

DOWN to EARTH

Emmanuel International UK News
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SEPTEMBER 2018

Philippines Trip Report

Sue Fallon, General Manager of EI UK, and Fred Silva, General Secretary of MEB (EI in Brazil) had the opportunity to visit the staff and projects in the Philippines.

Small micro finance/loan project



The photo on the left was taken on 3 September 2018 and the photo on the right after Typhoon Mangkhut has struck

The first project I (Sue) visited on my trip to the Philippines was to a community in Cabagan in the province of Isabela. It's a small micro finance/loan project that, alongside the funds, provides training on finance planning and management. There is a problem in the area with loan sharks and many farmers find themselves trapped in poverty because of the high interest asked from them. This project is attempting to alleviate the situation and it's surprising what a small amount of money, some good teaching and a low interest rate can do. They were very keen to show me their crop, soon ready to be harvested. I was welcomed into homes and encouraged by their

stories. It was more than a 12 hour drive from our office and a 48 hour round trip but it was worth it. The second picture was taken just after Typhoon Mangkhut had visited! The crop they were excited about and depending on, all of a sudden flattened. Natural disasters have a huge impact on communities like this and make breaking the cycle of poverty very hard. Typhoon Mangkhut was my first experience of a Typhoon. I was sitting in the middle of the night, watching rain lashing down and strong winds blowing things around and we were hundreds of miles away from the eye and in a very sturdy house on reasonably high ground. These farmers were in the direct path.

Marawi houses

The highlight of my (Fred) visit to Mindanao island was the contact I had with a Muslim community in the Marawi area, led by KEDRN. KEDRN is the Kagayan Evangelical Disaster Response Network. Marawi is a Muslim city and there are Muslim communities spread out in the whole area. The 2017 conflict between ISIS and the Filipino Army left many people homeless and Christians decided to respond to that need, building houses for the Muslim IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) in the Delabayon community to show God's love to them. Today 43 houses have been built and the goal is to build another 57. Visiting the community and talking to people were a real blessing to me. The community leader, Sultan Camlon Moner Sr, was so friendly and eager to have a closer relationship with us. I was deeply moved when he said:

"This project is not about building houses. It's about building relationships between Christians and Muslims."

Talking to the church leaders and knowing more about the efforts made by organizations such as Emmanuel International Philippines, to bless that Muslim community, I had a strong feeling that 'Jesus has been in this community'.

What an encouragement to see Christians obeying God's command to love their neighbours as themselves and how Jesus Christ is glorified when we do that.

You can read more about EI's work in the Philippines in BushNet Issue 1 of 2018.

Scan the QR code to read online.



Fred (left) talking to Sultan Moner



Dates for your diary

Board Meeting: 2 November 2018
in London.

Revisiting El's first projects

It was really good to be able to see a number of current projects, to meet people working in them and also people impacted by them. It gave me (Sue) a better understanding of the size and scale of what is involved. The Philippines is vast and 3 of my visits involved flights.

It was also good to go and visit some of the communities in KabanKalan where the first projects were done in 1980. Even better was that I went with Shem Catanus, who was the team leader, and Anita Bertrand, who was on the team then. We went to see the water points for me to have an idea of the early projects. Three things had an impact on me. The first was as we were walking up the track to the water point we heard one lady call "Anita Matias!" (Anita's maiden name) A relationship developed some 38 years ago still remembered. The second was that both water points we visited were still being used and still having an impact on community life. The third was that as we were talking to some of the ladies, one said she was on her way somewhere when she saw Shem heading up the



Anita meeting members of the community she worked with in 1980

hill and she had to change her plan and come and see him.

It is such a privilege to go back to communities we have worked in and see the impact the team has made and be reminded that a big part of what we do involves relationship on so many levels.

Thank you so much to Alex Pacis and Edna Santos for hosting us! **Please remember them in your prayers as they manage the wide variety of projects that they are involved with.**



Shem Catanus showing the 2 water points still being used some 38 years later

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