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ABOUT ASSIST

Asia Society for Social Improvement and Sustainable Development (ASSIST) was established in 2003 with the aim of addressing sustainability challenges in the Philippines.

Today it has evolved into a self-sustaining, Pan-Asian, non-profit organization driven by passion and purpose for progress and prosperity in the region.



300+
projects



20+
countries



1,000,000+
individuals reached

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LET US KNOW your thoughts about this quarter's newsletter. _____

WORKING TOWARDS THE SDGs

As part of the global development community, ASSIST aligns its initiatives with the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To demonstrate this, stories in this newsletter end with the icons of the SDGs that they help achieve.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



THE ONE WITH HOPE

2021 is here and while the new year promises a new chapter to unfold, the horrors of last year aren't going anywhere — the COVID-19 virus still lurks, ready to take its next victim.

Even with the growing anxiety towards what the future holds, we at ASSIST strive to gather all the strength that will keep us safe and sane in this journey. For the first issue of our quarterly newsletter, we present stories of resilience as we define the true meaning of healing. Stories that depict updates on our projects and the lesson of moving forward together despite the confinement and physical isolation brought by the lockdown measures implemented across the different countries we work in.

As you read through our January-March offering, let us take this opportunity to reflect on the message of hope. Reaching our milestones wouldn't have been possible without your invaluable support, and we thank you for joining us in finding ways to stay innovative and progressive even in the toughest of times. Let us all remain healthy and spirited as we face the future.

COLLECTION OF THOUGHTS FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF 2020?



Ian: 2020 brought a major shift not just to our personal lives, but also to the organization.



Gab: It was a challenge, to say the least. Almost all the plans and projects we prepared were immediately dashed.



Ian: We were asked to stay at home, constantly asking when will the world heal from this disaster. Chaos is the first word that comes to my mind, but there were lessons learned for sure.



Gab: While 2020 brought suffering to many, looking at ASSIST, we were lucky and worked hard to keep operating efficiently. Speaking for our team, Communications & Visibility, work actually increased in multitudes because of the remote working arrangements, considering how we work with the project management teams to organize online/digital activities. Everyone is constantly trying to find the best way to engage with our stakeholders and beneficiaries safely while creating positive impact.



Ian: One of the most crucial takeaways from last year is the realization of health as a very important aspect of life and our work at ASSIST. This birthed our new project, Saving the Lives of the Healthcare Workers that serves the health workers tirelessly working in the front line.



Gab: Together, our management team and our team leads reflected a great deal on our mission, allowing us to focus on the areas we consider most important as we enter 2021.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR 2021?



Gab: It's not always easy to be optimistic about the future. Many of the same issues have carried over from 2020 to 2021. Our lovely colleagues in Vietnam have been able to overcome the challenges of last year with ease, causing much envy over here in the Philippines, and it is a fact that the effectiveness of the response of developing and developed countries to COVID-19 is greatly unequal. But, we are an organization that works to uplift and empower all, and that means that we must be a part of the solution.



Ian: It may sound cliché but facing the future, meaning sporting an upbeat and confident outlook in life, is our theme for the year and this issue of ASSIST Now. A new year means a new opportunity to change the game, especially when it comes to responding to crises such as a pandemic. Better health is what we all hope for in 2021, but let us make it a season of recharging our spirit too. The virus unfortunately took precious lives, but it also took our hearts in living. I sincerely hope we can bring back the energy we have for work, family, and other personal relationships. While social distancing is still present, may we find ways to forge connections as this will help us build a future every human being deserves.



Gab: Ultimately, I hope to shed the figurative weight that last year's worries created. I hope we can carry the valuable lessons we gained from these difficulties with grace. As the future we envision soon becomes the present we face, let's challenge ourselves to remain hopeful and be active participants in making sure this year is a better one.

One Community's Solution to Health and Poverty: Clean Water



Baseco Compound is one of the largest urban slum communities in the Philippines, holding a total population of over 100,000. The community has long struggled with lack of access to clean water and sanitation facilities. This situation is not uncommon in the Philippines and the difficulties facing the communities in Baseco Compound are only growing more relevant, especially because of COVID-19.

SHIP² (Sustainable Health Improvement & Pandemic Prevention) was officially launched last October 29 in Baseco Compound, Tondo Manila and was attended by Grundfos Country Director, Jonathan Breton and ASSIST's own Managing Director, Sreeni Narayanan and Director of Projects and Strategy, Francis Macatulad. The project, in partnership with Grundfos and Kabalikat, aims to create a sustainable and resilient community within the Baseco Compound by providing potable water and creating livelihood opportunities for the local community. ASSIST has found a prominent partner in Grundfos, collaborating for the third time for SHIP². Other projects in which ASSIST and Grundfos work together include SOLution, also in the Philippines, and the Partnership for Blended Finance Models on Non-revenue Water and Energy Consumption in Vietnam, both of which are ongoing.

Through SHIP², 96,000 litres of potable water will be produced and 4,800 people in Baseco will be provided safe drinking water daily. Furthermore, the Baseco community will be equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to better ensure their own health, safety, means of living.



By March 2021 the first batch of project activities will be underway, focusing on the training of trainers on WASH, the installation of four water filtration systems, and the establishment of drinking water stations that will be operated as social enterprises to sustain other WASH projects. Ultimately, the SHIP² project presents a great opportunity to create a positive impact on two of the largest and longstanding issues facing the Philippines: health and poverty, which have only worsened due to the ongoing pandemic.



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2020 AT A GLANCE

OUR IMPACT



25
ACTIVE PROJECT PARTNERS



135,515+
DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

*Approximation based on internal project reporting

FEBRUARY



WHO Immunization Toolkit Delivery

Focus group discussions and pilot tests of the WHO Immunization Toolkit were organized for community health workers in the Philippines



Future Movers Programme Launch

Many gathered to celebrate the start of a programme that aims to impact more than 500 internally displaced persons, who will benefit from increased employability with access to various vocational education and training opportunities.

JUNE



KuBO (Kusinang Bayan sa Oras ng pangangailangan)

Translating to "Community Kitchens in Times of Need," another crowdfunding campaign was conducted through the GlobalGiving platform to create mobile kitchens that could be brought to disaster-stricken areas.

SEPTEMBER



Saving the Lives of Healthcare Workers in the Philippines

[Read more on page 8](#)

DECEMBER



RISE BCMS and Disaster Preparedness Training

[Read more on page 9](#)



Telstra CSR Partnership Training

ASSIST led select Telstra volunteers in a Training on Child-centered Learning, which the volunteers will utilize in their journey to become agents of change for children's digital citizenship.



Joint Programme on Shock-Responsive Social Protection (JPSRSP)

ASSIST Creativelab is working with the UN Joint Programme and interviewed Gustavo González, UN Resident Coordinator for the project Ensuring Inclusive and Risk-Informed Shock-Responsive Social Protection Resulting in More Resilient Communities in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

MARCH



Onion UNION Harvest Festival

The ASSIST team and our beneficiary farmers celebrated the fruits of their labour and the season's bountiful onion harvest.



Master of Disaster - Wishberry Campaign

Our humble board game was made anew in India with the organization of the crowdfunding campaign that would cover the costs of translation and localization.

--- Start of Remote Working Arrangements

JULY



CoopEnable Project Close

After 3 years, the CoopEnable successfully created a model for cooperative development, strengthened the competitiveness of rice farmers, and improved food safety standards in the Mekong Delta.

OCTOBER



Post-Consumer Resin Market Development Partnership

To develop the market for a localized PCR recycling industry in Vietnam, our team organized multiple conferences, focus group discussions, and site visits to plastic recycling facilities



PROFIT Kick-Off

ASSIST has been chosen as the Business Accelerator for the Greater Mekong Sub-region for the initiative, Supporting Internationalization of Small & Medium Enterprises: Linking India and the Greater Mekong Sub-region (Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia).



SHIP² Project Launch

[Read more on page 4](#)



Deloitte WorldClass Learning Videos Go Live

ASSIST and Deloitte are working together to empower 380,000 young Filipinos through skills development and we've launched a series of educational videos on Cloud Computing, Mobile Development, Business Continuity Management System, and Cybersecurity all of which are available for free online.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Facing the Smart Future



In 2019, ASSIST in partnership with KFW DEG launched the **Smart Window Technology Adaptation for Responsible Living (SMART-LI)** project with the goal of improving and promoting healthy air conditions in India, through innovative ventilation solutions in residential homes and medical establishments. The project officially closed off last November 20 with its successful run paving a smarter and cleaner future for India.

Some highlights of the project include the installation of Lingel-manufactured Smart Li chips, designed to improve air quality in buildings and establishments, and the skills development training of underprivileged youth in support of closing the education and employment gap in India.

IMPACT:

14 houses and 24 hospitals were installed with Smart Li chips

50% increase of indoor air quality thanks to the installed Smart-Li chips

130 youth were trained as product technicians, window installation apprentices, and technical supervisors. 39 of them were officially employed by the Lingel Windows & Doors Technologies Private limited.



Baked to Perfection: Enhancing Vietnam's Baking Industry



Contributed by: Bench Peralta, Intern of Research and Acquisitions

The **Baking Training to Augment Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Development (BAKE)** project which was developed by ASSIST Vietnam has had several ups and downs this past 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak made it difficult to conduct training in the baking training centers.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the BAKE project faced several challenges that hampered its progression. ASSIST Vietnam, however, managed to deliver results and reach multiple milestones all the while following health protocols and maintaining the safety of their students and teachers.

Last December 17, a certificate awarding ceremony was held to celebrate students who completed Basic Baking Course no. 6 & 7. The BAKE project managed to gather nationwide attention as HTV, one of the biggest TV networks in Vietnam, featured the project and its activities in one of their segments. The project has also been garnering success in the form of 100 students completing the basic baking course, while 38 students finished the Advanced Baking Course.



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Looking good, Vietnam!

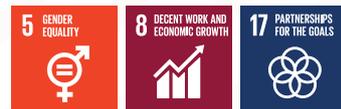


Contributed by: Raya Lantin, Associate of the Office of the Managing Director

Vietnam has made impressive gender equality achievements, giving its women a chance to improve their livelihood and status. ASSIST's own **Beauty for a Better Life**, in partnership with L'Oréal Vietnam is just one of the projects that uplift the lives of less privileged Vietnamese women by training them in beauty services and entrepreneurship.

Last November, 3 batches of beneficiaries were awarded. In Ha Giang, the first batch consisting of 13 beneficiaries received their certificates on November 7, and in Dien Bien, 25 beneficiaries received theirs on November 13. In the same month, the second batch in Muong Te, Lai Chau, consisting of 22 beneficiaries, was also certified.

With the certification of the first few batches, subsequent batches are well on their way to completion. In Dien Bien, training for the second batch was opened in late October 2020, garnering 28 attendees. In Thanh Hoa Province, training is ongoing for their 2nd batch and will conclude by the end of January this year. In Muong Te, Lai Chau, the third batch of beneficiaries has been transported to Sin Ho, a separate village within the province, ready to undergo training.



Pushing for Progress with the Future Movers Programme



While many businesses and organizations found their operations stalled or cancelled in the face of a global pandemic, time stops for no one, and the vulnerable internally-displaced persons in Marawi, Philippines continue struggling to rebuild their home. The **Future Movers Programme** consortium, consisting of a private-public partnership between ASSIST, the Colombo Plan Staff College (CPSC) the German Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GPCCI), and TÜV Rheinland, had to re-examine the planned project activities and how we could best serve the youth in post-conflict Marawi.

Moving all activities to the digital sphere posed a few difficulties, particularly in terms of engaging directly with the programme beneficiaries. But, ASSIST and our project partners rose to the challenge. The Industry Placement Committee was formed with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Holcim Philippines, Alay Balay, MARADECA (Maranao People Development Center), PCA (Philippine Construction Association). Various knowledge assets were created to support future project activities - including training manuals, and educational videos. Additionally, numerous events were organized to initiate and reconnect with the program's stakeholders, with much more planned for 2021.

For partnership inquiries, please contact:

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Saving Lives through IPC



After the successful launch of the Training of Trainers (TOT) Program under the **Saving the Lives of Healthcare Workers (HCWs)** in the Philippines project last November 4, 2020, over 200 local medical frontliners were certified as Master Trainers on COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC).

As Master Trainers, the HCWs are encouraged to pass on the knowledge to their organizations, healthcare facilities, and communities by conducting roll-out sessions on COVID-19 prevention, triage, and treatment. ASSIST has extended support to the Master Trainers by

providing access to the localized IPC modules, as well as marketing and technical assistance for virtual training.

Roll-out sessions designed to prepare the next generation of Filipino HCWs are also scheduled to occur in coming months, with over 5,000 to be trained on COVID-19 prevention. These were organized in collaboration with Jose Rizal University, Our Lady of Fatima University, the Association of Philippine Medical Colleges-Student Network, and the Asian Medical Students' Association-Philippines.

In addition to the TOT Program, ASSIST and Project HOPE have contributed to ensuring proper IPC management in various healthcare facilities through the donation of personal protective equipment (PPEs). Forty-five beneficiaries located in various parts of the country received 2,500 bunny suits and 11,000 KN95 masks, with the help of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines.

As updates on new SARS-CoV-2 variants, vaccine distribution, and the impact of the pandemic on HCWs' mental health continue to emerge, ASSIST and Project HOPE remain committed to prioritizing and ensuring the well-being of medical frontliners.



OUR PPE DISTRIBUTIONS ACROSS THE PHILIPPINES:



PPE DISTRIBUTION



2,500
BUNNY SUITS



11,000
KN95 FACE MASKS



45
BENEFICIARY HOSPITALS

TRAINING FIGURES

4

BATCHES

(Nov. 4 to Dec. 17, 2020)

422

TOTAL NUMBER OF HCW PARTICIPANTS

243

CERTIFIED MASTER TRAINERS

(as of Jan. 11, 2021)

8

COVID-19 MODULES

DISASTER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Rising Above Disasters to Businesses and Communities



As an archipelagic state vulnerable to numerous natural disasters with a great percentage of lives and livelihoods dependent on the maritime industry and related activities, it is important to ensure standard training is provided by maritime institutions to ensure the safety of Filipino seafarers and their communities.

This is where **RIS²E Philippines (Resiliency Improvement for Seafarers & Seafaring Enterprises)**, organized by the Philippine Transmarine Carriers (PTC), DEG, and ASSIST comes in, aimed at addressing the gaps in long-term sustainability by operating on numerous levels, including the delivery of training programs that ensures both business operations and communities can be sustained in times of emergencies such as a natural disaster.

Last December, the first batch of training programs on Business Continuity Management Systems (BCMS) and Disaster Resilience was organized for various maritime and seafarer communities, including the spokesperson of the COVID-19 National Action Plan

(NAP) and the PTC Group, Major General Restituto Padilla, Jr. Various members of the ASSIST team participated in the delivery of the training, with Master of Disaster, ASSIST's own inclusive board game, featured as an important educational tool.

Furthering impact on disaster preparedness, the Master of Disaster was also recognized by the Tanay North National High School in Rizal province as a learning material in fostering resilient communities. At present, the board game is used in disaster risk and resiliency lessons amid the distant learning brought by the COVID-19 lockdown.



A Fresh Future for Farmers



A flourishing agriculture industry awaits farmers of Norzagaray, Bulacan in the Philippines despite the presence of COVID-19 thanks to ongoing developments in the SOLution project.

Solar-powered Irrigation System for Farming Communities or SOLution is a project of ASSIST in partnership with Grundfos Pumps Philippines focused on increasing the productivity of farmers through the installation of solar-powered irrigation systems.

Grundfos recently bagged the Poul Due Jensen Social Responsibility Award and granted ASSIST a 20,000 EUR donation to further the project's activities, including the installation of a 4th solar-powered irrigation system in Bulacan Agricultural State College which will serve as a learning hub for farmers and agriculturists. Last December 16, a ceremonial turnover of the solar pump irrigation project was conducted and attended by farmer cooperatives from 12 barangays in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

Aside from the project turnover and site visits, the project held its final training session online and was attended by more than 20 farmers.



Trainers hope that the shift to digital training will ensure steady learning and skill development for the farmers despite the pandemic.

At present, the SOLution project have trained a total of 100 farmers and 25 agriculturists.



WHAT WORDS WILL DEFINE ASSIST IN 2021?

H E A L T H C A R E
S M W R T D O L E D
D P A S S I O N V U
G O S E O S P F I C
A W H N L A E U V A
S E T E U S R T A T
S R A R T T A U L I
I A N G I E T R O O
S E A Y O R E E R N
T E C H N O L O G Y

Help us make the new year a momentous one!

Share your answers in the provided feedback form link on Page 2.

ASSIST Creativelab in the Spotlight: Learnings from the Lockdown



As the world continues to deal with crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, people are forced to adopt new strategies to stay well-informed. Distance and blended learning are just two of the new forms of learning that sprung while everyone is dealing with the reality of getting locked up at the four corners of their homes.

A specialized unit of ASSIST, Creativelab (ACL) caters to the unique and varied communication, visibility, and knowledge management needs of actors and interventions in the development sector. In this issue of ASSIST Now newsletter, we give a spotlight to some of ACL's projects that define learning in a bigger spectrum. Because learning doesn't have to stay quarantined too.



The Project Coffee+ is an initiative of The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and multinational food company Nestlé which aims to support smallholder coffee farmers by increasing their productivity and income in a sustainable manner within the coffee value chain.

ASSIST Creativelab was tapped to produce campaign videos and online collaterals for the said initiative. Among the milestones of Project Coffee+ last year include training of smallholder farmers on entrepreneurship and empowering their agricultural work, where about 18 coffee farmer groups in the Mindanao region benefitted from capacity building and organizational development.

Learning to Empower Project Coffee+



Learning to Inspire Let's Read Philippines



Children's learning is at the forefront of the Let's Read initiative by The Asia Foundation. With an aim of collecting local relatable children's stories into a digital library to cultivate a culture of reading, ASSIST Creativelab was asked to create a digital marketing campaign that includes static and moving illustrations to increase interest and usage of Let's Read's social and digital platforms for its readers.



Learning to Protect Anti-Money Laundering Act eLearning Course



In this age of digital prowess where almost anyone can do illegality such as money laundering, it is essential to equip people with the capacity and knowledge to combat or prevent such acts. ECCI, the leading process improvement solutions provider in Southeast Asia through ASSIST Creativelab partnered with EastWest Bank, to deliver an eLearning Course that tackles the Anti-Money Laundering Act which will be used as educational material to supplement existing training to EastWest Bank employees.



Learning to Inform Signify Digital Awareness Modules



Signify is launching a digital awareness curriculum on their internal learning platform, Learning@Signify. The curriculum, which is in line with their company-wide Digital Transformation Strategy, consists of a series of modules on digital initiatives, including Integrated Business Planning, Vistex, Robotic Process Automation, and LightFinder.

ASSIST Creativelab engaged with Signify last November by developing animated modules and providing key inputs in the design of the curriculum. The development process involved improvements in the base content to create the script, storyboard development, voiceover recording, and animation. The engagement is scheduled to end this January 2021.

A-TEAM

Let's face the facts - the virus of yesterday lingers on today. As we enter a new year, we gathered responses from colleagues in different countries on how they viewed the process of healing. From their perspective, how did COVID-19 impact our projects and what did we learn in search of the spirit of revival.



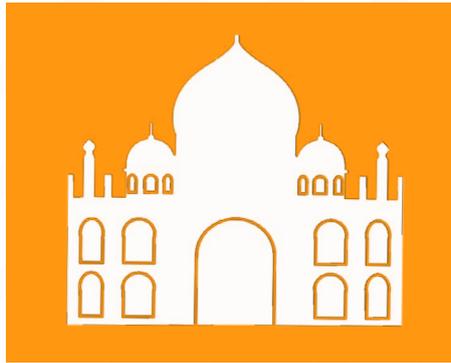
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The COVID-19 pandemic is considered one of the major events that disrupted the world. In the nonprofit space, it has changed how organizations make an impact through their work. The virus was powerful in a negative way, but we in Vietnam are very lucky to be able to recover and get back to work at speed.

Last year, many of the project activities were suspended, especially during the lockdown period around March to April. Though it was quite discouraging and stressful, the pandemic taught us to adapt smartly in dealing with our projects. Healing back from the effects of the pandemic meant revising our project plans, and brainstorming with our partners on how we can modify some strategies to move forward. Technology also played a vital role in our healing as we managed to become productive even if we're confined within the digital world. We were able to go back to the "new normal" since May and successfully arranged in-person meetings, local travels for work and organized offline events.

Lien Huynh

Project Manager, ASSIST Vietnam



“

Nonprofits during the pandemic have given outstanding contribution by involving in various economic issues while the government was struggling in protecting the public health and the economy. Nonprofits have assisted the government in identifying the COVID-19 hotspots and providing critical services to vulnerable groups of people.

The challenge was that the amount that nonprofits get from CSR funding has been drastically cut down. As a result, several organizations faced challenges in running their welfare programmes. That includes us in the India office where we struggled in coping up with the cost for maintaining the resources of our projects. Going into the year 2021, we realized that the essence of healing for nonprofits means exploring ways of leveraging their field of presence to address new and emerging needs. Sustainability plays a major role in resource management and all these lessons will serve as our guide in moving forward with a smile on our faces.

Karunakaran Kalinathan

Head of Projects, ASSIST India



“

How do we heal ourselves when people all around us are hurting? And how do we help heal others when we ourselves are in pain? Such is our struggle during this pandemic.

I recall a touching video early last year entitled #WeHealAsOne about frontliners and their hardships. It made me wish that a real effort be made to help our medical professionals.

My wish was granted when ASSIST was given the task to Save the Lives of Healthcare Workers. This project transformed ASSIST into a frontliner in the battle against COVID-19. And I believe it is helping our mental and emotional healing knowing we are no longer a mere spectator but are now part of the solution.

Times like these, we need to rise to the challenge, to work even harder and most importantly---to work together. No matter how difficult it has been, we will come back stronger because there is no limit to what we can do if we work together. Only when we truly work as one, can #WeHealAsOne.

Francis Macatulad

*Director of Projects and Strategy
ASSIST Philippines*

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- Introduction to Cloud Computing
- Introduction to Salesforce
- Introduction to Mulesoft
- Simple Mulesoft to Salesforce Integration



Mobile Development

- Introduction to Android Studio
- Writing Basic Kotlin Codes
- Designing the Layout UI
- Creating a Hello World Project
- Creating a Simple Calculator App



Business Continuity Management

- BCMS: What it is and how it benefits organizations
- How to Establish a BCMS
- BCP Test Plan



Cybersecurity

- Phishing
- Vulnerability Management
- Security 101 for the New Normal

Watch the videos now and get a certification from Deloitte by answering the **Knowledge Check Test** at the end of each module!

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