



# NEWSLETTER

MAY 2023

## Editorial

In this year of ACAY's 25th anniversary, we also celebrate 20 years of the Second Chance program!

20 years of accompanying young people in situations of delinquency, in detention, or in the alternatives to detention that have developed over time in the Philippines.

20 years in which this program has given birth to the Second Chance program in Marseille.

We have gone from educational activities so that the time in detention becomes a "useful time" to a real concept of training and detailed accompaniment with specific objectives for youth in search of themselves.

*"Sister, I was 10 years old when my mother died..."*

*Sister, my parents split up when I was 5 years old and I didn't know where to go, shunted from one family to another...*

*Sister, I joined the gangs when I was 10 years old, I saw a lot of blood and violence..."*

*Sister, I was given to my aunt and brought to France without even knowing that I would never see my family again..."*



Alumni of the Second Chance Program with members of the team

I could multiply by hundreds the stories of journeying of young people in detention who carry within themselves such deep distress.

One of the challenges was to maintain an approach that combined work on oneself to untangle the inner distress experienced during childhood without minimizing a true culture of responsibility *"I am responsible for my actions, my past choices, and my future choices"*.

After 20 years, we now see young "ACAY Ambassadors" rising up, ready to testify in so many different contexts, to government institutions but also to partners and to other young people.

They are Ambassadors of hope and optimism.

Ambassadors that "a transformation is possible and it starts from within".

Ambassadors of a culture of responsibility.

Ambassadors that young people need a sense of belongingness, a family, and roots on which to build.

Ambassadors that life only has meaning if it is given and shared.

For this anniversary, we aim to find a place to stabilize the Second Chance Program mission towards this youth.

Be with us in this! These youth rekindle in our hearts, if needed, the hope that it is possible to see lives transformed.

Sr. Sophie de Jésus - ACAY founder





## THE POWER OF A SECOND CHANCE: 20 years in Manila

When I started my mission in MYRC (Manila Youth and Reception Center) with Charles and Egon, French and Austrian volunteers in August 2002, I never imagined that 20 years later this project would have grown into a program – so important and impactful for this country and for France.

SCP began first in our hearts. We dared to believe that these young people who committed crimes, detained in a Youth Home under challenging conditions, could become who they are today, responsible, respectful, successful citizens with a deep desire to give back to others.

We then met Edward, Nino, John Paul, and many others who are today's husbands and fathers, building their families and professional careers thus helping the new generations of CICL (Children in Conflict with the Law) youth to dream big.

After 20 years, the SCP alumni are numerous, they are an inspiration for the new generations of youth, by giving their testimonies, training, and coaching them. May this continuous chain of shared compassion and courage flourish and give Life to much more youth!

Happy 20th Anniversary!

**Sr Edit Fabian**  
Founder of SCP

Author Helen Keller once said that *"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much..."*. This year we have celebrated the compassion, generosity, and belief in a second chance for both those who are delivering and receiving the SCP interventions. The impact is profound and lasting.

For 20 years, there has been a constant encounter of "Second Chances" that has served as a catalyst for the development of each CICL: the family spirit, going beyond in reaching out, a connection with reality, and the need for growth, and the development of the Metamorphosis Method to transform the lives of the youth worldwide. Grounded in a shared and lived experience, innovation and strategies were combined to form this new and successful method.

The 20th SCP anniversary celebration is a moment of inspiration to move forward and continue spreading the flame of hope to Children In Conflict with the Law (CICL) for them to become Citizens Involved in Community Life (CICL).

To the people who founded SCP: the Missionaries of Mary, to those who believed that Second Chances exist and that there is always hope: benefactors, partners, staff, and volunteers, and to the living testimony of hope: the youth and their families, THANK YOU!

**Marlou Simangon-Dumao**  
Program Manager of SCP

*"We are proudly the fruit of ACAY's labor; we became Agents of Change. Thank you, ACAY for the 20 years of dedication to everyone!"*

**Rainer**  
SCP Alumni



SCP anniversary was an experience of JOY: the presence of a family, the change in so many lives, the realized dreams, all of this is because of everyone's perseverance. Little by little, everything has paid off. For me too...

For the future, I know that we will always have the courage to conquer the challenges. Thank you very much for having allowed me to be part of the ACAY family.

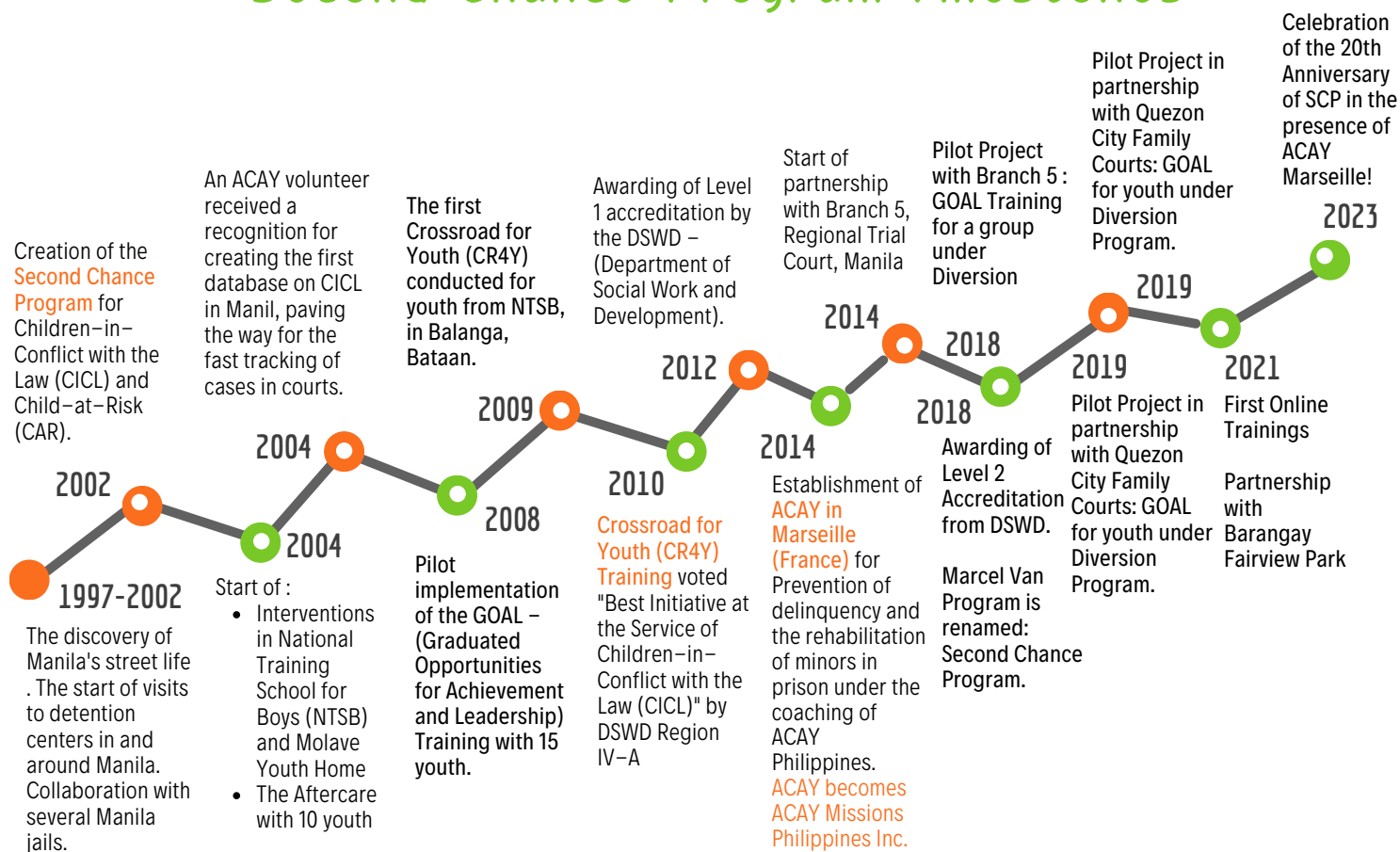
**Kim - SCP Alumni**







## Second Chance Program Milestones



# DISCOVERING ACAY'S ROOTS:

## The ACAY Youth Ambassadors of Marseille in Manila !

***This year 2023 marks a new turning point for ACAY Marseille. Last February, the entire team left for Manila, taking two young people with them on a 10-day volunteer mission in ACAY Philippines. Among the team members, Ines Sedrati, who has been in charge of partnerships and communication for the past three years, tells us about her immersion and her experience at ACAY Philippines with young people.***

Last year, we observed that some of our young people from Marseille were showing leadership skills and were willing to give testimony to the ACAY partners. By giving back what they have received, they help lift up other youth in need, they inspire people listening to them. This led us to design the "ACAY Ambassadors" program with a group of youth who have journeyed with us. The experience of Idrisse who, since then, became an ACAY staff, had been so impactful that the idea of taking others to the Philippines emerged. The project was finalized with 2 youths: Aimane, and Yanis. Two main objectives: Experience ACAY in the Philippines to reinforce the feeling of belongingness to the ACAY family and then to give them the opportunity to fully embody their role as ACAY ambassadors.

At the School of Life, I shared special times and life experiences with the girls, as well as with the staff of ACAY Philippines. Imagine working with people from a distance and building close relationships with them for 3 years, then meeting them for real. What a thrill!

The first day was particularly memorable for me. We started with a visit to a juvenile prison where Nino and Edward, two former youths accompanied by ACAY, had been incarcerated. We were speechless by seeing the poor conditions of detention, such an extreme compared to those in Marseille. However, the exchange of testimonies was inspiring for our ambassadors as well as for the young prisoners.

We also improvised a basketball game against the kids from the squatters, and that was the event of the day! We disrupted their usual routine and our heads and hearts were filled with memories.

Thanks to the tools such as the Genogram and the Lifeline, this stay in the Philippines allowed us to consolidate the work on self-awareness that had begun in Marseille.

Last 2019, Idrisse had been the first young person from Marseille to come to the Philippines. This time as a staff, he took on the role of "Captain of the team", transmitting to the youth all he had previously received.

Today, while staff in ACAY, he is studying to become a monitor educator. His presence was extremely precious for our youth who experienced for the first time such a trip.

It was memorable and will remain so moving for me to see the Marseille youth giving their testimonies. They realized the journey that they had done. Despite the language barrier, we could sense so deeply the hope that they shared with youth who have experienced challenges in life.



The journey continues. Now, the future goal with this group is to create a solid group ready to support ACAY to reach out to other generations of youths.

Before this trip, I used to talk about ACAY as if I had already been to the Philippines. Now that I have been there, "everything makes sense". I came back full of ambition, like a new breath to breathe into our youth in Marseille and the team.

**INES SEDRATI**  
**Communication and Fundraising Officer**  
**ACAY Marseille**



# School of Life Debutants 2023



Turning 18 years old is a significant milestone for Filipina girls, as it marks their transition from adolescence to adulthood. The "debut celebration", which is a traditional Filipino coming-of-age celebration, is often seen as a rite of passage. It symbolizes the young woman's readiness to take on the challenges and responsibilities of adulthood. The ACAY family and School of Life recently offered a wonderful debut celebration for 6 beautiful ladies! Read about their personal experience below. The presence of the Second Chance program, France and Philippines, made this moment so special for all.



Mickaela: *"The experience of my debut, has given me a chance to reflect on my past and to give thanks for all the good that has happened to me. A huge 'Thank You!' to all our benefactors!"*



Maria: *"I remember when I was a kid I dreamed of a fancy debut, but I never imagined it would happen here in School of Life, with the people I'm inspired by today. The place was so beautiful."*



Lovely: *"I will always remember these words from a debut guest, 'Adulthood might be tough, but if we use what we have learned from the people who love and support us, we can conquer it no matter how hard it is as long as we always believe in ourselves.'"*



Shara Mae: *"My birthday had been simple and a regular day just before I joined School of Life. ACAY chose to offer me this special moment and celebrate the gift of my life. My parents were there, and they saw my dream coming true."*



Tina: *"ACAY helped me conquer my inner battles and crises – and finally I could have my debut this year. ACAY is a family who have accepted me and changed me into who I am now."*



Katherine: *"Throughout the entire evening, I felt like I was a very lucky girl because I was given this wonderful 18th birthday with dancing and an escort. I am grateful through the help of ACAY my mother was able to attend too."*

## Thank you to our volunteers Kieran & Alvaro



Last February, ACAY welcomed two young men who volunteered to support our mission in the Philippines:

- **Kieran** who arrived last February for a month of exposure to ACAY and volunteer service. He taught self-defense classes in the School of Life, sports and English language to Molave Youth Home, participated as an escort on debut and with the Aftercare youth of Second Chance Program.

*A memorable and eye-opening month!* Kieran



- **Alvaro** who arrived last January for a month on his way from Mexico to Australia to further his studies on the Pedagogy of Education.

*In going to ACAY, I thought that I was going there to teach others what I knew; however, I realized that I was there to be part of a family... I am amazed at how the sisters and staff understand each one of the youths' situations and how they accompany them to a change of life. I realized that I was there not only to give of myself but also to learn how to look at others with compassion, how to give people a second chance.* Alvaro

## Skills Hub Training for ACAY Classmates



We're proud of our first successful training for ACAY classmates and external youth: Resume Making and Job Preparedness! This Skills Hub Training series aims to equip the youth with the necessary life skills for the future.

Among one the fun activities were having mock interviews to help prepare them for employment, with the participation of School of Life (SOL) beneficiaries. Ten young persons from external places (classmates and other foundations) joined the ACAY youth for this training.

After the training, the youth received a certification of completion of the training. Kudos and looking forward to more training to come.

## WANT TO MAKE A DONATION FOR OUR 25TH ANNIVERSARY?

You can make a single donation or commit to a monthly bank transfer, both to the amount of your choice.

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