



BACKGROUND

More than a month after super typhoon Yolanda, also known as Haiyan, pummelled the Visayas, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported on Thursday morning that the death toll has slightly increased to 5,982 from 5,959 reported Wednesday. The number of people injured and missing remained at 27,022 and 1,779, respectively.

Affected cities: 57; affected provinces: 44. Number of people/families affected: 12.191 million people/ 2.582 million families number of people displaced: 3.98 million people/ 869,742 families

In evacuation centres: 21,669 families/ 93,814 people.

The number of damaged houses decreased to 1.192 million, nearly half of which were totally destroyed. To date, power outage is still being experienced in some provinces and municipalities of Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, and Eastern Visayas.

Based on the latest inspection of the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP), a total of 1,959 transmission facilities have been damaged.

Government's Response caused more devastation to the people.

The Philippine archipelago is in the frontline of calamity brought by storms. It is a common knowledge impossible to miss especially by the government which is supposed to be the authority in terms of preparation and rehabilitation. Huge number of dead people scattered in Leyte is attributable to incapacity of the government to install preparatory mechanism to lessen casualties, the Philippine government did not learn to our past experience of havoc due to storm surges.

Reports in relation to looting and violence in Tacloban city and other municipalities are effects of dirty politics, neglect and corruption. The inability of the government to provide systematic and effective respond made people behaved violently; shortage of food is not an issue. The global attention is on the Philippines for the past few weeks; donations and support in terms of cash, in kinds and in services are overwhelming. Ships fully loaded of goods are lined-up in ports of Cebu and Manila; billions of funds are pouring in through government and corporate accounts (media); despite of these, victims are scrambling to get food. The feeling of scarcity and food insecurity forced people to behave violently.

This calamity is one of the most devastating witnessed by global community, the spirit of solidarity is heart-warming and very effective in terms of recovery and rehabilitation, but the government's corrupt practices undermined this solidarity; two weeks after the horrifying event, the people in Leyte remained hungry, homeless and seeking medical support; useless and hazardous materials are everywhere. Prices of basic commodities increased almost double such as food

and medicine; lack of power supply is a lucrative business that exploits the victims. Local business offered high rate of charging services to the people for their emergency lights and mobile phones.

Generally, it is the government's inability to respond swiftly and appropriately makes the situation much more devastating.

Yolanda's Aftermath and Autonomous Initiative

In this context, Mobile Anarchist School decided to act and conducted direct action; we set an action that could elude government's corrupt influence. We gathered support from Local Autonomous Network (LAN), independent collectives and groups and international network.

Power is crucial in terms of rehabilitation and recovery process, so we focus our effort in consolidating resources to complete a 150 watts solar set-up to provide free charging services to community to power up emergency lights, flashlights and mobile phones. After a week of soliciting support, we procured 160 watts solar panel, 10 ampere solar control charger, 500 watts inverter and 12 volts/50 ampere starter battery.



Manila was minimally affected by the typhoon, but the rest of the Visayas Islands and the other places were badly and destructively hit. Some of our comrades who have relatives in the affected communities were really worried because up until now there is no communication and electricity. That's why we decided to make an strategic solidarity effort with the area of Tacloban City. This is what we have in mind and hopefully people in Australia will be interested with this.



We will be based on our meetings with some individuals here in Manila, particularly the Mobile Anarchist School. The typhoon was really destructive in all aspects; thousands of affected communities had a lot of needs in terms of foods, water, clothes/blankets, medicine, electricity/communication etc. We see that there's already a lot of aid concerning to provide foods, water, clothes and medicine, but an immediate solution to provide electricity for communication and alternative media purposes was partially neglected, that's why our strategic plan of solidarity with this kind of natural calamities is to provide a free internet and free charging of mobile phones with the help of a solar power equipment.

The aftermath of different calamities, not only this Typhoon Haiyan, is always the loss of electrical power and communication for our love ones. This kind of problem always needs to be addressed. Our plan is to travel and set up a booth firstly in Tacloban City area and put up a 120watts solar panel with batteries, solar charger and inverter that will cost of 17,500 pesos (roughly A\$450). So if our international friends and comrades can raise funds for this equipment, we can be in solidarity with the victims of this Typhoon Haiyan. The Philippines are always directly affected by different natural calamities. Solar power equipment can always be used after there is a calamity.

At this moment, based on the information that we got, the electricity in the affected area will be back after 6 months. That's why we think that the more solar power equipment that's used, the more people will be directly benefited. Just let us know if you are interested with this kind of solidarity direct action, we are now working on it.

LEYTE MISSION ONE

Inter-Island travelling

On the 20th of November we started travelling; our crew with four volunteers travelled packed with supplies good for a week; we also prepared packages of relief for 15 families. We made sure that our equipment is working and in good condition. Bus ride is the most practical and cheapest way to reach Leyte. We left Cubao, Quezon City at 9 AM, we negotiated the road connecting Manila, Laguna and, Quezon; we took ferry to cross the sea between Sorsogon and Samar.



As we travelled, we witnessed the extensive damage in many municipalities in Leyte; Yolanda's onslaught starts right after we crossed San Juanico, a bridge connecting Samar and Leyte. The situation in Tacloban is relatively peaceful, the people are trying to collect and salvage remaining useful materials to rebuild their homes at the back draft of heavily devastated city. We could not find any regular trip so we rented an expensive jeep going to Municipality of San Miguel. We reached Barangay Libtong, San Miguel on the 21st of November at four in the afternoon.

Solar Charging Operations

Day 1

Our actual operation started on the 22nd of November, we accommodated at least 40 units of flashlights and mobile phones and we reserve more units to be charged on the following day. We conducted informal discussions with the families and let them talk and share their miseries, grief and difficulties.

Unfortunately, our plan to give a free call and free internet access for communication purposes did not materialize due to lack of network signals.

Day 2

Sunlight was poor due to low pressure area that brought rain; we decided to stop the operation to charge our battery for effective charging operations. We arranged interviews and discussions with localities and barangay officials to gather data. More phones and flashlights come in for charging but we stopped accepting to on the afternoon and asked people to come back because we can accommodate only very limited units.

Day 3



We resume charging operations; more people are coming in waiting to be served. Good thing that sun shone entire day and we able to charge at least 30 units. We reduced number of units to avoid under voltage status. We observed the process of relief distribution of barangay officials and Philippines air force.

Day 4

We keep accepting phones and flashlights but we able to charge limited units. The capacity of our solar set-up could only accommodate 30 units per day to avoid draining our battery.

Day 5

We conducted an orientation to local volunteers who will maintain our solar equipment and will facilitate solar charging services. We made sure that volunteers learn the simple process of operation and maintenance to continue providing free charging.

We are set to travel going to Ormoc City, from Ormoc took ferry going to Cebu where we will catch a plane going to Manila. We need to be in Quezon City in time because we have a climate conference with Evangelical network.

LEYTE MISSION TWO



As mentioned earlier, we focused our initiative in Barangay Libtong, municipality of San Miguel. There was no casualty or injury reported but the damage based on estimate of barangay captain is so extensive; in fact rice fields, coconut trees, infrastructures such as rice mills, market, tele-communications and among others are destroyed.

When we arrived there for our second mission, we see signs of very slow recovery process. The relief is scarce; families have no means to access government support to rebuild their homes. Communication is difficult, prices of basic commodities and services are still double and power restoration is far from completion.

On our first day we upgraded the capacity of our solar set-up. We installed 300 watts solar panels with 30 amperes solar control charger and two units of 12 volts batteries (3SM deep cycle 70 amperes and 2SM 50 amperes). We set-up the team to effectively carry-out charging operations, medicine and relief distribution, food not bombs and stress de-briefing activities.



Two volunteers handled the charging operations, and another was assigned in medicine distribution. The other three volunteers distributed tasks in handling food preparations.

Charging and medicine distribution operated on the daily basis (from second to eleventh day)



Barangay Central activities: we conducted art workshop, series of games, food not bombs and gifts sharing for kids and youth. Around 60 children participated the event that last for three hours.

Activities in "Iskwater": we organized the same pattern of activities with different variations; we did not expect more than a hundred of children swarmed our event. Due to the time constraint and limitation of supplies and materials, we felt so sad to see many of them did not able to participate and did not able to get food.

We repacked our limited relief to double the number of families who will receive the goods. We focus our effort in charging and medicine distribution while the two volunteers spontaneously organized games for kids who were always around the area of our campsite. Actually, the tandem always does this activity every afternoon during our stay except during bad weather.

We organized workshops, food not bombs, games and gift sharing to children in Pikas. Kids there are relatively small in number compare to Barangay Central and in Squatter; but they are very warm just like the places we had previously visited.

Limited supply obliged us to prioritize families without houses. We distributed relief in Iskwater, Barangay Central and Olputan areas.

These activities were carried-out in our 14-day mission including two ways travel time.



REFLECTIONS

In our ten years of operating food not bombs, free market and similar activities we are used to positive impressions from the people and communities.

School teacher is highly respectable career in many municipalities in the archipelago. A school teacher with her two daughters showed-up in one of our events all of them were wearing black shirts. Afterwards, the teacher told the reason why they are wearing black, because they respect the people who preferred to wear black color.

The community treats us good and with respect, perhaps it is natural for the people to treat us this way as long as we provide service or share supplies. On the other hand they also asked why institutions are not working efficiently and creatively to provide support. We are not supposed to be here if the government is doing its job.

In general, it's not normal to see strange looking people providing or sharing things services essential to our daily lives without asking anything in return. Strange looking would mean heavily tattooed, body pierced, weird hairstyles and preferring black over the other colors. Likewise, it is really odd to see these strange looking people who has no boss and privilege less but active in the front line of disaster to extend solidarity to the victims.



Our appearance raised curiosity which made people come, mingle and inter-act with us. They are expecting “formal” and “decent” people to come to help in exchange of political allegiance or spiritual favour. They are really surprised to know that strange looking people like us are here to share based on our capacity without asking anything in return.

For us this is not a heroic act, we believe that helping is a normal and common relationship in many organisms. Currently, human being is essentially guided by the idea of competition reinforced by capitalism and statism. The idea of supremacy, hierarchy, uniformity and centralized pattern distorted our values. Our relationship with nature, to our self and with others is now characterized by domination and control that eventually resulted to inequality, poverty, ignorance, patriarchy and ecological destructions.

Mutual Aid can be effective if delivered directly.



Ways forward

The incompetence and corruption in the government proved to be more devastating than the super typhoon itself, we call on the people, collectives, private sectors and autonomous network to act directly. Avoid government process because goods and supplies will just end up in storage facilities accessible only to authorities. There are plenty of reports with regard to anomalies, we actually witnessed how the authority control the basic goods for their own purposes. Thousands of sacks of rice and goods are being kept by the authorities and distributing only very limited supplies to the families who could not access basic commodities.

In our part, we would like to expand our set-up of solar power unit equip with 300 watts solar panel, 30 ampere solar control charger, 2500 inverter and two units of 3SM maintenance and deep cycle batteries to accommodate more units of mobile phones and flashlights. We will organize a Solar Guerrilla Autonomous Response Team that will immediately react in every calamity and power black-out situation.

In the first week of December we are planning to organize a camp that will provide relief, medical missions and stress debriefing activities, the extent of operations will depend on the support and participation from immediate and extended Network.

Any queries or donation related to this initiative please contact:

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Visit the Etniko Bandido Infoshop at <http://ebinfoshop.surestepintegral.com/>

Donations can be sent to

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