



Metamorphosing youths' lives worldwide

# NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2023

## Editorial - Lines of Strength

The older I get (let's face it!), the more mature I become as a missionary and as a developer in the professional world, the more I see that the lines of strength of an organization are those where it is most authentic, where it is rooted and aligned in what is its DNA.

It's all there in this inner and outer alignment, in the alignment of a vision and objectives, of identity and direction, of charism and mission, where being and doing come together. That's where they become, as Yves Meaudre wrote in the preface to my book *Defying Chaos: fireflies in the night!*

I have begun to take my first steps in "seeding" the Metamorphosis method in various contexts: in an NGO and a community that wanted to formalize its identity. And other perspectives are on the horizon.

Adapting Metamorphosis, which I believe is so well suited to new generations, in such diverse settings makes me jubilant! Each time, it's like a new birth for the organization. In Bacolod, the members of an NGO told us at the end of the first phase that "in just a few days you've given us a real metamorphosis". There's no better word for it.

For the young people and the professionals, it means returning to their unique being. For associations, to refocus on their uniqueness and vision, with simplicity and clarity.

Our donors, partners, and supporters for a wonderful year of metamorphosing youths' lives.

See page 06

## Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays!

Ultimately, this inner alignment transforms them in fireflies in the nights of the societies they are called to inhabit.

I'm immensely happy to be working with my sisters and our teams on this: bringing fireflies to life and transforming young people! In fact, this is perhaps the anchor of ACAY: this constant work over the years of trying to understand the underlying wisdom that has driven the events and the development of the missions, in order to unify the whole.

By joining the ACAY boat, young people finally find that space of security that transforms them into spaces of generosity (to use Maurice Zundel's beloved expression).

Whether they're Filipinos or from Marseille, since we've had the joy of welcoming several of them among us in this year of ACAY's 25th anniversary, I've been dazzled to see this ACAY DNA: now they're the bearers of a word that goes beyond them, because it comes from this inner work of unification between what they've experienced and what they're called to share in this world.

Not everything is finished, far from it, but Life is taking its place and unfolding... and it's splendid!

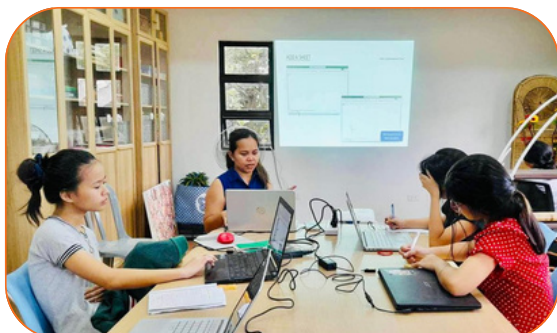
*Sr. Sophie de Jésus*

Sr. Sophie de Jésus - fondatrice d'ACAY

# Skills Hub: Developing the entrepreneurial skills of our youth

As a result of reflection during the pandemic, ACAY has launched the Skills Hub initiative: a training center that reinforces entrepreneurial and managerial skills among young people and their families to equip them for professional and financial autonomy. The Skills Hub is further divided into the following components: its entrepreneurship training (E-Hub), IT skills capacity-building (IT Hub), and creativity development (Creativity Hub). The Skills Hub building is situated at the entrance of the School of Life, a residential program in Manila designed to support and empower young individuals facing challenging circumstances.

ACAY is dedicated to preparing the youth for a dynamic and ever-evolving society. ACAY's comprehensive training courses are meticulously crafted to empower young individuals, offering them the expertise to establish their own small-scale businesses. Participants undergo immersive learning experiences, gaining proficiency in key aspects of the business world, including marketing, communication, business development, planning, finance, sales, and the essential qualities for success in entrepreneurship and management.



*Introductory computer training*

Through the hands-on training provided to participants, they are equipped with the ability to conceive and execute income-generating projects, coupled with the skills to plan, evaluate, budget, and uncover individual talents. All of these contribute to them regaining or rebuilding their self-confidence – something that ACAY emphasizes in all of its flagship programs, capacity-building activities, and other training events. This transformative process provides participants with newfound motivations to exceed personal boundaries.



*Production of Christmas decorations*



*The Skills Hub building*

ACAY's commitment to thinking big for its youth instills hope for a better future and facilitates their successful integration into the workforce. Within the Skills Hub, the team provides a dynamic space encompassing theoretical modules and practical hands-on experiences for piloting and developing income-generating projects.



*Job interview simulation*

Following this, participants engage with successful entrepreneurs, gaining insights into success stories, keys to achievements, and valuable lessons about experiences or behaviors to avoid. Supported by a diverse network of partners, ACAY ensures comprehensive assistance for the youth on their journey to success.

**But how does this impact the lives of the youth themselves? Let's hear directly from the beneficiaries of the Skills Hub program (See next page).**



## Shirley's Story

*I live in the provinces where I've developed a business selling organic fruit and vegetables that come mainly from my garden and neighboring farmers. I live in the province of Nueva-Vizcaya, 8 hours by bus from Manila. I organize my online sales to a network of customers developed by ACAY. Twice a month, I come to Manila to distribute my products and those of the farmers in my village. Thanks to the Skills Hub's training courses, I've innovated and cooked my products, such as banana chips, which are a big hit with my customers, and I plan to create new products such as pumpkin chips. I also want to invest and build a small bamboo kitchen to prepare more products. It's also becoming a family business as I pass on my knowledge and passion to my children.*



Shirley, older sister of a beneficiary

*I was able to benefit from coaching and follow-up for my business for two consecutive years with the Skills Hub, and I'm happy with all my experiences and adventures with this team. I was able to increase my sales thanks to their support. Although there were challenges, such as receiving negative feedback from customers, I overcame them and succeeded in building customer loyalty. Today, we have gained a growing number of customers who support our projects. The Skills Hub team suggested I enroll in the Philippines' government training course to transform my business into a start-up.*

## Lovely's Story

*Being part of the Skills Hub is a huge gift for me. Thanks to these training courses, I've developed my entrepreneurial skills. I've developed a business making and selling popcorn to my friends. It's been a great success and has enabled me to put money aside to prepare for my independence. I've learned to plan and to know the laws of marketing, sales, etc. I've improved my skills in the area of marketing and sales. I've improved my communication skills with my supervisor. I also learned how to become responsible for managing the stocks of our products, by being the leader of the group of girls within the Hub. My role has pushed me to be more committed and consistent. I apply these learnings in my income-generating project and daily life.*



Lovely, Marketing Training Assistant at the School of Life

## Some Figures from 2023

75

young people trained  
in entrepreneurship

44

young people trained  
in computer science

47

youth trained in self-  
awareness

50

Training provided  
within the Talent Hub

Thanks to all our donors who support this project, especially the Bouygues, Blancmesnil, Gratitude, Masalina, and AMADE foundations.

# "Incarcerated minors: From rupture to separation" Conference

**On October 6, the ACAY Marseille team was honored to participate in a significant event organized by the health teams of the youth prison at the Alcazar library in Marseille. The day brought together various influential figures, including Boris Cyrulnik (neuropsychiatrist), Eric Mangin (Vice-President in charge of juvenile court duties at the Marseilles Court of Justice), and Philippe Pujol (writer and journalist), shedding light on factors contributing to delinquency and exploring ways to assist youth in rebuilding their lives during their time in prison.**

The Director and an ACAY ambassador described the day as "a star in the dark night," emphasizing the importance of such collaborative efforts. Boris Cyrulnik shared his insights on the critical role of attachment in a child's psychological development. He stressed the significance of a secure attachment, highlighting how a child who feels loved and supported by parental figures develops healthy emotional and social skills and a capacity for resilience. ACAY's mission aligns with this approach, focusing on helping youth verbalize their experiences and fostering psychosocial skills.

Philippe Pujol, author of "La Fabrique du monstre" and "French Deconnection," delved into the complex realities of urban life in Marseille. He provided a vivid account of the construction and international forces behind drug networks, shedding light on the recruitment stages and the pressures that lead youth into what he termed as "slavery."



*"Idrisse's story appeared like a star in the dark night. His courage and mental strength are an example for everyone, professionals and inmates alike. It's undeniable proof that anything is possible in life," Sylvie said. "It's the voice of all these young former and current inmates that has been carried and heard. My young patients [incarcerated juveniles] often talk to me about ACAY, and in particular about Idrisse, who is a model of hope for them", continued Sylvie after listening to Idrisse and Laurent's presentation.*



Laurent, Idrisse, Sylvie Brollo (psychologist)

A powerful testimony was shared by Idrisse, a former ACAY youth who has successfully transitioned into a salaried employee. His narrative of hope and ACAY's impactful pedagogical approach, presented alongside Director Laurent, resonated with 200 prison professionals. Sylvie Brollo, the psychologist at the juvenile prison, described Idrisse's story as "a star in the dark night," acknowledging his courage and mental strength as an inspiration for both professionals and inmates. She emphasized that Idrisse's journey serves as undeniable proof that transformation is possible.

*"It's the voice of all these young former and current inmates that has been carried and heard."*

Madame Mongey, Idrisse's educator when he was a minor, also attended the conference and expressed gratitude for ACAY's continuous educational care. She highlighted Idrisse's remarkable transformation and commended ACAY for its commitment to collaborative efforts with operational partners, stressing the importance of working together to facilitate the reintegration of youth. In essence, ACAY's approach relies on partnerships to provide comprehensive care, contributing to the positive reintegration of young individuals into society.

*"Importance of working in partnership to promote the reintegration of our youth."*

*"A new page has been turned for Idrisse. He brilliantly transformed the trial with a desire to pass on! Finally, I would like to thank ACAY for the continuity of its educational care. It is a reminder of the importance of working in partnership to promote the reintegration of our youth. Through his life story, Idrisse illustrates the benefits of social ties in the face of the deleterious effects of sudden breakdowns," Madame Mongey said.*

Indeed, ACAY relies on collaborative work with its operational partners to promote comprehensive care for the youth, leading to better reintegration.



# Trophy Sports Adventure

**This summer, ACAY was invited by the Ministry of Juvenile Justice to take part in the Trophy Sports Adventure in Pelvoux, in the Alps.**

## "Summit School, a shared adventure"

This trophy, organized each year with some sixty youths in centers from all over France, had as its theme "Summit School, a shared adventure". Several collective activities were organized, transmitting the values of sport, solidarity, mutual aid, and surpassing oneself.

Engaging in this unique experience allowed us to interface with industry professionals and connect with a diverse group of youths. ACAY was a partner in the hike, which involved over 10 hours of walking and more than 1,000 meters of ascent. Each youth who completed the challenge enabled a family in the Philippines to receive a food basket sponsored by the Ministry of Juvenile Justice.

Rainier, a former beneficiary of ACAY Philippines, traveled to France to share his compelling life story with the French youth. Addressing the audience on the first day of the event, he recounted his experiences, leaving a profound impact on the attendees:

*I was lucky enough to take part in the Trophy Sports Adventure at the end of June. When I arrived, the organizers gave me a warm welcome. Right from the start, I felt at ease sharing my life story, hoping to inspire youth to go beyond their limits. When I finished telling my story, the youths were silent for a few seconds, and then some of them shook my hand, congratulating me on my courage and on what I was able to achieve despite everything.*



During the hike, accompanied by young people

*We also accompanied the youth and their educators on a 9-hour hike with a 1,200-meter ascent. It was hard and painful, as I rarely walk, let alone in the mountains. Most of the youths weren't used to walking so much either. That's why we were at the same level of difficulty, but together we succeeded.*

*During the hike, we talked to a lot of people: youth and professionals. We shared about our lives, what we love, our hobbies, the difficulties we face, and how to find solutions.*

*The youth's main motivation for completing the hike was to help youth in the Philippines. I was deeply touched and very grateful. For the first time in my life, I saw snow and immediately jumped in. Everyone was laughing! I was very happy to live that moment. I learned to live every step as an ascent towards our goal. I also did the hydrospeed activity, which involves floating down a river. I was delighted to have done it because it was a unique experience. On the last day of the Trophy Sports Adventure, the youth received their prizes. I also met a world ski champion, Simon Billy, who gave me a gift with an autograph. I was very touched."*

*The closing ceremony, attended by the ACAY team, was a convivial and emotional culmination. A commendable sum of €1,200 was presented, a testament to the unwavering dedication of each youth involved. Heartfelt thanks extend to the Ministry of Juvenile Justice and the participating youth for their invaluable commitment and contribution.*



Closing Ceremony

# NEWS FROM ACAY MISSIONS PHILIPPINES

Latest figures from the School of Life

12

Young women have successfully completed their school year



7

New young women have been welcomed in the School of Life

6

Companies have shared their expertise



50

Food baskets have been distributed

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**Reychell Clarisse S. De Ramon**  
Partnership & Fundraising Officer  
reychellderamon.acaympi@gmail.com  
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