



**MERCY
RELIEF**

Community

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NEWSLETTER

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Morocco Earthquake



Image Source: The Independent

Mercy Relief will be responding to the Morocco Earthquake that occurred earlier this month. The Earthquake is said to be rare for Morocco, with reporters labelling it the 'most deadliest in decades' and has impacted over 300,000 lives - the majority living in rural, mountainous villages that are hard to access.

Following discussions with our ground partner in Morocco, we are fundraising to provide food, drinking water, shelter tents and blankets to address the immediate needs of the most affected and vulnerable families.

We are extremely grateful to all donors for their contributions. Let us continue to donate via this [link](#) to support Morocco. **Every amount counts.**

Gift of Giving 🎁

As the end of the year approaches, Mercy Relief is excited to announce the beginning of our annual fundraising campaign, **Gift of Giving**. This festive campaign will run throughout December, allowing for a month of festive, impactful celebrations! The idea behind this campaign represents our view that the holiday season is not just a time to celebrate, it is a time to give back.

This year's Gift of Giving will be extra magical, as we are celebrating our 20th Anniversary. All funds raised will help us to ensure a quick and efficient response to disasters within 72 hours and also improve the way we generate awareness about disaster-stricken communities that need our help.



Make sure you are following us on social media to stay up to date with this campaign as well as updates on our disaster relief efforts.

Additionally, if you or your organisation would like to get involved in this campaign, please contact us via email at rebecca.topping@mercyrelief.org and we can discuss partnership opportunities!

Appointments

It is with great sadness to announce the departure of our Executive Director, Angelina Ong who will be leaving in October after spending two years at Mercy Relief. We are grateful to Angelina for her contributions and wish her every success in her future pursuits.

On the same note, we extend a warm welcome to our new Executive Director, Muhammad Ashik Bin Mohamed Daud, graduate from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. Muhammad is a strong advocate of volunteerism and brings with him extensive experience in humanitarian missions and local community programs.

Baseco by Becky Topping

I started as an Intern with Mercy Relief at the beginning of September as part of my placement year at the University of York, UK. One week later, I found myself on a trip to the informal settlement of Baseco, located in the Philippines. This is how it went ...



Main street of Baseco



Mangroves and rubbish

As our van pulled up alongside large container trucks to enter the small, singular entrance to the Baseco compound, I felt excited but I would be lying if I didn't feel a little nervous as I had never visited a poor, urban community like Baseco before.

The compound was very colourful, with a lot of narrow roads and many houses made out of an array of materials. One thing was for sure that the characteristic of Baseco being used as an illegal rubbish dump by both its residents and metro-Manila was very apparent.

We met with representatives of Kabalikat, Baseco's Peoples Association, who gave us insight into Baseco and its residents. The compound consisted of 48 hectares of poorly reclaimed land; it housed about 60,000 people, who were mainly informal settlers with low-paid jobs and limited access to basic services.

We viewed the sites of Mercy Relief's long-term projects implemented in 2012. It was clear our Disaster Risk Reduction efforts were a success. This project included workshops educating locals on the signs, hazards and evacuation plans for future disasters as well as practicing evacuation drills with the local community and the school children to ensure the community's, safety and resilience. Unfortunately, our development project 'ground up, clean up' was not as successful. The convenience store and the livelihood store that sold local produce from the urban garden and handmade woven products were prosperous and continue to this day. However, the continuation of rubbish clean ups for WASH purposes and also the planting and maintenance of Mangroves in the coastal area were not as successful. This was due to the local community not recognising the importance of mangroves for protection against natural disasters as well as the limited accessibility to legal rubbish disposal.

My trip to Baseco taught me a lot about the importance of public services and the implementation of sustainability projects. The main lesson being that no long-term development project can be sustained without the support and cooperation of the local community.