

November 14, 2013

### **Giving to the Philippines in response to Typhoon Haiyan**

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, Typhoon Haiyan slammed into the Eastern Philippine islands of Leyte and Samar causing devastating destruction. Preliminary estimates are that 9.5 million people are displaced and homeless and thousands are dead. Typhoon Haiyan is perhaps the strongest storm ever to hit land, with winds exceeding 200 miles per hour. The wind and rain caused devastating sea surges and flooding. This natural disaster has wiped out towns, roads, and homes. Those on the ground say that the media pictures fail to capture the true extent of the devastation.

Disaster relief is very difficult. Yes, there have been significant problems in the past. There have been many reports on the fiasco of some charities response to the Asian tsunami and the Haitian earthquake. Even closer to home, the disaster relief efforts in Calgary and Lac Megantic have raised questions of where donations went and how they were spent. These reports and allegations are sobering and can breed cynicism in donors. Charities need to be honest and accountable for these mistakes.

Yet this is not a time for cynicism. This is a time for compassion and for us to respond. Timeliness matters. And this time, let's give with perhaps more awareness and intelligence.

3 pointers may help direct donations to relief:

1. **Local involvement** - We recommend supporting a charity with operations in the Philippines before the typhoon. Our thinking here is that history provides local knowledge, local contacts and a local network. This may help when timeliness is critical. This is perhaps not the best time for a charity to arrive in the Philippines looking to start-up operations from scratch.
2. **Area of expertise** – Look for expertise in international disaster relief and charities that have done this work before. Over 1,200 Canadian charities have primary activities in international aid. Some have expertise drilling wells in Africa, some in educating girls in Pakistan. Look for charities that have expertise in providing disaster relief – food, water, shelter.
3. **Track record** in other international disaster relief. At Charity Intelligence we put a lot of weight on a charity's track record – how did it respond in the past, what was it able to deliver and achieve, and did it candidly report back to donors.

In the Asian tsunami and the Haitian earthquake, Charity Intelligence was most impressed by **Doctors without Borders Canada** and **World Vision**.

**Doctors without Borders Canada** is focused on the immediate medical needs and expects to have 329 tonnes of medical and relief supplies arriving shortly in Cebu – the Philippines’ 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city, the closest functional airport approximately 200 kilometres from the affected areas. Doctors without Borders is focused on the provinces of Leyte and the town of Tacloban. Three planes arrived November 13<sup>th</sup> with medical supplies, shelter materials, hygiene kits, water and sanitation equipment.

**World Vision** has operations in the Philippines since 1958 with 38 project areas, of which 4 are in the affected areas. While best known for its child sponsorship program, World Vision has expertise in water and sanitation operations (30% of 2012 programs), emergency and disaster relief (12% of programs) and technical expertise (7% of programs). World Vision is already distributing UN provided food and supplies in the North area of Cebu province.

Other Canadian international relief organizations:

**Catholic Organization for Development** – on the ground programs in Tacloban City in Leyte Province.

**Humanitarian Coalition** – the combined efforts of **Oxfam Canada** and **Oxfam Quebec**, **Plan Canada**, **CARE Canada** and **Save the Children**. A newly-formed coalition of Canada’s large international aid agencies working together to fundraise in times of international disaster relief that reduces competition and the duplication of fundraising costs. Reports to have decades of experience on the ground in the Philippines working with partner agencies.

**The Canadian Red Cross** is fundraising to support relief efforts – in collaboration with the Hong Kong Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross will deploy a field hospital for 20 inpatients and outpatient clinic services and serve a community of 30,000.

We will update this list as information is provided.

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