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ADRA Philippines

TOM PIGNON

Tom Pignon is the country director for ADRA Philippines where he has lived with his wife Kaylene and their three sons since 2015. Tom has spent over 15 years working for humanitarian organizations in the United Kingdom, Angola, Afghanistan, and the Philippines while supporting humanitarian and development programs around the world. Tom began working for ADRA in 2010 as a programmes officer for ADRA-UK before becoming the program director of ADRA Philippines and later the country director.

ADRA Philippines was established in the Philippines in 1984 as part of the international network of independent Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) country offices that operate in over 135 countries around the

world. The establishment of ADRA Philippines followed the reorganization of ADRA International in 1984, which had previously been the Seventh-day Adventist World Service (SAWS) in 1973 and, before that, the Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Service (SAWS) in 1956. On April 11, 1984, under the leadership of Pastor E. C. Corpus, the SAWS Philippines board voted to register the ADRA Philippines name with the Securities and Exchange Commission with the purpose to undertake charitable educational development work.¹

With this new identity, the ADRA Philippines board recognized the need for a full-time director and, at a board meeting on March 16, 1985, voted to request the Far East Division to consider providing a full-time director for ADRA Philippines.² In this same meeting, the board designated Donald Christensen as acting director for ADRA Philippines.³ The purpose of ADRA Philippines is to serve humanity so all may live as God intended⁴ to live abundantly with justice, compassion, and love.

History

After registering as a foundation in 1984, ADRA Philippines began its first significant project: a feeding program for refugees in Bataan titled the Philippine Refugee Processing Center. The agency was initially involved in implementing institutional strengthening support and infrastructure projects in line with its humanitarian and development goals, including construction of the Palawan Adventist Hospital, various barangay clinics, and water systems⁵

Between 1996 and 2000, over 170 field staff and hundreds of local and foreign volunteers participated in the successful implementation of ADRA projects throughout the Philippines. A total of 102 projects were implemented, which benefited more than 500,000 people. Youth and professional volunteer groups from Germany, Japan, the United States, Canada, and Singapore worked alongside local volunteers and ADRA Philippines staff to build mountain schools, foot bridges, solar driers, and irrigation facilities as well as provide primary health care services and ensure a steady water supply for village homes and gardens.⁶

In the late 1990s, ADRA Philippines implemented a five-year project with the Manobos of Mindanao called HEAL (Health, Education, Agriculture, and Literacy) with support from ADRA Germany, ADRA Italy, and ADRA EU. This holistic project was considered the first development project of ADRA Philippines. Another project, "HEAL Nurture – Alegria," was implemented between 1998 and 2001 with support from ADRA Australia. This integrated project was implemented in 14 villages on Negros Island and benefited 4,320 people through agricultural, health, and small enterprise development components.⁷

For much of its history, ADRA Philippines held a permanent diplomatic status with the Department of Foreign Affairs. Under this status, the department had granted tax-exemption privileges to ADRA Philippines by virtue of the 1956 Exchange of Notes Relating to Duty-Free Entry and Exemption from Internal Taxation of Relief Supplies and Equipment between the Philippines and the USA.⁸ Through this arrangement, ADRA Philippines was able to import goods donated in the US, including relief and rehabilitation supplies and equipment in support of its projects in health and nutrition, education, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), livelihoods, emergency response, and disaster risk reduction.⁹

ADRA Philippines has a long-running partnership with Operation Christmas Child of Samaritans Purse, a Christian international non-governmental organization. In 2000, ADRA Philippines facilitated the importation of three 40-foot containers¹⁰ with over 20,000 shoeboxes containing gifts donated by US children to be distributed to disadvantaged Filipino children. Each year, ADRA works with different missions and conferences across the Philippines to distribute these gifts to disadvantaged children.

Throughout its history, ADRA Philippines has had significant responses to natural disasters that have impacted the country. These have included the large Typhoon Ketsana (*Ondoy*) in 2009, Typhoon Washi (*Sendong*) in 2011, and Typhoon Bopha (*Pablo*) in December 2012.

Emergency response projects in 2009, which included ADRA's response to Typhoon Ketsana (*Ondoy*), focused on distribution of food, non-food items, medical care, and a water purification system. These responses amounted to \$994,409 USD with funding from the ADRA network, Southern Asia-Pacific Division, Central Luzon Conference, the Latter-day Saints, and government partners, including the United States Agency for International Development/Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, the Japan Platform, and the German and Spanish governments.¹¹ ADRA Philippines also partnered with the United Nations World Food Programme and the Philippine's Department of Social Welfare and Development to conduct post-distribution monitoring in Laguna, Rizal, and parts of Northern Luzon.

Typhoon Washi (*Sendong*) hit the Philippines in mid-December 2011, and ADRA responded to the impact of that typhoon as well as other disasters, including Typhoon Bopha (*Pablo*). The ADRA network, the church in the Philippines, Hong Kong Adventist Hospital, and the Hong Kong government assisted 18,941 families with bed kits, food, water, and cash grants totaling \$325,201 USD.¹²

Prior to Typhoon Haiyan (*Yolanda*) in 2013, ADRA Philippines had implemented 16 emergency response projects in response to a variety of disasters, including typhoons, earthquakes, and flooding. The ADRA network, the church in the Philippines, Global Medic, Swiss Solidarity, and the Hong Kong government assisted 58,850 families with \$465,590 USD of funding.

In the 2013 Typhoon Haiyan (*Yolanda*) disaster, ADRA Philippines assisted 220,000 individuals affected by the super typhoon with food, water, shelter, livelihood recovery, and training in disaster risk reduction programs. The ADRA network, the government, and private donors worldwide funded the effort in Leyte, Iloilo, Roxas, and Aklan,

amounting to \$8 million USD.¹³

Typhoon Haiyan heralded a period of dramatic expansion for ADRA Philippines; the response and recovery efforts resulted in the agency's growth from a staff of nine to over 90. The size of the agency's projects also grew significantly with several of the projects amounting to over \$1 million USD. In 2012, the annual value of the projects for ADRA Philippines was \$335,000 USD, growing to \$5.5 million USD in 2014.¹⁴ The agency benefited from the world's focus on the Philippines, and, with the Haiyan recovery phase drawing to a close, the agency won multi-million-dollar multi-year grants, which grew its development programming.

ADRA Canada has been a close partner of ADRA Philippines during Typhoon Haiyan and the years that followed. In July 2015, ADRA Philippines started a three-year MASIGLAHI Mother and Child Health/Nutrition project focused on young, pregnant and lactating mothers and their children in Bato, Leyte.¹⁵ This was with \$544,945 CAN of funding from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and ADRA Canada. In August 2015, ADRA Philippines started a four-year livelihood project – Restoring, Empowering, and Protecting Livelihoods – in Northern Iloilo funded through a \$5,681,777 CAN grant from Global Affairs Canada.¹⁶ Working in partnership with World Renew, the project aimed at sustainably improving the economic self-reliance of farmers, fisherfolk, and local traders while also increasing their resilience to natural and human-made hazards.

Eradicating malnutrition and creating healthier families are focus areas for ADRA Philippines. The agency does not simply hand over food to the hungry but instead helps poor communities improve access to essential health services and nutritious foods for mothers, pregnant women, caregivers, and girls and boys under the age of five years. In February 2016, ADRA Philippines received a grant of \$4,705,097 CAN from Global Affairs Canada to implement a four-year project focused on health and nutrition for female youth, pregnant and lactating mothers, and their children.¹⁷ The EMBRACE project (Enhance Mother/new-Born child health in Remote Areas through health Care and community Engagement) was implemented in Camarines Sur as part of a larger ADRA Canada program in the Philippines, Canada, Cambodia, Rwanda, and Myanmar.

ADRA Philippines works with communities to prepare for and mitigate the impact of disasters through a disaster risk reduction program. The agency aims to build disaster resilient communities by promoting awareness of the importance of disaster risk reduction as an integral component of sustainable development. It thereby reduces human, social, economic, and environmental losses due to natural hazards. As part of this strategy, ADRA Philippines started an 11-month long, \$50,000 USD project in August 2017 funded by ADRA Czech, ADRA International, and the Humanitarian Leadership Academy. Project VIPER (Project on Vulnerability and Impact Reduction to Earthquake for the Province of Cavite)¹⁸ focused on supporting the provincial government to develop a contingency plan for the "Big One" earthquake that is expected to hit Metro Manila and the neighboring regions. In November 2017, ADRA Philippines started implementing the 11-month long BATANG READY (Resilient Child and Empowered Advocates for Disaster Risk Reduction) project.¹⁹ This was a €105,000 EUR project funded by Aktion Deutschland Hilft in partnership with ADRA Germany. Its focus was on inclusive disaster risk reduction training for 2,500 school students in the Iloilo province.

ADRA Philippines has historically worked closely with the Adventist Community Services (ACS) when responding to various disasters that hit the country each year. In 2015, the agency began a two-year project aimed at building the capacity of the church, and in particular ACS, to respond more effectively to emergencies, implement disaster risk reduction activities within the community, and deliver psychosocial support services in the aftermath of a disaster. The project Negotiating Ordinances and Reducing Incidents through Systems and Knowledge²⁰ was funded with \$375,568 USD of donations from ADRA country offices in Australia, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, and the United Kingdom. This project helped ACS units from Central Luzon, Central and Western Visayas, and North Central Mindanao become accredited with local government units at the municipal and provincial level.

In 2018, ADRA Philippines was invited to become a member of the UN Humanitarian Country Team, one of five seats given to international non-governmental organizations in the country. Later that year, ADRA Philippines was awarded funding from the United Nations World Food Programme to improve the nutritional status of nutritionally at-risk displaced young children and pregnant or lactating women including adolescent girls in crisis-affected areas by providing technical and operational support to the local health facility staff in the implementation of a five-month blanket and targeted supplementary feeding program.²¹ This program was implemented in and around the city of Marawi that had been devastated by the Siege of Marawi in 2017. As part of ADRA Philippines's wider response to Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018, ADRA Philippines again partnered with the United Nations World Food Programme to register 4,000 households to receive food packs from the country's Department of Social Welfare and Development. ADRA Philippines's wider response to this typhoon also included a focus on providing cash grants to those affected, empowering beneficiaries to determine and supply their own needs.

ADRA Philippines's work has been recognized by the national government. The agency has been given the *Gawad KALASAG* award, a symbol of excellence, in 2007, 2008, and 2014. The *Gawad KALASAG* award is given to stakeholders who design and implement disaster risk management programs meant to protect or shield high-risk communities against hazards.

Role and Place in the Country

Today, ADRA Philippines employs a team of experienced staff that design, implement, manage, and monitor its programs in accordance with donor regulations, ADRA policies, and the government requirements of the Philippines. The agency's technical team includes emergency management, disaster risk reduction, nutrition and public health,

livelihoods, agribusiness, shelter, water and sanitation/hygiene, social work, monitoring and evaluation, and communications/public relations specialists. The managerial team includes a country director, finance and administrative director, partnership/government/church coordinator, program manager, planning and evaluation manager, public relations and marketing officer, and a logistics and finance team.

ADRA Philippines is registered with the Philippine Security and Exchange Commission and is licensed and accredited by the country's Department of Social Welfare and Development. The agency is both a member of the Philippine Association of Foundations as well as the international non-governmental organizations network. It is also an active member and contributor to other networks, including the United Nations Humanitarian Country Team, the Philippine Coalition for Advocacy of Nutrition Security, and the National Anti-Poverty Commission.

ADRA Philippines concentrates its efforts in community based development activities and disaster preparedness while cooperating with other government and non-government agencies and organizations in fulfilling this goal. Community based development includes a wide range of activities leading to improved health, economic and social wellbeing, and self-reliance. Disaster preparedness activities include advocacy and training of local partners in disaster prevention, mitigation, and preparedness, as well as direct interventions in disaster rescue, relief, and rehabilitation. A national emergency management plan facilitates an immediate response to a range of emergencies with funding from ADRA International, the ADRA Asia regional office, and the local church, conference, or mission.

ADRA Philippines is the humanitarian arm of the Seventh-day Adventist Church who assist the one million strong Adventist community in the Philippines with its thousands of churches across the country and a large integrated healthcare and education network. ADRA Philippines delivers relief and development assistance to individuals across the country regardless of ethnicity, political affiliation, gender, or religious association. By partnering with local communities, organizations, and governments, ADRA Philippines delivers culturally relevant programs and builds local capability for sustainable change.²²

The ADRA Philippines Board of Trustees exercises its corporate powers, conducts and manages the corporate business, and holds and controls the corporate property. The Board of Trustees consist of three incumbent officers of the North Philippine Union Conference (NPUC), two from the Central Philippine Union Conference (CPUC), and two from the South Philippine Union Conference (SPUC); the agency's executive director; one representative from the ADRA Asia regional office and one from ADRA International as an *ex officio* member; one representative from the Southern Asia Pacific Division; and four other members chosen for their experience and expertise related to the mission of the agency. The elected trustees serve for a term of five years while the chairmanship rotates every two years between the presidents of NPUC, CPUC, and SPUC. The board meets twice annually, and a smaller executive committee also meets twice a year.²³

Executive Directors

E. Corpus (1984-1985);²⁴ D. Christensen (interim) (1985-1986);²⁵ J. Sipkens (1986-1991);²⁶ Lamar Philipps (1992-1994);²⁷ James Astleford (1994-1998);²⁸ Gil Micua (1998-2001);²⁹ Querubin Padilla (2001-2002);³⁰ Leomer Batulayan (interim) (2002-2004);³¹ Goran Hansen (2004-2012);³² Cindy Bankhead (interim) (2012-2014);³³ Denison Grellmann (2014-2016);³⁴ Tom Pignon (interim) (2016-2017);³⁵ Tom Pignon (2017-).³⁶

NOTES

1. Seventh-day Adventist World Service Board Meeting Minutes, Action No. 1984-29?
2. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 1985-21?
3. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 1985-20?
4. ADRA Philippines Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022?
5. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 1986-40?
6. ADRA Philippines 5-Year Report (1996-2000)?
7. ADRA Philippines 5-Year Report (1996-2000)?
8. Department of Foreign Affairs Note 3001 and US Embassy Note 1071 (1956)?
9. United States Agency for International Development, List of registered PVOs with USAID / Philippines.?
10. ADRA Philippines 5-Year Report (1996-2000)?
- 11.

- ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2009-16?
12. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2012-45?
 13. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2014-09?
 14. ADRA Philippines 2016 Constituency Meeting, Action No. 2016-02?
 15. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2015-19?
 16. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2015-19?
 17. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2015-19?
 18. "Project VIPER," ADRA Philippines, accessed October 8, 2019, <https://adra.ph/index.php/causes/viper/>?
 19. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2018-05?
 20. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2014-19?
 21. ADRA Philippines EXCOM Minutes, Action No. 2018-06?
 22. ADRA Standards Manual, Page 5, ADRA International?
 23. Amended by Laws of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency Foundation (ADRA) Inc. (2016)?
 24. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 1985-1913?
 25. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 1985-20 and 1986-43?
 26. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 1986-43 and 1991-97?
 27. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 1992-17 and 1994-57?
 28. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 1995-08 and 1998-15?
 29. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 1998-15 and 2001-44?
 30. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2001-12 and 2002-18?
 31. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2002-23 and 2004-17?
 32. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2004-20 and 2012-26?
 33. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2012-20 and 2014-05?
 34. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2014-05 and 2016-16?
 35. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2016-16 and 2017-12?
 36. ADRA Philippines Board Minutes, Action No. 2017-12?

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