

# ASSIST *Now*

## FARMERS UNITED: TRANSFORMING THE ONION LANDSCAPE IN THE PHILIPPINES

6 & 7



**BRIDGING THE GAP:  
INCREASING FARMER  
COMPETITIVENESS IN VIETNAM**

5

**TAKING  
A BIG LEAP  
FOR EDUCATION**

9

**A-TEAM:  
CELEBRATING WOMEN IN  
THE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR**

14



# 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

## EDITORIAL TEAM

**Angelica Dino**  
Editor

**Leif Malvas**  
Writer & Content Lead

**Renz Perez**  
Writer, Photographer, & Layout Artist

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

This newsletter may feature photos and logos from our partners. Unless otherwise stated, the contents of this newsletter are the copyright of ASSIST. All rights reserved. No part of this newsletter may be reproduced, transmitted, or copied, without the written consent of ASSIST. Requests for permission should be directed to [info@assistasia.org](mailto:info@assistasia.org).

## LET'S PARTNER FOR PROGRESS!

Join us as a partner, contributor, or sponsor.

Together, let us work hand in hand to build more sustainable societies.

You may connect with us through [info@assistasia.org](mailto:info@assistasia.org) or visit our website at [www.assistasia.org](http://www.assistasia.org) for more information.

## 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







# CREATING IMPACT

## IN THE HIGHLANDS OF BENGUET

**T**wo years after its implementation in Buguias, Benguet, the project “Improving Productivity in Agriculture through Climate-Smart Technology in the Philippines” (ImPACT PH) was completed last February 28. With the aim of improving the farmers’ practices and livelihoods through the use of climate-smart technology, the project was launched in partnership with Pessl Instruments and KfW DEG.

Throughout the course of ImPACT PH, a total of 32 Pessl-manufactured METOS instruments were installed in the municipality of Buguias. The METOS instruments serve as weather stations that provide farmers with relevant information, such as granular weather, air temperature,

solar radiation, and relative humidity, that can help achieve farming success.

“I used to just look up at the sky and check whether it would rain or not. Sometimes, I spray insecticides in the morning, only for it to be washed away by rain in the afternoon so I have to spray again the next day. It’s a big waste of insecticide,” Florante Belo-o, a highland vegetable farmer, said. With the introduction of the ImPACT Project, Florante claimed that he no longer has to rely on his hunches because the METOS instruments provide him with the information he needs.

Another output of the project is the ImPACT Weather App, a mobile application designed to provide easy access to data from the weather instruments. Through this app, farmers can

view and assess information through their cellular phones.

May Ann Babag, a regular ImPACT Weather App user, said that the application has helped her in managing her time in the farm and in the house. “Now, I don’t have to go to my garden frequently to water my plants. The app helped me save time and energy. I can do household chores with my extra time,” May Ann, shares.

With the conclusion of the project, Florante holds a positive outlook for the people of Buguias, “I would like to thank ASSIST and Pessl for providing us and our municipality the METOS instruments. My fellow farmers need to be educated about this technology so they can also utilize it.”

Further developments on the

project and the app are still underway. Long term goals for the project include the widespread use of the app amongst more farmers in Buguias; and the continual maintenance of the METOS Instruments. Additionally, ImPACT PH was also expanded to Tagbilaran, Bohol and Baler, Aurora.



May Ann Mabag

“Now, I don’t have to go to my garden frequently to water my plants. The app helped me save time and energy. I can do household chores with my extra time.”



Florante Bela-o

“I would like to thank ASSIST and Pessl for providing us and our municipality the METOS instruments. My fellow farmers need to be educated about this technology so they can also utilize it.”







**A**SSIST, in partnership with SolarNRG and the University of Makati (UMak), held the project closing ceremony of accessRE: Promoting Access to Solar Energy Solutions for Small Buildings in the Philippines last February 26. Certificates were given to the trainees who successfully completed the project's solar technicians training program.

The accessRE project promotes the use of renewable energy while providing employment opportunities in the solar energy industry of the Philippines. Through this project, multi-sectoral dialogues, community awareness sessions, and renewable energy classes for solar technicians were facilitated.

A training center was also built on the grounds of UMak. This became the site of the solar technicians training. A total of 112 trainees were trained under the program. The training covered various concepts, procedures, and safety practices in solar installation through classroom-based lectures and hands-on training.

Through his determination and hard work, Jezzrel Rafil, one of the trainees, was eventually employed by SolarNRG Philippines. "The [accessRE project] really

helped me get a job. I can now support the education of my sibling and give financial assistance to my parents," said Jezzrel.

Through the project, solar panels were also installed in three selected community-relevant facilities: Camilus Medhaven in Marikina City, Stepping Stone Foundation in Parañaque City, and Montessori Integrated School in Antipolo City.

Mike Consenheim, Country Manager of SolarNRG Philippines, said that solar energy solutions can be promoted by raising awareness about the benefits of solar technology in schools. "This [training on solar technology] doesn't just allow people to work at companies but also to give them the opportunity to start their own businesses," he said.

The accessRE project was implemented by ASSIST, co-financed by SolarNRG and KfW DEG, in association with UMak.



**Jezzrel Rafil**

“

The [accessRE project] really helped me get a job. I can now support the education of my sibling and give financial assistance to my parents.

”





# BRIDGING THE GAP: INCREASING FARMER COMPETITIVENESS IN VIETNAM



Vietnam's agriculture sector is an important contributor to the economy. But behind this vibrant industry are highly labor-intensive farming practices and an increasing consumer demand for safer food and quality management systems.

The project CoopEnable: Enabling, Building Cooperative Capacity aims to address the needs of both the farmers and the consumers. Co-financed by KfW DEG and SGS Vietnam and implemented by ASSIST, CoopEnable strengthens the farmers' competitiveness

through an effective model for cooperative development.

This project also raises awareness on the GlobalGAP (Good Agricultural Practices) standards among the farmers and the consumers. These standards of GlobalGAP will ensure compliance in crop production at the primary level, as it requires expert knowledge and thorough understanding of agricultural practices too.

In the first quarter of 2019, CoopEnable gained momentum through a series of workshops for cooperative representatives in the Tien Giang, Can Tho, and Dong Thap provinces. The goal

of these workshops is to promote the benefits of the Transparency-One system. This system supports the global food supply chain industry by helping companies ensure that their products are safe and follows the product safety rules and regulations.

Another series of workshops was conducted in Vietnam's Can Tho and Dong Thap provinces. The workshops guided the farmers in preparing documents that subscribe to the GlobalGAP requirements.

The farmers expressed appreciation for the CoopEnable project because it helped

them improve the quality of their products by following the GlobalGAP standards. The project's Transparency-One System also helped improve product supply chain amidst the decreasing rate of rice exports in Vietnam.





# FARMERS UNITED:

## TRANSFORMING THE ONION LANDSCAPE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Aiming to increase knowledge on onion cultivation in line with its advocacy to increase the capacities of Filipino farmers, ASSIST, with co-financing from East-West Seed Company (EWSC) and KFW DEG, launched a project entitled, "Understanding Integrated Pest Management for Onion Farming" (Onion UNION).

Onion UNION is an ongoing initiative to provide sustainable solutions to the major challenges the Philippine vegetable industry faces, focusing mainly on the professionalization of agriculture, and adaptation to changing environmental conditions caused by climate change, new pests, and crop diseases.

Onion production in the country remains to be one of the top five vegetable productions that generate major source of income among Filipino farmers, especially in the provinces of Luzon. This project highlights effective cultivation management and practices, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) technologies to improve the productivity rate among smallholder farmers in the key onion-producing provinces of Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Ilocos Sur, and Occidental Mindoro.

Moreover, this project aims to reach 600 farmers (150 farmers per province) and 40 agronomists/agriculturists (10

per province) to be upskilled as trainers and multipliers on IPM solutions within a 22-month period from 2018 to 2020.

Victorino David, one of the beneficiaries of the project, said that farming is his primary source of income and natural calamities have always been one of his biggest problems, "I am really happy with this project because this does not only benefit me but the whole farming community, as well. Also, the discussions are really good about farming and crop marketing, so I hope many could join us in the next sessions," David said when asked about his experience with the project.

Earlier this year, four Onion Learning Centers (OLC) have been successfully established in the following areas: San Jose, Occidental Mindoro; Bayambang, Pangasinan; Laur, Nueva Ecija; and Bantay, Ilocos Sur. These onion learning centers serve as venues to educate and train farmers regarding effective onion farming and management.

With the guidance of experts from East-West Seed, onion farmers are given lessons about proper and efficient pest management methods. A drip irrigation system was also installed in all four sites, as part of the experimentation process of improving the

beneficiaries' farming practices.

Consequently, a harvest festival was held in all four project sites at the end of March, in celebration of the bountiful onion harvest for this season. A short program was conducted, wherein the first batch of the OLC learners were recognized for their participation in the said project.

"I hope that the student farmers will never get tired of attending these sessions so that their learnings are continuous. I urge those who haven't gone here to attend so that they can learn something and apply those learnings to elevate their farming and livelihood," Bonifacio Bautista, an onion farmer from Bayambang, Pangasinan, shares.

The Onion UNION project will assist in the second planting and harvesting season that will take place in October later this year.









# SMARTER FARMING FOR GREENER COMMUNITIES

Over 50 million farmers in India depend on sugarcane for their livelihood. Maharashtra is one of the top three sugarcane producing states in India. However, farmers in the state continue to face many challenges in sugarcane cultivation, including poor yields.

Through the SMART Technology for GREEN Agricultural Practices (SMART 4 GREEN) project, ASSIST is educating farmers on sustainable sugarcane practices.

Last January, ASSIST and SAME DUETZ-FAHR organized a three-day farmer development workshop on the Sustainable Sugarcane Initiative (SSI) in the cities of Pune and Ahmednagar. This workshop brought together 70 participants to understand how farm inputs and mechanization can help increase sugarcane yield and reduce costs.

to develop stronger marketing strategies, soft skill and adapt better systems and processes.

In addition to the workshops, the SMART 4 GREEN project has also established four pilot farms to promote and implement SSI and other innovative methodologies and techniques that will ensure improved and sustained productivity.

*contributed by*  
**ASSIST India**

Workshops were also conducted for tractor and farm implement dealers, sensitising them on the role of mechanisation in sugarcane cultivation. Training modules developed and distributed under SMART 4 GREEN have enabled dealers



## FOOD FOR THOUGHT: ENSURING SAFETY IN THE FOOD SECTOR



More than 60% of Myanmar's industry is comprised of the food sector. As the industry continues to grow rapidly, adoption of food safety practices becomes crucial.

**P**roject AWARE: Raising food safety awareness within the crop industrial processing sector in Myanmar, implemented by ASSIST with co-financing from Bureau Veritas and KfW DEG, aims to improve food safety and quality control practices in Myanmar.

Gap assessment visits in the factories of Mandalay and Shwebo cities were facilitated early this year. After the assessments, recommendations and action plans to improve food safety and sanitation systems were provided to the factories.

Project AWARE also introduced the Hazard Analysis and Critical

Control Points (HACCP) and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in the local food sector. HACCP is a food safety management system used to reduce the risk of safety hazards in food, while GMP is a system that ensure food products consistently undergo quality and safety measures.

In the next quarter, a case study booklet will be created, containing results derived from the project. A closing forum will also be organized to showcase the impact of the project, and raise awareness on food safety as well.







# TAKING A **BIG LEAP** FOR EDUCATION

**T**he integration of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education in the Philippines has brought attention to address the lack of qualified teachers, classrooms, and laboratory facilities in the country. Moreover, there exists an increasing lack of interest in the field among students.

In response to this challenge, ASSIST, in partnership with Telstra Foundation (Philippines) Inc., spearheaded the STEM Learning and Application through Play (LEAP) Program, an event that aims to encourage young students

to pursue STEM as their educational track in senior high school and college, and eventually as their career path, by instilling in them a fundamental understanding of STEM-related topics. LEAP is a seven-week pilot program held from 26 January to 2 March at the Zapatera Elementary School in Cebu City.

With over 150 beneficiary students from the school, the program offers collaborative, immersive, and fun activities, specially designed to match the current Science and Math curriculum in the country. With the active participation and support of over 80 Telstra employee volunteers, a total of 21 STEM-related activities, ranging

from inspirational talks to group experiments, have been conducted over the duration of the event.

"After the program, the students became more participative, active, and engaged with the activities. Now they're more interested in [enrolling under the STEM program,]" Luzviminda Pingol, MST-CS, Assistant Vice Principal of Zapatera Elementary School, shares.

The Zapatera Elementary school serves as the pilot site of the program and its grades five students are the main beneficiaries. ASSIST and Telstra Foundation hope that through this initiative, teachers

and students alike will be given a new perspective on how to approach learning in the field of Science and Mathematics.

Moving forward, Ms. Pingol challenges herself and her colleagues to integrate their learnings from the event into the classroom. She closes, "[I always remind my teachers] to not teach the way they want students to learn, but to teach the way their students want to learn, so that they will become engaged, active, and participative in their lessons."





# PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY - MARCH 2019



## INDIA



### SWITCH

- Commencement of Batch 2 Trainings (21 January)
- Completion of Batch 1 Trainings (8 March)
- Commencement of Batch 3 Trainings (8 March)



### SMART 4 GREEN

- Farmers Sensitization Workshop (5-7 January)
- Dealer Development Workshop (28 & 29 January)



## CAMBODIA



### CEP-D

- Basic Training (12 January)
- Advanced Care Program



## MYANMAR



### AWARE

- Gap Assessment Mandalay Shwebo





A

Training for Medical Students  
(January)  
Specialized Training for Health  
Professionals Part 1 (16 February)

R

Assessment Trip  
Bogota, Myanmar (21-24 January)  
Bogota, Myanmar (26-28 February)



## PHILIPPINES



### SOURCE Philippines

- Project Closing Ceremony (14 January)



### accessRE

- Renewable Energy Class & Montessori Integrated School Site Visit (29 January)
- Renewable Energy Class & Camillus Medhaven Site Visit (19 February)



### ImPACT PH

- Project Closing Ceremony  
Bogua, Benguet (28 February)  
Baler, Aurora (6 March)  
Tagbilaran, Bohol (19 March)
- Municipal Development Council Regular Meeting (20 March)



### Onion UNION

- Harvest Festival  
Bayambang, Pangasinan (7 March)  
Laur, Nueva Ecija (8 March)  
Bantay, Ilocos Sur (21 March)  
San Jose, Occidental Mindoro (26 March)





## CREATIVE LAB EMBARKS ON THE Roads2SDGs



A specialized unit of ASSIST Development Solutions, ASSIST Creative Lab (ACL), caters to the unique and varied communication, visibility, and knowledge management needs of actors and interventions in the development sector.

ASSIST Creative Lab (ACL) was engaged to develop and produce eight instructional videos for “Paving the Roads to Sustainable Development Goals through Good Governance (Roads2SDGs),” a governance reform program in local roads management (LRM) and public financial management (PFM).

The Roads2SDGs project is under the initiative program launched by Department for the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces (CMGP), that aims to improve the quality of the local road network across the country. Improving people’s access, especially through better roads, has both catalytic and multiplier effects in achieving reductions in poverty and hunger, having good health,

education, and decent work, promoting industry and innovation, reducing inequality, and building sustainable cities and communities, and promoting peace, and partnerships.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), one of the stakeholders of the Roads2SDGs project, engaged with ACL to generate eight (8) instructional videos on construction guidelines as set by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). ACL engaged internationally Acclaimed and Multi-Awarded Director Aaron “Papins” Mendoza for this project. Post-production process had already begun and the output is expected to be rolled-out to Local Government Units in July 2019.





# 30,000+

## READERS WORLDWIDE

# iMPACT

latest issue is out!

DOWNLOAD NOW



# IN\_PACT RETURNS WITH ANOTHER IMPACTFUL FORUM



The Innovation for Inclusive Impact Asia (IN\_PACT Asia) forum will be back for its second year, to continue the dialogue for collective impact and bring together key actors from different sectors to achieve social and sustainable growth. The forum is convening on May 28, 2019 at the ADB Headquarters in Manila, Philippines.

IN\_PACT Asia 2019 is organized by ASSIST, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde's Hub of Innovation for Inclusion (HiFi), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). With the theme "Convening for Collective Impact," IN\_PACT Asia 2019 is an opportunity for more than 300 experts and social innovators across various sectors to find potential partners and resources to help launch their social innovations while creating social and sustainable impact. The forum also features the presence of over 30 global social innovation thought leaders and speakers, and more than 10 interactive learning streams to generate new strategies and ideas.

for accelerators/incubators, investors, businesses, academic institutions, and other like-minded entities. Each nominee per category will be assessed by an independent panel of experts based on specific criteria. Moreover, the Awards Night seeks to give a great opportunity to establish partnerships by bringing all key actors in a one of a kind event.

ASSIST Managing Director Sreenivas Narayanan says, "In this world with sectors operating in silos, the principle of collective impact should be the innovation ecosystem's top priority. IN\_PACT Asia will convene key actors from the ecosystem to discuss challenges, share opportunities, and exchange ideas to lead healthy design of new solutions for social impact."

This year, IN\_PACT Asia is also initiating an awards program to recognize exceptional purpose-driven businesses, social enterprises, and startups across 10 categories on innovation and social impact. This awarding program is open



## ROLLING THE DICE FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

The Philippines is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the region. Recognizing the need to equip the youth with the proper knowledge on disaster preparedness, ASSIST developed Master of Disaster (MOD), a board game that helps prepare young children against common disasters. MOD gains momentum with its launch in Naga City, Cebu last March 18-19.

ASSIST partnered with CEMEX Philippines Foundation to launch MOD in the province of Cebu. The launch was part of CEMEX's disaster risk reduction program entitled "Brgy. Alerto." ASSIST also trained engineers and volunteers from the Emergency Response Unit of CEMEX on how to play the MOD board game. These engineers and volunteers will go on to teach young children from select schools how to play the

game as well.

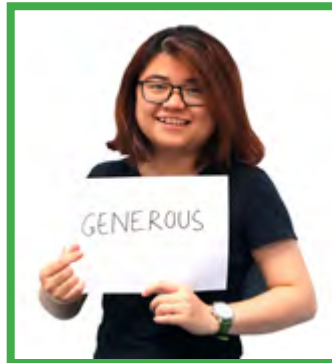
ASSIST and CEMEX also rolled out the board game to over 200 students from Cepoc Elementary School. The students showed great enthusiasm for the board game. With funding from CEMEX, the MOD board game will also be launched in elementary schools in Antipolo.





# A-TEAM

WE CELEBRATE WOMEN WORKING  
IN THE DEVELOPMENT SECTOR  
BECAUSE THEY ARE...





Whether working full-time, part-time, or remotely,  
the best time to contribute to social progress is now.

# VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Create an impact in the Philippines and beyond  
by volunteering in the following activities:

- Project Implementation and Evaluation
- Creative Content Development
- Event Management
- Communications and Visibility
- Research and Writing
- Community Engagement
- Resource Mobilization

Launch yourself towards a successful and fulfilling career path  
whilst bringing positive transformation across key sectors and industries.

# JOIN OUR STRUCTURED INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Apply your skills and contribute to the following activities:

- Stakeholder Engagement
- Community Engagement and Social Work
- Creative Content Development
- Research, Writing, and Reporting
- Event Management
- Resource Mobilization
- Business Development and Sales
- Accounting
- Human Resource Management
- Communications and Marketing

INTERESTED? CONTACT US AT  
[opportunities@assistasia.org](mailto:opportunities@assistasia.org)  
Email subject line should be "Internship Inquiry"

Visit our websites to learn more about us.



[www.assistasia.org](http://www.assistasia.org)

**asianNGO**  
Funds | Partnerships | Learning

[www.asianngo.org](http://www.asianngo.org)



IN\_PACT  
A S I A  
2 0 1 9

Convening for  
**C**ollective  
Impact

**28** May | 8:00 AM- 5:00 PM (Forum)  
2019 | 6:00 PM (Awards Gala)

Asian Development Bank HQ  
Manila, Philippines

Hosted by



Co-hosted by

