



newsletter

Island Kids
Philippines 

2021/3

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Dear Friends of Island Kids Philippines

Even though the Covid pandemic has changed the circumstances of life drastically in many places, there are always signs of optimism and hope:

812 successful graduations; continuous activities against human trafficking; completed and newly started construction work; a nomination as social worker of the year; and of course, the start of Thomas Kellenberger's long walk from his home in Switzerland to his home in the Philippines.

There is still a lot to do to facilitate positive changes. Together with you we tackle it. Thank you for your support!

■ Current Situation in Cagayan de Oro

Despite of lockdown and travel restrictions, the highly infectious Delta variant of Covid-19 is spreading in Cagayan de Oro. The situation is precarious and lockdown has again been extended. Shops and restaurants remain closed.

We are grateful that so far neither kids/adolescents in the Children's Village nor staff have been infected.

Sadly though, in August several mostly elderly people of both slums of the Landfill died from flu-like symptoms. They have not been tested, and hospitals would not even admit patients like that. Sad as well that the newborn baby of Angeline, one of our teenage mothers, has died shortly after birth. Angeline herself was tested positive of Covid-19 in hospital and was sent home for recovery shortly after having given birth. Therefore, she was not allowed to be with her baby when it died.

We are grateful that our new local partner, the LifeBank Foundation, finances Covid-aid for the three districts San Simon, Pagatpat and Canitoan. This allows us to provide more Covid-19-aid. In addition we can now use all further dedicated donations for survival packages for families in Landfill and other poor areas of the city. The money saved because of cancelled school lunches due to module lessons is used for our pupils and their families.

■ Graduations 2021

Severely restricted by Covid-19 regulations, all graduation ceremonies took place virtually. We are happy and proud that a majority of our pupils finished their studies successfully:

- 21 graduations at the Junior Highschool
- 46 graduations at the Elementary School (6th grade)
- 531 transfers into the next grade of Elementary School
- 203 transfers into the next grade of Highschool
- 3 transfers into the next grade at the College

We congratulate the following young people on their important degrees and wish them all the best for their future!

Jessa Mae Sedon-Wabe – Bachelor nursery teacher

Rachel Gose – Bachelor teacher for English

Novelyn Cutanda-Auguis – Senior High School, degree for one of the top ten of the whole High School; start of studies of social work

Ragmac-Lamantucan Rosalinda – Senior High School, honors degree as one of the best of the whole High School; start of studies of psychology

Quidlat-Jaudian Rica Mae – Senior High School, honors degree; start of studies of psychology

Marba-Tanusan Jolito – Senior High School; start of studies of criminology

Quidlat Jason Vic – Senior High School; start of studies as an electrical engineer

Montero-Kipkipan Rosebel – Senior High School; entry into military service

For 21 pupils the module lessons were too difficult. Unfortunately, they did not succeed and will repeat their course.

We are especially grateful to our staff who throughout the year gave their best to accompany, support, encourage and stimulate these kids and adolescents under difficult circumstances. Their commitment exceeded their working hours. Equally we thank our sponsors and donors. They give these young people a perspective!

■ Activities of PIKIFI (Philippine Island Kids Int'l. Foundation Inc.)

Trotz der schwierigen Pandemie-Einschränkungen wird bei PIKIFI auf Hochtouren gearbeitet:

Preparation of **lectures on OSAEC** (Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children) and other activities in cooperation with LifeBank Foundation and Save the Children Philippines (see Newsletter 2021_2).

Renewal of accreditation by DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) in August, which means a lot of administrative work. In November 2018 PIKIFI was officially licenced, and in 2019 accredited as private Social Welfare and Development Agency (SWADA). For our work in the children's village (Residential Based Programs and Services) we received Level 1, and even Level 2 for the work under the community

of former recycling collectors (Community Based Programs and Services).



Filming relating to the topic of children's protection

For the **activity program** in the children's village during summer vacation our carers always come up with ideas, even though unfortunately all excursions are prohibited due to Covid-19. Also, psycho-social activities for children and adolescents are taking place after our social workers could complete a training of the Mental Health Society (amongst others storytelling, role-playing games, painting).

Enrolling for **the new School Year 2021/22**, due to Covid still as module lessons.

On August 17th a **video interview** relating to the topic of children's protection was filmed at PIKIFI in cooperation with various organizations.

■ Alice Rose Clover Child Development Center

On 8th June 2021 our new Socialtherapeutical Center for Prevention and Intervention has been inaugurated – only with a small celebration by some of our staff due to the pandemic. Pastor Florence Toloy gave the blessing and Marilou Lacre, treasurer of PIKIFI, cut the ribbon.

A few days later the whole of our administration as well as the social workers moved from the Red House (until 2007 Virgelia Dematas residential house, until 2017 an additional children's house for about 30 children, now only for boys) into the new building. We kept to the budget and the opening took place as scheduled. We are

very grateful to all those people who enabled the construction of this new building.

Not yet finished is the ground level where a coffee shop, a bakery and a grocery will be opened.



Alice Rose Clover Child Development Center.

■ New Building Project "Safe House"

During our commitment for abused children and adolescents over the last years we realized that their mothers (and therefore also the children, that is the victims themselves) are often financially and vitally dependent on the offenders. Because of these existential fears the mothers often do not dare to stand by their children or to protect them against mistreatment and abuse.

With the renovation of an acquired building next to the Alice Rose Clover Child Development Center we plan to create a safe haven, a sort of a women's refuge. Here, women and their children shall at least temporarily find accommodation and protection, and also support to go back to an independent and secure existence.

On the upper level we plan another shared apartment for our students who could then leave the Red House and live more independently.

We are profoundly grateful to the generous sponsors of this project.

At the same time renovation works will be carried out in the Red House. Termites have caused some damage to the house over the years.

■ Nomination of "Social Worker of the Year"

Our longstanding and very experienced social worker Grizshelle Labang was nominated by DSWD as "Social Worker of the Year" for the whole of South East Asia.

Although she was not elected among all the managers of other organizations, she got the chance to advertise PIKIFI among other things in a live radio interview by DSWD. Those interested can listen in [here](#).

■ Medical Services

Die Mitarbeitenden unseres Gesundheitssozialdienstes wurden seit Juni durch mehrere Krankheitsfälle und Unfälle stark herausgefordert:

- Two of our girls suffered severe anaemia which required a blood transfusion.
- The 18-year-old Jason Vic was hit by a car. His head injuries led to cerebral haemorrhage which made surgical intervention necessary.
- Lorna, the wife of our bus driver Butch, suffered a stroke and had to be delivered into hospital. She is still rehabilitating.
- The social worker Aleah suffers from a painful rheumatoid arthritis which needs medical treatment.
- In addition there was the support for many mourning families in Landfill who have lost beloved family members in August.

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KuyaThom goes Home

Early in the morning of 25th August about fifty people came to Wilderswil to wish Thomas good luck and great success on his long journey on foot. Among them were the Philippine ambassador and his wife, the family of Thomas, the main sponsor, Galvaswiss, as well as numerous Filipinos and Filipinas living in Switzerland and friends of Thom. Television was present in order to document the emotional departure. Beforehand, several newspapers published articles about the new project of Thomas Kellenberger (see our special Newsletter). TeleBärn reported in two [broadcasts](#), while Swiss TV wants to accompany the project in the program "Reporter".



Thomas Kellenberger and the boys from the Foundation YouCount walking with him

With the start of Thomas Kellenberger's charity walk, Gabi Gafner has taken over the management of the Foundation IKP Switzerland. She describes the emotional farewell from her former student:

"Now the time has come and Kuya Thom has embarked on his walk back home. He put his first kilometres behind him happily and contentedly.

The farewell was emotional, colourful and full of unshakable belief that it can be achieved. May all the guardian angels be with him. During the time of his walk, we, the Board of Directors of IKP, will do our utmost to continue the daily operation as usual.

As Thom always points out he will not be gone from this world. We can still count on his inputs.

As new Vice-President I am now facing a route which

is still a bit shrouded in mist. But it is daylight, bright enough, there is help everywhere as I am not alone. The Board of Directors consists of many very motivated members on whom I can count all the time. I am looking forward to this task and I know I, we, can succeed in keeping IKP on the right track."



"... I will not be gone from this world..."

Various organizations have already donated the profit from events for the benefit of this new project, among others:

15th August 2021: During midsummer temperatures the FEG Gwatt organized a charity run: "Children run for Children". The event was a real success, the children and adolescents gave their best to collect as much money as possible for the benefit of two charity organizations, one of which was the Kuya Thom's project.

The Filipino-Community in Switzerland has donated the offerings of several church services to [„KuyaThom“](#).

Jana, Ladina and Nicolin have once more collected money for IKP, this time by selling pictures and wristbands. Being asked why they are so committed to IKP, Jana answered:

"My neighbor Rolf has told me some time ago about Island Kids and I wanted to do something for these children. So, I decided to bake muffins and to sell them in the neighborhood. When Kuya Thom was visiting our neighbors, I could give the money I collected directly to him. I was very impressed when he told me how much

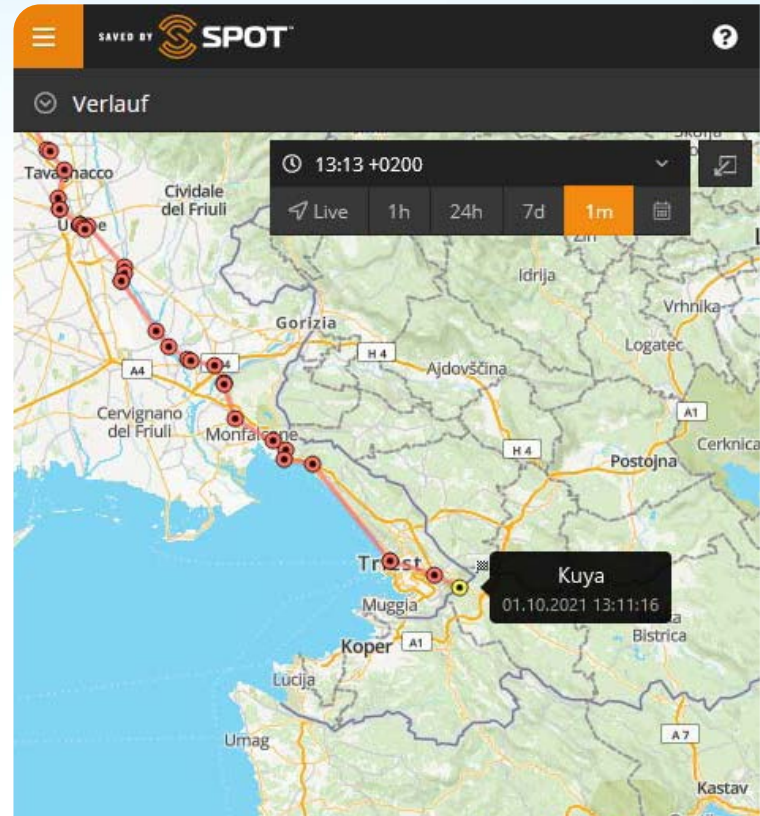
rice one can buy with it and how many children can be fed. I was very pleased with this. When I told my friends Ladina and Nicolin about it, they immediately wanted to help as well.



Nicolin, Jana, Ladina.

We love baking, doing handicrafts, and we love it even better because we can help other children with it. Perhaps one day these children will be able to live like we do and will not go hungry any more. Therefore, it is exactly the right project for us."

The Chairman of the community of Schänis and his staff met Thomas Kellenberger and the boys of YouCount walking with him in Susten-Hospiz. After singing and yodelling together the staff of the community passed around a hat and donated the collected money.



Distance travelled by Kuya Thom, 01.10.2021