



peace and reconciliation journal



Mennonite Church Canada
WITNESS

A MONTHLY PRAYER LETTER PUBLISHED BY DANN & JOJI PANTOJA
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Working with PeaceBuilders Community, Inc., Republic of the Philippines

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NUEVA ECIJA EMBRACES PAR THEOLOGY



PAR NE members prayed together after the impact assessment. They prayed for God's guidance as they spread PAR theology to their whole province.

On December 2009, Peacebuilders Community, Inc. (PBCI) and Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) started a project on Disaster Risk Management. After a year, we have already trained one Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) community, consisting of 30 members, in the Province of Nueva Ecija (NE). They were trained for one year in Peace and Reconciliation Seminars 1-3, and Disaster Risk Management.

On February 21, 2011, all the members of PAR NE were very excited for their reunion. They all shared stories and updated each other upon their arrival. It was the first time they met PBCI Director of Field Operations – Kriz Cruzado, who facilitated their impact assessment and Focused Group Discussion.

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BUGKAI FARMERS READY TO PLANT ARABICA COFFEE

On January 25, 2011, PBCI team travelled to Brgy. Binuangan, Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya. Bishop Edgardo Docuyanán welcomed us and led us to their church where we would conduct the seminar on coffee farming. Twenty six (26) farmers from the area and the nearby barangays attended. The team introduced Fair Trade Principles and Arabica coffee farming.

On the following day, we reviewed the topics discussed on the first day, and challenged the farmers if they would commit to plant coffee trees.

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Top: BUGKAI farmers ordered 11 kgs of Arabica seeds that they will plant.

Bottom: Professor Jun Vizmonte of CLSU trained the farmers about good agricultural practices before they begin planting. eds.



PAR NE during the Focused Group Discussion facilitated by Kriz Cruzado—PBCI Director of Field Operations.

Before the Focused group discussion, they had a Group Dynamics/game wherein the winning group receives prizes..



PAR NE quantitatively assessed the PAR program. They have to step in front of the bar that is equivalent with their assessment. The bars were valued 5, 10, 15, and 20. In most of the questions, they gave a 20 score.

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They were all active and participative, given the lively approach of the facilitator. They also felt happy with the presence of Bruce and Helen Glick from the Mennonite Central Committee.

They gave positive comments and feedbacks about the training on Disaster Risk Management, although some of them were not able to attend the PAR trainings. Because of this, they requested to conduct PAR 1-3 seminar again, so they could also invite more people from the 4th District of Nueva Ecija.

During their timeline making, some of them had a hard time recalling what happened during a certain month, and yet they were very eager to share and help each other recall what they have done. They told stories with much excitement as they recall their experiences. In fact, one of the most exciting experience that the pastors recalled was the Armed-Conflict Area Survival Training (ACAST) that they held on May 2010. They were very happy recalling how they crawled and rolled and carried each other.

Overall, they gave a positive feedback about the training and would want to share this to more people in their province. 🌱

During a group activity, Helen Glick joined one group in order to understand them better and to help if she could with their output.



Bruce Glick joined another group and the members enjoyed his presence.

We welcome your contributions for our support and invite you to send these to:
MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA,
600 SHAFTESBURY BLVD.,
WINNIPEG, MB R3P 0M4
Please designate to:
Dann & Joji Pantoja,
PeaceBuilders Community, Inc.,
Philippines

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They all agreed to plant coffee trees according to the size of their lands. After we are done presenting to them, we were about to pack up when the Brgy. Captain volunteered to teach them about nursery preparation. It is then he admitted that he graduated with a degree in Forestry. After his lecture, we thought that it was over and that we are about to go. One of the Brgy. Councilors, however, initiated that they should take it seriously and begin organizing their own group.

They ended up with the name BUGKAI Fair Trade Farmers Association. BUGKAI represents seven (7) tribes, that is, BUGkalot, KAlanguya, KAnkaney, Ilocano, Isinai, Ibaloi, and Ifugao. After establishing their organizational name, they even elected their officers and set a schedule for their regular meeting. Their first meeting was scheduled February 1, 2011.

A few days after that, Prof. Jun Vizmonte of the Central Luzon State University, heard about the fair trade coffee farming seminar that we held there. We expressed to him that we would accept any technical advice that he could give us regarding agricultural practices, because he is an agriculture expert.

On February 25, 2011, he decided to go to Binuangan and give a training on good agricultural practices before the farmers plant their coffee seeds. We moved our schedule to fit with his, so that all of us could go there at the same time. We were surprised that he really prepared for this and even brought samples of seedling trays and poly-ethylene plastic bags. He recommends the farmers to use this technology in raising seedlings so that the roots and soil would be intact.

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PRAY FOR THE PBCI STAFF



Dann Pantoja. Please pray for strength and wisdom as he leads PBCI in facilitating a dialogue between the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) and the Peace panel of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Cotabato City.



Joji Pantoja. Please pray for faster healing of her bones which was broken due to her accident. Pray for God's miracle as her menopausal age causes lack of estrogen and calcium. Also pray for comfort as being constraint in her room and having limited mobility makes it hard for her.



Bennette Tenecio. Pray for good health, wisdom and strength as she performs her tasks in the Support Operations.



Kriz Cruzado. Pray for more wisdom as she directs our Field Operations, patience as she deals with untoward events, good health so she could always function well, economic stability for her family so she does not have to worry for her finances, creativity and resourcefulness so she can continue innovating new approaches and strategies in achieving Field Ops goals.



Mei Solocasa. Pray for wisdom as she establishes relationship with newly-elected officials in Poona Piagapo, strengthens relationship with other NGOs in Kolambugan and Iligan, and renews the commitment of all PAR Teams. Also pray for wisdom as she obeys God.



Regina Mondes. Pray for wisdom and strength as she faces bigger challenges with her tasks in Luzon, such as coordinating upcoming activities of the Integrated Mennonite Churches in the Philippines.



Matt Tiessen. Please pray for safety of his parents as they travel to the Philippines this March. Also pray for the safety of the team as he is in charge in most of the land transportation of the team to the different field areas.



Keith Grubaugh. Keith is our new intern specializing in Technical Support—Accounting. Please pray for wisdom and strength.



Jenna Grubaugh. Jenna is our intern, and serves as PBCI's Theater Arts Consultant. Please pray for wisdom and strength as they adjust here in the Philippines.



Arjay Freg Balabag. Please pray for wisdom and creativity as he continues working on PBCI's comic book about Fair Trade Coffee Farming.



Joy Betios. Please pray for renewed strength for her work from day to day, as she and her family also struggles from injustice in their local community.



Freddie Abelitado. Please pray for energy and strength as he continues to be a good member of PBCI family. Also pray for his health and his family's needs.

Hon. Clarita Egmin -Epi, mayor of Dupax del Norte, sat down with us for lunch and expressed her support for the Peace and Reconciliation—Fair Trade advocacy of



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The farmers were excited to plant the coffee seeds. They ordered 11 kilograms of coffee seeds that are ready to be planted.

After the training, one of the members served a good lunch for us. While we were eating, we were surprised by the arrival of the Municipal mayor of Dupax del Norte, who even sat down and ate with us. We had a good conversation and she expressed her appreciation to what we are doing and what God is doing in Binuangan. 🌱

MCC VISITS IMC CHURCHES

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) representatives -Bruce and Helen Glick, and PBCI team visited Integrated Mennonite Churches, Inc. (IMC) congregations around Luzon. First, we visited Bishop Adriano Fernandez of the Anabaptist Mennonite Community Church (AMCC) in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija. Upon arriving at their church, we immediately noticed a new infrastructure that is being built beside their church. When one of their youth leaders, Yda Villa, arrived to guide us to Bishop Fernandez' house, we learned that it would be their new church building. The old church building will be used as a classroom for Sunday School. We were indeed very blessed to see this development, knowing that they used local funding for that project.

Afterwards, we visited Grace Anabaptist Mennonite Church (GAMC) at San Jose City in Nueva Ecija and had a wonderful time with Bishop Ramon Bansan and his family. We had fun recalling and hearing new stories. He even shared to us his beginnings as a Mennonite. We were delighted with his welcome as we enjoyed a good snack together.

On the next day, together with Prof. Jun Vizmonte of the Central Luzon State University and Elmer Docuyan, we traveled to Binuangan Mennonite Church at Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya to visit Bishop Edgardo Docuyan. Aside from this, Prof. Jun Vizmonte also committed to teach Bugkai Fair Trade Farmers Association about good agricultural practices. PBCI is currently training the farmers in Binuangan about Fair Trade Coffee Farming. Bishop Docuyan toured us around his land and showed us the area where he would plant the 200 trees he committed to plant.

The next day, we visited Lumban Mennonite Bible Church in Lumban, Laguna. There we met Bishop and Mrs. Ambrocio Porcincula, Dr. and Mrs. Eladio Mondez, and Rev. Richard Rancap. We enjoyed our lunch meeting over exotik cuisine. Afterwards we also viewed Caliraya Lake and had coffee at a place overlooking the whole town of Lumban and Laguna de Bay. 🌱



The new church building under construction of the Anabaptist Mennonite Community Church in Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija.

Dann, Pantoja, Helen Glick, and Bruce Glick enjoyed looking at the bulletin board of Binuangan Mennonite Church in Binuangan, Dupax del Norte, Nueva Vizcaya.



Dann and Kriz visited Lumban Mennonite Bible Church in Lumban, Laguna. They met Bishop and Mrs. Ambrocio Porcincula, Dr. and Mrs. Eladio Mondez, and Rev. Richard Rancap.