



JANUARY 2013 PRAYER LETTER

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CORPORATION SIGN AGREEMENT AFTER YEARS OF TENSION

BY TWINKLE BAUTISTA



After many months of intense listening to each other, the council of the Talaandig tribe signs an agreement with Unifrutti Group Philippines (UGP) on 16 December 2012. It is a landmark event for the indigenous peoples when one of the biggest businesses in Mindanao respected the ancestral domain and the resources within it. Present in the signing are key officials of national and local government agencies who pledged their support to the right of self-determination of the indigenous peoples based on their own definition.

UGP has been operating in an ancestral land for decades. Last year, they have listened to the Talaandig cosmology and made concrete actions to respect it such as paying for water tax and reviewing their boundaries which may have encroached in sacred grounds.

PBCI initiated and is still facilitating the ongoing dialogue between the Talaandig tribe and UGP.

A corporate woman, an indigenous woman leader and a woman peace advocate. In the Creator's perfect timing, they met and made gains to fulfill the Shalom – harmony with God, harmony with the self, harmony with others and harmony with God's creation. (From left to right: Renee Araneta-Perrine of UGP, Bae Liza Saway of Talaandig and Joji Felicitas Pantoja of Peacebuilders Community. The photo was taken during the signing of agreement between the Talaandig and UGP.)



For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. - 1 Cor. 3:11

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TYPHOON PABLO STORIES



God promised to move mountains if we have faith like a mustard seed. We took that spiritual reality to heart. Throughout the relief operations, the team by faith, asked God to let trucks pass safely through narrow roads, mud bridges and landslides. Glitches like trucks getting lost, trucks getting stuck on the mud, loose brake, altered river paths, 2-way radios not working and confusing maps always happen but the relief goods and the team also always arrives safely. Peacebuilders Community at first was only able to give relief goods to a mere 650 families. The administrative staff unanimously allowed PBCI to borrow their next month's salary. Barely a week after, organizations contacted our community and 14,282 family food packs were distributed in the provinces of Compostela Valley, Davao Oriental, Surigao del Sur and Bukidnon. One food pack can feed a family of five in five days.

The mayor of New Bataan in Compostela Valley province caught up with us as we are going to the next town for relief distribution. In a car parked at the side of the road, he gave a certificate of appreciation because we had delivered 2750 family packs in his town. The last one was in Manurigao on 19 January – one of the hardest-to-reach barangays (village) due to lack of transportation infrastructure. The people had to hike for six hours just to get relief goods and six hours more to go home. It is in that context that the team decided to give four packs each family so that their travel time will be maximized. Relief goods were also dropped at General Baptist Church which was re-distributed to five other churches with an average of 50 families per church. St. Bridget's Convent was also given which was distributed to an approximate of 500 families living in the barangays and evacuation centers near the convent.

PBCI HOME CITY, GETS FLOODED



The day after the last relief operation, we thought we will have a restful Sunday. But we woke up to news of floods in Davao City. Our transporter for many years now, Toto Balono, was flooded and had to be rescued from their rooftop. His wife Dak, has led the medical team in the relief operations last 24-25 December.

After ensuring the safety of Toto's family, the team immediately resumed its relief operations. Food packs, water and used clothes were delivered to the evacuation centers at the Bangkerohan Gym, UM Gym, Madapo Gym, Dona Pilar Elementary School, Davao Marine Merchant Academy and Davao Bible Community Church.

According to the Department of Social Welfare and Development, 5,000 families were affected by the flood.

A VOLUNTEER'S STORY: "IT WAS FUN AND AN ADVENTURE TO WORK WITH THEM"

By Angel Abella



Angel volunteered with us during the fourth wave of relief distribution. She organized the delivery of floatable mats which were given to the families. Angel works with Philippine Exports - Region XI, based in Davao City.

You've got to hand it to Peacebuilders Community who, don't only have the heart of a servant-volunteer, but also, have the brains of a volunteer-leader. From systematically organizing relief operations to implementing these plans strategically, their way of operations was definitely something to be lauded about. And quite frankly, it was fun and an adventure to work with them as well. Sometime during holidays, between Christmas and New Year, it was found out from the people from PBCI that the residents from Barangay Malibago, in Cateel, Davao Oriental, trekked miles of treacherous land to go down and visit evacuation centers just to be able to get one or two days sustenance provided supposedly only for families living within the area of said centers. This would mean that, during the planning phases, goods rarely arrive in that area, and can only be delivered using a helicopter.

To press in on the urgency to deliver these relief goods, challenges were presented as follows: (1) low pressure area was developing at the Eastern Short of Mindanao, and bringing goods across a flooded river presented an extra challenge, (2) there was no road going there (as of planning phase) and footpaths were muddy, so indigenous transport were considered for usage, (3) there was no cellphone signal and communications would only be thru 2-way radios and foot messengers, and (4) there were segments along the way when security would be quite a concern. Despite all these challenges, PBCI was determined to deliver the necessary goods to the Mandaya people of Malibago. As January 5 came, all systems were a go as three 10-wheeler trucks of food (for two weeks of consumption per family), numerous boxes of bottled water and 833 waterproof sleeping mats for the children and elderly were ready for dissemination.

Despite hurdles (one of the 10-wheeler trucks, the one holding the boxes of bottled water, broke down and got stuck twice), 2,592 family packs (for 800+ households) were distributed not only to Barangay Malibago, but also to Brgys. Tandawan, Maglahus, Aliwagwag and Aragon in Cateel and Brgy Sibahay in Boston. The sleeping mats were distributed accordingly to each respective household, as accounted for with stubs distributed prior to handing out (one household would usually have one to two extended families living under the same roof.)

And with that I would like to take this opportunity to thank the following organizations and companies for their help and massive contribution in this relief operation. Access Aid International, Platatac, DHL and JRMT Resources Corporation. And most definitely, the PeaceBuilders Community, Inc.

Thank you very much! *Mabuhay po kayong lahat!* (Long live, all of you!)

PBCI WELCOMES NEW PAR COMMUNITY IN OCCIDENTAL MINDORO



28 Christian leaders in Occidental Mindoro have finished the 6-hour orientation seminar on Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) Community Organizing. They have agreed to formally invite the PAR Training and Consulting Team to actually establish a three-month training period for the core group of PAR Community in this province.

From 19 to 26 January 2013, Dann Pantoja taught two modular courses at the Asian Center for Leadership Education and Development, Doctor of Ministry Program. His students include a bishop, bank manager, directors of non-government organization, educators and church pastors. They, in turn, invited their key leaders for the PAR orientation.

PRAYER LETTER: JANUARY 2013

 **PeaceBuilders Community, Inc.**

PRAY FOR THE PBCI STAFF


DANN PANTOJA
President

Please pray that God would strengthen my faith, even like a mustard seed.



TYRON ORTIZ
Accounting

Please pray for wisdom as I do my administrative work and as I decide to go back to school to enhance my skills.



JOJI PANTOJA
Executive Vice President

Pray for wisdom as I lead the administrative team in these times of emergency relief operations.



DARRIENE JOY BETIOS
Admin Assistant

Pray for strength and good physical health as we do the tasks given to us. May we have joy always in our hearts.



TWINKLE BAUTISTA
Team Leader, ICT

I pray for a listening ear, a humble and obedient heart to the Lord, my God. I pray for sensitivity of spirit and the readiness of my hands and feet whatever Jesus Christ wills me to do as His missionary.



SELFRED ABELITADO
Center Care

Please pray for Fred's health. He was diagnosed with high blood



DAVID RAE QUICO
Field Leader, Davao Oriental

I am praying for the success of the rehabilitation phase in Davao Oriental which I will be assigned to. May the Lord our God give me wisdom and guidance in every decision I make.



ECRECENCIA ECLEVIA
Center Care

Please pray for the good health of my family and my daughter's education.



JOHN MEL SUMATRA
Field Leader, Compostela Valley

Please for my wisdom and blessings for my family and for all the people who needs help.



FRANI CATUA
Food Service

Pray for Frani's health and her two kids. She just gave birth to Aria on 2 January.



NENIA RHEA GALANZA
Field Assistant, Bukidnon

I pray for my parents as they take care of my nephews and niece. May God give them more patience and wisdom as they guide their grandchildren. I also pray that my personal relationship with God will continue to be strengthened.



DION IRVING TIMBANG
Volunteer Care

Please pray for good health and safety for me and my family. I also pray for guidance as I ponder on decisions to be made. May I always have a heart for serving.



SHEREL QUIDER
Admin & ICT Assistant

Please pray for wisdom, joy, safety and peace of mind for my papa, mama and grandparents. I pray for reconciliation between my grandparents.

*1 Thessalonians 5:17
Pray without ceasing.*