Fighting the Good Fight: Cycling against Women Violence

The Aftermath of Marawi and Its Bright Future Ahead

Forging a Path: Midwives in the Pandemic

A-Team: ASSIST's Vision for 2030 is Galloping Ahead!

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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.

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Agriculture is a crucial industry in the Philippines, accounting for one-third of total employment. Low agricultural productivity and interruptions in the production, transportation, and consuming value chains have a substantial influence on the country’s economic growth, employment, and food security. During the third quarter of 2021, Agriculture production in the Philippines fell by 2.6%, compared to a 0.7% loss in 2020. One of the reasons for the reduction in agricultural production is the country’s poor soil health.

ASSIST in partnership with Syngenta aims to transition to a more sustainable agricultural farming system in order to be more resilient to these threats. Filipino farmers would be able to adapt by implementing new technologies and programs. To combat climate change more effectively, and safeguard the country’s food supply.

Stay tuned for more updates!
Violence Against Women (VAW) continues to be a common problem in the Philippines. As mentioned by the National Demographic Health Survey (2017), 1 out of 4 women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical, emotional or sexual violence in their lifetime. The VAW campaign continues to be the foundation to educate the public on the ongoing Gender Based Violence as women are still seen as subordinates and weaker than men. The lack of unreported acts continues to make the “culture of silence” prevail when abuse is common at home, workplace or school affecting the victims, their families and communities.

Break the Cycle is an initiative of Bikers United Movement which was founded by Ann Angala, a survivor of domestic violence, and with the support of ASSIST and the Dutch Embassy. This project aims to raise awareness and empower Filipinos through the power of cycling for an abuse-free Philippines.

For the next 10 months, Break the Cycle aims to touch, train and transform the lives of 30,000 Filipinos by accomplishing the following objectives:

- **To educate** Filipinos through the LGU, organizations, and institutions about the existence of abuse in the different spaces—home, school, workplace, and other public spaces.
- **To impart capacity building skills** to the people surrounding the abuse landscape to address violence in society
- **To empower** abuse survivors by connecting them to the networks that will provide sustainable livelihood
- **To encourage** a respectful, gender-sensitive, and egalitarian mindset.

The following objectives are aimed to be accomplished by August 2022 through the following initiatives:

- **Educational Videos tackling various facets of abuse**
  - Physical, Psychological, Financial and Sexual Abuse
  - Culture and Gender (VAWC and LGBTQIA+)
  - Abuse in Marriage, School, Work and Public Places, Culture, Mental Health
  - Biking as a Tool for Healing and Empowerment

- **1 Capacity Building Framework on Anti-Abuse and Empowerment Education**
  - Education and Rescue
  - Relief and Intervention
  - Aftercare, Reintegration and Livelihood

- **5 Phy-gital (Physical and Digital) Initiatives**
  - Women’s Month Webinar focusing on Women, Mobility and Empowerment
  - Online Social Media Campaign to advocate and spread awareness of the abuse landscape in the Philippines
  - Two cycling events to commemorate International Women’s Day (March) and World Bike Day (June)
  - Pride Month Initiative focusing on creating safe spaces for women and the LGBTQIA+ community
The aftermath of Marawi and its bright future ahead

The 2017 armed conflict in Marawi resulted in a major socio-economic disruption in the region. This included destruction of city infrastructure and disruption in livelihoods and education, which resulted in the displacement of families in the area. City-wide rehabilitation projects have been in place since then, with a strong focus on expanding vocational skills training programs and developing human resources. This pressing need for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and capacity-building to take the center stage in rebuilding the economy was the impetus for the Future Movers Programme (FMP).

FMP is an initiative towards building an inclusive and market-driven VET ecosystem with the goal of increasing employability of youth IDPs in post-conflict Marawi. Since November 2019, this project has focused on socially and economically empowering the youth IDPs. FMP has established partnerships with 19 tech-voc institutions (TVI) in the area and capacitated them through various training programs. Through this partnership, FMP is able to deliver the Construction Occupational Safety and Health and soft-skills development training courses to 783 youth IDPs in the area.

In the long term, this project will positively impact IDP households with better economic productivity, TVIs with improved capacity to handle the needs of disadvantaged populations, industries now with highly competent human resources, local government units with a vibrant and sustainable construction industry, and Marawi City—having witnessed quality infrastructure development work central to its rehabilitation.

For more information, please contact Vince Naval, Project Management Associate, vince.naval@assistasia.com

Our youth and other IDPs are able to rebound and gain employment. This program will be helpful in rebuilding Marawi.

- Francis Macatulad
Executive Director

Working together is always the way to contribute for the nation. This is in order to be able to rebuild the lives especially for the young people.

- Arlene Cruz
Projects & Consultancy Division, Colombo Plan Staff College
COVID-19 affects populations regardless of location and access to healthcare facilities and healthcare professionals. This is why in September 2021 ASSIST, in partnership with Project HOPE, launched Champions of Community Care: COVID-19 Management Training for Filipino Midwives.

Midwives have played a crucial role in caring for the community during this pandemic, as they continue to care for maternal and newborn health as well as observe the highest standards of safety and service in the midst of the threat posed by COVID-19, which pregnant women, new mothers, and newborns must be protected from at all costs.

As such, the first-of-its-kind program was designed to mobilize and empower midwives and midwifery students as conduits of COVID-19 safety, education, and awareness in the community, through capacity development and the provision of quality education materials.

Beyond addressing the needs of vulnerable populations during this pandemic, Champions of Community Care emphasized enabling greater access to important services through education.

The project has certified over 150 Master Trainers, who have trained over 2000 midwives and midwifery students to equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and educational materials to become protectors against COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

This formula of equipping midwives to train their current and future colleagues will enable the exchange of best practices to continue sustainably, well beyond the program. In the long run, this will be beneficial to both the midwives and the communities they serve and allow Filipino midwives to continue their practice of championing community care.

For more information please contact Gabby Cuvin, Special Projects and Partnerships Associate, at gabby.cuvin@assistasia.org
As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and new variants emerge, this further endangers the safety and well-being of our healthcare professionals (HCWs). HCWs are aware of the hardships that this unprecedented challenge has placed on their bodily, emotional, and psychological well-being. While the physical demands of the job continue, a greater burden, underlined by the collective experience of fear and worry surrounding the virus, is impacting their mental health. It is vital that healthcare staff have skills and strategies to assist them manage during this tough period while also improving patient outcomes.

In response, ASSIST and Project HOPE, with the support of multi-stakeholder partnerships, aims to provide an additional lifeline of hope to Filipino healthcare workers by providing much needed support and training for their mental health. While helping them become more resilient to the unwelcome stress, anxiety, trauma, and grief that is linked to the fight for health and safety.

Since its official launch in November 2021, HERO-PH 2.0 has been in its second generation, since HERO-PH was well received by local HCWs. However, as the pandemic progressed, it became clear that there was an urgent need for mental health-focused interventions for HCWs.

Looking Forward: Training the Youth for the Future of Work

With the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4th IR) in full swing, building skills in areas such as cloud computing and cybersecurity has become crucial for young people all across the world. Deloitte in the Philippines, in collaboration with the ASSIST, launched video learning courses as part of its WorldClass program to help train young Filipinos for future jobs.

Through its video learning courses, WorldClass has touched, trained, and transformed over 10,000 Filipino kids since its official launch in November 2020. More than 30,000 4th IR-job ready e-certificates have also been given by the program, which WorldClass learners can simply use if they wish to pursue a career in Deloitte or a similar field. ASSIST and Deloitte are now in their second year of collaboration, with the goal of reaching learners across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao and impacting an additional 20,000 Filipino lives by May 2022.

Eventually, this will help Deloitte’s global goal of preparing 100 million individuals for the future of work by 2030. Deloitte has committed to assisting 5 million Southeast Asian youths by flourishing their knowledge, skills, resources, and network.
Project Showcase: Updates from the year 2021

**SOLution**

The Philippine agricultural sector is a cornerstone of the country’s economy, employing over 30% of the country’s workforce. Despite its significant role for the Philippine economy, the agriculture sector has not received adequate facilities such as efficient irrigation systems. **SOLution aims to address the irrigation needs of rural farmers** with small landholding in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

- Capacity building of 25 irrigation specialists
- Training of 100 farmers on best practices in small scale irrigation
- Installation of 3 solar-powered irrigation systems in the project site
- Multi-stakeholder showcase forum on best practices in irrigation
- Field visits of other farming communities for knowledge sharing

**RISE 1 and RISE2E**

The Philippines is vulnerable to a wide range of natural disasters, putting a major burden on Filipino communities’ ability to plan for and respond to calamities. To address this issue, the PTC Group, ASSIST, and various project partners developed Project RISE, a collaborative initiative to **develop and implement disaster preparedness programs** for seafarer communities in the Philippines.

- 6 Fleet Operators successfully completed the BCMS Gap Analysis
- 8 Fleet Operators trained on BCMS training of trainors
- 5 Fleet Operators successfully completed 3 out of 5 total workshops on BCMS
- Development of predictive disaster mobile app
- 286 individuals trained on Master of Disaster and Disaster Resilience
- 511 Master of Disaster boxes distributed
Project Showcase: Updates from the year 2021

Saving the lives of HCWs in the Philippines

Healthcare workers have been at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. They are at the greatest risk when on duty without proper infection prevention and control (IPC). ASSIST, in partnership with Project HOPE, launched Saving the Lives of Healthcare Workers in the Philippines last August 2020 and the project ended last December 2021 and were able to reach the following targets:

- **33,350** PPEs were distributed to **118** hospitals and health centers all over the country
- **6,229** healthcare workers were trained on IPC, **2,325** on mental health, and **133** were trained on how to vaccine communication
- **7** hospitals participated in face-to-face assessments and **30** hospitals participated in the remote IPC self-assessment
- **7.27M** reach on #GameKaNaVacc social media campaign in addressing vaccine hesitancy and misinformation

STEM LEAP

ASSIST and Telstra Foundation Philippines (TFP) partnered to co-design and co-implement the STEM Learning through Application and Play (LEAP) Program, which aimed to raise awareness on STEM Education, improve academic performance, and prepare students to take the first steps in pursuing career paths.

- Development Science and Math learning modules and activities
- Engagement with Telstra Foundation Philippines volunteers in conducting activities with the students
- Development toolkits/self-help manuals for teachers and parents
- Development a career magazine for high school students
- Conduct of a science investigatory project competition for high school students
- Provision AV room equipment for both ZES and ZNHS
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**Project Showcase for Q3-Q4**

**NPOA-ML Video Development**

The National Plan of Action for the Prevention, Reduction, and Management of Marine Litter (NPOA-ML) has been conceptualized to provide an outline to further the current endeavors of the country in resource and waste management and to focus masses’ attention to marine litter issues and the control of additional leakage of waste into bodies of water.

**What has been achieved so far?**

ASSIST understood that as a part of this initiative under the vision of “A Philippines free of marine litter through shared responsibility, accountability, and participatory governance”, and under the overarching banner of having a “Zero waste to Philippine waters by 2040”, various targeted campaigns have been developed over the years. As a provider, ASSIST was able to successfully deliver an 8-minute compelling video to support these efforts.

**Project duration**

October 2021 - November 2021

**Who are our Partners?**

Through its Consuelo Life Skills Program, the Consuelo Zobel Alger Foundation aims to equip young people with skills to help develop them to become active and productive members of society. This includes living a healthy lifestyle and awareness of their reproductive health. Various Organizations implementing health and development programs for the youth that are in partnership with CF are encouraged to use the Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) and HIV/AIDS module, following lessons and work plans to implement in their respective centers or communities for their beneficiaries.

**Development of Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) IEC Materials**

In order to develop IEC materials on ARH which CF’s partner organizations can distribute to its communities and use to continue awareness, ASSIST took on the task of being the consultant for the review, instructional design, development of graphics and layouting of the IEC materials in the form of an activity book, a workbook and a flipchart.
R2E – Get Ready to Export – is a program financed by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) to help small and emerging enterprises in Vietnam and the Netherlands grow through export.

Both administrations are eager to boost internationalization between the two regions in order to increase economic integration. There are several trading opportunities that could give significant benefits to enterprises, and with SMEs serving as the backbone of the Vietnamese economy, businesses like yours will be critical in driving this transition. You may have already dabbled in foreign trade, been a passive exporter, or never considered internationalization. This curriculum has something to offer you regardless of your stage of business development.

R2E will lead you on an international adventure.

CCBO - Clean City, Blue Ocean is a project implemented by ASSIST in partnership with Evergreen Labs (EGL) that seeks to create an innovative public-private partnership scheme with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This project was created due to the rapidly decreasing landfill capacity, increasing complaints by residents, as well as the importance of the tourism sector.

Waste management has been made a top priority by the new Chairman of Da Nang city. Our objectives are to establish a fully integrated PPP pilot for improved waste collection at municipal sites; increase the capacity of waste collectors and aggregators to meet market demands and many more. This project is guaranteed to establish a collection scheme that is reliable and transparent.

Stay tuned for more updates!
A-TEAM:

ASSIST’s Vision for 2030 is galloping ahead!

The year 2022 would’ve been groundbreaking. Everyone was eagerly awaiting this moment for the past two years of quarantine. However, the Philippines was brought to a standstill again due to the unexpected spike in COVID-19 cases and the constant evolution of variants. Despite this, Francis Macatulad promised to continue to expand ASSIST Philippines and become the number one Partner for Progress.

Born and raised in the Philippines, Francis Macatulad, also known as FM to his colleagues, took his undergraduate degree at Ateneo De Manila University, one of the most prestigious universities in the Philippines. He later completed a second degree at Saint Mary’s College of California and eventually completed a Master in Business Administration program at the Asian Institute of Management. Moreover, he continued to work in corporate life, but he opted to leave the corporate sector and take on leadership roles in development foundations notably Habitat for Humanity, Caritas Manila, Rotary Club of Makati, and the Stepping Stone for Special Education.

This, without a doubt, paved the way for his involvement in ASSIST. Francis began as the Director of Strategy and Project Management in 2020 and was promoted to Executive Director the following year due to his outstanding achievements. He worked with urban impoverished groups and indigenous tribes around the Philippines, helping them build their communities in a variety of ways. The provision of solar lights to indigenous communities around Central Luzon and MIMAROPA is only one of many impactful projects Francis led.

“Serving as a trainer and mentor for community-based organizations allowed me to understand the passion and commitment that these organizations have despite a lack of manpower and financial resources. We will maintain and expand our efforts to help NGOs like this.”

Furthermore, there are numerous upcoming projects this year with various partners in new geographic and thematic regions in the Philippines, which will result in the development of more ASSIST initiatives. In addition, Francis intends to launch ASSIST’s Social Enterprise in the near future.

Francis has high hopes for the year 2022; despite the COVID-19 pandemic, he remains committed to firmly establishing ASSIST as a trusted CSR partner while expanding and strengthening connections with local and international organizations. Through this mindset, we can fully live up to ASSIST’s name and vision of transformation through sustainable practices for our planet and people.”

Written by: Trish Enriquez

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