



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

MAY 2011 EDITION

PAR LA UNION IS FORMALLY ORGANIZED

On May 19, 2011, Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) Community in the Province of La Union was formally organized. Pastors, bishops, and church leaders from the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines



Members of PAR La Union as they were led to sing "Let there be peace on earth"


Upon recognizing themselves as individuals who were called to be peacebuilders in the name of the Prince of Peace, they immediately assigned core leaders that will represent each sector, to lead them in this movement.

(NCCP) were joined with academic leaders, Christian NGO leaders, local government officials, police officers, and youth leaders. They all mutually agreed to be part of the Peace and Reconciliation movement in their province.

This meeting was preceded by a series of Peace and Reconciliation seminars and consultations facilitated by PeaceBuilders Community, Inc. (PBCI). During the meeting, all the leaders actively expressed their opinions regarding peace and how they can attain peace in their own province. It was surprising that the police officers were very much involved in sharing the gospel to their people.

As Bishop Jun Tarlit, president of the Christian Leaders Alliance in Ministering La Union (CLAIM LU) stated,

"All our inputs are needed, but we need the power of God to move us at the right place, at the right time. We are putting all our ideas together because we are a working force. We will continue uniting."

PAR Community La Union was coordinated by Rev. Mariano Apilado, a native of Caba Municipality, Province of La Union. The meeting was hosted by Union Christian College, and some of their senior staff served as secretariat. 



PAR LU Members while actively listening to the other members who were sharing their reflections about peace.



The activity was hosted by Union Christian College, and all their staff were very much supportive and involved in the activities



One participant invited a youth leader to join during the meeting. She was very enthusiastic to involve the youth in this ministry

PBCI AND KOLAMBUGAN SIGNED A MOA

Kolambugan, Lanao del Norte—The Municipality of Kolambugan, represented by Mayor Bertrand Lumaque; and PeaceBuilders Community Inc. (PBCI), represented by Krizanti Cruzado signed a Memorandum of Agreement for an Institutional Partnership on May 10, 2011 at the Municipal Mayor’s Office.



(L-R) Hon. Bertrand Lumaque, Mei Solocasa, Teresita Tuburan, and Kriz Cruzado during the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Municipal Government of Kolambugan and PBCI

The partnership focuses on the major Peace and Reconciliation (PAR) Programs—Peacebuilding HealthCare Program, PAR Fair Trade

Coffee Farming, Transitional Justice Initiative, and other Socio-economic and Environmental Development Programs geared towards the attainment of the Sustainable Integrated Area Development of the municipality.

PBCI’s first outreach program in Kolambugan was in September, 2008; a month after the August 18, 2008 attack of a lawless armed group in this municipality. A Healthcare Program in partnership with ECOWeb, a development non-government organization and Reach International, a ministry-based healthcare organization, was then implemented on March, 2009.

The HealthCare Program was successful, with 21 active Community-based PAR HealthCare Volunteers, opening the doors for more relationship building opportunities within the community, and cross-cultural exchanges between

the Muslim Maranaos and Christian Migrants. PBCI experienced challenges during the implementation of our programs, but they were immediately corrected and helped improve our strategies.

After two years of working together, the Municipal Government of Kolambugan and PBCI decided to take a step further in institutionalizing the partnership for more programs and endeavors to work together.

The signing of the Memorandum of Agreement was witnessed by Teresita Tuburan, Kolambugan’s Municipal Social Welfare and Development Officer and Mei Solocasa, PBCI’s Mindanao PeaceBuilding Coordinator. 🌿

Mei Solocasa, Mindanao Peacebuilding Coordinator

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

MINISTERS' LEAGUE OF ZAMBALES INITIATES PAR MOVEMENT

The Ministers' League of Zambales (MLZ) and the Asian Center for Leadership Education and Development (ACLEAD) invited the Peace and Reconciliation Commission of the Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC-PARCom) to conduct a seminar series on Peace Education among their pastors and other sectoral leaders of the Province of Zambales. It was held last May 26th.

Ms Susan Granada, National Coordinator of PCEC-PARCom, and Dann Pantoja, President of PeaceBuilders Community Inc (PBCI), were tasked to facilitate the orientation seminar held at the Transformational Learning Center (TLC) in Iba, Zambales. The theme of the initial session of this four-month seminar series was *Building Bridges, Sustained Peace in Our Communities*. Dann & Susan were assisted by the volunteers from the Youth for Social Action, an evangelical movement advocating for an active non-violent, radical transformation of the Filipino youth.

Through the spiritual leadership of Bishop Virginio Ducos (TLC Director) and the coordination of Rev. David Banaag (MLZ President), 38 participants came—pastors, ministry leaders, civil society leaders, police officers, military officers, and local government officials. Bishop Ducos said that there were more than 60 people who pre-registered to participate. But because of the approaching super typhoon Chedeng (Songda), around 25 pastors and ministry leaders decided to stay home. (The typhoon, however, changed its direction and missed the general area where we were. The whole seminar day was very sunny and hot!)

At the end of the day, 31 pastors and ministry leaders made a commitment to be trained to become part of the PAR Community in Zambales. The training will continue in the next four months.

God willing, a new PAR Zambales would be organized in September. 🌱

PBCI FACILITATED PAR TRAINING AMONG YOUTH LEADERS



Youth for Social Action (YSA) Executive Committee with Twinkle Bautista from Tabuk, Kalinga, and Regina Mondez from PBCI. Dann Pantoja facilitated the Training.

May 30-31, 2011. Tagaytay City. The Executive Committee of the Youth for Social Action, "an evangelical youth movement committed in

creatively engaging society towards social transformation by providing trainings and venues for direct involvement in grass roots communities, national and global level," went through Peace and Reconciliation Seminar Facilitators' Training Program.

PeaceBuilders Community Inc (PBCI) facilitated this training program that is committed to biblical, active non-violent, radical transformation of our land that leads to just-peace.

The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches' PAR Commission (PCEC PARCom) sponsored this particular leaders' training for the Executive Committee of Youth for Social Action. 🌱

PBCI CONDUCTED PAR FAIR TRADE FARMING SEMINAR IN KALINGA

27 MAY 2011. TABUK, KALINGA

Twenty eight (28) farmers from Barangay (Village) Asibanglan and Balbalan were gathered in Tabuk City for the Fair Trade Farming seminar. They were introduced to Fair Trade Principles and processes in coffee farming. The farmers were happy because it was the first time they heard about Fair Trade and it was an eye-opener for them. At the end of the day, they ordered 39.5 kilograms of coffee seeds that they will be planting on November. The 39.5 kg of seeds can be planted in 79 hectares of land.

Kriz Cruzado facilitated the training, while Christy Sacayle was the coordinator. The farmers are anticipating our return on November, as we deliver them the coffee seeds. The 28 farmers committed to be Fair Trade farmers, advocating for the rights of the farmers and for just-peace in their whole province. 🌱



The principal of Asibanglan High School and the eldest participant in the training expressed their gratitude and blessings to PBCI



One of the participants translate the discussions in their own native tongue so they could understand it better.

PRAY FOR THE PBCI STAFF



Dann Pantoja. Please pray for God's wisdom as PBCI discerns the 80 PAR Leaders across the Philippines who would be the key people in establishing PAR Communities in each of the 80 provinces in our country. Pray also for 1000 national financial partners who would help us advance peace and reconciliation in this land.



Joji Pantoja. Please pray for faster healing of her bones which was broken due to her recent 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. Please pray for her as she spearheads the fundraising for the PAR 80 by 2015 vision of PBCI (see <http://peacebuilderscommunity.org/invitations/give/>).



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. Please pray for God's wisdom as we start Urban Poor Healthcare Program in Davao City. May God provide direction for us to know the people to work with, the places to reach, the right time to start, and the resources to be used.



Regina Mondez. Pray for wisdom and strength as she faces bigger challenges with her tasks in Luzon, as well as with her tasks as coordinator of the Integrated Mennonite Church of the Philippines.



Matt Tiessen. Please pray for wisdom and motivation, and also safety during their travels in Mindanao as they are very busy moving around the island, which involves lots of driving for him.



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



Jenna Grubaugh. Please pray for a healthy heart, mind, and body so that she would be able to work to her full potential in making the theater production come to life.



Arjay Freg Balabag. Please pray for wisdom and creativity as he continues to do his tasks at PBCI and Coffee for Peace.



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.