



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**Discovering Deaf Worlds Embarks on Trip to Philippines to Advance Rights  
in Deaf Communities through Local Capacity Building**

*U.S. Government Supports Improved Education, Employment Opportunities  
and Human-Rights Conditions for Deaf People in the Philippines*

**ROCHESTER, N.Y., FEBRUARY 4, 2015** — Discovering Deaf Worlds (DDW) is entering phase four of seven in its two-year program supported by the U.S. Embassy Manila’s United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide organizational development, process consultation and training to improve the sustainability of the Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD) and its 28 member organizations.

Through the U.S. government’s \$300,000 grant, DDW is implementing the Expanding Participation of People with Disabilities in the Philippines program (EXPAND) in partnership with PFD to advance rights in deaf communities through local capacity building. The trip will mark the fourth of six visits to the Philippines for DDW.

“Phase four will focus primarily on three components, which are aligning programs with the organization’s mission, vision, values and strategic plan; the basic structure of programs and their evaluation; and tying program development to fund development, financial management and budgeting,” DDW Executive Director Davin Searls said.

Searls, along with program specialists Allie Rice, youth programs coordinator for the National Association of the Deaf, and Alim Chandani, Ph.D., Student Success Specialist/ Peer Mentorship Supervisor at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., and founder and executive director of Global Reach Out Initiative Inc., will travel to the Philippines Feb. 6-25 to implement training on program development and evaluation.

Chandani will use his expertise in international development and social entrepreneurship, and Rice will apply her background in fostering leadership among deaf youth to enhance PFD’s capacity to develop strong advocacy programs, as well as work with the government on developing better educational programs, interpreter training and overall accessibility for Filipino deaf people.

“I am eager to work with the PFD to strengthen their ability to implement and evaluate different advocacy programs in the Philippines and assist them in reaching their goal of becoming a strong and sustainable organization,” Rice said. “Through training, I hope to support the PFD in developing tangible outcomes for their programs that will have a lasting impact on the Filipino deaf and hard-of-hearing community.”

(more)

According to the Deaf People and Human Rights Report published by the World Federation of the Deaf in 2009, at least 90 percent of deaf people in developing countries receive no formal education. The USAID and DDW EXPAND program has provided over 320 deaf Filipinos with the training they need to reduce this statistic, and strengthened the capacity of nearly 30 deaf advocacy organizations in the region.

“I look forward to the opportunity to work with PFD and its 28 member organizations and an opportunity to witness each organizations' growth, advocacy and community development,” Chandani said. “I hope to contribute to such growth through means of training, to identify key programs that can further facilitate a sustainable community for all deaf Filipines.”

For more information about the DDW program, please contact DDW International Programs Director David Justice (U.S.-based) at [djustice@discoveringdeafworlds.org](mailto:djustice@discoveringdeafworlds.org) or 585-690-6737 or PFD EXPAND Program Logistics Coordinator Patrick Ablaza (Philippines-based) at [pb.ablaza@gmail.com](mailto:pb.ablaza@gmail.com), or visit [www.discoveringdeafworlds.org](http://www.discoveringdeafworlds.org).

### **About the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**

The American people, through the United States Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 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; and increase environmental resilience and natural resource management capabilities. For more information, visit [www.usaid.gov/philippines](http://www.usaid.gov/philippines) or email [infoph@usaid.gov](mailto: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., Philippines and Costa Rica, which are working to improve education, employment opportunities, and human-rights circumstances for deaf people in those countries.

### **About the Philippine Federation of the Deaf**

Formed in 1997, the Philippine Federation of the Deaf (PFD) works to empower Deaf people, making them independent, united, equal and productive members of society; and also represents Deaf groups in national and international meetings/forums and legislative bodies. PFD provides training to its grass roots self-help Deaf member- organizations specifically on organizational management, community organization, advocacy techniques, leadership training, values formation and other skills necessary for their development. PFD's activities include close monitoring with government/non-government agencies on the implementation of Deaf people's basic rights and equalization of opportunities especially on employment to ensure that they are given just and equitable treatment. PFD is a national member of the World Federation of the Deaf.

###