

# **The Philippines schools project**

## **2009 UPDATE**

**2008 proved to be our most successful year so far with fund-raising. Thanks to all our friends, we took substantial funding out with us and were really optimistic that we could get a lot started.**

**It is always exciting to go and visit the school when we arrive in the Philippines, because the first thing we have to do is to see how things have progressed since we were last there.**

**All of this, of course, is in addition to the parcels that Jo has so carefully packed and despatched in advance. Opening those up when we arrive is always fun, because you've forgotten what was in them often, so it's a bit like your birthday!**

A couple of words about my friends.

"They're great"



What else do say about a bunch of people who turn up on a cold, dark winter's evening, race around for three hours and pay hard-earned money for the privilege.



They arranged it all as well. And then they made additional donations, and brought more prizes to raffle.



all for something they've only seen in a picture. A picture of some children 7,000 miles away.



You remember I talked about the new Mayor? Well, he's ok! He did everything he promised last year, knocking down the old building and blending a new one on to the end of the new library in the High school.



He also used his network of contacts to raise money for two other new buildings in the elementary school.

Here's the Mayor in front of the new buildings with his two sponsors.

Best of all, from our point of view, he's offered to match our funding! So that means all the donations we've taken out to the Philippines will be worth much more!



the two new elementary buildings

Mayor Reynaldo Velasco  
He's got big plans for our area and the school is included in them, thanks to all your donations.

<http://www.stabarbara-pangasinan.ph/>



This is the room they are now using as a canteen in the elementary school.

You can see it's looking a bit rough and could do with a new floor and some tidier fittings.



The wood for the roof is past its best!

and the galvanised is a bit thin in places!



So we handed over some money to the local councillor, who will then oversee the project to replace the wood and roof and lay the floor. The teachers are very happy as you can see!



Through a chance meeting, we got invited to view the activities of the Barangay Health Workers and their feeding programme for under-nourished children.



This is just another activity that takes place, eight days each month, at the Barangay Hall.



On these days, about 50 local children get a meal consisting of a couple of pieces of chicken and vegetable, in a thin soup with vitamin supplements, and copious quantities of rice.



It made us think, if this is a "good" meal, what do they eat on all the other days of the month?

Jo commented that they had nowhere to eat this and a spillage of this hot meal could wreak havoc on a young body.



So we got the carpenter to make three low tables and they were taken to the Barangay Hall just before we left to come back to the UK.





We were fortunate to attend a parent/teachers committee meeting, and it gave us an opportunity to understand a little more of the difficulties the parents face in just trying to keep their children in school.

we asked the High School Principal for a breakdown of the annual school costs. It comes to less than £3. Some parents said they just can't afford these for all their children.

School Fee	
PTCA	₱65.00
Miscellaneous fee	33.00
athletic fee	10.00
organization fee	20.00
Last papers 10 x 8	= 80.00
	<hr/>
	₱208.00

Other parents told us about the additional costs, even down to pencils and ball-point pens. We already had quite a lot of these in the parcels we'd sent out but we decided to buy some more so that each child in the school got a new pencil and pen. That's over 900 of each by the time we'd counted them all!



Here are some of the teachers with the parcels of pens and pencils for their students.

I'm holding one of the many wonderful, hand-made cards that the students give us every year.

## The scholarship and medal scheme

It's not much, but it may help a little. We've set up a bursary to pay the school fees for ten students from the last year at elementary into first year High school, ten from first year High into second and so on through High school. The top ten students in the final year will get an award as a record of their achievement.

## grills for the computer room

The building on the right is the Principal's office for the elementary school. For the last two years it has been where the computers have been, because it is the only room with metal grills on the doors and windows.

The building on the left has just been completed so all we had to do was

to set aside some money and they started to put grills on this building, so soon there will be a dedicated computer room for the elementary school too.



Here's Jo handing over the money for the grills.

In the background you can see two of the computers on the new bench.



On a lighter note, here's the charge of the light brigade!

Jo and I were just leaving the school one day, when we heard shouting. It was the children from one class in Elementary, standing outside their classroom waving at us.



"Take a photo" said Jo. I took out the camera, and they charged!



Not only them, but the next class now as well!



and then another, and another!  
They just kept coming.....





## More computers

As ever, we managed to supply some more computers to both the schools. This always involves more benches being made and electrical wiring etc. Installation always takes a few days but it's always worth it when you see how well-received these gifts are.

Even allowing for a couple of failures over the year, we now have fourteen computers in the high school.



We added another computer to the Barangay Hall, complete with an all-in-one scanner/printer unit.



I'll leave the last word to them:

They can express themselves with their enthusiasm and smiles much better than I will ever be able to.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
DIVISION OF PANGASINAN 1  
BOTAO NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL  
Sta. Barbara

To all Donors/Benefactors from London,

The Brgy. Council and PTCA Officials of Botao National High School Sta. Barbara lead by Brgy. Capt. Isagani T. Gutierrez and PTCA President Mr. Donato C. Tulao, would like to thank you for all that you've given and offered to Botao National High School. The computers, books, modern devices, printers, scanners, CD's and VCD's and school supplies have been of great use. They have brought immense benefits not just to the progress of the students, but have also brought the assurance to the parents that their children would soon have better future. Likewise, we are also taking pride of the fact these students after equipping themselves with the right skills and knowledge would soon be capable enough to help in the community development. For these, we thank you very much. We look forward to meeting you all there so we let you see personally how much you've done to our lives.

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