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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



US Government Grant to Help Improve Disability Rights in the Philippines

Jan. 3-17 Trip Kicks-off First Phase in the Two Year EXPAND Program

As part of a two-year, seven phase initiative funded by the U.S. Embassy Manila's United States Agency for International Development (USAID), representatives from Discovering Deaf Worlds (DDW) are visiting the Philippines on January 3-17 to support disability rights.

In partnership with the Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD), DDW, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the rights deaf communities through local capacity building, will utilize the Php12.6 million (\$300,000) USAID grant to implement its Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities in the Philippines (EXPAND) program.

Under the program, DDW staff and specialists will provide organizational development, process consultation, and training to improve the sustainability of the PFD and its 28 member organizations across 13 regions in the Philippines.

USAID Mission Director Gloria D. Steele said, "This partnership supports our goal of empowering people with disabilities by promoting their rights and providing them with equal opportunities to help them succeed in life."

The two-week trip will involve data collection, strategic planning and objective-based workshops to import knowledge and skills that PFD-Sustainability Sub Committee members can use to improve the circumstances of deaf Filipinos.

"A comprehensive nationwide survey will be conducted to determine the precise community/organizational issues faced in regions of the Philippines by traveling to specific areas to interview deaf organizations, their stakeholders, and analyze the resulting data. Based on the data assessment, a series of interventions will be developed, addressing the most pressing needs of the Filipino deaf community as a whole," said DDW Executive Director Davin Searls.

After the assessments, DDW will provide organizational development and training on strategic planning, fundraising, leadership, team building, recordkeeping, program development and evaluation, and public relations, with the aim of strengthening participants' skills to operate their projects more effectively and efficiently.

DDW, working with local leaders and deaf advocacy organizations in developing countries to assess their community's needs and available resources, is helping improve education, employment opportunities and human-rights circumstances for deaf people in

the Philippines. The organization also works to advance deaf education, advocacy, policy, organizational development, community outreach, and human rights.

For more information about the EXPAND program, please contact DDW International Programs Director David Justice (US based) at djustice@discoveringdeafworlds.org or 585-690-6737, or PFD Program Accessibility Coordinator Patrick Ablaza (Philippines based) at pb.ablaza@gmail.com or visit www.discoveringdeafworlds.org.

About USAID

The American people, through the United States Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for over 50 years. In the Philippines, USAID works in partnership with the national government in creating a more stable, prosperous and well-governed country through programs that foster sustainable and inclusive growth, strengthen governance and combat corruption, improve access to water, energy, health and education services, increase environmental resilience and natural resource management capabilities. For more information, visit <http://www.usaid.gov/philippines> or contact USAID/Philippines Development Outreach and Communications via email: infoph@usaid.gov.

About Discovering Deaf Worlds

Discovering Deaf Worlds is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the self-determination of signing deaf communities through local capacity building in developing countries. In the past six years, DDW staff members have volunteered more than 30,000 hours to connect with more than 250 deaf schools and organizations from 50 countries, creating one of the largest international deaf-advocacy networks in the world. DDW's work is now focused on capacity building partnerships with deaf leadership teams in the U.S.A, Philippines, and Costa Rica, which are working to improve education, employment opportunities, and human-rights circumstances for deaf people in those countries.

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