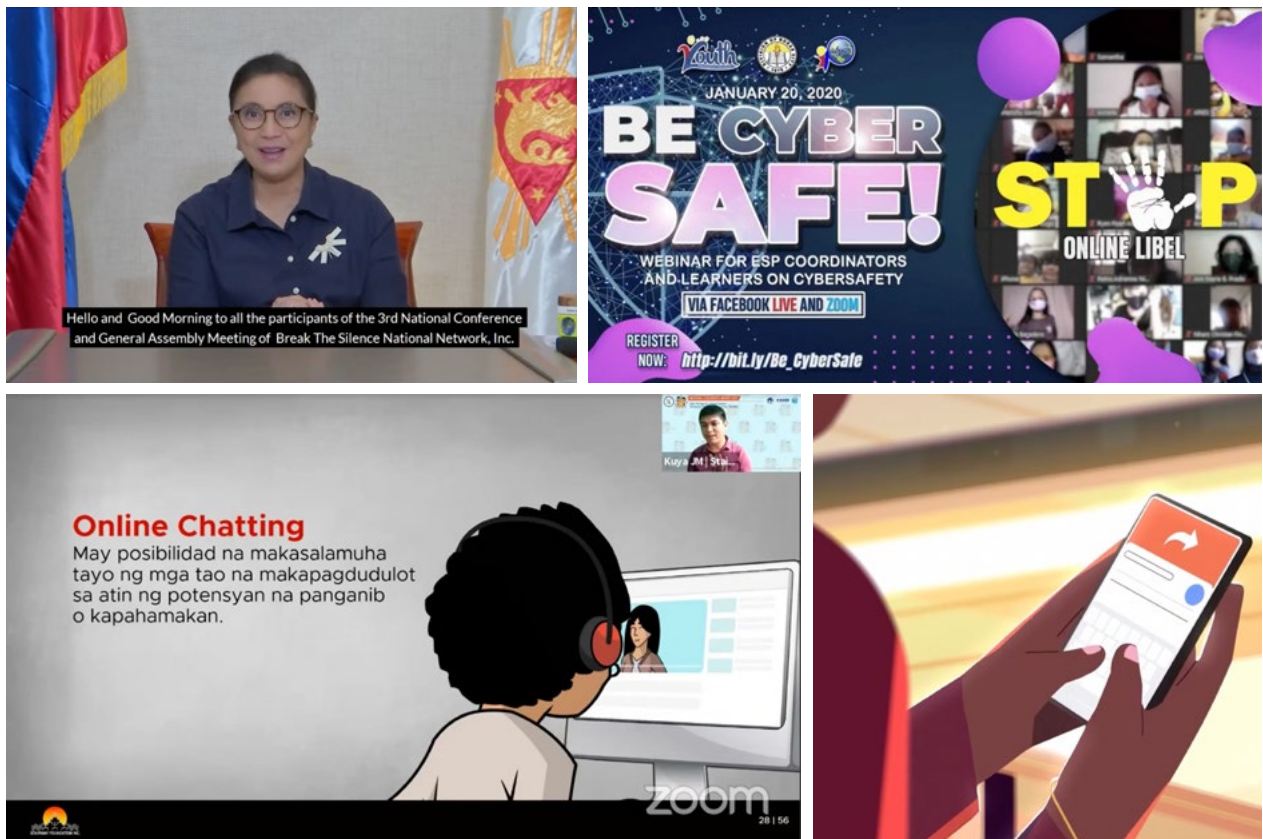
A key component of the Global Program is the usage of Stairway's e-learning as the main tool in implementing the capacity-building component in all the three (3) implementing countries. Our e-learning courses will be translated and localized to the contexts of our co-implementers in Indonesia and Nepal. Stairway also enters the arena of national legislative policy lobbying, aiming to raise awareness of policy makers to inspire the drafting of legislation for establishment of a registry for child sex offenders.

This program builds on our goals of further consolidation and expansion of our previous and existing initiatives focusing on child online protection, like capacity development of stakeholders, institutionalization of child protection agenda in key government organizations and, ultimately, empowering children and communities for the prevention of child abuse, online as well as offline.

Other 2021 initiatives relevant to the Global Program include the following:

- We intensified our collaboration with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in more contexts and projects. One of the main platforms for advocacy and awareness raising is the Safer Internet Day Philippines (SIDPh) celebration, a national annual event taking place every second Tuesday of February. Stairway supported SIDPh 2021 via the launching of the DICT's Child Online Safeguarding Policy (COSP). The COSP aims to set child safeguarding standards for the Philippines' free public Wifi access project. The COSP was developed with the support of Stairway together with other members of the Inter-agency Council against Child Pornography (IACACP).
- We are currently finalizing a concrete partnership agreement, which will enable us to share our e-learning courses on CyberSafety on DICT's own Learning Management System. The partnership shall also involve technical cooperation between Stairway and DICT in the continued development of resources on CyberSafety. With the DICT being one of the main government agencies mandated to promote the online protection of children in the country, this partnership supports Stairway's position as an innovator in the field of child protection in the Philippines.
- One of the main activities with our private industry partner Facebook Philippines in 2021 was joining the public awareness campaign called "Report it, Don't Share it." This campaign focuses on non-malicious sharing of child sexual abuse materials in social media. The awareness campaign generated 41,000 views from the general public and was participated in by the Child Rights Network (CRN), Inter-agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) and the Inter Agency Council against Child Pornography ([IACACP](#)).
- For three (3) straight years, Stairway was once again invited to participate in the Facebook WeThink Digital Asia Pacific Summit, wherein Civil Society Organizations and Government Representatives across the region engage in discussions on issues of digital literacy and Cyber Safety.
- As a means to further help the Department of Education (DepEd) create safe spaces online for its learners, Stairway and Facebook started a collaborative project in 2021 called "Facebook Safety Guide for Schools." Seeing that the main platform being used by schools right now in communicating with learners is Facebook, and understanding the risks involved, we proposed to Facebook that a Safety Guide for Schools should be elaborated for school personnel who use the platform as a communications medium with their learners. The draft content outline for the Safety Guide is currently under review by the DepEd.

- Converge is one of the major internet service providers in the country. In 2021, the company contacted Stairway to explore how to engage in the field of CyberSafety. After several discussions, both parties agreed to focus initial efforts in producing public awareness campaigns on CyberSafety, with Stairway providing technical assistance in the development of the campaign content. The campaign is planned to be launched in 2022.
- Stairway also participated in several national legislative lobbying activities in 2021 via the Break the Silence National Network (BTSNN) and as a resource organization in congressional and senate hearings for draft legislations on the following: Anti-Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children, Child Online Protection, Updated Anti-trafficking in Persons Act and Anti-bullying Act. BTSNN is a regular member of the Child Rights Network (CRN), the largest alliance of organizations doing national legislative advocacy.



Other Initiatives, Engagements and Highlights

Capacity-building Program Partnership with Kindernothilfe (KNH) Germany

Since 2012, Stairway has collaborated with KNH Germany in the development and conduct of its child protection capacity-building program for its partners worldwide. In 2021, we were supposed to have commenced face to face child protection trainings in Sri Lanka and Kenya that were postponed from 2020. However, because of the continuing pandemic, we decided to conduct all of the trainings online. Stairway took the lead in the development and conduct of one of the new training programs – CyberSafety – utilizing existing interactive courses on CyberSafety, as well as our experiences from setting up e-learning courses in the Philippines.

We set up a blended e-learning course in the KNH e-learning Platform and conducted three (3) batches of pilot trainings covering 10 organizations from Sri Lanka and eight (8) organizations from Kenya. The participants appreciated the quality of the courses, emphasizing the high level of interactivity and thoroughness of content.

With such positive responses from the pilot batches from Sri Lanka and Kenya, discussions are on the way for expanding the training to India for 2022. The experience has shown the universality and quality of our e-learning courses.

Partnership with the Child Protection Network (CPN)

In early 2020, before the onset of the pandemic, Stairway entered into a partnership with the Child Protection Network (CPN) for the elaboration of Child Protection Policies for Hospital Based Women and Child Protection Units (WCPUs), and for the local government of Valenzuela City. With the pandemic hitting in March of 2020, the project shifted to online delivery for the trainings and consultations, which was done successfully via our e-learning platform. In 2021, the second phase of the partnership commenced – the development of a child protection policy for the Local Government Unit (LGU) of Valenzuela City in the National Capital Region (NCR).

The first of its kind in the Philippines, Stairway guided the LGU of Valenzuela City in crafting its own Child Protection Policy (CPP). Designing a blended online approach, utilizing our e-learning platform for asynchronous sessions and supplementing with synchronous online sessions (e.g., webinars), we conducted a participatory process of CPP development with personnel of the Valenzuela City LGU to come up with a draft CPP. In December of 2021, the draft CPP was transmitted to the LGU, wherein it will start the ratification process in 2022.

Another significant aspect of the project is setting up a self-directed e-learning course on “CPP Development for LGUs.” The course shall be hosted on Stairway’s e-learning platform and shall offer free access to interested LGUs for their CPP development. The target is to launch this course by early 2022.

Advocacy and Awareness Raising Sessions Upon Request

Aside from the sessions done as part of specific project activities, we continue to provide advocacy and awareness raising sessions to a variety of groups upon request. Below is a list of sessions conducted in 2021, many with links:

- Talikala, Inc. OSAEC Webinar attended by 100 adult participants;
- Food for the Hungry Philippines BTS Orientation for Teachers in Malabon and Navotas Areas;
- Virlanie Foundation, Inc. Blended CyberSafety Session for Children;
- Talikala, Inc.; OSAEC Summit, November 29 with 500 views [LINK](#);
- SOS Village Philippines CyberSafety Session for SOS Mothers;
- International Youth Peace Group's (IYPG) Pa-TALK: Empowering the Youth against Cyberbullying;
- ASMAE Philippines' Online Youth Forum on Internet Safety;
- Assists and Testra Foundation, Stem Up Digital Citizenship Boot Camp;
- UP PGH Talk on Cyberbullying attended by 80 doctors;
- Ateneo Association for Communications Technology Management (ACTM) – CyberSafety Session attended by 100 university students;
- APEX Manila's Parents Webinar via Google Meet;
- SEAMEO Innotech's Podcast on CyberSafety; 453 streams [LINK](#);
- National Council on Disability Affairs' (NCDA) Child Protection Webinar; with more than 1,300 participants and viewers [LINK](#);
- My Children's House of Hope Philippines, Talking Hands: Break the Silence Session, September 2, 2021; 52 adults, advocates and partners from the community and LGU;
- Children International Manila, Webinar of CyberSafety for Volunteer Area Leaders, 4 Batches with 265 total parents attended;
- DSWD Regional Field Office 2 CyberSafety Session, 80 children and parents participated;
- DOST Region 2 CyberSafety Session: Effects of Cyberbullying, Misinformation, and Online Sexual Abuse to Students;
- RSCWC- MIMAROPA National Children's Month Celebration 2021: Cyberbullying and its effects to Children's Mental Health, November 12, 2021; More than 1,300 view/watched on Facebook live streamed, [LINK](#); and
- CyberGuardians PH Youth Summit, CyberSafety Session, 500 youth participants.

With the shift to e-learning as our main training platform, we have also been receiving invitations from various DepEd offices for the provision of synchronous child protection advocacy and awareness raising sessions. These sessions are basic delivery of information and, for 2021, we reached out to the following DepEd offices:

- DepEd Roxas City, Region VI; Be Cybersafe! Webinar for ESP Coordinators and Learners on Cybersafety, January 20, 2021; 3,530 mixed group of children and adult attended (Zoom Participants: 30 ESP Teachers/Coordinators and Youth Leaders Facebook Upload: 3500 views as of 03 Jan 2022) [LINK](#);

- DepEd Lucena City, Region IV-A Calabarzon; CyberSafety Webinar, February 4, 2021; participated by 80 school heads and personnel;
- CyberSafety Orientation for Safer Internet Day Philippines, National Capital Region; February 9 and 15, 2021; More than 13,338 Children and Youth/Learners/ Individuals participated: Conducted 2 sessions | CyberSafe for Elem: 4,391; CyberSafe for HS: 8,947 FB Analytics: [LINK](#);
- DepEd Adolescent Health Series; Episode 3: National Webinar Series: CyberSafety, live streamed via DepEd FB page with more than 60,000 views [LINK](#);
- Cristo Rey High School, Capas Tarlac, Region III; CyberSafe Session, April 12, 2021; reached 422 Learners and Teachers: 72 attendees- Zoom; 350 attendees- FB [LINK](#);
- DepEd Region IV-A Calabarzon; Training-Workshop for Online Safety for Children and Positive Discipline (POSDI), May 19-21, 2021; DAY 1- 88,109 (mixed group); Day 2- 83,061 (mixed group) [FB link: Day 1](#)
- [FB link: Day 2](#)
- [YT link Day 1](#)
- [YT link Day 2](#)
- DepEd Tanauan City, Region IV-A Calabarzon; Child Protection Summit with more than 1,600 views on facebook [LINK](#)
- La Paz Elementary School, Makati City, National Capital Region; In-Service Training (INSET): Promoting Online and Cyber Safety in the Virtual Teaching and Learning Processes, September 8, 2021; attended by 71 Teaching Personnel;
- Macario B. Asistio Sr. High School (MBASH - Main), National Capital Region; Cyber-Safety Brigada Eskwela Session, September 2021, with more than 200 participants
- DepEd Las Pinas, National Capital Region; CyberSafety Webinar; October 2021, 150 Guidance Advocates participated;
- DepEd Mandaluyong, National Capital Region; CyberSafety Webinar; November 2021, 300 participants (School heads and teachers);
- DepEd Cavite Province, Region IV-A Calabarzon; CyberSafety Webinar; November 2021, 150 participants (School heads and teachers);
- DepEd Tanauan, Region IV-A Calabarzon; Ang Makabata VODcast on Online Risks and Harms, November 2021, received more than 6,700 views [LINK](#);
- DepEd General Trias Cavite, Region IV-A Calabarzon; CyberSafety and CSAP Session; 250 participants (School heads and teachers);
- St. Bridget College HS Department, Batangas, Region IV-A Calabarzon; CyberSafe Session; December 10, 2021 attended by 788 Children and Youth/Learners (241 Zoom; 547 FB Live stream) [LINK](#); and
- Pulo National High School, Cabuyao, Laguna, Region IV-A Calabarzon, In-Service Training, December 16, 2021, participated by 130 teaching personnel.

Participation in Inter-agency Councils/Networks and Other Relevant Engagements

Stairway continues to be an active member of the following local, regional, national and international inter-agency councils and networks:

- We Protect Global Alliance;
- Inter-agency Council Against Child Pornography (IACACP);
- Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) Sub-Committee against Sexual Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (SACSEC);
- National Council for Social Development (NCSD);
- Child Rights Network (CRN) through the BTS National Network;
- Regional Sub-Committee on the Welfare of Children (RSCWC) MIMAROPA;
- Regional Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking-Violence Against Women and Children (RIACAT-VAWC) MIMAROPA;
- Regional Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (RJJWC) MIMAROPA;
- Regional Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (RJJWC) NCR;
- ABSNET West Cluster;
- Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCPCs) – Caloocan City;
- Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCPCs) – Malabon City;
- Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCPCs) – Navotas City; and
- Local Councils for the Protection of Children (LCPCs) – Silang Municipality.

Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography (IACACP)

Stairway is a long time NGO representative in IACACP and continues to contribute to its various activities and initiatives. During the celebration of the National Children's Month (November), Stairway was a resource speaker for a CyberSafety event for 150 employees from the DSWD Central Office.

One of the mandates of IACACP is provision of capacity-building training on child online protection for local duty bearers, such as social workers and police officers. Stairway is a member of the advocacy sub-committee tasked to implement such programs. In line with our thrust to maximize the usage of our e-learning platform, we proposed to the IACACP to help develop an e-learning course on handling OSAEC cases (online sexual abuse and exploitation of children), delivered via the Stairway e-learning platform. The council has approved the proposal, and we have started development of the course. It will be built upon existing courses ("A Good Boy" and "Red Leaves Falling"), but it will include video lessons from the various agency members of the IACACP. The IACACP e-learning course is targeted to be launched in time for SIDPh 2022. This collaboration will also feed into the implementation of our Global Program later on.

Stairway was also tapped by Save the Children Philippines as part of its Advisory Board for the development of an OSAEC (online sexual abuse and exploitation of children) vulnerability assessment tool.

We continue to sustain our active participation and explore other relevant partnerships within the IACACP.

Family Home Program

During periods of extended lockdowns with frequent power failure and shortage of fresh food, the children in our family home program (FHP) benefitted from our self-reliance in terms of self-generated solar power and a constant supply of fresh organic fruits and vegetables from our farm in the mountains. All of the 13 boys extended their stay in the program, making them the small exception of children who benefit from the pandemic. Before joining Stairway, luck was rarely in their corner, so it is a well-deserved turn in their fortune, which they have all used to the max.

Alternative Home Life

All the boys have shown impressive continued improvement in their physical, emotional, social and intellectual development throughout their second year under the program. They display positivity and confidence in their attitude. Everybody complies with the safety protocols regarding the pandemic and stays healthy and active. We continue to provide a healthy and balanced plant-based diet appropriate for child-growing age, which is clearly manifested in the boys' physical development. None of them have had any health issues, and all have received complete vaccination against COVID-19.



Child	Height (cm)			Weight (kg)		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
A	140	150	157	30	39	42
B	162	168	172	50	60	63
C	147	160	164	38	42	49
D	132	145	152	29	40	51
E	157	161	164	41	49	51
F	144	155	160	34	43	50
G	135	142	147	32	40	43
H	137	149	155	29	40	47
I	164	165	169	46	55	57
J	152	163	169	35	49	52
K	147	157	164	38	47	53
L	143	151	157	39	46	53
M	156	159	164	42	49	57

Health and weight development
progress from 2019 to 2021



Recently, three (3) of the children were reunited with their families after two (2), three (3), and six (6) years of separation, respectively. We appealed for assistance from the local offices of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in their respective home areas to assess the families' parental capabilities and have family care sessions before the reunifications. In cases of family reunification, this is a standard operational procedure to secure the child's welfare and establish a healthy relationship between the child and the family. The three (3) children are currently enrolled in their local schools, under the Blended Learning Module of the Department of Education (DepEd), and the local social welfare workers are continuously monitoring them.

Out of the 13 boys admitted in 2019, only five (5) had birth certificates. It is a complicated process to acquire a legal identity of a child, as he can only provide limited information about himself and his family. Majority of children referred to Stairway come with no available records from the referring agency. For this batch, the process of securing their legal identity was further complicated by the pandemic. Despite the challenges, all except one (1) of the children now have documents to state their identities. , It is their right. The documents of the last child are still in process.

A step beyond a birth certificate is the Certification Declaring a Child Legally Available for Adoption (CDCLAA), which ensures equal protection under Philippine child welfare laws. Obtaining a CDCLAA for a child is a tedious and bureaucratic process. To date, six (6) of the 13 children in our Family Home Program (FHP) have received their CDCLAA, and the others are in process. In 2021, Stairway received a certificate of recognition from the DSWD regional office for the highest issuance of CDCLAA among any child care organization in the region.



After six years of separation, mother and son were reunited. Social network platforms do some good in the process of finding long lost relatives.

Education and Livelihood

All schools in the country are still under lockdown. We enrolled 10 children in the DepEd's Blended Learning Module for 2021-2022. They all engage independently in their modules with the supervision of the resident teacher and, aside from the modular classes, they continue with their regular Stairway classes and activities. They have a packed schedule with a huge variety of activities, including reading books, math, computer and digital literacy, baking, theater, dance, music, arts, sports, and livelihood. They constantly have access to computers, tablets, a well-equipped library and teaching staff.

A highlight in their creative activities over the year was a shadow puppet theatre production about Greek mythology. They created every single aspect of the production and had the pleasure to present their work in front of all Stairway staff members. The production lasted for a few months and, since then, they have all taken a strong interest in Greek mythology. Many are reading book series, including Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Heroes of Olympus, and Kane Chronicles. They are also reading Roald Dahl's books, Geronimo Stilton, Thea Stilton, Goosebumps, and the Harry Potter series. Reading and reporting on books is part of the weekly routine. Their computer skills also continue to improve, as they confidently use MS Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel), Cloud, and Adobe Photoshop.



Boys in a creative developmental process.



In the livelihood sessions, the boys produce organic shampoo and soap, bread and pastries, and various handicrafts with minimal supervision by the facilitator. During weekends, they cook with the guidance of our house parents. Their interest and skills in gardening are continuously stimulated and enhanced through weekly gardening activities inside the center and through Baclayan farm immersion. We have a new colleague, who is a teacher and an agriculturist. She offers mentorship once or twice a week at the farm in Baclayan, and the results are truly impressive. The boys have developed some serious gardens and produce a vast variety of vegetables. They also produce their own seeds and seedlings, exchange plants and plant materials, and advise and support one another. At least one (1) of the boys aspires to become an agriculturist.

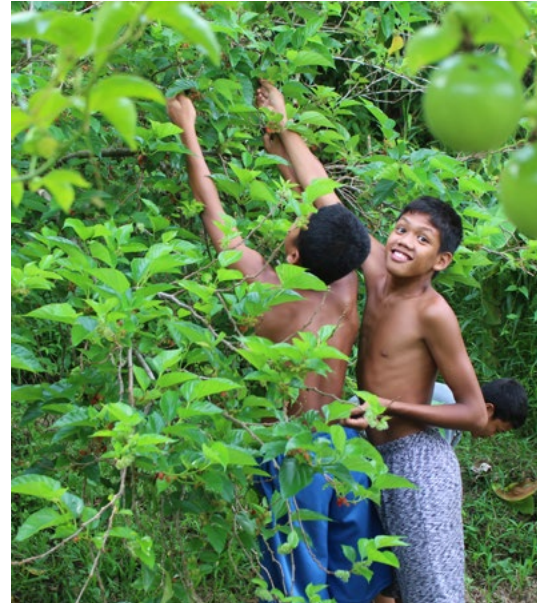
Under the guidance and coaching of their housefather, the boys compose and record songs based on their personal experiences about family, street life, abuse, neglect and education. With the assistance of friends and volunteers from abroad, Stairway aims to develop a sound studio, which can take this particular creative aspect of our program to a higher level.

As a New Year reflection, we asked the boys what Stairway means to them. This quote from one of boys, 15 years old, seems indicative of the general sentiment shared by the group:

“Stairway is like a home and a heart that opened several doors of opportunity for my development that I never expected to gain, especially when I was on the streets.”



Conclusion of the 2021 Stairway Chess Tournament Finals. The tournament ran for several weeks and included staff and children.



Stairway kids learn about organic farming during weekly sessions at the Baclayan farm.

Community Assistance Program

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected the local population in Puerto Galera, where Stairway is based, especially the beneficiaries of our Community Assistance Program (CAP), who fall under the disadvantaged and marginalized sectors. After nearly two (2) years with schools closed and, more or less, strict community lockdown, we now see the indications of the negative psychological effect the isolation has had on mostly older children/teenagers. Many are deeply frustrated and start to ignore their parents' guidelines and leave home without permission. The parents do not know how to deal with their children's rebellion and, over the past year, we have dealt with more cases of parent-child conflict than ever before.

The pandemic has taught us the importance of resiliency and self-reliance, further prompting a transition plan in our work with the Baclayan indigenous community. With enhanced focus on socio-economic interventions, we are in the second year of a five-year phase-out period for the feeding program. Over the coming years, we hope to further contribute to developing an active community that will work towards self-reliance and sustainability.

In 2021, we focused more on livelihood and social enterprise projects, initially aiming at the beneficiaries of the Educational Assistance Initiative (EAI). As we assist families in Puerto Galera, under the EAI, to achieve economic sufficiency and social adequacy, they will no longer need financial assistance to support their children's education. This means that the number of beneficiaries of the EAI will gradually decrease. Currently, the EAI caters to 604 students from elementary to college level.



The Baclayan Community Development Initiative is in its second year of transition.

The implementation of our Child Protection Project with the local government unit (LGU) has been somehow delayed and modified because of the pandemic. However, we continue to find ways to reach the mandated institutions and conduct consultations and capacity building sessions. In response to the increased risk of child abuse during the pandemic, we expanded the target group of the project to include the Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPC) in 13 barangays. The project aims to improve the functionality of existing institutions to respond to child protection concerns in the local community, as mandated by law. Advocacy efforts will be enhanced at the local level through networking, partnership, information, education and campaigns to achieve a clear child protection agenda. The project is a five-year partnership, which started in January 2020 and runs until December 2024.

Baclayan Community Development

After more than 11 years of working with the Baclayan community people, we are now in a transition process that is designed to inspire, stimulate and support development towards self-reliance. Community organizing and establishment of groups and associations is part of a strategy to support development and provide the community members with a sense of ownership of the process.

Community Organizing

Through community organizing, we have established a parent leaders' group and two (2) groups of children to ensure their representation in formal procedures of planning, implementing and evaluating. The four-member parent leaders' group performs an active role in the Baclayan Food Security Association as well as in the health and education component of the Baclayan Community Development Program. The parent leaders' group co-facilitates reproductive health awareness sessions, sessions for determining body mass index (BMI), and creative learning activities (CLA). The group also represents the parent sector in the stakeholders' meetings about the 5-year Baclayan Transition Plan. The Transition Plan will include the strategies and design of what the Baclayan Community Development will look like after five (5) years. It will describe the activities needed to achieve the overall objectives: to facilitate community awareness and community participation to enable people to solve community problems/issues, provide their basic needs and provide access to opportunities that will help them develop better living standards. Different stakeholders are engaged in shaping the work plan towards a common goal.

Children's Participation

Part of promoting children's rights is to develop their participation right. Creative Learning Activities (CLA), Drop Everything and Read (DEAR), and Let the Children Play are initiatives that promote children's developmental rights. Participating in groups provides the children venues for advancement, empowerment and essential skills to know how to protect themselves from different forms of abuse.

Two (2) groups of children have been organized to spearhead the CLA and Environmental Awareness for Children and Youth (EACY) program activities. Three (3) children have been participating in stakeholder meetings and consultations pertaining to the Baclayan Development Plan.

One of the Baclayan Educators and Storytellers (BESt) members is also a member of the young team taking part in the mapping of Puerto Galera's ancestral domain. She decided to join the team to deepen her understanding of the youths' responsibility in guarding their land and their cultural heritage. If we can encourage more children to take an active part in community programs and governance, we will have more children advocating for a child-friendly Puerto Galera.



Children Health Education Center (CHEC)

Two (2) years of schools closed and studies conducted online or through home modules are taking a heavy toll on millions of children around the world. As always, it is the marginalized that are affected the most. Many children in Baclayan are testimony to that, as they struggle with their home modules and have no one in their homes to ask for assistance. They have been deprived of interaction and activities that are crucial for their mental, social and physical development during their formative years. The Children Health Education Center (CHEC) has been challenged in its operation, but we have tried to monitor the community children and install support measures to mitigate the risk of the potential negative effects of extended isolation and restrictions.

After School Care Activities

Stimulating and playful activities have been available at the CHEC for visiting children after school hours. Before and during the pandemic, the center has provided children a safe and healthy learning and playing space. Among the activities are reading, playing chess, counting games and practicing creativity and self-expression through writing, drawing and coloring. With the pandemic situation, children need a place where they are allowed to learn and play together. Since a surge of COVID-19 cases in May, 2021, fewer children have been able to benefit from the after-school care activities of the CHEC.

Despite community restrictions, we facilitated academic and non-academic sessions to 33 struggling secondary students. Fifteen boys and 18 girls attended Math, Reading, and Health Awareness activities regularly. This was to respond to the difficulty they expressed in understanding and answering their home modules.



Environmental Awareness and Life Skills

The Life Skills Program of the Baclayan Family and Youth Livelihood Group aims to focus on developing emotional intelligence, social skills, critical thinking, creativity, cooperation, and communication.

Twelve secondary students under the Educational Assistance Initiative (EAI) participated in a two-month Environment and Life Skills curriculum, which includes topics like Agriculture, Climate Change and Marine Ecosystems (mangroves, seagrass, and corals). The integration of environment and life skills in the curriculum for secondary students aims to discourage environmentally damaging habits and promote sustainable living.

Ten female and two (2) male high school students completed the first level of the Environment and Life Skills Program. Five (5) of them are EACY leaders and are responsible for monitoring EAI Baclayan students in waste segregation, recycling, and other EACY activities. Three (3) of them are members of the Baclayan Educators and Storytellers (BES) and are supporting Child Learning Activities (CLA) and Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) activities. They are now undergoing the second level of the Life Skills Program facilitated by social work interns from St. Bridget School, Batangas City.

The second batch of high school students, composed of six (6) females and four (4) males, is now attending the first level of the Environment and Life Skills Program. Currently, the second level of the program on life skills is facilitated online because of the General Community Quarantine (GCQ) status of Puerto Galera. Once the GCQ has been lifted, regular activities will commence.

“Under the Tree” Learning Groups

At the onset of the pandemic, we started to establish what we call “Under the Tree” Learning Groups, where capable parents and older students help those in need. In some sitios (territorial enclaves that form part of the barangay) in the barangay, it turned out very well, like in Managan, where they built an Aral Kubo (Study Hut), with Stairway assistance. Young learners continue to meet and study in the Aral Kubo in Managan, assisted by the parent volunteers who serve as their primary teachers. Older children also conduct storytelling to the younger ones, with the help of books borrowed from the library. The Under the Tree concept also made it to other areas of Baclayan, but without a hut dedicated for the purpose.

The Baclayan Educators and Storytellers (BEST) members facilitated sessions for daycare and elementary students. Sixteen children participated in a 6-month Creative Learning Activities (CLA) program, which started in February 2021. The young children enjoyed reading books, experiential activities, food preparation and physical movements. Unfortunately, the sessions were interrupted in May because two (2) residents in the barangay acquired COVID-19. The program was put on hold.



Health and Sanitation

We have intensified our medical services in Baclayan during the pandemic, so we now conduct medical consultations and pre-natal check-ups every week. In conjunction with the consultations, we conduct health awareness sessions to address not only health and medical issues experienced by the community, but also a high prevalence of disinformation. We have made an effort to counter disinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine and, instead, encourage people to be vaccinated. By year end, the percentage of the above 12 year-old population in Baclayan, fully or partially vaccinated, was around 70%. The number for Puerto Galera, as a whole, is over 90%, so there is still a gap to fill.

Patients often express their gratitude for the medical assistance program. Due to fear of COVID-19, most of the indigenous people (IP) from the community are afraid to go to the hospital for their medical needs. They prefer to go to the Stairway clinic and avail themselves of free medicine. They regularly ask for Vitamin C to boost their immune system.



Our medical team during consultation 2021. We served more than 600 patients from January to December 2021.

During the second half of the year, we observed an increase in the number of patients with symptoms related to the COVID-19 virus. The doctor advised patients to self-quarantine for 14 days and strictly adhere to protocols to prevent the spread of the virus. Vitamins and other medications were prescribed to help them recover and fight the virus.

In partnership with barangay health workers, we conducted an orientation about family planning and encouraged parents, especially men, to use contraceptives and understand the importance of family planning. There were 113 mothers and fathers attending the orientation on family planning. After the session, 22 parents decided to use contraceptives.

Poor sanitation has been a prevalent cause for disease among many of the people in Baclayan for as long as we have run a clinic in the barangay. About four (4) years ago, we initiated a project that aimed to establish sanitation stations in five (5) different areas of the barangay. The project design was that Stairway would provide materials and technical assistance, but the actual construction of the stations was the accountability of the community people. After multiple delays, we finally saw the last of the sanitation stations completed and put to use during the last part of the year.



Each of the five sanitation stations has three (3) toilets and a washing area.

Feeding Program

It has been more than a year since parents started to run the three (3) feeding centers in the Baclayan community, with only minimal participation from Stairway staff. The process was not always smooth, as the parents faced difficulties and challenges in terms of participation and organization. Through these difficulties and challenges, they learned to work better together, support each other and find solutions. The parents themselves initiated meetings to solve their issues regarding the operation. We supported them with consultations to address issues and concerns, and capacitated them to manage all aspects of the feeding centers, including the checking of students' attendance, the inventory of supplies, food preparation, coordination and communication.

In previous years, the feeding program followed the school calendar, which meant there were no operations during vacations and holidays. Driven by obvious need and a request by the parents, we changed that routine during the pandemic. The feeding centers continuously provided food for around 300 children all year, also during the school breaks from July to October 2021. As a result, the number of malnourished and underweight students went down further during the vacation period, which is contrary to previous years' experience.



The feeding centers served an average of 300 students daily from Monday to Friday, including during vacation time.

A Milestone

Over the past year, we have seen the women in Baclayan take initiatives for the benefit of their families and their community. They have demonstrated their desire and capability to organize and manage the operation of the feeding stations with minimal support from Stairway. This development is a huge milestone, which we hardly dared to anticipate when we started working with the community more than 10 years ago.

Generally speaking, we were dealing with a very passive group of people who were willing to receive, but who were challenged by the requirement of active participation. Today, it is obvious that the feeding program has served more than pulling the children into the classrooms and boosting their health condition. The required active participation of parents has significantly contributed to strengthening the sense of community. It has empowered the mothers, in particular. The time is ripe to transition into a new phase of our engagement with the Baclayan community, in which we stress the need for the community to become self-reliant. We aim to end the feeding program by the school year 2024-2025.

To solidify the transition plan and get the active participation of the community, we have been conducting consultation meetings with multiple stakeholders. With the help of barangay health workers, we also conducted a survey involving 102 families in the community to determine the need for the continuation of the feeding program, in support of the transition plan. The results show that eight (8) families stopped participating in the feeding program because they had difficulty performing kitchen responsibilities, and 94 families (92%) expressed their need for the continuation of the feeding program.

Baclayan Food Security Association

The Baclayan Food Security Group was initially established in February 2020. By November 2021, it was registered with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and accredited by the Municipal Local Council of Puerto Galera. The Baclayan Food Security Association is now considered a legitimate group that can provide the members with equal economic opportunities, which means that the association now has access to technical and funding support from the local government. The members have almost finished writing a proposal for the improvement of their culinary and medicinal garden center. Once the proposal is submitted and approved, the members will receive a P75,000 grant from the Mayor's Office.

The association members underwent several training sessions about the importance and benefits of savings, management committee responsibilities, share purchase and savings, record keeping, leadership, and community organizing. To continuously introduce systems and structures, the association established a Community Savings and Credit Association (ComSCA) in July, 2021. Already by year end, the members had made impressive savings. The concept is spreading, causing other community members to sign up for membership in the association, as well.

In the association, 18 mothers (currently) are a source of inspiration for other parents in the community to be active and realize the power of collaboration and the potential of other livelihood alternatives for empowerment and self-reliance. The forming of an association is a first step towards forming a Cooperative, which will be a pillar in the journey to transform Baclayan into a prosperous self-reliant community.

A Variety of Livelihood Activities

The Baclayan Food Security Association is engaged in several small livelihood activities: growing a medicinal/herbal garden, the production of soap and shampoo using the herbs from their garden, and mushroom production.



With Stairway assistance, the Food Security Association has developed a medicinal herbal garden center in Baclayan, next to the Children Health and Education Center (CHEC). The initiative offers an opportunity to share herbs as well as knowledge about medicinal plants as a natural remedy for sickness. The herbal garden initiative aims to inspire the community members to appreciate and utilize their traditional knowledge about medicinal plants and transfer this knowledge from the elders to the younger generation. The herbal garden is also a source of raw materials being used by the mothers from the organic soap production project.



Five (5) mothers are engaged in making and selling organic soap and shampoo. The group is now learning basic technical skills in simple cash book recording, documenting cash flow, expenses, and reporting for transparency.



Thirteen parents have been involved in the mushroom production. The technical knowhow was transferred from the Stairway farm crew and the Mushroom Production Association of Oriental Mindoro.

Livestock Management

The Livestock Management Project is a new, two-year complementary initiative to the Baclayan Transition Plan. The 18 members of the Food Security Association received two (2) kinds of animals for management and production. To support this, they continuously participate in capacity-building sessions facilitated by Stairway and other external resource groups from the local government and private organizations.

One special characteristic of the project is its ability to multiply and reach more families and youth in the community. This enhances their economic capacity to improve the family living conditions, not only the living conditions of the individual members of the association.

The animal dispersal scheme can also strengthen the association's capacity to effectively manage livelihood projects.



Last July, a typhoon and earthquake shook Baclayan and prompted many families to leave their homes. The garden center was destroyed after repeated landslides and earthquakes. However, the mothers showed their determination and strength and, with the help of their families, they rebuilt the garden center and transferred the mushroom house to another location. Their goal was to have a new garden center by September, which they were able to achieve. The mushroom house and the meeting hut are now safely standing, with 45 different culinary and medicinal plants planted in the new garden center.



Stairway Organic Farm in Baclayan

With a newly hired agriculturist as part of our team, we are now in a better position to approach the farm in a more scientific manner, to better understand potential and limitations in production and output. This is an important step towards our goal to operate as a Farm School/Demo Farm for Organic Gardening towards Food Security.

We have designed two (2) activities that provide lectures and hands-on experience in organic gardening with organic fertilizer and insecticide making, namely: 1) Two-week farm internships, and 2) Farm Camps for Youth Groups. Both activities are organized to cater to beneficiaries of the Educational Assistance Initiative (EAI), to help augment families' need for nutritious food. Stairway provides food and transportation expenses for participants in both activities, together with the training modules.

In the second semester of 2021, a number of scheduled two-week internship programs did not materialize due to strict implementation of COVID-19 protocol, but we accommodated three (3) scholar graduates of an agriculture course under a partner school, to experience field practice in the Baclayan farm.

The Farm Camps for Youth Groups were also postponed due to COVID-19 protocols. However, we conducted organic vegetable production sessions with the 13 boys under our Family Home Program (FHP). They set-up their own field to do hands-on composting, nursery production, and developing a vegetable garden and fruit/flowering area within the Stairway compound in Barangay Aninuan. Also, once a week, they have an immersion activity at the farm in Baclayan. Two (2) of the boys spend an additional day on the farm every week, as they are interested in pursuing careers in farming or gardening.

To cater to other beneficiaries, we are planning to design different organic agriculture sessions categorized as short, medium and long term. Short term is a half day to 1-day session, medium term runs for 2 – 5 days, and long term is either a 2-week full time internship or one day a week for 16 weeks for community based participants. All courses have lectures and hands-on experience and will address the unique needs of the participants.





A young man from the Stairway Family Home Program (FHP), who is aspiring to become a farmer, not a common aspiration among local youth. According to research, the average age of the Filipino farmer is around 60 years. Who will produce our food in 10 years?

Greens, Chicken and Bees

The Stairway Organic Farm in Baclayan produces vegetables to partly supply the needs of the feeding program of the Baclayan community and the kitchen of the Stairway center. Last semester's production dropped after we decided to discontinue employing three (3) daily wage workers in the farm. The decision was based on several months of close monitoring of their work, which ended up coming short of expectations. Since September, vegetable production has been handled by only two (2) farm workers assisted by a team of children and staff from our Family Home Program.

In the farm, three (3) greenhouses and a nursery are maintained and operational. The importance of the greenhouses is observed during the rainy and stormy season, to grow leafy and short term vegetables. Different farming techniques and strategies are practiced to avoid insect infestations and damage by stray animals.

There are 16 kinds of fruit bearing trees in the farm. Majority of the trees are already bearing fruits. Dragon fruits and grapes are newly planted. Our many rambutan trees were affected by heavy rains and strong winds during the flowering phase, which made for a poor harvest. We are testing a new perennial crop, strawberry, which we have planted in three (3) plots. We have also planted an area with soy beans. We have great hopes for this particular crop, as it could make for good protein in the people's diet, and an extensive production could lead to a source of livelihood for many people.

We are also in the trial stage of organic egg production and egg incubation, but the output has been disappointing throughout the year. We plan on having a different breed of chicken more suitable for the altitude and colder climate of the farm.

Last semester, we also ventured into stingless honey bee production. Two (2) of our colleagues attended a one-day bee culture training. Initial stock was purchased and placed at the Stairway center, and the second stock was placed at the Baclayan farm. We now have a total of four (4) bee colonies in two (2) different areas with different environments as to topography, wind direction and flowering plants. The colonies are regularly monitored to see which environment would be most favorable for the bees. At the moment, the colonies are growing at different paces. The next harvest season will teach us a lot more.

Production of vermicompost is still going strong, producing sufficient fertilizer for the farm and for the children's gardens at Stairway's Family Home Program (FHP).

Farming and Networking

In order to root environmental concern and sustainable living deeply into our community, collaboration with other agencies and concerned entities plays an important role. The following activities were initial steps for future collaboration, to enhance organic agriculture and environmental protection.

The Institute of Plant Breeding in the University of the Philippines (UP)-Los Baños provided us with 25 kilos of open pollinated seeds for initial production. It also offered detailed instructions and advice on growing techniques.

The Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) field validation team for Learning Site for Agriculture Certification visited our farm, in response to our application for validation. We received the ATI's validation report in September, which concluded that the farm is not yet qualified, due to some gaps. But the ATI encouraged us to apply again, once other requirements are met. The formulation of new strategies and techniques will be based on the feedback, for improvement.

Barangay Baclayan, including our farm, was affected by ground fissures due to incessant rains and earthquakes last July. In order to understand the cause for the dramatic land surface movement, and assess the risk of future incidences, we contacted the Regional Mines and Geoscience Bureau. Five (5) members of the bureau visited Baclayan in November, in response to our letters of request. The team explored the extent of damage from the reported origin of movement. The team's first impression of the cause is the rock formation, identified as slate. According to the team, "this rock (slate) is characterized as fine-grained, clayey metamorphic rock that cleaves, or splits, readily into thin slabs. When water penetrates within spaces, and washes away organic particles, these slabs become smooth and easy to slide. The area affected is most likely to be included in the hazard map for land slide." The team, along with Stairway people, also met with the Barangay Captain and had a discussion regarding the incident and their immediate action. The worst case scenario, over the next 10 years, is a collapse of the whole area, if not properly planned and risk mitigated. The official report will be one of the bases for our future planning in the farm.

Educational Assistance Initiative (EAI)

Stairway's Educational Assistance Initiative (EAI) supports families and students in the community who are in need through financial augmentation, academic support and family and youth empowerment activities. The initiative helps schools and communities to focus on providing quality and accessible education to children.

School year 2020-2021 posed multiple challenges brought on by the pandemic. Never the less, among Stairway's 616 EAI beneficiaries 591 completed the school year, 83 of them graduated. Twenty-five students stopped schooling.

EAI beneficiaries' Educational Status for S.Y. 2020-2021

Educational Level	# of Students finished school year	# of Graduates	# of students who stopped schooling
Elementary	16	10	2
Secondary	344	65	10
College	148	7	13
Vocational		1	
Total	508	83	25
		616	

For the new school year, 2021-2022, we accepted 116 new beneficiaries. The selection process was once again a collaborative effort with our partner schools and communities. We started the school year with 617 beneficiaries: 120 indigenous people (IPs) and 497 non-IPs. At present, there are 604 active beneficiaries.

Active beneficiaries S.Y. 2021-2022 (as of December 2021)

Education Level	No. of students
Elementary	27
Secondary	406
College	170
Vocational	1
Total	604

In order to comply with the COVID-19 protocols, our annual general assembly was split into 19 smaller assemblies in 13 barangays, with the participation of 545 parents and students. The sessions offered a venue and opportunity to address and clarify various concerns of our parents and students, who have encountered challenges during the home modular classes, specifically, those parents who are not capable of guiding their children academically. Other topics during the assembly were regarding program policies, benefits, and bank applications for automated teller machine (ATM) cards.

New systems and the strict implementation of policies were stressed during the assemblies, like home module compliance, academic performance and a household monitoring system. These are validated through random visits and school partnerships with class advisers, guidance counselors, parents and youth leaders.



Distribution of school supplies to ALL 12,189 public school students in the municipality at the beginning of school year 2021-2022



The pandemic restrictions forced multiple changes in both strategies and procedures. The general assembly of all students and parents we used to hold at the beginning of each school year was split into 19 smaller assemblies this year.

Financial Support and Distribution of School Supplies

Through collaboration with our local bank, 107 of the new EAI beneficiaries have received their ATM cards, while nine (9) applications are in process, pending submission of birth certificates. Each elementary and secondary student receives 500 pesos monthly, following our monitoring with their household waste management and academic responsibilities, which are among the conditions for being beneficiaries.

In collaboration with the Puerto Galera District Department of Education (DepEd), Stairway distributed school supplies to all students in all public schools in the municipality, including Special Education (SPED), Alternative Learning System (ALS), and Stairway college beneficiaries. These are a total of 12,189 students.

Stairway also extended support to San Teodoro National High School in the form of Break the Silence (BTS) notebooks (1,500 pcs.), pad paper (1,500 pcs.), and pens (3,000 pcs.).

Enhancing Child Protection in Puerto Galera

We have concluded the second year of the implementation of a local project in Puerto Galera, which aims to make the town a safer place for children. Despite the pandemic, child protection work carries on, supported by the conclusions and recommendations from a baseline study conducted in 2020.

Baseline Study

The research we conducted in 2020, on the situation of children and the status of child protection systems in Puerto Galera, gives us a concrete direction as to where to focus our energies in our work with the local government. We have collaborated with a child protection specialist and a member of the academe of the University of the Philippines (UP) for the analysis of the study's findings. One of the conclusions is that cases of violence against children (VAC) and other child protection issues will continue as long as child protection programs and activities continue to be unsynchronized, residual, and fragmented. The recommendations provided were adopted as project strategies.

Re-organizing the Child Protection Structures

Municipal Council for the Protection of Children (MCPC)

In the study, it was emphasized that instead of reaching only the cognitive domains of all individuals and groups who will be involved in child protection work, it is more significant and sustainable to reach their “affective” domains, meaning, they need to imbibe and make it their personal value and culture to protect and prioritize children in all levels of programming and decision making. Hence, Stairway employed the child rights programming (CRP) approach to set up a dynamic and responsive child protection system.



In July, we facilitated the first face to face training in more than a year. It was a 3-day strategic planning workshop with the Municipal Council for Protection of Children.

As the major local structure for children, we first targeted the Municipal Council for Protection of Children (MCPC) of Puerto Galera, which has members from basically all the municipal offices, including Social Welfare, Health, Law Enforcement, Tourism, Education and many more. Twenty-three members of the MCPC embarked on a child rights programming (CRP) planning process last July where they attended workshops on child rights situational analysis, organizational analysis, and designing a comprehensive child rights program. During a three-day workshop, they were reminded that their actions or inaction directly affect the children, their safety and well-being.

With the concerted effort of all members, the following evidence-based key strategies were identified to serve as the council's guidelines in addressing child protection issues in the future:

- Adoption and localization of existing national programs
- Implementation of Community-based Family Strengthening Services (parenting sessions, cybersafety, child sexual abuse prevention, life skills, etc.)
- Integration of Child Protection to School Curriculum
- Capacity Building of Implementers
- Creation of Comprehensive Communication for Behavior Change Strategy
- Community Participation and Mobilization
- Child Rights Policy and Program Development
- Strengthening Direct Service Delivery
- Intensifying Child Participation in Local Governance

The MCPC developed short-term and long-term objectives and strategies that correspond with the international and national commitments in ending violence against children (VAC), suggesting that the group is on the right track when it comes to child rights programming. Since then, the members of the MCPC, together with Stairway, have started initiatives to make these plans materialize. MCPC members will join different trainers' training sessions next year to become local resources in various child protection advocacies.

Another concrete result from this is that priority undertakings, such as additional regular positions for social workers, capacity building for implementers and community advocacy activities, were included in the 2022 municipal budget. This is a clear indication of the commitment of the council in putting significance to children's welfare.

Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC)

The same process was done in six (6) Barangay Councils for the Protection of Children (BCPCs) of the pilot barangays. But instead of conducting a three-day activity, a series of strengthening sessions were done in the second half of the year, to work on their functionality as barangay councils. This process was not achieved overnight as it takes time for members to realize that they are front-runners when it comes to protecting children in the community. For months, 60 BCPC members underwent an array of sessions of child rights programming: a) review of legal and policy mandates, b) mapping of violence against children (VAC), c) consultation with children and stakeholders, d) identifying and prioritizing VAC issues, e) situational analysis, and f) review of the existing policy, program, budget implementation and functionality and planning of programs, projects and activities for children.

The process was full of realizations from the implementers. They were able to delve deeper into more serious issues faced by children, which are in sync with the results of the local baseline study and priority issues identified by the MCPC, such as child sexual abuse (especially among boys), engagement in early relationships and teenage pregnancy, gadget addiction and the increase of children-at-risk. All of these are rooted in poor protective behavior of children, poor parenting skills and the lack of programs and policies for child protection. The six (6) BCPCs were able to draft their evidence-based three-year BCPC plan, as a result of the strengthening sessions.

This year, 2022, will also be a promising year for the pilot BCPCs, as the sessions they have undergone are expected to be manifested in action. Relevant policies on children identified by BCPCs will be lobbied to the barangay councils. Community awareness raising sessions about various child protection topics will be held in different sitios in the pilot barangays. Community learning hubs, which were conceptualized by the BCPCs and Stairway, are expected to be launched next year. These hubs will serve as a venue to provide assistance to struggling learners, children-at-risk and disadvantaged children. The target children will be assisted in their self-learning home modules. They will also be taught necessary life skills, psychosocial coping strategies and significant child protection topics, in order for them to effectively adapt to the challenges of the new normal, and for them to be less vulnerable to abuse and violence. There will also be separate sessions with their parents.

Two (2) BCPCs have already initiated community sessions to jumpstart their activities this year, where 35 parents were oriented about responsible parenthood and cybersafety.



With proper training and motivation, the Barangay Councils for Protection of Children can become incredibly valuable in fulfilling their mandate. As of now, none of the members have the skills or the confidence to engage and really play a role in child protection.

Children and Community Participation

The adult implementers recognized the importance of child participation in the entire programming process, which they often do not take into account. This realization was reached during consultation sessions with children in the pilot barangays, wherein 73 children were able to express their present issues and aspirations as well as their wish list for the children in their communities, further validating the results of the baseline study. They also stressed the importance of listening to children's voices and giving value to their participation all throughout the programming process. The results of the consultation were integrated to the plans drafted by BCPCs, ensuring that children are involved and activities are gender-responsive and developmentally-appropriate. By next year, barangay children's associations (BCAs) will be targeted to be actively involved in child protection work. This will give them opportunities to represent their sector, not only in their respective barangays, but in the entire locality.

Throughout the array of strengthening sessions with BCPCs, inclusion of community stakeholders in the planning of child-centered activities was a priority. Members of the church, fraternities, and children and people organizations were involved in the action planning. In this process, a sense of ownership among the implementers was developed, as they themselves designed child-centered programs and activities that they believe will meet the needs of the children and the community.



Child participation is an essential (obviously!) ingredient in child protection programming, but still not a common practice.

Strengthening Direct Service Delivery through Capacity Building, Coaching, and Mentoring Sessions with the Local Government Unit

Aside from strengthening the mandated local structures, it is important to have skilled and empowered direct service providers responsible for giving appropriate services to children in need of special protection (victims of child sexual abuse, neglect, teenage pregnancy, etc.).

In 2021, Stairway social workers continued to provide mentoring and coaching sessions to our local partners in handling cases of children. The filing of cases in court, facilitating family case conferences, providing counseling to child sexual abuse victims, prevention and reporting of cyber offenses are some areas covered. According to a recent report from the National Police Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD), more and more cases referred to them this year have been cyber-related.



Stairway social worker in a coaching session with members of our local police, the Women and Children Protection Desk.

Last October, members of the multidisciplinary team (MDT) of Puerto Galera participated in our online training program for members of the Break the Silence (BTS) program. The training was delivered via blended learning approach, which utilizes both synchronous and asynchronous training delivery. The training and the e-learning platform offered the MDT an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of various child sexual abuse prevention (CSAP) and cybersafety concepts, and different ways to teach and cascade these concepts to the community level, with various target groups.

Coaching and Mentoring Sessions with the Local Department of Education (DepEd) Office

In 2020, early into the pandemic, we provided training to all Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) teachers in Puerto Galera, along with the members of the School Child Protection Committees. Trainings covered basic Children's Rights, Child Sexual Abuse Prevention (CSAP), Cybersafety, and Safeguarding in Schools in the New Normal. The sessions were designed to equip the school personnel with practical guidance on how to ensure safety and protection among learners in their homes. The schools incorporated into their Child Protection Policies (CPPs) child safeguarding in education delivery, social media policies, and case management protocols in handling online and offline child protection concerns within their schools.

In 2021, Stairway facilitated coaching sessions to eight (8) members of the public high schools' Child Protection Committees (CPCs). These were comprised of principals, guidance counselors and child protection focal persons. The sessions aimed to monitor the implementation of their respective local child protection policies, and also to gather feedback and recommendations on how to improve the response to child protection issues experienced by learners. In one of the brainstorming sessions, members of the CPCs admitted that, due to the overwhelming work-load faced by teachers today, they cannot consistently assist and monitor cases of learners needing special intervention. Hence, strengthening community partnership became one of the highlighted strategies.

Case Management of Children

Stairway continues to be a safe refuge for children in difficult situations. In 2021, we received referrals of children requiring special protection and intervention, coming from the local government unit, community leaders, parents, and the children themselves. Below is a breakdown of cases and the interventions provided by the social workers.

Type of Child Protection Issue	No. of Cases	Type of Service
Family miscommunication and conflict resulting in emotional abuse	5	Family conferences, coordination with schools, referral to BCPC and parent leaders for monitoring
Physical abuse	2	Family counseling with BCPC
Child sexual abuse in center	1	Referral to Regional Social Welfare and Development Office
Custody issue of a child	1	Referral to MSWDO
Sexual abuse (3), runaway (2), eloped (2), early relationship (1)	8	Individual counseling
Sexual abuse	4	Counseling session to the parents of sexually abused children
Sexual abuse	1	Relocation of a family to avoid harassment of the offender's family
Commercial child sexual exploitation	1	Referral to MSWDO and PNP-WCPD Individual and family counseling
Child sexual abuse material	3	Referral to MSWDO and PNP-WCPD Coordination with FB Management for the removal of child sexual abuse materials
Child sexual abuse	6	Group therapeutic counseling and court preparation

The six (6) child survivors of sexual abuse underwent group therapeutic counseling sessions, which enabled them to process the unimaginable trauma and other damaging effects of the abuse. Through the group, the children were able to give and receive support to and from one other, which helps heal their emotional and psychological wounds. The sessions were co-facilitated by one of the local government unit (LGU) social workers, which is our strategy of training our municipal partners on therapeutic sessions for child victims. Currently, one (1) of the child survivors is being assisted during court hearings to ensure her safety, while she seeks justice for the inconceivable crimes she was a victim of.

Psychosocial Sessions for Teachers

Stairway also recognized the need for psychosocial interventions for teachers, given the pressures of the pandemic and current education setup. Aside from providing technical support, primarily on child protection, we extended our assistance and organized psychosocial sessions to 49 teachers of several schools. The activity became a venue for the teachers to give their mental health a legitimate boost.

Integration of Child Protection into the Curriculum

Before the pandemic, the integration of child protection, particularly, cybersafety, into the curriculum was one of the identified project strategies, and the trained ICT teachers were to be in charge of the roll-out sessions with the learners. The pandemic caused delay in the implementation, but the strategy was again underscored during the MCPC action planning, as a majority of the members acknowledged the use of the basic education curriculum in order to reach and capacitate more learners on child protection in the most efficient and effective way.

We have already developed the e-learning training program to capacitate educators to integrate child protection in the school curriculum as part of a different project, which was piloted in 43 schools covering four (4) regions. It is scheduled for implementation in all public high schools in Puerto Galera by 2022.

Awareness-raising and Advocacy Activities

One hundred eighty parents under Stairway's educational assistance initiative (EAI) were provided sessions on Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention (CSAEP) and cybersafety throughout the year. During these sessions, not only did the parents learn more about the issue of child sexual abuse, touching rules and cybersafety rules, the parents also realized the value of open communication with their children, and the challenge on how to become their children's trusted adults.

We have also explored conducting cybersafety sessions for children, both offline and online, in collaboration with the trained Information, Communication Technology (ICT) teachers from various schools. In these sessions, we reached 33 indigenous people (IP) children from Baclayan, and 23 public high school student leaders from other parts of Puerto Galera. Due to these awareness-raising activities, the student leaders were able to disclose and refer three (3) cyber-related cases involving learners, which were given appropriate intervention. Gender awareness sessions were also conducted to nine (9) student leaders and 44 teachers on different occasions.

Tarpaulins and standees with child protection tips were distributed and stationed in conspicuous places around Puerto Galera. These advocacy materials aim to make child protection information accessible to the public. Two (2) anatomical dolls were provided to the Women and Children Protection Desk (WCPD) and the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), which will aid in their interviews and counseling with children who may have been sexually abused.



Distribution of 1500 copies of Stairway's "I am a Child" booklet.

Challenges in Child Protection Work

It is an immense challenge to make children's rights and child protection part of the culture and value system of the local government unit (LGU) and the Department of Education (DepEd) in Puerto Galera. Child protection is not a priority of our municipality, as revealed in the concluded baseline study. We will have to give the local office of the LGU credit for engaging in this partnership with Stairway, to strengthen the local structures mandated and to be responsible for giving appropriate services to children in need. However, the present COVID situation makes our task very challenging, as both the LGU and DepEd have given less priority to child protection in view of the pandemic. It requires a lot of footwork to mobilize the relevant individual members of the municipality without a push from the top of the organization. Child participation, which is an integral and crucial part of the process we are working on, is also limited. This gives the children fewer opportunities to realize their fundamental rights to survival, development, protection and participation.

Despite challenges and obstacles, we managed to target barangay-level councils, where child protection issues are most felt. We tried to address child protection issues at the micro level, where the children are. Relevant community stakeholders have been organized and informed to make concrete plans for children, as a foundation for future actions.

Considering the gains and pains of our work with the LGU in 2021, we will continue to make consistent and persistent efforts to address program bottlenecks, mobilize mandated child protection structures, and stir the LGUs' commitment to create protective environments for children, institutionalized by policies, programs, and activities. Stairway will also progressively spot potential child advocates in all levels and transform them to local resources, to achieve maximum community participation and sustainability.

Social Services

Stairway continues to provide services to local residents who seek assistance for various reasons. Below is the list of cases handled in 2021.

Types of Services	Types of Issue	No. of reached
Food assistance	Financial difficulties due to the pandemic	38 families
Orientation to new DepEd teachers on Child Safeguarding in the new Normal	Child protection	60 teachers
Case study	Child with disability	1
Group counseling sessions & filing of legal case	Sexual harassment	3
Transportation service	Medical (1) child sexual abuse (1), burial (6)	8
Cash assistance	Medical expenses for medicines, transportation & laboratories (13), burial (8), court hearings (2) & going home to native land (4)	27
Individual counseling session to abused women	Physical & emotional violence	3 persons

Conclusion

While the past couple of years have been challenging for our communities, especially the children, they have offered an opportunity for assessment of many existing templates and systems. As an organization, this process has been both challenging and inspiring. Thanks to a creative and innovative team of people, restrictions and limitations in some areas have opened up new opportunities in other areas. We cannot predict what the coming year will bring in terms of COVID-19 afflictions, but we are in a good position to deal with what may come.

Environmental Awareness for Children and Youth (EACY)

Throughout 2021, we gained valuable experience on how to navigate through the rough and unpredictable waters of the pandemic and the “new normal.” Restrictions caused by surging COVID cases in our locality have significantly affected what we planned for the Sea Adventure School (SAS) and other activities that encompassed gathering of children and youth.

Without any chance of getting our 50-foot floating classroom, Berge Apo, into operation, we took the opportunity to dry dock to further strengthen and enhance the boat. After more than six (6) months of work, 75% of the wooden skeleton and other wooden parts were replaced with fiberglass, which was all molded and fabricated on site by local crafts people and the SAS crew. We now have a much safer and stronger vessel ready for action, once circumstances will allow it.

With the SAS on hold, we initiated and supported many new developments this year. We reinitiated a high level of child and youth participation through a municipality-wide campaign. We launched a new EACY Advocacy Group, a Puerto Galera Sustainable Tourism Initiative, a campaign for environmentally sustainable practices in an indigenous people (IP) community, and we expanded our network of partners outside the locality. We are pleased to experience how environmental awareness and active concern have taken root in our local community after eight (8) years of EACY advocacy and campaigning.



Berge Apo, Stairway’s floating classroom, underwent a major overhaul while waiting for lock-down and restrictions to be lifted. Most of the wood in the skeleton has been replaced with fiberglass for safety and durability.

Marine Protection and Networking

EACY Program people took part in a multi-sectoral task force to manage an outbreak of crown of thorns (COTs) through collection, together with local volunteer divers and snorkelers. Along with collecting thousands of these predators that can destroy entire communities of hard coral, there was a community education campaign on the causes of the extraordinary proliferation of the COTs. According to the chief of the Municipal Environmental Office, the recent outbreak was a product of many factors, but mainly due to overfishing, which is a direct result of scarce income opportunities from tourism, as the pandemic lockdowns continue. Overfishing has significantly reduced the population of COTs' natural predators, along with other fish species.

Furthermore, the frequent and heavy rains had caused flooding and run-off of sediments that provide rich nutrients and food for COT larvae, contributing to enhanced conditions for their survival and multiplication.



Although the Sea Adventure School (SAS) was on hold, we still distributed SAS Learners' Guides to the new batch of Grade 9 students in the community, as the new school year opened last September. The Learners' Guides are supplementary materials for the students' lessons done in self-learning modules. These will be complemented with practical performance task activities in proper garbage segregation and a tree growing campaign in the students' home areas. The lessons and activities in the Learners' Guide will prepare the students for their possible participation in future SAS trips.



A test ride with a small group of young environmental activists.

The University of the Philippines (UP) is currently building a Marine Science Institute in the town of Puerto Galera. We met with the head of the institute to discuss future collaboration through our Sea Adventure School (SAS), once the center and laboratory open. With the presence of the UP Marine Science Institute in Puerto Galera, we see new opportunities to expound further on the educational assets and reach of the SAS.

Another positive development in our marine environment conservation and protection initiatives is our new membership and active participation in the Oriental Mindoro Resource Monitoring Team (ORMT), which aims to secure proper management of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) all over our province. In the last quarter of 2021, we joined in 22 biophysical assessments of MPAs with the ORMT, from the southern part of Mindoro to its northern coast, Puerto Galera. The aim is that every MPA will undergo an underwater monitoring activity every year to determine the condition of the area and to determine if the custodians of the area live up to their mandate. The findings from the two- week monitoring activity in November were that some areas are affected by typhoons and coral bleaching, and there are also indications of human activities that had negative effect on the protected areas, but nothing detrimental that cannot recover. Overall, the MPAs are well managed by their corresponding People's Organization and Local Government Units (LGU).

For a few years now, Stairway has been lobbying within our LGU and working with the indigenous population of a coastal village for establishing a marine protected area along the coast near our center. From snorkeling and diving in the area, we have witnessed destruction and loss of habitat, which has only gotten worse from overfishing during the past couple of years because of the pandemic. We hope that our newly found collaboration with the ORMT can help in the establishment of a marine protected area along the Aninuan coastline.



SFI-EACY is now an active member of the ORMT, who spent two weeks in November assessing the health condition of Marine Protected Areas along the coastline of Mindoro.

Founding of New Environmental Advocacy Group (EAG)

While a main strategy since the inception of the EACY program has been active and meaningful participation of children and youth, the nearly two-year pandemic induced community quarantine, where children have been locked up in their homes, has inspired a more targeted approach to further involve the adult population in our environmental advocacy. We consider the formation of the EACY Advocacy Group (EAG) as a groundbreaking milestone, leveraging on the network and influence that the EACY program has built over the past many years in the schools and locality of Puerto Galera. Most of the founding members of the EAG are teachers from the high schools, where we run the Sea Adventure School (SAS), so they are already well informed about our advocacy, and they all have both skills and interest in working with children and young people. With the EACY Advocacy Group, we have significantly extended our capacity to reach many more children, youth and communities in the future.

Child and Youth Participation in the Communities

The members of the EACY Advocacy Group (EAG) have already proven their dedication and great value in furthering our environmental protection movement in the municipality. We recently launched a large campaign covering almost every barrio in the municipality, in which children and youth submitted project proposals to address environmental protection issues in their respective localities. The EAG members advised and mentored the youth throughout the process, from proposal writing to project implementation. From the initial 13 submissions for the campaign, we supported 11 promising project proposals. All 11 project teams, with their respective EAG mentors, initially took part in a Workshop on Principles of Project Management, which enhanced their project design plans. We also taught project administration systems regarding the preparation of cash advances, liquidation reports, and monitoring and evaluation of their projects. These are skills that are useful, long-term, in the promotion of organized participation against destructive environmental practices and towards a responsible and sustainable developmental plan, locally, nationally and globally.

There were several well thought out and ingenious projects that addressed the following:

- Single use plastic. Setting up of a store that sells at discounted rates when the customer brings his/her own container;
- Up-cycling old tires for production of simple furniture;
- Printing and distribution of a children's book on marine protection, written by a young Sea Adventure School participant;
- Stopping the proliferation of the highly invasive Giant African Snails that destroy local food gardens;
- Construction and proper operationalization of enhanced Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) for proper waste segregation, followed by local advocacy campaign;
- A virtual Eco-Camp with over 100 participants from six (6) barangays with our EACY Program officers, training youth advocates in all barrios;
- Paper briquettes from waste paper. The DepEd uses tons of paper for students' home modules;
- Seagrass rehabilitation project with local fisher folks;
- Online publishing of a magazine that features environmental news and issues under the lens of young campus journalists; and
- Transforming former landfill into Eco-Park



Fewer Fires in the Mountains

The usual sight of entire hillsides burning over the slopes and hills above the IP village of Bignayan during the summer season was basically nowhere to be seen this year. The campaign to lessen the burning of trees and mountain grasses has been long and meticulous, but it has also proven effective.

We started working with the Bignayan community back in 2019 towards a more sustainable means of livelihood. Majority of the people in the village practiced slash and burn farming and fished with fine masked net right on the reef, causing evident damage in both areas. In addition, they did not practice any form of waste management, so all waste from the village ended up in the sea. Through a series of meetings, consultations, film showings and farming workshops with the village elders and the overall community, spanning over a year, we were able to reach a consensus on a strategy towards more sustainable practices in terms of waste management and planting. The reef protection was also part of the discussion, and there was a compromised resolution. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and zero income from tourism for two (2) consecutive years, the marine life on our local reef is seriously compromised due to massive overfishing.



Community Meeting in Bignayan. The long process we underwent with the IP community to educate and inform them towards their decision on protecting the environment will hopefully prove sustainable. The tedious process has been in stark contrast to the usual top-down approach, where municipal leaders craft and impose ordinances that constituents are not aware of and do not understand. These ordinances usually end up poorly enforced. We need full understanding and cooperation from the local communities to be successful in our conservation efforts. It can be complicated, demanding and quite overwhelming, but there is no other way around it.

But there have also been positive results. Starting with the slash and burn challenge, the agreement was that we provide 55 families with fruit tree seedlings they could plant on the land above their village, where they used to slash and burn, before planting their rice and corn. Despite the challenging conditions in the mountains, like strong winds and lack of water, we found a survival rate of the seedlings, after a year, at 80%. We also handed out open-pollinated vegetable seeds to the entire community to encourage further development of their backyard gardens. During the rainy season, they can grow their vegetable gardens, but during summer, the lack of a local water source is detrimental. We are still in the process of trying to find the best and most possible solution to the water problem, as five (5) kilometers of an easily breakable plastic pipe connected to a spring in the mountains hardly seems like the best solution.



During a group discussion with 10 of the Bignayan community partners towards the end of 2021, they confirmed that they have indeed veered away from burning the areas, where they planted their fruit seedlings. Not only that, they have also encouraged their neighbors to do the same. Image: Will Smith, Deakin University in Melbourne

The children were not left out of the community activities in Bignayan. We continued with our Creative Learning Activities (CLA) with the children, facilitated by volunteer EACY Club officers once a week. Usually, there are 20 kids, aged six (6) to 13 years old, who participate in the activity. The activities are varied and cover many topics. Environmental concerns are also processed in an age appropriate manner, with colors, paints and fun activities. The community is unique in the sense that Mangyan people live side by side with Tagalog, Visayan and Muslim settlers, so the Creative Learning Activities (CLA) also serve as a venue where all kids, regardless of background, play and learn together.



All plastic and other waste from the Bignayan community used to wash directly into the sea. Now, children and adults learn about the significance of proper waste management.

Household Solid Waste Management

We have a few conditions pertaining to the environment for the family beneficiaries under our Educational Assistance Initiative. The families are obliged to practice proper waste segregation, refrain from burning garbage and compost green waste. The Household Solid Waste Management was established to educate and involve these families and the barrio councils to actively participate in environmental protection and conservation. Among the 600 plus families receiving educational support from Stairway, for their children, none practice burning of garbage anymore, and almost all practice proper segregation of their waste. Everybody with a garden has a compost bin or area. This is a remarkable change in comparison to the same families' former practices.

Puerto Galera Sustainable Tourism Initiative

Tourism is one of the hardest-hit industries during this pandemic. According to data from the municipal government, 1,410 establishments or 74% of all local business establishments are closed, leaving 3,624 tourism workers without jobs, and further affecting 1,729 transport sector members. Municipal authorities also lament on the astronomical economic loss of the town, failing to reach anywhere near the projected 230,000 annual tourist arrivals.

The pandemic has caused much havoc and pain, but it has also offered an opportunity to think about tourism in a sustainable manner, taking into consideration the right balance between environment, community, livelihood and earnings.

On World Oceans' Day, June 8, we hosted a webinar entitled, "Towards Sustainable Tourism in Puerto Galera." The main speaker was Susan Santos De Cardenas from the Society for Sustainable Tourism and Development Inc (SSTD), a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization providing learning and capacity building for public and private stakeholders to attain excellence in sustainable tourism development and management, environmental conservation and stewardship, and sustainable consumption and production in the hospitality industry.

A tried and tested blueprint called the "Green Destinations Program" was proposed and agreed upon to attain our goal of sustainable tourism in Puerto Galera. To enroll in the program, we first had to organize the Puerto Galera Sustainable Tourism Council (PGSTC), which will work to align Puerto Galera with the Green Destinations standards. To facilitate the formation of the PGSTC, we formed a preparatory committee composed of the department heads of the Municipal Environmental Office and the Tourism Office, the EACY Program Coordinator, EACY Advocates Group representative, and the chairperson of the Puerto Galera Philippine Chamber of Commerce, Inc.

The efforts to systematically work towards sustainable tourism involving all stakeholders continue, but it is a challenging task that easily gets sidetracked by political interests, especially as we approach national and local elections this coming May. Despite multiple challenges, we have garnered interest and participation from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, so a strong foundation has been laid for enduring what may turn out to be a long and trying process.

Towards Sustainable Tourism in Puerto Galera



Resource Speaker:
Susan Santos de Cardenas
President & CEO, Society for Sustainable Tourism



Joan Margarette Yap
MEMRO Officer, Puerto Galera



Paulita Aileen N. Bareng
Senior Tourism Officer
Office of Tourism, Puerto Galera



Emmanuel "Noe" Lineses
President, Puerto Galera
Tourism Council



Joel De Veyra
Chairman - Phil. Chamber of
Commerce and Industry -
Puerto Galera



Neil Joshua Lerin
President, Supreme Student
Government, Puerto Galera
National High School - Main



Moderator/Host:
Jason C. Abarquez
EACY Program Coordinator
Stairway Foundation, Inc.

A conversation on how we can make tourism in Puerto Galera more sustainable.

Online Tuesday June 8, 9 AM

(UTC+08 – 12 PM UTC+08)



STAIRWAY FOUNDATION INC.

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Representatives from the Municipal Environmental Office, the Tourism Office, the Department of Education and the EACY Advocacy Group at one of the initial meetings of the Puerto Galera Sustainable Tourism Initiative.



The incredible natural beauty of Puerto Galera makes it vulnerable to destruction from uncontrolled influx of tourists.

Climate Reality Talks

Despite the changing pandemic restrictions, we held face-to-face climate awareness talks in a total of 12 schools, with 259 local educators, throughout 2021. During the talks, we encouraged teachers to mainstream climate crisis discussion among their students. They were also encouraged to pitch projects and activities that can raise awareness about the climate crisis. The talks have also served as a recruitment platform for teachers to join the EACY Advocate Group. Also, recently, one of the EACY Advocate Group members accepted the challenge to join and complete the two-week virtual Global Climate Reality Leadership Training under former US Vice-President Al Gore. She will be an additional asset in the amplification of our climate crisis educational campaign.

Another concrete output of the Climate Talks is a project in partnership with the Ayala Foundation and the DepEd, Puerto Galera, with the aim to install local youth-created videos and environmental education materials in 1,200 tablets to be utilized by the majority of Grade 4 to Grade 6 students in Puerto Galera.

Aside from activities in schools, we held Climate Reality discussions with a number of other partners and sectors. The biggest online audience we have reached was during one of the weekly webinars of Kabataang Makadagat (Youth for the Sea), with over 500 participants from all over the archipelago.

DOKYUKALIKASAN
Puerto Galera Edition - Year I
for KIDS

- Gisingin ang kamalayan ng mga Kabataan sa mga usaping pangkalikasan
- Paligsahan sa paggawa ng 3-7 minute Educational Videos sa bawat tema
 - Kalikasan at Ako
 - Komunidad
 - Kabundukan
 - Karagatan
- Open para sa mga kabataang edad 15-25 na naninirahan sa Puerto Galera

LORAX
MARCH 2023

DOKYUKALIKASAN
Puerto Galera Edition - Year I
for KIDS

Pamantayan sa Paghuhusga

- 50% NILALAMAN**
Kaangkupan sa tema, mensahe, pagsunod sa patakaran at regulasyon
- 30% PRODUCTION**
Tamang paggamit ng transitions, ilaw, background at tunog, husay ng pagkakaedit, organisado ang ideya
- 20% KALIDAD**
Malinaw na naririnig ang mga dayalogo
Steady ang video, hindi nanginginging
Malinaw ang mga larawang ginamit
Akma ang musikang ginamit

LORAX
MARCH 2023

5Rs: Reporting, Responding, Reasoning, Relating and Reconstructing Climate Change in the New Normal

A VIRTUAL SEMINAR WORKSHOP ON FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE
23 OCTOBER 2021 | 10:00 AM via Zoom

PROGRAM

I. National Anthem	Ms. Ma. Joy Babanto (MA SE 104 Student)
II. Invocation	Ms. Ma. Angie Cubillas, Ph. D.
III. Opening/Welcome Remarks	MA SE 104 Instructor
IV. Setting up Expectation	Ms. Jonna Mae Tasyay (MA SE 104 Student)
V. Introduction of Participants	Ms. Edelyn Torreliza (MA SE 104 Student)
VI. Introduction of Resource Speaker	Ms. Carren Parungao (MA SE 104 Student)
VII. Seminar Workshop Proper	Mr. Jason C. Abarquez SFL Project Development Officer
VIII. Question and Answer	Participants/Resource Speaker
IX. Presentation of Certificate and Token	Ms. Jessica Vitto (MA SE 104 Student)
X. Closing Remarks	Ms. Lea Ocampo (MA SE 104 Student)
	Ms. Cyliz Meriles (MA SE 104 Student)

Edelyn D. Torreliza (MA SE 104)
Master of Ceremony

EACY Dive School

EACY Dive remained closed for the entire year. The only activities were our instructors' volunteer participation in the clearing of crown of thorns and periodic check of equipment. We hope to see the Dive School in operation again in 2022.

Our Financial Partners

We would like to thank all our financial partners, who have enabled us and made all of the above possible. We look forward to face new challenges for years to come with your continued support.

In alphabetical order our partners are:

Axel og Paula Nissen Fonden, Denmark
BMZ, Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation, Germany
DANIDA, Danish International Development Assistance
Embassy of Denmark, Manila
Emil Ingeman Oeigaard, Denmark
Firetree Trust, Singapore
Grundfos, Philippines/Denmark
Hit Productions, Philippines
JOTUN, Philippines/Norway
Kindernothilfe, Germany
Mission Inclusion, Canada
Marshall Foundation, Singapore
Metro-Schroeder, Denmark
Phoenix Foundation, Switzerland
REGUS, Philippines
Roedkilde Gymnasium, Denmark
Singapore American School
Skanderborg Gymnasium, Denmark
Solenergy Systems Inc., Philippines
SONION, Philippines
Stairway Denmark
Tage Abildgaard Holding, Denmark
Thailandia Import, Denmark
Trine Wilkens, Denmark

We also want to thank all the individuals, who have supported our work through generous donations and/or membership of Stairway Denmark. Last but not least, a special thank you to all our volunteers, including the boards of Stairway Foundation and Stairway Denmark.

Stairway Foundation, January 2022

