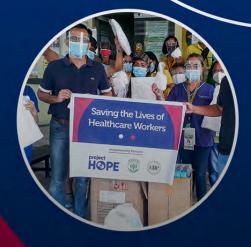
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Protection is the Priority: Keeping Filipino Healthcare Workers Safe amid the Pandemic

EMPOWERING THE FUTURE OF **FARMING**

A SOLUTION TO THE FARMING COMMUNITY

POUL DUE JENSEN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AWARD WINNER

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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.







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For further information, questions, and/or feedback about this newsletter and its contents, please contact info@assistasia.org. Our headquarters is located at Makati City, Philippines.

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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 GALS DEVELOPMENT GALS







































Protection is the Priority:

Keeping Filipino Healthcare Workers Safe amid the Pandemic

Contributed by: Maxine Ferrer, Program Coordinator



ealthcare workers (HCWs) have been at the forefront of the fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) since the start. According to the Department of Health, over 9,000 Filipino HCWs have tested positive for COVID-19 at the time this article was written. Though most have successfully recovered, this statistic highlights the need to actively invest in protecting frontliners from the risk of infection.

With this goal in mind, ASSIST is collaborating with international healthcare nonprofit Project HOPE, in the project **Saving the Lives of Healthcare Workers in the Philippines**. The project will deliver much needed supplies and skills training to HCWs as they continue to fight the clear dangers of the ongoing pandemic.

Under this project, regional and provincial hospitals in COVID-19 hotspots will receive personal protective equipment (PPE) kits. The first batch of PPEs has already been distributed with the help of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines. ASSIST and Project HOPE are working to procure additional PPEs for more beneficiaries in the coming months.

HCWs also have the chance to participate in COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) training to augment their ongoing efforts to safely screen and treat patients. Partner organizations and technical consultants are assisting in localizing modules for different specializations. Additionally, Filipino medical experts like Dr. Elmer Soriano of CIVIKA Asian Development Academy have been tapped to lead the training sessions, which will be facilitated online.

"I would like to thank ASSIST and Project HOPE for their collaboration in this program to help provide solutions to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines," said Dr. Lester Suntay of the World Surgical Foundation Philippines, one of the local project partners. "We are happy to provide our service to help in IPC in operating rooms, hospitals, and communities across Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao."

Originally developed by Brown University, the IPC training covers critical areas of COVID-19 prevention, triage, and treatment, including diagnosis & management and risk communication. Qualified HCWs have been invited to become certified Master Trainers and pass on the knowledge to their peers and colleagues in their immediate community.

To round out the project, targeted hospitals and health facilities will be receiving technical assistance for improved IPC management through identification of gaps and needs and implementing improved controls, practices, and protocols.

Over 15 partnerships with hospital associations, medical societies, local government units have been established for Saving the Lives of Healthcare Workers in the Philippines. ASSIST has also expanded the project's IPC training by connecting with medical education institutions in a bid to prepare the next generation of HCWs.

"All of our partners are very eager to help roll out this relevant project. This pandemic has affected everyone and it is only with everyone's support that it can get resolved," said Francis Macatulad, Director for Strategy and Project Management. "To heal as one, we have to work as one."















ASSIST ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

NEWLY LAUNCHED PROJECTS



Saving the Lives of Healthcare Workers in the Philippines

> Aims to save the lives of healthcare workers in COVID-19 hotspots in the Philippines with delivery of needed supplies and skills training.



Resiliency Improvement for Seafarers & Seafaring Enterprises (RIS²E)

Designed to address the gaps in the Philippines' maritime industry by enhancing the capacity of domestic fleet operators and seafarer communities through training and implementing disaster preparedness programs.



Sustainable Health Improvement & Pandemic Prevention (SHIP²)

Aims to create a sustainable and resilient community within the Baseco Compound by providing the clean water and creating livelihood opportunities for the locals.

ONGOING PROJECTS



Deloitte WorldClass



Aims to empower people globally through skills training to be able to compete in the 4th Industrial Revolution by the year 2030



Beauty for a Better Life (BFBL)



Seeks to provide beauty-training programs for underprivileged women areas to develop their skills and capacities to become certified hairdressers and beauticians







Aims to increase the agricultural productivity of 100 farmers in

Norzagaray, Bulacan by installing

solar-powered irrigation systems.



Baking training to Augment Knowledge and Entrepreneurial **Development (BAKE)**

Aims to develop the Vietnamese baking trade by focusing on teaching and molding the skills and techniques of craft



Onion UNION



Seeks to provide sustainable solutions to the major challenges in onion farming through professionalization of agriculture, and adaptation to changing environmental conditions caused by climate change, new pests, and crop diseases



DIGI-CONNECT



Aims to establish an e-learning platform that will enable remote training for marginalized groups.



Post-Consumer Resin Market Development



A collaborative partnership that aims to address the long-standing issue of plastic waste in Vietnam through effective PET recycling.



UNION

STEM Learning and **Application through Play** (LEAP)

Educate students on Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) through fun and challenging activities.



Gender Equality



Skills Development



Environment



Agriculture



Education

OUR IMPACT



ACTIVE PROJECT PARTNERS



81,805 **DIRECT BENEFICIARIES**

*Approximation based on internal project reporting

CoopEnable: Empowering the Future of Farming

arking the project's successful conclusion, a closing ceremony was held last July 23 for CoopEnable (Enabling, Building Cooperative Capacity), at Nam Can Tho University, in Can Tho province, Vietnam.

CoopEnable is a project implemented by ASSIST Vietnam, cofinanced by KfW DEG and SGS Vietnam which was formed to address the needs of both the farmers and the consumers by strengthening the farmers' competitiveness through an effective model for cooperative development. Throughout the project, 6 agriculture cooperatives were trained and consulted on Global GAP, of which 4 cooperatives were assessed and granted with Global and/ or Local GAP certificates.

For the training sessions, 62 farmers and experts received training on Global GAP and were qualified as advisors. A total of 946 individuals were also trained on basic requirements of Global GAP while 3 local SGS experts were sent to Cologne, Germany, and received qualification as Global GAP Auditors.



The CoopEnable project has helped expand SGS Vietnam's market and business opportunities in the Mekong Delta region through the network developed during the course. SGS will continue to engage local and international authorities and stakeholders to take on other initiatives on food safety and hygiene in the future.







Sustaining Momentum and Creating Connections for DIGI-CONNECT

Contributed by: Maxine Ferrer, Program Coordinator



rior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Vietnam was already touted as the next giant of the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) world in a Spotlight on Vietnam report by audit firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) Vietnam. Despite the challenges initially posed by preventive health measures, the country still shows signs of growth in the BPO industry, which could benefit marginalized groups in society.

Through **DIGI-CONNECT**, ASSIST continues to bring BPO employment opportunities to persons with disabilities, stay-at-home women, and youth in rural areas by providing access to remote training for upskilling. Recently, the project has moved forward by formally establishing partnerships with various stakeholders, such as the Disabilities People Association of Can Tho. Organizations have been tapped to mobilize beneficiaries, provide training certification, or recruit trainees for BPO companies.

Project partner DIGI-TEXX, a leading BPO company in Vietnam, has also begun working on the learning management system and recruitment portal for DIGI-CONNECT. The demo versions are expected to be finished by the end of the year. Meanwhile, ASSIST is overseeing the development of basic courses for e-learning.

The end goal for DIGI-CONNECT is to attain jobs for an estimated 2,000 trained individuals in DIGI-TEXX and other affiliated BPO companies. These employees will then be able to safely work from the comforts of their home, a set-up that has become more common due to the circumstances caused by the ongoing pandemic.







Making the Bread of Success

Contributed by: Maxine Ferrer, Program Coordinator

s Vietnam continues to contend with the lack of interested and skilled workers in its baking industry, ASSIST Vietnam launched the BAKE (Baking Training to Augment Knowledge and Entrepreneurial Development) project that established a vocational training center that will teach specialized baking skills to support the country's baking trade.

During the course of the project, the first Baking Training Centre at the Ly Tu Trong College was accredited by the General Department of Vocational Training to have baking training as an official subject. Despite the presence of the COVID-19 virus, training programs were administered under the guidance of the new normal and strict health protocols.

Around 90 students were already trained for the basic course, with 2 more batches expected until the end of 2020. For the advanced course, a total of 7 modules will be produced with the first module launched last October 5-6th.











Contributed by: Maxine Ferrer, Program Coordinator

he Post-Consumer Resin Market Development Partnership is a collaborative endeavor that combines the expertise and resources of ASSIST, Unilever Vietnam, CITENCO, Evergreen Labs, and the Vietnam Council for Sustainable Development which aims to address the long-standing issue of plastic waste through effective PET recycling.

The PCR Market Development project partners recently concluded the research stage and met with stakeholders last October 1-3 in Ho Chi Minh City to present their initial findings. Focus group discussions, orientations, and site visits were also organized to gain feedback from the participants.

The results of the PCR Market Development Partnership are expected to be published during the 2021 Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G) Summit, which will be held in Seoul, South Korea. Vietnam is one of the 12 partner countries of the P4G. The international partnership network focuses on the attainment of several SDGs across developing countries, including sustainable cities (SDG 11) and circular economy (SDG 12).







A-TEAM: INDIA IN THE FACE OF AN INVISIBLE ADVERSITY

Contributed by: Karunakaran Kalinathan and Pavithra Pari

How do you deal with an enemy if you can't even see it in the first place? The COVID-19 pandemic is one catastrophic nuisance that ravaged every corner of the world. India wasn't spared from its blow, and as of this writing, the country has crossed over 5 million cases.

Just like any other business and organization, the pandemic has put a halt to the majority of our operations. Starting with reaching out to new clients, implementing our existing project activities, and discussing it with our team members over a cup of coffee, everything has been hindered. Due to a lack of face-to-face meetings with potential clients, it is very difficult to close a meeting with positive results. At present, the trust is kept to the client only through online meetings.

The India office has inevitably switched to a flexible work policy. We miss all our healthy arguments and discussions. With this comes the unfamiliarity of making connections from a distance. Not to mention, the reduced salary due to lack of projects creates additional stress in our individual financial commitments. The

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Due to a lack of face-to-face meetings with potential clients, it is very difficult to close a meeting with positive results."

The uncertainty of when things will go back to new normal is growing big, but positively speaking this crisis made us adapt to new solutions to achieve our goals."

remote work situation was a mixed bag either, with our work-life balance becoming a major challenge as we end up putting in a lot more time to work than to take care of ourselves and the things at home.

We are experiencing this pandemic for the first time in our lives, which is making us miss our office environment and working closely with all our colleagues. The uncertainty of when things will go back to new normal is growing big, but positively speaking this crisis made us adapt to new solutions to achieve our goals.

The virus is indeed a threat that shouldn't be underestimated, but we shouldn't let it take full control of our lives. Believe it or not, we started experiencing some form of normalcy despite the skyrocketing cases. We are hopeful and enthusiastic that once this pandemic calms, we can bring new projects by the year 2021.

A SOLution for the Farming Community

armers are considered as the backbone of one's nation. Not only they produce food, but they also work tirelessly under the scorching heat of the sun—and a deadly virus too! This makes them frontliners as well, and it is important to serve their needs so they can continue to serve the people.

SOLution (Solar-powered Irrigation System for Farming Communities) is one of ASSIST's private sector partnership projects that is tailored to uplifting the lives of the farming community by improving their harvest. Grundfos Pumps Philippines recently won the Poul Due Jensen Social Responsibility Award, which awarded diploma, statuette and 20,000 EUR donation to ASSIST to install more solar-powered pumps in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

Last September 28-29, training was conducted in Norzagaray which was attended by about 50 farmers where they learned about solar-powered irrigation systems and how they can use it to boost their farming activities. Further assisting their harvests, 2 out of 3 pumps have already been installed in the province with the third pump set for installation by the end of October.











Planting the Seeds of Resilience

n times of a pandemic, one of the major challenges for projects that are field-based is ensuring the completion of deliverables while at the same time, providing safety and learning opportunities for the community.

Onion UNION in partnership with the East-West Seed Company is one of the ASSIST projects that underwent several changes to cater to farmer activities without sacrificing safety and protection from the COVID-19 virus. Strict quarantine measures were implemented across four Onion Learning Center sites, particularly in Nueva Ecija and Ilocos Sur where both saw an increase in COVID-19 cases.

Last July, closing meetings to discuss remaining activities were done online, while a final report on all the project milestones was submitted to the funder last September. The Onion UNION project is an initiative of ASSIST that aims to increase the productivity and resilience of onion farmers in Luzon, Philippines by providing learning sessions on Integrated Pest Management.











RIS²E Up Philippines

■ ilipinos form a quarter of the 1.2 million mariners deployed all over the world and maritime activities are among the primary sources of livelihood, but the country's topography and geographic location also make it vulnerable to many natural disasters, such as floods, typhoons, landslides, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions. Additionally, standard training provided by maritime institutions to address natural disasters are found considerably lacking.

Conceptualized by the Philippines Transmarine Carriers (PTC) - a pioneer in the field of merchant maritime, DEG - a development finance institution, and ASSIST - a development organization, RIS2E **Philippines** will address these gaps in the Philippines' maritime industry by enhancing the capacity of domestic fleet operators and seafarer communities through training and implementing ISO 22301 and disaster preparedness programs.

During the course of the project, 10 selected fleet operators will receive technical assistance and at least 5 fleet operators will get certified to the standard by an external third party auditing company. In total 100 trained trainers and consultants will



continue to provide training and technical assistance to the fleet operators industry. Additionally, 100 seafarers (PTC employees) from the provinces of Cavite and Iloilo will be trained on disaster preparedness to train the general public including women and children in disaster prone areas.









Saving the Slums

The Baseco Compound is one of the largest and densest urban slum communities in the Philippines, suffering from poor sanitation and access to safe and affordable drinking water. As of the 2015 census, the 53-hectare land area holds a population of 59,847, or 902 persons for every square meter. The congested community additionally lacks access to clean water and sanitation facilities, creating environments exceedingly vulnerable to highly contagious diseases such as COVID-19.

Grundfos Philippines and ASSIST have organized the project: Sustainable Health Improvement & Pandemic Prevention (SHIP2) that aims to create a sustainable and resilient community within the Baseco Compound by providing the critical life resource that is clean water and creating livelihood opportunities for the locals. Through SHIP2, Grundfos and ASSIST will work together with the Baseco civil society communities to establish water filtration facilities and clean water stores, as well as organize WASH trainings and other health-related livelihood activities.

By the end of this project, the installed water filtration facilities will produce 96,000 litres of clean water and provide 4,800 people with safe/potable water daily, 100 community trainers will be equipped with the knowledge and best practices to fight against COVID-19 and other diseases, and more than 15,000 families in the urban slum community will benefit from sustained WASH trainings.





Assisting Marawi's Youth towards a **Smarter Future**

ne of the key solutions in rebuilding a battle-scarred city is by elevating the capacity of the people. In a mission to empower a post-conflict Marawi, ASSIST in partnership with the Colombo Plan Staff College (CPSC), the German Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GPCCI), and TÜV Rheinland launched the Future Movers Programme which aims to increase the employability of the youth through Vocational Educational and Training (VET).

As part of the movement to push for an innovative VET ecosystem, modules and scripts for the online learning materials were outlined, and will be filmed as instructional videos in October. The online portal which will also host the learning materials were also discussed, with a release date coming very soon.















Promoting a Safe Digitized World

bout 73 million people in the Philippines have access to the internet as of January this year, according to data released by market and consumer data site, Statista. The Internet alone is a massive force and failing to understand its full potential can lead to negative consequences.

Committing to social impact and employee engagement, Telstra Foundation Philippines, Inc. (TFP) partnered with ASSIST to empower its employee-volunteers as "agents of change" for the digital citizenship of children and youth. The program aims to roll out Training of Trainer (ToT) sessions to enable volunteers to become skilled and child-friendly trainers to effectively educate children on core digital citizenship skills.

ASSIST developed a 59-page manual to further supplement the program's objectives. Targeted at the TFP volunteers, the manual is divided into three sections focusing on child-centered learning pedagogy and child psychology, cybersecurity and digital empathy, and a list of activities that trainers can use to conduct interactive Digital Citizenship sessions.





Future-Proofing Today's Workforce

he global multidisciplinary professional services provider Deloitte and the pan-Asian non-profit organization ASSIST have come together in a partnership that creates social impact by providing better opportunities for the Filipino youth.

As a component of **Deloitte's WorldClass** program, which seeks to empower 50 million people by 2030 with the skills required for the jobs of the future, ASSIST has co-organized training of trainer sessions and established strategic partnerships with colleges and universities across the Philippines since the partnership's initiation earlier in 2020. Most recent activities have focused on content development and video production on various topics such as Cloud Computing, Mobile Development, Cyber Security, and Business Continuity Management, as well the development of the self-learning portal where beneficiaries can learn through video materials, take quick knowledge check tests, and receive certificates of completion.

Through this initiative ASSIST offers unique learning opportunities to upskill the Filipino youth on various critical topics and skill sets required for the workforce of the future.







I Like My Coffee Sustainable



SSIST Creativelab, a specialized unit of ASSIST that caters to the unique and varied communication, visibility, and knowledge management needs in the development sector were tapped to create promotional and learning materials for Project Coffee+.

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

To celebrate World Coffee Day last October 1st, ASSIST Creativelab produced a campaign video for Project Coffee+ as an appreciation for farmers in Bukidnon and Sultan Kudarat provinces. Throughout the contract, a booklet for Project Coffee+ detailing its activities and milestones will be produced as well as social media collaterals and a powerpoint presentation to promote Project Coffee+ among partners and stakeholders.









Cleaning the Air for a Better Asia

International NGO, Clean Air Asia which promotes better air quality and healthier, livable cities in Asia partnered with ASSIST Creativelab to develop a knowledge management system to further solidify their learning toolkit on strategies and policies, such as the City Solutions Toolkit.

The City Solutions Toolkit is a project of Clean Air Asia which covers elements needed for the effective design and successful implementation of clean air action plans. Through the partnership, ASSIST Creative Lab will enhance the toolkit through e-learning, which includes a streamlined WordPress module which will serve as a reference for instructional/guidance documents and case studies on air quality management.

Aside from modules, graphical assets will also be created for better user experience. Through the partnership, Clean Air Asia and ASSIST Creativelab hope to provide the best avenue for the City Solutions Toolkit to be circulated across the Clean Air Asia website and social media accounts.

One for the Books!



Children love reading stories. Whether it's for encouraging a sound sleep, promoting a sense of recreation or supplementing their education, reading plays a vital role in their holistic development. The Let's Read initiative builds on that mission to foster a creative world where children can read without limits.

ASSIST Creativelab is currently developing a digital campaign to increase interest and usage of the Let's Read digital children's storybook platform by parents with young children. The digital campaign consists of creating illustrations along with copywriting on the ads and a social media calendar which mixes static and moving assets (GIF).

At present, Let's Read has about 146 books in 3 Philippine languages with an average number of books read at 4,184 with 1,159 readers accessing the library. Let's Read is an initiative of The Asia Foundation, an international nonprofit development organization committed to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia.





A Push for Responsible Business







Businesses have played a very important role in achieving global development, providing millions of jobs while contributing to the overall prosperity of society. With their impact, however, comes the need to regulate its positive and negative footprint.

In the spirit of responsible business, ASSIST Creativelab developed an introductory video about the Responsible Supply Chains in Asia Programme. A product of a partnership between the European Union (EU), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the programme seeks to promote responsible business practices into the operations of multinational companies and their supply chains.

The 3 minute and 15-second video showcases the objectives of the programme, detailing its multi-faceted approach to encourage sustainable and inclusive economic, social, and environmental progress with respect for human and labor rights. Six partner countries are currently participating in the programme which include China, Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

HOW WE ASSIST

A major motivation of ASSIST is always empowering the youth. We've structured our internship program in such a way to ensure our interns can take pride and ownership in the projects they helped organize and the positive impact they made on the communities we work with. Read on for testimonials from our interns themselves.

*Content has been edited for length and clarity.



As a postgraduate student pursuing Development Management, I joined this internship with the goal to understand the process of project management, grant writing, and administration of an NGO through firsthand experience. I initially worked on the Master of Disaster project, supporting the campaign planning, fundraising, event management, networking, then eventually was involved in researching, grant proposal writing, budgeting, and more. While I am uncertain about the type of opportunities in the NGO sector, especially in the light of a global pandemic, I think that ASSIST has been one of the best internships I've done. My internship was practical, application oriented, and put me in challenging situations that necessitated my complete involvement and participation. The internship equipped me with new skills and a taste of real-world experience.





When I started interning in August, I was focused only on our upcoming podcast and Youtube channel, Nonprofit Wizards. Over time, I got more involved in providing support for Saving the Lives of Healthcare Workers in the Philippines. I never expected to do another internship after graduating but I'm glad I chose to do it at ASSIST. Being assigned to their communications and visibility team exposed me to the behind-the-scenes production work for digital media, from conceptualization to roll-out, even for NGOs. Though I have expectations and I need to challenge myself to learn new skills and adapt quickly. The real highlight of working at ASSIST is being able to observe how it's possible to maintain a healthy and productive work environment online, so I now have a standard to look for as I start my career.

Entering the workforce



As an intern, I supported many different projects of ASSIST, including the Master of Disaster project in its conversion from the Philippine-based context to India-specific content. During the internship program, I was able to learn lots of new things, develop skills like project management, communication, and how to identify my unique strengths and skills as a member of the team."

Ashwin 🚇





During my internship with ASSIST, I was able various projects, with topics that included health and hygiene, agriculture, and women empowerment. Thanks to ASSIST, I learned a lot of skills like how to effectively communicate, build connections, be professional in the workplace, and more.

Sanjana 🕮





As an intern, I mainly provide office support to administrative activities and to our project managers. So far, I've been involved in the BAKE (Saf-Viet) project and have helped organize and set up the recent P4G event. Being a fresh graduate, entering a completely new environment made me nervous, but everyone here is so amazing and friendly, they all make me feel so included. Although I'm still a little concerned about my performance, I still really enjoy completing the tasks I'm assigned and

have already gained some valuable knowledge along the way. As I'm pursuing a career path in NGOs, working at ASSIST will surely create a solid foundation for my future jobs.

Uyen







In search of a trusty guide for your growing nonprofit organization?

Enter Nonprofit Wizards, the first and only channel to teach you everything you need to know about nonprofit management. The channel will be launched as a podcast and video series available on all streaming platforms to educate aspiring non-profit professionals on-the-go about various development topics, including:



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project management

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For more information, you may contact the team at npw@assistasia.org or follow our social media handles!



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