

Destination: GOOD



The AirAsia Foundation team talks shop about the people they meet and the ideas they come across as they travel the Asean region on their unique mission: to meet social entrepreneurs and explore ways to support their growth. airasiafoundation.com



While AirAsia Foundation's primary focus is supporting Asean social enterprises, another significant part of our work has been to manage three post-disaster rehabilitation programmes. The first of these started after Typhoon Haiyan struck Philippines in November 2013. As one of a handful of airlines that flew into Tacloban, one of the worst-hit areas, we began by flying in emergency aid and evacuating survivors.

Once the scale of devastation was evident, we launched a region-wide fund-raising campaign, 'To Philippines with Love', with the Philippine Red Cross. Donation boxes were made available on all AirAsia flights and contributions soon poured in. Within six weeks, we raised over USD1 million, which AirAsia matched, to fund reconstruction projects. We were surprised and gratified by the response, given that the Foundation was still relatively new.

Two more humanitarian campaigns followed, and we inevitably gained a deeper understanding of post-disaster work. We learned that the best way that the public can contribute is by donating cash to trustworthy organisations. While there is a natural inclination towards in-kind giving, cash contributions offer aid-givers maximum flexibility in implementing the most effective course of action.

We also found most impact partnering with local NGOs of medium capacity. Organisations such as Hapinoy in the Philippines or Open Learning Exchange Nepal (OLE Nepal) were able to mobilise quickly as the size of AirAsia Foundation's funds made a material difference to their ability to scale up, compared to larger organisations that handled major international and governmental funds.

Finding such alliances is not easy, but having a dedicated partner with a shared vision is a crucial first step. When we run a humanitarian campaign, our responsibility does not end once the donation boxes are emptied and money is disbursed. Post-disaster rebuilding stretches for years, and projects are often wrought with bureaucratic challenges. However, the results are needless to say, rewarding and inspiring – children being able to go back to school, people getting back on their feet again. Above all, the immense display of compassion by ordinary people, helping one another and achieving the extraordinary.

What's a social enterprise?

A business that tackles social challenges and improves communities or the environment using profits from the sale of goods and services.

AirAsia Foundation is an ASEAN accredited civil society organisation



Contact Us!

Yap Mun Ching, Executive Director of AirAsia Foundation, is always on the lookout for exciting new social enterprises. Write in at foundation@airasia.com



WORD UP!

Yap Mun Ching recounts her journey to the Himalayas, where villagers are still rebuilding their lives after the 2015 earthquake.



I was jolted left and right as we inched up Nepal's Gorkha mountains. In the driver's seat, ex-soldier Nir skilfully manoeuvred the steering wheel. Behind me sat OLE Nepal Founder, Rabi Karmacharya and Malaysian filmmaker, Tan Yew Leong. With a crew of 10, we were travelling 180km northwest from Kathmandu to Olang, a remote village in the cradle of the Himalayas, to document the construction of new schools funded by AirAsia Foundation. Olang was among hundreds of villages shattered when a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck in 2015.

With the sun out, temperatures would soar above 30 degrees Celsius. At night, it would dip close to freezing.

This was one of the poorest regions of Nepal and it bore the brunt of the quake, but the villages were so remote that they were left out by international aid agencies. Fortunately, OLE Nepal was familiar with the area.

Our two days in Olang were amazing. We slept on a cold earthen floor and ate simple meals of rice and *dal* (pulses). Yet, we enjoyed ourselves, being welcomed into the hearts of these strong, independent people. We will be back to film the completed schools – once roads re-open after the monsoon season.

From Airasia With Love

Four years after our first humanitarian campaign, we are proud to report the results. For details, visit airasiafoundation.com/humanitarian



East Coast Relief Fund

Donations – USD212,000

- Equipped six rural clinics • Trained 40 schools – Schools Preparedness Programme (for natural disasters) • Installed water system for three villages

To Philippines With Love

Donations – USD2,174,705

- Rebuilt/repared 500 homes • Started up 133 stores • Trained 50 artisans

To Nepal With Love

Donations – USD200,654

- Rebuilt four schools • Equipped schools with 100 laptops • Trained teachers