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ABOUT ASSIST



ASSIST is a self-sustaining pan-Asian non-government organization (NGO) established in 2003, geared towards capacity-building, promoting sustainable practices, and achieving social impact.

For over **20 years**, ASSIST has nurtured partnerships from the academe, industry, government, and civil society in supporting projects that target meaningful societal transformation while meeting and exceeding shared objectives.

OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS



20+
years



3M+
people



500+
projects



100+
partners



25+
countries



5
offices

Let us know your thoughts about this quarter's newsletter.

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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.



SOME OF OUR PARTNERS IN THE PREVIOUS QUARTER



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Message from the Management Team

For this edition of the ASSISTNow newsletter, we are proud to share that ASSIST Philippines has achieved ISO 9001:2015 certification—an important milestone that reflects our commitment to quality, excellence, and continuous improvement. This recognition highlights the collective efforts of our teams in strengthening systems and ensuring that our programs and services are delivered with consistency and impact.

This issue also showcases the ongoing work of ASSIST across its diverse programs and initiatives. These efforts reflect our continued dedication to creating meaningful change and supporting the communities we serve.

As ASSIST continues its journey, we remain guided by our commitment to excellence and our mission to deliver sustainable, high-quality solutions. Together with our teams, partners, and communities, we will continue to strengthen our work, foster collaboration, and build lasting impact for the future.

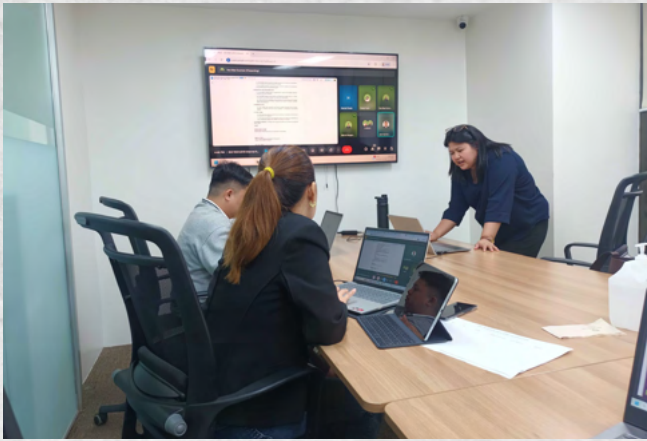
Karthik Subburaman
Executive Director



ISO 9001:2015 Certified

ASSIST Philippines

ASSIST Philippines has successfully achieved **ISO 9001:2015 Certification**, marking a major milestone in the organization's more than 20-year journey of delivering programs and services that empower communities and strengthen institutions. The certification follows the successful completion of the **Stage 2 audit on December 15, 2025**, after the **Stage 1 audit conducted on November 7, 2025**.



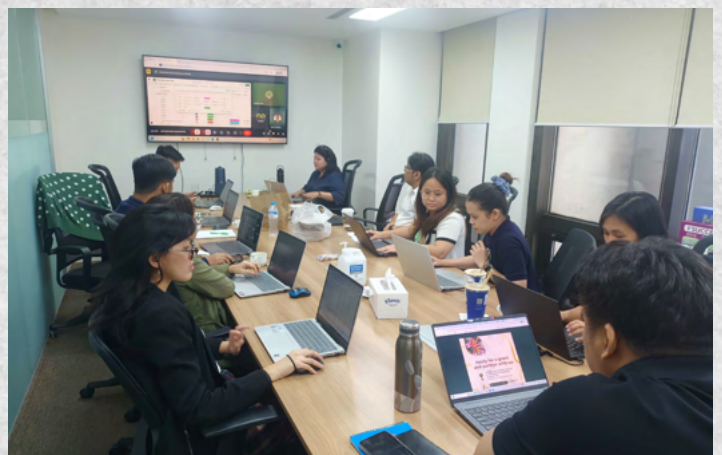
The achievement reflects months of preparation and collaboration across teams, highlighting the organization's strong commitment to quality management, effective systems, and continuous improvement. Over the past three months, employees worked together to review processes, align documentation, and demonstrate how ASSIST consistently upholds high standards in its operations.



Founded with the mission of enabling sustainable transformation, ASSIST has implemented a wide range of projects and services across sectors. These include capacity-building programs, technical and vocational education initiatives, disaster preparedness training, environmental sustainability programs, agricultural development projects, and corporate social responsibility partnerships. Through these efforts, the organization continues to support communities, institutions, and industries in building resilience and creating long-term impact.



Achieving ISO 9001:2015 certification reinforces ASSIST's commitment to delivering quality services to its partners and beneficiaries while strengthening internal systems that support its growing portfolio of programs. It also demonstrates the organization's readiness to meet international standards as it expands its reach and partnerships.



Leaders of the initiative emphasized that the certification is not only a recognition of current practices but also a foundation for further growth. As ASSIST moves forward, the organization aims to sustain this momentum, continuously improve its processes, and further enhance the quality and impact of its work.

A Quarter of Momentum, Milestones & Meaning

This quarter marked important progress in partnerships, outreach, media visibility, and organizational growth at ASSIST, reflecting continued momentum across initiatives in India.



ASSIST formalized two key collaborations during this period. An MoU with Schindler Group will support the relaunch of Project LIFT at Montfort Private Technical Institute. The initiative focuses on renovating and upgrading institutional infrastructure, modernizing technical training spaces, and improving learning environments so students can access industry-relevant training in safe and well-equipped facilities. In parallel, a renewed partnership with Stellantis strengthens the continued expansion of the INSPIRE initiative, further advancing sustainability awareness and career readiness among youth.



INSPIRE recently concluded a major cycle, reaching more than 3,000 students and surpassing its original target of 2,500 participants. A recent engagement at St. Joseph's College of Engineering alone brought together 101 students, contributing to the program's growing regional footprint and ongoing collaboration with academic institutions.

On 26 January, ASSIST partnered in the IGNITE 2026 & 31 launch organized by Tamil Nadu Apex Skill Development Centre for Automobile, supporting the vision of advancing Tamil Nadu's automotive skilling ecosystem under the 1 Lakh Skilling Mission - 2026. During the event, ASSIST was recognized as a CSR Impact Champion for its role in strengthening youth employability through Project INSPIRE.



The initiative also gained national visibility through a filming engagement with NDTV at AMET University, highlighting youth participation in sustainability-focused learning.



Internally, ASSIST India strengthened its team with the onboarding of Sahasra Sri as Communication & Visibility Associate, Vaishnavi Saravanan as Business Development Lead, and Yuvashree as Legal and Compliance Officer—further enhancing the organization's capacity for communication, partnerships, and governance.



Empowering Communities Through Wellness and STEM

ASSIST Philippines, in partnership with Texas Instruments Philippines, advanced community wellness and STEM learning through the BSCP 2025 and STEM PossibiliTI initiatives. On January 15, 2026, a “Nutrition Basics for Everyday Wellness” session was held in Mabalacat City, led by Mr. Hallel Talampas, and later reached Baguio City, where Dr. Reynald Estandian guided families on healthy eating and disease prevention.



Building on this, STEM PossibiliTI launched its STEM LEAP Discovery Program on March 5, 2026, at Springhills Elementary School in Baguio, engaging 47 students in hands-on STEM activities and inspiring them, especially girls, to explore future opportunities in STEM.



Shaping A Future-Ready Workforce

From January 16-19, 2026, ASSIST Philippines, in partnership with EY GDS Philippines, advanced workforce readiness through the NextGen Workforce 2.0 Project Launch and Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions in Cebu and Region 7. The launch engaged 288 participants from DepEd, TESDA, and partner organizations, followed by ToTs for 157 DepEd educators and 62 TESDA trainers, focusing on green skills, digital literacy, workforce readiness, and inclusive employment.



In March 2026, the sustainABILITY HR Summit in Mandaue City, Cebu gathered 200+ HR practitioners, featuring insights from government, business, and institutions, while the sustainABILITY x PESO Valenzuela Forum brought together 60+ enterprises to advance green workforce initiatives.



Advancing Education and Sustainable Agriculture

ASSIST Philippines continued strengthening communities through the Adopt-a-Madrasah and AgriSagana 2 initiatives. On January 20-21, 2026, training sessions in Davao City engaged teachers and students from three madrasah schools, covering 21st Century Learning with Dr. Vilma Andoy and Digital Citizenship and Digital Literacy led by DICT Region XI. Students also joined a Master of Disaster activity to build disaster preparedness.



Meanwhile, AgriSagana 2 concluded on February 10-11, 2026 in Cauayan, Isabela, bringing together stakeholders for market linkages and training, including a Cargill Philippines orientation and the launch of the AgriSagana E-Learning Portal to support farmers' continued learning and access to markets.



Developing Young Changemakers

ASSIST Philippines continues to equip youth through the emPOWER and ANNAKKO: Our Children, Our Future initiatives. On January 26, 2026, the emPOWER bundled skills program reached 3,103 students at Batangas State University, combining hands-on training in the emPOWER Lab with learning on Deloitte MoneyAce and Ready4Work for job preparedness.



Complementing this, ANNAKKO launched its Year 3 activities in Ilocos Sur, engaging 500+ high school students in Digital Citizenship sessions led by Ms. Cherrie Anne Rafanan, focusing on online responsibility, safety, and critical thinking.



Sowing Green Seeds Today for a Sustainable Future

On Saturday, January 17, 2026, ASSIST Vietnam and Nam Sung came together for a tree-planting activity at Bu Gia Map National Park—a practical step toward protecting and restoring Vietnam's natural ecosystems.



With the participation of both Nam Sung and ASSIST Vietnam staff, and the close support of the National Park's management, 200 trees were planted as part of the activity. This contributes directly to forest recovery, biodiversity conservation, and long-term climate resilience within the park.



More than a one-off CSR initiative, the program reflects a shared commitment to linking business responsibility with concrete environmental action.



CLEANSE 2.0 Launches at UEF

CLEANSE - Final Campaign: "Untold Stories of the Canal" was successfully held on December 12, 2025 at the University of Economics and Finance Ho Chi Minh City (UEF), celebrating the journey and impact of the CLEANSE project while opening a new chapter with CLEANSE 2.0.

Co-organised with the UEF Center of Service-Learning, the event featured a student-led recycled-art exhibition, storytelling and discussions on urban waterways, and interactive activities promoting clean water protection. The programme was honoured by the participation of Vietnamese actors Hua Vi Van and Vo Dien Gia Huy, who joined as CLEANSE project ambassadors, inspiring greater public engagement for environmental action.



The event also opened a new chapter for CLEANSE 2.0, reaffirming the project's commitment to community-driven solutions for clean water and environmental sustainability.



Wind Power Project Design Course Launched at Electric Power University

On January 27, “Wind Power Project Design” Course for final-year students has been launched at Electric Power University (EPU), jointly delivered by the Faculty of Control & Automation and the Faculty of New Energy.

This training is implemented under the RENEW Skills project, funded by the GE Vernova Foundation, in collaboration with ASSIST Vietnam, contributing to the development of a skilled workforce for Vietnam’s energy transition.



The course equips students with essential theoretical and practical knowledge in wind power development, including regulations and standards, turbine design fundamentals, wind farm planning, grid integration, and hands-on practice using simulation software and tools.



Clean Water, Safe Children – Spread Love in Vinh Long



The kick-off event brought together over 400 students and 40+ PwC volunteers for a joyful day filled with interactive games, learning activities, and meaningful connections—transforming the schoolyard into a vibrant space of laughter and shared moments.



On December 13, 2025, PwC Vietnam, in partnership with ASSIST, officially launched the “Clean Water – Safe Children – Spread Love” initiative at Thạnh Hòa Sơn Primary School, Vinh Long Province.

Under this initiative, PwC Vietnam will donate and install rainwater harvesting systems integrated with tap water and on-site drinking water filtration units at two beneficiary schools, starting with Thạnh Hòa Sơn Primary School. With ASSIST as a bridging partner, the program aims to improve access to safe drinking water and support children’s health in the coming phases.

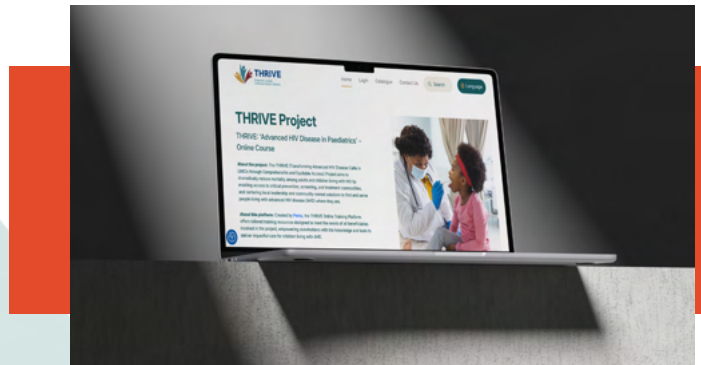




A specialized unit under ASSIST, **Creativelab** helps solve the communication, visibility, and knowledge management needs of development stakeholders, such as NGOs, social enterprises, UN agencies, international financing institutions, and others through a mix of contextualized social development, regional presence, and innovative design capabilities.

Bridging Pediatric Gaps for Thriving Communities through eLearning

Despite significant progress in expanding HIV treatment over the past decade, preventable AIDS-related deaths continue to affect many adults and children living with Advanced HIV Disease (AHD). To address this gap, the THRIVE (Transforming Advanced HIV Disease Care in LMICs through Comprehensive and Equitable Access) Project, led by the Clinton Health Access Initiative in collaboration with Afrocab and Penta, was established to help reduce mortality by improving access to essential prevention, screening, and treatment services, while promoting community-driven and locally led solutions. The initiative also supports operational research, identifies gaps in pediatric care, and strengthens capacity through training across key countries. In partnership with Penta, ASSIST is developing a multilingual eLearning course on the STOP AIDS Toolkit in English, Portuguese, French, and Spanish, with three modules completed and four more currently in development, contributing to a more integrated and sustainable response to AHD.



Reinforcing a Culture of Integrity for Sustainable Businesses



Corruption is a serious global issue that severely affects the economy and businesses, further posing a challenge to building sustainable, inclusive societies. Signify, as a known world leader in lighting, recognizes this and aims to strengthen its culture of integrity for all employees through mandatory training. ASSIST draws on its expertise in the eLearning space to deliver an interactive, engaging course that reinforces Signify's zero tolerance policy on corruption. Set for launch this Q2 2026, this training emphasizes that businesses can only be sustainable if all employees always act with integrity.



Breaking Myths, Building Knowledge: EU-PH Video Production for Science and Resilience

As part of the European Union in the Philippines' brand awareness campaign, two video productions were recently completed to highlight capacity-building efforts and scientific research through EU-supported programs.

The first project - "Atom Araullo: Mythbusters" is a four-episode series featuring Filipino journalist, Atom Araullo. The series aims to debunk common myths and misconceptions about climate change, storms, renewable energy, and earthquakes, using relatable, accessible, and scientific storytelling. Each episode showcased how the EU's Copernicus Programme provides satellite data and insights that support disaster preparedness and climate understanding in the Philippines.



In celebration of the International Women's Month, the second project features Judy Ann Meorado-Wenceslao, the first-ever scholar of the Technical Assistance to the National Copernicus Capacity Support Action Programme for the Philippines (CopPhil). She is a geologist affiliated with the Mines and Geosciences Bureau. Judy Ann represents the growing role of women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and reflects the value of supporting women in pursuing careers in STEM.

These initiatives were developed to translate complex scientific concepts into engaging and accessible content for the public, helping bridge the gap between research and everyday understanding. By showcasing real-world applications of science and technology, the videos aim to encourage informed decision-making and greater appreciation of environmental and disaster resilience efforts.

Together, these projects strengthen public awareness of EU-supported science and disaster resilience initiatives while promoting evidence-based understanding of environmental issues. They also highlight how EU and PH's equal partnership empowers and inspires Filipino experts for greater participation in STEM fields.



MOTHER:

A Systems Approach to Maternal and Infant Health

This quarter marked the official kickoff of the MOTHER Project (Maternal and Offspring Training for Health and Empowerment in Rural Areas), a maternal health systems-strengthening initiative implemented by ASSIST in partnership with Philips Foundation across Tiruvannamalai, Tirupattur, and Pudukkottai in Tamil Nadu. The project aligns with the 50 high-risk pregnancy conditions identified by the Directorate of Public Health (DPH), with an initial focus on the 10 priority risk conditions, aiming to improve early identification, referral, and management of high-risk pregnancies.



Field studies across 24 Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) are assessing service delivery, infrastructure gaps, and readiness for digital integration. The project strengthens PHC systems through capacity building for ASHAs and VHNs and clinical training for healthcare providers. With a strong focus on prevention, it promotes early screening, timely referrals, and proactive maternal care to improve maternal health outcomes in rural Tamil Nadu.



Project VISA Batch 4 Culmination: Empowering Sustainable Tourism Leaders in Sri Lanka

The fourth batch of Project VISA (Vocational Initiative for Sustainable Ambassadors in Tourism) concluded with a culmination event at Hotel Royal Kanayan in Kandy. Implemented by ASSIST and supported by VFS Global in collaboration with the National Cleaner Production Centre Sri Lanka, the program continues to strengthen sustainable tourism capacity. Batch 4 engaged 123 participants, including 31 women (25%), underscoring its commitment to inclusive skill development in the tourism sector.

Batch 4 engaged 123 participants, including 31 women (25%), highlighting its focus on inclusive skills development. The training equipped aspiring and professional tour guides with skills in sustainable tourism, cultural storytelling, environmental responsibility, and customer service through interactive and simulation-based learning.



The training equipped participants with practical skills in sustainable tourism, cultural storytelling, heritage interpretation, environmental responsibility, and customer service through interactive and simulation-based learning. Participants enhanced their confidence and professionalism, while the culmination event celebrated their achievements through certificate awarding and knowledge showcases—marking another milestone in advancing inclusive, sustainable tourism and strengthening employability in Sri Lanka.



ASSIST Vietnam Closes 2025 Together

ASSIST Vietnam's 2025 Year-End Party last February 2026 was a meaningful opportunity for the team to pause, reflect, and celebrate everything accomplished over the past year. It was more than just a gathering—it was a moment to appreciate the collective efforts, resilience, and dedication that brought projects to life and strengthened partnerships. The evening was filled with laughter, shared stories, and a sense of pride in what the team has achieved together, highlighting the energy, collaboration, and shared purpose that continue to drive ASSIST's work forward.



A highlight of the evening was the recognition of dedicated colleagues for their long-standing contributions to the organization. The celebration also provided a special moment to recognize team members whose commitment and impact truly stood out. Their passion, hard work, and consistent excellence not only pushed projects forward but also inspired others and raised the bar for the entire team. As the organization looks ahead, these moments of recognition and connection serve as a reminder of the strong foundation and team spirit that will carry ASSIST Vietnam into another year of meaningful impact.

Connecting with Future Talents: ASSIST at the Ateneo Career Fair

ASSIST recently participated in the Ateneo Career Fair, where it had the opportunity to connect with a diverse group of bright, driven, and motivated students exploring internship opportunities and future career paths. The event served as a meaningful platform for the organization to engage with young individuals who are eager to learn, grow, and make a difference in their respective fields.



As an organization, ASSIST has always been committed to nurturing the potential of the next generation. This commitment is reflected in its strong culture of mentorship and growth, with many of its current team members having first joined as interns. These experiences not only shaped their professional journeys but also strengthened their alignment with the organization's mission and values.



Celebrating Together: ASSIST Monthly Birthday Celebration

ASSIST recently held its monthly birthday celebration, bringing together team members to honor colleagues celebrating their birthdays this month. The gathering created a warm and joyful atmosphere, filled with shared laughter, conversations, and well wishes. Beyond the cake and festivities, the celebration serves as a meaningful opportunity for staff to connect with colleagues they may not regularly interact with, helping strengthen relationships across teams and departments.



Moments like these reflect ASSIST's commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive workplace culture, where employees feel appreciated not only for their contributions but also as individuals. By taking time to celebrate big or small milestones, the organization continues to nurture a sense of belonging, teamwork, and camaraderie.

ASSIST Leads Fire and Earthquake Drill at Pacific Star Building

ASSIST actively participated in and helped lead the Fire and Earthquake Drill organized by the Pacific Star Building, conducted in coordination with the Makati LGU, Bureau of Fire Protection - Makati, Philippine Red Cross - Makati, and the Barangay Bel-Air DRRM Team.



Through this exercise, ASSIST reinforced the importance of preparedness, quick response, and coordinated action, ensuring the safety and resilience of our workplace and demonstrating our commitment to a secure and proactive working environment.

A-TEAM

Leading with Purpose

Women in Action

My journey has been shaped by learning to overcome not only external challenges, but also the quiet internal voice of doubt and fear. There were moments I questioned my worth, held back, and hesitated to step forward, but I chose growth over comfort and courage over fear. What empowers me is my faith in God, a strong sense of purpose, continuous learning, and the belief that my voice can create meaningful impact. I am reminded that every step, no matter how small, matters. To other women, be patient with yourself, trust your inner strength, and keep showing up—believe that you have so much more to give.

“

ANA LOREN OMBOY

Organizational Support Group - Admin Manager



Reaching where I am today has been a journey shaped by determination, perseverance, and resilience. After a career break following maternity, I stepped back into my professional path with purpose. Returning to academics after a ten-year gap to pursue my Master's in Social Work was a strong commitment to myself. Balancing studies while raising a child meant long days and moments of doubt, but I stayed determined, giving my best to both family and career. What empowers me is the belief that growth is always possible. To every woman: trust your journey, move at your own pace, and never be afraid to start again.

“

VAISHNAVI SARAVANAN

Partnerships and Business Development Lead - ASSIST India



As part of the 8x generation, many of us grew up following a familiar path: graduating from university, starting a career, getting married, and building a family. My journey was no different—until my 40s, when I took a six-month career break that became a turning point in my life. That pause gave me the space to rediscover myself—who I am and what I truly want. It was a period of reflection that led me to a renewed sense of purpose. To young women: understanding yourself is the most powerful way to grow and to live a meaningful and happy life.

“

THANH VO

Partnerships and Business Development Lead - ASSIST Vietnam





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