



**Peace
Corps**
PHILIPPINES



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

FRONT COVER: Children, Youth, and Family Peace Corps Volunteer Megan Sarver facilitating the Human Knot life skills activity with the girls at her site.

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MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Reimagining service during the pandemic and meeting this historic moment

Dear Partners, Friends, and Family,

Mabuhay from US Peace Corps! On behalf of our whole team here in the Philippines, I am pleased to present our 2022 Annual Report. This is the first annual report that we have prepared since evacuating our Volunteers at the start of the pandemic. And although 2022 was sadly another year without Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), we could not be more excited to highlight what we have achieved with you this past year!

In 2022, US Peace Corps worked closely with partners to vaccinate Filipinos against COVID, support distance learners and out-of-school youth, and prepare schools for safe face-to-face school reopening. We collaborated on locally-prioritized trainings to strengthen volunteerism in provinces targeted for Volunteer placement, introduce alternative income-generating activities to recovering communities, and protect biodiversity through improved coastal resource management. Through our new Virtual Service Pilot, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) donated their time and expertise to virtually support a number of different partners in meeting urgent technical assistance needs. To build the Intercultural Competence, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (ICDEIA) competencies of US Peace Corps' staff, we introduced an ICDEIA bridge committee and staff training program; we also identified our team's ICDEIA mission, vision, and values, and joined the US Embassy's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council.

In this report, you will learn more about these and other diverse, impactful programming activities that US Peace Corps has undertaken to reimagine service during the pandemic and meet this historic moment with our partners. In the absence of our Volunteers, our staff have partnered with many of you to serve Filipino communities across all four of our Volunteer programs: Education; Children, Youth and Family; Coastal Resource Management; and Response. Our mission of promoting world friendship and peace has endured during the pandemic, but we have broadened our strategic priorities to encompass COVID response and recovery, including accelerating the delivery of safe and effective vaccines, addressing acute needs driven by COVID, and building household and community resilience. Finally, we have innovated and adapted – by actively engaging in the agency's Virtual Service Pilot and planning to continue both virtual service and COVID programming activities once Volunteers return.

Our success this past year and, indeed, over the decades is due to the strong partnerships we have with you. On behalf of the whole US Peace Corps team, I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the Philippine National Volunteer Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), our Local Government Unit (LGU) partners, our state university and NGO partners, and our host communities.



I would also like to thank our friends at the US Embassy and especially United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Philippines for enabling US Peace Corps to become a key contributor to the US Government's COVID strategy and for the Small Project Assistance to support partners in advancing our shared education and biodiversity priorities.

US Peace Corps celebrates its 61st anniversary in the Philippines this year. Since 1961, more than 9,300 Volunteers have proudly served across the country – as co-teachers, youth development facilitators, disaster risk reduction experts, and in other roles requested by host communities. This year, we are celebrating the lifelong friendship and intercultural

bonds between our Volunteers and Philippine communities. We are celebrating what we have achieved together in 2022 and over decades of partnership. And last but not least, we are celebrating the return of our Volunteers in early 2023! That's right – after nearly three years of pandemic, our first batch of PCVs will be arriving in the Philippines this coming January. We are elated and know you all are as well.

Maraming salamat po!

Jenner Edelman
Country Director
US Peace Corps Philippines

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PNVSCA

Turning the world's challenges into shared triumphs



been one and have established a strong partnership in promoting and advocating volunteering for development toward the nation's vision of volunteerism as a way of life for every Filipino.

The recently conducted training on mainstreaming volunteerism with the local government units (LGUs) aspires to capacitate leaders as they play an essential role in orchestrating the development efforts in their localities. This capacity-building program is part of the effort to provide an enabling and conducive environment for impactful volunteer engagement at the local levels and enhance the LGUs in managing a cohesive and responsive volunteer program.

Volunteerism is a fundamental form of human connection. It is about the need for people to be a part of communities in need of them and where they matter to others.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically altered people's lifestyles and work environments. Most governments, including the Philippines, have opted to adopt quarantine protocols and limited mobility to prevent and contain the further spread of the virus. Mobility restrictions prevented most workers, including volunteers, from doing their usual thing, that of delivering services and providing technical assistance to the beneficiaries via face-to-face interactions.

Despite these limitations and challenges, the US Peace Corps explored avenues to continuously work with partners towards promoting knowledge exchange and building organizational relationships.

The Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) and the US Peace Corps Philippines have always

I commend US Peace Corps Philippines for your great resolve to serve the people and the country - *"turning the world's challenges into shared triumphs"* as it is rightly stated. It is no secret how USPC and its volunteers significantly impacted and provided invaluable support in different programs for Children, Youth, and Family (CYF), Coastal Resource Management (CRM), and Education, among others. I, therefore, join the nation in waiting for the return of Peace Corps Volunteers; by God's grace, this will happen soon.

Congratulations to the women and men of US Peace Corps Philippines who made 2022 a blissful year full of compassion, fortitude, and hope!

Mabuhay ang bolunterismo!

Donald James Gawe
Executive Director
PNVSCA

Reimagining service and meeting this historic moment



COVID-19 response and recovery

RESULTS IN 2022: US PEACE CORPS AND PARTNERS...



Assisted in vaccinating
26,689 Filipinos
against COVID-19



Supported 168 schools and
youth centers by providing
COVID-19 prevention
commodities, school supplies,
and infection control and
handwashing training



Reached over 1,600
program stakeholders
with COVID-19 vaccination
promotion and awareness
campaign



Introduced alternative
income-generating activities
to 240 families in recovering
communities



Public Health and Education Data Analytics (PHEDA)

US Peace Corps collaborated with USAID on the review of a training course designed to utilize public care data in decision making, particularly in elementary schools. The PHEDA course had three phases including the content review, roll-out with 360 participants, and in-depth analysis of the gathered data. It was a strategic approach to support the capacity-building of school health and other officials as identified by the Department of Education.

This initiative was aimed at helping schools prepare for the reopening of face-to-face-classes. Under this project, teachers were trained to develop, adapt, and/or pilot educational resources to mitigate the disruption resulting from the pandemic, as well as address specific school needs. In addition, the PHEDA project was helpful in gathering public health data and gauging if policies are still applicable and need amending.



Distribution of personal protective equipment to pilot schools in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)

In early 2022, US Peace Corps donated approximately \$7,600 in COVID PPE (personal protective equipment) and other prevention supplies to support the Philippine government's face-to-face school reopening pilot in the BARMM. Working in collaboration with USAID and its implementing partner RTI/Reach Health, US Peace Corps procured over 60,000 face masks, 275 bottles of sanitizers, and other commodities requested by the Department of Education.

While US Peace Corps no longer has a presence in Mindanao, the Department of Education identified the BARMM as a priority region

for this important pilot. US Peace Corps welcomed the opportunity to support the government in safely reopening schools and recovering from the pandemic, a strategic priority for the agency, while simultaneously paving the way for the eventual, safe return of Volunteers across the rest of the Philippines.

This commodities handover benefitted approximately 10,656 elementary and high school students and nearly 300 teachers across 11 schools in the BARMM. US Peace Corps' medical team provided an accompanying training on proper PPE usage and infection and disease control.

ABOVE: Reach Health and BARMM's Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education and Integrated Provincial Health Office attending the ceremonial turnover in Maguindanao, Cotabato City.

Vaccine clinic support in Luzon and the Visayas

Between March and August of 2022, US Peace Corps teamed up with USAID and its implementing partner RTI/Reach Health to support the Philippine government in vaccinating 26,689 Filipinos against COVID-19. While US Peace Corps does not have a health program, staff augmented local health official staffing at vaccine clinics in the National Capital Region, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Cavite, Rizal, and Cebu.

Medical staff pre-screened patients, administered vaccines, and provided post-vaccination health education, while non-medical staff encoded vaccination data and provided other administrative support.

Vaccination sites included schools, hospitals, malls, barangay halls, gymnasiums, a provincial jail, and a fire station. US Peace Corps staff also conducted house-to-house vaccination to protect harder-to-reach populations against COVID-19, including Filipinos unable to

physically travel to vaccine clinics themselves.

BELOW: US Peace Corps Medical Officers pre-screening COVID vaccine patients in Luzon.





Technical assistance for face-to-face school reopening in Caloocan

US Peace Corps and USAID collaborated to support Caloocan elementary schools in preparing for the reopening of face-to-face classes. A four-day activity was conducted from June 21-24, 2022, to promote and re-inforce knowledge in infection prevention and control, proper handwashing, and vaccination to eligible participants. School personnel, students, parents, and guardians from 52 elementary schools across seven districts in Caloocan participated. Another component to the activity was the donation of hand sanitizers and masks to participating schools.

ABOVE: Peace Corps staff demonstrating proper handwashing to youth.

A banner for the "COVID Vaccine Ambassadors Training" Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Camp by Johns Hopkins University. The banner features three circular portraits of speakers: Dr. Dominic Maddumba (04/20), Eloisa Gonzales, RN (04/21), and Dr. Rupali Limaye (04/22). Below the portraits, the text "MEET OUR SPEAKERS" is displayed in large white letters, followed by "Meet-up day 1, 2 and 3". The banner also includes logos for the United States, USAID Philippines, and Peace Corps Philippines at the top.

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Camp to train COVID Vaccine Ambassadors

US Peace Corps — in partnership with the US Embassy, John Hopkins University, and USAID — organized a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on “COVID Vaccine Ambassadors Training: How to Talk to Parents.” The MOOC camp was held from April 20-22, 2022, and centered around a training developed by John Hopkins University to promote COVID-19 vaccination amongst children.

Participants in the MOOC camp learned how COVID-19 vaccines work, engaged in conversations about vaccine hesitancy in a respectful and empathetic way, and identified how to distinguish between credible sources of information on COVID-19 and misinformation. US Peace Corps partners, stakeholders, and other participants received certificates from John Hopkins University and the US Embassy after completing the course.

ABOVE: MOOC Camp speakers sharing their knowledge on COVID-19 and experience in running MOOC camps.

Distribution of COVID-19 commodities and learning materials

To support safe, inclusive face-to-face school reopening in the Philippines, US Peace Corps procured over \$65,000 in COVID-19 commodities and basic teaching and learning materials in 2022. US Peace Corps donated these materials to 158 schools and 10 youth centers in the provinces of Benguet, Ifugao, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Pangasinan, Nueva Vizcaya, Nueva Ecija, Zambales, Pampanga, Tarlac, Bataan, Laguna, Batangas, Camarines Sur, Albay, Guimaras, Iloilo, Capiz, and Negros Occidental. These commodities benefitted more than 900 teachers, 20,000 students,

and 1,000 vulnerable/ out-of-school youth in areas targeted for Peace Corps Volunteer placement.

During the handover, recipient schools expressed their appreciation for the strong and enduring partnership between the Department of Education (DepEd) and US Peace Corps, as former host schools recalled the productive work of Peace Corps Volunteers with their school communities. This donation will be distributed to different schools based on their priority needs. The COVID-19 commodities will support the full implementation of face-to-face classes in November 2022. The learning materials and school supplies

will support learners who would otherwise have limited access to such materials. Recipient schools and youth centers included small schools with about 100 students, much larger schools with more than 6,000 students, and even multi-grade schools.

BELOW LEFT: US Peace Corps staff interacting with a group of students during the handover ceremony in Ifugao.

BELOW: Teachers and parents of a recipient school unpacking donated COVID-19 commodities and learning materials in Batangas.

BOTTOM: US Peace Corps staff posing with SOS Children's Village staff during the handover of COVID-19 commodities and learning materials in Bataan.





Parenting Academy

US Peace Corps and partner Glory Reborn organized a “Parenting Academy” to empower women, parents, and families and assist them in responding to the challenges of the pandemic. This training enhanced the capacity of nine women in community leadership and development, and delivered community sessions on pandemic-related topics such as job skills, nutrition, vaccine promotion, mental health, and gender-based violence, reaching a total of 219 participants.

ABOVE: A Peace Corps Medical Officer engaging with Parenting Academy participants during a session on COVID-19 vaccine promotion and myth-busting.



Backyard gardening and free-range chicken training

US Peace Corps, in partnership with Tarlac Agricultural University, trained 240 families from Anao, Camiling, and Santa Ignacia in Tarlac province. This activity was determined to reduce food insecurity and provide economic relief to communities badly affected by the pandemic.

The training provided each family with a starter kit containing seeds, basic gardening tools, and up to ten chicks for free-range eggs and chicken. The participants learned best practices in backyard poultry farming, planting seeds, caring for a backyard garden, and vegetable harvesting.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) requested this activity and asked that US Peace Corps train the lowest-income families in three municipalities in Tarlac, which is a priority province for Community, Youth, and Family (CYF) Volunteer placement.

This training was designed not only to support CYF communities in meeting their immediate food security needs, but to enable future Peace Corps Volunteers to work alongside families in Tarlac to sustain and expand this activity to other families and community members in similar circumstances.

ABOVE: US Peace Corps staff and participants showcasing the start-up livelihood gardening kit and free-range chicks.



Livelihood assistance in COVID-19 affected areas in the provinces of Cebu and Bohol

The pandemic severely impacted coastal communities in the Philippines, which rely heavily on tourism and the sale of handicrafts and fishery products. Repeated lockdowns took a significant toll on local economies in coastal areas, leaving fishersfolk looking for alternative sources of income.

To provide alternative livelihood assistance for these communities, US Peace Corps partnered with USAID to organize a series of trainings in September and October 2022 on entrepreneurship, business planning, e-commerce, tourism development practices, and

the expansion of market linkages. Participants included over 200 individuals from 40 Savings Clubs and 14 People's Organizations (POs) from the municipalities of Badian, San Francisco, and Tudela in Cebu, and Tubigon and Getafe in Bohol. More than 2,000 individuals are expected to benefit economically from the skills learned in these workshops.

Highlights of the livelihood assistance trainings included (1) value chain analysis to outline issues affecting readiness in implementing tourism projects; (2) profiling to determine organizational capacities and financial status of POs; (3) entrepreneurial mind-setting to assess POs' readiness for enterprise development; (4) e-commerce start-up to promote and sell online

products; and (5) simple business planning to jump-start the return to managing a small enterprise.

The project yielded valuable lessons and new skills for LGUs and community members still struggling to recover financially from the pandemic. Among other results, 14 POs have already started selling goods and services on Facebook and other e-commerce platforms. All 40 Savings Club that participated in the trainings now have the opportunity to expand their operations through online sales.

ABOVE: LGU staff and community stakeholders having a photo break between sessions on ecological valuation.

Support to strengthen volunteerism

US Peace Corps and the Philippine National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency (PNVSCA) strengthened volunteerism through nationwide trainings for designated local key personnel in August and September 2022, with support from multiple international volunteer service organizations.

RESULTS IN 2022: US PEACE CORPS AND PARTNERS...



Supported PNVSCA in strengthening volunteerism initiatives for 79 local government units covering 12 provinces.



Mainstreaming Volunteerism Workshop with LGUs

US Peace Corps and the PNVSCA — with the support of representatives from the Australian Volunteer Program (AVP), Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), France-Volontaires, the Global Initiative for Exchange and Development, Inc. (GIED), and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) — strengthened volunteerism through trainings for designated local key personnel from across the country in August and September 2022.

One hundred participants from 79 LGUs covering 12 provinces took part in the workshop. The events were held in the cities of Dagupan, Baguio, and Cebu. LGU participants from La Union, Ilocos Sur, Pangasinan, and Zambales took part in the Dagupan leg of the workshop, while representatives from Benguet, Bataan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, and Tarlac attended the workshop in Baguio. The Cebu workshop included LGU participants from the province itself, as well as those from Bohol and Negros Oriental.

The workshop covered key topics including the Volunteer Act of 2007 (also known as

Republic Act 9418), the role of LGUs in promoting volunteerism, and the importance of establishing enabling mechanisms and structures to strengthen volunteerism in their localities. The participants developed consolidated action plans on mainstreaming volunteerism in their respective LGUs, which included strategies in engaging their local chief executives to incorporate volunteerism in their executive-legislative agenda. They advocated for a municipal or provincial resolution on volunteerism, the establishment of provincial volunteerism councils, and budgets for volunteerism initiatives in their action plans.

In his opening remarks during the Baguio workshop, PNVSCA Executive Director and Ifugao native Donald James Gawe said “Volunteerism in the Cordilleras is a way of life. The government’s role is to provide enabling mechanisms for volunteerism to flourish. We need to institutionalize volunteerism as a strategy. We hope to mainstream volunteerism to aid the development of the provinces and as part of nation-building.” As the prime mover for the workshop series, Executive Director Gawe is hopeful that many, if not all, of the LGUs represented during the workshop will start establishing provincial volunteerism learning hubs and identify a volunteer focal person in their LGU.

The workshop series served as an opportunity for US Peace Corps and other international volunteer service organizations to reconnect with LGU partners and enabled US Peace Corps to identify new partners for potential Volunteer placement in 2023.

ABOVE LEFT: Susan Cataylo, Municipal Planning and Development Coordinator of LGU Pilar, advocating for volunteerism in her LGU’s executive-legislative agenda.

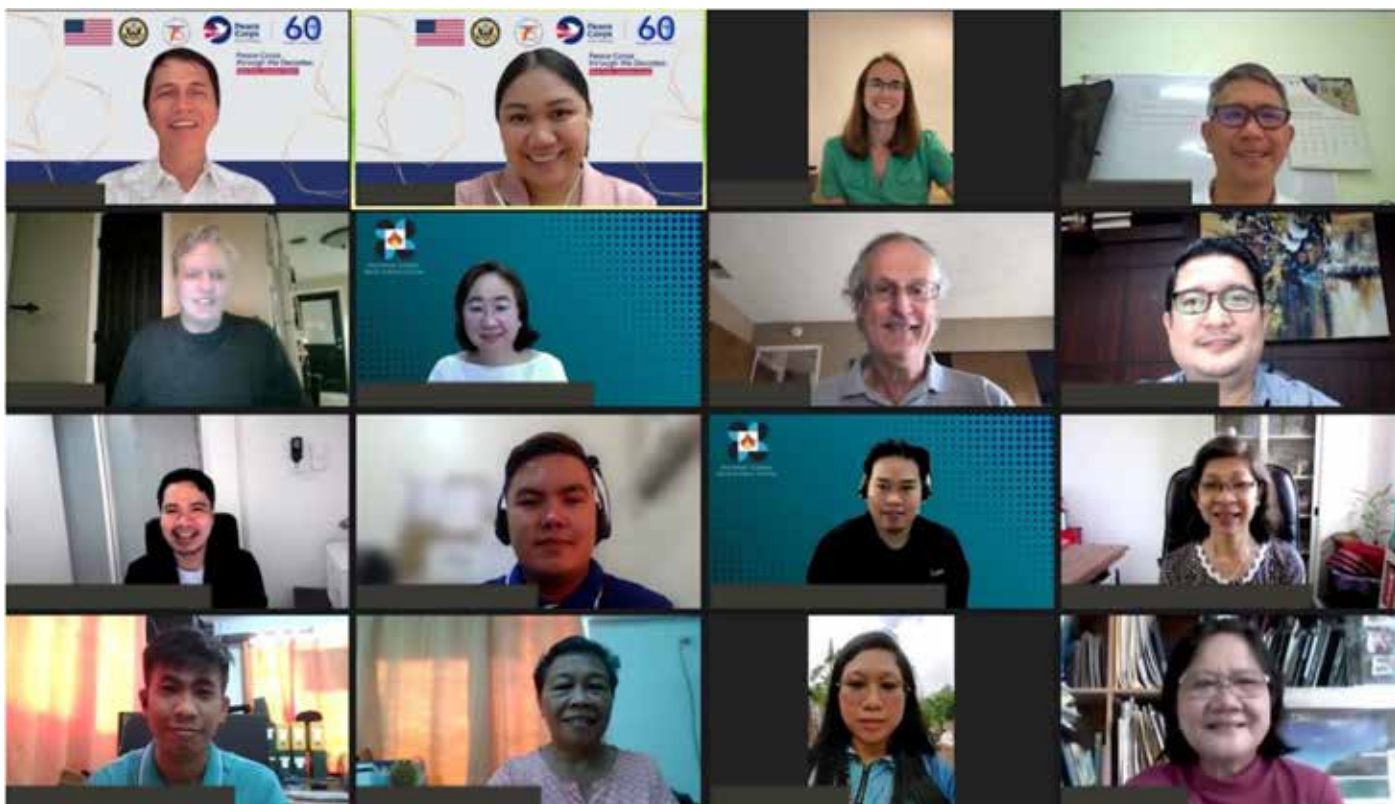
Virtual Service Pilot

The Virtual Service Pilot (VSP) is an innovative service model launched in 2020 to help meet the evolving needs of our Host Country Partners and expand opportunities for US Peace Corps participation through virtual engagement. Participants are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who volunteer 5-15 hours per week of their time and expertise on six-month virtual assignments, both synchronously and asynchronously. The Virtual Service Pilot complements the work of two-year and Response Volunteers and allows the US Peace Corps to engage with partners on shorter-term projects that can be completed remotely or in areas off-limits to in-person Peace Corps Volunteers.

RESULTS IN 2022: US PEACE CORPS AND PARTNERS...



Supported nine Virtual Service engagements in the program areas of education, environment, child and youth development, and disaster risk reduction and management.



Since 2021, nine Virtual Service Pilot Participants (VSPPs) have donated their time and expertise to support US Peace Corps' partners in meeting their priority technical assistance needs. Partners have included Benguet State University (BSU), Nueva Ecija University of Science & Technology (NEUST), Philippine Science High School (PSHS), Bataan Peninsula State University (BPSU), ACTION Foundation, Inc., Balasan Central Elementary School in Iloilo, Glory Reborn Organization, and the Local Government Unit of Ivisan, Capiz province.

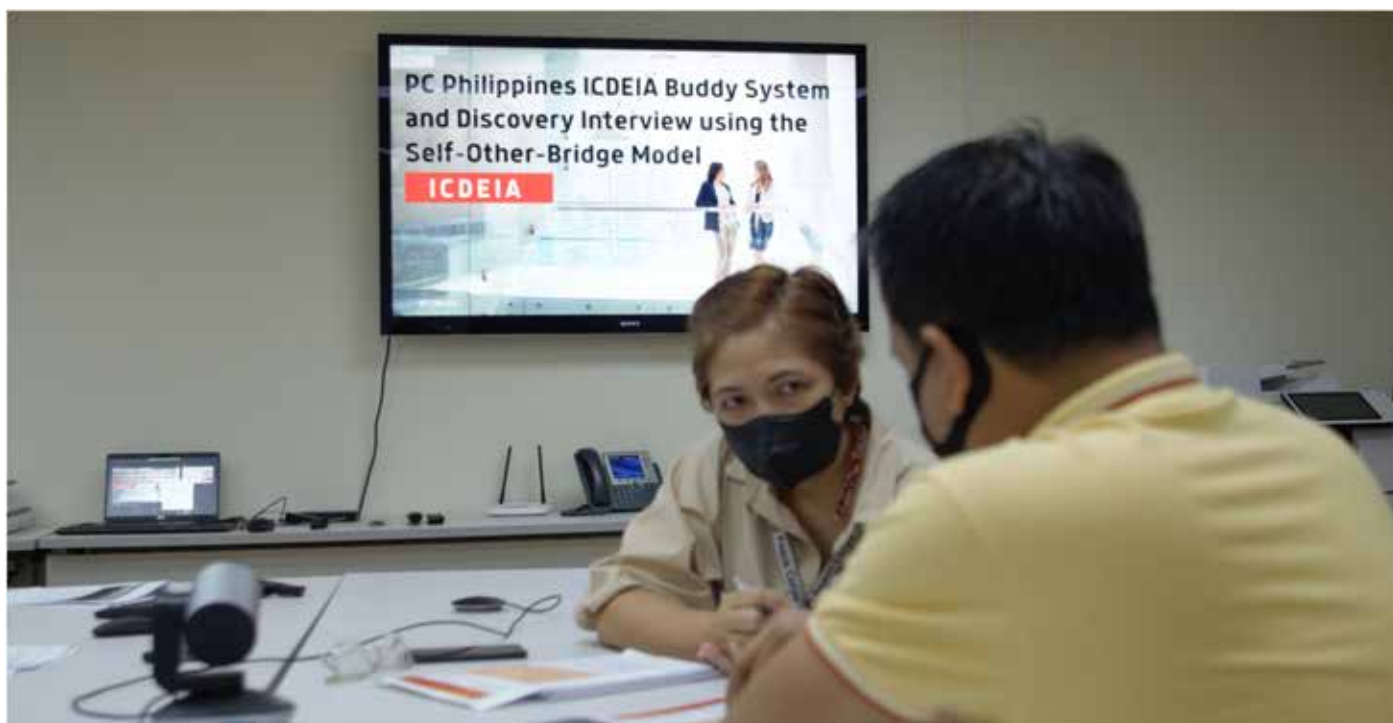
The VSPPs worked collaboratively with partners to provide requested technical assistance in the areas of Information Technology, Language Documentation,

Environmental Policy Development, Agro-Ecotourism Planning, Maternal and Child Healthcare, and Human Resource Management. US Peace Corps will continue to offer this innovative virtual service opportunity to partners even after the return of in-person Peace Corps Volunteers in early 2023.

ABOVE: US Peace Corps staff leading the VSP Orientation.

Championing Intercultural Competence, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (ICDEIA)

US Peace Corps is fostering a deliberate practice & culture of ICDEIA until it becomes ingrained in our way of connecting, doing, and being. A key first step is to build our own staff's ICDEIA competencies through a series of targeted activities and partnerships.



Intercultural competence, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (ICDEIA) are paramount to US Peace Corps' ability to achieve its mission and goals. Strengthening ICDEIA is both an agency strategic priority and a post-level priority. With this in mind, US Peace Corps introduced a series of targeted activities and partnerships this past year to continue building staff's ICDEIA competencies.

US Peace Corps launched an ICDEIA bridge committee to facilitate monthly all-staff, interactive discussions, and other ICDEIA programming. Monthly programs have included sessions on the Self-Other-Bridge Model, Unconscious Bias, and Discovery Conversations, as well as interactive activities for Black History Month, Women's Month, and Pride Month.

US Peace Corps also launched an ICDEIA Buddy System among staff to begin creating a shared understanding and vocabulary of ICDEIA and to introduce and practice new ICDEIA competencies in a safe space.

In October 2022, all staff participated in an ICDEI Foundations Workshop facilitated by Peace Corps Washington specialists to raise awareness amongst staff and strengthen ICDEIA skills.

Finally, US Peace Corps joined the DEI Council at the US Embassy this year to promote greater mission-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as share resources and experience.

US Peace Corps aims to be an ICDEIA leader and to genuinely embrace and embody ICDEIA in all we do — in how we support and work with our Volunteers, partners and host communities, and each other as staff. We encourage you to join us!

ABOVE: US Peace Corps staff sharing insights with their buddy during an ICDEIA session in the office.

Small Project Assistance

RESULTS IN 2022: US PEACE CORPS AND PARTNERS...



Developed Learning Activity Sheets for all elementary grade levels and distributed 100 sets to more than 50 multi-grade schools



Trained 190 LGUs and the academe in sustainable natural resources management and biodiversity conservation



Trained educators on developing and pilot-testing contextualized assessment tools for learners with disabilities



Trained 125 youth as peer facilitators to support DSWD regional youth and development sessions



Trained 50 parents and caregivers in parenting skills to manage children and youth amidst the pandemic



Strengthened the capacity of 52 LGUs and counterparts in environmental resource economic valuation and sustainable financing



Philippines featured in the 40th Anniversary SPA video

In 2023, USAID and US Peace Corps will celebrate the 40th anniversary of USAID-funded Small Project Assistance (SPA) to Peace Corps posts around the world. To commemorate this milestone, USAID Washington invited US Peace Corps in the Philippines and just two other posts worldwide to be featured alongside partners in a video documentary of SPA-funded activities.

In September 2022, USAID Washington's Megan Smith travelled to San Esteban, Ilocos Sur, with US Peace Corps staff to film footage for the anniversary video. The team chose to showcase a SPA-funded Participatory Coastal Resource Assessment project introduced by Coastal Resource Management Volunteer Jackson Moffett from 2017-2019. USAID and US Peace Corps staff interviewed Jackson's former counterparts, Fishery Coordinator Mark C. Vergara and Municipal Agriculture Officer/Municipal Environment & Natural Resources Officer Designate Rosemarie

Etrata. The team also visited Municipal Mayor Ray M. Elaydo II, who recalled excitedly the positive impact that Jackson and his SPA-funded project had on the community. Three staff at the Municipal Agricultural Office (MAO) pointed to a handwritten note that Jackson had posted on the wall reminding everyone to refuse plastic bags when they go out to buy food every day. One of the ladies said, *"hindi talaga namin 'yan matanggal-tanggal kahit sira na kasi naaalala namin ang tinuro ni Jackson"* (we don't have the heart to remove it, even if it is old and torn, because it reminds us of Jackson's lessons). Jackson distributed reusable cloth bags to colleagues when first posting the note several years ago now to demonstrate that behavior change is possible when individuals have both the knowledge and the means.

The 40th anniversary video aims to show how SPA funds enable Volunteers to work alongside local leaders to implement sustainable locally-prioritized development projects. Throughout the pandemic, US Peace Corps, with support from USAID, used SPA funds to provide direct targeted technical assistance and other support requested by partners across all four US Peace Corps programs. When Peace Corps Volunteers return to the Philippines in early 2023, they will once again have access to SPA funds for small community-driven projects similar to Jackson's, as well as for priority technical assistance.

ABOVE: US Peace Corps and USAID coaching one of two community counterparts for the video shoot.



Development of learning activity sheets

US Peace Corps collaborated with the Department of Education (DepEd) in the development of the Differentiated Learning Activity Sheets (LAS) in elementary English, Science, and Mathematics. More than 200 DepEd teachers, principals, and supervisors developed and reviewed the materials via online sessions, that benefitted more than 8,000 multi-grade schools in the Philippines. Curriculum

experts from teacher education institutions, the Bureau of Curriculum Development, and the Bureaus of Learning Delivery and Learning Resources validated and ensured the quality of the materials. The main goal of this USAID-funded activity was to provide quality distance-learning materials aligned with the curriculum, while building the skills of participants in creating these materials.

In 2021, DepEd allocated PHP 17 million pesos (more than USD 300,000) for the

printing and distribution of LAS to selected multi-grade schools in the Philippines. Prior to the distribution of the LAS to multi-grade schools, US Peace Corps teamed up with DepEd's Multi-Grade Program to virtually train more than 1,500 teachers, principals, and administrators on distance education, formative assessment, learning plan development, and LAS utilization. All 16 regions were required to roll out the training to their respective school Divisions to reach the multi-grade schools in the Philippines.

In 2022, US Peace Corps printed 100 master copies of the 3rd and 4th quarter LAS for English, Science, and Mathematics and distributed them to at least 50 partner schools. All activities were organized by DepEd Central Office, and the participants represented all 16 regions with multi-grade schools. This project took a total of two years to complete, from the creation and validation of the LAS across multiple subjects to the finalization, printing, and distribution of all materials.

ABOVE LEFT: A multi-grade school teacher showcasing the Self-Directed and Differentiated Learning Activity Sheets.



Youth leadership trainings to reach out-of-school youth

US Peace Corps trained 125 youth leaders of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) on motivating their fellow youth who stopped attending school during the pandemic to resume their studies.

US Peace Corps and DSWD decided to scale up this innovative peer-to-peer approach, reaching 1,250

out-of-school youth through life and leadership skills development in Nueva Ecija and Tarlac.

USAID funded this unique leadership training for 4Ps youth. Subject to the availability of funding, DSWD Region III requested that US Peace Corps and USAID roll out the trainings to youth in other provinces in the region as well.

ABOVE: A youth participant receiving feedback after her facilitation demo during the Peer Facilitators Leadership Training.

Development of contextualized assessment tools for Learners with Disabilities (LWD)

From May to August 2022, US Peace Corps and the Department of Education (DepEd) Division of Albay conducted workshops with 85 teachers and principals to develop assessment tools for Learners With Disabilities (LWDs). The team conducted a pilot test among 200 students, followed by a dry run of the tools among 100 learners with disabilities from different schools in Albay. Schools will use them to determine the proper classroom placement of learners with disabilities.

In August 2020, DepEd released Department Order 21, series of 2021 titled, "Policy Guidelines on the Adoption of the K to 12 Transition Curriculum Framework for Learners with Disabilities." This USAID-funded project is a response to DepEd's policy to provide tools for LWDs with the main objectives of 1) deepening the understanding on inclusive education and Department Order 21 on the transition curriculum for learners with disabilities; 2) strengthening the capacity in developing diagnostic assessment; 3) and creating the assessment tools for the livelihood curriculum package for LWDs.

These tools will be used by schools under the Division of Albay and will serve as prototype for other divisions and schools. DepEd Albay will also work to develop the manual that will accompany the assessment tools. Additionally, teachers can adapt the same process in materials development, and use their new knowledge and skills to design and create similar assessment tools to develop the other DepEd transition curriculum packages.



LEFT: US Peace Corps staff providing an overview of the workshop to school teachers and principals in Albay.



Agapay parenting interventions

US Peace Corps, in partnership with USAID, trained 40 parent leaders and ten staff of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in Tarlac and Nueva Ecija on parenting and caregiving amid the pandemic.

The Agapay Training for Parents, which was conducted by the Children and Youth Wellness Technical and Advocacy Center, focused

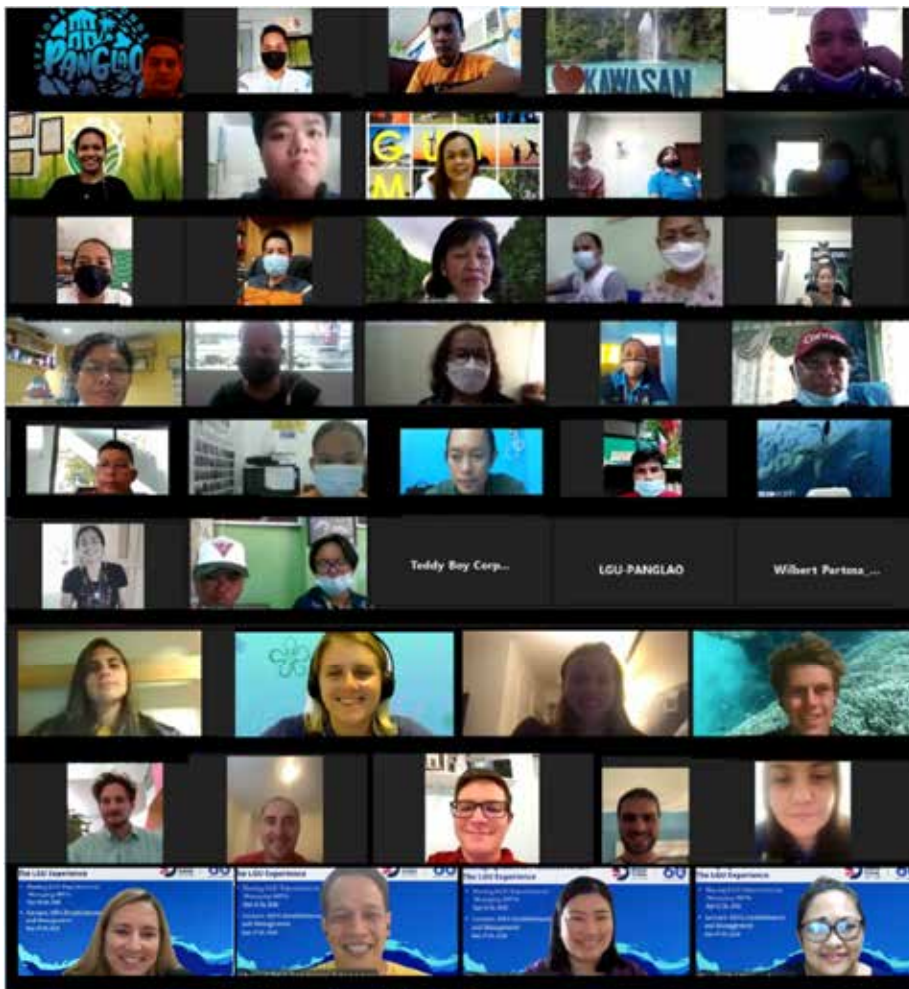
on parenting support interventions to help manage the challenges of parenthood during the pandemic. Sessions included the sharing of pandemic experiences, basic counseling, coaching skills, online safety for kids, and psychological first aid, amongst others.

The training was in response to needs identified by DSWD Field Office III and is part of a holistic approach to supporting communities during the pandemic. It complements the youth leadership trainings that US Peace Corps conducted

in the same provinces to reach youth who dropped out of school.

Parent leaders who participated in the training are expected to share the knowledge and skills they gained with other parent leaders in their communities. These parents will serve as resource facilitators for the DSWD in future family development sessions (FDS), leading workshops on parenting and caregiving interventions.

ABOVE: Mothers sharing their parenting experiences during the pandemic.



knowledge of coastal resource management and how to monitor and evaluate MPAs as well. They also shared experiences and best practices in MPA management and related activities, such as establishing seagrass and mangroves alongside MPAs. Nine Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) joined the online training as a show of support for their respective LGU counterparts.

The forum became the springboard for succeeding CRM trainings designed for 32 LGU staff participants with CRM programs that will potentially host Peace Corps Volunteers in 2023. In 2022, US Peace Corps provided additional trainings in coastal resource management and sustainable financing for the MPA workshop participants.

Training on marine protected area (MPA) management

In September 2021, US Peace Corps hosted a five-day online forum among Fisheries Technicians, Municipal Agriculture Officers, Municipal Planning and Development Officers, and fisher folk leaders. Participants learned about basic marine ecology, destructive practices affecting coastal and marine

resources, and how to establish and maintain marine protected areas (MPAs). The USAID-funded event boosted the interest of participating LGUs in improving the management of their respective MPAs through user-fee systems and secondary activities to boost their local economies.

The training provided LGU partners with the same basic understanding of how to establish and sustain MPAs. Participants increased their

ABOVE LEFT: US Peace Corps convening a virtual marine protected area forum in recognition of World Maritime and International Clean-Up Month.



LEFT: LGU partners conducting seaweed assessment in Panglao Island, Bohol.

Coastal resource management training

In response to priority needs identified by Coastal Resource Management (CRM) partners, US Peace Corps conducted three back-to-back trainings in Bohol in April 2022 to strengthen LGUs' CRM capacity. The first training focused on Community-Based Coastal Resources Management (CBCRM) and aimed to build LGU capacity in CRM program management, fisheries management, and governance. The second training focused on Marine Protected Area sustainability. The third and final training was on Zero Waste

Communities and targeted Sangguniang Kabataan (youth councils) and city/municipal youth coordinators, the key leaders in implementing this solid waste management initiative.

Twenty-nine municipalities participated in the training series, which included interactive lectures and field visits to communities implementing innovative projects in Bohol. The lectures covered topics including basic CRM, the role of communities and LGUs in project implementation, ridge-reef concepts in biodiversity conservation, and habitat management. Complementary field visits focused on habitat

assessment, understanding the sharing scheme of the use-fee system, and how an island village introduced a Zero Waste Community program. Participants learned how to conduct socio-economic surveys through household interviews and basic GIS mapping.

By the end of the trainings, participating LGU partners have increased their readiness and skills to better manage their coastal resources.



LEFT: Peace Corps staff and USAID staff joining LGUs and the academe for hands-on training on biodiversity conservation research.

Capacity strengthening of selected academe, Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), and local government units in biodiversity conservation

In May 2022, Peace Corps Response organized a biodiversity conservation training in Laguna for nearly 50 participants from Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST), Southern Leyte State University (SLSU), Nueva Ecija's PAMB, and Panaon Island local government.

Funded by USAID, the training was conducted by the University of the Philippines-Los Baños' School of Environmental Science and Management (SESAM), which is recognized by the Commission on Higher Education as a Center of

Excellence on Environmental Science.

The nine-day event focused on enhancing biodiversity conservation and research through hands-on field work in data collection and analysis. The training included specimen sampling and data collection at Taal Lake, Mt. Makiling, and Calatagan and featured lectures from experts on state-of-the-art biodiversity assessment in terrestrial, marine, and inland aquatic environments and GIS mapping. The aim of this critical workshop was to support academe and government partners in working together to reduce threats to biodiversity in Minalungao National Park and Panaon Island. Participants developed new skills for conducting biodiversity conservation research,

crafted management plans, and identified collaborative ways to address biodiversity threats. John Rey Quinones, an Instructor from NEUST, summed up the workshop by saying “[t]his experience doesn’t just let me understand the proper methodologies of assessing marine biodiversity, but also lets me learn that our marine diversity is rich and therefore needs to be protected. The terrestrial biodiversity assessment [made] me appreciate the effort of our environmental professionals. Working collaboratively with other institutions and organizations contributes a lot to the success of conserving and protecting our biodiversity.”



Sustainable financing workshop for local government units and academe

In August 2022, US Peace Corps trained over 50 partners from 32 LGUs and two academic institutions on the concept of resource economic valuation. The USAID-supported workshop was held in Cebu, with LGU representatives and academe from areas with high tourism potential and large coastal habitats requiring protection.

Participants learned new techniques in monetizing

marine resources to sustainably finance their coastal resource management programs and thereby protect biodiversity and the environment in their LGUs. They were introduced to different economic instruments and tools for revenue generation, policy-making, and importantly, coastal resource management.

LGU representatives appreciated the significant relationship between the environment and the economy and that these concepts are not separate

from each other. The ultimate objective of resource economic valuation, after all, is to sustain the environment and its many ecosystems.

ABOVE: Peace Corps and USAID staff posing with LGU and academe partners during the sustainable coastal resource management workshop in Cebu City.

Partnerships

US Peace Corps continually seeks to build and strengthen relationships with government partners, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and civil society. Our approach to partnership is grounded in mutual respect and collaboration and is a catalyst for lasting community-driven, community-centric development.

Partnerships enable US Peace Corps to better understand and support host communities in meeting their local development priorities, provide the right training for our Volunteers, and leverage each other's resources and expertise. Moreover, partnerships enable US Peace Corps to better achieve its mission of world friendship and peace by increasing mutual understanding and appreciation. US Peace Corps warmly thanks and salutes all of its many partners for their support and commits to continuing to identify new partnership opportunities going forward.



MOU signing with RARE

On March 18, 2022, US Peace Corps and international nongovernment organization RARE signed a new five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) in Bohol to jointly support sustainable coastal resource and fisheries management. This five-year MOU is the second between US Peace Corps and Coastal Resource Management Program Partner RARE.

Representatives from 29 local government units (LGUs) joined the event, which coincided with US Peace Corps' training on community-based coastal resource management for office heads, fisheries and agricultural officers, and environment officers, also

in Bohol. Highlights of the new MOU include continued information and resource-sharing to build resilient, sustainable coastal communities across the Philippines, amongst other activities. US Peace Corps and RARE both gather data and assess marine protected areas (MPAs), for example, but in different geographical locations across Luzon and the Visayas. Sharing this information allows the two partners to demonstrate the importance of sustainable fisheries and coastal resource management on a larger scale and support a greater number of coastal communities in protecting their resources.

When Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) return to the Philippines in early 2023, RARE will once again provide

technical trainings to Volunteers on sustainable fisheries management, while Peace Corps will share relevant data on MPAs in Luzon.

RARE Philippines' Vice President Lito Mancao emphasized how LGUs directly benefit from this alliance: "Our continued collaboration with the US Peace Corps will amplify how sustainable fishing behaviors actually improve fish stock productivity and enable us to continue co-designing and sharing innovative, practical solutions with LGU partners to protect the country's marine environment."

ABOVE: US Peace Corps staff, RARE, and LGU representatives celebrating the MOU signing in Bohol.



IN PHOTO: JFK Awardee Ambet Yangco at the US Institute of Peace in Washington D.C.

John F. Kennedy Jr. Service Awardee Ambet Yangco

On May 19, 2022, US Peace Corps Philippines Youth Program Manager Roberto “Ambet” Yangco was honored with the JFK Service Award. This award is given only once every five years to two staff and two American volunteers across more than 60 countries. He received the award for his exceptional lifelong service and leadership supporting the Philippines’ most vulnerable youth.

Ambet grew up as a street child in Olongapo City. At age 11, he was taken in by a local Catholic non-government organization supporting abandoned and underprivileged children. Since then, he has dedicated his life to serving the Filipino youth. A social worker by training, Ambet has served as an HIV/AIDS outreach worker, an educator for street children, a community development officer, and rose through the ranks in the U.S. Peace Corps.

Here are excerpts from his inspiring message delivered during the ceremonies at the U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington D.C.

Wow! Good evening! If this is a dream, please dear God, don't wake me up... just yet.

Who would have thought that a former street child who grew up sleeping on sidewalks and scavenging food from trash bins would be standing at this podium before you now with my two teenage sons and wife in the audience? I could not have imagined this moment in my wildest dreams.

God is good, though, and he sent me to meet so many people over my lifetime who have shown me the goodness of their hearts and supported me in becoming the public servant I am today. From the NGO workers who offered my older brother and I a decent shelter as children so we would no longer have to sleep on the street, to the volunteer at that same

shelter who sat down beside me during my darkest hours when I found out that my older brother had died a terrible death during the furious volcanic eruption of Mt. Pinatubo. She did not say a single word, she just sat beside me and showed kindness by being there.

We live in a chaotic, difficult, and divisive world, but in a world that is filled with good as well. There is good in each of our hearts just waiting to be ignited, just as it was for me when I pursued my dream of becoming a Social Worker to help abused, neglected, and abandoned Filipino youth.

Peace Corps showed me the goodness of Americans and what they truly represent. I love the Peace Corps and have spent half of my life with this organization. There is no other organization that embodies the goodness and kindness of humanity like the Peace Corps. Our mission is more important now than ever, and we must continue promoting world friendship and peace and demonstrating love and respect for all of humanity.

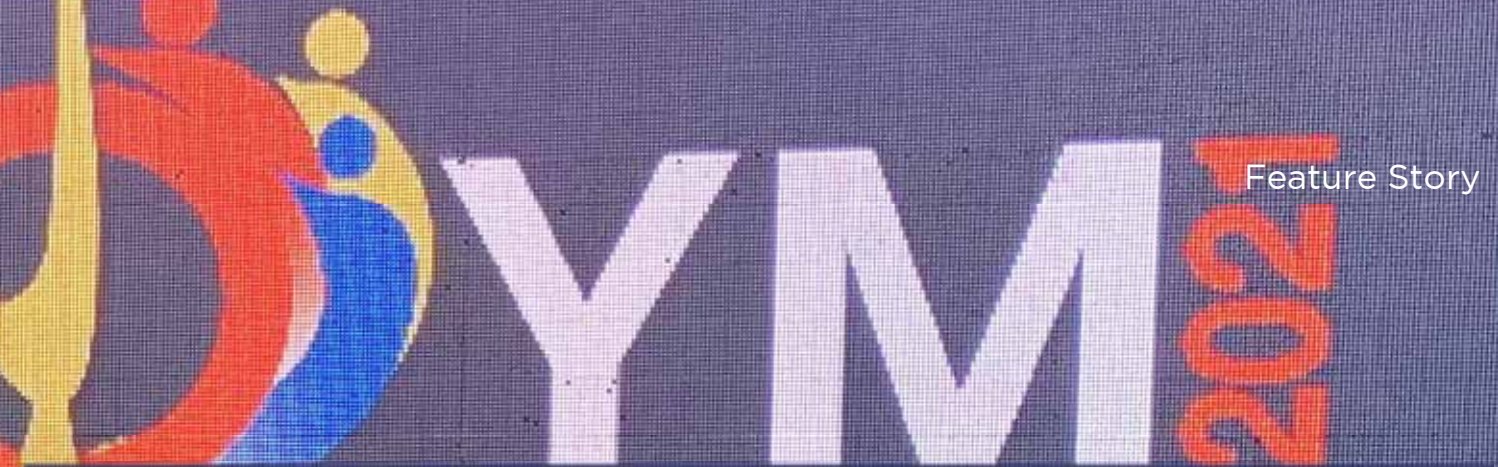
I stand before you today together with my beautiful family, expressing our heartfelt gratitude for all the kindness we have received from my Peace Corps family. We will be forever grateful for this honor you have bestowed on me. Thank you, Peace Corps! Maraming salamat, Peace Corps Philippines family! Maraming salamat Peace Corps Philippines Partners! Know that I am receiving this award on behalf of all of you. This recognition is for all of you.

To the Filipino youth - maraming salamat for serving as our inspiration to keep fighting the good fight. Kung kinaya ko, sigurado akong kayang kaya 'nyo din!

Mabuhay ang Pilipinas! Mabuhay ang Peace Corps!



IN PHOTO: Ten Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Awardee Ariestelo Asilo at the awarding ceremony.



Ariestelo Asilo: Peace Corps and my humble beginnings

Before my father died in 2010, he left me three “inheritances”: first, take care of your mother; second, support your siblings to finish school; and third, achieve all of your dreams. My father was a stern yet thoughtful man. My father only finished 3rd year high school and my mother reached Grade 6. They both got married at a very early age, my mother at 15 and my father at 24. I started working at the age of six selling sweepstakes tickets, firecrackers, and many more. Almost every day after class, I would go to our public market to sell them so I could help my family get by. Although my father was working only as a kubrador ng jueteng or the “illegal numbers’ game” in Batangas, he was very determined to send us to school no matter what. Exposed at an early age in the deep realities of life, I was given a duty to stand as the eldest brother and an assistant padre de familia. My mother taught me a lot of things, most especially about selling and being confident in facing various customers. My father taught me to be kind to others but be assertive. And my parents taught me that if somebody asks something, be kind, and give the best way you can even if you have little. Thank you to Peace Corps for fulfilling my parents’ humble and unselfish wish. Because of you, you’ve made not just one person’s life plucked out from poverty but you’ve impacted the life of a family who without you would not be able to end the vicious cycle of lack of education. Because of you, I had a scholarship that I would not have imagined to have in the first place. I profusely thank you and will forever be grateful to PCV Ann Meehan assigned in Bauan, who later on I would find out was under the supervision of my very good friend Tita Geri Maiatico.

My involvement with the Peace Corps started with US Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development (PCAFPD). PCAFPD is now more than a Foundation that supported

my education and who helped us away from poverty. PCAFPD has become a family who supports each other, listens to one another, and spends quality time with each other.

You, at the Peace Corps, taught me to think of others. We are never too poor to help. Richness in ourselves is too abundant if we only always know how to look within and look positively at others. Over time, I have become more mature and my growth has always been pivoted for others more than myself. From a young little man who had nothing to eat, who started selling at 6 years old, to now of a man who feeds inspiration and motivation for others and who is still selling, and this time it is coffee, I can say that I am enjoying my journey the same way that the Peace Corps teaches me to always enjoy our journey with others.

I always say that the TOYM has given me more platform to strengthen my advocacy for the unsung, the untapped and the unvalued. I dedicate my TOYM awards, the accolades from various national and international segments, and some other more, to the many young men and women who have responded to the call of service and volunteerism. I had only asked for a scholarship to fulfill my parent’s dreams, and God has given me more than that. You are all angels! I pledge to continue to live the spirit of humanity, development, and community. I will continue to chase my dreams and touch many more lives because out there, there are still so many young ones waiting for their dreams to come true. May we all have that spirit since the founding of US Peace Corps in 1961—one imbued with adventures and yet full of loving surprises; one with uncertainties and yet has an assurance of a good future; and finally one attuned with the times and yet blessed with inner peace and happiness.

Mabuhay ang US Peace Corps! Mabuhay ang Pilipinas!

Peace Corps Response program evaluation

In October 2021, US Peace Corps hired an independent evaluator to determine the impact of Response Program Volunteers in the Philippines and identify opportunities to improve the program. The evaluation included an extensive desk review, a survey, individual interviews, and focus group discussions with Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs), Host Country Agency (HCA) supervisors and counterparts, and PNVSCA staff. It covered the period from 2014 to 2019 and a sample of 122 PCRVs, in addition to numerous partners. The evaluation approach was participatory and consultative, with project stakeholders utilizing qualitative and quantitative tools and methods for collecting and analyzing data.

The study showed that PCRVs enhanced the organizational capacity of their partner HCAs through various skills transfer activities and the application of innovative practices. The PCRVs provided technical and capacity building support to HCAs in the delivery of training programs, the development of training modules, the formulation of plans and projects, and the development of baseline data. PCRV activities benefited host communities through increased access to key services and improved participation in decision-making processes. Most projects were sustained after PCRV service. HCA partners fully utilized PCRVs' expertise, and the cost of engaging a Volunteer was determined to be commensurate with the benefits of the project.

The study also showed that the PCR Program introduced innovative models and approaches to build the capacity of HCAs in the areas of disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM), environment, youth, and education. In this respect, the evaluation demonstrated that inclusive change is possible, as long as strong partnerships and other supporting elements are in place.

Some of the best practices identified include skills-based PCRV matching, mechanisms to ensure HCA readiness in hosting PCRVs, and adaptation of diversity awareness strategies.

While the PCR Program demonstrated the ability of PCRVs to successfully provide technical assistance to HCAs, there is room for improvement. Key recommendations included extending the length of PCRV assignment from seven months to one year, narrowing the scope of project deliverables, reinforcing successive PCRV placements, allocating more time for language and culture sessions during PCRV orientation, and exploring the development of a logical framework for the PCR program.

Additional recommendations included creating a community of best practices to build a wealth of knowledge and experience, and increasing opportunities for policy dialogue and collaboration among HCAs, US Peace Corps staff, PCRVs, and other stakeholders.



ABOVE: US Peace Corps Response staff witnessing the contract signing for the Response Program Evaluation.

US Peace Corps' 60th Anniversary

On October 6, 2021, US Peace Corps commemorated its 60th Anniversary in the Philippines during a virtual celebration themed “Peace Corps through the Decades: Sixty Years, Countless Stories.” The US Embassy, Philippine government, and other partners celebrated the over 9,300 American Peace Corps Volunteers who have served alongside Filipino host communities across the country since October 1961.

Hundreds of former Volunteers, host organizations, US Peace Corps staff, youth, and other beneficiaries gathered online to recognize the contributions of American Volunteers and their local partners working in education, fisheries, coastal resource management, youth development, water sanitation, business, and other sectors over the decades. Participants also reflected on the unique ability of Peace Corps Volunteers to meaningfully impact and integrate into their host communities by learning local Filipino languages and living with Filipino host families.

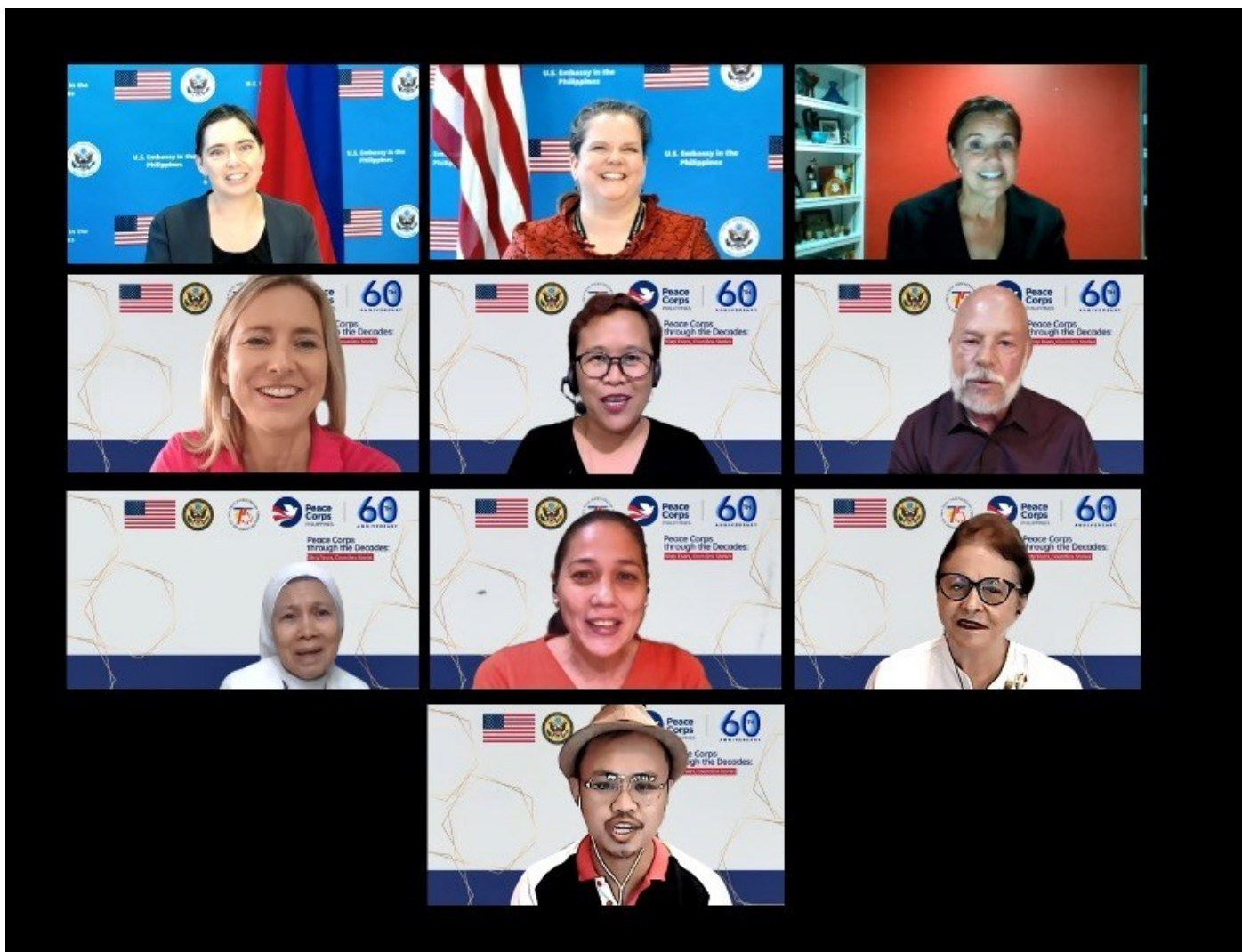
The program featured a speakers’ panel of prominent Filipino leaders and national public service award winners whose lives have been touched and shaped by US Peace Corps in the Philippines, including a former Country Director, former Peace Corps Volunteer Supervisor, a Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippines Development (PCAFPD) Scholar, former Philippine Olympian who is a daughter of a former Country Director, and it was moderated by a former Peace Corps Volunteer Supervisor. The virtual event likewise featured anniversary greetings from senior leadership at the Departments of Education and Social Welfare and

Development. There were also heartfelt and meaningful messages from civil society leaders, former country directors, and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs), representing a cross-section of the broad communities that US Peace Corps has worked with and impacted over the past six decades.

Joining virtually from Washington, PC Acting Director Carol Spahn highlighted how US Peace Corps is reimagining service and supporting partners during the pandemic. She also recognized US Peace Corps partners and staff for their COVID response efforts in the Philippines, saying “these are unprecedented times, and I commend you all for creatively working together to support students and communities across the Philippines in recovering from this pandemic.”

In her opening remarks, US Embassy Chargé d’Affaires Heather Variava said that “Peace Corps Volunteers have significantly advanced our shared diplomatic and human development objectives with the Philippine government and will continue to embody the best in our partnership and friendship with the Filipino people for many more years to come.” She highlighted the role of US Peace Corps in strengthening the diplomatic relationship of the US and the Philippines.

Executive Director of the Philippines National Volunteer Service Coordinating Agency James Donald Gawe called the contributions of US Peace Corps staff and volunteers in education and social and economic development “exceptional,” and concluded by saying “your dedication to service has been an inspiration to all of us, and we look forward to many more years of partnership, coordination, and advocating for national volunteerism.”



ABOVE: US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Heather Variava (top-most center) welcoming current and former US Peace Corps staff and partners during the virtual celebration.



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