

SALIGAN implemented its programs in 2021 still challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, with surges in cases due to the Delta and Omicron variants, staying the planned re-opening of the economy, further exacerbating the plight of the poor and the marginalized. The vaccines which were rolled-out by first quarter of 2021 were not initially readily accessible to the general population and to those in the provinces. In the second year of the longest pandemic lockdown in the world imposed by the Philippine government, stricter policies for violating quarantine protocols and accessing public services such as transport were implemented. By December 2021, the unemployment rate was at 6.6% or 3.27 Million. The recent data released by the government covering the first semester of 2021 showed that 23.7% or 26.14 Million Filipinos are living below poverty threshold, with about 10.4 Million Filipinos who can't even meet their basic food needs.

SALIGAN's programs and strategies were mostly implemented online. SALIGAN's policies on online legal consultation, data privacy and security, and digital security were enhanced, as well as the team's capacity to facilitate online learning sessions. SALIGAN relaunched www.saligan.org on February 25, 2021, which serves as a resource hub for popular legal materials. Three projects culminated in 2021: The Legal Empowerment and Assistance Program for the MDES in the Philippines with Misereor; Bida ang Bata with Save the Children Philippines; and Strengthening Community-Based Responses to HR Violations with the Asia Democracy Network. SALIGAN also worked with several development partners, such as UN Women, PHILSSA, the ALG, ILO CO-Manila, and IOM.

SALIGAN 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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LEGAL CONSULTATIONS

SALIGAN facilitated 86 legal consultation sessions, 22% of which were face-to-face and were in Bicol and Mindanao. There was a considerable increase in the number of legal consultations facilitated by SALIGAN's offices in Manila and Mindanao. SALIGAN's online legal consultation platform facilitated this increase. 239 individuals, 69% of whom were women, were able to access SALIGAN's legal services through its legal jamming sessions with paralegals, and partner organizations and communities.

Four of these sessions were online. SALIGAN represented litigants in four new cases, mostly labor, increasing the total number of cases to 73 in 2021. Case strategizing sessions were conducted with partners and stakeholders in pending cases involving farmers and workers. Case build-up sessions were also facilitated on issues on mining, demolition, and eviction.





ACCESS TO LAW AND LEGAL PROCESSES

PUBLICATION OF POPULAR LEGAL MATERIALS

SALIGAN finished drafting Manuals on Violence Against Women, Labor, and Urban Poor, as well as Primers on Katarungang Pambarangay, Barangay VAW Desks, and Family Code. These materials will be available online at www.saligan.org in 2022.

The Children's Manual for Local Governance and Participation (English and Filipino), and the Primer on the Localization of Safe Spaces Act were released. SALIGAN also drafted Manuals on Workers' Freedom of Association with the International Labor Organization. The Manual will be published in 2022, coinciding with the launching of an online learning platform. As a consultant of the Internal Organization of Migration, SALIGAN drafted an Enhanced Pre-Departure Orientation Module contextualized for overseas household workers from BARMM to Gulf States. SALIGAN also published articles on psychological incapacity as ground for annulment and the need for comprehensive policies on children's rights.





ACCESS TO LAW AND LEGAL PROCESSES

INTERNSHIP

SALIGAN facilitated an online 8-week summer internship of 6 law students (4 of whom are women) from Ateneo Law School. They immersed into the various programs of the branches. They developed an increased appreciation to the role of law in attaining social justice and social change. In addition, SALIGAN hosted 5 interns from the Ateneo Human Rights Center and the San Sebastian College of Law. Although their immersion to SALIGAN was shorter, they were able to work with SALIGAN's partners and communities. Two forum on alternative lawyering were facilitated among law students from the University of Nueva Caceres and the University of Mindanao. An orientation of labor laws and program was also provided via a pre-recorded video for interns of the AHRC. Moreover, a session on Alternative Lawyering and Active Citizenship was conducted for Ateneo graduating students who plan to enroll in law school.



Seven groups of paralegals – 140 individuals (65% are women) – completed the paralegal formation program in 2021. They are: anti-VAWC advocates of Sipocot in Camarines Sur, indigenous peoples in CARAGA, housing and children's rights advocates in areas in GMMA, community responders for WICL in Quezon City and Davao City, and HR responders in GMMA, Bicol and Mindanao. All sessions in Bicol and Mindanao were conducted face-to-face.

COMMUNITY LEGAL EMPOWERMENT

PARALEGAL FORMATION PROGRAM

2021 was the first time SALIGAN facilitated a full online paralegal formation program, which meant shorter sessions spread out through longer periods, while ensuring that technical support is given to partners to participate virtually. Coinciding with SALIGAN's 34th anniversary, a legal empowerment forum was participated by graduate-paralegals who shared their plans on using the law for their organizations and communities' issues and advocacies. The paralegals have improved their confidence in engaging with stakeholders as they advocate for policies and solutions to their issues, which they attribute to their capacity to explain the legal aspects and legal procedures. Their increased knowledge of the law and legal procedures combined with enhance advocacy skills not only improved their engagement with key stakeholders from the government but more importantly gave them confidence to seek accountability from their respective LGUs.

FEATURE STORY:



RIGHTS CLAIMING IN THE RESETTLEMENT SITE IN BARANGAY PLAZA ALDEA IN TANAY, RIZAL

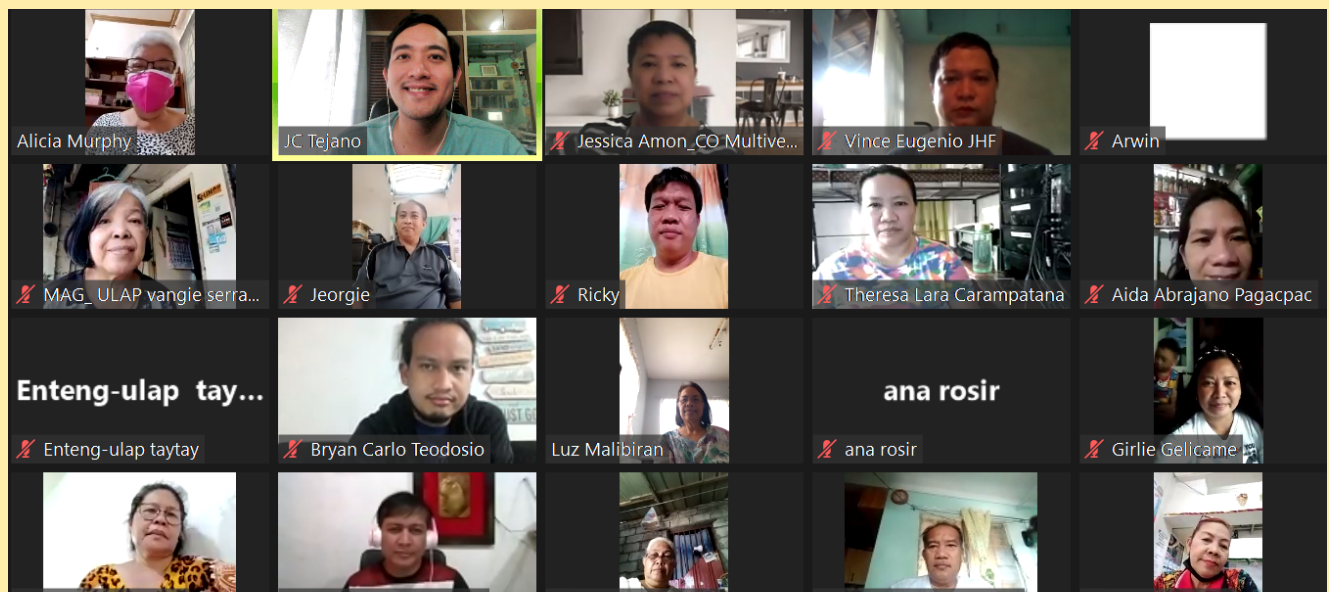
Active and persistent engagement of the paralegals with barangay Plaza Aldea led to the installation of a waterline system, regular garbage collection and proper waste management in the resettlement area.

DepEd's local officers also committed to open the school building for use by student-relocatees. Budget was also allocated for the delivery of services to relocatees.

FEATURE STORY:

FACILITATING NEGOTIATIONS

Paralegals met with partners and evicted ISFs in San Dionisio, Paranaque to demand assistance from the local government pending their inclusion in the list of beneficiaries for housing program entitled to relocation. The case conference facilitated a negotiation between the affected ISFs and the local government and eventually resulted in the provision of financial assistance to the community. These engagements showcased to other communities and groups who may be facing future threats of demolition that such platforms exist and negotiations with the LGUs can be facilitated.



Paralegals are the first “responders” to the communities in handling conflicts, as they have necessary knowledge and skills to explain rights and mediate between parties, and to provide protection to women and children victim-survivors by assisting and referring them to the agencies concerned.

LEGAL LITERACY SESSIONS

In addition to the paralegal formation program, 18 legal literacy sessions in 2021 reached more than 744 individuals (65% are women). 7 of these sessions were conducted face-to-face in Bicol and Mindanao.

Various topics were discussed during sessions depending on the needs of the partners and communities, but more particularly on workers' right, women and gender equality, good governance, and human rights.



PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL ADVOCACY REFORM

SALIGAN continued its work with national advocacy teams on the right to housing, women and children, and workers, and actively participated in the deliberations on several proposed measures.

FEATURE STORY: HRAT

The Housing Rights Advocacy Team (HRAT) continued its legislative advocacy on the proposed Just and Humane Resettlement Act (JAHRA), Least Displacement of Informal Settlers Act (LISA), and the National Housing Development Bill. SALIGAN also supported the approval of the Marawi Compensation Bill pending in Congress.

Along with other partners and networks, it started engaging with the newly-established Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development for the institutionalization of Peoples' Planning mechanism. Advocates also asked the DILG to revoke its order lifting the moratorium on eviction and demolition of ISFs during the pandemic. The Karapatan and Tahanan FB page continued to be the primary social media advocacy platform for housing rights, featuring videos on the situation of ISFs during the pandemic (Homemade) and information materials on JAHRA and LISA.

SALIGAN, with partners and networks working on gender equality and children, participated in deliberations on amendments to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act and the Dangerous Drugs Act. It also participated in the deliberations on domestic translation of the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment. SALIGAN also participated in the consultation facilitated by the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) in formulating the Women's Priority Legislative Agenda for the 19th Congress. International organizations turned to SALIGAN's expertise in their research on the status of the Philippine law and legal system on gender equality, such as the global research conducted by NAMATI on Gender Justice During and Beyond the COVID-19 Crisis: Institutional Responses to Gender-Based Violence and the Role of Legal Empowerment Groups, published in June 2021, and the annual World Bank Women and Law Report. SALIGAN, as SCP's partner and in consultation with stakeholders, including children, drafted a template for Children Participation Ordinance, which will be rolled-out in 2022.





e-SUMBONG

The e-SUMBONG, from the Bikol word "sumbong" which means "to report", is an online reporting system of violence against women and their children cases. It aims to strengthen VAWC victim-survivors by bringing closer to them service providers that will respond to their need for security and protection, legal, medical and psycho-social assistance and other form of crisis-intervention.

[Report a Case](#)

SALIGAN actively took part on the deliberations on a number of issues affecting workers, including paid pandemic leaves in the private sector, welfare of informal economy workers, hours of work and overtime, productivity incentives, and apprenticeship program.

While the work of the advocacy teams in Bicol and Mindanao were affected by limitations in mobility and the almost impossible participation in online meetings due to poor internet connections, SALIGAN was able to work on several local advocacies, including (1) The proposed Magna Carta of Children in BARMM; (2) The adoption of the Davao City Safe Spaces Ordinance; (3) The adoption of the e-Sumbong web application for VAWC cases in Naga City; and (4) The First 1000 Days of the Child Ordinance in Naga City. In partnership with ALG, SALIGAN conducted consultation-sessions with IP communities in Mindanao and Bicol on COVID-19 policies and responses, which led to the drafting of a community-based response to the pandemic.

SALIGAN continued its participation in local governance mechanisms as an accredited NGO in Quezon City and Naga City, and a recognized partner in Davao City. SALIGAN accepted its nomination to be one of the CSO representatives to the Inter-Agency Oversight Council on the Safe Spaces Act (IAOCSSA), and continued to be the women sector representative to the RTIPC-NCR.

SALIGAN maintained its membership with various networks in pursuing common advocacies, such as the ALG, PHILSSA, PMPI, NFR, and RHAN.



Feeling 2022

SALIGAN looks forward to continue its programs and strategies as the country is set to minimize the restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022 national and local elections is an opportunity for the MDES to engage those seeking public office in the discussion of their issues and concerns. Misereor continues to be SALIGAN's institutional development partner, while SALIGAN continue to seek partnership with other organizations to support the work with MDES. SALIGAN is also looking forward to welcoming new members of the team as it prepares for the Strategic Assessment and Planning by end of 2022.



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