



NEVER
NEVER
NEVER
GIVE UP



JAARVERSLAG

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

Nederlandse inleiding



Beste vrienden,

Dit is het jaarverslag van 2019, een prachtig jaar met veel nieuwe afgestudeerde studenten die een toekomst tegemoet zien wég van armoede. Zij delen hun geluk en vreugde met hun familie, wat ook een impact heeft op de lokale gemeenschap en andere jongeren aanmoedigt om ook te kiezen voor onderwijs zodat zij de mogelijkheid hebben om de vicieuze cirkel van armoede te doorbreken!

In 2019 hebben we een grote stap gemaakt in het nauwer betrekken van onze achterban en de uitbreiding van het bestuur met nieuwe geëngageerde leden.

Een greep uit de activiteiten:

- ♦ We hebben met (bijna!) alle sponsors persoonlijk telefonisch contact gehad om hen te bedanken voor hun voortdurende steun voor het werk in Manilla, waarover u in dit verslag meer kunt lezen.
- ♦ Paul & Ann van Wijgerden waren na de zomer enkele weken in Nederland. Tijdens de Meet & Greet vertelden ze over de ontwikkelingen bij Young Focus in Manilla en presenteerden ze de prachtige nieuwe Young Focus-film met de indrukwekkende verhalen van Salve en Ivan.
- ♦ Nieuwe vrijwilligers zijn belangrijke ondersteuning gaan bieden in het administratie- en kantoor team.
- ♦ We hebben nieuwe contacten met fondsen opgedaan, met onder andere als resultaat dat EO Metterdaad in december opnames heeft gemaakt voor een serie uitzendingen in voorjaar 2020.

Dit jaar presenteren we het jaarverslag in het Engels. Mocht dit voor u lastig zijn, wilt u dit dan aangeven? Graag licht ik, of een van de andere bestuursleden, u persoonlijk toe wat dit verslag graag wil vertellen.

Hartelijke groet, namens het bestuur,

Netty Visser
voorzitter

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Intro



Dear Reader,

We would like to present to you an overview of what was happening here in Tondo, Manila in 2019.

2019 was certainly one of the most memorable years since we started in the Philippines in 2008. Young Focus had gained a lot of attention through Catriona Gray, Miss Universe 2018, who advocated the foundation worldwide. That support for us was very touching, not only the support for Young Focus, but also for Tondo, which all at once seemed to be recognised on the world map: the poor and underprivileged of this huge squatter area was suddenly 'on the radar' of many people around the world. We can only hope for a long-term impact from this, that many more children will be able to receive education and care from Young Focus and the other NGOs working in the area.

2019 was also a good year in which we celebrated a new batch of young professionals: students who graduated from college or university and entered society after years of study and effort. We are so proud of them and we see that the academic level of Young Focus graduates is going up. Thanks also to the hard work of our team.

Yes, we are really grateful for the Young Focus team of staff (see page 4): without them Young Focus could not function and operate the way we want to. Here we also see a growing level of expertise and commitment.

We want to thank each and every one of you who believe in what we do and support us by volunteering or donating. We hope that this Annual Report will encourage and inspire you to continue to be part of this foundation.

Thank you again.

On behalf of the Young Focus team and the Board of Trustees here in Manila.

Paul van Wijgerden
Managing Director



MISSION

Improve the spiritual and social well-being of young people in poor communities by means of education and personal support.

VISION

Give underprivileged children and young adults the chance to develop themselves intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually by means of education and personal coaching. The organization wants to see young people developing their (hidden) talents, and, in doing so, escape the vicious cycle of poverty.

Young Focus operates in a highly complex environment, holistically addressing a myriad of socio-economic issues for target beneficiaries - children and families who live in the Smokey Mountain area (Manila's former dumpsite). Thousands of families rely directly or indirectly on the garbage 'industry'. Jobs range from scavenging for recyclable materials to driving bike taxis. Financial constraints, as well as a lack of educational and social support, mean that many children are unable to complete their education, and as a result, are unable to break the cycle of poverty.

Young Focus works here in three main communities: Permanent Housing, Vitas and Temporary Housing, all located in the Smokey Mountain area, and including smaller pockets of shacks. In total Young Focus estimates that about 40,000 people live in these communities. Young Focus also has a number of beneficiaries in Bulacan and Cavite, who were relocated in recent years.

Four goals to change the lives of children and their families

1

To enroll children into government education system and provide extra educational, as well as social and creative support

2

To motivate, stimulate and prepare children and youth who have dropped out of school so that they can finish elementary, high school and college

3

To provide comprehensive Early Childhood Education and Development for 0-4 yr olds to give them a solid basis for enrolling in elementary school

4

To provide social support for all the students, families and wider communities in which Young Focus works

Young Focus Team



Young Focus Programs

Child Care PLUS / Early Child Care & Development

Child Care PLUS is for children aged 3-4 years old. The main objective is to provide quality education which helps the child's social/emotional, physical and cognitive development. It also provides them with life skills, play and basic education.

Grade 1 - Grade 12 and College Education

Local students aged 6-20+ are supplied with school fees, uniforms, books and other required materials. In addition, Young Focus runs compulsory tutorials for all students at the Student Center which also has a computer room, a library, classrooms and recreational areas for them to use.

Love2Learn

This program focuses on children who dropped out of elementary school due to poverty and a lack of educational and social support. This program provides classes for one year before re-enrolling them into government schools, and works with the families to solve any problems that might get in the way of the children completing their education.

PostCare

PostCare students have re-enrolled into government schools. During the transition from being a school dropout these students receive extra coaching to prevent them from dropping out again.

ALS

ALS = Alternative Learning System. The ALS program is the formal 'study acceleration' program of the government. It allows us to work with youth who cannot re-enroll into high school as they have been out of school for too long. Students receive an official high school certificate upon completion.

YoUNgLI

YoUNgLI (Young Unlimited) works with the most vulnerable 15+-year-olds who have received no - or very limited - formal education, many of whom are addicted to solvents. We provide them with a safe space to hang out and receive training in hygiene, education, personal coaching and life skills with the aim of recapturing their love for education. We then either enroll or re-enroll them in local schools through our school sponsorship program.

Combat Malnutrition

The program Combat Malnutrition provides nutritious and healthy meals for children in Love2Learn and YoUNgLI. Combat Malnutrition also teaches parents on health and nutrition.

Family & Social Care

Young Focus works with families and students who are in need of more specialized social support. Besides personal social support the social workers also provide training on child protection, health, hygiene, nutrition, family planning and parenting skills for the parents of all Young Focus beneficiaries.

Highlights

An unforgettable day...

It was unforgettable for our Love2Learn children (school dropouts) to experience a day at an oceanarium in Manila. They saw the most amazing marine life attractions. This was no ordinary school trip... for our children this was their highlight of the year! It was made possible by a number of leading BPOs and their top client. They joined us for the day as well. Before going to Ocean Park, the visitors saw for themselves what life is like in a squatter community when we showed them around.



Young Professionals

May we introduce you to some of the people we are most proud of: the Young Professionals. These are around 125 college and university graduates who used to be Young Focus sponsored students. And, though they have finished their studies, they remain, of course, still part of the Young Focus family. They meet together at Young Focus on a regular basis for mutual encouragement, and to plan activities for Young Focus students. After all, they understand as no one else does, the challenges the students face...



Miss Universe Catriona Gray's homecoming

At the end of 2018 Catriona Gray became Miss Universe. Since then Catriona has been raising both funds as well as awareness on behalf of Young Focus. In February she came back to the Philippines and visited Young Focus. At the homecoming event at a main Manila stadium a group of our children were also invited on stage, which was broadcast on national television.

Checking out our teeth

Dentistry students from the University of the East conducted dental checkups and treated about 100 young people from Catch-UP (programs for school dropouts).

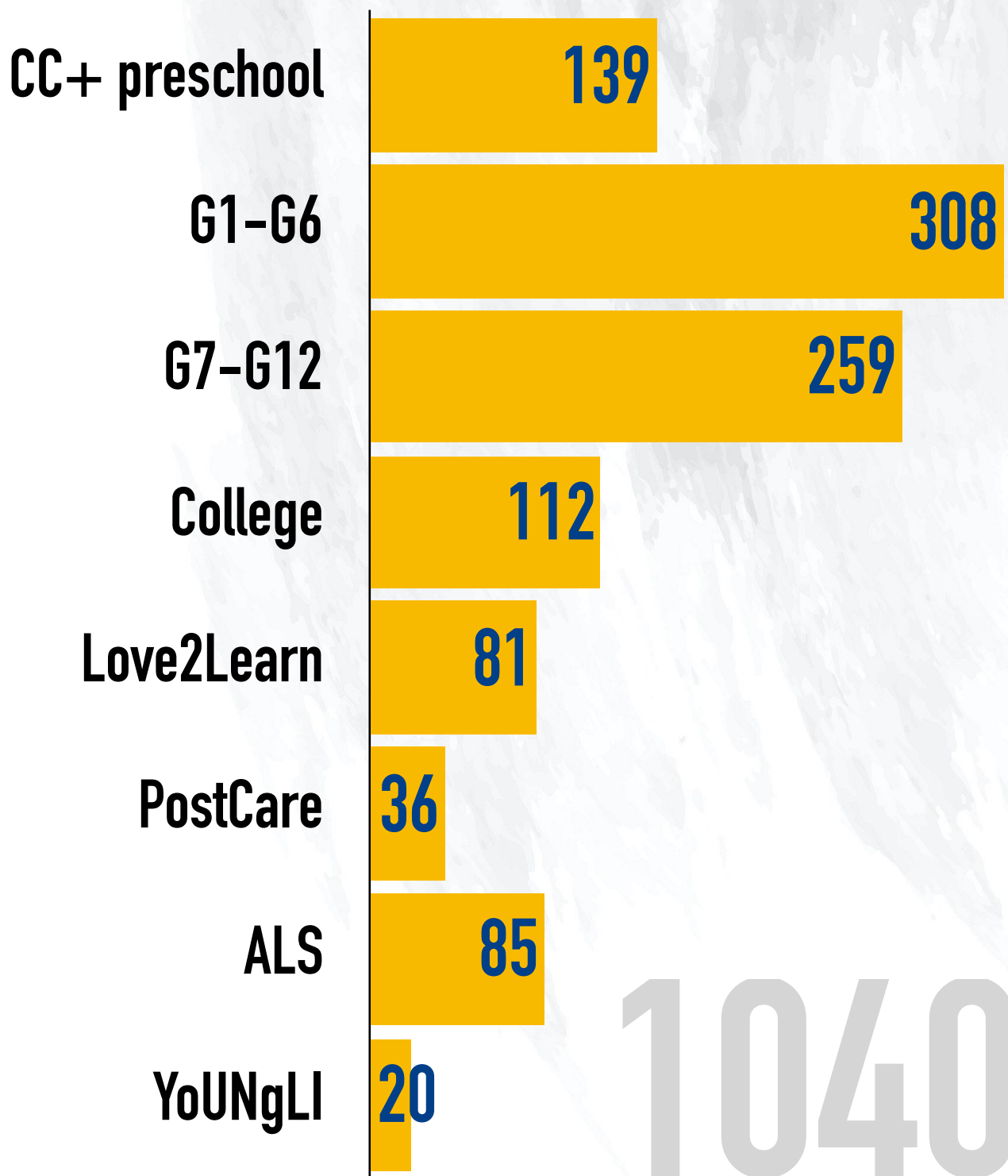


10 Computers for school dropouts!

Young Focus wants to tackle computer illiteracy among school dropouts. Young Focus has a special 'Catch-UP' center for them on the edge of a large squatter area in Tondo, Manila, but what we were still missing were the computers... We set up a computer room with 10 computers to give 200 children and teenagers the opportunity to develop their talents through educational computer programs.

Number of Children in Young Focus Programs

As of Dec 1 2019



Love2Learn, PostCare, ALS and YoUNgLI are the Catch-UP programs which have as their goal to give school dropouts the chance to go back to school and/or finish their education.

Thomas is now a Mechanical Engineer



Thomas: "All I wanted was to finish my studies and get a job. What kind of job? I didn't know. I just wanted to complete my schooling so I could work. This was how I thought when I was young: a simple student who just wanted to finish his education. I feel so lucky because a year after entering high school I became a sponsored student of Young Focus. But it wasn't until I started college that it really sank in. Some of my friends in Tondo couldn't afford to continue their studies. That was when I realized how blessed I was. I had never realized this before, maybe I was too young. But in my college life I start imagining what my life would have been like without Young Focus.

Along the way I experienced a lot of problems in life and Young Focus helped me to overcome those problems. This foundation has taught me to value and appreciate someone's effort. I will never forget the time I visited the Netherlands because I saw the reality, how Young Focus works, and their efforts to try to make sure we have an education. I learned that it's not only about finishing your study and landing a job. There's more to it than that. Young Focus wants every student to have a better life, to be a professional; to tackle poverty through education. As a student, I knew that the only thing I could do was to study hard, and so I did. Young Focus also gave me the opportunity to speak to other students, especially to out-of-school youth, to encourage them to go to school. Young Focus gave me and other students the chance to lead as well, establishing a student council where we could practice our leadership skills. I'm so thankful that this foundation has given me many life lessons that I can share with other people.

Sixteen college/university students graduated from courses like Hotel & Restaurant Management, Engineering, Business Administration, Human Resource Development, Accounting, Psychology and Education.

Now, that I have finished my studies as an engineer, it's my time to support my family financially, and as a Young Professional, it's my opportunity to give back to the foundation that helped me reach my goal. To Young Focus and to my beloved sponsor, thank you from the bottom of my heart, for not giving up on me. Thank you for believing in me and for supporting me. I will always remember and represent the name of Young Focus wherever I go".



Mr. & Ms. Ecology

Students, from Grade 7 to college/university, competed for the title Young Focus Mr. and Ms. Ecology 2019. Based on the theme 'Conserve Nature, Save our Future', each team made costumes out of recycled materials, such as paper, cardboard, straws, etc.

With the students looking incredible in their amazing costumes, the 'Trashion Show' was indeed a wonderful event. The contestants were also 'put on the spot', and had to answer challenging conservation-type questions. Our goal for the whole event was for the students to learn how they can do a lot in helping the environment through reduction, reuse and recycling. What was also extra rewarding to witness – from the preparation to the prize giving moment – was the unity of the students and the deepening bonds of friendship they made. Young Focus will hold more activities like this, where the students get to learn, bring out their creativity, have fun, and make friends.



Highlights

FIRST-EVER HIKE FOR YOUNGLI!

YoUNgLI (Young Unlimited: older school dropouts) had their first hiking experience, conquering the mountain Daraitan... This hiking day was a very wet one, the rain causing the rocks to be muddy and slippery. It was a tough climb and an even tougher descent. But they kept an amazing attitude and truly enjoyed their day out, finishing the hike in the cooling waters of the Tinipak river. All in all it was an amazing day!



MERIT BAZAR

Among the activities run by our Student Support Program is the Merit Bazaar. One of the goals is to help motivate the students to be actively involved in the tutorials and life skills sessions. For each activity the students attend, they accumulate points. These points are then converted into Pokus Money (play money made by Young Focus), which they can then use to 'buy' things at the bazaar. A great variety of things are 'on sale' for the students, such as books, clothes, shoes, school supplies and toys. One of our students, who didn't have a cellphone, was able to accumulate so many Pocus points - also with the help of other students - that he was able to 'buy' a cellphone. He truly deserved it as he has been attending all our activities! ... The Merit Bazaar is a pretty fun way to learn the concept of saving!



PARENTS TALK ABOUT EDUCATION

In Young Focus it's not only about educating the children, it's also about involving the parents. We have parents' meetings and tackle the importance of education. We discuss what happens to children when they complete their schooling, and what happens to them when they drop out.

Without the direct involvement of the parents in the students' education, the chances of students dropping out is high. Unfortunately it is often the case that parents are not involved in the studies or have other priorities for their children.

In 2019 our Family Care staff and Social Workers conducted training on various topics on education, as well as other lifeskill topics related to family life. Each month a new topic was discussed with the parents in the program. (Parents are required to follow these teaching sessions.)

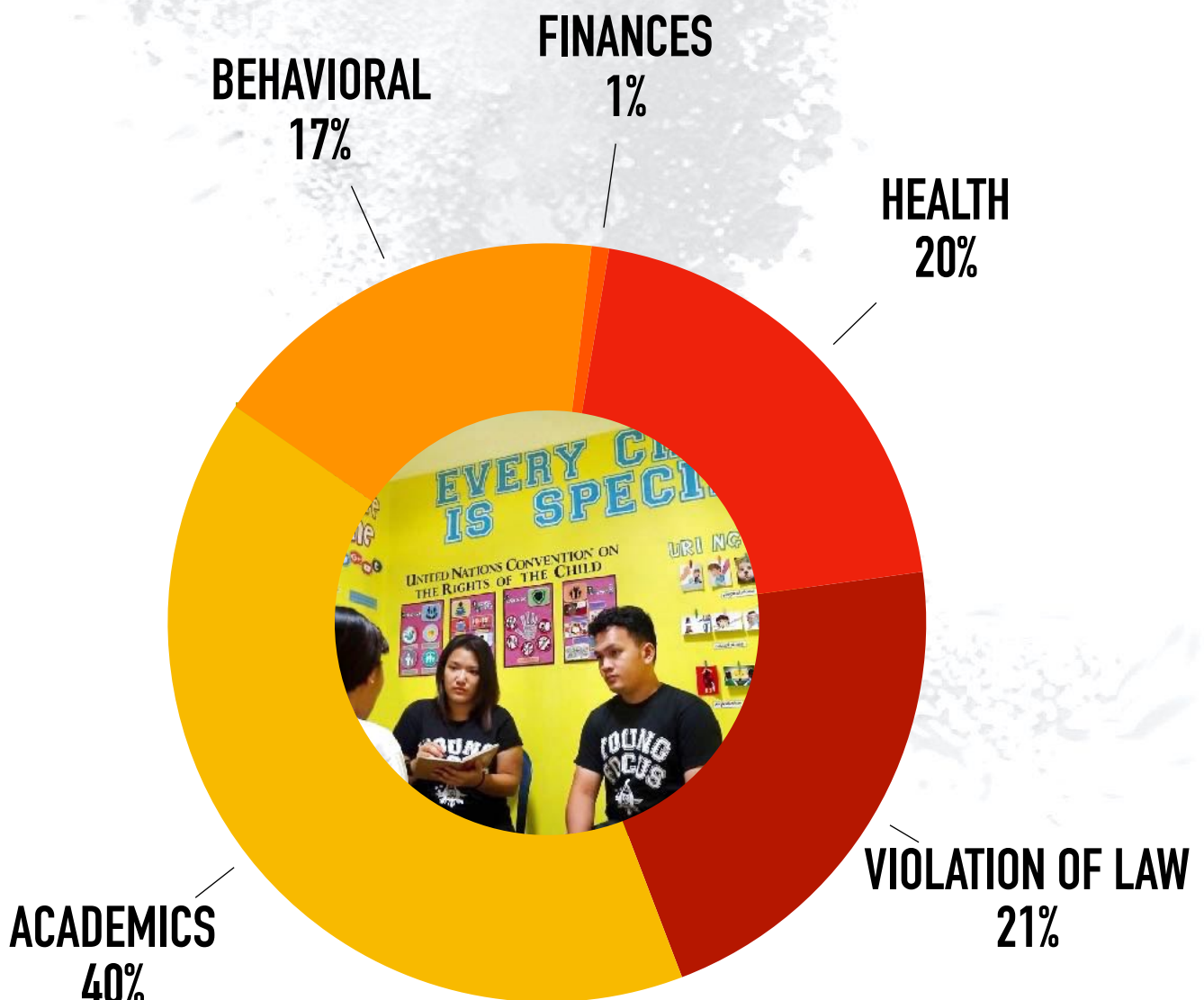
Equipping and empowering the parents has a direct impact on the development of the child, and is therefore a vital aspect of Young Focus training programs.



Cases our Social Workers Encountered

Our Social Work in Young Focus is concerned with helping the students and families within the community to enhance their individual and collective well-being. Besides addressing the issues they face, it aims to help people develop their skills and their ability to use their resources. In 2019, together with our Family Care program, they not only conducted training on life skills, but also conducted case management among the students, who faced five categories of challenges:

- **Behavioral** - behavioral problems like bullying (victim or offender), and suicide attempts. There were students who experienced stressful events at school or at home, which led to behavioural issues.
- **Financial** - financial problems or shortage of money. Many students suffered financially, with the potential to cause them to stop schooling.
- **Health** - medical concerns needing attention. We had students who needed medical assistance but could not afford it. The social workers referred them to agencies who could provide their medical needs.
- **Violation of the Law** - legal cases like abuse and committing crime. We had students who were victims of abuse, affecting their functioning as a person and as a student.
- **Educational** - there were students struggling academically for different reasons. We had students who had many absences because of problems in their family; sometimes they chose to stop their schooling.





JAYSON in 2004:

On Smokey Mountain

Jayson, his parents and 8 siblings grew up in the charcoal area of Smokey Mountain. Daily, together with his siblings and parents, he made charcoal from old wood. (Using charcoal is the cheapest and simplest way to cook a meal - rather than using a stove.)

Making charcoal was 'big business' on the old Smokey Mountain. The production of charcoal provided income for hundreds of families. However, the living conditions were awful and unhealthy: parents and their children lived in the

JAYSON in 2019:

Finished Grade 12, now taking up 'Criminology' at College

smoke 24/7. The local authorities eventually decided to close the charcoal area down and relocated the families to Bulacan - an area north of Manila.

Six years ago Jayson's family moved to Bulacan. He continued his education in high school and entered college in 2019. Jayson is doing very well in college and is diligent in his studies. Since a young boy, his dream has been to become a policeman. Young Focus will support him to fulfill his dreams.

I see one of my responsibilities here in Young Focus as being that of a life changer. Indeed, being a coach/coordinator not only requires skills to teach students, it also means having a sound mind and caring heart, which can help turn the tables on even the most desperate moments for an individual student.

Being of service to young people in Young Focus for almost 3 school years has been an absolute eye-opener regarding the actual situation of the families in this community. My personal emotions and patience are constantly being challenged by the various situations and behavior of the beneficiaries.

I am most fulfilled seeing my students realize for themselves the consequences of their impulsive decisions and actions. While of course I want them to finish their studies, it is also significant that they understand the reasons why they have to go through all of these negative or positive experiences. I believe that you not only go to school to acquire academic knowledge or to earn a diploma. An individual also goes to school to meet other people; classmates, school mates, teachers, etc. Communication and interaction with others play a huge role in the development of a person. Some students, that I'm currently dealing with, commit certain actions that result in a negative impact on their studies. [*] When I reach out to help, I tell them that they should be grateful that their teachers are considerate enough to give opportunities to students like them. We talk about the importance of doing a particular task and why it is essential to complete it. I remind them of their values, their worth and the importance of considering others. I constantly tell them that they should not lose their sense of self in the process. Now, as my students start to understand the importance of complying with a particular task, they have frequent communication with, or visits to, Young Focus. This is my personal emphasis, that they become determined enough, or at least think through the positive side of moving forward, even with little steps.

My ultimate vision for my students is obviously, that they finish their studies. Beyond this, I want to see them become as successful as possible, with a strong sense of self-worth, as well as having a living testimony for future students. Their stories of hardships and triumph will become examples for others.

Arvie, for instance, has been an outstanding student of Young Focus since he was first accepted as a beneficiary. He is studious, responsible and a loving son in his family. He is also an active Young Focus student leader. In a family of 9 members, daily sustenance of the family is big challenge. The family's sources of income are their small "sari – sari" store and his parents working as scavengers. Arvie wants to be a nurse in the future.

I'm proud of the studies they want follow after Grade 12. For instance, we have students who are going to study Education, Health Sciences, Engineering, Hotel & Restaurant Management, Maritime, Architecture, Social Work, Psychology, IT, Accountancy, Business Admin., etc. Truly, students – and a list of courses – we can be proud of as a Young Focus team!

[] Issues include: spending too much time on social media, copying classwork from each other or the internet, struggling in relationships, and having to cope with an extreme workload from school activities and projects.*

**Ryan Rei V. Dorol
shares about his
experience as a
Grade 12 teacher
and coordinator**



GRADUATES IMPRESSIONS 2019



Raymond



Raymond is a former Love2Learn student who was subsequently able to enroll in third grade at elementary school. His parents separated and he lives with his mother and sister.

Life was extremely tough for him, which had made him stop going to school. He sometimes scavenged or did traffic-enforcer work to make money to cover their daily needs.

Raymond came to know about Young Focus through his neighbors, and was in the Love2Learn program for the 2018-2019 school year. Young Focus became a second family for him, with many new and memorable experiences in Love2Learn. He also gained friends and learned a lot - especially in Math and English, which was great preparation for his return to elementary school. Young Focus taught him to believe in himself. He can face all the challenges at school, he said, because of having the support he needs to finish his schooling.

Cristina

Cristina is a former Young Unlimited participant. She then joined the Alternative Learning System (ALS) class, a program of the Department of Education for the out-of-school youth, and passed the Accreditation and Equivalency Test, making her eligible to enroll in college.

In 2019, her family was among those who were relocated from Temporary Housing to Naic, Cavite (see page 15). Her father works as an on-call driver, while her mother is a stay-at-home mom.

Financial difficulties was the reason she had had to stop with her studies, which led her to disappointment and lack of interest regarding going back to school. Thankfully, she encountered Young Focus through some friends' recommendations and since then, was inspired to pursue her dreams.

Tinay (as everyone calls her) considers her experiences in the program as one of the most unforgettable parts of her life. She was able to travel and see places outside Tondo. She also enjoyed social activities and peer support. She even shared her talent in singing whenever there was the chance.

For the 2019-2020 school year she was in her first year at college studying tourism.



Where did the school dropouts go after a year in...

Love2Learn

Children who dropped out of elementary school due to poverty and a lack of educational and social support. This program provides classes for one year before re-enrolling them into government schools.

- 5 went to Kinder
- 9 went to Grade 1 Elementary
- 2 went to Grade 2 Elementary
- 6 went to Grade 3 Elementary
- 2 went to Grade 4 Elementary
- 5 went to Grade 5 Elementary
- 2 went to Grade 6 Elementary
- 4 moved on to ALS
- 20 did another year in Love2Learn

ALS

ALS = Alternative Learning System. The ALS program is the formal 'study acceleration' program of the government. It allows us to work with youth who cannot re-enroll into high school as they have been out of school for too long.

- 1 went to Grade 11
- 14 went to College/TechVoc
- 12 did another year in ALS
- 14 found a job

YOUNGLI

YoUNgLI (Young Unlimited) works with the most vulnerable 15+-year-olds who have received no - or very limited - formal education, many of whom are addicted to solvents.

- 1 went to Grade 3 Elementary
- 9 moved to Love2Learn
- 5 moved to ALS

POSTCARE

PostCare students have re-enrolled into government schools. During the transition from being a school dropout these students receive extra coaching to prevent them from dropping out again.

- 1 went to Grade 1 Elementary
- 13 went to Grade 2 Elementary
- 1 went to Grade 3 Elementary
- 1 went to Grade 4 Elementary
- 2 went to Grade 5 Elementary
- 14 went to Grade 5 Elementary
- 2 went to Grade 9 High School
- 1 went to Grade 10 High School
- 7 went to Grade 12 High School
- 2 graduated from College/TechVoc
- 7 went College/TechVoc



Relocation to Naic, Cavite

In 2019 relocation started for the families of Temporary Housing.

For years it had been in the planning: the government built small concrete houses south of Manila to relocate the families of the Temporary Housing community (part of the Smokey Mountain area). Moving everybody will be a long process, but in the meantime 60 of Young Focus families already relocated. This is very much needed due to the extremely unhealthy conditions and the dangerously dilapidated state of the Temporary Housing buildings.

The new houses are great, and elementary and high school are provided in the area. However, the biggest challenge is for the parents to find work... Job opportunities are limited, but earning an income, of course is essential in order to provide for their families. Many parents have to travel back and forth to Manila for work.

Young Focus supported our families in the process of moving, including providing food for the first days. The vision is to construct a multipurpose center in the relocation area so we can offer the same services to our beneficiaries there as we do in Manila.



A new logo and website

1992



2002



2019



www.youngfocus.nl



Music lessons for YoUNgLI



Young Focus Nederland



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