

NOVEMBER
2017:
OPENING
NEW
PRESCHOOL
& LEARNING
CENTER

YOUNG FOCUS ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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WORD FROM THE MANAGEMENT



Dear Reader,

Greetings from Young Focus!

Reflecting on the year 2017, we experienced probably one of the most challenging years since we first established ourselves in the Philippines. We were dealing with tremendous growth and development and at the same time we were challenged to sustain what we achieved.

There's no doubt that one of the highlights was the inauguration of our new Preschool & Learning Center on November 18. The building is located right across from the Temporary Housing area where we also experienced a huge fire in August that left thousands of people homeless. Their dwellings are far from what we would consider a home. Nevertheless, our beneficiaries had to deal with losing their places, and they ended up - with a few belongings - on a basketball court for weeks. Most of their personal possessions were lost and no space was immediately available to build new homes. Unfortunately also two children died during the fire.

The swift response from the NGOs and sponsors was tremendous. In spite of the material loss, most essential items were replaced and eventually people were able to rebuild their houses with materials provided by the local government and a number of NGOs including Young Focus.

Young Focus' new Preschool and Learning Center, together with our center in the Vitas community, provided early childhood education for 432 children of 3 - 4 years old in the school year 2017/2018. We had the privilege of preparing them for enrollment in the local government schools.

With a total of 1342 beneficiaries in all of our programs, we reached the highest number of beneficiaries since we started in 2008. We will probably not be able to maintain this because many of our beneficiaries are facing relocation plans from the government. One of the communities (Temporary Housing) will be relocated in 2018. To be continued...

Education is the key to development. Therefore I want to thank many of you who have made Young Focus education programs possible for the children here in Manila.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul van Wijgerden". The signature is stylized and somewhat abstract, with loops and flourishes.

Paul van Wijgerden
Managing Director & Founder Young Focus

ABOUT YOUNG FOCUS

Young Focus has been working with children and their families in the Smokey Mountain area of Tondo, Manila, since 2008. Young Focus believes that education is the most powerful tool to tackle poverty for children and young adults. Young Focus therefore provides access to education, as well as the chance for children to develop themselves intellectually, emotionally and psychologically. Young Focus wants them to develop their hidden talents and reach their full potential.

Young Focus strongly believes in a holistic approach as far as child and youth development is concerned. That holistic approach goes hand in hand with believing in the potential of each child no matter what their psychological, mental, social or academic obstacles are. Young Focus also covers all ages in terms of development: starting at the preschool level up through college or university, and even beyond as Young Focus helps the graduates to find a job. Young Focus operates very close to, and in the community.

Young Focus believes that long-term investment in education is the most effective way. We use the existing government education system, acting as a 'catalyst' we work within this infrastructure. By not having our own official school, we keep costs low, whilst maximizing impact through our comprehensive after-school tutorial programs, which also encourage creative development and personal growth.

STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAM (SEP)



Grade 1-College

For students aged 5 to 20+, Young Focus provides school fees, uniforms, books and other school materials. Young Focus runs compulsory tutorials for all students at our centers, as well as life skills activities and creative learning opportunities.



Catch-UP

Young Focus has a several academic levels of 'catch-up' education. Catch-UP education is for children who have dropped out of school, providing them with a customized educational approach and social support before re-enrolling them into a local government school.

SOCIAL CARE PROGRAM (SCP)



Early Childhood Care & Development

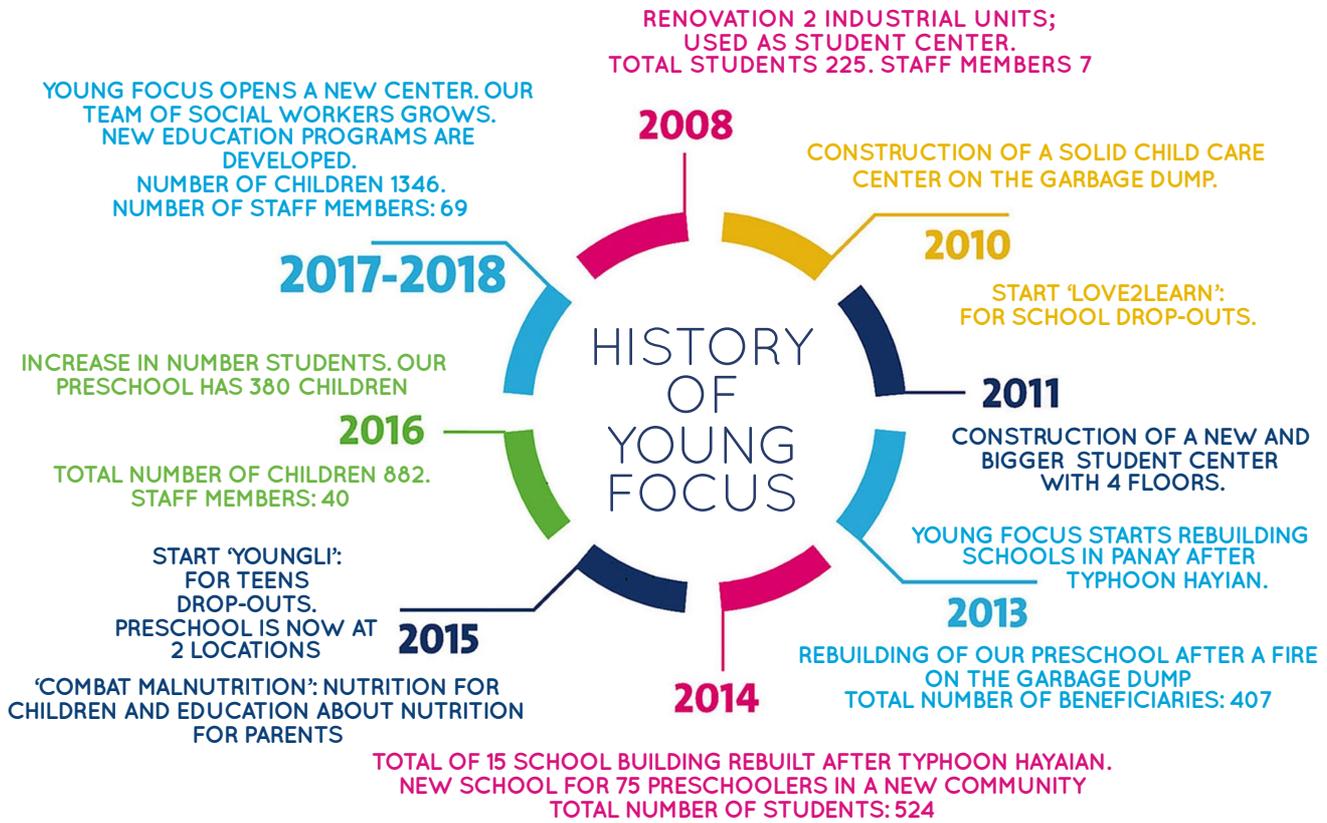
Child Care focuses on the small ones who are behind in their physical or mental development (0-2 yrs). *Child Care PLUS* is a preschool for children aged 3-4 years old, providing quality education and preparing them for elementary school.



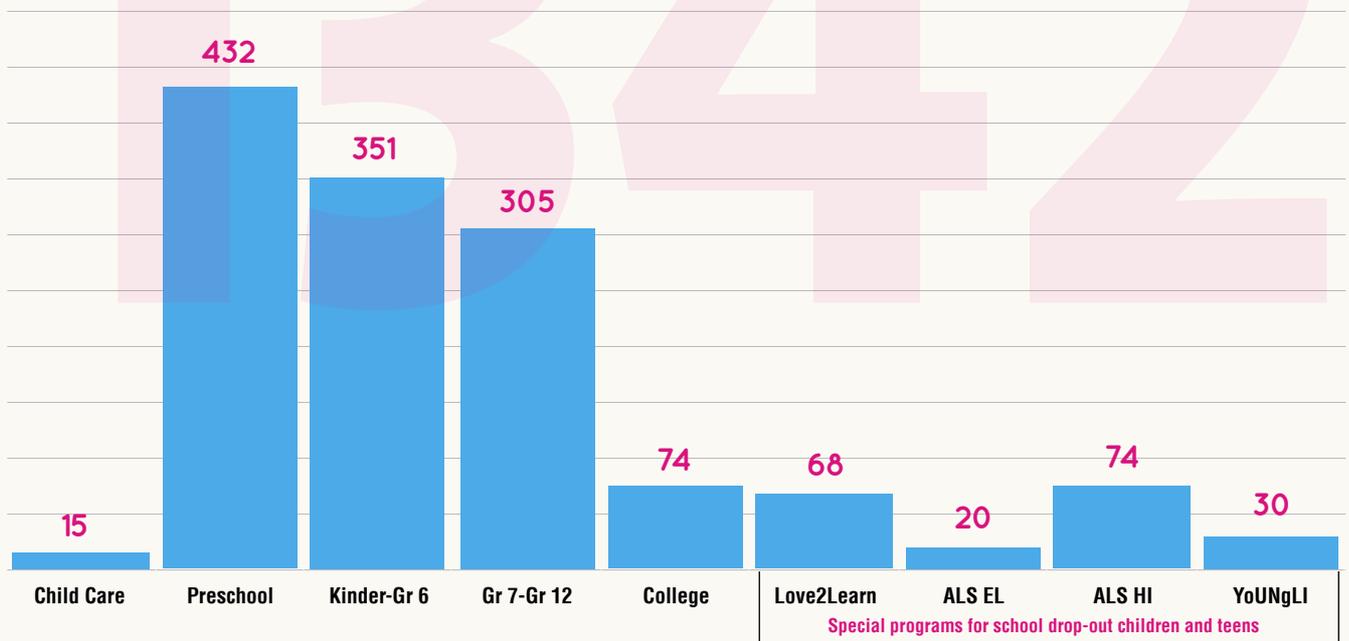
Family Care & Case Management

Young Focus works with families and students who are in need of more specialized social support, and gives training on nutrition, health, hygiene, family planning and parenting skills. We also provide meals for the children who need extra attention.

OTHER FACTS



NUMBER BENEFICIARIES 2017



432 PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

The expansion of the Child Care PLUS from 150 preschool children to 432 children - for school year 2017/2018 - stretched and deepened the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of the staff in our ECCD (Early Childhood Care and Development) program.

As early as January 2017, the team planned ahead in terms of the development and expansion of the Child Care PLUS program. The expansion resulted in the tripling of the number of beneficiaries, staff, classrooms and educational and life skills activities.

The challenging part of the expansion was to look into the approaches and strategies on how to maintain all the children in the program and making sure that no one would be left behind. Keeping the children in school entails the assessment of, not only the academic, but also the physical, psychological and social aspects of the children. This includes their direct environment which is the family.

The ECCD number of children were divided over two buildings: one in the Vitas community, catering for 175 children, and our new building focussed on Temporary Housing, catering for about 275 children. The preschool education during the week was strengthened and supported by Parent Effectiveness Modules and Nutrition Life Skills meetings for parents on Saturdays. All children received a daily meal under our Combat Malnutrition program.

TEACHERS WERE INSPIRED WHEN...

“...I saw a single mom with a big family and no permanent job. But she stands up and strives to do her best to feed her children.”

- Teacher Lylie

“...I heard from a mother how grateful she is seeing her child learning how to write, draw, read and socialize with other children.”

- Teacher Jessica

“...a mother tells us that she will do her best so that her son will stay in the Young Focus program because it gives her hope for her 8 children.”

- Teacher Emma

“... you hear that the children appreciate the food. And I myself cook these meals at home because it is cheaper and more nutritious.”

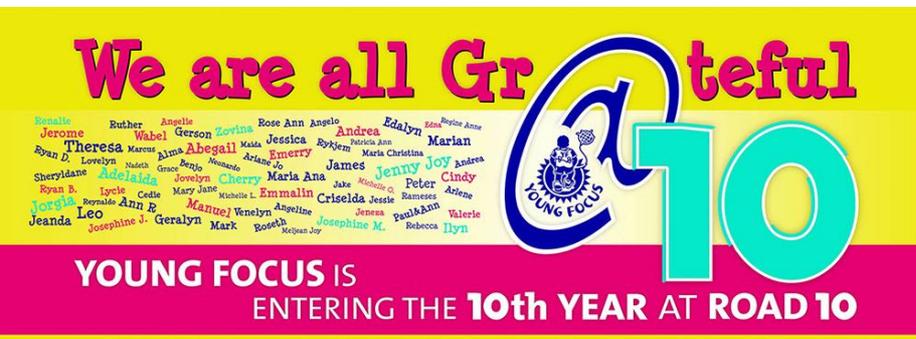
- Dhang,
Combat Malnutrition



GRADUATION MARCH 2017
150 CHILDREN



INAUGURATION



On November 18, 2017 we celebrated the inauguration of our new center. The theme of the day was 'We are all Gr@teful' through which we expressed our gratefulness to the foundations and individual sponsors who made this new center possible.

The new building at 'Road 10' then became a preschool for about 275 children and learning center for 80 ALS students*). And on Saturdays the building was used for tutorials for sponsored students, and teaching sessions with parents.

ALS = ALTERNATIVE LEARNING SYSTEM

ALS is a parallel method of learning that provides a practical option to existing formal education. It dovetails perfectly with our Love2Learn program which also provides substitute learning for those who do not have, or cannot access, formal education in schools.

The Alternative Learning System, is a one year training for drop-out students from elementary and high school. Within that year they will be able to obtain a diploma.



A total of 94 students went through ALS elementary (picture above) or ALS high school (left) in 2017.

STUDENTS' STORIES



Margie - BS Public Administration graduate

I was a sponsored student at Young Focus. I'm so happy and lucky because I never thought that I could achieve this kind of commitment. I had told myself that it would be ok if I just graduated from high school. But when I became part of Young Focus sponsorship, everything became possible for me; that's why I started dreaming big for myself and family. There was a time that I struggled financially. As a college student, I still needed money for transportation. YF also helped me through the 'Fair Jewelry' program. Every time I came short I had Fair Jewelry to back me up.

I'm so happy because my family is so proud of me. Now I will have to face the real world: finding a job, etc. That's why I need to become stronger because everything I do is for my family, and I want to end their poverty.

I would like to thank all the people who never gave up believing, loving, and supporting me in good and bad times. You are the reason why I was able to achieve all of this and why I am who I am now. Thank you so much Young Focus family and to my dearest sponsor. I love you all.



Ivan - Grade 10

"One day I was scavenging alongside my parents. While resting, I saw other kids around, and I said to myself that I do not want to spend my life this way. So, I have strived hard to stay in school no matter what happens. And who would have thought that that simple thought would make me excel. I did not expect I could ever accomplish this kind of achievement. If it is possible for me, it will be possible for you too,"

Ivan said to his fellow YF students during a meeting.

Ivan is a sponsored grade 10 student of Young Focus who received 8 awards in school:

- with highest honors - Class Valedictorian
- 2nd place Local Science Quiz Bee- School level
- 2nd place Environmental Quiz- Division level
- 10th place Science Quiz Bee- Division level
- Best in Science and in Electronics
- NC II passer-Electronic products assembly and Servicing
- Youth Leadership Excellence Awardee



Harold - BS Hospitality and Management

It was great to be a part of the Young Focus family. Yes, I treated them as my second family. All throughout my studies, they're the ones who guided me and helped me through the problems. They would always stand beside me.

I discovered my leadership skills in Young Focus. They are a big part of who I am now. Tutorials was a big help, as well as life skills and other workshops. But the most important thing for me in Young Focus was the student-staff relationship. As a student it was not hard at all to open up about school and personal issues. The bond among students was also amazing.

Now that I have become a Young Professional, I'm ready for anything. Whatever God will give, I'm ready to grab it. I just want everyone to be proud. Young Focus, my family and my sponsor. I'm very thankful for everything you gave. Not just financially, but also the moral support.

FIRE IN THE COMMUNITY



On August 18, a fire broke in the community of Temporary Housing. More than 500 families were affected and, among them, 104 families were Young Focus beneficiaries.

All the families had to live on a basketball court for weeks. Eventually the devastated area was cleared and people were allowed to move back - but without any construction materials to rebuild their homes. After providing immediate relief aid for the first weeks on the basketball court, Young Focus, the local government

and other NGOs provided construction materials like plywood, coconut lumber and roofing.

With the help of our Parent Area Leaders the materials were quickly distributed so people could start constructing their homes.

Besides the 954 sheets of plywood, 1272 lumber beams, and 312 kilos of nails Young focus distributed, 1830 school uniform items, as well as kitchen and storage materials, rice and clothes were given out.



MOTHERS & FATHERS



One of the fundamentals of Young Focus successes are the weekly meetings with the parents of our students. For 2017 all parents were strongly encouraged to attend the meetings. Mothers attended meetings related to several lifeskill topics like nutrition, hygiene, family planning and health. Fathers were often too busy with their work.

However, the fathers had a special learning module entitled 'Marriage is not a Joke'. Nurturing their families is often left to wives alone, when it should not be that way. Our staff taught fathers on, besides earning a living, how they could set a good example for their families; seeking further personal development, as well as development for their families.

STUDENTS' ACTIVITIES



Public Speaking Seminar

"The Public Speaking Seminar was an awesome experience for us. We learned that the basic format of speaking is just the same as when we are writing. We also learned that 'stage fright' is not our enemy, but our friend in disguise," college student Edrian said after the seminar.

Public speaking is one of the most important forms of communication, but at the same time, it's also the form people are most anxious about. At Young Focus, we expose our student beneficiaries to experiences that would help them improve their communication skills, as well as their ability to develop in the real world.



Holland Student Exchange

In April, four of our students were invited by Groevenbeek high school in Ermelo, the Netherlands for a Student Exchange experience. They travelled to different cities in the Netherlands, learned about the culture, attended museums, ate local meals with Dutch families, visited elementary and high schools and in doing so, experienced the Dutch educational system.

This was the third time Groevenbeek sponsored this program. As in previous times, the students experienced a tremendous boost in their self confidence, which Young Focus sees as the greatest impact of these trips in the lives of the students.



PostCare

'PostCare' focusses on students who need extra personal attention as well as tutorials. Most of our PostCare students are children who have a 'drop-out' background: they have gone through one of the Catch-UP programs, are now back in a regular school but receive extra tutorials and attention to diminish the risk they might drop out again.

Young Focus also covers tutorials for children with hearing disabilities. One of our teachers, who is specialized in sign language, has different approaches to make sure that they do well in school and also monitored them throughout the 2017/2018 school year.



Photography

The photography workshop was a workshop dedicated to teaching kids the technical usage of a professional camera and different creative techniques.

A student reported:

"I had already come to love photography because I like to take selfies and take photos of nature-oriented places. [In the workshops] I learned that you don't just take photos: I learned that there is a right angle, right camera settings, that there are different ways to take a shot and be creative.

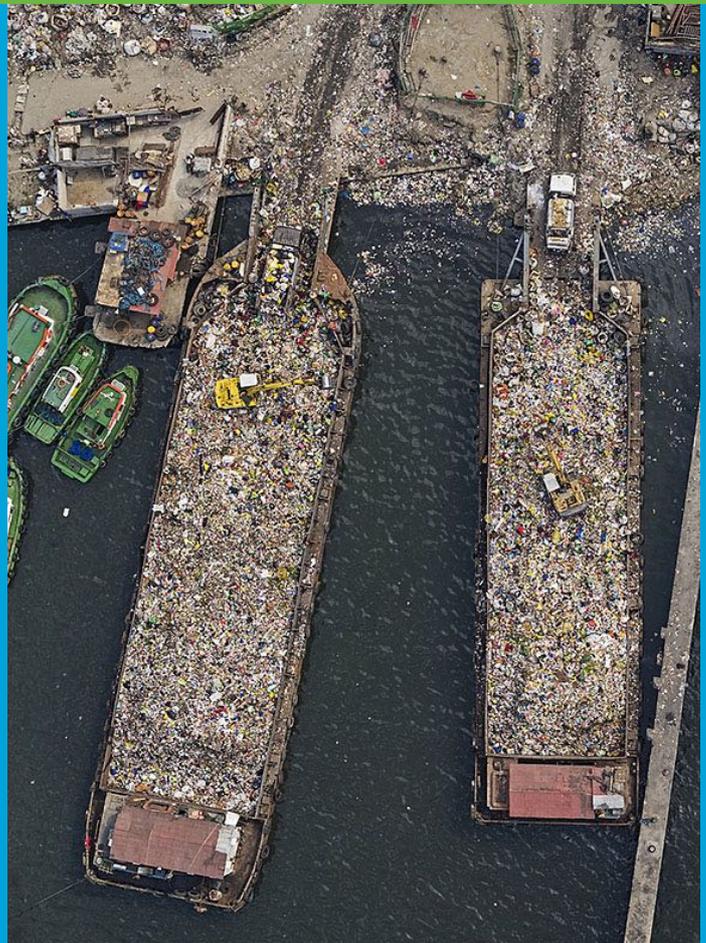
I've learned to look at things from different perspectives, find out where to focus, appreciate its surroundings (even the smallest detail) and see the beauty in everything".

CONTEXT

Thousands of families rely directly or indirectly on the garbage 'industry'. Jobs range from scavenging for recyclable materials to driving bike taxis. The average income for a family with these jobs is \$ 5 USD/day.

Financial constraints, as well as a lack of educational and social support mean that many children are unable to complete their education, and in turn, are unable to break the cycle of poverty.

Besides squatter houses along the river and the road, Young Focus works in three communities: *Permanent Housing*, *Temporary Housing* and *Vitas* with a total population of about 35,000 - 40,000 people.

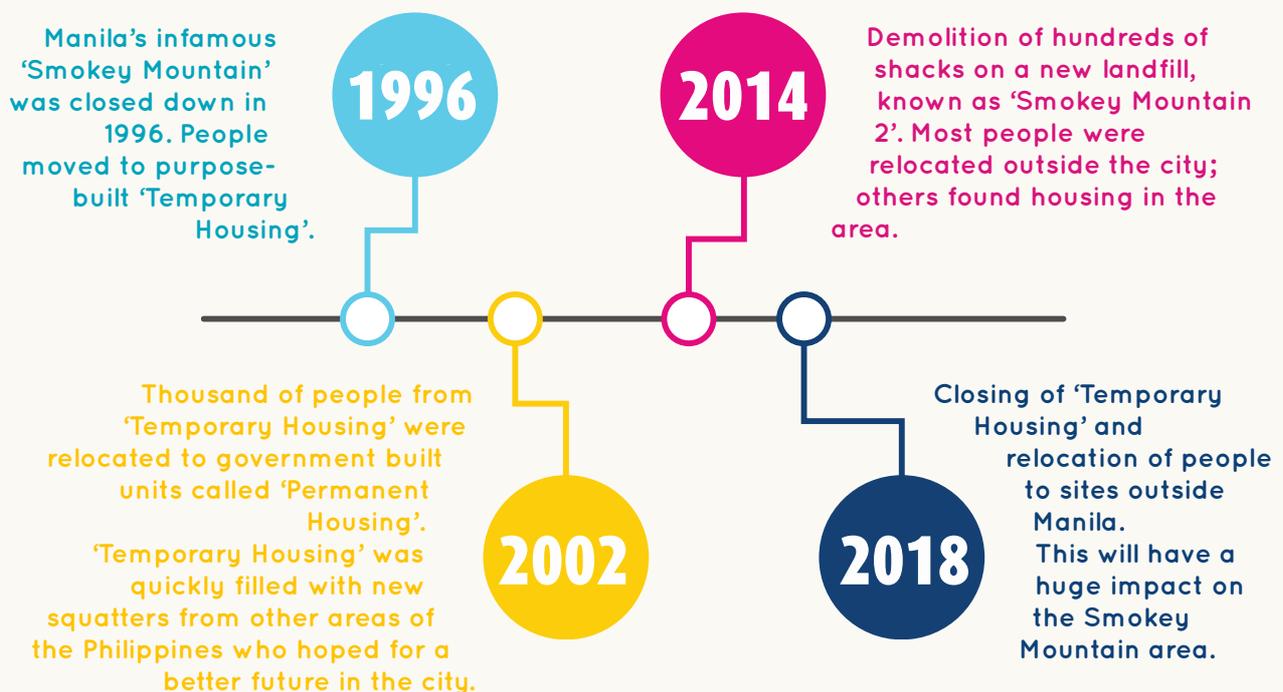


SINCE THE ORIGINAL GARBAGE DUMPSITES HAVE BEEN CLOSED THE GARBAGE TRUCKS NOW DUMP THEIR LOADS IN BARGES - WHERE PEOPLE SCAVENGE THROUGH THE CITY'S WASTE LOOKING FOR ITEMS THEY CAN SELL FOR RECYCLING.

RELOCATION

Preparations started for Young Focus in 2017, but the year 2018 will mark the relocation of about 8,000 people from the Temporary Housing community. Potentially about 250 of our students with their families will be relocated.

As the illustration shows, throughout the years relocations have happened before in the area. Obviously, the biggest issue for the people will be the availability of work and income.





Tondo Creations had a successful launching. It aims to expand and support the creative intelligence and artistic development of Young Focus students. The workshops offered include (but are not limited to): guitar, drawing & painting, photography, dance and theatrical arts and cooking.

The TC drawing workshop is a workshop dedicated to teaching Young Focus students basic figure drawing, drawing techniques and visual concepts. In the school year 2017/2018 the students participating ranged from grades 4 to college students, were mostly beginners, with a few more 'experienced' ones.

Our Tondo Creation Coordinator shared his experience in teaching the drawing workshop: "Sure, it is much easier to teach the older ones concepts and the theories behind art. The younger ones are easily distracted, but it has given me the insight on what activities and lessons are suitable for specific age groups."

Salve told us more about her experience from the drawing workshop: "I can say that it was a great opportunity to be part of the Tondo Creation's drawing workshop. I've

learned a lot! We started from simple and went on to more difficult techniques.

I didn't just learn how to draw "randomly", we were taught techniques on how to draw and shade properly, using different pencils. We were taught how to render a person's face in 3D. It gave such a happy feeling to be able to master that.

In coloring, I even got to mix 2 and 3 colors and create a new one. I was just amazed about how simple mixing can create lots of different colors.



SOCIAL WORK

This year Young Focus set up a Social Work Team with 4 Social Workers. With their help we were able to go deeper into the social issues the children and their families are facing. There is a strong emphasis on Child Protection Policies as this becomes more of a topic once foundations grow.

Besides case management the team also got involved in training and teaching the parents.

As the team integrated with our Family Care Program they were thrown into the deep end as they had to deal with the follow up of our fire victims.

SOCIAL WORKERS WERE INSPIRED WHEN...

"... I see young women who suffer a lot of pain. It is a self-realization that I should be thankful and grateful for my life, because these women face so many different struggles."

- Cedic

"...there is still hope to change the future for better. I saw change happen to former solvent users and seeing them now in school. Young Focus changed my views of life."

- Ryan

"...when you hear the real stories of parents who were victims during the fire; and how they stood up and started their lives again. Love will do whatever it takes to make your loved ones happy."

- Ariane

"... I put myself in the shoes of people in need and they remind me how difficult life can be and to always look forward for the best outcome. They inspire me when they say 'thank you' because that melts my heart."

- Nadeth

CATCH-UP: MORE FOCUS ON DROP-OUTS

In 2008 Young Focus started as an NGO which primarily focussed on sponsorship, coaching and facilitating tutorials for our 200+ students. Earlier in this annual report there was a brief overview of Young Focus development up to the 2017/2018 school year. As you may have noticed, there has been a growing focus on school drop-outs. This has evolved into four different approaches: Love2Learn, PostCare, ALS and YoUNgLI. Those four programs are now bundled in 'Catch-UP' as they work very close together.

It was way back in 2010 that we started with our Love2Learn program on the former garbage dump site. Since then many of them have gone back to a regular school. If children needed additional coaching or teaching they would stay another year in Love2Learn before being enrolled in a public school. After 7 years of running the Love2Learn program we have developed a solid curriculum for teaching



elementary age children. The graduating class of April 2017 had as their theme: 'METAMORPHOSIS: Challenged and changed'. It's a process all Love2Learn children go through.

Throughout the years we learned that there are so many older children and teenagers who drop out of school as well.

Only in recent years have we been able to set up new programs that would give them opportunities as well: In 2015 we started reaching out to teenagers. Some used solvent (sniffing glue) and had become addicted to it. Others were young adults and had never finished elementary school. These were kids who made a living by scavenging through garbage and yet... they still were young and had so much potential. Young Focus initiated YoUNgLI (Young Unlimited) to recapture their passion for education.

In the school year 2017/2018 we started a new program called ALS (Alternative Learning System). This is specifically for drop-outs who might be able to complete their elementary or high school education in a year through an accelerated study program. It is a module that the local government provides and we execute it.

All drop-outs who are from Love2Learn, ALS and YoUNgLI and go back to school but they will go

through a transition phase - as they are not used to a regular school yet. Young Focus supports them in our PostCare program. PostCare is the after-care program given to out-of-school kids and youth who go back to formal school. Students under the PostCare program are given extra monitoring through small group tutorials and school/home visits to lessen drop-out rates and to check if they have adjusted to the formal school environment. One of our PostCare students, now in Grade 10 shares: *"My initial days at PostCare were difficult because I didn't know anyone at Young Focus yet, but my coordinators were very helpful and encouraging that's why I was able to do my best as a student in school. I am also thankful for the supplementary food that I was receiving every day because it helped me to think better while studying."*



YoUNgLI hosted a team building event in Wawa Dam, Montalbano. This was to help with developing effective communication and co-ordination skills. The successful event was facilitated by staff and volunteers. Despite the bad weather, the Youngli beneficiaries enjoyed and learned from the group activities and educational sessions.

In 2017 YoUNgLI also started with ukelele lessons! Playing together and performing made a real impact on group development, as well as discovering their talents.



TOTAL IN CATCH-UP:

YOUNG FOCUS INFO



Name & address of organization	Young Focus for Education & Development Foundation, Inc. 284 Dayao Street, Balut, Tondo, 1013 Manila, the Philippines
Telephone	+63 358 48 22
Mobile	+63 (0)9-7781-0-6681
Email	info@youngfocus.org
Websites	www.youngfocus.org / www.facebook.com/youngfocus.org
Date of establishment	December 28, 2007
Bank account	BPI (Bank of the Philippine Islands), Navotas Account no.: 4651-0036-58 / BIC/SWIFT code: BOPIPHMM
Finances	A complete Audit Report 2017 is available upon request: info@youngfocus.org
Legal Structures	<i>Charitable organization:</i> registered & licensed as social welfare and development agency to implement Community-Based Programs and Services for Disadvantaged Children, their Families and Communities by the DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development - Reg. no. SWD-SB-A- 001358-2015 + Accredited by the DSWD

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Cathlyn Ann Ragudo: Social Care Program Manager
Marian Erika Terredaño: Student Education Program Manager
Jenny Joy Alvazo: Catch-UP Program Manager
Wabel Animoza: Administration Manager



On behalf of our Young Focus beneficiaries
we want to thank you for helping to make all the activities and
programs of 2017 possible.

It was a year of academic, mental, social and spiritual growth
for the children and students:
another big step toward fulfilling their dreams,
as well as our desire to see them one day become mature and
responsible members of Filipino society, contributing
their talents and leadership.

The Young Focus Team

