Children's Rights
at the Heart of 'Building Back Better'

2020 Annual Report
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Foreword

Dear Friends,

For many of us, 2020 was “Annus Horribilis” or a horrible year. With the rapid and fatal spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, we all experienced various degrees of lockdowns, the loss and separation from loved ones, the near-collapse of our health systems, the downward spiral of the economy and livelihood security, the sudden loss of mobility, and the disruption of education and progress on children’s rights.

In spite of all this, we managed to rapidly adapt to the changing environment by modifying our systems of work and taking advantage of the new opportunities that emerged. We strengthened the partnerships and collaboration that we had built in the past years to be able to actively respond to the new crisis. We successfully shifted the focus from regional to national and local whenever appropriate.

The use of new technologies, approaches, and applications such as COVID 4P Log and the #CovidUnder19 initiative were very useful in hearing the views of children and adults in their experiences during the pandemic. These technologies were also a big source of information and learning as various webinars on child rights were conducted. While we missed seeing each other in person, we still managed to strengthen our solidarity and exchange of experiences by conducting our first-ever virtual General Assembly, which was participated in by all our members despite this limitation.

This year, we experienced the outpouring of emotions and calls to action of children and young people in Hong Kong and Thailand as they asserted their rights and aspirations for democratic governance. Children continued to express their concern for the environment, protection and participation in the digital environment, and better public investment in children. We laud our member organizations who continued the work with children and civil society on the issues that have become all the more crucial with the prolonged pandemic and increasing social unrest.

We responded to the pandemic by working creatively to support the project “Sewing Hope: Community Action for Frontliners and Our People” which produced thousands of essential materials like the Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), including face masks, that were distributed to children and families in urban poor communities and to public hospitals and clinics providing services for infants, children, and their mothers in the Philippines. We also gained precious experience in humanitarian assistance when we facilitated food aid for urban poor communities during the months of lockdown in Metro Manila. This humanitarian effort further expanded when Typhoons Vamco and Goni happened. We rapidly responded to provide blankets and food aid for those who were affected in the Philippines. We are forever grateful to family members and friends who provided us with the support that we were able to send thru groups working on the ground. “Collaboration” is the other keyword that summarizes our work despite all the challenges.

Surviving, and even thriving, during this time would not have been possible without the dedicated and committed secretariat team and member organizations of CRC Asia, the valuable advice and leadership provided by our Board of Trustees, and the fellowship and solidarity within the network. We also thank our friends, supporters, and the funding partners that continued to provide support to our work. Many, many thanks to all of you. Let us take good care of ourselves and continue to look after one another.

Amihan Abueva  
Regional Executive Director  
Child Rights Coalition Asia
About CRC Asia

CRC Asia is a regional network of organizations working together for the fulfillment of children’s rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) and its Optional Protocols serve as the foundation of our work.

Our mission is to be a strong voice for child rights by leading in strengthening child rights movements, promoting innovative approaches, and advocating better policies for and with children in the region.

CRC Asia has been an active player in upholding child rights in the region since our formation in 2008 and formal registration as a non-stock non-profit organization in 2012. Taking advantage of being a regional coalition, we coordinate advocacy efforts to give strength to our calls, utilize our diversity to broaden perspectives and capacities, and provide space for the participation of children and civil society.
Our Key Achievements in 2020

Amidst an unprecedented crisis in 2020, we journeyed through the second year of implementing our 2019–2024 Strategy, adapting our timelines and methods of work to address the new challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent movement restrictions and impacts on our established ways of working. We worked towards achieving our targets aligned with the themes of child rights governance, child protection, and child participation, with the themes of non-discrimination, especially in terms of gender, disability, race and nationality, and child participation cutting across.

We provided spaces and support for children in the time of the pandemic.
We created an online platform that puts spotlight on locally-conducted child-led initiatives, providing evidence that children, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, are taking leadership in protecting themselves and their families and peers. Supplemented by our other efforts, this space informed the report of UN SRSG-VAC and the development of our advocacy calls.

We co-created the #CovidUnder19 global initiative to ensure the meaningful involvement of children in responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. By being part of this, we facilitated the participation of children in Asia, including those who are non-English speaking, and brought children’s voices from local to global.

We provided child-led groups in the Philippines with capacity-building support that prepared them in their involvement in local and national child participation platforms. In the process of providing this support, we also provided a safe space for children to talk about their mental health.

We broadened our partnerships with children on the ground and with decision-makers at the regional and international levels.
We partnered with children youth groups in Indonesia to advocate for improved public budgeting on child protection at the village level and to provide advice on the development of the child online protection policy of Indonesian Child Online Protection. We collaborated with children in Thailand to give recommendations to government, civil society, and private sector in upholding children’s rights in the digital environment. All these contributed to the realization of children’s right to be heard and to the empowerment of children.

We became a strategic partner of UN SRSG-VAC on child participation and we successfully influenced an ASEAN policy framework in the form of the AICHR Work Plan. All these contributed to strengthening civil society participation in child rights monitoring at the international level and regional level.

We strengthened our organizational capacity in terms of operational and adaptive programmatic implementation.
We made our work plan more responsive to the issues raised by children during the pandemic by putting focus and addressing issues related to children’s mental health and psychosocial well-being this year.

We improved our set of organizational policies and procedures by updating our Anti-Fraud Policy and finalizing our new Formal Complaints Process and Disciplinary Process. With these, we have stronger measures to ensure that our operations and implementation remain effective and efficient.
Children's Rights and Participation at the Heart of COVID-19 Response
Highlight in 2020:
Children's Rights and Participation at the Heart of COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic pushed us to hasten our actions on addressing challenges in the realization of child rights during emergency situations, and one of the challenges we saw is ensuring that child participation is upheld during this unprecedented crisis. As such, in 2020, we created and utilized platforms for children in Asia to share how they actively protect themselves and others during the pandemic and how they want to be continually involved in the pandemic recovery phase. We advocated for an enabling environment for children human rights defenders, not only during the pandemic but in the years that will follow. We also pushed for a child rights-centered approach to the different levels of response to the pandemic.

Providing platforms to bring children’s voices from local to global

Like services and social interactions, child participation took a different shape when pandemic-related movement restrictions were enforced. There has been no other time when the realization of child rights is highly affected by technology and the internet, putting a spotlight on the digital divide. Yet, amidst these changes and challenges, children and civil society from the national, regional, and global levels continued to work together to put children’s rights at the center of all pandemic response and recovery actions.

We saw child-led groups supported by CRC Asia member organizations and children we worked with previously taking action and using digital tools and other platforms to support each other, promote awareness, exchange information, and voice their opinions. Young people were creating child-friendly videos to raise awareness about the coronavirus, giving tips on how to cope with the pandemic, helping provide meals to students relying on school-supplied lunches when classes were moved online, and conducting peer-to-peer counseling, among others.

We gathered these initiatives done locally by children, promoted them to a wider audience at the international level, and used them to inform one of our key advocacy calls during the pandemic: Children are not just passive subjects of the COVID-19 pandemic response. They are active citizens who are taking leadership in protecting themselves and their families, peers, and communities during the crisis.

We are using our website to serve as the main space to promote these child-led actions, but we also utilized available platforms, including those created by the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children (UN SRSG-VAC). As a result, the report Children as agents of positive change: A mapping of children’s initiatives across regions, towards an inclusive and healthy world free from violence by UN SRSG-VAC recognizes the actions of children in our region.

Scan to view
Child Participation in the COVID-19 Response in Asia

Scan to view the report
Children as agents of positive change by the Office of the UN SRSG-VAC

Child Rights Coalition Asia 2020 Annual Report
In addition, we co-created the #CovidUnder19 initiative led by Queen’s University Belfast and Terre des Hommes, in partnership with children and child rights organizations and with the support of UN SRSG-VAC. The effort aims to be a platform to understand children’s experiences and to involve children meaningfully in responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Anchored on a child rights-based and participatory approach, it involved several activities, including a jointly developed survey questionnaire answered by more than 26,000 children across the globe, a children’s virtual skills camp where the results of the survey were analyzed, and a global launch with children panelists.

As part of #CovidUnder19 and with the support of our member organizations, we contributed to making sure that the Asian perspective and the voices of children from the region are included in the effort. We provided inputs to the process and facilitated the participation of children in Asia not only through the dissemination of the survey, but also through the translation of the survey in different Asian languages, including Bahasa Melayu, Filipino, Khmer, Korean, Thai, and Urdu. In addition, children supported by our member organizations and partners in the Philippines, Indonesia, Nepal, India, Pakistan served as members of the initiative’s children advisory group. For the launch of the global findings in December, children and youth from South Asia and Southeast Asia were selected through an online child-led nomination process to be speakers in the panel.

The global findings of #CovidUnder19 show that children would like the pandemic recovery efforts to focus on upholding their rights to education and protection. They also want the opinions of children and young people to be taken into consideration because they felt that their voices were not heard during pandemic-related decision-making processes. We will utilize the global findings, together with the upcoming regional and country-level analysis of the results, in developing and updating our plans and actions.
"COVID-19 is one of the many emergency situations we have to face. What is most important for us is to speak the truth, work together, be creative, not lose courage, and ask the governments to become accountable to the children of today and tomorrow."

Amihan Abueva, Regional Executive Director of CRC Asia during the #CovidUnder19 High-Level Launch Event Dialogue with Children in December 2020

In the Philippines, we set up an online space for children and youth to improve their understanding and develop the skills needed to adapt to the changes brought about by the pandemic. This online learning space contributed to the preparation of children and youth in taking part in the children’s consultation on the revision of the government’s Guidebook on Child Participation in the Philippines, and in providing inputs during the different platforms made available as part of a city-wide celebration of the children’s month in General Santos City.

The series of online learning sessions were conducted in partnership with our member organization Mindanao Action Group for Children’s Rights and Protection (MAGCRP) and focused on themes previously identified by children, with a few additions to reflect the emerging themes due to the pandemic. Children and youth, including children from indigenous communities and children in street situations, learned and discussed reporting and referral mechanisms for violence against children; COVID-19 and its impacts on children’s mental health; adolescent pregnancy, HIV and AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health and rights; online sexual abuse and exploitation of children and the #SafeWeb4Kids campaign; child rights monitoring; ecological child rights and children’s right to a healthy environment; and using digital tools and social media for online advocacy. As a follow-up, the children and youth participants rolled out the knowledge and skills they learned to their respective children’s groups.

The series of learning sessions for children called “Da Quarantine Sessions” conducted in the Philippines
Creating an enabling environment for children human rights defenders

In 2020, we continued to witness children asserting the enjoyment of their civil and political rights. The democracy movements that were participated in, or even led, by children and young people in Hong Kong in 2019 also happened in Thailand this year. Thai children and youth creatively and courageously took the streets and used social media to voice out their calls for systemic democratic reforms. In solidarity with the peaceful demonstrations participated by children human rights defenders, we advocated for the respect and protection of freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. We urged the government of Thailand, through a joint statement signed by FORUM–Asia and more than 70 other civil society organizations (CSOs) in Asia, to end the use of police violence against protesters and to respect the rights of children and young people to safely and peacefully express their opinions on issues that affect them.

In the Philippines, we became part of the government agency-supported Technical Working Group on drafting the child participation component of a proposed Magna Carta for Children. We used this opportunity to advocate for the implementation of the advice from the UN CRC General Comments and of the children’s inputs from previous consultations regarding taking serious consideration of children’s views in decision-making processes, increasing opportunities for the political participation of children, raising awareness on child rights through human rights education in schools, ensuring respect for children’s freedom of association and freedom of assembly, and protecting children human rights defenders from retaliation. The Philippine Magna Carta for Children is expected to be passed in the next two years.

As a member of the National Committee on Child and Youth Participation of the Philippine Council for the Welfare of Children, we gave advice on ensuring that the principles of child participation and inclusion are upheld in the program design and implementation of the Philippine National Children’s Conference, the platform of the Philippine government for the selection of child representatives to the ASEAN Children’s Forum. Our intervention on this led to the allocation of additional slots for child delegates from different child-led groups; the use of inclusive engagement online tools in the program proper; and the use of inclusive representation of children in the communication materials.

At the international level, we worked with Child Rights Connect to uphold the rights of children human rights defenders. We contributed to the development of The Rights of Child Human Rights Defenders Implementation Guide, which serves as a tool to articulate the rights of children human rights defenders and identify the distinct aspects of children’s rights. By being part of this initiative, we made sure that the experiences of civil society and children in Asia are taken into consideration in providing advice on the improved implementation and, subsequently, monitoring of the rights of children human rights defenders.
In the Southeast Asian region, we continued our efforts to improve the knowledge of civil society and other stakeholders on the issues distinct to children human rights defenders. Through a webinar we conducted in partnership with FORUM-Asia and the ASEAN Youth Forum, we put focus on the experiences of youth and children human rights defenders in the time of the pandemic. The discussion resulted in the identification of the challenges faced by children and youth human rights defenders, the ways they are innovating to continue their activism, the support they need, the ideas to strengthen the collaboration among children, youth, civil society, and government, and the roles of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) sectoral bodies, such as the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), in upholding the rights of children and youth human rights defenders.

The webinar, done in the early onset of the pandemic, was attended by ACWC representatives, ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Social Welfare and Development representatives, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee), and CSOs.

**Children and Youth during COVID-19: their Rights and as Human Rights Defenders, 29 April 2020**

**Panelists:**
- Roshni Basu, Regional Advisor on Adolescent Development & Participation, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
- Ruthra Mary Ramachandran, Young Scholar-Activist of Southeast Asian Studies in Universitas Malaya, Malaysia
- Astrid Permata, General Coordinator of Pamflet, Indonesia
- Mueda Nawanat, Youth Human Rights Defender, Thailand

**Closing remarks:**
- H.E. Yuyum Fhahni Paryani, Indonesia’s Representative on Children’s Rights to the ACWC
- Fatimah Zahrah, Lead Coordinator, ASEAN Youth Forum

**Moderator:**
Hazel Bitana, Program Manager, CRC Asia
Advocating and implementing child rights-centered strategies in emergency response

As we aim to uphold the principle of child participation and other child rights principles during the COVID-19 pandemic, we deepened our partnerships with civil society and other stakeholders, including the government.

In 2020, we collaborated closely and synergistically with Joining Forces in Asia, an alliance of child-focused international non-government organizations, especially in engaging with regional intergovernmental bodies. We jointly advocated for child rights-centered pandemic regional response of ASEAN and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), combining our recommendations and linking one another’s experiences and priority areas. In the beginning of the pandemic when the world was grappling with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, our joint statement with Joining Forces, Child Rights Connect, and ECPAT International brings forward the emerging child rights issues experienced by various groups of children in the region. For us, we used this platform to bring forward the recommendations of children and the local experiences of our member organizations.

“This unprecedented crisis presents an opportunity for leaders and other stakeholders to help children develop their skills and leadership in civic engagements at the local, national, regional, and global levels. Children must not be viewed and treated as passive subjects of the pandemic response. They are active citizens who want to understand the pandemic and be involved in protecting themselves, their families, and their peers.”

from the Joint Statement by CRC Asia, Joining Forces in Asia, ECPAT International, and Child Rights Connect “ASEAN AND SAARC MUST PUT CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AT THE HEART OF COVID-19 RESPONSE”
ASEAN AND SAARC must put children’s rights at the heart of COVID-19 response

Joint Statement by CRC Asia, Joining Forces in Asia, ECPAT International, and Child Rights Connect

Summary of Recommendations

• Address violence against children by allocating a portion of the COVID-19 national and regional response budgets to child protection systems and services

• Share experiences, expertise, and good practices on children’s mental health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, alternative care, and access to water, sanitation, and hygiene to reinforce public health regional cooperation

• Include experts on child rights and women’s and girls’ rights in regional coordinating bodies tasked with planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating regional strategies to address the COVID-19 pandemic and future public health emergencies

• Ensure food security and nutrition of children when responding to the financial impact of COVID-19 and improving the stability of the regional economy

• Provide inclusive access to education as part of the COVID-19 regional response and recovery plan

• Ensure that public information campaigns are adopted for children and that children are genuinely consulted in the pandemic response

• Strengthen regional child rights efforts by including the perspectives of civil society and children during the COVID-19 crisis

Continuing our collaboration with Joining Forces, we further urged ASEAN and SAARC, as well as national governments and social media companies, to take action towards the empowerment and protection of girls online during the COVID-19 pandemic when digital technology is greatly affecting the realization of the rights of girls. In our joint statement for the International Day of the Girl Child, we pushed for actions to close the gender digital divide and to address online abuse and harassment of girls.
In 2020, we also advocated for ASEAN to heed the UN Secretary General's call for a ceasefire, ensure human rights amidst the pandemic. In a statement we co-signed with Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict-Southeast Asia and the Initiatives for International Dialogue, we called on States to place human security and conflict sensitivity as core principles in the pandemic responses by ensuring that the emergency measures are necessary, proportionate, non-discriminatory, and sensitive to the unique situation and vulnerability of conflict-affected communities, refugees, asylum-seekers, persons in stateless situations, internally-displaced persons, persons with disabilities, women, children, and the older persons.

In addition, our emergency response in the Philippines, where the CRC Asia Secretariat is based, included the development of partnerships with the community in the conduct of Sewing Hope, a small-scale, community-based sewing project that has a whole-of-community approach in responding to the pandemic. The project addresses the health and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 through the production of PPEs for the use of medical frontliners and communities. At the beginning of the project, the face masks were made by volunteer seamstresses. A few weeks later, the project reached out to sewing communities whose sources of income have been affected by the pandemic. For the community seamstresses and production assistants, the project became an informal source of income. One sewing group composed of around 30 individuals from the City of Caloocan relayed that they divided the income among themselves and their families, and used a portion of this to buy medicines for a community member with mental illness. The seamstresses who learned the skills of PPE production also shared their capacities with other interested groups through informal small group community training done either online or face-to-face.

The project carried out mask design innovations that promote indigenous culture and inclusivity. Women weavers of the T’boli indigenous group in Lake Sebu were involved, with their handwoven textiles being used as the outer layer of face masks. This contributed not only to the continuation of their fabric production, which was halted by the lack of tourism activities due to the pandemic, but also to the promotion of locally-made textiles. In addition, the project produced smile masks or masks with transparent windows for the deaf and hard of hearing. These were distributed to communities through organizations and initiatives, such as Project Inclusivity which supports children and young people with disabilities.

With financial contributions from individual and organizational supporters, around 10,000 cloth masks and more than 1,100 medically-reviewed protective suits were distributed in 2020 to various communities and health facilities, birthing and family planning clinics, pediatric wards, and newborn intensive care units. When Typhoons Vimco and Goni hit the Philippines, the project also provided hot meals to eight affected rural and urban communities and distributed more than 3,000 pieces of blankets and 500 sets of undergarments for women, girls, and families in evacuation areas.
Select photos from the Sewing Hope Project (from upper-left, clockwise): donated PPEs to health frontliners in community infirmary; transparent/smile masks for the deaf and hard of hearing; PPEs donated to a birthing facility; donated blankets to community beneficiaries during the typhoon Vamco and super typhoon Goni; donated face masks for health frontliners at the National Center for Mental Health; woman seamstress who is part of the community sewing group; and T’boli indigenous women weaving group member, handweaving fabric for mask production.
Addressing the Underlying Causes of Violence against Children

End Violence against Children!

Hustisya para kay Fabel at para sa lahat ng biktima ng rape.

Ginahasa si Fabel Pineda ng dalawang pulis mula sa San Juan, Ilocos Sur. Nag file ng case si Fabel sa police station ng Cabugao.

Humingi siya ng escort pauwi pero hindi siya pinagbigyan.

Maya maya, pinagbabaril siya. 15 years old lang si Fabel.

Artwork by Robert Alejandro provided to CRC Asia for the Statement and Campaign on the Fabel Pineda Case

Child Rights Coalition Asia 2020 Annual Report
Highlight in 2020: Addressing the Underlying Causes of Violence against Children

As we took stock of children’s experiences and recommendations in responding to the COVID-19 crisis, we adjusted our work plan to act on the children’s call to put focus on issues related to children’s mental health and psychosocial well-being during the pandemic. We also continued our advocacy on strengthening the protection of children against all forms of violence, anchoring on the inputs from children.

Putting spotlight on children’s mental health and psychosocial well-being

Through the various child participation platforms we created or supported, we heard the growing concern of children about the lack of open discussions and actions related to children’s mental health and psychosocial well-being amidst this global health crisis. When we gathered the pandemic-related experiences and actions of children, reviewed the results of the #CovidUnder19 children’s survey, and observed the discussions of the 2020 ASEAN Children’s Forum, we heard children express their stress and anxiety over the impacts of COVID-19: the physical health risks, isolation due to movement restriction, school closures and shift to online learning, loss of income and economic vulnerability of their family, missing out on experiencing life events, and uncertainty of the future. Our child delegates 2019 Asian Children’s Summit, who back then already surfaced mental health as an emerging child rights issue, also said in early 2020 that mental should be considered to be as important as physical health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scan to view the Asian Youth Committee Social Media Page, created by the child delegates of the 2019 Asian Children’s Summit

In response to this, we included actions on ensuring children’s mental health and psychosocial well-being in our advocacy calls at the national, regional, and international levels. In the Philippines, we also created safe spaces for children to talk about their mental health. The series of online learning sessions by MAGCRP served as a platform for children and young people to share their feelings, struggles, and fears during the pandemic. This allowed them not only to express themselves and provide support to one another, but also to identify their recommendations to the government leaders at the national, local, and community levels, schools, their families, children, young people, and the public.

We also broadened our collaboration with the Philippine-based organizations and groups with expertise on providing psychosocial support to children and adolescents, such as the Psychosocial Support and Children’s Rights Resource Center, Philippine Association for Child and Play Therapy, and Mindfulness, Love, and Compassion. Together, we produce a set of information communication materials, made in the form of handheld fans, that provide guidance on children’s mental health and psychosocial well-being during the COVID-19 crisis. These materials were designed for use of adolescents and of parents and caregivers during the COVID-19 community quarantine. The materials also contain the contact details
of our partner organizations who offered their services to be psychological hotlines, ready to provide counseling services for adolescents and their parents and caregivers.

The set of materials also contain information about breastfeeding and child protection in the time of pandemic. With the help our member organizations and networks in the Philippines, we distributed the materials to our target audience through civil society’s and local government’s existing outreach programs, relief operations and food distribution services, house-to-house visits, and parenting and breastfeeding orientations.

Strengthening child protection during and post-pandemic

In 2020, we explored the partnership with the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) and Joining Forces in discussing ASEAN’s response to violence against children at home, in school, and in community. Building towards possible joint regional efforts to address physical and humiliating punishment of children, we co-organized an online webinar that served as a platform for our member organizations and other CSOs to share their experiences, underlying challenges, and recommendations on ensuring child protection during and post-pandemic. We also utilized this space attended by ACWC representatives to disseminate the recommendations of children from the Violence against Children Workshop Group of our 2019 Asian Children’s Summit.
In 2020, together with our member organizations in the Philippines, the Civil Society Coalition on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC Coalition) and MAGCRP, we issued a statement condemning the killing of Fabel Pineda, a 15-year-old girl who was shot multiple times on her way home right after she lodged her report to the police of the sexual assault that she and her 18-year-old female cousin experienced from two police officers in Ilocos Sur in July 2020.

This extreme case of violence against children who are seeking justice and redress for an abuse done by the authorities reflects the severe institutional gaps in child protection.

Scan to view the CRC Coalition, CRC Asia, and MAGCRP Statement on the Case of Fabel

Scan to view the MAGCRP Statement on the Case of Fabel
Child Rights in Rapidly Changing Settings
Highlight in 2020: Child Rights in Rapidly Changing Settings

In 2020, we created a platform for children in Thailand to inform the collaboration plan between government, civil society, and the private sector in upholding children’s rights in the digital environment. We also consulted children in the development of the child online protection policy of a multi-sectoral coalition in Indonesia. At the regional and international levels, we continued to voice out children’s recommendations on the realization of the right of the child to a healthy environment.

Children’s rights in the digital environment

With our member organizations in Thailand – Childline Thailand Foundation (CTF) and The Life Skills Development Foundation (TLSDF) – and in partnership with ECPAT International and World Vision Thailand, we created a platform for children to develop and articulate their recommendations to strengthen the multi-sectoral coordination in upholding children’s rights in the digital environment. These recommendations were presented in a forum attended by representatives from Thai government agencies, private sector, and CSOs.

Some of the children’s recommendations centered on the provision of services to children victims of all types of abuse in the digital environment; and on the role of different duty bearers, including parents and administrators of formal and non-formal education systems, in protecting children from various forms of violence in the digital environment. These recommendations were developed through a meeting of child representatives of diverse ethnicities, gender, geographical and cultural backgrounds from Bangkok and the provinces of Mae Hong Son, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Tak, Phang Nga, and Chanthaburi. In promoting their recommendations, the child representatives resolved to communicate their inputs, recommendations, and messages to their peers through social media.

Children developed their recommendations during a consultation in Thailand organized by The Life Skills Development Foundation and Childline Thailand Foundation called “Upholding child’s right to participation in the virtual world.”
Adult stakeholders in the forum discussed how to move forward with the children’s issues and recommendations and strengthen the collaboration between the government and CSOs. One of the opportunities that arise from the discussion includes a follow-up meeting between Thai Media Fund, CSOs, and other duty bearers to discuss proposals responsive to the children’s recommendations.

CTF and TLSDF took the lead in developing a collaboration plan between government, civil society, and the private sector, taking into consideration the children’s recommendations. They also intentionally built alliances with other child rights organizations and coalitions as a strategy and way of working.

“...we must always think out of the box, look for possibilities so we can make an impossible dream come true. Simply say, do our best for ‘the best interest of the child’ and for the best of human rights defenders like we are.”

The Life Skills Development Foundation

In Indonesia, through our member Yayasan SEJIWA in collaboration with the other members of the multi-sectoral Indonesian Child Online Protection (ID-COP) Coalition, we supported the development of ID COP’s own Child Online Protection Policy (CPP) that takes into consideration the views of children.

As part of the policy’s development process, children from the provinces of Riau Islands, Bali, West Java, Maluku, and the special capital region of Jakarta were consulted about what should be included in the policy. CSOs working on child rights and government officials from other ministries also participated in the process, laying down links and future collaborations between ID-COP and other non-member CSOs and government ministries.

ID-COP is a multi-sectoral coalition of CSOs and government ministries, including the National Commission on Child Protection, Ministry of ICT, and Ministry of Women Empowerment and Child Protection. The development of ID-COP’s CPP strengthens the coalition’s child protection response mechanism and promotes the development of child online protection policies by government ministries, NGOs, and the academy. In this regard, the CPP lays down the foundations for developing a national roadmap on online child protection in Indonesia. As an immediate result of this action, ID-COP’s CPP is being used as a reference of another coalition in Indonesia, the Down to Zero Alliance, in developing its own CPP.
Letter to the LIBE Committee of the European Parliament

Together with children’s organizations from 21 European Union Member States, 18 international children’s organizations, and nine experts, we co-signed the letter to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE Committee) of the European Parliament to maintain the legal status of child protection tools being used to remove online child sexual abuse materials.

At the global level, we saw in 2020 the fruition of the previous year’s country-level consultations with children and regional consultations with adults during the 2019 Asia-Pacific Partnership Meeting of Child Rights Organizations and Networks (APPM) in the publicly available draft UN CRC General Comment No. 25. In this draft, we saw that most of the recommendations that we brought to the Experts Consultation in 2019 were included.

At the regional level, we continued our advocacy on including children in the decision-making processes related to ASEAN efforts. In 2020, we successfully advocated for providing child participation platforms in the development of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action for the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Abuse and Exploitation.

During the ASEAN Regional Conference on Child Online Protection, CRC Asia promoted the children’s recommendations from the 2019 Asian Children’s Summit and the #SafeWeb4Kids campaign.
By Children, For Children

Our #SafeWeb4Kids Children’s Guide to Online Safety booklet is now available in Hindi and Braille!

#SafeWeb4Kids is a regional campaign on online child protection created by children for children.

Scan to view the #SafeWeb4Kids booklets and know more about the campaign

#SafeWeb4Kids Braille

Climate action and children’s right to a healthy environment

We continued voicing out children’s recommendations on their right to a healthy environment, anchoring on our strengthened partnership with other child rights groups and utilizing the available regional and international platforms.

Our advocacy messages are mainly coming from the recommendations of children from the two consultations we previously held: the 2019 Asian Children’s Summit in Bangkok, Thailand and the Global Initiative on Advancing Children’s Right to a Healthy Environment: Regional Expert Consultation for East Asia and the Pacific in Bogor, Indonesia. We included these recommendations when, with members of the Child Rights Connect Working Group on Children’s Rights and Environment, we submitted inputs to the Human Rights Council (HRC) and developed a joint call to action for the HRC Annual Full-Day Meeting on the Rights of the Child. We also referred to these children’s recommendations when we participated in the different activities that comprise the process of developing a policy guidance for promoting and protecting children’s rights to a healthy environment in the ASEAN region.

Scan to view the Joint Statement of the Children’s Environmental Rights Initiative

Child Rights Coalition Asia 2020 Annual Report
Improving the Systems and Policies for the Rights of the Child

Budget for Children's Rights
Highlight in 2020: Improving the Systems and Policies for the Rights of the Child

We partnered with children and strengthened partnerships with village governments in Indonesia and the Philippines to improve public budgeting for child rights. We also contributed to improving civil society participation in child rights monitoring by strengthening our partnerships at the international level and by successfully influencing policy frameworks at the regional level. Furthermore, we strengthened our organizational capacity by improving our set of policies.

Public Budgeting for Children’s Rights

Led by our member organization Yayasan KKSP, we partnered with children and youth groups in Indonesia in advocating for improved public budgeting for child protection. We recognized that there is an existing regulation that provides an opportunity for a village to allocate its local budget for child protection, but the village officials are not utilizing this. As such, the advocacy strategy involved capacitating village government officials through a public hearing attended by community organizations, including children and youth groups, and village government officials. The public hearing included workshops on drafting child rights-responsive budgets, which then resulted in suggested village-level programs, activities, and budgets informed by children and CSOs and accommodated by the village decision-makers. Yayasan KKSP and its partners will build on these initial results to continue the child rights-responsive budget advocacy.

In the Philippines, the efforts in the previous years to improve the understanding and capacity of CSOs in budget advocacy are showing results. MAGCRP, through a collaborative engagement with the region’s Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Barangay (village) Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), and other local partners, influenced the BCPC plans and their budget to be realigned to COVID-19 pandemic response and to programs that aim to raise awareness on violence against children, online sexual abuse and exploitation, and children’s mental health.

In addition, we produced an advocacy tool that could help CSOs in the Philippines in developing or strengthening their budget advocacy strategies. The Resource Book on Public Budgeting for Children’s Rights in the Philippines, published with support from UNICEF Philippines, is targeted to help CSOs to understand, unpack, and utilize the budget processes to advocate for child rights-centered public finance management at the national and sub-national levels. It was produced in a participatory process, with our civil society networks from the different sectors – children’s sector, the disability sector, indigenous people’s community, women’s sector – telling us what information should be included and how should these be presented.

The Resource Book was virtually launched in December 2020, with messages, remarks, and reactions from Bianca, a child advocate from a group called PILAK that is supported by the Unang Hakbang Foundation; H.E. Maria Leonor Robredo, Vice President of the Philippines; Oyunsaikhan Dendevnorov, UNICEF Representative to the Philippines; Jun Bernardino from the LifeHaven Center for Independent Living; Luz Divina Canave-Anung from the Tambayan Center for Children’s Rights and MAGCRP; and Amihan Abueva,
Regional Executive Director of CRC Asia. During the virtual launch, several follow-up strategies and actions were identified, including the conduct of additional training on the use of the book, and the publication of a material intended for use by children.

In the photo (from upper-left clockwise): Oyunsai Khan Dendevnorov, UNICEF Representative to the Philippines; Hazel Bitaña, Program Manager, CRC Asia; Luz Indah Abayan, Policy Advocacy Officer, Amihan Abueva, Regional Executive Director, CRC Asia; Keziah Marie B. Miroy, Filipino Sign Language Interpreter.

Scan to view the Digital Copy
Public Budgeting for
Children’s Rights
in the Philippines
A Resource Book

Scan to view the
Recording of the Virtual
Launch - Public Budgeting
for Children’s Rights
in the Philippines
Civil society space in child rights monitoring

In 2020, following several engagements in the past, we became a strategic partner of the UN SRSG-VAC, especially on upholding child participation. With this development, we now have more opportunities to bring the perspectives from Asia to child rights advocacy and monitoring at the international level.

In ASEAN wherein work plans are crucial policy frameworks, we successfully influenced the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Work Plan 2021–2025 by submitting written inputs to AICHR Philippine and by engaging with AICHR and other CSOs in the past years. Two of our explicitly adopted inputs – the Consultations/Dialogues on General Comments and Concluding Observations, and the AICHR-ACWC regular meetings with the participation of other stakeholders, including dialogue partners and CSOs – open up a space for civil society engagement with the ASEAN human rights bodies. The process in which AICHR Philippines sought the inputs of CRC Asia can be considered as an achievement in ensuring CSO space in the decision-making process of ASEAN.

Furthermore, the successful intervention in the work plan also fits our public budgeting advocacy because
inclusion in the work plan means that there is a possibility that our proposed projects will be supported by the AICHR Fund or the pool of resources from the ASEAN Member States earmarked for AICHR project activities.

**Strengthening our organizational capacity**

In 2020, we made several improvements and additions to our organizational policies to ensure that our standards for operational and programmatic implementation remain effective and efficient. We updated our Anti-Fraud Policy to strengthen the protection of whistleblowers, extend accountability, and clarify who can receive reports. We also adopted our new Formal Complaints Process and Disciplinary Process to strengthen our process of accepting reports and our mechanisms for problem-solving and conflict management.

We also have a new set of Board of Trustees, decided during our first-ever virtual General Assembly in July. In our General Assembly, we also shared our experiences of COVID-19 and how it pushed us to be creative and innovative to reach out and provide support to children.

**COVID 4P Log**

As part of our effort to understand the situation of child rights and civil society space during the pandemic, we partnered with Inspiring Children’s Futures at the University of Strathclyde at Scotland on the global initiative called the COVID 4P Log: Protection, Provision, Participation, and Prevention for the well-being of our children. The project uses a smartphone app to gather for 8-weeks the lived experiences of policymakers and practitioners from around the world working to support children’s well-being. By getting information on the ways practitioners and policymakers protect children, provide for the children’s unique needs, enable child participation, and prevent harm at different stages of the current pandemic, the initiative aims to inform the actions of civil society leaders and policymakers. COVID 4P Log is an accompanying initiative of #CovidUnder19. Through this initiative, we were able to deepen our understanding of the situation of the child rights activists in the Philippines and develop links with child rights players outside our coalition.

Scan to know more about the COVID 4P Log smartphone app
Social Report

CRC Asia’s Policies and Procedures
This guides the governance structure of the organization. The General Assembly, composed of CRC Asia’s member organizations, is the highest decision-making body of the organization. It is supported by the Board of Trustees and the Secretariat.

CRC Asia’s Policies and Procedures was updated in July 2019.

CRC Asia’s Child Safeguarding Protocol and Code of Conduct
This protects the rights of children who may be directly or indirectly involved in CRC Asia’s programs and activities. It ensures that staff, representatives, and staff of member organizations take all judicious steps to ensure that children they are in contact with are treated with respect and dignity, are protected, and are kept safe from harm. It contains the reporting and responding standards.

CRC Asia’s Child Safeguarding Protocol and Code of Conduct was updated in 2013. A review was conducted in 2019 and the updated version is expected to be approved in 2021.

CRC Asia’s Finance Policies and Guidelines
This guides the effective implementation of CRC Asia’s financial management system. It describes the various components of financial management such as finance procedures, budgeting, internal controls, procurement, accounting, and bookkeeping.

CRC Asia’s Finance Policies and Guidelines was updated in 2017. In 2020, CRC Asia adopted interim finance policies and procedures on specific areas to cope with the movement restrictions and health protocols brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

CRC Asia’s Anti-Fraud Policy
This provides guidelines for the organization to prevent, detect, investigate, and act on fraud against the organization or that may be committed by anyone associated with the organization. It includes policies on whistleblowing and retaliation.

CRC Asia’s Anti-Fraud Policy was adopted in 2017 and updated in 2020.

CRC Asia’s Policy against Workplace Harassment
This ensures that CRC Asia provides a work environment that is free from sexual harassment and other types of discriminatory harassment. It has a reporting procedure and protection against retaliation.

CRC Asia’s Policy against Workplace Harassment was adopted in 2013.

CRC Asia’s Policies on Formal Complaints Process and Disciplinary Process
These are our mechanisms to receive and manage reports. They identify the persons tasked to receive complaints and the handling process. The Formal Complaints Process has policies on whistleblowing and protection from retaliation. It also requires the annual publication of summarized formal complaints received.

CRC Asia’s Policies on Formal Complaints Process and Disciplinary Process were adopted in 2020.
### Financial Report

**Statement of Financial Position as of 31 December 2020, in PHP**

#### Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>4,500,432</td>
<td>8,668,995</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receivables</td>
<td>206,786</td>
<td>81,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Current Assets</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property and Equipment</td>
<td>86,634</td>
<td>246,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>4,823,853</td>
<td>9,026,382</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Liabilities and Fund Balances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Payables</td>
<td>214,877</td>
<td>585,999</td>
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<td>Current Statutory Payables</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>120,185</td>
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<td>Deferred Support</td>
<td>4,498,378</td>
<td>8,049,211</td>
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<td><strong>Non-Current Assets</strong></td>
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<td>Operational Fund</td>
<td>23,264</td>
<td>24,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>Property Fund</td>
<td>86,634</td>
<td>246,137</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES</strong></td>
<td>4,823,853</td>
<td>270,987</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Income 2020

- **34%** Project with Save the Children
- **15%** Other Sources
- **51%** Project with Plan International

#### Expenses 2020

- **Programs** 72%
- **Administrative** 28%

**Support**
- Grants and Donations: 8,647,609 to 10,477,439
- Membership Fees: 65,550 to 4,990
- **TOTAL SUPPORT**: 8,713,519 to 10,482,429

**Expenses**
- Project Costs: 8,547,375 to 10,424,704
- General Fund Administrative Expenses: 167,487 to 57,725
- **TOTAL EXPENSES**: 8,714,862 to 10,482,429
- Excess (Deficit) of support over expenses: (1,703)
- **Other Comprehensive Income**
  - Interest income from bank account: 1,703 to 1,586
  - Unrealized foreign exchange gain (loss): 0
- **TOTAL EXCESS (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR**: 0
The Organization

CRC Asia Member Organizations

- Child Rights Coalition Cambodia
- Yayasan KKSP, The Education and Information Centre for Child Rights (Indonesia)
- Hong Kong Committee on Children’s Rights
- ChildFund Korea
- Village Focus International (Lao PDR)
- Equality Myanmar
- Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre
- Group Development Pakistan
- Protect and Save the Children (Malaysia)
- Mindanao Action Group for Children’s Rights and Protection (Philippines)
- Child Welfare League Foundation (Taiwan)
- Rakdek, The Life Skills Development Foundation (Thailand)
- Childline Thailand Foundation
- Vietnam Association for the Protection of Child’s Rights
The Organization

Board of Trustees

President: Elizabeth P. de Castro
Secretary: Victoria Juat
Treasurer: Lourdes Balanon

Members:
Mary Ann Ballesteros
Ester Isberto
Valerie Khan (starting 2020)
Sanphasit Koompraphant
Madhav Pradhan (starting 2020)

Key Partners

Affiliations
Consultative Relationship with AICHR since 2015
Member of Child Rights Connect since 2016
Member of the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children since 2017

Secretariat

Regional Executive Director: Amihan Abueva
Program Manager: Hazelyn Joy Bitaña
Program Officer (Organizational Development): Luz Indah Abayan
Program Officer (Comms): Rosheic Sims
Program Officer (M&E): Dennis Velasco
Finance Officer: Ima dela Cruz
Finance & Admin Associate: Francis Copino
Finance Assistant: Florence Casedo