

Helping
typhoon
victims in the
Philippines





HELPING TYPHOON VICTIMS IN THE PHILIPPINES

One of the strongest tropical storms ever recorded tore through the Philippines in 2013, leaving many local people destitute. Immediately after the cyclone, Ivoclar Vivadent, which has been operating a manufacturing plant near Manila since 1993, decided to donate 200,000 US dollars to support the survivors of the typhoon. A total of 100,000 US dollars of the donation was allocated to the Philippine National Red Cross for emergency aid, while another 100,000 US dollars was used for the re-establishment and operation of a dental facility in Bayan ni Juan, a relocation site for storm refugees. The clinic was officially inaugurated in December 2014.

When Dr Peter Flores, Area Sales Manager South East Asia, and the managers of the Ivoclar Vivadent production plant in the Philippines was asked in 2013 to find a way of helping the typhoon victims in the Philippines in the long term, he had no idea that the answer would be to help the Filipinos do what they do best, which is to help them smile.

The scheme came about when Ivoclar Vivadent representatives met with officials of the local ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation to discuss the best way of satisfying the needs of the survivors. This meeting was followed by a visit to Bayan ni Juan (BNJ), a resettlement community for over 27,000 people, not far from the Ivoclar Vivadent factory.



One of the first patients of the newly inaugurated dental clinic

Changing people's lives

Looking at the faces of those around him, Peter Flores and his team saw immediately what could be done to change the lives of these people for the better. He remembers seeing "children who were ashamed to smile because their teeth were black and elderly people who hid their faces because they did not have teeth or dentures."

An inspection of the existing dental clinic in BNJ, which revealed a small room with a broken dental chair, further highlighted what needed to be done. Today, after an investment of 100,000 US dollars and many months of preparation, coordination and dedication, the economically disadvantaged residents of this community have a choice as to the future of their dental health.



Ribbon-cutting ceremony of the new clinic.
From left: L. Bautista (ABS-CBN), D. Sanchez (Deputy Mayor of Calauan), Dr L. Quidayan (PDA), Dr P. Flores, Dr A. Panganiban (Ivoclar Vivadent), G. De Guzman (ABS-CBN)

"Children were ashamed to smile because their teeth were black"

Dr Peter Flores, Ivoclar Vivadent

Miko Alino, Deputy Project Manager of the community, is grateful for this additional service which the clinic provides in terms of basic health care. He says that the facility allows them to focus on preventive care so that teeth do not have to be pulled in the first place.



The inhabitants of BNJ have access to dental care

Free dental health service

According to Dr Liza Quidayan, a member of the Philippine Dental Association (PDA), poor diet and lack of awareness about healthy eating habits are responsible for the high prevalence of dental caries. In addition, dental care is expensive and not widely available in the Philippines. Cecile Alcaraz, a local dentist also explains that parents do not know about oral hygiene and therefore cannot teach their children to look after their teeth properly. They bring their children to the dentist when they see swelling and pain and then it is often too late to save the tooth.



Children are the beneficiaries of the oral health care program

BNJ resident Nitz Villanueva, 44, says that she has only been to the dentist three times in her life. She has had six teeth extracted. She only goes to the dentist in emergencies when she has strong pain. Susana Tukop, a 46-year-old mother of three, tells a similar story. She already wears dentures because her parents could not afford dental care. She says that when she had a toothache, her parents would manually extract the tooth at home.

Ivoclar Vivadent's donation was used to cover the renovation of the existing clinic and pay for all the dental equipment and supplies and the salary for a full-time dentist and dental assistant for a period of two years. The dental facility, which opened on 5th January, sees an average of 14 patients daily. It provides services such as oral exams, oral diagnostics with X-rays, basic filling and root canal treatment and tooth scaling and polishing.

Long-term investment in healthy smiles

In order to make a fundamental difference to the lives of the people in this community, the clinic will also have a dental education plan, which will teach the residents proper basic dental care techniques, such as tooth brushing and flossing, and the importance of healthy eating habits and good oral health in general. Susana Tukop says that the clinic will be a big help for the small community.

Jaime Sapitano, 47, is grateful that his children's teeth will now be checked regularly. He believes that everything starts with a smile, and good teeth are needed to show that smile.



New dental chair – the heart of the clinic

“A big help for a small community”

Susana Tukop, BNJ resident



BAYAN NI JUAN

The Bayan ni Juan resettlement community was established in 2009. Most of the 6,400 families who currently live there have been left destitute due to tropical storms that have wreaked havoc across the Philippines in recent years.

The 107-hectare property has been established as a "relocation site" by the national government. It is managed by the ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation. This community of 27,000 people has two schools, a preschool/day-care centre, a health centre, two gyms, a fresh food market, a learning centre for training courses/seminars and lectures and a livelihood centre. The families with an average of two to six children and other residents are housed in 5,625 units.

Some of the residents belong to business groups that are engaged in organic farming. Many of the family wage earners are construction or factory workers in nearby towns. Some even work in Manila. Others earn their livelihood within the community by operating small businesses, such as home-run convenience stores and cafeterias, or by making greeting cards or preparing and selling food items.



However, there is still much work to be done to fulfil the needs of the residents. Only 900 of the houses are electrified and only 68% of the available land has been developed to date. The undeveloped land will ideally be used for the benefit of the community to establish a techno-commerce centre, additional day care and livelihood centres and community gardens.

6,400 families have made their new home in Bayan ni Juan

Our vision is to facilitate the basis for a self-sustaining community, which meets the basic needs of its residents and is capable of creating an environment for optimum growth. The goal is not only to meet economic needs, but also to ensure peace and harmony, good health and an intact environment. The bottom line is to create a place where people can live comfortably.



Gina Lopez is the chairperson of the ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, the NGO that partnered with Ivoclar Vivadent to make the dream of a dental clinic come true. The foundation is committed to improving the lives of the Filipino people through health care, education, environmental awareness and disaster relief.



Gina Lopez, Chairperson of the ABS-CBN Foundation



Development continues – only 68% of the land has been developed to date

Your work involves many projects that are focused on improving the lives of people in the Philippines. What makes this project special and stand out for you?

I am especially pleased with this project because it involves not only funding, but also equipment and training. In other words, it is all-encompassing. It even covers the salaries of the dentist and the dental assistant who will be attending to the community. Ivoclar Vivadent is renowned for its state-of-the-art dental products. Therefore, I am delighted to know that we are providing a first-class service to underprivileged members of our society.

Why is dental care such an important service for this community?

Oral hygiene is a key component of overall well-being. I would even go so far as to say that it spills over into the psycho-emotional state of people. By providing this kind of service to the community we will have an impact not only on the physical well-being of the individual but also on the psycho-emotional space of the collective.



The core values of Ivoclar Vivadent include passion, vision and innovation. How does this project reflect these values?

The company's passion is shown in the comprehensive nature of this project. Innovation characterizes the equipment that has been supplied and the way in which the project is designed. We have a vision of working together on issues of preventive dental care, which go beyond restorative dental treatment.

How did this project come into being?

After typhoon Haiyan swept through a part of the Philippines in 2013, Ivoclar Vivadent donated financial help to the Philippine National Red Cross for emergency relief. At the same time, the company committed its support to the re-establishment of a social dental health project in the Philippines. I am thrilled that they chose ABC-CBN and our community in Bayan ni Juan in Calauan.

“Oral hygiene is a key component of overall well-being”

How will the dental clinic continue to operate after the two years during which Ivoclar Vivadent has committed funding?

We are working on and planning a number of revenue-generating schemes. I am confident that in two year's time Bayan ni Juan in Calauan will be able to carry this project self-sufficiently. Our vision for BNJ is that the economy of the community will one day be able to sustain basic social services – one of which is dental care.



