

ASSIST *Now*

BUILDING A FUTURE FOR MARAWI'S YOUTH

3



**MASTER OF DISASTER
IN THE SPOTLIGHT**

**FARMER POWER:
RAISING VIETNAM'S AGRARIAN INDUSTRY**

**SAVING THE SLUMS:
UN HABITAT'S PSUP**

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'S 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





BUILDING A FUTURE FOR MARAWI'S YOUTH

In the afternoon of May 23, 2017, a few days before Ramadan, armed fighting broke out between government forces and militants in the Islamic city of Marawi. The clash initiated a five-month long siege and forced thousands of civilians to leave their homes and livelihoods behind as they fled from the battle. An estimated 200,000 individuals were displaced at the height of the crisis.

Government forces prevailed in the end and in the aftermath the city has progressed steadily towards rehabilitation and recovery. While there

are existing efforts at multi-sectoral rehabilitation, roadblocks still deter Marawi's progress. In particular, the lack of appropriate construction skills and technical qualifications prevent job-seeking youth from securing decent livelihoods and, consequently, uplifting their economic capacity.

Access to an inclusive and market-driven Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) ecosystem to produce an up-skilled and right-skilled young workforce is critical for Marawi's recovery. To deliver such, the Future Movers Programme was rolled out

last 18th February. The project will be implemented through a private-public partnership among ASSIST, the Colombo Plan Staff College (CPSC), the German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GPCCI), and TÜV Rheinland, and with generous support from the Belgian organization, ENABEL.

"A city that needs to rebuild, means, first, we need to rebuild the capacity of the people. That's the role of TVET," said Dr. Ramhari Lamichan, Director of CPSC. The programme is based on innovative learning approaches, global and standardized

skills certification, and comprehensive labour market integration. The project envisions socially and economically empowering the youth in post-conflict Marawi by increasing their employability through an innovative VET Ecosystem. The project will benefit more than 500 internally displaced persons in Misamis Oriental, Lanao del Norte, and Lanao del Sur.



The youth are not just beneficiaries. We need to empower them to contribute positively to their society. They need to think: I am a construction worker because I am building a greater Marawi, and therefore, a greater country.

Samira Gutoc, Youth and Women's Advocate



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



DIGI-CONNECT

- Established partnerships with stakeholders and beneficiaries
(Read more on page 10)



BAKE: Baking Training To Augment Knowledge And Entrepreneurial Development

- Conducted training for the first batch of project beneficiaries



Post-Consumer Resin Market Development

- Consulted with government agencies for local implementation and impact evaluation
(Read more on page 11)



CoopEnable

- Conducted Global GAP certification audit at Tan Thuan Tay Agricultural Cooperatives in Dong Thap and at Truong Khuong Agricultural Cooperatives in Can Tho
- Organized stakeholder meetings with the Department of Agricultural and Rural Development, SGS' management, consultants, and auditors



Beauty For A Better Life

- Established a mobile training center in Thanh Hoa Province
- Set up an onsite training center in Ha Giang and Dien Bien Provinces
- Conducted recruitment and training activities



INDIA



SmartLi

- Conducted technician training programs for Product Technicians and Window Installation Apprentices
- Organized product installation and monitoring of air quality



MILK : Modernizing Dairy Sector for Improved Livelihood and Knowledge Among Dairy Farmers

- Designed and developed training modules for cattle custodians



ANALYSE

- Designed and developed training modules on Ion Chromatography and Potentiometric Autotitrator
- Conducted recruitment and screening for training participants



Master of Disaster

- Organized a crowdfunding campaign to localize the game
(Read more on page 6)

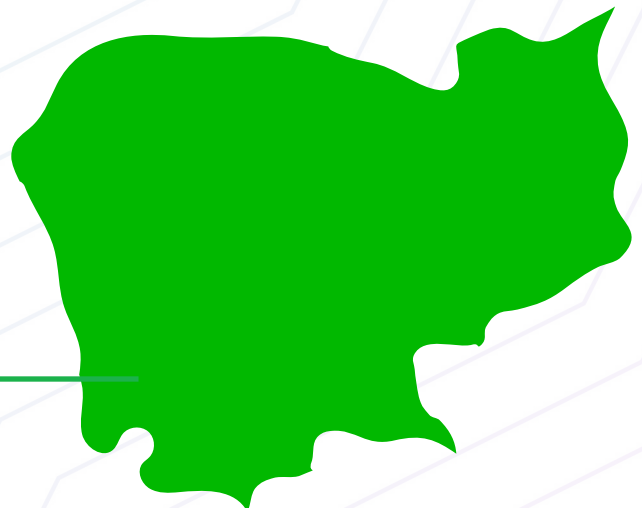


CAMBODIA



T.A.C.F.P (Thalias Assessment Center for Food Production)

- Translation of educational materials into Khmer





VIETNAM



PHILIPPINES



Onion UNION: Understanding Integrated Pest Management for Onion Farming

- Installed Pessl Automatic Weather Station
 - Organized Harvest Festivals
- (Read more on page 9)



Future Ready Graduates – Deloitte’s Agile Methodology

- Organized project launch and training programs for Deloitte Consulting and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines
- (Read more on page 10)



SOLution: Solar-powered Irrigation System for Farming Communities

- Trained a batch of irrigation specialists
- (Read more on page 9)



Master of Disaster

- Conducted training of trainers at Wells Fargo
- (Read more on page 7)



Future Movers – BEST for Marawi Project

- Organized project launch
- (Read more on page 3)



ASSIST Creativelab

- Supported the design and development of UNACOM’s Decade of Ocean program and 2019 Annual Report
 - Partnered with UNDP and the Department of Interior and Local Government to design and develop communication materials
- (Read more on pages 12 & 13)

Master of Disaster in the Spotlight

Master of Disaster is one of ASSIST's original social initiatives that was first conceptualized in 2013. It has since undergone many changes, faced many challenges, and continues to overcome the test of time. As the lasting consequences of being unprepared and unequipped to face disasters become more apparent, Master of Disaster has become a key, innovative resource to build resilient homes, businesses, and communities in the Philippines and India.

COMMUNITIES COMING TOGETHER FOR RESILIENCE

Each country faces its own challenges in crafting solutions that can address disasters and their consequences. India and the Philippines are both immensely disaster-prone and the ASSIST team has long been looking for ways to bring Master of Disaster and the best practices gained from its successes in the Philippines to India.

ASSIST was supported by Wishberry, the number one crowdfunding platform in India, in the creation of a crowdfunding campaign to foster a safer and more resilient India. From February 8 to March 16, 2020, ASSIST campaigned to get support from communities and individuals that could support Master of Disaster: Conducting test runs in schools and organizing focus group discussions with disaster management experts to localize the game.



Thanks to the 121 people that backed the campaign, ASSIST was able to raise ₹4,00,700, funds which will be dedicated to translation, prototyping, organizing focus group discussions and test runs, project management, and expert support.

MOD is the first of its kind in India. It is a great medium of learning through play - it promotes responsibility, teamwork apart from educating kids and youth on disaster preparedness. It is a good way to mobilize volunteers to build disaster preparedness in India among the private and public sectors, the academe, and more.





THE BOARD ROOM CAFE GAME NIGHT

On the 28th of February 2020, ASSIST, in association with the Board Room Cafe, organized a gaming event, “Master of Disaster” to help raise awareness on disaster resilience and preparedness. More than 30 people, including professional gamers, young professionals from the start-up world, college students, kids, teachers, NGO and corporate professionals, played the board game, “Master of Disaster.”

The event was organized to discuss and promote the game in the context of disaster resilience in the Indian context. India ranks 5th in the Global Climate Risk Index, and awareness on what to do in case of a disaster is extremely low. Now, ASSIST is bringing the game to India, with modifications suited to the local disaster context. This toolkit takes the form of a game that children in schools can play, to imbibe and understand the basics of disaster response and preparedness.



MOD AT WORK

Seventy employees of Wells Fargo participated in a training of trainers event for Master of Disaster on March 29, 2020. The company has been providing support to the City of Taguig, particularly in the area of disaster resiliency, and

the Master of Disaster is a tool to complement that advocacy. After the training of trainers, Wells Fargo employees were equipped to share their learnings with their fellow colleagues and engage beneficiary schools and communities as Masters of Disaster.



TESTIMONIALS FROM WELLS FARGO EMPLOYEES:

“ Obviously, the kids will enjoy this game because we ourselves enjoyed it... when we go to the community and teach the youth, we have to let them enjoy the game but we must ensure that they are reading all the appropriate responses for the disasters.”

“ Our declared Master of Disaster was able to answer all the Knowledge Card questions, so relating it to a real-life scenario, one has to be knowledgeable so that you can have a higher chance of survival.”

“ We have to note that in real-case scenarios when there's someone who is in need, we help and we don't expect anything in return, unlike in the game [where] there are hero tokens.”





Farmer Power: Raising Vietnam's Agrarian Industry

www.assist-asia.com

Vietnam's agriculture sector is one of the burgeoning industries in the country. A testament to this is its contribution to the country's economic growth—accounting for 15.34 percent of total GDP last 2017. However, the sector is still scarred with issues such as the increasing demand from

consumers for safer food and quality management systems. In line with empowering the farmers and consumers, a Global GAP certification audit was conducted under the CoopEnable project at Truong Khuong Agricultural Cooperatives (AC) in Can Tho and Tan Thuan Tay AC in Dong Thap, where ASSIST met with

the Department of Agricultural and Rural Development of Dong Thap to strengthen partnerships with local authorities. Non-compliance points were brought up during the audit, with corrective actions expected to be completed by April.

CoopEnable (Enabling, Building Cooperative Capacity) is a

project implemented by ASSIST Vietnam, co-financed by KfW DEG and SGS Vietnam which aims to address the needs of both the farmers and the consumers by strengthening the farmers' competitiveness through an effective model for cooperative development.



Harvest Festival: Celebrating Market-Ready Farms



The main challenge for modernizing Philippine agriculture and the vegetable industry is to transform smallholder subsistence farming into one that is market-focused and commercial. However, onion production is severely limited by losses caused by natural calamities and infestation impacts.

The Onion UNION Project introduces the use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM), drip irrigation system, and other technologies to capacitate and build the resilience of onion farmers in the country.

March 4, 2020, in the Onion Learning Center of Bayambang, Pangasinan, a harvest festival was organized to highlight harvest activities including the installation and testing of the iMETOS 3.3 Automatic Weather Station. The installation provides data that allows farmers to predict pest life cycles and plan effective and cost-efficient pest control interventions. The main highlight of the harvest festival was the graduation of 38 local farmers who now are better equipped to elevate their farms to be market-ready.

Over the course of the project, multiple learning sessions on these subjects were delivered to local farmers. On



SOLution: Shining Light on Farmers Productivity



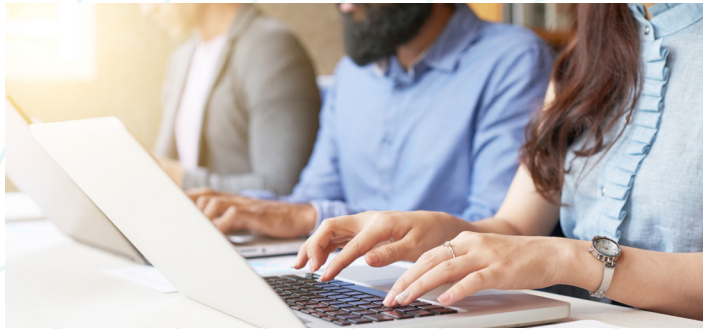
SOLution (Solar-powered Irrigation System for Farming Communities) project is a Public-Private Partnership under the DeveloPPP program of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, implemented through DEG in partnership with Grundfos Pumps Philippines and Asia Society for Social Improvement and Sustainable Transformation (ASSIST). The project aims to increase agricultural productivity of 100 farmers in Norzagaray,

Bulacan by installing solar-powered irrigation systems.

Last March 9-10, a two-day theoretical and on the job training was conducted in the province of Norzagaray, Bulacan which trained local irrigation specialists, technicians, agronomists, agri-engineers, and instructors on operation and maintenance of pumps and solar power irrigation systems.



Connecting to Virtual Learning



About 10 to 15% of the global markets account to Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) alone. This industry is currently thriving among developing countries in Asia like Viet Nam, ranking fifth of the twenty emerging markets with the highest potential for BPO growth.

BPOs do not only provide a wide array of solutions for cost reduction and business growth, but also open various employment opportunities for people with basic skills. However, the

skills demanded by BPOs are not often harnessed by marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities (PWDs), stay-at-home women, and youth in rural areas. To bridge this gap, ASSIST, in partnership with DIGI-TEXX, a digital services provider in Viet Nam, the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and select partner BPO companies, will establish an e-learning platform that will enable remote training for marginalized groups through this project called DIGI-CONNECT. With the help of local vocational schools and training institutions,

training modules focused on data processing skills shall be developed. Internet cafes are also tapped to provide access to target beneficiaries who lack equipment to pursue training.

It is estimated that this initiative will reach 10,000 people in rural Viet Nam. By the end of the project around 2,000 trained individuals will be employed by DIGI-TEXX and partner companies, and will be working from

their homes instead of travelling to BPO offices located in the cities.

As digitalization takes over traditional learning methods, initiatives like DIGI-CONNECT promote inclusive learning by providing access to opportunities for the underserved sectors.

Contributed by Patricia Catu



Creating Future-Ready Graduates

Becoming future-ready is an important skill that students must learn before they graduate. The challenge is to familiarize students with the ins and outs of the professional world and equip them with the right skillset to take on corporate challenges.

ASSIST partnered with Deloitte Consulting PDC to solve issues that challenge the global economy through education and skills development with its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, WorldClass.

"We are committed to applying our core skills and experience

to empower Filipinos through WorldClass" said Uday Sreeram, Managing Director of Deloitte Consulting PDC. One of the key projects under this program is the Training of Trainers (TOT) in the Philippines. Educators from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) were trained on agile methodology, a project management mindset that is based on iterative and incremental development, where requirements and solutions evolve through collaboration between self-organizing, cross-functional teams.

PUP Taguig Branch Director, Dr. Marissa Ferrer, said, "Inside

the academe we only focus on concepts and theories. There is a mismatch between the academe and industry practices. Through this partnership with Deloitte, we can easily address the problem because they bring actual practices and systems, which we can easily incorporate in how we teach our students."

The agile training was held on February 20. An initial 20 educators participated in the training, but plans for expansion to other branches of PUP are underway.



A Solid Solution to Solid Waste

The shift to sustainability has increased the global demand for a solid waste management imperative—recycling. In Vietnam, this has been a long-standing priority, alongside the goal of establishing a circular economy, for its positive environmental impacts. In fact, there is a current swing of recycled polyethylene terephthalate (rPET) especially in

Ho Chi Minh City, as industries are now finding the balance between economic realities and environmental regulations.

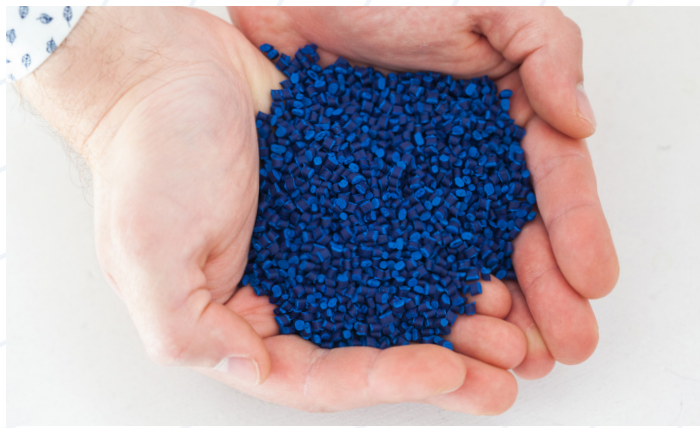
Because of the success of some rPET processing and recycling schemes, ASSIST launched the Post-Consumer Resin (PCR) Market Development project, which is aimed at developing the market for localized PCR industry in Vietnam by bridging the demand and supply within 15 months.



In partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Tam Binh District, Vinh Long Province, a call for local partner companies to utilize PCRs as fundamental raw materials in their operations shall be embarked and these raw materials will come from an investment-ready, food-grade rPET resin factory. This initiative is a head start to bring the New Plastics Economy (NPE) to the region covered and provides a replicable scheme that will encourage investment for modern PCR recycling factories.

This PCR Market Development Project will demonstrate the key role of multi-sectoral partnerships in driving improvements to solid waste management efforts without having to compromise the economic needs of a continuously growing manufacturing base and the environment.

Contributed by Patricia Catu



Building Smart Windows to the Future

Thirty youth were trained as product technicians and window installation apprentices under the “Smart Window Technology Adaptation for Responsible Living” or SMART-LI, a project of ASSIST India in partnership with Lingel Windows and Doors Technologies Private Limited last January of this year.

safety in compliance to the course curriculum developed by Lingel.

After the completion, successful trainees received a certificate where few of them got officially absorbed by Lingel, with the rest being placed on window manufacturer companies. As part of the ongoing product installation and monitoring of air quality, SMART-LI chips were also installed in 12 homes and 2 hospitals last February 9th.

Launched last August 9th of 2019, the SMART-LI project seeks to mitigate air pollution through innovative ventilation solutions in residential homes and medical establishments in India. The second batch of training was held in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan state and covered several practical topics on welding, cutting and even electrical



The Blog is Out in the Bag: ACL's How-Tos

In an effort to support non-profit organizations whilst promoting its own services, the ASSIST Creativelab (ACL) has unveiled its own blog under its newly launched web portal last January 8.

Spearheaded by ACL's own SEO Specialist, John Levi Cuyoca, the blog is a library of tips and tricks on how NGOs can maximize their work, such as improving their communication strategy and knowledge management.

One article featured on the online blog is a guide on how NGOs can tap and leverage the power of social media in increasing

their visibility and engagement to their target audience. Why is social media important and some best practices when it comes to building an online presence are among the topics discussed in the article.

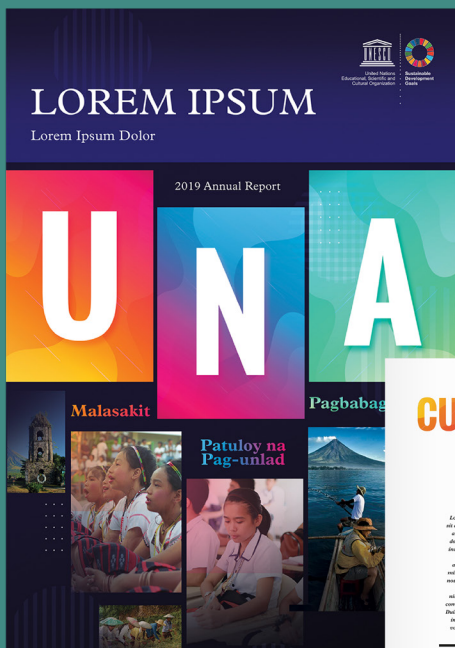
The blog can be visited by clicking this [link](#).



Oceans Are Our Home Too

The UNESCO National Commission of the Philippines (UNACOM) partnered with ASSIST Creativelab for editorial and design services for UNACOM's Decade of Ocean program.

The Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) aims to support efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health and gather ocean stakeholders worldwide to create improved conditions for sustainable development of the world's oceans. Under this partnership, ASSIST Creative Lab was engaged to create infographics to serve as an educational material on promoting the basics of the program.



The Toolkit for Better Health



Vaccinations continue to play an essential role in eradicating and managing infectious, yet preventable diseases such as polio. The success of these vaccinations, however, doesn't only rely on its sheer benefit, but also from the public trust.

Last February 21, the last pilot test for the Health Worker's Toolkit for Interpersonal Communication on Immunization was conducted at the San Jose Del Monte Bulacan City Hall, where health workers learned some tips on how to communicate vaccination benefits and overcome objections related to vaccine hesitancy.

The Department of Health partnered with ASSIST Creativelab to boost public trust on immunization and vaccination programs, by strengthening health workers' interpersonal communication (IPC) skills and preparing them on how to properly respond to various immunization concerns.



Saving the Slums: UN Habitat's PSUP

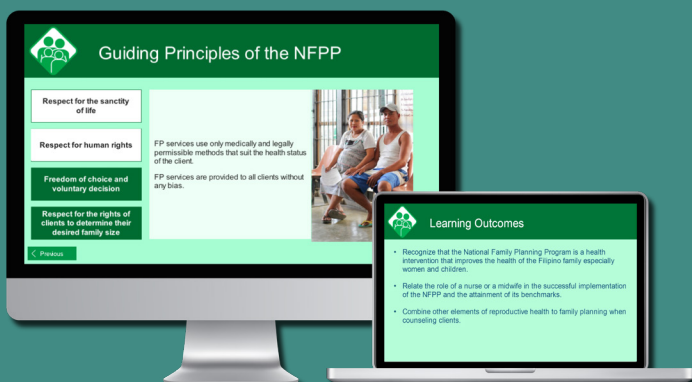
An estimated 828 million people live in slums, representing around one third of the world's urban population according to the World Health Organization. Slum dwellers are often exposed to tight living spaces and unsanitary practices, making them at risk for various communicable diseases.

UN Habitat partnered with ASSIST Creativelab to support the engagement of PSUP with the private sector, contribute to the identification of concrete entry points and models for private sector engagement to slum upgrading and private sector partnerships for the PSUP. Under the partnership, ACL will also engage the organization through a private sector partnership forum and facilitate key discussions between selected private sector and government champions.

UN Habitat's Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) aims to improve the lives of slum dwellers by strengthening global partnerships and policy dialogue for participatory slum upgrading and prevention in 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.



Chemonics' HRH2030: Leaving No One Behind



ASSIST Creativelab developed e-learning modules for the Universal Health Care and Family Planning under the HRH2030 Project implemented by international development consulting firm, Chemonics International Philippines.

ACL produced e-learning modules that will standardize core training courses for health workers into online modules.

Chemonics International Philippines and ACL hopes that by reinforcing the capacity of the health workforce, Filipinos will have greater access to quality healthcare and services needed to maintain a healthy population.

The HRH2030 project is a USAID program which seeks to strengthen the health workforce to improve family planning and tuberculosis services. Under the partnership with Chemonics International Philippines,



A-TEAM

Who is Your Female Role Model and Why?

“

My sister in Christ, Joanna Barcemo, has a good view of life. She feels like a sister to me, a mother sometimes-- but what inspired me the most is her strong faith. Even though sometimes she receives criticism and discrimination from others, I am still inspired by her because of her heart and dedication to everything she does.

Kimberly Ann Tarectecan
Administrative Assistant

“

I consider Alodia Gosiengfiao as my role model. I am amazed at how flexible she is in managing her career as a cosplayer, model, host, gamer and vlogger. I became more amazed when she played my favorite games and cosplayed the characters that I loved.

Jeano Centeno
*Intern,
Communications and Visibility*

“

Mary Travers of Peter, Paul, and Mary provided the powerful and feminine touch that separates their trio from their contemporaries. Mary's masterful utilization of her musical prowess shaped the mass' perspectives. It inspired me to use my craft beyond expectations and contribute in developing the society – something that I aim to achieve to this day.

Alfred Lachayo
*Acquisitions Associate,
Research and Acquisitions*

“

Gina Lopez lived with truth, justice, and integrity. I admire her for many reasons, but the two that strike me most are her steadfast heart in championing the people and the environment, and proving that women can pursue their passion and achieve their dreams if they have a dedicated heart and soul.

Jessica Malicdem
*Senior Multimedia Designer,
ASSIST Creative Lab*

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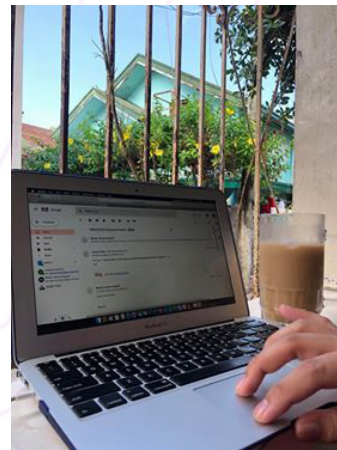
The ASSIST Work-from-Home Experience



While working from home, I still try to do some of my usual routine to lighten my mood like putting on makeup and wearing my heart sunglasses during meetings. My office best friends and I still check on each other, apart from keeping ourselves informed on CoVID-19 developments, we also frequently send update pictures of ourselves, funny or relatable jokes, and set virtual lunch and calls in our group. Some of our relatable jokes are about not taking a bath and turning pale/super white because of staying home for so long.

Amenah Rasul Natangcop
*Project Management Associate,
Project Management Office*

”



"In order for me to be more productive despite the new setup, I usually take my laptop out on our veranda. While working from home, it is still important for me to feel refreshed by having some glimpse of sunlight that pierces through my skin, while listening to the birds up in the Gumamela tree whilst humming their chants. Of course, as a member of PMO, attending emails is vital— that is why it is best paired with a toasted pandesal filled with sticky peanut butter jam and a home-made iced coffee, shots with non-fat fresh milk."

Jeanric Biñas
*Project Management Associate,
Project Management Office*

”



Home-cooked meals, my favorite "Starbucks Coffeehouse Pop" playlist, unlimited cups of tea, and not having to worry about showering first thing in the morning—these make the WFH arrangement manageable for me. Few days with this setup, I realized three things: (1) I am privileged. (2) It's not wrong being privileged; (3) but the lack of empathy to those who are not is. #CheckYourPrivilege

Patricia Catu
*Events and Partnerships Coordinator,
ASSIST Events Management*

”

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