



*Empowering People Inspiring Change*



## Super-typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan Response

**Update: February, 2014**

In the language of the UN & NGO community, the phase has shifted from 'relief' to 'early recovery'. The distribution of food and basic needs continues by local government and NGOs, churches, etc. – and indeed is very appreciated by all those who still need and receive such assistance.

On a follow up visit in mid-January to Barangay Santa Cruz near Tacloban, fresh vegetables were given to nearly 200 families and sandals to children and some needy adults. We coordinate with the community, Oxfam, and the local water authority to rebuild and improve the delivery system and the five public taps that were destroyed in the storm.



The main focus now is on rebuilding – homes, schools, livelihoods and basic services such as water and electricity. Our AMURT team in Eastern Samar was one of the first to initiate such important projects having begun over two months ago. By comparison there are still many larger agencies and NGOs that are only just now starting to address community rebuilding needs.

On January 17, the Minister of Education of the Republic of the Philippines, Mr. Armin Luistro, visited the disaster area. AMURT / KNH were the only organizations introduced to him in Eastern Samar. Our partnership is the only player in the Education Cluster providing permanent repair and permanent new structures.

This unique contribution was greatly appreciated - by the time of his visit the mounted tarpaulin sheets and temporary tent structures provided by other INGOs were mostly torn or had collapsed due to the extreme weather conditions. Mr. Luistro visited the three largest schools AMURT is rebuilding in Guiuan, Mercedes and Salcedo.

He told our staff that he was impressed with their speed, their careful planning and their implementation: "AMURT is far ahead." Upon his return to Manila, Mr. Luistro intervened at the DNR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) to help AMURT source good timber and had a nation-wide transport allowance issued for AMURT.



*Minister of Education Mr. Armin Luistro with Dada Nirmalakrsnananda (Kurt Behringer)*



*AMURT Engineer 'Boy' supervises school repairs at Central Elementary School in Mercedes Municipality*

**Other Important Visitors** included Herr Christoph Dehn, Director of KNH (Germany), KNH Country Director Maria Stella Echano - our funding partner for the ongoing work in Easter Samar; Mr. Roger Flores (Ramnath) and Mr. Fidencio Tani (Jiivan Deva) – President and Administrator respectively of AMURT Philippines, Inc.; together with Dada Bhaktapranananda.



*AMURT staff with KNH's Christoph Dehn, Maria Stella Echano, & local coordinator Ray "King" Padit*



*AMURT officers (and Dada) from Manila with teachers of the Fisherman's Village school in Tacloban*

KNH staff came to inspect all works in progress: construction and repair of schools, day care centers, and permanent housing; psychosocial support work and training of teachers; livelihood restoration through training in organic agriculture and permaculture.

AMURT representatives from Manila made key contacts in the Tacloban City and the regional governments, inspected and assisted ongoing activities, met local community leaders and members and made a brief visit to Eastern Samar as well. Dada Pramananda and sister Maetreyii ('Jhaps') continue to attend various cluster meetings in Tacloban at which AMURT's work gained wider recognition.

## PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT UPDATE

Four more teachers have been trained; four more Barangays are being visited daily for programs with children and schools. The number of Barangays will increase from eight to fifteen in the coming months. On January 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> a training program entitled “Enhancing Psychosocial Support Capacities in Emergencies and Disasters” was conducted for 11 day care center teachers, one from each Barangay. The same program will now be held with the parents in those same communities. AMURTEL staff now includes seven teachers and one child psychology graduate.

## NEW HOMES, NEW WORK, NEW LIFE!

In this first phase we selected the Barangays of Asgad and Jagnaya to establish model projects. Most residents were coconut plantation workers and many built their homes on the beach side. Now they will get new homes, relocated to nearby, safer land (some has been donated) as well as training in a new livelihood – organic farming on some of the plantation land.

One hundred and twenty new homes will be built with the active participation of their future occupants – through a pay-for-work scheme. Another fifty two houses are being repaired. In the same area as the housing complex an agricultural training center and small model farm is also being established. Training has already begun in composting with worms, soil enrichment, organic farming and permaculture. Enthusiastic and knowledgeable local trainers guide this work. Training will continue for six months. The Mayor requested AMURT to provide this training to all Barangays within the municipality. The local university may arrange land for this. Nearby municipalities are also keenly interested to receive training.



*Diagram for new housing complex, the agric training center is in the upper left hand corner*



*The new houses meet international standards for permanent structure (concrete & steel columns, etc.)*

Twenty school complexes each with 6 to 30 classrooms and multiple buildings will be repaired and/or rebuilt in this first phase as well as a similar number of day care centers. AMURT's staff now includes 164 professionals and skilled laborers. UNDA arranged an additional 120 unskilled laborers for a limited period to help clear the land for housing and farming. A four ton truck with dumping capacity has been purchased for the transport of materials and crews.



## Volunteer Voices:



*"My first day was full of heavy heart and teary eyes. But I'm thankful for the opportunity to watch the people rise up again after the calamity. Thanks to all the volunteers who gave their time for this great cause.*

*"We may be doing the same thing over and over again, feeding people cooked food; but every day is a new experience, a new encounter. Whatever lies ahead for me and for Tacloban, everything happens for a reason. Every heart that has a desire to serve will continue to beat for the people's needs."*

Maria Jesse Faith Cuyco ("Jhaps")

*"When I arrived to Tacloban I experienced a place without electricity and how to be, to live without even running water. I began to learn how to save these basics of life. On day two I helped to cook the food and went to the city to help serve the people. I noticed how the children rushed to get our food and their bright smiling faces. I felt a pain inside, even though I smiled, my heart was crying. I felt sad and did not know what to say. In Salcedo (Easter n Samar) we helped Didi share songs and dances at the pre-school, the children were so happy and innocent. After 5 days I felt sad to leave them and return to Tacloban. I gave them some small goodies. I learned a lot; to forgive and forget - what happened has passed. We must love the world's people; help each other as friends to stand up. The people of Leyte and E. Samar will need more help from all of us."*

Sampriya (Seah Khai Heok), Singapore



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

For additional information please visit: [www.amurt.net](http://www.amurt.net) [www.amurtphilippines.org](http://www.amurtphilippines.org)

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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:

[https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=\\_s-xclick&hosted\\_button\\_id=CQJTPYK68ZLZS](https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=CQJTPYK68ZLZS)



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