

ASSIST *Now*



Accelerating Impact and Promoting Success

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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.



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



Scan here

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You may connect with us through info@assistasia.org or visit our website at 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.



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JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021



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Project Preview



Brighter days are on the horizon following the official launch of **Sinag Pag-asa**, a new project which aims to improve the lives of indigeneous people (IPs) by providing access to a sustainable source of light. To date, over 1 million

households in the country still have little to no electricity, which also affects access to potable water, proper healthcare, and quality education.

In response to this challenge, ASSIST - in partnership with Signify Philippines - is distributing solar-powered floodlights and lanterns to off-grid communities. Last June 25, 700+ families from Norzagaray and Doña Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan became the first beneficiaries of Sinag Pag-asa. ASSIST is working with the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples to reach more indigenous communities around the country.



ENTERPRISE EXPORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Despite the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Cambodia still have potential for growth in export and international trade. Through the **Enterprise Export Development (EED)** project, local agricultural SMEs will undergo comprehensive capacity building and mentoring programs to guide them in pursuing export opportunities.

ASSIST, together with Khmer Enterprise and the Feed the Future Cambodia Harvest II program of the United States Agency for International Development, envisions the EED project as a platform to unlock exciting new opportunities for Cambodia's agricultural exporters.



Accelerating Impact, Promoting Success For SMEs in the GMS and India

In Cambodia, a humble honey farmer and beekeeper thinks about what it would be like to expand his business to the international market. However, he isn't sure where to start. Where does he get the funding to produce enough to send abroad to India or Thailand? What are the logistics involved in doing so? How does he know that his product will be accepted based on recognized international standards, or if there is even any interest in the product at all? Entering international trade for the first time is no easy task and requires knowledge and skills that many businesses don't have.

This is a hypothetical situation, but all too real for many businesses across various sectors looking to grow their business. **PROFIT Accelerator** is a programme of the Asian Development Bank to promote regional opportunities for investment and trade, implemented by a consortium including IMC Worldwide, the Bombay Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and ASSIST. It is aimed at businesses in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam and in India who would like to grow their business and could use support as they find new customers, partners and distributors in other countries, among other activities.



The PROFIT Accelerator programme is designed to provide the necessary knowledge and skills so businesses in the region have the ability to start exploring international opportunities by allocating the necessary resources. Participating small and medium enterprises (SMEs) benefit from various training courses, technical assistance, direct mentoring, introduction to key partners, and guided trade missions to target countries. Furthermore, the online platform has various educational resources available publicly for anyone who is interested.

ASSIST is primarily represented in the project through Aru David, our Global Director of Private Sector Partnership, as Business Accelerator Manager for the Greater Mekong Subregion. Aru is further supported by members of our Mekong team who ensure that the project is able to produce the needed learning materials, connect relevant actors, and coordinate with participating SMEs. About 370 SMEs have registered, with 140+ already trained on general trade knowledge and able to receive mentoring support.



<https://profit-accelerator.com/>



Empowering Filipinos for a Future-Proof Workforce

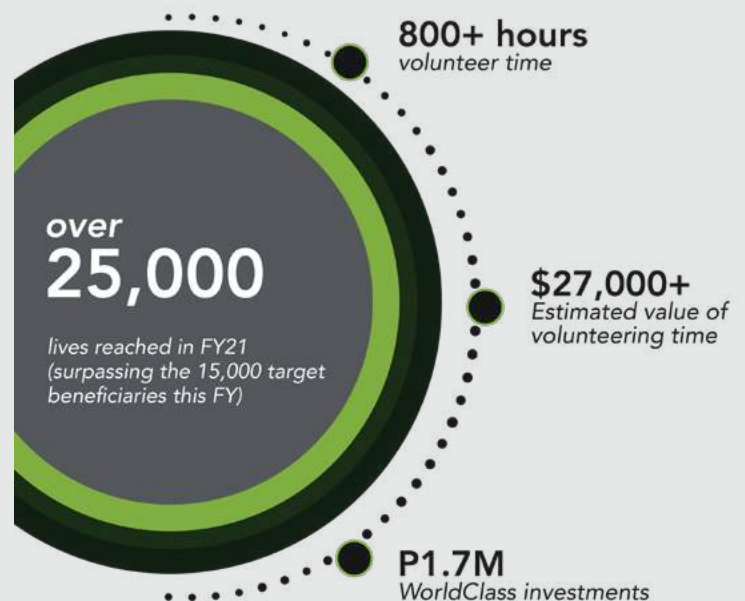


The Fourth Industrial Revolution is changing the landscape of the workforce, with technology such as Big Data and Analytics taking the major spotlight in global development. Now more than ever, it is critical to equip the young generation with the required skills to succeed in this new economy and help them become future-proof.

Multidisciplinary professional services firm Deloitte partnered with the Asia Society for Social Improvement and Sustainable Transformation (ASSIST) to deliver a new Training of Trainers (TOT) program as part of its **WorldClass** program, a global initiative that seeks to empower 2 million people in Southeast Asia by 2030. The first Learning Lab activity was kicked off in January, at Bo De Secondary School, and continued in Mac Dinh Chi and Mai Dich Secondary Schools.

Under the *WorldClass* program, Deloitte touched, trained, and transformed over 25,000 Filipino lives, surpassing its 15,000 target beneficiaries this year. As Deloitte's Social Actions Partner in the Philippines, ASSIST contributed to this milestone by training over 10,000 unique Filipinos on the essential skills for the jobs of the future through the development and roll-out of the *WorldClass* video learning modules.

To date, more than 24,000 4th IR career-ready *WorldClass* e-certificates were issued. Despite being a male-dominant industry, more than 60% of learners are women, proving the steadily growing trend of diversity in the Philippine workforce. The *WorldClass* video learning modules, which are featured in ASSIST's The Career Engine YouTube page, covered topics on Cloud Computing, Mobile Development, Business Continuity Management System (BCMS), and Cybersecurity. duration of the project.



Deloitte and ASSIST are poised to continue supporting Filipino youths in competing in the 4th IR, and the country's education sector by providing access to learning resources supplemental and complementary to the distance learning brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. Planning for next year's *WorldClass* activities is underway, which will empower more than 20,000 Filipino futures, especially from other learner communities in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.



Keep Moving Forward: 2021 so far

JANUARY



January 8

1st STEM Learning Class at Bo De Secondary School

The Mekong Team started 2021 on a good note with a trip to Ha Noi for the official rollout of the Learning Labs project funded by DOW Vietnam, which aims to strengthen the understanding of chemistry among school children.



January 16

COVID-19 response project expanded to support future healthcare workers

Saving the Lives of Healthcare Workers in the Philippines reached a new milestone when it officially rolled out training sessions for thousands of medical students in schools throughout the country.

January 17

HAPPY Vietnam Project Kick-off

To help address this persisting challenge of stunting among young children in Vietnam, HAPPY Vietnam was launched with the support of MERCK Vietnam, DEG, and Vietnam Association of Diabetes and Endocrinology (VADE).



FEBRUARY



February 27

Digital Citizenship Bootcamp wraps up

With the support of long-time partner Telstra Foundation Philippines and Philippine Business for Social Progress, ASSIST organized the Digital Citizenship Core Skills Bootcamp for 100 students and educators from Pasay City.

February 19

Creativelab signs new projects with major partners

As a testament to their quality work and great relationships with clients, Creativelab successfully sealed new projects with Oxfam, WWF Philippines, and the UN Office for Project Services in content development and e-learning.



February 5

ASSIST begins new study for German and PH Red Cross

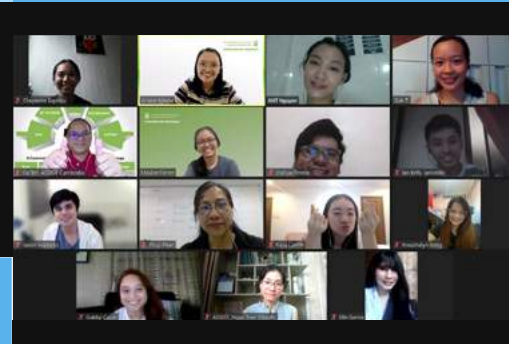
The newly re-established Office of the Managing Director begins work on a scoping study for the establishment of additional Red Cross regional hubs in the Philippines.

February 18

MOU signing with Kabalikat People's Organization for SHIP²

The PMO team visited Baseco, Tondo for the official MOU signing with representatives of Kabalikat for SHIP², a project focused on improving community's access to clean drinking through water stations and community WASH training and awareness.

MARCH



March 5

Out Of Function Fridays officially begins!

Staying connected and continuing to from one another can be challenging with a work-from-home set-up. To keep everyone engaged, our colleagues in the Philippines started Out Of Function (OOF) Fridays. Business units take turns hosting the weekly event.

March 9

First mental health-centered project, HERO-PH, is launched

The Office of the Managing Director successfully rolled out HERO-PH, ASSIST's first mental health-focused project, which was designed to provide additional support for healthcare workers and first responders.



High COVID-19 cases prompt stricter lockdown in PH

After a drastic rise of COVID-19 cases, the National Capital Region in the Philippines and surrounding areas shift to enhanced community quarantine.



The beginning of 2021 was widely seen as an opportunity for recovery after the challenges of the previous year. Now that we're officially halfway through, let's take a look back at the milestones ASSIST has achieved as we continue to rise above the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

APRIL



April 16

Onion UNION project closing

After a successful run since its launch in 2019, the Onion UNION project officially came to a close. Thanks to the support of various partners across sectors, the project was able to impact the lives of 800 farmers in Ilocos Sur, Nueva Ecija, Occidental Mindoro and Pangasinan.

"The importance of the crops in the Philippines is our priority. We will continue to support the farmers and the country."

- Henk Hermans (General Manager, East-West Seed Company)

April 19

ASSIST holds Virtual Town Hall for Vaccination

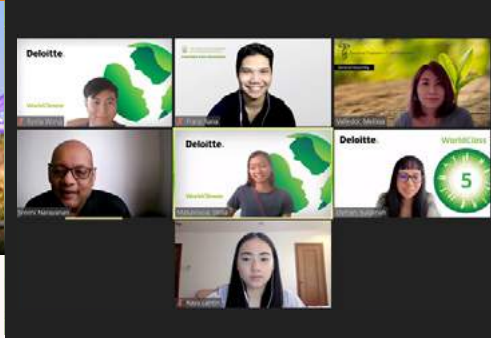
As COVID-19 vaccination efforts began to ramp up, employees were encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as it was available in their area. Key organization leaders also took the time to address concerns about vaccine hesitancy and hospitalization due to COVID-19.

 **India moves to curb surge in COVID-19 cases**

By mid-April, India also begins to experience a spike in COVID-19 cases.



MAY



May 21

Deloitte, ASSIST initiate next stage of partnership after WorldClass success

Building on the success of WorldClass, Deloitte and ASSIST have kickstarted planning for 2022 programs, with the goal of empowering other WorldClass learner communities in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

May 8

Saving the Lives of HCWs in the PH begins multi-college training



PMO embarked on a months-long training agreement for COVID-19 Management with Our Lady of Fatima University and its partner schools. Faculty members became Master Trainers to help prepare thousands of nursing students for the eventual return to face-to-face classes.

"It's a gift for us that we can continue in our own little way [to] lessen the burden this pandemic is giving to the nation and to the world because we are training future health professionals."

- Maria Luisa Uayan (Dean, College of Nursing)"

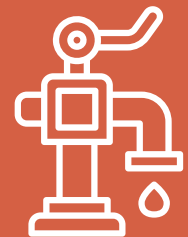
JUNE



June 21

Official signing of turnover of solar irrigation pumps for SOLution

The solar irrigation pumps installed for the benefit of farmers in Norzagaray, Bulacan were officially turned over by the PMO team to the local government, as represented by Mayor Alfredo Germar and Engr. Agapito Pascual.



June 30

Mekong successfully transfers training site to new location

After the original hair training site in Ha Giang province was converted to a COVID-19 isolation ward, the Mekong team moved quickly for relocation. The transfer was successfully completed with training for the Beauty for a Better Life participants still on track.



Vietnam acts quick to slow spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 restrictions increase in Vietnam as case numbers increase in various parts of the country.



A Seed-sational Future for Onion Farmers

After more than two years of farmer trainings and harvest festivals, the **Onion UNION** project has officially closed—but not the hope of resilience brought by the project for farmers in the Philippines looking to elevate their livelihood.



Photo from Onion UNION Harvest Festival in Bayambang, Pangasinan last February 2019

To date, the project has trained 766 out of 600 target farmers, and 73 agronomists, exceeding the target mark of 40 in the established Onion Learning Centers. This feat was successfully achieved despite the COVID-19 pandemic paralyzing the concluding activities and the country's agricultural sector. Closing programs of the project sites in Ilocos Sur, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, and Occidental Mindoro were held virtually from April 16 to April 22.

"We have worked wonderfully together with ASSIST, our partner implementer, and co-financier DEG for the Onion UNION project. Integrated pest management is one of the ways to help farmers protect their crops, which is among the initiatives under the Onion UNION. The beauty of this project is we spent several years on the activities, and we want to thank all the partners because we can now see the impact of our actions," Henk Hermans, General Manager of East-West Seed Company on the success of the project.

Throughout the course of the project, several milestones have been achieved including:

- Launch of 4 Onion Learning Centers in Ilocos Sur, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, and Occidental Mindoro
- Deployment of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies and solutions for onion farming to address the challenges of onion production loss due to natural calamities and infestation
- Development of a farmer's guide booklet on IPM practices for pre-planting, cropping and post-harvesting seasons

Thanks to the introduction and trainings on various technologies such as IPM and drip irrigation systems, onion farmers in the Luzon region will not benefit from an increased yield and resilience from environmental conditions caused by climate change, new pests, and crop diseases.



Hope STEMS Eternal, Even from Home

The quality of education in the Philippines has long been criticized for failing to meet local and international standards, a situation which has grown more complex with the COVID-19 pandemic. While STEM professionals pave the way for the world's recovery, it is important to recognize the importance in the training and development of young STEM practitioners, starting with their basic education. Telstra Foundation Philippines and ASSIST remain committed to supporting the Filipino youth through STEM LEAP, which saw great success in its first two years, engaging about 250 students who are now more willing to pursue STEM as a career.

Though the distance learning set-up has posed additional challenges, STEM LEAP continues to address the gaps in the skills of science and math teachers, conducive classrooms and laboratory facilities, and growing young students' excitement in STEM. To ensure learning can happen as effectively at home as in school, the ASSIST team worked on supporting teachers and parents. For Zapatera Elementary and National High School, fun activities and experiments were recreated at home with safe practical applications of grade 5-8 students' science and math lessons. A Career Magazine with insights from several professionals in STEM-related careers was also produced, serving as a replacement for their usual Career Week.

Once students are again able to physically attend their classes in Zapatera Elementary and National High School's campus in Cebu City, they will be able to enjoy special audio-visual rooms or fun learning labs that ignite students' imagination and creativity, and hopefully inspire them to eventually explore STEM as a career. As the third year of the project's implementation moves towards a close, the STEM LEAP team has created tools and spaces that will perpetuate the project's impact beyond the project's end and inspire many more Zapatera students in the future.



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.



115+
PROJECTS
IMPLEMENTED



1.03M+
PEOPLE
IMPACTED



20+
COUNTRIES
REACHED

Creative Solutions

Knowledge Products on Milestones and Learning of Project Coffee+



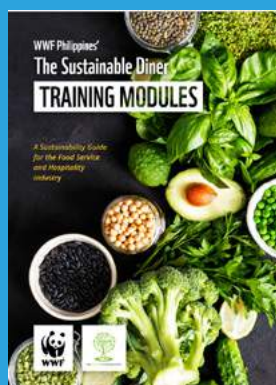
With the extension of Project Coffee+ until December 2022, the knowledge products aim to present information about the project, and serve as a guide to ensure attainment of the project's objectives despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The **Project Coffee+** is an initiative of The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and multinational food company Nestlé Philippines which aims to support smallholder coffee farmers by increasing their productivity and income in a sustainable manner within the coffee value chain.

Creativelab developed the Project Coffee+ Summary publication, brochure, PPT presentation, as well as social media collaterals including the International Coffee Day post



Video Editing and Design Layout for The Sustainable Diner Training Modules



The **Sustainable Diner Project** developed learning modules to help partner restaurants engage in capacity development activities remotely and assist them transition to sustainable food practices despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Creativelab also supported the organization of WWF's Sustainable Diner Summit 2021, coordinating with speakers, sharing the learning modules and best practices in sustainable consumption and production, as well as documenting the projects' success.

A-TEAM: Building Bridges and Bridging Gaps

The most beautiful thing in life is that everyone is unique, we are all different from each other; but we equally share many things in common as well as many opportunities for working together. In Vietnam, where I am from, there is a proverb: "Good leaves cover torn leaves" and for me, this is not only about altruism and compassion, but also means sharing of resources. I believe the uniqueness of someone can supplement the shortcomings of someone else. That is why I am drawn into the philosophy of ASSIST in conducting our work: **Partner for Progress**.

I first knew ASSIST six years ago when I was working with a local NGO in Vietnam. Ever since, I have always been impressed and inspired by the creativity in every work that ASSIST delivers. How can an organization generate so many ideas and never stop striving for improvement? The answer lies in the organization's culture, which celebrates different ideas and opinions and brings people from various backgrounds to innovate and create collective impact.

Before joining ASSIST as a team member, I have benefited a lot from generous resources ASSIST offers.

“

From new knowledge, to new contacts and friends, ASSIST has always been willing to share with me and my former organization, whenever we ask. Sharing, listening, and respecting with an open attitude for learning and collaboration sums up my experience with ASSIST.”

On my first day at work with ASSIST, I took on a project for which I had no industry knowledge. But we eventually found the right local partner, who shares the same commitment with us and who has great experience and knowledge. By approaching the partner with a genuine intention to learn and address the common social challenge, and with our experiences (which are not the strength of our partner either), we have come up with exciting ideas and solutions that would create long lasting change in Vietnam. I find such practice inspiring as it truly is a representation of the quote, 'alone, we can do so little, together, we can do so much'.

“

COVID-19 has again reminded us that we are all interconnected - no one is safe until everyone is safe.”



“

I am pleased and excited to join ASSIST during this time to bring different people together and innovate together for the common good. Every day at ASSIST, I am encouraged to share my different views. My ideas, whether excellent or silly, are always welcomed. It motivates me as I feel I am contributing to 'building bridges and bridging gaps' somewhere.”

GIANG TRAN

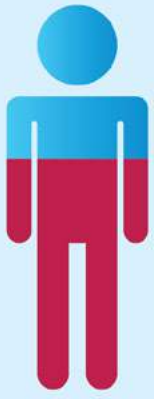
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6 out of 10 Filipinos

ARE HESITANT TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINE.

The attitude of the general population of the Philippines towards vaccination is mostly negative and may derail efforts in curbing the COVID-19 pandemic.



ASSIST is launching a Vaccine Communication Campaign!

In partnership with Project HOPE, under the **Saving the Lives of Healthcare Workers in the Philippines** project to raise awareness on the importance of vaccines, correct misinformation that amplifies vaccine hesitancy, and support local vaccination efforts.

How to educate others about vaccination



Listen with empathy and understanding



Ask open-ended questions



Share trusted information



Explore reasons for wanting to get vaccinated



- Being at risk of serious disease
- Can't afford getting sick
- Protecting others from getting sick



Information taken from the World Health Organization, US Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and Pulse Asia

For more information, you may contact Christelle Britanico at christelle@assistasia.org.

project
HOPE



DO YOU WANT TO?



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- Social Actions
- Project Management Office
- Research and Acquisitions
- ASSIST Creative Lab



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