



2023

# Annual Report

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**Sun Life**  
FOUNDATION

Brighter  
Together



## Table of Contents

- 01 About the Theme
- 02 Message from the Chairman of the Board
- 04 Message from the President
- 06 Message from the Executive Director
- 08 Company Overview
- 10 2023 in Numbers
- 14 Where We Are

### Flagship Programs

- 16 Sun Pera-Aralan
- 18 Sun Life Barangay Health Stations

### Pillars of Advocacy

- 20 A Closer Look at Our Pillars
- 22 Education
- 30 Health
- 40 Environment
- 50 Success Stories

### About Sun Life Foundation

- 52 Board of Trustees
- 54 Sun Life Foundation Team
- 56 Financial Report



## About the Theme

Light overpowers darkness. It gives a glimmer of hope that guides our path, no matter how small the spark is. In the past years, we saw our light shine through the dark days of the pandemic. Those flickers of hope led us to triumph over one of the greatest challenges we have faced. In 2023, we were filled with a renewed sense of purpose and greater passion to build a brighter future.

This year, we let the light we radiate bring hope to those near us, and we came together to shine brighter for our greater community. The Sun Life Foundation, together with its partners, volunteers, and stakeholders, upheld its long-standing commitment to promote a sustainable future for Filipinos from generation to generation. We ignited opportunities, deepened collaborations, and built meaningful connections to uplift the lives of those we serve.

Our mission went beyond lending light. We empowered others to hold their torch high so that we can shine **BRIGHTER TOGETHER.**

## Message from the Chairman of the Board

“ We confidently pursue our goals because we know we are not alone.



The year 2023 was an important turning point for Filipinos: It was the year that life fully went back to normal. We moved on from the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. And as we did, we brought with us the many lessons it taught us right from the beginning.

Looking back, I remember how the Sun Life Foundation strived to stay true to its mission of helping build a brighter world, even as uncertainty prevailed. It was not easy, but it certainly was an honor to serve others and bring a ray of hope where and when it was needed the most.

Step by step, we made it through.

Yet, a question lingered: How do we amplify our brightness to cast out the shadows of the pandemic? Our desire to broaden our reach and deepen our impact had become even more fervent. Overcoming challenges in the past had not only inspired us to do more but also reminded us of how we could be more.

This became the guiding principle of the Sun Life Foundation in 2023. It led us to touch more lives by collaborating with and fostering participation from our leaders, team members, implementing partners, and volunteers, all in the service of our beneficiaries nationwide.

We championed projects aligned with our pillars, including education, health, and the environment. Our flagship programs also continued to progress and fulfill their goals. Through Sun Pera-Aralan, we extended financial literacy to thousands of school teachers in the country. Meanwhile, our Sun Life Barangay Health Stations continue to provide marginalized communities with much-needed health and wellness assistance through various programs and services.

We confidently pursue our goals because we know we are not alone. The essence of togetherness not only makes us brighter but also brings spark to the communities we serve. And while there is still much work to be done, this is how we are moving forward: together, stronger, and brighter.

Step by step, we will make it through.



**Benedicto C. Sison**

Chairman of the Board  
Sun Life Financial - Philippines  
Foundation, Inc.

# Message from the President

“...working together can bring us closer to a country that is more sustainable and a future that is brighter for everyone.”



As the doors of 2023 opened, opportunities to help even more of our *kababayans* became more abundant for the Sun Life Foundation. The decline of COVID-19 cases brought us to the tail end of a global health crisis, and rays of hope were more radiant after three years of being in the pandemic. We saw these rays getting brighter, guiding us to continuously fulfill our mission to build a brighter world for Filipinos.

Throughout the year, we witnessed how hope persistently flourished and how dreams were brought to life. We at the Sun Life Foundation saw this through the various projects we initiated. One such project was Sun Pera-Aralan, one of our flagship programs where, through our partnerships with Schools Division Offices in NCR and CALABARZON, we constantly engaged with thousands of public school teachers and helped them manage their personal finances.

We were also given opportunities to provide students, teachers, and parents with access to various education tools and programs to address learning gaps that worsened during the pandemic. We stand with our partner schools, universities, and organizations in the belief that by addressing these gaps, we are enhancing both their capability and willingness to learn.

Moreover, this year certainly gave us avenues for enabling our beneficiaries to actively participate in building healthier and more resilient communities. From children, mothers, and healthcare workers to farmers and local foresters, we can see how our collective efforts impact the lives of both present and future generations.

Aside from expanding our reach, we also amplified our scope in different areas of the country. With the construction of the Sun Life Barangay Health Stations in Tarlac and Nueva Ecija, we aim to provide accessible primary health care to residents and encourage active participation of health workers in their own communities.

Collaboration remains at the heart of the Sun Life Foundation as we launched multiple initiatives in education, health, and environment. At the very core of these initiatives are the volunteer programs mounted with our Sun Life advisors and employees. These volunteer programs along with our collaboration with partner organizations helped in positively touching over 460,000 Filipino lives this year.

In a span of a year, we were able to achieve this much, seeing rays of hope directing us to a horizon of even brighter years to come. Our work at the Sun Life Foundation is not yet done but may our

milestones this 2023 remind us that working together brings us closer to building a country that is more sustainable and a future that is brighter for everyone.



**Alexander S. Narciso**

President  
Sun Life Financial - Philippines  
Foundation, Inc.

# Message from the Executive Director

“ Together, we made 2023 brighter.



*Brighter together.*

These are the two words that shaped our 2023 at the Sun Life Foundation.

As I look back at this year, I am reminded of the stories we pieced together. Every story radiated hope, as each narrative lit our pathway towards a brighter future, one day at a time.

Last year, our light reached far, with you bearing and sharing your own light. When the world opened its doors wide with the end of the pandemic in sight, we seized the opportunity to continue what we had already started in the previous years. We have let our light further shine through the lives of our beneficiaries, partners, and volunteers.

*Together*, we saw lives being transformed from one community to another. Anchoring on our advocacies, we strengthened our flagship programs and expanded our sustainability initiatives while encouraging the active involvement of all community members. The work that we did in the present was in essence the continuation of the lasting impact that we made in the past, and which we hope still to bring into the future.

*Together*, we ignited the passion to serve within the hearts of our volunteers and advisors. We strengthened our volunteer network, enabling us to serve more Filipinos and move closer to our mission of building a brighter tomorrow.

*Together*, we shared our vision of bringing forth a brighter nation with our partner academes, organizations, and Board of Trustees. Hand-in-hand, we built, mended, and healed to support our fellow countrymen in reaching their potential. We journeyed through 2023 by envisioning communities of thriving and empowered Filipinos.

Thank you to everyone who brought their light to make the future brighter with us. With the light the previous year has given us, let us continue to spark hope and touch lives.

Together, we made 2023 brighter.



**Kristine Dianne C. Millete**

Executive Director  
Sun Life Financial - Philippines  
Foundation, Inc.

# Company Overview

The Sun Life Foundation traces its origins to 1992 when Sharing Hope and Resources for Education and Social Services (S.H.A.R.E.S.) was founded to bring together Sun Life volunteers seeking to make a difference. Incorporated in 2007 as Sun Life Financial-Philippines Foundation, Inc., the Foundation has since served as the philanthropic arm of Sun Life of Canada (Philippines), Inc. Committed to building a brighter world and alleviating the plight of the most in need, we partner with and provide grants to academic institutions and registered non-government organizations to support their sustainable programs and services to Filipinos.



## Vision

Sun Life Foundation is a committed corporate foundation successful in sustaining community transformation initiatives.



## Mission

To uplift the lives of Filipinos by providing financial resources, time and talents in support of education, good health, and a wholesome environment.



## Philanthropic Priorities

The Sun Life Foundation's philanthropic priorities comprise three pillars: Education, Health and Wellness, and Environment. We believe in a holistic approach to building a brighter world and securing a brighter future for generations of Filipinos, which is why our projects sustainably foster education and improve the public's financial literacy, expand access to healthcare and bring essential health services within reach of various groups, and raise awareness for and directly combat environmental degradation.



## Disaster Relief and Volunteerism

Recognizing the destructive impact of disasters, we launch disaster relief initiatives to deliver much-needed aid to affected areas and populations. And remaining faithful to the spirit of S.H.A.R.E.S., we continue to uphold volunteerism as a key component of our operations. Each year, we mobilize thousands of Brighter World Builders, as our volunteers are fondly called, through meaningful and impactful activities that reach lives in every sector of Filipino society.



# 2023 in Numbers

## Flagship Programs

### Sun Pera-Aralan



Achievements:  
Reached **35,000** teachers in **8 Schools Division Offices** in 2023

To date, reached **108,653** teachers in **26 SDOs**

### Sun Life Barangay Health Stations



Achievements:  
Installed Diabetes Corners in **7 Phase 1** sites

## Education Pillar

### Sun Life Scholarship Program



**65** scholars in **6** academic partners

### Project SUNRISE



**125** full scholars from secondary to tertiary education

**9** partner schools with estimated **17,000** students as indirect beneficiaries

### Tulong Eskwela: Leading at the Right Level



**162** teachers and **14** parents as direct beneficiaries

**810** teachers, **50** parents and **4,860** students as indirect beneficiaries

### SHINE Giguimitan



**90** solar home systems

**450** community members

**130** estimated learners

## Health Pillar

### Surgical Missions



205 beneficiaries  
89 major surgeries  
116 minor surgeries

### Enhanced Mingo Meals Nutrition Program



Benefitted **100** malnourished infants and toddlers in Iloilo and over **500** infants and toddlers in Negros Occidental

### Project SUNBRIGHT



216 pregnant women  
53 health service providers

557 parent caregivers  
60 individuals from support network

### Brighter Health and Wellness



School-based feeding, milk feeding, and comprehensive check-ups  
64 kids

### Project SUNRAY



25 pediatric cancer patients assisted

### Caring for Carers



40 families  
6 bi-monthly check up for mothers

4 training workshops  
10 monthly health and nutrition check ups for children

## Environment Pillar

### Mangrove Education: Tulay sa Tibo and Beyond



13 schools around 8,000 students  
32 teachers

### Food Shed Farming Enterprise



2 barangays  
250 individuals benefitted from sustainable livelihood  
2,943 community members with access to nutritious food

### Increasing Capacity of Calamianes Watersheds Towards Resilience



45 trainees  
60 forest guards  
45 youth participants  
19,000 residents benefitted

### Mayon Unrest Disaster Relief



14,938 lives touched (community members)  
1,750 relief packs (1 relief pack / family of 5)  
6,188 hot meals

### Disaster Relief for Habagat, Typhoons Egay and Falcon



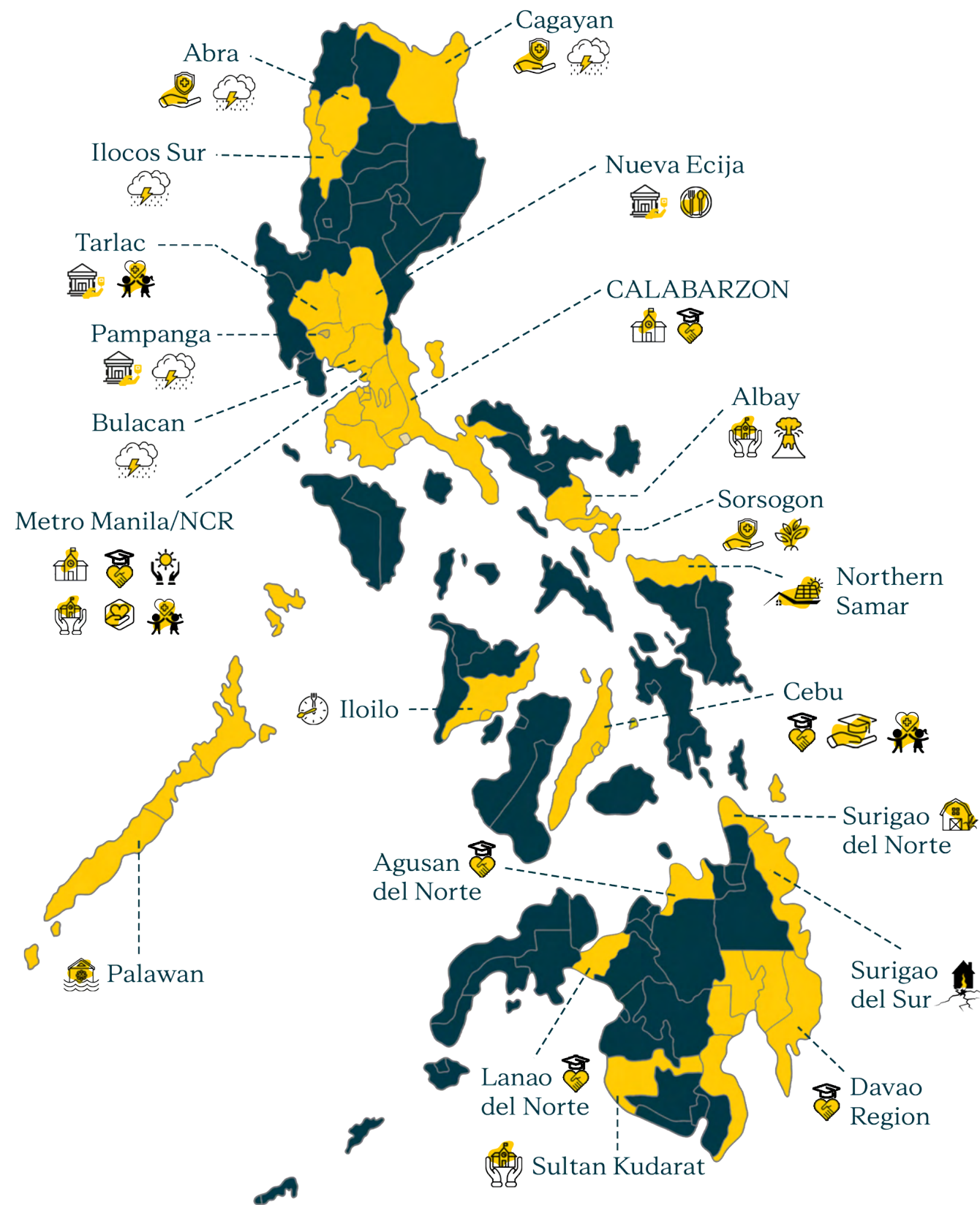
5,000 lives touched (community members)  
1,000 relief packs (1 relief pack / family of 5)

### Surigao Earthquake Disaster Relief



2,885 lives touched (community members)  
577 relief packs (1 relief pack / family of 5)

# Where We Are



# Map Legend

- Sun Pera-Aralan
- Tulong Eskwela: Leading at the Right Level
- Project SUNRISE
- Sun Life Scholarship Program
- Project SUNBRIGHT
- Brighter Health and Wellness
- Surgical Missions
- Project SUNRAY
- Caring for Carers
- Sun Life Barangay Health Station
- Enhanced Mingo Meals Nutrition Program
- Surigao Earthquake
- Mayon Unrest
- Food Shed Farming Enterprise
- Egay, Falcon, and Habagat
- Mangrove Education: Tulay sa Tibo and Beyond
- SHINE Giguimitan
- Increasing Capacity of Calamianes Watersheds Towards Resilience



Flagship Program

# Sun Pera-Aralan

Project Sites: Metro Manila, Cavite, and Laguna



While teachers play an important role in nurturing future generations, growing indebtedness is leaving thousands of teachers across the country vulnerable. In 2017, public school teachers collectively owed PHP300 billion to government and accredited private lenders.<sup>1</sup> Responding to this mounting problem, the Sun Life Foundation, in collaboration with AHA! Behavioral Design, conceptualized the flagship program Sun Pera-Aralan in 2018. Sun Pera-Aralan is the first behavioral design program that promotes financial security and self-efficacy among teachers by encouraging sustainable habits and behaviors that can improve cash flow management.

At the center of Sun Pera-Aralan is the *Peso Sobre*, a budget-stretching tool featuring envelopes that divide monthly funds on a weekly basis. With its intentionality and simplicity, *Peso Sobre* enables teachers to better track their daily expenses and encourages them to optimize funds until the next payday. But beyond this method, the *Peso Sobre* empowers teachers to take control of their finances, manage available resources, and avoid incurring unpaid debts.

<sup>1</sup> Janvic Mateo, "Public School Teachers' Accumulated Debt Reaches P300 B," *Philippine Star*, October 27, 2017, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2017/10/27/1753286/public-school-teachers-accumulated-debt-reaches-p300-b>.



In 2023, Sun Pera-Aralan brought positive impact to the lives of 35,000 public school teachers in eight Schools Division Offices in CALABARZON. One of them was Teacher Judelle Gonzalo of Poblacion National High School, who shared her positive experience of being inspired to save more money by using *Peso Sobre* in allocating budgets and savings.

The program has also garnered multiple recognitions from education and financial literacy communities since its implementation. Such recognitions allow the program to reach more schools and help build financially resilient futures for teachers.

Taking inspiration from the power of working together to uplift lives, the Foundation aims to reach a total of 130,000 teachers across the country by 2025, the same year Sun Life celebrates its 130th anniversary in the Philippines.

Flagship Program

# Sun Life Barangay Health Stations

Project Sites: Batangas, Tarlac, and Nueva Ecija



Though health is essential to building strong and productive generations, vital health care services remain beyond the reach of millions due to the lack of facilities and expertise in many areas. Since its inception, the Sun Life Foundation has been committed to addressing this challenge by promoting health and expanding access to healthcare, especially in low-income and geographically isolated areas, through holistic and sustainable health initiatives.

Launched in 2020 in celebration of Sun Life's 125th year in the Philippines, the Sun Life Barangay Health Stations

project is a flagship program implemented in partnership with Health Futures Foundation, Inc. (HFI). It aims to construct Barangay Health Stations (BHS) in areas lacking primary health services. The first eight stations, all located in Batangas, were turned over in 2021 and 2022 as part of Phase 1. For Phase 2, another five stations in Central Luzon are nearing completion and slated for turnover in 2024 while three more are underway. In a statement, Deputy Director of HFI Michelle Fortea conveyed that this is a multiyear project that aims to benefit thousands of community members.

The project also implements community-based health and wellness programs (CBHWP) through the capacity building of Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) and community members. These programs provide training, knowledge, and skills and emphasize the importance of community involvement in building healthier and happier communities.

This 2023, the BHS project granted the opportunity to battle the rising tide of diabetes through the "Diabetes Iwasan! Diabetes Pag-Aralan" campaign, which was made possible through additional donation from Sun Life Canada. To educate communities about the increasing prevalence of diabetes, the campaign installed Diabetes Corners in seven Phase 1 project sites in Batangas and held activities that raised public awareness on the chronic disease.

But beyond simply delivering primary health care, the stations have also become a source of pride and joy. BHWs like Joan and Arlene, for instance, have been empowered to take care of community members. For Joan, learning how to use herbal medicines, take vital signs, and identify non-communicable diseases sharpens her competencies as a health worker. Meanwhile, Arlene finds happiness in attending to the health concerns of her community. As shared by Ronelo Villanueva, Barangay Captain of Pansol, gaining control of their health has fueled the passion of residents to actively take part in raising their health status.

The success of the Sun Life Barangay Health Stations project is a testament to the positive impact of accessible health care. More than serving as centers for health services, these stations help uplift the lives of beneficiaries and pave the way for a healthier and brighter future.





# A Closer Look at Our Pillars



## Education

At the Sun Life Foundation, we believe that a changed life starts with education. Through our programs, we bring equal opportunities to Filipino children and youth and empower them to dream big. We provide scholarship grants, support families in building conducive environments for learners, and enhance the capabilities of families, partner institutions, and communities to ensure that quality education is within reach. This is our contribution to shaping the next generation as we journey together towards a better and brighter future.



## Health

The Sun Life Foundation believes that every Filipino deserves access to health care in order to build a better, brighter, and more sustainable life. Hence, our health advocacy focuses on supporting programs that train our health workers, expand access to health care in underserved and marginalized populations, and enhance nutrition among children, families, and communities.



## Environment

Securing a bright future requires good stewardship of our present resources. At the Sun Life Foundation, we put a premium on fostering a healthy and sustainable environment. We have partnered with leading environmental organizations to implement holistic programs that rally the preservation of our natural resources, help transform communities into becoming protectors of our environment, and increase their resilience against the impact of climate change. This way, we contribute to transforming communities and building a brighter, safer, and sustainable world for every Filipino.



## Tulong Eskwela: Leading at the Right Level

Implemented in partnership with AHA! Learning Center, Tulong Eskwela aims to help schools in the learning recovery of students through the expansion of reading and numeracy remediation support and the enhancement of supplementary programs for academic and social-emotional learning. Currently in its fourth year of implementation, it has continued to impact the lives of school teachers and students across the country.



### EDUCATION

## Sun Life Scholarship Program

The Sun Life Scholarship Program provides comprehensive scholarship grants to college students from six partner academic institutions, giving them access to quality education. In 2023, 65 slots were opened for students enrolled in the fields of actuarial science, business, information and digital technologies, and natural sciences.



## SHINE Giguimitan

Access to electricity is still one of the challenges that millions of Filipinos experience in geographically isolated and underserved areas. Together with Solar Village Foundation, we aim to provide reliable solar home systems to the community members of Barangay Giguimitan in Silvino Lobos, Northern Samar. We hope to benefit 130 learners and their families through these sustainable light sources that enable them to study at home and perform productive work even past sunset.



# Project SUNRISE

(Comprehensive Educational Sponsorship in Cebu)

Project SUNRISE stands for "Supporting Underprivileged Needs: Resources, Inclusion and Student Empowerment." This project supports high school students and their families by giving access to quality education until they graduate. In partnership with Children of Asia (COA), the Sun Life Foundation contributes to fostering sustainable education among disadvantaged students and their families by providing financial support, social skills, values formation, and other supplementary skills training. A total of 125 scholars from nine partner schools benefitted from the project. Another 17,000 students also indirectly benefitted from school support such as awareness campaigns, IT equipment, and empowerment workshops for teachers and parents, made possible through additional funding from the Macaulay Club, an elite club of the top advisors of the company.



# Sun Life Scholarship Program Towards Dreams and a Brighter Future

Project Sites: UP Diliman, UP Mindanao, UP Cebu, UP Los Baños, MSU-IIT, Father Saturnino Urios University, and Cebu



With steadfast commitment to expanding access to quality education, the Sun Life Foundation has for many years extended scholarship opportunities to underprivileged students. This year is no exception, as the Foundation once again lent support to scholars from different partner universities and organizations. Through the Sun Life Scholarship Program, the Foundation covers monthly allowances, book allowances, and tuition fees to ease the rising cost of education.

In 2023, the Foundation opened 65 slots for college students from six partner universities: University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman, UP Mindanao, UP Cebu, UP Los Baños, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT), and Father Saturnino Urios University (FSUU). Scholars majoring in actuarial sciences, business, information and digital technology, and natural sciences were welcomed to the program.

Apart from the Sun Life Scholarship Program, the Foundation also creates opportunities to secure a future where

everyone enjoys the right to quality education. The Foundation partnered with Children of Asia (COA) and established Project SUNRISE, a comprehensive educational sponsorship program that benefits 125 students and their families in nine partner schools in Cebu. Project SUNRISE's unique approach departs from using academic performance as criteria; instead, it anchors the selection of scholars on children and their parents' motivation to finish school. Additionally, this program comprehensively considers financial, health, and other constraints to accessing learning materials and opportunities when granting scholarships. Another 17,000 students of the nine partner schools also indirectly benefitted from school support such as awareness campaigns, IT equipment, and empowerment workshops for teachers and parents, made possible through additional funding from the Macaulay Club.

Barbie Romeo-Guardiario, Country Director of COA, shared that the scholarship's holistic and child's rights-based approach makes it distinct. Sessions on positive parenting and child's rights awareness were

also conducted with the parents who play an integral role in their child's development.

The road to a brighter future is long and filled with obstacles. But with people and institutions working together to extend

a helping hand, there will always be hope that one day every Filipino will have a chance at learning and building a better life.



# Tulong Eskwela: Leading at the Right Level Brighter Students for Brighter Future

Project Sites: Comembo ES, SDO Pasig, SDO Legazpi, and SDO Sultan Kudarat

As our country recovers from the damages wreaked by the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions are also endeavoring to make up for lost time and opportunities for learning. As such, the Sun Life Foundation has partnered with AHA! Learning Center to implement Tulong Eskwela, a four-year project that aims to help students and teachers recover from learning losses due to the pandemic.

Tulong Eskwela has evolved in its approach since its launching in 2020. In 2020, interventions focused on supporting teachers, students, and parents as they adjusted to distance learning due to prolonged lockdowns. In 2021, Phase 1: Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) equipped students and teachers with strategies to remediate literacy and numeracy gaps as well as held supplementary activities for the social-emotional development of learners. Utilizing a learning innovation developed by Pratham, one of India's largest NGOs, TaRL assessed children and applied methods appropriate to the identified level of learning to improve outcomes. In 2022, Learning at the Right Level built upon the successes of previous years to expand the project to

more schools.

Now in its fourth year, Tulong Eskwela has launched Leading at the Right Level to implement capacity building activities to further empower students, teachers, and parents. The project has also expanded to include Comembo Elementary School (Comembo ES), where the Tulong Eskwela Urban Gardening project was added as a health component that combats hunger and undernutrition in students. Comembo ES also serves as the site where the Sun Life community can observe and participate in live learning sessions and other activities. In 2023, schools under the Schools Division Offices (SDOs) of Makati, Legazpi, and Sultan Kudarat benefitted from the project.

To date, Tulong Eskwela has reached hundreds of teachers. Phase 1: TaRL trained 162 teachers, exceeding the target of 150 teachers by 8%. Phase 2: Leading at the Right Level with Comembo Elementary School retrained 14 parents (40% higher than the target of 10 parents) and an additional 28 teachers on Teaching at the Right Level, Socio-Emotional Learning, and Suporta Eskwela Club. A total of 149 students (99%

of target of 150 students) were also enrolled at the feeding program at Comembo ES, resulting in improved nutrition status and school attendance. It has also impacted through training of trainers the lives of 810 more teachers (8% higher than target of 750 teachers), 50 more parents, and 4,860 students (8% higher than target of 4,500 students).

While significant progress has been made in learning recovery, more support is needed to fill the gaps in our education system and transform school communities. Tulong Eskwela is the Sun Life Foundation's contribution to this massive undertaking as we pursue a brighter tomorrow for Filipino children.





## Enhanced Mingo Meals Nutrition Program

Malnutrition is still prevalent in different areas of the country. The Sun Life Foundation, in partnership with Negrese Volunteers for Change (NVC) Foundation, Inc., takes part in combating malnutrition by providing Mingo Meals to nutritionally at-risk children. Mingo is a powder made of rice, *monggo* (mung beans), and *malunggay* (moringa). It provides high nutritional value and can be served as complementary food for malnourished children. Aside from giving Mingo Meals, this project equipped children's carers through child health and nutrition sessions as well as empowered Barangay Health Workers (BHW) to take part in the program. In addition, an estimated 540 infants and children in Bago City, Negros Occidental were also provided with Mingo Meals for one year, made possible through additional funding from Sun Life Canada.

### HEALTH

## Surgical Missions

Life-changing surgical procedures remain beyond the reach of many Filipinos, especially those residing in remote areas. The Sun Life Foundation and the World Surgical Foundation Philippines, Inc. (WSFP) are on a mission to enhance the surgical health care capacity of the Philippines. This program enables doctors to perform minor and major surgeries in disadvantaged communities by providing them with surgical supplies, anesthetics, tubes, and other regulated drugs. In 2023, this project covered the provinces of Abra, Sorsogon, and Cagayan de Oro.



## Caring for Carers

Caring for children with disabilities poses unique difficulties and challenges. The Sun Life Foundation and Gota De Leche advocate the welfare of mothers who serve as caregivers of children with disabilities through its Caring for Carers program. Seeking to enhance the health status of caregiver-mothers in low-income and underserved communities, this program provides them with self-care capacity building activities, mental health workshops, and nutritional support that reinforce and build resilience so that they can continue caring for their families in the long term.

# Project SUNBRIGHT

Project SUNBRIGHT (“Supporting Nanay in Exclusive Breastfeeding and Infant/Child Feeding for Growing Healthy Tsikiting”) focuses on the reduction of malnutrition among infants, young children, and pregnant and lactating women in Barangay Alabang in Muntinlupa City through the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding with breastfeeding. Launched in partnership with Save the Children Philippines, this comprehensive health initiative determines the causes of undernutrition, promotes optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices among parents and caregivers, builds community support groups, and capacitates health service providers and local governments.



# Project SUNRAY

(Psychosocial Support for Hospitalized Children)

Implemented in partnership with Kythe Foundation, Project SUNRAY (“Support to Nurture until Remission for Admirable Youth”) is a health initiative that provides assistance to a total of 25 pediatric cancer patients and children with chronic diseases. Ten children under the Maintenance Phase of treatment in Kythe-affiliated hospitals are given support for meeting health care needs such as medical procedures, laboratory tests, medications, and transportation under the Adopt-a-Patient Program. Meanwhile, Project SUNRAY also provides partial sponsorship to 15 patients joining the Kythe Summer Camp 2024, which will offer children a fun and wholesome break from routine and a chance to form friendships with other children fighting the same battle.

# Brighter Health & Wellness

Launched in partnership with ASKI Foundation, this program aims to implement a holistic approach in addressing health issues facing students in Barangay Joson in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija. It will provide comprehensive check-ups, hygiene kits, capacity building activities to engage the community, and education and awareness about nutrition and hygiene. It will also promote sustainable practices such as backyard gardening that will enable families to grow their own produce for enhanced food security.



# Surgical Missions

## Operation: Brighter Days

Project Sites: Abra, Sorsogon, and Cagayan de Oro City

Access to health care is a fundamental human right. However, many rural and remote communities across the Philippines are located far from clinics and hospitals, making it difficult for residents to receive primary health care, let alone advanced and sophisticated services such as surgery. The cost of surgery is also a major hindrance, and often patients who cannot afford such services are forced to endure difficulties that result from unmet health needs. Children are unable to attend classes, adults are deprived of the capacity to work and generate income, and the welfare of families and communities are put at risk.

Bearing this challenge in mind, the Sun Life Foundation has partnered with the World Surgical Foundation Philippines, Inc. (WSFP) to provide rural and remote communities with quality, sustainable, and equitable surgical health care. For many years, WSFP has been bridging the gap between underserved sectors and the right to access comprehensive health care. With the Sun Life Foundation covering the cost of surgical supplies including anesthetics, tubes, and regulated medicines, WSFP's surgical teams conducted surgical missions

in the provinces of Abra and Sorsogon and in the City of Cagayan de Oro.

This year alone, the surgical missions performed 205 minor and major surgeries, in the process changing lives and giving hope for a brighter future. Having received the surgeries they required, beneficiaries can once again pursue education, work, and greater productivity, more confident that a better and healthier life lies within reach.



# Enhanced Mingo Meals Nutrition Program

## Behind Meals: A Heart that Nurtures

Project Sites: Iloilo City, Iloilo and Bago City, Negros Occidental

Ensuring proper child nutrition is an essential component of building a healthy and productive Filipino society. Child undernutrition, however, still affects millions of children across the country. Intent on nourishing as many children as possible, the Sun Life Foundation and the Negrense Volunteers for Change (NVC) Foundation, Inc. have partnered to uphold their shared commitment to help build a world free of hunger through the Enhanced Mingo Meals Nutrition Program.

The program aims to help children overcome undernutrition in their formative years. Developed and produced by NVC, Mingo Meals are composed of rice, *monggo* (mung beans), and *malunggay* (moringa), three nutrient-rich foods available in abundance in the Philippines. The meals are served to undernourished children as a complementary food, thereby filling gaps in nutritional intake and improving health status. Children's body weight is then monitored for progress for one year. To date, Mingo Meals have been served in 60 provinces across the country, benefitting thousands of children and their caregivers.

In 2023, the Foundation and NVC provided Mingo Meals as well as health care support to 100 children aged six to 59 months. Mothers and volunteers were also offered incentives to bolster motivation and participation: mothers received monetary rewards for regular attendance in health sessions and utilization of nutritional services while Barangay Health Workers (BHWs) received cash incentives when children under their care attained their goal weight. NVC also opened a community pantry offering food items at lower prices during quarterly checkup sessions. In addition, an estimated 540 infants and children in Bago City, Negros Occidental were also provided with Mingo Meals for one year, made possible through additional funding from Sun Life Canada.

Michelle Custodio, one of the mothers under the program in Barangay Calumpang, Iloilo City, reported that her children gained weight, achieved their target height, and became more socially active as a result of improved nutrition. She further shared that the program not only provided Mingo Meals, but also imparted knowledge on proper childcare to parents like her.



An excellent start in life begins with proper nutrition, and Mingo Meals help set children on the path to a healthier and brighter tomorrow.



# Project SUNBRIGHT

## Shining Bright for the Children

Project Sites: Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila

Children need adequate nutrition for optimal growth and development. However, malnutrition remains prevalent in the Philippines, especially among low-income and underserved populations. Though local governments and organizations have implemented programs to lower the rate of malnutrition, the fight is far from over.

Launched by the Sun Life Foundation in partnership with Save the Children Philippines (SCP) in 2023 in Barangay Alabang, Muntinlupa, Project SUNBRIGHT (“Supporting Nanay in Exclusive Breast Feeding and Infant/Child Feeding for Growing Healthy Tsikiting”) aims to address undernutrition among infants and young children through the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding. Alabang was chosen due to its high urban poor population and many informal settlement communities. Additionally, a significant number of pregnant and lactating women as well as malnourished children under five years of age reside in the barangay, based on data gathered by the City Health Office in 2022.

Project SUNBRIGHT believes that it is important to involve the entire community in fighting malnutrition, which is why it utilizes a comprehensive approach that determines the causes of undernutrition, educates on the importance of optimal infant and young child feeding (IYCF) practices, capacitates local health service providers (HSPs), establishes community IYCF support groups, and involves and supports local government units. Furthermore, the project not just targets children and pregnant/lactating women but also encourages the active participation of husbands and partners, caregivers, and HSPs, proving that it indeed takes a village to raise a child.

In 2023, Project SUNBRIGHT successfully reached out to 216 pregnant women, 557 parent-caregivers, 53 HSPs, and 60 individuals from the support network. While limited to just one barangay, the learnings from this project provide precious insight that can assist in creating a replicable model for promoting IYCF practices in other settings.





## ENVIRONMENT

### Mangrove Education: Tulay sa Tibo and Beyond

Launched in partnership with ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, Inc., *Tulay sa Tibo* (Mangrove Boardwalk) aims to protect and rehabilitate the mangroves of Gubat in Sorsogon, expand awareness on the vital role of mangroves forests, and promote sustainable ecotourism. Now in its third phase, the project is leveraging the successes of previous phases by educating the youth on mangrove health and its impact on the environment. Through the comprehensive integration of mangrove education into the curriculums of 13 schools in Gubat, the project hopes to raise a new generation of environmental advocates that will serve as stewards and protectors of this precious resource.

### Food Shed Farming Enterprise

The Food Shed Farming Enterprise is an initiative launched in partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines that provides food sheds to the remote barangays of Caub and Halian in the municipality of Del Carmen in Surigao del Norte. For many years, Caub and Halian have relied on Surigao City and the main island of Siargao for its supply of fresh produce. But this supply chain is vulnerable to disruptions such as the impacts of climate change. Through this project, the Sun Life Foundation seeks to enhance food security and establish a sustainable agriculture-based livelihood that complements the communities' fishing industry.



### Increasing Capacity of Calamianes Watersheds Towards Resilience

Launched in partnership with the Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation, Inc. (Forest Foundation) and the Embassy of Canada, Increasing Capacity of Calamianes Watersheds Towards Resilience is a multiyear project that aims to enhance the protection of the Calamian Islands' forests and increase the watersheds' capacity to provide water to locals. Apart from the provision of tools, equipment, training, and administrative and infrastructural support to forest guards, the project also establishes sustainable rainwater harvesting systems. Through these components, the Sun Life Foundation hopes to safeguard the welfare of these islands' natural resources and secure a more sustainable environment for local communities.

# Mangrove Education Branching Out to a Brighter and More Resilient World

Project Site: Gubat, Sorsogon

Preparing younger generations to serve as stewards of nature is vital to securing a resilient, sustainable, and brighter world. In 2023, the Sun Life Foundation remained dedicated to the pursuit of environmental conservation through its Mangrove Boardwalk project in Barangay Panganiban in Gubat, Sorsogon. Locally known as *Tulay sa Tibo*, this project was launched in partnership with Bantay Kalikasan, the environmental stewardship arm of ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, Inc.

Previous phases of the project focused on the construction of a boardwalk among the mangroves, laying the foundations for sustainable ecotourism, and capacitation of Panganiban People's Organization (PPO) members by training them in citizen science, environmental stewardship, and livelihood operations. The project's third phase now branches out to preparing Gubat's students to serve as stewards of nature through comprehensive mangrove education.

To reach this goal, the Foundation enabled the development of learning materials on the role and importance of

mangroves and their integration into the formal curriculum of 13 schools in Gubat. By expanding awareness at a young age through formal education channels, the project hopes to raise generations of Sorsoganon who understand, treasure, and protect natural resources not just for themselves but also for the future. This undertaking was made possible through the work of 32 teachers who were instrumental in developing the learning materials.

Phase 3 of the project underscores the importance of multigenerational initiatives where older generations empower younger generations, demonstrating that no single generation can claim ownership of nature, but that every generation is merely a steward of shared resources whose preservation is vital to building a brighter world for all.



# Increasing Capacity of Calamianes Watersheds Towards Resilience

## Our Last Ecological Frontier

Project Site: Palawan

While the Calamian Islands, also known as the Calamianes, in Palawan are famed for their lush forests, white sand beaches, and pristine waters, their real value lies in the rich biodiversity that sustains the needs and livelihood of the local population including the indigenous Tagbanua people. However, climate change and environmental degradation constantly threaten these natural resources and, by extension, the communities that depend on them.

Increasing Capacity of Calamianes Watersheds Towards Resilience is a five-year project launched in 2023 by the Sun Life Foundation in partnership with Philippine Tropical Forest Conservation Foundation, Inc. (Forest Foundation) and the Embassy of Canada. Covering the municipalities of Busuanga, Coron, and Culion, the project aims to enhance the protection of the islands' forests and increase their capacity to provide clean water to local communities.

The project will bolster forest management and protection by erecting three new guardhouses for community forest guards (Bantay Gubat). It will also provide 60 Bantay Gubat with administrative

support and training as well as equip them with tools, safety kits, solar power sets, and communication equipment. To enhance the islands' climate resilience and increase their capacity to provide water, the project will supply six new units of rainwater harvesting facilities (ferrocement tanks) and support the utilization of 3R (Recharge, Retention, and Reuse) water technologies at the Sinibayan Watershed in Busuanga, Mabentangen Watershed in Coron, and Dita Watershed in Culion.

Protecting natural resources and having access to clean water are vital to building healthier and more climate-resilient communities. Through this project, the Sun Life Foundation and Forest Foundation Philippines aim to benefit a total of 18,904 individuals in 4,362 households and thereby aid them in shaping a brighter world.



# Food Shed Farming Enterprise

## A Beam of Hope for Halian and Caub

Project Site: Del Carmen, Surigao del Norte

The Sun Life Foundation has always advocated for extending health and livelihood initiatives to remote locations. For Barangays Halian and Caub in the fifth-class municipality of Del Carmen, Surigao del Norte, this initiative comes in the form of two food sheds. Launched in 2023 through a partnership with World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines, the Food Shed Farming Enterprise project aims to enhance food security in these barangays and provide residents with a sustainable agro-based livelihood.

As remote island barangays, Halian and Caub rely on the main island of Siargao and Surigao City for their supply of fresh produce. But disruptions such as lockdowns during the pandemic and extreme weather conditions due to climate change threaten the barangays' food supply chain and undermine food security. The seasonality of the fishing industry, which serves as the main livelihood, also poses a challenge.

The food sheds address these issues by producing safe and nutritious locally produced food for residents year-round. Moreover, these food sheds provide

additional income, as produce can be sold to neighboring communities via improved market linkages. The application of climate-adaptive green farming technologies such as hydroponics, waste recycling, rainwater harvesting, and composting also enhances climate resilience, while the formation of a Group Savings and Loans Association (GSLA) and provision of financial education aid in ensuring long-term sustainability of the agro-based enterprise.

The food sheds have proven to be a boon and a bright beam of hope for the residents. Barangay Captain Eliza Escobido of Halian conveyed that the project has opened livelihood opportunities for farmer and fisher families. The food sheds, each requiring just 25 square meters of space to operate, support the livelihood of 250 individuals and indirectly benefit a further 2,943 barangay residents who now can enjoy fresh and nutrient-rich food.



# Disaster Relief

Project Sites: Albay, Abra, Bulacan, Cagayan, Pampanga, Ilocos Region, and Surigao del Sur

In 2023, the Philippines faced a series of natural calamities that affected thousands of Filipinos across the country. Recognizing the impact of disasters on life, property, and livelihood, the Sun Life Foundation once again upheld its commitment to reach

populations in need of aid, build resilient communities, and uplift the lives of Filipinos. Through our partnership with ABS-CBN Foundation, we were able to contribute and provide relief packs and hot meals to thousands of victims.



Photo courtesy of ABS-CBN Foundation



Photo courtesy of ABS-CBN Foundation

## • Mayon Unrest

The Sun Life Foundation donated 1,750 relief packs to affected families in Albay and served hot meals to over 6,000 individuals.



Photo courtesy of ABS-CBN Foundation



Photo courtesy of ABS-CBN Foundation

## • Typhoons Falcon and Egay

In the wake of the typhoons, the Sun Life Foundation distributed relief packs to over 1,000 families in Ilocos Region and the provinces of Cagayan, Abra, Bulacan, and Pampanga.



Photo courtesy of ABS-CBN Foundation



Photo courtesy of ABS-CBN Foundation

## • Surigao Del Sur Earthquake

In the wake of the magnitude 7.4 earthquake that struck Surigao del Sur, the Sun Life Foundation extended its relief support to 577 families through 577 relief bags that were distributed using donations made by the Foundation.



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*Volunteering left a positive impact in my life since during all those activities, it reminded me of the different opportunities in life. I became more thankful and more compassionate to others. I also became even more vocal to encourage my circle to try volunteering. We cannot do anything without others. If there is no collaboration, we limit the things we can do for others. So personally, I wanted to be that person to encourage others to be helpful because I believe that the more people I influence, the more people will volunteer, the more people we can help and more communities we can reach.*

**James Bagallon**  
Sun Life Employee and Volunteer

”

*Volunteering is not just about what you can give. Your mere presence in the site already brings hope and comfort to those we reach out to. By volunteering, I learned to be more compassionate, kind, and generous to others. This is something I treasure and live out in every aspect of my life.*

**Jennifer Caro**  
Sun Life Foundation Provincial Volunteer

”

*Sun Life Foundation helped us to be the catalyst of transformation of communities.*

**Michelle Fortea**  
Deputy Director, Health Futures Foundation, Inc.

”

*We are very grateful for the Sun Life Foundation for the vision, their support and the trust they gave us. They can also see that we are sincere and dedicated to do the Children of Asia and Sun Life Foundation's mission for a better and brighter future. We will reflect the light that Sun Life gives to Children of Asia to others. We will pay it forward and be that light.*

**Barbie Romeo-Guardiario**  
Country Director, Children of Asia

# Success Stories

## We shine BRIGHTER TOGETHER



**Benedicto C. Sison**  
Chairman



**Alexander S. Narciso**  
President



**Valerie N. Pama**  
Vice President

## Board of Trustees



**Dr. Gerardo D. Legaspi**  
Independent Trustee



**Kara Patria C. David-Cancio**  
Independent Trustee

# Sun Life Foundation Team



**Kristine Dianne C. Millete**  
Executive Director



**Reiza Ayla M. Bañega**  
Specialist, Programs and Partnerships



**Stephanie Anne C. Loanzon**  
Specialist, Programs and Volunteer  
Management



**Czarina Zenneth F. Bucas**  
Specialist, Finance and Administration

## Statements of Assets, Liabilities and Net Assets

| Assets   | Notes | 2023               | 2022        |
|--|-------|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>Current Assets</b>                            |       |                    |             |
| Cash   | 5     | <b>P5,535,759</b>  | P6,764,214  |
| Investment in Mutual Fund                        | 8     | <b>55,048,961</b>  | 41,558,031  |
| Other Receivables                                | 6     | <b>200,289</b>     | 213,785     |
|  |       | <b>P60,785,009</b> | P48,536,030 |
| <b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>                |       |                    |             |
| <b>Current Liabilities</b>                       |       |                    |             |
| Trade and Other Payables                         | 9     | <b>P738,139</b>    | P532,738    |
| Due to a Related Party                           | 12    | <b>1,050,187</b>   | 458,208     |
|  |       | <b>1,788,326</b>   | 990,946     |
| <b>Non-current Liability</b>                     |       |                    |             |
| Pension Liability                                | 10    | <b>P2,553,600</b>  | -           |
| Total Liabilities                                |       | <b>4,341,926</b>   | 990,946     |
| Fund Balance                                     |       | <b>57,999,483</b>  | 47,545,084  |
| Remeasurement Loss on Defined Benefit Obligation | 10    | <b>(1,556,400)</b> | -           |
| <b>Total Net Assets</b>                          |       | <b>56,443,083</b>  | 47,545,084  |
|  |       | <b>P60,785,009</b> | P48,536,030 |

## Statements of Cash Flows

For the Years Ended December 31

| Cash Flows from Operating Activities                | Notes      | 2023                | 2022          |
|---|------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Net Receipts (expenses) for the year                |            | <b>P10,454,399</b>  | (P71,129,809) |
| Adjustments for:                                    |            |                     |               |
| Pension Benefits                                    | 10, 12, 14 | <b>1,472,500</b>    | -             |
| Unrealized Gain on Investment in Mutual Fund        | 8          | <b>(462,324)</b>    | 698,741       |
| Interest Income                                     | 5, 7       | <b>(19,535)</b>     | (988,837)     |
| Realized Loss (Gain) on Investments                 | 7, 8       | <b>(228,611)</b>    | 500,722       |
| Written-off Prepayments                             |            | -                   | (8,520)       |
| Operating Cash Flows Before Working Capital Changes |            | <b>11,216,429</b>   | (72,325,185)  |
| Decrease (Increase) in: Other Receivables           |            | <b>13,496</b>       | (166,795)     |
| Increase (Decrease) in: Trade and Other Payables    |            | <b>205,401</b>      | (240,294)     |
| Due to a Related Party                              |            | <b>116,679</b>      | 361,825       |
| Net Cash from (Used in) Operating Activities        |            | <b>11,552,005</b>   | (72,370,449)  |
| <b>Cash Flows from Investing Activities</b>         |            |                     |               |
| Proceeds from Disposal of Investment in Mutual Fund | 8          | <b>25,200,005</b>   | 22,600,003    |
| Interest Income Received                            | 5, 7       | <b>19,535</b>       | 2,320,559     |
| Purchase of Investment in Mutual Fund               | 8          | <b>(38,000,000)</b> | -             |
| Proceeds from Maturities of Investment in Bonds     | 7          | -                   | 37,338,000    |
| Net Cash from (Used in) Investing Activities        |            | <b>(12,780,460)</b> | 62,258,562    |
| <b>Net Decrease in Cash</b>                         |            | <b>(1,228,455)</b>  | (10,111,887)  |
| <b>Cash, Beginning</b>                              |            | <b>6,764,214</b>    | 16,876,101    |
| <b>Cash, End</b>                                    | 5          | <b>P5,535,759</b>   | P6,764,214    |

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