

The Philippines schools project



As before, we spent most of 2007 raising funds and collecting gifts. As always, our friends' generosity continually amazed us and once again our dining room became a warehouse. Computers, monitors, books, school supplies and bags of clothes piled up as the year progressed.

We had some sad news in November when our brother died suddenly and, of course, Jo had to go home to the Philippines. This was at the time when we would usually be putting the parcels together and, by the time Jo returned to the UK and we had the boxes packed it was the 2nd week of December. This made it a little tight for a delivery date while we would still be in the Phils but Edward, our freight man, promised to pull out all the stops. He didn't let us down.

For the first time ever, due to our reduced personal circumstances, we had to use some of the donated money to help pay for the freight. I hope to be able to reverse this in 2008.



Our dining room in London, UK

Donations pile up in our dining room and get boxed. Computers and other fragile items are protected by the clothes and soft toys.



7,000 miles and seven weeks later they are in our kitchen in the Philippines.



Our kitchen in Botao, Philippines

Of course, the first job is to get all the boxes unpacked and sorted.

books for the High school



computers



monitors



paper



pencils and ball-points



2 scanners and a laser printer



and bags of clothes.





We needed some more desks!

So, I ordered some wood and got it delivered.

The carpenters turned up in the evening (after they'd finished their day job) and made the desks over two nights



When they were finished I called the school. Pretty soon students from the High school arrived -

and carried them off!



I have a friend who helps me set up the networking for the computers before we take them to the school



Setting them in position, with an eager observer.



four of the computers on the new benches



Another two next to the four we installed last year



We had to upgrade all of the electrics and the network to cope with the increase, all of the units are fitted with an Automatic Voltage Regulator, required due to the flaky power supply!



The Barangay Hall is now functional.

It is a cross between a community centre, a medical centre and a local council hall. Situated in the grounds of the Elementary school, it is a focal point for the local community.



So we kitted it out with a complete system including scanner and printer. Now the school children can come in out of school hours to complete project work. This is also available to the wider local community.

Before this they had to travel into the nearest town and use commercial facilities, all of which cost them dear.

The Barangay council paid for new basketball hoops.



Each year, we take the teachers to the National Book Store and give them a budget to spend on books and equipment.



The National Book Store is the main source of supply for all school requirements, everything from posters to magnetic boards,.....

.....folders, all stationery, paints and crayons.

Above are teachers from the High school, to the right representatives from the Elementary school



The new Mayor.

Since we were last in the Philippines, a new Mayor has been elected. Education is one of his main themes and, through the teachers, he had heard of our project and asked to meet us at the school.

He told us that our activities had helped to raise the profile of the school and he intended to help us by bringing forward some funding for proposed building works.



Could this be the site of our new computer room when we return in 2009?

As we toured the school he informed us that he intended replacing all of the wooden roof structures with new steel ones, and the oldest building was to be demolished.

In its place, he will build a larger computer room and equip it with air-conditioning (we have had some machine failures, more than likely due to the heat in the room). Let's hope his words translate into action!

Internet

I've always hoped that one day we would get internet services for the kids. But as we don't even have a telephone service, that has always appeared a remote possibility.

However this year when we arrived we heard of a new system offering broadband over a small satellite dish. We immediately applied to have it fitted.

Two workmen arrived on this bike, carrying with them two 10-foot lengths of aerial and proceeded to erect this on the roof of the school. Stay wires were attached, the dish was fitted and wires dropped down into the school room and terminated. The computer was plugged into the box and- hey presto- we had an internet connection, or so we thought!



We had a late specification PC lined up and all ready to go with the internet connection.

However our hopes were dashed when the engineer said that the signal was not very strong, possibly due to 70ft bamboo trees which surround our area, shielding the signal.

So down came the mast and dish and away they rode! Perhaps there will be another system by next year?

Google Earth

You can see the school quite clearly on Google Earth.
The co-ordinates are: 15 58' 28.52" N 120 27' 31.52" E

If you look at Google Earth, this is the layout of the school to give you an idea of where all the different buildings are.



As always, Jo and I would like to join with the young people from the Botao Elementary and High Schools to thank everyone who helps make this project possible, turning dreams into reality for lots of children.