

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**PREDA THERAPEUTIC HOME FOR BOYS (ZAMBALES)**  
**Year: 2021**

**Introduction**

Despite the regulations put in place due to the pandemic, for the year 2021, this project continued to rescue and provide hope and new life to children from sub-human conditions in government-run youth detention facilities, drop-in centers and Bahay Pag-asa rehabilitation centers all over Region 3 and the National Capital Region. The project also tried to save children from the negative effects of dysfunctional homes and communities and offered them a new chance in life. The common practice of arresting children despite being 15 years old below (the minimum age of criminal responsibility in the Philippine) still continues and would remain a major problem, unless the local governments comply with the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Law and build more Bahay Pag-asa's that are hopefully child friendly and respectful of children's rights. Preda strongly campaigned for this law for 9 years, however, many important provisions of the law are sadly ignored. Many of these young boys arrested and charged were only accused of committing petty offenses, like theft, robbery and vagrancy. Very few have allegations of serious offenses. Nearly every child is a school drop-out coming from a very poor background. Majority are from broken homes with dysfunctional relationships. Some experienced abuse while growing up so they would rather spend time with their peers outside and on the street. The project also addressed the risk factors that cause children to struggle for survival on the streets and to fall into the negative influence of the street gangs, crime syndicates, and adult criminals and forced to commit offenses.

When the pandemic struck, the Preda Bukangliwayway Center became even more vital. Most Bahay Pag-asa (mandatory youth rehabilitation centers) and NGO-run centers refused to accept or admit children at risk (CAR) and children

in conflict with the law (CICL) for fear that admitting them would bring the novel coronavirus into their facilities and cause a contagion. But at Preda, no child in need of special protection shall be refused. For the past 2 years through the pandemic, Preda continued to serve children by innovating with health and safety protocols in order to continue delivering its key services.

In total, there were **70 children (carried over clients = 23, newly admitted = 45, new special cases = 2)** saved from this deplorable situation and were given a new start in life at the Preda Therapeutic Home for Boys for the year 2021. Of this number, 31 boys are children in conflict with the law (where 17 had legal cases and 5 without cases filed), 37 are children at risk and 2 boys have special cases (where the boys needed protection from their abusers). They all received a complete and holistic range of services for human and personality development, homelife, education, medical/dental assistance, legal assistance, psychological and psycho-social services, therapy (to deal with trauma), socio-cultural/recreational and productivity and other therapeutic interventions intended to assist these children to reform their lives. Social assistance was likewise extended to the victim's families through counseling, family therapy, and/or referrals to local resources to enable them to become effective and responsible parents to their children. Aside from this, an added value of the project is that it was able to equip older boys with various vocational technical skills. A total of 33 boys, who graduated from the voc-tech training program now have better chances of earning money through decent means.

Thus, after receiving the complete holistic range of human development services, and for having completed their rehabilitation at the Preda Bukangliwayway Therapeutic Home for Boys, a total of 30 boys were successfully reintegrated to their families/communities (in Central Luzon and Metro Manila) who now have reduced risk of re-offending. The most indigent also received aftercare services.

Below are the salient accomplishments of this project:

## **1. Rescue and Admission**

When the pandemic struck, there were major changes to the way this project operates, specifically as to how it handled the admission of children into the Preda Therapeutic Home. The goal however remains the same, to save children from detrimental conditions in youth detention and/or from negative influences in the community especially if community-based interventions are no longer effective. However, because of the volatile situation as regards COVID-19, the planned regular visitation to various youth detention facilities and Bahay Pag-asa were no longer implemented as these facilities also did not allow the entry of visitors who may unknowingly carry the virus. The purpose of this visit is to identify the children that can be helped by Preda and to immediately facilitate their release to the Preda Homes. So because actual visits are no longer possible, the project social workers instead maintained consistent coordination (online, thru texts or calls) with government social workers from various local government unit partners in the National Capital Region and in Region 3. For children qualified to be admitted into the therapeutic program, the pre-admission case conferences were done online and the transfer of the children to the Preda Home was effected immediately.

In total, there were 70 boys helped in the Preda Therapeutic Home for Boys for the year 2021. Of this number, 45 were newly admitted residents of the Preda Home for Boys in 2021. And among these 45 children, 27 boys were actually rescued from various youth detention facilities, drop-in centers and some from police detention cells. All new boys were briefly welcomed by the Preda family of staff and senior clients, and then they were assigned to the quarantine dormitory to complete their isolation. The rest of the newly admitted children for 2021 were referred by partner local government units without any shelter or drop-in center. These boys from the community were also saved because for most of them, they are no longer safe to stay in their communities because they were branded as criminals by their neighbors. Many communities also cannot provide community-based rehabilitation

services and some were limited only to counseling and provision of material assistance. For these referred children, as a safety protocol, the government social workers who brought the children to the Preda Boys Home were advised ahead of time to secure a Rapid Antigen Test for the child before bringing the child to Preda. However, in some cases, they did not submit the child for testing. But Preda will not refuse this child in need.

All newly admitted children at Preda were required to undergo quarantine as mentioned earlier. Similar to the set up in other Preda centers, the quarantine room in the Preda Bukangliwayway Center served as dormitory where new arrivals stay for 1 to 2 weeks to prevent the entry of COVID-19 into the home (the project follows the existing quarantine rules of the government). While in quarantine, all the child's basic needs such as food and clothing are provided. In the quarantine dorm, the newly-admitted child is given self-learning activity kits (SLAKs) and materials for arts and crafts. His vitals like body temperature and oxygen levels are also routinely monitored. A staff with a nursing background does this work. While the Preda social worker regularly visits the child to check on his welfare. All this had to be done by the staff utilizing COVID-prevention kits and maintaining physical distance. When the quarantine of the child is finished he is then introduced formally to the whole community and was given a welcome, acceptance, affirmation, encouragement and introduction to a friendly community. Then the child is interviewed by the Preda social worker for intake purposes and given orientation about the center programs and services as well as the rules and regulation in the center.

In addition to protecting the children from COVID-19, all direct Service providers/duty-bearers have been vaccinated. Almost two years into the pandemic, vaccine hesitancy in both far-flung and densely populated communities remains an issue in the Philippines despite the fact that the government has procured millions of vaccines already. Social workers and facilitators/houseparents assigned to the Bukangliwayway Center fall under the A4 Priority Group List. As soon as the vaccines became available, members of the Board of Preda and top management took the vaccines themselves in order to allay fears and encourage all the staff to get vaccinated, too. While

employers cannot require employees to be vaccinated, the leadership provided by Preda management encouraged all social workers, facilitators/houseparents and cooks to get the vaccine themselves. The vaccination rate of staff assigned to the Bukangliwayway Center is 100 percent.

To minimize the risk of COVID-19 infections, the work schedule of project staff especially facilitators/houseparents was also revised so they report for work for straight two eight-hour shifts (total 16 hours) to lessen travel time and thus possible exposure to the virus. Preda also offered the staff free food and lodging if and when they choose to stay overnight in the staff room in the Bukangliwayway Center.

## 2. Rehabilitation

**Homelife Service.** A total of 70 boys (carried over clients = 23, newly admitted = 45, new special cases = 2) were provided with homelife services. It included provision of 5 meals per day, clothing, footwear and laundry & hygiene supplies. The children also followed a structured program of activity daily in a home-like atmosphere with the facilitators/house parents acting as their teachers at the same act as their monitors. They also perform parental duties as there are always on duty facilitators with the children 24 hours, 7 days a week. From the moment the children wake up, there is a facilitator to handle their needs. But while the basic needs of the children are important to be adequately provided, what the Preda program also offers is the restoration of the children's dignity and self worth. The Preda Bukangliwayway Center, a beautiful building located in an organic farm in Nagbayan, Castillejos, Zambales, is an open home without armed security guard, fences, or high walls. Freedom of choice to stay is an essential human decision afforded to each child. It is not a prison and does not treat children as criminals. The interventions given to the boys helped them heal the pain and trauma endured from the abuse and maltreatment experienced by them when they stayed in the Bahay Pag-asas (BPAs) and/or other youth jails and detention

facilities. There were many boys also who experienced maltreatment at home and in the community. The beautiful and expensive facility of the Preda Home for Boys provided the children a sense of security, belongingness to undo the negative effects of neglect, abuse or deprivation that these boys may have suffered from their parents or from their community.

**Health Services.** Aside from homelife services, the children's medical and dental needs were also addressed by the project. In total, there were 30 children who were sent for medical check-ups due to a cough and cold. Some boys had serious skin diseases so they too had to be checked. Fortunately, the medical conditions of these boys were non-serious and were easily cured through proper medication. There was also one boy also who had tuberculosis (TB) who was assisted by this project to get tested and obtain needed medication. The boy and even the referring social worker did not know about the boy's condition. Luckily, he was observed and routinely checked by the staff nurse of the project and he advised to take the TB test, thus after confirmation he was able to get necessary medication. The same boy is free of the disease now which he probably obtained while he was in detention. Another boy who confessed to be sexually active also took test for venereal disease which fortunately turned out to be positive. At least 22 children who required dental extraction were also assisted and at least 2 of them got new dentures.

**Educational Services.** Preda recognizes that it is a right of every child to be educated, more importantly now that due to the pandemic, many children would struggle to continue. Therefore, those who stay at the Preda Boy's Home are provided with various modalities of education whichever suit their needs and capacities. It is good to note that the majority of the children have high risks of truancy as they cannot cope with demands from a formal school environment. Thus, it requires a lot of patience to teach the boys and even greater patience to help them make learning a habit especially during this time of the pandemic. The Department of Education continued their modular approach and completely eliminated face to face classes up to the end of the year 2021. The Preda staff had to continue their dual roles of tutoring and submitting accomplished modules and obtaining new ones on behalf of the

children. The same arrangement has worked up to now. So for the academic year 2020-2021 (started in September 2020 until June 2021) there were 28 boys who were enrolled and assisted in their modular schooling). They were enrolled in nearby Nagbayan Elementary School and San Agustin Highschool. All these boys attended their classes, and accomplished tasks and assignments required of them as students. Consequently, by June 2021, 23 boys moved up and were elevated to the next year level. Only 5 boys are not able to meet the demand of formal schooling, as many boys exhibit lower intellectual capacities as a result of poverty and malnutrition. Nevertheless, these boys also attended the non-formal classes held at Preda by staff facilitators to augment their learning. On the other hand, for the school year 2021-2022 (September 2021 until June 2022), there were 29 boys enrolled in formal schooling (4 kinder, 16 elementary, and 9 in high school) and were continuously assisted through the modular arrangement.

On the other hand, those children who are not eligible to be enrolled in formal schooling, and those that were assessed to not being capable of meeting the demands of formal learning structures, were enrolled in ALS or ALternative Learning System. This is a practical option where the children attend learning sessions on a modular basis based on an agreed schedule with teachers. The fact is that due to the pandemic, the ALS and formal have similar modalities now because the ALS teachers are not able to come regularly to the Preda Home. The rest of those eligible for ALS were also enrolled.

There were also young boys who were totally illiterate when they came to the Preda Home for Boys. Some of these boys did not even experience studying as a result of extreme poverty. It is only at the Preda center that these boys learn the value and importance of being literate. Thus, with constant tutoring by staff, a total of 25 boys are now able to do basic reading and writing.

Take the case of Chris, 13 years old from Pampanga. He came to the Preda Home for Boys because he was accused of committing repeated robberies in their community and allegedly for using illegal drugs. His only choice now was to get rehabilitated or stay on the streets and perhaps one day be killed just like the more than 120 children killed in the war against drugs. When he

arrived at the center, he was fearful and quiet. Like the majority of the boys who came to Preda, Chris disliked studying. He was not able to go to school. He cannot read nor write. He doesn't even know how to properly handle a pencil. At first Chris would find all sort of reasons not to join the literacy session implemented by staff. Eventually the effort of staff to teach him paid off. He began to realize that he cannot really change his situation if he cannot read or write. Chris slowly gained his interest to study . He is now back in formal schooling again at Kinder level. Chris is also assisting the staff in teaching the newcomers to the boys' home the basics of reading and writing.

**Psychological and Psycho-social Service.** This important component of the PREDA's therapeutic program is one of the services that did not need adjustments despite the COVID situation. The trained center therapists, all 3 of them, continued to conduct psychological assessment utilizing various tools that determine the personal and family issues that will be processed in the various therapeutic approaches that the project employs. The complete psychological service involved a range of practices including primal or emotional release therapy, individual and group counseling, art therapy and psycho-social sessions. The initial process included determining the child's psychosocial history, life conditions and even abuse experiences from childhood and from recent experiences. The information about the child obtained through interviews enabled the Preda multidisciplinary team to identify appropriate interventions for each child.

The main psychological interventions to the children include Preda's uniquely developed Emotional Release Therapy (ERT). Done in a padded, sound-proof room, and facilitated by a trained therapist,, this therapeutic approach helped the boys to release all their negative feelings and emotions, resentment and anger to those who committed abuse,neglect, rejection and/or apathy towards them. Thus, the 90 ERT sessions conducted (or at least twice a week session attended by each child), was participated by all Preda boys. There is counseling done also per child after each ERT session attended by the child. Participation in the therapy enabled the residents to come to terms with the pain and trauma they have within themselves, and the by-product is that they became better in controlling their negative emotions resulting in low

incidence of aggression and physical violence among residents and zero incidence of aggression by the boys towards the staff. Furthermore, as the social workers and therapist become informed of the children's ordeals and intrafamilial issues, the children are better helped through the facilitation of family therapy and reconciliation.

On top of this, individual counseling sessions were also conducted with every resident, with more sessions conducted to those who have violated center policies and regulations. On a daily basis, there were also group dialogue and group sessions held by the social workers with their clients to discuss various issues that concern the group members. In addition, there were also Family Meetings, done every evening, held inside the center where the children were able to share their insights, comments and issues regarding their co-residents as well as their feedbacks to the staff and the over-all implementation of the program. The EXECOM also conducted their own dialogue with the children at least once a week to hear directly from the children their own feedback about the program.

At least once a week, there is also a mass celebration together with the spiritual formator of the center, Fr. Shay Cullen, and spiritual counseling were conducted to select children afterwards. Those children with exemplary performances and with improved behavioral rankings were given recognition and affirmation, while those with serious violations of center policies were given advice on how to better improve themselves.

**Other Therapeutic Services.** Other activities, such as outings, dancing, seminars and workshops are carried out by the social workers and the other members of PREDA's staff team.

To fulfill children's right to play and recreation, outing/swimming were held throughout the year (once a week) for all the boys which included a visit to the beach and to a nearby water dam. The beach outings done every month also served the purpose of celebrating birthdays of the boys.

There were indoor and outdoor sports activities held. Prior to the pandemic, the children of Preda all look forward to the annual READLANI Sports Festival, the annual sports event participated by various residential care facilities for children in the region. As it is a much anticipated event, all the Preda children participated and enjoyed this Sports Festival. However, for the last 2 years, there were no sports competitions allowed anymore so instead, Preda organized its own sports event held in February, April, and November 2021 which was enjoyed by all the Preda children.

Aside from this, several activities also contributed to the recovery and rehabilitation of the children in the center, namely their participation in online dance competitions organized by a partner organization called ACTION. Other important activities implemented also involved dance lessons and karate lessons implemented by trainers from the same partner organization, ACTION. This is to foster a sound mind and body, and to instill focus and discipline. In addition, the staff also implemented arts and crafts activities and music lessons with the children to inspire creativity and to develop children's potential. To overcome boredom in the center and to offset the effects of institutionalization, the staff organized events following certain themes such as Valentines, Easter, Nutrition Month, Language Month, Halloween, Children's Month and Christmas,

Aside from these special activities mentioned above, there were also special sessions conducted by an invited resource person who is a former Preda staff, on topics such as rights and responsibilities, gender and development, adolescent sexuality, women's rights and personality development. In addition, the boys were also given input on baking, cookery, crafts making and even received lessons on arts and music.

**Productivity and Vocational-Technical Services.** Productivity includes interventions that are intended to help the child become more productive making their time at Preda worthwhile. This included regular karate and dance trainings offered by a partner agency, ACTION, which are meant to strengthen the body and mind at the same time fostering discipline and values.

They also include special training on character building and employment preparations. Aside from this, the project also focused on offering vocational-technical skills to the older boys or those 15 above. These voc-tech trainings are practical and useful whenever the older children are already reintegrated giving them skills where they could earn a decent living. As mentioned in previous reports, the Preda vocational training center was officially made functional in March 2019 and at least 2 staffers were formally trained on cookery/baking and shielded metal arc welding. Both staffers got official National Certification Examination qualification, which is a standard set by the government through the Technical Skills and Development Authority or TESDA. Since then, the project continued to offer various practical vocational courses for older boys which cover short courses on shielded metal arc welding, driving and basic automotive, electrical installation and repairs, barbering (haircutting) and even agro-farming. It is intended that these training programs will enable these children and provide them with a fighting chance in life through better job and income opportunities when they leave Preda. A total of 33 boys who have attended two or three training programs benefited from this project component.

**Welding Training.** There were 33 boys who were above 15 years of age who were given basic knowledge and skills on shielded metal arc welding training. The Preda professional conducts this training for select boys daily at least 5 times per week. This Preda training program is officially recognized by the Technical Skills and Development Authority or TESDA, the government's vocational technical training arm and regulatory body. Having skills in shielded metal arc welding is considered an in-demand skill in the Philippines and abroad by TESDA. All the 33 boys were assessed to have completed the training program and graduated with basic competencies on welding by December 2021. Of these boys, 6 excelled and demonstrated keen interest in furthering their welding skills. They were thus awarded a complete basic welding machine and welding start-up kits during their reintegration ceremony. These 6 boys who were already reintegrated have been monitored and they gave feedback to the Preda social workers that they have been able to use their welding skills and helped them earn some money.

**Driving Training.** A total of 32 boys were trained on professional driving. These boys who are 16 years old and above learned to drive two-wheel and four-wheel vehicles under the guidance of the professional Preda trainer. The lessons were attended at least twice a week by every child beneficiary. Part of the driving training is basic vehicle maintenance and inspection. By the end of 2021, there were 10 boys who were assisted by Preda to obtain their non-professional license. Having a non-professional license meant these boys can drive private two to four wheel vehicles which is very practical when they try to look for jobs when they are already discharged from Preda. In addition to this, there were also 5 boys who were able to get their student's permit to drive. These boys will have to undergo further training and will eventually be assisted to get their non professional license later on.

The reality is that many of these boys may not have acquired their own driver's license if not for the support of this project. The difficulty lies in the complicated requirements set by the Philippines Land Transportation Office (LTO) which include parent's consent in obtaining authenticated birth certificates, requiring parent's authorization in applying for license for minors, passing the driving test and exam, and the very high fees to get a license. Each child requires about Php15,000 inclusive of LTO fees, cost of driving assessment and other incidental expenses. Having a license however for these boys will be a lifelong benefit for them since the ability to drive makes it an advantage for job applicants nowadays in the Philippines. In addition, at least 5 older boys also served as basic mechanic apprenticeship with the Preda in-house mechanic. These boys have had experience working on repairs and maintenance of Preda vehicles. This project component also expanded to benefit some project staff where 1 staffer was also assisted to learn driving and to get a non-professional license and 3 staffers assisted for student driver's permit. The training for staff was done on their own free time.

**Basic Electrical Repair.** A total of 30 boys attended the basic electrical repair training and apprenticeship. The children attended sessions on basic electrical installation, appliances repair and basic maintenance. A professional electrician facilitated these sessions five times a week where each boy is

attending at least 3 days a week. The boys were taught on how to repair and maintain electric fans, washing machines, heating equipment, and even install electrical wiring. Similar to the welding training, those boys, at least 5 of them, who showed great interest in electrical work were given basic electrical repair kits with tools. All of these 5 boys reported that they were able to use this skill at home and they were able to do some electrical repairs even in the comforts of their own homes. Aside from this, at least 10 boys who attended this program were given the apprenticeship opportunity by working with the Preda's in-house technician in doing electrical repairs around the Preda centers.

**Hair-cutting Training.** For the barbering training (basic haircutting for males), there were 7 boys who completed the training program. At least 2 boys were awarded start up kit for haircutting given during their graduation day.

**Agro-farming.** At least 10 boys also experienced agro-farming or the fusion of agriculture and farming. It included as part of the regular activity of the boys in the center, cultivation of the big farm land at the boys home, maintenance and harvesting of crops, and the rearing and management of livestock.

**Legal Service.** It is good to note that for the year 2021, the focus of the program is not only to help children who have no legal cases, but also those boys (above 15) who have been charged in court for various offenses. Thus, some boys were admitted into the Preda Home by virtue of court orders, some were referred by local social workers on the day the boy was arrested by police thereby preventing incarceration. In total, there were 15 boys (above 15) who availed of the legal services of Preda. Ensuring that justice is delivered considering the best interest of the child is what this project worked hard for. Part of the interventions includes coordination with Public Attorney's Office and the clerk of courts, conduct of legal interviews with the child to help him prepare his statement, attending legal case conferences with the diversion committee, assisting the child in attending court hearings (mostly

online as per the Supreme Court Memorandum but in some instances the child had to be brought to the court to deliver his testimony), and securing evidence and affidavits required by the Public Attorney representing the child, and preparing and submitting court-required disposition programs and/or progress reports for the minors. These legal efforts of the Preda social workers resulted in 4 boys whose cases have been promulgated/terminated (where there are 2 boys acquitted in their case, 1 with suspended sentence, and 1 whose case was dismissed). There were also 3 boys with on-going diversion hearings (or those whose cases are not going through formal court proceedings). Seven (7) boys were also assisted with their on-going court hearings and 1 boy was approved by the Judge to be released on recognizance to his parents.

### **3. Reintegration**

After receiving the complete rehabilitative services that the Preda Therapeutic Home for Boys offered, thus, out of the 70 children served by this project in 2021, there were 30 boys who successfully graduated from the rehabilitation program and were therefore reintegrated to their supportive families. All the boys who were reintegrated to their supportive families are still doing well, some are continuing their education. Some boys also reported to have been earning through informal economic activities such as by working in the markets, laborer in construction sites, or through home service (for those who learned welding and electrical repairs). It is good to note that only one of these reintegrated boys is back in youth prison. Since the Preda Home for Boys is an open center without armed guards or fences, there were also those who ran away in the first few days of stay at the center, 7 boys in total. The Preda social workers tried to retrieve these boys and coordinated with the local social workers where these boys reside. Nearly all of them arrived home safely and are back with their families. Furthermore, at least 2 boys with legal cases had to be transferred to another rehabilitation facility for the continuation of their rehabilitation.

The Preda social worker worked with the local social worker or the referring agency to prepare for the reintegration of these boys. Several case conferences (for discharge purposes) were done where the Preda team and referring/accepting parties discussed the reintegration and aftercare plan for the child to be reintegrated. Among the matters discussed were the monitoring of the child's situation after reintegration and the continuation of educational assistance for the children who want to pursue their studies. On the other hand, those boys who are above 16 years of age and are eligible for formal or informal employment will also be assisted by their local social workers. The local social welfare and development offices (LSWDO) are mainly in charge of monitoring the boys while in the community since they are situated near the child's residence. They also ought to continue monitoring the child's progress and to provide community-based interventions to the child and his family as required. On the other hand, Preda social workers maintain contact with the reintegrated boys through texting and calling.

**Aftercare Assistance.** A major change that happened in 2021 was the introduction of the Aftercare component for the Home for Boys Project. The center-based services of the Preda Home for Boys have been generally successful in changing the lives of the Preda children, a major challenge however, especially for the boys coming from poor background, is to achieve the stability of these positive changes among the lives of the children and to sustain the progress even if the children are no longer at Preda. There was a need to provide follow-through interventions to these aftercare beneficiaries so that the positive result of the therapeutic program to these former clients can be sustained if not further enhanced, and lowering the chances of regression for the rehabilitated children. At the moment, the aftercare component of the Preda Home for Boys project is limited to monitoring by calls/sms/online, provision of educational assistance to each eligible child, and referral to local resources as needed by the boy and his family.

In total, there were 12 aftercare beneficiaries who received some form of aftercare support from this project. These former clients were closely monitored by the Preda Aftercare Worker and were provided with monthly educational assistance.

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