

Success Stories

BETTER TOGETHER: USAID's private sector engagement empowers Filipino out-of-school youth and local businesses



Marlon and Richard are long-time friends and neighbors from Legazpi City, Philippines. Marlon, 24, is the youngest of four siblings raised by a single mother. He dropped out of high school in hopes to follow his passion in dancing. Richard, 20, previously a gang member, lost his mother a few years ago and lives with his older sister. Both Marlon and Richard never knew their fathers.

Similar to many of the 4 million out-of-school youth (OSY) from in the Philippines, Marlon and Richard struggled with their education, training, and finance opportunities.



Dapat nag-aral nalang ako. Wala kang mararating kung hindi ka nag-aral. (I should've studied. You can't get anywhere if you don't.)

— Richard, 20
Former out-of-school youth



Tambay po talaga ako dati. (I was definitely a delinquent.)

— Marlon, 24
Former out-of-school youth

Working together to unlock OSY potential

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Making youth work and business ready

In November 2021, they joined USAID's Opportunity 2.0 program, implemented by Education Development Center, and were trained on work readiness and entrepreneurship skills.

Part of the training to equip OSY with the skills to succeed is to expose them to the real world of work. By being matched with local businesses, OSY get the rare opportunity to receive mentorship from entrepreneurs and hands-on working experiences.

Changing mindsets, better businesses

There is a common misconception about OSY, and many businesses would not have considered working with a vulnerable youth. But through engagement with USAID's Opportunity 2.0 program, more and more people in the private sector are seeing that OSY's unique grit, determination, and soft skills could also benefit their businesses in a win-win situation.



I learned how to communicate in the workplace.

— Marlon



I found out all about business plans.

— Richard



I believe people, especially youth, if given the right support, can succeed. I want to grow my business, of course, but I want my employees to grow with me.

— Abigail Badong, General Manager
Anniesville Condotel in Legazpi City

"You know, I was surprised," says Abigail Badong, General Manager of Anniesville Condotel in Legazpi City. "The OSY are honest, have initiative, and are so eager to learn. They're like sponges, you just show them what to do and they absorb it!"

Marlon and Richard started working as housekeepers and helpers at Anniesville in 2022. Their friendship grew stronger as they overcame similar challenges and are determined to improve their livelihoods through the training program.



Marlon may not have pursued dancing but is happy he can now financially support his mother. Richard is slowly paying back his debts using the earnings of his hard work. They both hope that they can pursue a university degree someday and start their own families with the new opportunity that they received. #