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Philippines

Report on solidarity campaign

- IV Online magazine - 2013 - IV466 - November 2013 -

Publication date: Wednesday 27 November 2013

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We present here an update on the solidarity campaign initiated by ESSF with victims of the Haiyan/Yolanda super typhoon and the activities undertaken by our partners. We have to date transferred 6,000 euros, 4,000 on November 13 and 2,000 on November 21. UPDATE : Since this second report on our solidarities activities was originally written, 3.500 euros more have been sent via ESSF to our partners in the Philippines, thus for the time being a total amount of 9.500 euros has been transferred. We hope to be able to order a fourth transfer in few days time.

Since the first report on the beginning of our solidarity campaign, our appeal has been translated into German (as well as Dutch, Flemish, English and Spanish). In France, our initiative has received the support of the Solidaires trade union organisation. We are ready to fully involve in this activity the social movements, progressive reviews or other organizations which give it support.

Outside France, there have been donations from Germany, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, Quebec, Canada and the USA; and they are forthcoming from Hong Kong, Japan, and Australia. Before having received written notification of transfers from the bank, it is sometimes impossible for us to know their origin. We will in the future give more specific details on the international dimension of our campaign.

Our Philippine partners are making a considerable effort to raise funds in Mindanao themselves (see below). They are also in contact with European associations able to aid them, as in Belgium where Entraide et Fraternité has launched an appeal for this purpose. We hope that they will soon receive financial support from these movements. In the immediate however – to our knowledge at least – they depend at the international level on donations transferred by ESSF thanks the quick response of our solidarity network. Thanks to all donors.

The activities of our Philippine partners

As we have indicated in our previous articles, the organisations with whom we work are established in Mindanao, one of the two biggest islands of the archipelago, situated in the south of the Philippines. They have links with the zones most violently affected by the typhoon, located in the centre of the archipelago in a set of islands called the Visayas. A first team left last week to investigate the situation on the ground, evaluate needs and possibilities more precisely, and begin to provide aid and draw up an initial plan of action. At the same time, preparation, mobilisation, educational and organisational work has begun in Mindanao.

The “pilot” team which last week left Iligan (Mindanao) to go to the affected areas of the Visayas has gone to a rural area in Daanbantayan (in the north of the island of Cebu), to Palompon and Villaba, as well as Ormoc City where there is a significant Muslim community (on the island of Leyte). In all these places, the inhabitants have not yet received any aid from governmental agencies, private Philippine institutions or international bodies. This first team is currently preparing a report to evaluate in more depth the situation in the localities and specify the modalities of the necessary solidarity work. A second team has just left to help local coordination of operations and distribute aid in correct safety conditions.

Broadening of the mobilization in Mindanao

A big effort is being made in Mindanao to carry out activities of aid, rehabilitation and reconstruction in the Visayas. In the country as a whole, the population is in shock after having discovered the breadth of the devastation brought about by Haiyan/Yolanda. Typhoons are common climatic phenomena in Philippines. Generally disruptive, but relatively benign, they are sometimes murderous. This one has exceeded anything previously seen.

The inhabitants of the Mindanao coast have themselves faced devastating and murderous typhoons, like Washi/Sendong in 2012. They are aware of what can mean "much worse than what they have themselves lived". In such conditions, solidarity has been readily forthcoming.

Initially, we worked with two associations: Tripod and RDRRAC. Now a new coalition has been established, comprising around fifty organisations: the Mindanao Humanitarian Action Network against Disasters (Mi-HANDs - its address will be: www.mihands.org). The campaign for the victims of Haiyan is called: "Mindanao Duyog sa Katawhang Biktima sa Yolanda" (Mindanao Solidarity for Typhoon Yolanda Survivors). A logo has been designed and an Internet site is under construction. The search for funds is linked to a campaign of explanation on the implications of the super typhoon. Small teams of volunteers go from school to school, shopping mall to shopping mall with a photo exhibition. Discussions begin, money is collected. The mayors (or their equivalent) are contacted so that they help the success of this initiative in their localities.

The next stage

Urgently, which means in a few days, Mi-HANDs has the objective of raising 1.8 million pesos (or more than 30,000 euros) in the form of advances and loans to send aid by boat to some 850 families who have lost everything: food (rice, canned goods, coffee, sugar, mongo, oil, dried fish, salt) and hygiene kits (bath soap, detergent soap, tooth brush, toothpaste, sanitary napkin, nail cutter, face towel)) as well as a team responsible for health questions (medicines and medical equipment and psycho-social therapy sessions).

Several dozen volunteers take care of logistics, with a division of labour between various teams: distribution of aid, documentation, psycho-social aid, health and so on. All this is only a beginning. The reconstitution of the social tissue will take time. In vast areas, economic activity is destroyed; the possibilities of finding a job are very low. There are hundreds of thousands of displaced persons. Many are those who are tempted to leave and join family members in the capital, at the risk for the poorest of ending up in the shanty towns of unemployed and informal workers. New typhoons are currently hitting the Philippines, but they are of moderate strength. However, in the areas already devastated, they can still destroy the tents where the refugees are sheltering and revive the memory of a genuinely apocalyptic experience. People are experiencing insecurity. In coming to their side, the members of Mi-HANDs know that they make a long term commitment.

They thank all those abroad who have contributed to both political and financial solidarity. The money sent by ESSF has served to buy basic necessities and indispensable logical resources. For our part, we will continue our campaign, even when the TV no longer speaks of the victims of the super typhoon – and if possible involve other movements in solidarity, drawing in new layers.

To send donations

Cheques

Report on solidarity campaign

Cheques in euros only and payable in France made out to ESSF should be sent to:

ESSF
2, rue Richard-Lenoir
93100 Montreuil
France

Bank:

Crédit lyonnais
Agence de la Croix-de-Chavaux (00525)
10 boulevard Chanzy
93100 Montreuil
France
ESSF, account number 445757C

National bank references (RIB):

Bank: 30002
Code: 00525: 0000445757C
Key: 12
Account in the name of: ESSF

International bank references:

IBAN: FR85 3000 2005 2500 0044 5757 C12
BIC / SWIFT: CRLYFRPP
Account in the name of: ESSF

Paypal: you can also make donations via Paypal (

https://www.paypal.com/fr/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_flow&SESSION=HYicOYx_ee-jYpZ4KT0Lb30CFQ_allhQDaCsf2U_hDzHgORSJCLJk_DiCqy&dispatch=5885d80a13c0db1f8e263663d3faee8def8934b92a630e40b7fef61ab7e9fe63)

We will keep you regularly informed via our site of the situation and the use of the solidarity fund.