Project Overview

On November 8, 2013, the Category 5 “Super" Typhoon Haiyan (known as Yolanda in the local context) made landfall in the Philippines and caused widespread destruction as it moved through the central region of the country. It damaged approximately 1.1 million homes and affected 14.4 million people, the majority of whom live in the Samar and Leyte Provinces. Soon thereafter, The DLA Piper Foundation provided a generous donation of more than $43,000 to Global Communities to begin early recovery activities in Samar Province.

Global Communities’ program focused on restoring basic shelter and livelihoods in the weeks and months directly following the typhoon.

Our local partner, Eva Marie Arts and Crafts, is based in Basey, Samar Province and creates a wide range of products for export to the US, Europe and Australia. This innovative small to medium enterprise (SME) has developed a sophisticated system which outsources much of its production to local artisans. These artisans are mainly women working from their homes in an area with few economic opportunities besides fishing, and other small-scale income-generating activities.

Assistance to these skilled workers to repair their homes and resume production addressed a critical need and helped facilitate the rapid resumption of business operations. By helping to maintain Eva Marie Arts and Crafts’ market share and the livelihoods of their local suppliers, the program was able to benefit the overall community. In addition to providing aid to artisans in Samar, the rapid response, short term project also assisted local fishermen in the region.
Local Partner

Eva Marie Arts and Crafts is owned by a fourth generation artisan and full time Basey resident, Eva Marie Adona, who continues the family tradition of weaving first began by her great grandfather. The business originally focused on the traditional ticog mats popular in the region and eventually expanded in the 1980s to include more commercial items such as placemats and handbags. In 2011, Eva Marie Arts and Crafts partnered with an American designer to reach an even greater market and expand the business’ global reach. Prior to the typhoon, the company averaged approximately $9,000 in monthly revenue, with nearly 80 percent benefitting the community through employment of local artisans.

Description of Activities

The short term, rapid response program focused on livelihood restoration through shelter repair and distribution of weaving kits, seeds and fishing kits in Samar Province.

Originally, Global Communities planned to distribute 300 shelter kits in Basey, a town in the south of Samar Province and one of the areas heavily damaged by Super Typhoon Haiyan. The majority of shelter kits benefited artisans whose production was based in their homes to help restart their businesses and revitalize the community. However, after reassessing need and our own ability to obtain and distribute additional packages, Global Communities procured an additional 150 kits helping a total of 450 households repair and improve their shelters. The kits were procured through a local importer in Cebu City who could supply high quality products, including galvanized sheeting, hammers and nails at competitive prices.
Beneficiary selection began with local artisans who worked directly with Eva Marie Arts and Crafts and targeted those who were most vulnerable as a result of total or partial loss of their shelters and livelihoods. These individuals were chosen in order to jump start Eva Marie Arts and Crafts supply chain and reinvigorate the economy where programming was based.

In addition to the shelter kits, Global Communities also distributed needed supplies to weavers working directly with our local partner. The weaving kits include ticog grass and buri, a locally sourced palm leaf. Buri is traditionally cut into strips, decorated and used with the ticog for embroidery and weaving. The artisans also received tools, dye and seeds to grow their own grass and enable future production past the end date of the program. Overall, Global Communities distributed kits to 100 local artisans and 400 households received seeds to plant supplementary ticog.

Once the first phase of the program was complete, Global Communities distributed additional shelter kits to the surrounding villages via a lottery system. A team visited the distribution sites prior to the day of the lottery to meet with local government officials and the heads of women’s associations to set parameters and ensure community involvement and to ensure that the distributions were based on need. Final participants were limited to those whose houses had been totally destroyed by the typhoon and further disaggregated by vulnerability factors such as female headed households and the disabled. In total, four lotteries with an average of 250 participants were held in each of the towns.
The program also helped to restore the livelihoods of local fishermen whose fishing boats were lost or damaged by providing fishing kits in coordination with the municipal government and other NGOs. By working with the local government, Global Communities identified beneficiaries who had already received new or repaired boats through other donations, and provided packages with nets, lamps and coolers. Global Communities distributed 98 kits to fishermen whose main source of income was disrupted by the typhoon.

Evaluation and Possible Next Steps

By the end of the 12 week program, Eva Marie Arts and Crafts was able to restore their business and reemploy 100 weavers. The company’s short term goal during this rebuilding phase is to produce 1,000 bags per month for export to the United States. They expected to regain full production within four months.

Though Global Communities’ current project is complete, we will continue to monitor the situation through our Office of Humanitarian Assistance (OHA) as many communities in the Philippines are still working to rebuild in the wake of the typhoon. Even though Eva Marie Arts and Crafts will be reestablished, it is evident in Samar Province and in the surrounding communities that many people are still in need of shelter repair and livelihood restoration.

The generous donation from the DLA Piper Foundation enabled Global Communities to reach nearly 7,000 beneficiaries. By partnering with an innovative, local business we were able to work directly with the community to repair shelters and revive the struggling economy, helping those most in need get back to work at a critical time. We are sincerely grateful to the DLA Piper Foundation for its support of this important initiative.