



ONE ASEAN  
ONE RESPONSE

# THE COLUMN

THE AHA CENTRE NEWS BULLETIN

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## HIGHLIGHT

ASEAN Delivers on  
COVID-19 Humanitarian  
Assistance to Myanmar

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ASEAN Coordinating Centre  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE



Hi Readers,

Amid the ongoing COVID-19 crisis in Myanmar the AHA Centre, in conjunction with the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), has been to the forefront in facilitating the delivery of much-needed medical and other aid. In this volume of The Column we report on how USD 1.1 million worth of medical supplies and equipment were handed over to the MRCS in September. This aid was the first result of the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar that was previously promised at a Pledging Conference hosted by the ASEAN Secretary-General in August in the spirit of "One ASEAN, One Response".

We also take the opportunity to examine the increasingly important role of social media in disaster management. Not only does social media provide instant information that can be essential in ensuring aid and rescue efforts are directed to where they are most needed, it can also be used to assist in fund-raising. However, disaster-management professionals must always remain wary about hoaxes and fake news.

Meanwhile Batch Seven of the ACE Programme continues apace. We hear from several participants in this year's programme, from a variety of ASEAN Member States, about how much they appreciate the leadership training they have received from the programme. Included among these is Lawrence Anthony "LA" Dimailig who tells us about his dedication to disaster management born of his experiences following Typhoon Haiyan in Tacloban in the Philippines in 2013. In his free time LA is equally dedicated to marine conservation.

Innovation consultant Tobias "Toby" Wosowiecki of launchlabs also explains how innovation and culture change in organizations can be harnessed to improve coordination in disaster management. Launchlabs was an active partner in the exciting three-day AHackathon Competition staged by the AHA Centre. Toby highlights the need for a people-focused approach to problem-solving in disaster management and how the Asian culture often provides this approach through a tradition of working together in collaboration. This approach was very much on display in the exciting AHackathon in which teams from ASEAN Member States competed to showcase the innovative solutions they came up with in the areas of logistics, emergency response, coordination and communication in disaster management.

The Editor

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Hegarty

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR**  
Yohan Andreas

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**  
Fauzi Primassalam

**PUBLISHED BY**  
The AHA Centre

**ACTING EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
Dipo Summa

# ASEAN DELIVERS ON COVID-19 HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO MYANMAR



The AHA Centre handed over ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance to the Central Women's Hospital, in Yangon, Myanmar. The assistance comprised of medical supplies and equipment.

In a virtual ceremony held on 15 September, USD 1.1 million worth of medical supplies and equipment were handed over to the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) in support of that nation's COVID-19 response. Contributing to the implementation of the "Five Point Consensus" on Myanmar agreed at the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting in April this year, the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar aims to address the most pressing humanitarian needs of the people of Myanmar.

The AHA Centre, as the operational lead, facilitated the delivery of the assistance, while, the MRCS, as a local partner, supported ASEAN by facilitating the request for tax-exemption and customs-clearance with the Myanmar local authorities, as well as providing temporary storage and last-mile distribution of the medical supplies and equipment to the communities in need in Myanmar.

The handover, which was attended by the Secretary-General of ASEAN H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, the Executive Director of the AHA Centre Mr. Lee Yam Ming, and representatives of ASEAN Member States and donor countries, was the first result of the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance to Myanmar that was previously promised at a Pledging Conference hosted by the ASEAN Secretary-General.

At the Pledging Conference held on 18 August, Dato Lim Jock Hoi had called for a strong show of support for the people of Myanmar, in the spirit of "One ASEAN, One Response". The support subsequently handed over to the MRCS is a concrete manifestation of this spirit, provided as it was by the governments of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey and Temasek Foundation International. The next batch is expected to be provided by Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, and Viet Nam, along with other donor countries and organisations.

Written by: Michael Hegarty | Photo Credit: AHA Centre



**1.1 MILLION**  
WORTH OF MEDICAL SUPPLIES  
AND EQUIPMENT

Some USD 8 million in monetary pledges and in-kind contributions of medicine, medical supplies and equipment to assist Myanmar in containing the spread of the COVID-19 virus was raised at the conference. During the conference Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General to Myanmar Ms. Christine Schraner Burgener, on behalf of the UN Secretary-General H.E. Antonio Guterres, said,

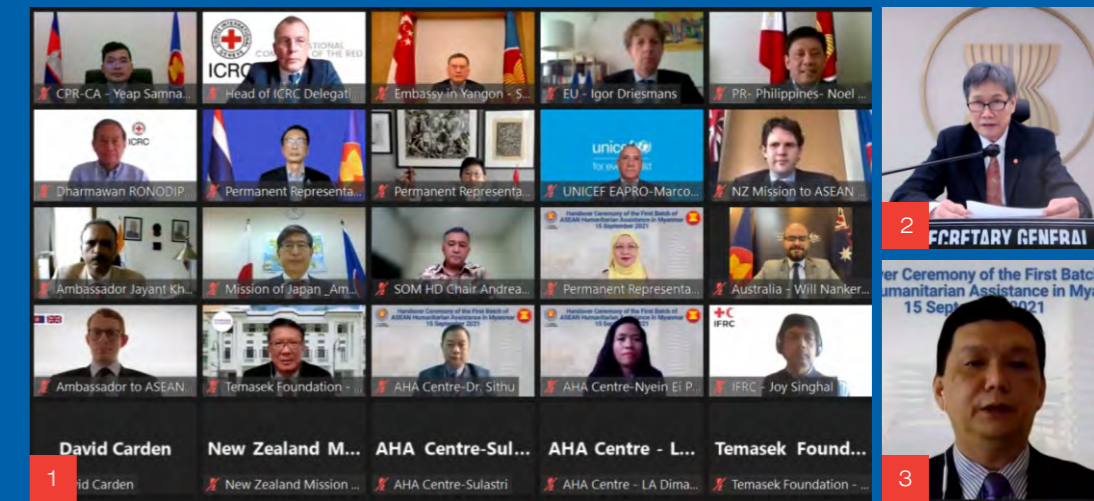
UN humanitarian actors on the ground led by the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator will work to strengthen cooperation and seek complementarity with ASEAN's AHA Centre.

In his remarks at the handover of the aid, Dato Lim Jock Hoi underscored the importance of extending a helping hand to the people of Myanmar in the realisation of a people-oriented, people-centred ASEAN Community. He thanked the five donor countries and Temasek Foundation International, and expressed his confidence that the assistance would alleviate the sufferings of the people of Myanmar in this critical time.

The Special Envoy of the ASEAN Chair on Myanmar, Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof, in his recorded remarks at the handover said the COVID-19 pandemic was "the common enemy" that exposed the vulnerabilities not only of our socio-economic structures, but the fragility of human life. In his remarks, he urged the international community to continue giving support and to complement ASEAN's efforts, further highlighting that the "provision of humanitarian assistance is a true reflection of the 'ASEAN Way', and demonstrated our commitment to help our ASEAN family when they are in need."

ASEAN's operational plan led by the AHA Centre will focus firstly on life-saving measures through the provision of immediate needs towards the COVID-19 response and mitigation, and thereafter proceed to address life-sustaining priorities of broader humanitarian needs. ASEAN's humanitarian assistance will be supported by humanitarian partners in Myanmar, including the MRCS.

Sources:  
<https://asean.org/asean-delivers-medical-support-to-myanmars-response-to-covid-19/>  
<https://asean.org/close-to-usd8-million-in-pledges-raised-to-support-aseans-humanitarian-assistance-in-myanmar/>



1-3 The handover ceremony of the first batch of ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance in Myanmar was held virtually on 15 September 2021. The ceremony was attended by the Secretary-General of ASEAN H.E. Dato Lim Jock Hoi, the Executive Director of the AHA Centre Mr. Lee Yam Ming, and representatives of ASEAN Member States and donors.

4-6 The first batch delivery of the ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance came from the AHA Centre procured items using cash contribution from ASEAN Member States as well as in-kind contribution from Indonesia, Thailand, Turkey, and Temasek Foundation.



**433 / 100,000** AFFECTED BY DISASTERS | **17 / 100,000** DISPLACED DUE TO DISASTERS

REGIONAL TALLY	SEPTEMBER 2021	SEPTEMBER IN FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE
• Number of recorded significant disasters	161	25
• Number of affected people	2,891,926	1,992,305
• Number of internally displaced people	110,163	214,571
• Number of damaged houses	98,467	18,955
• Number of fatalities	59	52
• Number of injured people	79	151
• Number of missing people	10	37

(covering the period of Weeks 35-39 in 2021 and 2016-2020 average)

# MONTHLY DISASTER REVIEW AND OUTLOOK

DISASTER MONITORING & ANALYSIS (DMA) UNIT, AHA CENTRE  
**SEPTEMBER 2021**

## GENERAL REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 2021

For the month of September 2021, a total of **161** disasters were reported. The ASEAN Member States that were affected were Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Most of the disasters (69.57%) occurred in Indonesia but Thailand where only 7.45% of the total disasters for September 2021 occurred, comprised more than half of the total number of affected people (63.47%) for the month. The share of the disaster-affected people for other ASEAN Member States was as follows: (1) Cambodia-3.28%, (2) Lao PDR-0.01%, (3) Malaysia-0.03%, (4) Philippines-19.19%, and (5) Viet Nam-1.69%. September 2021 saw disasters **affecting 433 per 100,000 people\*** and **displacing 17 per 100,000 people\*** in the region, nearly five times and 17 times more than the previous month, respectively. September 2021 accounted for **17.65% of the total disasters** reported so far in the current year.

Most of the disasters that occurred in September 2021 were floods (63.98%) and this is consistent with September of the previous year and September on a five-year average (2016-2020). September 2021 saw hydrometeorological disasters (drought, flood, rain-induced landslides, storm, winds) affecting 99.9% of the total affected persons for the month. The reported disasters in the region for September 2021 in comparison with the historical data (average for September 2016-2020) indicates that there were **6.44x more reported disasters; 1.45x more people affected; 1.95x fewer people displaced; 5.19x more houses affected to some extent; 1.14x more lives lost; 1.91x fewer people suffering injuries; and lastly, 3.7x fewer people reported missing.**

Sources: ASEAN Disaster Information Network (ADINet), ASEAN Disaster Monitoring and Response System (DMRS), ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC), Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana (BNPB) – Indonesia, Agensi Pengurusan Bencana Negara (NADMA) – Malaysia, Department of Disaster Management (DDM) – Myanmar, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) – Philippines, Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) – Thailand, Viet Nam Disaster Management Authority (VNDMA) - Viet Nam, Badan Meteorologi, Klimatologi dan Geofisika (BMKG) – Indonesia, Pusat Vulkanologi dan Mitigasi Bencana Geologi (PVMBG) – Indonesia, Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH) – Myanmar, Philippine Institute for Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) – Philippines, Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) - Philippines

Geophysically, **17 significant earthquakes** (Magnitude  $\geq 5.0$ ) were reported by Indonesia's Badan Meteorologi, Klimatologi dan Geofisika (BMKG), Myanmar's Department of Meteorology and Hydrology (DMH), and the Philippine Institute for Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS). Recent volcanic activity was reported for Ili Lewotolok and Merapi (Alert Level III), Semeru, Dukono, Ibu and Krakatau (Alert Level II) in Indonesia by the Pusat Vulkanologi dan Mitigasi Bencana Geologi (PVMBG), and Taal (Alert Level 2) and Kanlaon (Alert Level 1) by PHIVOLCS. None have resulted in disasters but are being continuously monitored.

\*computed based on 2020 population data from worldometers.com

## ANALYSIS

According to the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC), compared with the average value from 2001-2020, during September 2021, rainfall was above-average over much of the ASEAN region except for northern Sumatra, northern Philippines, parts of northern Myanmar, peninsular Malaysia, Borneo and Papua (which received rainfall from below- to near-average). The largest positive anomalies (wetter conditions) were detected over eastern mainland Southeast Asia for both satellite-derived rainfall estimate datasets (GSMaP-NRT and CMORPH-Blended). This is associated with the developments of Tropical Storm CONSON and Tropical Storm DIANMU which made landfall in early September and late September respectively. As a result, hydrometeorological disaster events were reported for numerous areas in Thailand and Viet Nam.

## DISASTER COMPARISON IN NUMBERS

	WHITE BAR   SEPTEMBER 2021	RED BAR   SEPTEMBER IN FIVE-YEAR AVERAGE*
Drought	4	2
Earthquake	1	1
Flood	103	10
Landslide	23	3
Storm	9	3
Wind	21	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>22</b>

Cambodia	3	-
Indonesia	112	7
Lao PDR	1	1
Malaysia	3	-
Myanmar	-	3
Philippines	19	5
Thailand	12	2
Viet Nam	11	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>22</b>

(covering the period of Weeks 35-39 in 2021 and 2016-2020 average)  
 \*Values in column are rounded-off to whole figure

## SEASONAL OUTLOOK

For the coming month of October, it is predicted that wetter conditions than normal will set in progressively in the ASEAN region due to the transition to intermonsoon conditions taking place. For the last quarter of the year (October to December), the prevailing southeasterly or southwesterly winds over the ASEAN region are expected to weaken prior to a change in direction to blow from the northeast or northwest.

For the upcoming quarter, according to the ASEAN Specialised Meteorological Centre (ASMC), there will be an increased chance of rainfall over much of the ASEAN region with the southern and eastern parts of the maritime continent having the highest likelihood for said conditions. Models are predicting La Niña-like conditions, but the tropical region of the Pacific has yet to show consistent La Niña-like conditions. The negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) detected in the past month is forecast to return to neutral before December 2021. For this time of the year, a negative IOD tends to bring above-average rainfall in the southern ASEAN region. During the last quarter of 2021 also, warmer-than-usual temperatures

are expected for much of the maritime continent. In the same period, the northeastern parts of mainland Southeast Asia are predicted to experience below- to near-normal temperatures associated with the northeast monsoon surges.

Considering the persistence of the negative IOD event until December 2021, the progressive settling of wetter conditions over the ASEAN region due to the transition to intermonsoon conditions, and the disaster data records from the ASEAN Disaster Information Network, the number of disaster events (particularly hydrometeorological disasters) and the affected persons, are expected to increase in frequency and number respectively, as the year ends. National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs), relevant authorities and agencies, and the public are advised to take necessary preparations and actions accordingly.

\*Note from ASMC: The qualitative outlook is assessed for the region in general and based on the latest runs from models provided by the SEA RCC-Network LRF node. For specific updates on the national scale, the relevant ASEAN National Meteorological and Hydrological Services should be consulted.

**DISCLAIMER**  
 The AHA Centre's estimation is based on data and information shared by National Disaster Management Organisations (NDMOs) and other relevant agencies from ASEAN Member States, international organisations, and news agencies. Further information on each recorded significant disaster, description, and detail of data and information are available at: <http://adinet.ahacentre.org/reports>.

Written by: Keith Paolo Landicho, Sadhu Zukhruf Janottama, Lawrence Anthony Dimailig

# SOCIAL MEDIA IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Social media plays an increasingly important role in disaster management. Some would even argue that it has played a vital role in recent years, with lives saved and much needed food, water and supplies delivered to where they are needed most.



While major news media companies provide ample coverage when a disaster occurs anywhere in the world, information gets posted and exchanged at a much faster pace on social media. Text, pictures and videos get published at lightning speed and often make it to TV, even if they are not of the usual broadcast quality.



A case in point is the earthquake that devastated Haiti in 2010 when 2,000 posts on Twitter, Facebook and other social media proved critical in guiding rescue efforts.



When an earthquake struck the island of Lombok in Indonesia, social media was key in bringing help to the villages that were affected most. Many of the pictures and videos of the devastation posted on Instagram were also helpful in raising funds.



There is also the "Safety Check" feature that Facebook has added. More and more people now use it to tell their social media network that they are safe and unharmed. It has already been used by 9 million people in the United States when hurricanes have struck.

Written by: Judith Garcia Meese



Celebrities have been known to turn to social media for fund-raising, appealing to their fan base. US celebrity James Woods used his Twitter account during the fires that ravaged California in 2019. Woods used Twitter to post reports and updates that resulted in several people being reunited with their loved ones.



As ordinary people become journalists, a lot of information gets shared and published. Disasters get reported as they happen. And with this wealth of information, which is posted more often in real-time, rescue organisations and agencies are able use this to map out relief efforts.



While there is the freedom of sharing information, there is also the issue of authenticity and credibility. "Fake news" has now proliferated to the extent that a lot of rescue groups treat social media posts with caution. Other posts can be misleading too. A picture of one flooded street cannot give you the overall situation in a community. But while this has become an issue, it still cannot be denied that social media plays a significant role in disseminating information and bringing aid to where it is much needed.

Source:  
<https://www.preventionweb.net/news/how-social-media-shaping-disaster-governance>  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/information-age/how-social-media-can-help-during-crisis/>  
<https://preparecenter.org/topic/social-media-disasters/>

# LAUNCHLABS



Collaboration is all that you need, collaboration is the main thing you do to provide the help. The main goal is to get the help to affected areas fast.



The AHA Centre recently held the AHACKathon Competition, where several teams from different countries worked on developing a mobile app to find solutions in disaster management. The exciting three-day event would not have been possible without the help of partners like launchlabs.

Innovation consultant Tobias Wosowiecki explained what launchlabs is all about. "What launchlabs is doing is all around innovation and also around cultural change. The world is becoming more and more complex. We are helping clients and organisations act like successful start-ups, which means they are really agile and flexible as they are changing the culture. And how they are changing their solutions, like when they are getting information from end-users. We are doing that with the approach of agile frameworks, like design thinking, scrum, lean start-up."

For this approach, launchlabs has three pillars. "The first pillar is called learninglabs, where the teams will learn to understand and apply methods for human-centered and agile innovation development, enabling them to develop new products, services or business models that their customers really need in a playful and risk-free manner" said Tobias, or Toby to his friends and colleagues.

The second pillar is called projectlabs, where clients change the way they approach complex strategic and innovation project without a clear solution path. Launchlabs facilitates and enables the entire innovation process as experts for agile work from the first planning session all the way to implementation. "We are helping people to create their own ideas. This is our main work.

And with that we are using different kinds of frameworks, like what we did with the AHACKathon. At the end of a specific time, we come up with prototypes that we can test and implement in the system," he said.

The third pillar is called culturelabs, which is all about building a sustainable agile corporate culture. "The culture needs to grow and change sometimes. We are helping our clients create and design agile work environments. Especially now that we're going through a pandemic. We're creating virtual working environments. All of that means change. In this kind of field, we become more like coaches. And all of this needs communication. That is the underlying theme of these three pillars."

Launchlabs partnered with the AHA Centre for the HELIX AHACKathon Competition. The challenge of using technology to find solutions for disaster management was posed to students from different countries of the ASEAN region. "Before you can start a hackathon, you need a problem. This is what we created together with the AHA Centre. We created six different challenges that teams could choose from. We needed to find the right problems. Part of the pre-work was to find the right problems and frame challenges. So it's easier to understand what the problem is, try to solve it as well, and who are the users inside it," Toby explained.

Written by : Judith Garcia Meese | Photo Credit : AHA Centre and Launchlabs

Students from the different countries of the ASEAN region joined the three-day competition, forming teams and collaborating among themselves in coming up with the best app to solve disaster-management issues. The teams showcased past disasters in their respective countries and the solutions they came up with in the areas of logistics, emergency response, coordination and communication.

"All the teams focused on the users. That was what we tried to achieve. In this context, when we are trying to solve problems, we are not solving it for ourselves, but for other people. We are trying to understand the situation. They designed the platform but never really lost their focus on the end user."

Being part-Indonesian, Toby understood the cultural aspects of handling, mentoring and coaching teams for the AHACKathon. "We should not lose the connection with people when looking for solutions. With my experience, when it comes to collaboration, the Asian culture is supporting it. Asia has a strong culture of working together," he said.

"The AHA Centre does really important work. I have learned many things about disasters through this partnership. We have a better understanding of how to solve them. I think that Germany could have handled the recent disaster in a better way, which is mainly due to the fact that we are not so experienced with such disasters" said Toby, recalling the July 2021 floods that inundated parts of Germany. He notes that in Asian countries, people come together, help each other and collaborate during disasters. "I think this collaboration can really help us, especially the European collaboration with the AHA Centre. We have much to learn from Asian countries."



(R-L) Tobias 'Toby' Wosowiecki with Michael Koegel, Design Thinking Coach and Organizer of Impact Week, in one of the Q&A sessions with participants of the AHACKathon.



(L-R) Michael and Toby showing what the Mural is all about during the AHACKathon competition.

"Collaboration is all that you need, collaboration is the main thing you do to provide the help. The main goal is to get the help to affected areas fast." On his views of the role of technology in disaster management, "Technology is definitely helping us organise ourselves. But what I also believe is that we should not lose focus on people affected by these disasters, not lose the personal connection. This is the challenge we have to tackle with integrating technology more. Technology solves problems, but the people who are affected in flooded areas, they still need that human contact," he added.

**BRUNEI DARUSSALAM****NOOR  
HAZMAH  
ROSLI**

Tactical Combat Casualty Care with US Navy

Brunei's 33<sup>rd</sup> National Day in 2017  
(as ambulance commander)

**I have been working as a paramedic since 2012 with the Emergency Medical Ambulance Services, the Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam. In 2015, I was selected as an ambulance commander to lead the emergency-response teams during Brunei's 33<sup>rd</sup> National Day. I was then promoted to paramedic training officer and professional development in 2018 and was given greater responsibility to take care of all the paramedics nationwide in terms of their training and competency levels. On top of that, I have worked in high-pressure environments in life-threatening emergency situations, especially during this Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, I have also collaborated and worked closely with academic institutions and agencies in Brunei to expand and promote learning opportunities in paramedic education for our future generations. I hope to deliver my very best virtually in the ACE Programme in the context of capacity building and adopting best practices in disaster management.**

When I was told about joining Batch Seven of the ACE Programme, I honestly did not know what it was all about until emails began to arrive in my inbox. I was told it was a good opportunity for me to learn about leadership in disaster management in ASEAN countries but I was still uncertain about it. Good thoughts came later and I asked myself "why not?" To me, the ACE Programme is a selective and prestigious programme that any future leader should appreciate. As a result of the training, I am able to maximise my understanding into becoming an effective future leader.

Written by: Noor Hazmah Rosli, ACE Programme Batch Seven- Brunei Darussalam

Photo Credit: Noor Hazmah Rosli

We are now in our eighth week of the ACE Programme and let me tell you, it has been a roller coaster ride for all of us since Day One. So far, we have covered lessons/modules on English communication in disaster management (ECDM); critical incident leadership (CIL); gender, resilience, inclusion and diversity (GRID); the international humanitarian system and ASEAN disaster mechanisms and there is lots more to come. The learning approach is different in comparison with previous ACE Programmes due to the pandemic and there has not been any physical contact yet among us.

So far, it has been a successful and exciting journey as we are using adult learning methodologies in a safe learning environment and utilising online techniques to maximise our learning capacity despite the challenges faced along the way. This blended learning practice is equally as engaging as face-to-face sessions. We have learnt so much from disaster experts and we have yet to find ourselves and to create our own leadership identity through this programme. On top of that, we are also learning through real life experiences from colleagues in other ASEAN Member States who are in the same boat as we are. Indeed, experience is a great teacher.

I am very grateful to everyone who has been involved in the ACE Programme, and it is very true that this is a golden experience for the future leaders of tomorrow in disaster management. Following up on what I have said, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the ACE Programme partners, JAIF as the main funder of this programme, as well as the support from the New Zealand Government, United States Government, United Nations partners, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, GNS Science, AADMER Partnership Group, RedR Australia, the United States Forest Service, academic institutions: MIIS, AIM and APCSS. And most importantly, the AHA Centre for making this happen and possible in preparing us to master various aspects of disaster management.

We still have to soldier on until April 2022. I really hope that travel may be permitted in the near future and I will be able to meet my fellow ACE family members face-to-face to continue learning and supporting each other. I am also looking forward to building and strengthening my networks and collaborating with other people from different backgrounds in disaster management.

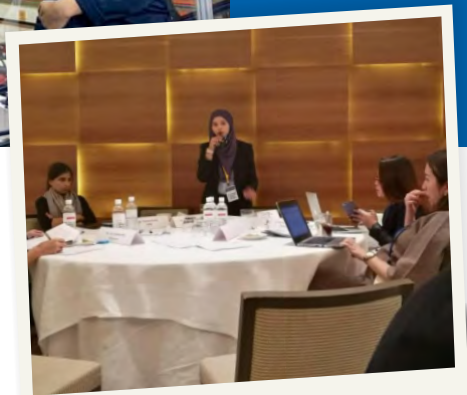
To me, this is just the beginning and every day is a learning experience. I wish all the best to the other warriors! And I hope the COVID-19 pandemic will be over soon so we can meet each other in the near future. Cheers!

MALAYSIA

# SITI NUR AFIQAH



This photo was taken during a visit to a COVID-19 Low-risk quarantine and treatment centre (PKRC) in Johor



Siti Nur Afiah attending ASEAN workshop on gender based violence in Singapore

Some might wonder why PDNA? It was because the course was related to my current position in the post-disaster sector. Even though I am not directly under the section in charge of this matter, it is related and relevant to my job scope. It was fascinating to discover tools and templates to carry out the PDNA, which may be adapted and adopted to our system in calculating the costs and losses in any disaster. The PDNA process is government-led and government-owned, but we can access technical support and facilitation from the European Union, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and other stakeholders as determined and requested by our respective governments. The PDNA process involves the participation of the affected population, local authorities, NGOs, donors, civil society and the private sector. I believe it is an excellent platform to gather all relevant input from related stakeholders. Key sectors assessed are social, including housing, health and nutrition; education and cultural heritage; productive issues, including agriculture and irrigation, commerce and industry, and tourism; infrastructure, including transport, energy, telecommunications, water and

Photo Credit : Siti Nur Afiah

sanitation; and cross-cutting concerns, including gender and social inclusion, the environment, social protection, livelihoods, disaster-risk reduction and governance. Due to limited time, we only got to study two key sectors, housing and cross-cutting concerns. It is hoped that we will get another opportunity to learn how to use the other key sectors in accessing the costs and losses in our countries. Overall, it was an enjoyable and safe learning environment and experience that allowed us to express our opinions and thoughts in a non-judgemental environment. I cannot wait for the next course to treasure the knowledge and experience, even though it is online!

Throughout September – October 2021, we were given the opportunity to study several interesting topics related to disaster management in Batch Seven of the ACE Programme. We started with the gender, inclusion, resilience and diversity course. We were introduced to the Humanitarian Inclusion Standards that help organisations tackle the critical issue of how to include those most at risk in emergencies and prevent anyone from being left behind.

We got to learn about the importance of the nine inclusion standards and how to improve inclusivity by applying the sector standards. Besides that, the course addressed sexual gender-based violence and child-protection issues too. Through this course, we got to relate to real-world situations where a leader can recognize the different impacts of hazards on various levels of capacity, vulnerability and exclusion among the affected communities. The Programme then continued with the international humanitarian system course; ASEAN disaster management; system and design thinking; humanitarian diplomacy; civil-military coordination; camp coordination camp management; and finally the course that I enjoyed the most, post disaster needs assessment (PDNA).

Written by: Siti Nur Afiah, ACE Programme Batch Seven- Malaysia





# LAWRENCE ANTHONY DIMAILIG

At first glance, Lawrence Anthony Dimailig, “LA” to his friends and colleagues, could still pass for a university student. But his youthful looks belie his years of experience in disaster and risk management, his passion for it and how he regards it as his life’s calling.




After seeing the devastation to life and property that Super Typhoon Haiyan left in its wake in 2013, in Tacloban, Philippines, “I made a pact with myself. That was the time I felt that I’d dedicate my life to disaster management. This should be the last time I should see something like that,” says LA. Only military planes were allowed in and out of the island after the typhoon struck in November 2013. “I was aboard the first set of C130s that landed in Tacloban City.” A few days later, he found himself in the back of a military truck riding through the streets, and he remembers it clearly to this day. “You couldn’t distinguish debris from bodies on the road. We passed by what looked to me like a pile of garbage covered with newspapers. As we went past it, the newspaper flew away, revealing the body of a child, about 7-10 years of age. It broke my heart. I vowed then that I would devote my life to saving people’s lives, that this should be the last time I should see something like that. I made a pact with myself that I’d dedicate my life to disaster management. I had an epiphany.”

These were the important experiences that led LA to pursue humanitarian work and disaster management. But his journey in this field started much earlier, while he

was pursuing a degree in geography. He developed his skills at mapping and spatial analysis, which eventually led him to humanitarian work. “Mapping is my craft,” he says. “After university, I entered into public service in May 2013. Five months into my first job, I was asked to map all evacuation centres in Zamboanga after the military siege, then again in Bohol when the big earthquake struck the island. I was tasked with mapping all evacuation centres, doing some logistical planning so that the delivery of relief items was efficient.” This was the first time he used his skills for disaster management. This was the point when LA realised that his craft of making maps could actually touch people’s lives. And that was just the start.

LA joined the AHA Centre in January 2019 as a Disaster Monitoring and Analysis Officer. Seven months later, he was promoted to Assistant Director for Disaster Monitoring and Analysis. “It opened up new perspectives to me. The AHA Centre is a coordinating centre that has the regional advantage and unique opportunity of linking one country to another. We do things on a broader scale. We have the time to step back, see the bigger picture, propose new things to make disaster management better and improve the knowledge base.”



 Teaching the ACE Programme Batch 6 students about the use of emergency telecommunications equipment.



Posing by the 1/3 miniature model of the Japanese Advanced Land Observation Satellite 2 (ALOS-2) during a study-visit to Japan

Written by : Judith Garcia Meese | Photo Credit: Lawrence Anthony Dimailig

He adds that there is more access to resources and higher technology, but realises that a disaster response has to be contextualised. “Things that can work in the Philippines may not work in Indonesia. There are some things that can work in a certain way and you can import knowledge from one country to another.” At the AHA Centre, LA feels he can also help facilitate learning. His first field deployment as ASEAN-ERAT was to Sulawesi in 2018, and his most recent was in 2019 to Lao PDR before the pandemic broke out.

In between humanitarian work, LA finds time to pursue another passion, free diving. Initially, the blue waters of the sea evoked thoughts of the endless deep and its unknown denizens. But all that changed when he took up free diving upon the advice of a close friend. “I had to train first. I went to Apo Reef in the Philippines the first time I did it and saw a huge sea turtle. Wow! The world beneath the waterline was so majestic. It mesmerised me.”



Free diving off the coast of Bali, Indonesia

While his new passion led him to discover life beneath the sea, it also exposed him to the destruction humans have caused through garbage and plastic. “I saw creatures wrapped in plastic. We are destroying the environment with the deeds of the bad and the inaction of good people. Now, when we go free diving, every dive is a clean-up dive.” LA is hopeful every time he visits coastal communities that he can get to talk to locals on subjects like community-based waste management systems, and with other people who are equally passionate about preserving the environment

LA is fortunate to have discovered his calling early on. He is excited for what is in store with humanitarian work through the enabling power of technology. “The AHA Centre has the ‘minds’ to build and impart more knowledge, develop artificial intelligence and machine learning towards finding solutions.” Through the AHA Centre, he hopes that ASEAN countries will become self-reliant, stronger and more resilient in dealing with whatever challenges the future holds.

# ONE ASEAN ONE RESPONSE



## THE AHA CENTRE OFFICE

Graha BNPB, 13th Floor  
Jl. Pramuka Kav. 38  
Jakarta - 13120  
INDONESIA



[www.ahacentre.org](http://www.ahacentre.org)



[comm@ahacentre.org](mailto:comm@ahacentre.org)



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## ABOUT ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established on 8 August 1967. The Member States of the Association are Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The ASEAN Secretariat is based in Jakarta, Indonesia. As set out in the ASEAN Declaration, the aims and purposes of ASEAN among others are to accelerate the economic growth, social progress, cultural development, to promote regional peace and stability as well as to improve active collaboration and cooperation.

## ABOUT THE AHA CENTRE

The AHA Centre is an inter-governmental organisation established on 17 November 2011, through the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the AHA Centre by ASEAN Foreign Ministers, witnessed by the ASEAN Heads of State / Government from 10 ASEAN Member States: Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Viet Nam. The Centre was set-up to facilitate the cooperation and coordination among ASEAN Member States and with the United Nations and international organisations for disaster management and emergency response in the ASEAN region.

## ABOUT AADMER

The ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER) is a legally-binding regional policy framework for cooperation, coordination, technical assistance and resource mobilisation in all aspects of disaster management in the 10 ASEAN Member States. The objective of AADMER is to provide an effective mechanism to achieve substantial reduction of disaster losses in lives and in social, economic and environmental assets, and to jointly respond to emergencies through concerted national efforts.