



**Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOFT) Farmer-to-Farmer Program for Southeast Asia
Volunteer Scope of Work - Philippines**

Assignment Summary Information			
Host ID:	PH_023		
Country:	Philippines		
Host Organization:	New Pathways to Enterprise		
Assignment Title:	Strategic Planning for Business Start-ups		
Assignment Dates:	First Quarter 2025		
Type of Assignment	In-person		
Area of Technical Assistance:	Agricultural entrepreneurship and agribusiness		
Associated Area(s) of Technical Assistance	Extension and advisory services		
Target Value Chain:	Horticulture (coconut)		
Objectives of the assignment:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assessment of 4-6 potential sites for a small-scale coconut vinegar processing production plant. 2. Recommendation of the optimal site location for the processing plant, estimating total costs for New Pathways of no more than \$12,000. (Partnering with existing copra processors or commercial coconut water producers would help to reduce New Pathways' investment requirements.) 		
Desired volunteer skill/expertise	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expertise in strategic planning for agricultural business start-ups 2. Expertise in business development, especially determining site locations 3. Expertise in agribusiness, especially food processing and production. 4. Background in food science and nutrition 5. Knowledge of logistics and supply chain management 		
PERSUAP Classification ^{1[1]}	III		
Anticipated number of people to be trained (key informant)	Men	Women	Youth (15-29)
	10	10	5
Will the assignment address climate change? (Yes/No) If yes, please describe in assignment background & rationale	No		

^{1[1]} USAID precisely classifies PERSUAP in four categories; **PERSUAP Type I** assignments directly related to pesticides recommendations, **Type II** as assignments with indirectly related with pesticides, **Type III** assignments are not expected to be involved in pesticide issues. and **Type IV** as assignments associated with other USAID projects and collaborators.



A. Project Overview

Country Strategy Overview

The University of Tennessee's (UT) "Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow" (ALOFT) regional Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program for Southeast Asia supports youth-led and youth-serving institutions to build more resilient and inclusive food systems. Through F2F, U.S. specialists spend two to three weeks on specific technical assignments, working directly with counterparts in the region to address local needs. ALOFT's demand-driven voluntary technical assistance will be delivered in four primary areas: 1) climate-smart agriculture; 2) agricultural entrepreneurship and agribusinesses; 3) agricultural education; and 4) extension and advisory services. Locally appropriate technical assistance will be provided to a range of host-organizations, including farmer cooperatives, vocational training centers, extension services, and agribusinesses. The University of Tennessee, country ALOFT teams, and established host-organizations will provide the necessary logistical, technical, and material assistance to position volunteers to successfully carry out the exchange of knowledge with communities.

Through demand-driven technical assistance, the ALOFT Philippines project seeks to strengthen the fruit, vegetables, small livestock, and aquaculture value chains and the agrotourism sector. ALOFT Philippines will collaborate closely with Central Philippine State University (CPSU) to deliver impactful and locally appropriate voluntary technical assistance to a range of host-organizations, including farmer cooperatives, vocational training centers, extension services, and agribusinesses. Technical assistance will promote the adoption of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) by smallholders, strengthen extension services and agricultural education, expand access to financial services, particularly youth and women, and support agricultural entrepreneurship and small-business growth.

Host Organization Background

New Pathways to Enterprise is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) dedicated to empowering women through innovative, sustainable livelihood programs so they can achieve their dreams of a better life for their families. Programs focus on food security, health and nutrition, creativity, and enhanced self-esteem of participants. Training modules are geared to adult learners with little formal education. New Pathways' *Learning to Livelihood* (L2L) program guides participants throughout the entrepreneurial cycle from selecting a profitable business idea through 'hands-on' technical and business skills training, to business start-up with equity grants of materials and equipment, and post-graduation follow-up with a monitoring/mentoring process during the critical business start-up phase. Through an interactive learning process, this holistic approach significantly improves livelihood training results because it enables women to initiate higher value-added business options, offering new opportunities for creativity and enhanced self-esteem, along with a greater likelihood of profitability over their lifetimes. The program is geared to adult learners with minimal formal education.

Assignment Background/Rationale



New Pathways' has begun implementing an initiative focused on iron-fortified coconut vinegar. Their long-term goal for this initiative is to reduce iron deficiency anemia in the Philippines, where 50% of the population is iron deficient. Their short-term goal is to determine the optimal production site location in order to launch a small business for the production and sales of iron-fortified spiced coconut vinegar owned and operated by women. If the results are successful in terms of improved health, especially for pregnant women and lactating mothers, then they hope to expand the program to a provincial or national level.

To determine the best production site location, the following characteristics for profitability and sustainability should be considered:

- Health benefits for the local population characterized by a high incidence of iron deficiency.
- Expertise of professionals in the fields of Food Science and Nutrition
- Partnership with the Food and Nutrition Research Institute of the Philippine Department of Science and Technology (determining fortification processes, quality assurance and documentation, regulatory affairs, labeling, compliance with Filipino food laws, etc.)
- Marketing expertise that highlights the unique nature of the enterprise: Empowerment of women as owners and operators; and the sustainable, artisan production of high-quality coconut vinegar
- Food safety assurance and compliance with Philippine regulations
- High local market demand
- A marketing strategy focused on serving local markets through broad distribution, such as through sari sari stores
- Unique market niche opportunity without competitors that already control the market
- Locally available supplies, including potable water, adequate power, and a clean and weather-protected product production environment
- Relatively low costs of production compared to potential revenue
- Production processes that reasonably could be undertaken by women who would benefit from training and wages, and over the long-term through operation of a sustainable business.

In line with these factors, New Pathways to Enterprise has initiated the establishment of a production facility for iron-fortified coco-vinegar, with two primary objectives: addressing iron deficiency in local communities and generating additional income for coconut farmers. Iron deficiency is a persistent public health issue in many rural areas, contributing to anemia and related health problems, especially among vulnerable populations. By producing iron-fortified coco-vinegar, this project aims to alleviate these health challenges by providing an affordable, accessible dietary supplement.

Additionally, the project is strategically designed to support coconut farmers by utilizing coconut water, a valuable byproduct typically wasted during copra processing. By converting coconut water into a marketable iron-fortified product farmers' income will increase and farm waste is reduced.



As an initial step, New Pathways has commissioned the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, a government agency, to lead product development and establish standard production processes. The product development has shown promising results and is expected to be completed by mid-2025.

The next crucial activity is to assess and select the optimal production site for the processing facility, as this will impact raw material accessibility, production efficiency, and distribution. Site selection must consider availability of the local women’s livelihood association/group, availability and accessibility of raw materials, and logistical factors to ensure the project can sustainably meet both health and economic goals. Therefore, technical assistance is requested to support the New Pathways point person as they work to coordinate with the Philippine Food and Nutrition Research (FNRI), the Philippine Coconut Authority, women’s livelihood groups, and coconut farmers to move the project from the product research and development phase into small-scale business start-up.

New Pathways intends to develop this business to be owned and operated by women, with a distribution system to reach rural remote villages with packaging in small units for affordability by low-income families.

B. Desired Qualifications of Volunteer

Idea Ideally the volunteer must have the following qualifications:

1. Expertise in strategic planning for agricultural business start-ups. Food processing business expertise is a plus.
2. Expertise in business development, especially determining site locations
3. Expertise in agribusiness, especially food processing and production.
4. Background in food science and nutrition
5. Knowledge of logistics and supply chain management

C. Objectives and Expected Results

Objectives of the Assignment

1. Assessment of 4-6 potential sites for a small-scale coconut vinegar processing production plant.
2. Recommendation of the optimal site location for the processing plant, estimating total costs for New Pathways of no more than \$12,000. (Partnering with existing copra processors or commercial coconut water producers would help to reduce New Pathways’ investment requirements.)



Anticipated Results

1. Enhanced capacity of New Pathways and assisted entrepreneurs to move smoothly from the product research and development phase into small-scale business-start up.
2. Recommendation and rationale for the optimal production plant site.

Expected Deliverables

1. Recommendation of the optimal production plant site for approval by the New Pathways’ Board of Directors.
2. Volunteer end-of-assignment report with recommendations to the host institutions
3. Final debriefing with the host organization (plus key stakeholders) and the Smith Center
4. Conduct in-country outreach events in the Philippines (print, radio, TV presentations, social media, etc.)

D. Resources to be Contributed by Host and Local Partners

New Pathways will assign a focal person to work closely with the volunteer, facilitating coordination with other organizations involved in the volunteer's activities. The host will also provide office space for the volunteer's use during the assignment, along with transportation to and from the hotel.

E. Assignment Logistics and Itinerary*

Accommodations and Logistics

Volunteers should review the country orientation manual and video series for extensive logistics information including pre-departure planning, expense reimbursements, health management, safety & security, and emergency protocols.

Key Points:

- Hotels and airfare will be booked by ALOFT Smith Center and reservation details will be provided to the volunteer before arrival in [country]. Hotels will offer air-conditioning, wireless internet, and proximity to local food options.
- ALOFT Smith Center will reimburse all assignment-related travel expenses
- The ALOFT [country] and/or the host organization will provide transport to assignment site
- All assignment sites will have access to local restaurants and rickshaw/taxi transportation
- Any logistic concerns can be addressed to ALOFT Smith Center using the contact information located in Section F.



Recommended Preparation

- Complete volunteer orientation series
- Review volunteer orientation manual
- Complete volunteer pre-departure checklist
- Bring any videos, posters, PowerPoints, or other materials that are important to your training and activities. If they are in English, please send them to the field staff at least 2 weeks before your assignment to be translated. We recommend you bring these materials on both a USB flash drive and hardcopy.
- Please bring any specialized tools/equipment with you as there may be limited options for acquiring them at the assignment site.
- The ALOFT country office has laptops, Microsoft Office, a projector, flash drives, and other materials that can be used for training and workshops.
- Download [country specific] messenger app to maintain contact with volunteer partner

General Itinerary

Week 1:

- Arrival from the US, check in to the hotel, meeting with F2F ALOFT country coordinator and New Pathways point person to discuss the Scope of Work and activities for three weeks.
- Coordinate with the Philippine Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) to provide recommendations for a smooth transition from their role in product development to New Pathways' role in commercialization set for July 2025.
- Coordinate with the Philippine Coconut Authority to identify and assess potential plant locations on Panay, Negros and Samar Islands, especially comparing the financial costs and access to coconut water at each site. Two general options exist: A) Work with an existing processor of coconut water (commercial scale), such as one on the island of Panay, as the Philippine Coconut Authority has proposed; or B) Work with existing copra (coconut shell) processors/cooperatives who are currently throwing out their coconut water, and instead setting up a coconut water/vinegar processing facility with them.
- Visit and assess potential production sites on Negros Island.

Week 2:

- Visit and assess potential production sites on Panay and Samar Islands.

Week 3 (approx 2 days):

- Preparation of the Site Selection Assessment and Recommendation Report
- Volunteer end-of-assignment report with recommendations to the host institutions
- Final debriefing with the host organization



E. USAID Classification of Volunteer Assistance and Activities

Primary classification for volunteer assistance (select one)

- Technology Transfer
- Organizational Development
- Business/Enterprise Development
- Financial Services
- Environmental Conservation
- Administrative

The primary classification of the type of value chain activity (select one)

- Information and Input Support Services (extension services, input supplies, veterinary services, etc.)
- On-Farm Production
- Processing (primary and final product transformation, storage, transportation, etc.)
- Marketing (branding, advertising, promotion, distribution, sales, etc.)