

AMURT & AMURTEL in the PHILIPPINES



Empowering People Inspiring Change



Super-typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan Response

Update: 1st January, 2014

Happy New Year – a healthy and joyful 2014 to you and your family. May your noble resolutions bring all-round welfare to you and to those you share life with.

It's been nearly 2 months since the Typhoon struck the coastal areas of central Philippines. A casual observer looking down a main street might get the impression life begins to regain a semblance of normality. Streets are mostly cleared of rubble; a few areas even have electricity. Shops and businesses reopen – a lucky few can even enjoy their favourite fast foods or an ice cream again. The more fortunate minority resume their work and have the means to avail of what the market offers – despite the inflated prices.

But for most their homes, schools, churches, markets, communities and livelihoods remain devastated and destroyed for the foreseeable future. The piled rubble and ruins remind all of what so recently was lost. To many, their existence seems dependent upon the compassion and offerings of others.

In light of this harsh material and financial reality however their resilient spirits soar. Several simple handwritten signboards so nicely assert: ***“Homeless or Roofless, but not Hopeless!”***

The Filipino people are widely known for their gentle, caring and cheerful nature. It's such a pleasure to work here, to be partners with our newly made friends in the process of their own self recovery and renewal.



Several large boats were pushed by the storm 12 meters from the pier in Tacloban onto land and destroyed houses in their path.

Celia's Story: AMURT's base camp in Tacloban is at LNK Enterprises. Maria Celia Go is an employee of LNK whose family was raised and lived in Baranguay Santa Cruz, in the Tanauan municipality, about 30 minutes south of Tacloban. Celia's parents survived Yolanda by clinging to a sturdy bamboo tree that grew directly behind a larger coconut tree. They witnessed the 24 foot high wall of water that destroyed their home, the local school and so much more. Celia lost her sister and 11 other cousins, aunts and uncles. Only after already mourning the loss, her sister's body was found while clearing away rubble. Santa Cruz lost more than 20% of its population of just over 1,000 residents.

Celia has been instrumental in helping AMURT reach and serve survivors in Santa Cruz and other more distant Baranguay. As an active volunteer her efforts meant people's immediate needs such as food and medical care were taken care of. She now helps us liaise with community leaders and members to discuss and plan future steps.



Celia: *"Being a volunteer I feel so blessed that I had the chance to help my fellow victims, especially my co-Barangays through AMURT and FVRC* team. Seeing people smile whenever they receive food makes me feel really happy.*

"I have lost all the things I had, but I am still very thankful - because I have been part of this group!"

*FVRC: Federation of Volunteers through Radio Communication, one of AMURT's partner NGOs in the Tacloban area.

AMURT selected Santa Cruz as a focus point (900 residents, including 207 families with 269 children). The first priority is to restore and improve their water supply system: five public taps all of which were destroyed. Livelihood restoration is another form of assistance under discussion. Bayanihan, or communal labor, and mutual self-help is agreed to as a fundamental principle for all future joint efforts.

There is a vast need matched by an equally great potential to help people jumpstart their capacity to generate income. Livelihood and adequate shelter are now their top priorities. Each of these endeavors requires your continued, generous support.



One of the many broken homes in Santa Cruz



A simple hut or tent is home for most

Xmas Distribution – On 23rd December AMURT and FVRC volunteers provided some Xmas cheer for the families of Santa Cruz through the distribution of toys and games to the children, foods especially requested for the traditional Nochebuena (Christmas Eve) dinner and household items including floor mats, bed sheets (as blanket) and kerosene jar lamps. Food items included fresh vegetables and fruits which many had not eaten since the storm. The following sports and recreation equipment was presented to the Barangway Captain for community use: 3 basketballs (with two nets), 1 volleyball, 1 soccer ball, 2 badminton sets, a ping pong set and 2 chess sets as well as a basic set of 1st aid and medical supplies.



Meeting with and medical supplies to Barangway leaders Brain Gym as psychosocial support to children

AMURT / KNH Partnership in Eastern Samar –

Rebuilding Houses, Schools and Day Care Centers; Restoring Healthy Minds and Right Livelihoods...

AMURT's efforts in the municipalities of Salcedo, Mercedes and Guiuan in Eastern Samar are lead by Dada Nirmalakrsnananda (Kurt Behringer) and Didi Ananda Shubra (Sylvia Cabanban). Each has assembled a local team with specialised skills. This is the region where Yolanda first hit the shores of this country.



AMURT's civil engineering staff manages the demolition, renovation and construction of schools, day care centers and houses.

In the first phase of work 31 day care centers and 34 schools will be either repaired or built anew. In two neighbouring Baranguays, 120 new houses will be built and 58 will be repaired. Fifty percent of these new houses are for families being relocated to safer areas, further from the beaches where they previously resided.



What remains of the Buabua Day Care Center... and the Lusod Day Care Center as it's always been.

Some schools need new roofs and ceilings, some require complete rebuilding...



Our psychosocial support team visits four schools in four different Baranguay each day bringing joy and creative expression to as many as 120 children daily. Games, song and dance uplift the spirit, convey moral lessons and are great fun for the kids. An additional five Baranguays will now be added in 2014.

Five teachers have been trained and four more will soon be added. Training in Trauma/Stress Debriefing was completed this past weekend. Fifteen children receive special attention through counseling.



Didi trains and works with teachers, social workers and a child psychologist to provide psychosocial support for traumatized children and families

Donor/Volunteer Visits: Representatives of Ananda Marga from Singapore and Taiwan recently came to participate in ongoing service. Chapters in both these countries have contributed significantly to the work. Didi Ananda Arushi and Seah Khai Heok (Sampriya) assisted in Samar and Leyte.

Wang Hsu Liang (Sevavrata) visited Tacloban/Tanauan on behalf of the Ananda Marga Social Welfare Foundation – Taiwan, and met AMURT board members in Manila.



Wang Hsu Liang serving food in Tanauan



Didis Ananda Arushi and Ananda Shubra with children in Eastern Samar

Other news: An AMURT/EL team distributed cooked and packaged food in Aklan Province on Panay Island.

Amurt Davao as part of a multi-group endeavor organized by Davao City Local Government, distributed cooked food, children's toys, conducted entertainment programs and kid's games in five barangays in Ormoc, Leyte. In a four days operation, the group served 3,023 individuals. They also inaugurated a livelihood program by awarding three fishing boats to local fishermen while commissioning the manufacture of more boats. For photos please visit: www.amurtphilippines.org

Our continued efforts depend upon your kind contributions. All funds received are deeply appreciated.

For additional information please visit: www.amurt.net

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Donations can be sent directly to:

AMURT in the Philippines

BDO Bank - Anonas Kamias Branch (US Dollar Savings Account)

Account No. 103980077734, Routing No: BNORPHMM (same as SWIFTCODE or IBAN) Branch

Address: Anonas Corner K6, Quezon City

International donations under \$100 can be sent via this Paypal link:

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