



# peace and reconciliation journal



Mennonite Church Canada  
WITNESS

A MONTHLY PRAYER LETTER PUBLISHED BY DANN & JOJI PANTOJA  
International Partnership Workers, Mennonite Church Canada  
Working with PeaceBuilders Community, Inc., Republic of the Philippines

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## PBCI EXPLORES IN NORTHERN LUZON

Peacebuilders Community, Inc. (PBCI) explored possible Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) Community and PAR Leaders in Northern Luzon. From January 20 to 26, 2011, PBCI team traveled around Northern Luzon to explore, experience, and discover what God has in store for us in that area. For two weeks, we were led to know different people with different stories. We discovered culture, and we experienced God's presence.

Aside from sharing Peace and Reconciliation among the people we met, we also introduced to them Fair Trade Coffee Farming Principles. We encouraged the local people to have dignity and to know and fight for their rights.

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The muddy trek going to Brgy. Asibanglan Pinukpuk, Kalinga, being led by our local guide

## AN ENCOUNTER WITH A BISHOP OF PEACE



PBCI Team with Bishop Jun Andaya of the Diocese of Tabuk in Kalinga, after our interview with him

Peacebuilders Community Inc. (PBCI) is resourcing the churches in the Philippines to spread the Peace gospel to the Body of Christ in this country.

Last year, PBCI consulted the Matagoan Bodong Consultative Council (MBCC) of Tabuk, Kalinga about their peace negotiation culture and tradition. They embraced peace theology and were very much enthusiastic in applying this, given that there exists a culture of revenge in their area.

On January 20, 2011, PBCI team visited Bishop Jun Andaya of the Diocese of Tabuk to seek counsel about the Peace and Reconciliation ministry in the Province of Kalinga. We also introduced to him the Fair Trade Coffee Farming advocacy. He said he was enlightened about this and is very much supportive of the PBCI ministry.

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## AN ENCOUNTER...

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When we told him of our first visit at the Bodong Council last year, he asked if there were women during the meeting. We were surprised about his question but it was then that he explained and we were enlightened about the situation in Kalinga. In Bodong Council meetings, not all are involved during the negotiations. Only the men are. The widows and orphans, especially those whose family members or relatives were killed, are not included in the negotiations. The women, who were left to discipline and take care of their children, pass on their hatred and feelings of revenge to their children. The children are the ones who later avenge, so the culture of violence does not stop.

This culture of revenge and discrimination of women, is the reason why Bishop Andaya started out the Peace Movement in Kalinga. At first, he only listened to stories of killings, and he prayed for the victims and the families. Since 2004, he has continued the Peace Movement, and said that "if it is God's will, it will flourish."

They made an acronym for PEACE, which stands for Peace and Justice Consciousness, Ecological Awareness, Academic Excellence, Christian Leadership, and Education. One of the cries of the Peace Movement is to have gender sensitivity, so that women should also be heard during peace negotiations, because the role of mothers is very crucial.

He even points out that as followers of Christ, relationship is very basic. They made an acronym for PRECEPTS, which stands for Peacemakers movement, Research and documentation, Education and information, Children's values formation program, Earth care, Pastoral counseling, Traditions, and School of Living Tradition. Here, they listen to victims of violence and allow the boys to cry, even if in their culture, they shouldn't.

In the end, he even shared his idea about "Animals for Peace," which may be a cow or a pig, wherein the offspring of which can be passed on to other families in conflict.

After our consultation with Bishop Andaya, we were very much happy and informed a lot about the Kalinga culture. We were once again reminded that God is at work in that area, even before we came. It was such a very humbling experience. 🌱

For more information, visit our website at [www.peacebuilderscommunity.org](http://www.peacebuilderscommunity.org)



PBCI team with the Wiens, in front of the Asibanglan Reading Center during the dedication ceremony



The plaque that was made to honor the three people who began translation of the Bible in their own dialect



The men played their gongs that gave life to the community dancing after the dedication of the library

## PBCI EXPLORES...

From page 1

On the third week of January 2011, PBCI team had an extraordinary experience in the Province of Kalinga. From Tabuk City, we had a three-hour roller coaster ride on a jeepney loaded with pigs, chickens, and rice. After the ride, we hiked a distance of 6 km uphill from 230 m/asl up to 680 m/asl. The hike took us 3.5 hours, due to the muddy and slippery trek. We were all tired when we got to Brgy. Asibanglan, Pinukpuk, Kaliinga but the warm welcome of the people in Asibanglan was a good prize for us. We were served with a delicious rice cake and brewed coffee, prepared in their traditional way.

We were hosted by the Agustin family, who had a traumatic experience years ago, when their father was killed. Their family's story is one worth writing about in another article. [continued on page 3]

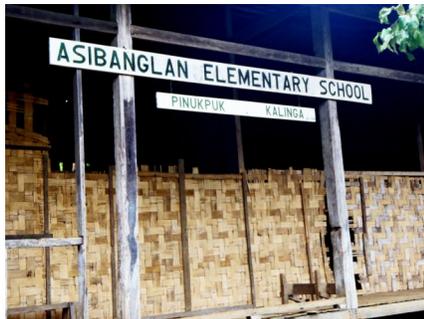
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Dann and Joji, resting with Christy Sacayle, our local host, during the hike up to Asibanglan

Asibanglan Elementary School is the only school in that area. It was truly a blessing for them to finally have a library. Now, they are accepting book donations that they can put in their library.



## PBCI EXPLORES...

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There, Christy Agustin Sacayle, our host in Tabuk who also hiked with us, and the eldest son of Pedro Agustin (who was killed years ago), showed us the rooms where we would rest for two nights. She managed our trip so well, that everything we needed, especially the food for the whole barangay, are complete. We also met Dominga (Christy's mother), Doleng (Christy's aunt), and Dominga's mother. They were all so friendly and accommodating to us. Together with us are Hart and Ginny Wiens, who lived there for 19 years doing Bible translation in Kalinga language, Dave and Debbie Wiens (Hart's brother and sister-in-law), and Kyoko Torakawa, a Japanese missionary who also lived there for four years. It was sort of a reunion for those who lived there before, but a totally new experience for us who were there for the first time.

The highlight of our stay there was the dedication of the Asibanglan Reading Center, which was dedicated in memory of three courageous people who started doing the Bible translation in their language. Before their works, there was never a written word in their language. Thanks to Pedro Agustin, Dorothea Bantor, and Benito Agguban for starting a difference in their community.

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## PRAY FOR THE PBCI STAFF



**Dann Pantoja.** Pray for spiritual joy and deep sense of happiness as he terribly misses his children and grand-children.



**Joji Pantoja.** Please pray for creativity and wisdom as she continues to manage Coffee for Peace efficiently, and as she gives advice to PBCI staff about the many different aspects of life.



**Bennete Tenecio.** Pray for wisdom on synchronizing her tasks in support ops and field ops for year 2011.



**Kriz Cruzado.** Please pray for wisdom as she faces new challenges in life. Also pray for good health and strength as she continues to train in becoming the next Director of Field Operations.



**Mei Solocasa.** Pray for wisdom as she and the PAR Teams in Ranaw continue to move on amidst the factors affecting the stability of the program in the area.



**Regina Mondez.** Pray for wisdom as she helps translate a book about Annabaptist Christians. Also pray for her health and enthusiasm as she embraces her works in Luzon.



**Matt Tiessen.** Please pray for strength as he misses his family and friends back home.



**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.

## PBCI EXPLORES...

From page 3

The dedication was blessed with a mass led by Father Francis Gella. After the mass and communion, the second part of the program was enriched with a message of peace delivered by Rev. Daniel Pantoja, whose message inspired the teachers and community leaders. They were all challenged about the four harmonies and how to apply it in dealing with their students. After the message, was the speeches of the three daughters of the people to whom the library was dedicated. A feast followed after this. The whole community enjoyed the two pigs that were killed the night before. Those are the two pigs that were with us from Tabuk, and that the locals carried up to Asibanglan.

In the afternoon, was the most exciting part, wherein we experienced their culturally preserved community dancing, and they even invited us (guests) to dance with them. It was an awesome, fun-filled afternoon. We are very much pleased with their native music and dance, decorated with smiles on their faces and enhanced with the laughter of the children as they enjoy watching the performers.

We really had a complete Kalinga culture experience. Their hospitality, music, dance, and tribal attire-- they showed it all to us and reminded us that the Philippines is indeed a rich country. There are still lots to discover, only if we are willing to take difficult challenges such as hiking in deep mud for three and a half hours. 🌿



The farmers in Binuangan did not just create a name for their organization, they even elected officers and set a schedule for their meeting.

After they have finished meeting as an organization, Bishop Edgardo Docuyanano of the Integrated Mennonite Churches (IMC), resident of the area, prayed for the officers of the association.



## INTRODUCING BUGKAI FAIR TRADE FARMERS ASSOCIATION

On January 25 to 26, 2011, PBCI team went to Brgy. Binuangan, Municipality of Dupax del Norte, Province of Nueva Vizcaya, to teach the farmers in the area about Fair Trade Coffee Farming. On the first day, they shared about what they plant and some of their frustrations in farming. We asked them how many coffee trees they are willing to plant to try out coffee farming. The total number of trees they are willing to plant is 6, 585 trees.

On the second day, we introduced to them the Fair Trade Principles. We also taught them skills in dealing with traders so they could defend their products well. They all enjoyed the role playing. When we asked them again of the number of trees they would plant, they committed to plant 11, 575 trees total.

After our presentation, 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 organized themselves as 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 on February 1, 2011.

They were indeed serious with Fair Trade Farming, and they meant it when they committed 11, 575 trees. Before we left, they already placed their orders and paid the amount of the seeds they would plant. They expect the seeds to arrive from Mindanao in two weeks. 🌿

Regina Mondez, Development Communication Specialist