

Philippines, Typhoon Haiyan-2013 Site Visit: Faby Gomez: The goal of my visit to the Philippines was two-fold. First and foremost, I was sent to attend the 16th AMOR Conference. The AMOR Conference, which the Fund for Sisters has been funding since 1994, takes place every four years and gathers around 80-100 Major Superiors from Asia-Oceania. At this time, it offered a great opportunity for me to know the superiors of this region, to introduce our new online grant process and to clarify our new guidelines and list of priorities. The meeting was very successful in this regard in spite of the fact that there were no sisters from India or Vietnam attending.

Among other successful stories at the conference was the finding of a new sister to help us with the projects in Myanmar. Since the sad news of Sr. Mary Walter's illness, we had not been able to find anyone who could replace her as our site visitor there. The sisters in Myanmar were all expressing their desperation and fear at the loss of Sr. Walter. The needs of the people are great, but the political challenges for anyone willing to help are even greater. Thanks to the conference, I was able to find a sister from Singapore, Sr. Theresa Sheow, of the Canossian Sisters who travels regularly to Myanmar and is very well acquainted with the challenges of safely bringing funds to this country. She accepted to help us and we are now working out the details of transferring previously awarded funds to the sisters.

Also, with the catastrophic event of Typhoon Haiyan, being present at the conference allowed me the possibility to respond personally to the sisters' urgent needs with the victims of the storm. In fact, the sisters in the Philippines were not aware that the Fund for Sisters could provide Emergency Grants for their immediate needs in cases of natural disasters.

Second, the aim of my stay was to take advantage of this opportunity to visit projects related to trafficking or other types of projects that could potentially bring a greater impact in and around Manila. In the area of trafficking, I visited many homes for women in crisis and was very impressed with the work of the sisters. One comment that was unanimous among the sisters was the fact that this type of ministry, because of its many intricacies and psychological challenges, could rarely be successful with large numbers of women. Most of the homes I visited had an average of 10 girls. One particular project of great impact that I visited was the ACAY program. The Fund for Sisters has funded this program several times since 2009. The project offers a second chance to youth at risk, age 14-23 years old boys and girls through educative and creative approaches. These allow them to rediscover the dignity and meaning of life and take the lead in becoming agents of change. This particular project has great potential and could be considered as a Signature Grant in the future. The sisters have 90% success with their programs of rehabilitation