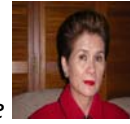


Philanthropy for Peace – Yolanda Ortega Stern, President-One World Institute



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The title is self explanatory so I can start by saying that in the Philippines I also work in dangerous territories. I am at war vs. lack of water; vs no access to health care; vs illiteracy; vs invisible hunger. In Cambodia we only donate wheelchairs.

Has the internet helped? But it certainly is a good measure for how much of the world's population has lagged behind. The UN calculates that since 1978 a country a year has slipped down to "least developed". That translates to 54 countries over the last 3 decades. It's easier to imagine by looking at the penetration rate of the internet on the world population – 28.7% as of June 30, 2010. For the Philippines, it's 29.7% of its population. That's 70 million out of 99,900,177 Filipinos who have no access. I leave you to imagine WHY?

Over 2 billion of the world's population live on less than \$1.00 a day and 1 billion have no access to health care. Yet the assets of three of the richest people are more than the GNP of 50 developed countries. The assets of 3 of Bill Gates MS people are more than the combined GNP of at least 44 developed countries.

We take so much for granted, but in the Philippines and in many places, there are people who have no access to any kind of news. They have no clue unless the messengers arrive. History is oral. They fish and hunt by moonlight. They tell time by the sun. They forecast storms by turning to the wind. The alarm clock is the rooster. They navigate by the stars. They rely on herbs for medicines. They still sacrifice animals for blessings. They never have enough to eat. They birth on their own. They die young. Their children become rebels and die young. They are a superstitious lot. Although it sounds very romantic, they really could use a little help because they are too proud to beg. They just die quietly.

Very little research has been done to determine whether Philanthropy actually helps bring peace. Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been finding

projects in the Philippines for over 5 decades. Corruption and poor implementation has plagued those projects over time. All of them are “tied aid”. They are loans to be paid by the recipient government, with minimal interest, on condition that the borrower spends the proceeds on services or products of the lender country. Usually, foreign consultants are calling the shots, without consulting the beneficiaries. Japan is the largest ODA funder, followed by the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, and China. But just ask anyone of the estimated 3 million displaced people.

It is no wonder I count the Overseas Filipinos and their counterparts from different countries as the front line soldiers for peace, because there will be so much trouble if they don't send that money home! \$19 billion this year already, running third behind China and India.

My other heroes are from the good 'ole USA – in 2002, America gave away \$241 billion to the world and 76% of that came from individuals. So when the going gets tough, Americans keep giving! You know the names of all the people who help Gawad Kalinga, PH Red Cross, Save the Children, etc.

We are very regional or tribal with our giving. Most give to benefit their towns. Between \$100-\$500 we the building named after us. Some of us give evening gowns during disasters. But we are like most American immigrants – kind and generous. We know that \$20.00 x 100 is more powerful than one \$20.00 bill, yet we do not trust anyone with our collective resources. But “an ounce of prevention cost less than a pound of cure”.

So what does One World Institute do? We do things that you can do and we can help you put your name on each project. By ourselves, we cannot compete with the ODA's, other NGO's and the government. We have the occasional multimillion peso projects, but we think small. Everything we do other is aimed at helping people put food on their table and at keeping the young out of trouble. We do Water for Life; Reading and Movies for Leisure; Laundry for Livelihood; Basketball for After School; Fish and Seaweed for Food and Money; Pangalay for History; Art for Culture; Pearls for the Soul; Wheelchairs for Disabled. I chose the

conflicted area of the Sulu Archipelago because I love Mindanao's tough history, having been raised along its enchanted islands.

But the bulk of our expenses go to the wheelchair program a big project with logistics dilemmas. Luzon and all its provinces and cities is our biggest beneficiary now because it is a major population center with highways, roads and ferries. It isn't easy or cheap to send wheelchairs to the other islands. There often are no roads leading to the beneficiaries. Only 550 unassembled wheelchairs fit in one 40 ft container and we ship two 40ft containers at a time. Without the Philippine Navy, the baranggays captains, the league of mayors, and all the hundreds of kind volunteers from the combined sectors it won't be easy. We partner with the Free Wheelchair Mission; the donation is fast tracked by the San Francisco Consulate; our consignee is the Department of Health. It has been a partnership built on HITCH – Honesty, Integrity, Transparency, Courage and Humility. Every single man/woman in our network of tribes and religious backgrounds has been absolutely noble and if One World Institute were a tiny country, it is one sustained by the people, for the people and of the people.

Our subject is philanthropy for but allow me to make sweet trouble before I leave.

There is a cultural and moral crisis in our communities. The simple pleasures of reading and poetry are lost to the younger generation. In the islands, the youth of all religions know how to rap, fire a gun, get high, but have no knowledge of the teachings of Mohammad, Christ, Buddha or Yaweh. I have seen it in Cambodia, Vietnam, India, the Americas and even in Europe.

But we can do something. Join my invisible army, an army where small acts mean so much to the people and small things like a pencil, a book, a chair, a flashlight, a water bottle can go a long way for peace. Do it, just sign up. You won't go broke if you gamble in my casino and I promise you a lot of enjoyment!