

Team visit to Gerhati project in Jakarta, Indonesia & CCT project in Manila, Philippines: 21-30 November 2008

Team: Rachel Millward, Miss Hye-Jung Park, HSBC (Indonesia & Philippines) and Miss Lily Ho, Accenture (Philippines only)

Purpose of visit

The purpose of this trip was to visit the South East Asia projects and gain first-hand experience of how the projects differ from those in Uganda and Tanzania which I visited last year. Hye-Jung and Lily who had learnt about Five Talents through HTB, were keen to see the projects with a view to using the experience to reach out to networks both at work and at church (HTB).

Friday/Saturday – 21/22nd November

Hye-Jung and I left London Heathrow on Friday night and flew to Jakarta via Singapore arriving Saturday night. We were met by the Gerhati Project Leader Mei Cen and taken to our guest-house 'Wisma PGI Teuku Umar'. We immediately got our first taste of the traffic problem in Jakarta – something which we quickly learnt, was the main talking point of most conversation in Indonesia, akin to the British weather!

Sunday 23rd November

On Sunday we met Dr Deborah Hennessy, a friend of Craig Cole's (ex-World Health Organisation) in Jakarta and three of the Gerhati Board members. We attended All Saints Church in Jakarta (Reverend Dale Appleby).

Deborah had arranged for us to spend the day with a friend who is a Consultant Paediatrician and an Indonesian Muslim. The family arranged for us to have a guided tour of the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta - the largest mosque in Southeast Asia. With a capacity to hold 120,000 people – it was enormous. We had a very interesting day and learnt more about life in Jakarta and the intricacies and constraints of the health system.



Monday 24th November

Our first meeting was with Gerard Howe from **DfID** at the Indonesia Stock Exchange. We learnt the following;

- UK government has allocated GBP50m to Indonesia over the next 3 years
- Indonesia is classified as a middle-income developing country and therefore is eligible to receive a share of the 10% of total UK development fund allocated to MI countries
- They focus on 1) improving the quality of public institutions (i.e. a decentralisation programme and transparency), 2) off-track MDG (reduce maternal mortality) and 3) assessing Indonesia's impact outside the country (in particular climate change)
- Most funding is not bilateral and they work closely with; Asian Development Bank, The World Bank, AusAID and the government of Japan
- It is expected the impact of the financial turmoil will start to be felt in March 2009
- Going forward, they estimate that budgets will be doubled but staff/administration will be halved
- Each UK household gives (through tax) £500 per annum to overseas development

"Master," he said, "you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more." (Matt. 25:20)

We then visited the **Gerhati Project** offices and client groups.

Overview of Gerhati Project, Indonesia

- *GERHATI means “Gateway of Hope for Human Transformation”*
- *It was established in 2002 by Five Talents in partnership with Anglican Diocese of Singapore and All Saints Church, Jakarta*
- *It operates out of two districts; Bekasi and Cipayung*
- *Total number of clients; 914 (92% women)*
- *Muslims - 80% and Christians - 20%*
- *Average loan is approximately £25 through group lending method*
- *Interest rate is 3% pcm, loan repaid over 5 months*
- *Clients must have existing businesses*
- *They operate a fine system for late repayments*



We met with the “Pandanwangi” group who after 8 preparatory meetings were receiving their first disbursement of £550. The group comprised 13 women, all Muslims, with established small businesses selling snacks, fruit and vegetables, top-up cards. Those who were unable to sign the loan agreement with their signature, confirmed their agreement with a thumb-print.

We then visited another village where the Gerhati staff were pleased to note that the general health of the people in this village had greatly improved over the year. They felt that this could be directly attributed to the improved financial status of many of the villagers who had taken out loans to support their businesses.



Tuesday 25th November



After an early morning worship session at the Gerhati offices and exchanging our gifts, we then set out to visit more clients. We met a client (see left) who is 49 years old and has four children. She has taken a loan to buy plastic containers and to reconstruct and sew them into hand-bags which are then sold in the local market for IDR 60,000 each.

We then moved onto meet the “Bunga Group” which comprises 15 women who had taken out loans to help them grow their businesses. Many sold home-made cakes, ice-drinks, vegetables and handicrafts such as patchwork quilts and jewellery from recycled acrylics bought from the market. They said that Gerhati offered preferential interest rates to other lenders and provided excellent training. It had allowed them to save and to buy food such as fish.



Wednesday 26th November

Hye-Jung and I flew to Manila via Singapore.

Thursday 27th November

Overview of CCT (Center for Community Transformation)

- *Five Talents partnered with CCT and the Episcopal Diocese of Central Philippines*
- *Now consolidated to eight districts and Five Talents has historically funded new branches and intends to contribute additional loan capital*
- *Total number of clients; 140,000 (3.5% Muslim)*
- *85% women (formerly 99%)*
- *First loan is on average £40*
- *Interest rate is 2.5% pcm, loan repaid over 4 months*
- *INDIVIDUAL LOANS ONLY – NO GROUP LOANS*
- *Clients must have existing businesses*



Hye-Jung, Lily and I attended the weekly Fellowship meeting where all loan clients met for a Bible study. The group was split into two groups of Christians and Muslims. The meeting started with a welcome, worship and prayers (the prayers for the Muslims being adapted so as not to cause offence), a Bible study (also adapted and contextualised) and a summary on the work of CCT and the loan repayment procedure.



We then talked to the staff to find out more about the loan programme in the Taguig branch (see left). Clients can also take out life insurance too as well as a loan.



The staff arranged for us to meet 3 Muslim clients and which gave us the opportunity to ask them about their businesses (see right). We were very impressed by the entrepreneurship of these women and their resourcefulness in setting up businesses.

Saripa (left) – has a shop which sells bananas. This is her 10th loan and prior to coming to CCT she used a pawn shop to borrow money. She has now been able to reclaim her jewellery.

Bidora (centre) – owns a convenience store. This is also her 10th loan. She also lends money to people who apply for Visa documentation for the Middle East. She used her loan to buy a telephone and charge for calls.

Noria (right) – owns a convenience store and the loan has helped pay for her children's education and buy more food.



We were then driven to the Cainta branch to meet Rufina and Felix Marquez. Rufina is a savings member of CCT and runs a convenience store. Felix (left) took a loan for his welding business. He employs 3 people however due to the recent increase in the price of steel and the decreasing number of orders, he has had to make staff redundant.

He has had 7 loans and trusts CCT because it is a Christian loan programme. He has also built a basket ball court which will be hired out for games.

Friday 28th November

Through a recent contact made with 2 first-year students at Kings College London, we were put in touch with Jane Walker OBE, a British woman who established The Philippine Community Fund in Manila to help families who live on the landfill site in Tondo. We made an early appointment to meet Jane to see her work first hand and to investigate, as requested, if CCT could help PCF.



We were shocked by the squalid conditions in which these families existed and how they made a living from the surrounding piles of rubbish and plastic by sorting and recycling the waste. Diseases such as TB and cancer were common due to the smoke from the open fires and the toxic waste.

We were shown the school that Jane has built for the children living on the site and we visited the work areas where women are employed to make school uniforms for the children. Once we returned to CCT later that day, we were pleased to learn from Ruth Callanta that 1) there is a CCT programme in the Tondo area and 2) one of the Board members has given industrial sewing machines to CCT. We hope that this link will provide Jane with opportunities for more employment on Tondo through PCF.

We then met the Bishop of Manila (of the Episcopalean Church) and his team Jaime Wy and Johnny Golucan.



Our day culminated at the CCT head office, meeting Ruth Callanta, the President of CCT. We heard in more detail about the other ministries that CCT are running such as their work with the homeless, training and mentoring for the staff, the training and development institute and the social security programme. 95% of their clients are ‘unchurched’ and CCT’s vision for next year is to become a more mission focussed organisation and plant more churches. They see their high repayment rates being a natural result of the training and ministry administered by the staff as well the high ratio of staff to clients - 1:170 (vs 1:350 more commonly). They have readily agreed to not be measured by secular MFI standards. The day ended on a very positive note as we visited their newly built centre for the homeless which provides heavily subsidised food, medical supplies and clothing for clients.



We would like to thank both the staff of Gerhati in Indonesia and CCT in Manila for arranging such an interesting programme for our visit. It was a hugely rewarding experience and very valuable in terms of context and it will undoubtedly equip us to speak to more networks and clients when fundraising. I’d also like to thank St James the Less Church in Pimlico for contributing substantially towards the cost of my trip.

***Rachel Millward
4th December 2008***