

Tzu Chi Sends 60 Pre-fabricated Houses to Philippines

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Saturday, 23 November 2013 12:09



As the first step in its aid to the victims of Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in the Philippines, the Tzu Chi Foundation is sending 60 pre-fabricated houses which will serve as temporary shelters and medical service stations. They are due to arrive on November 25.

Last September, the city of Zamboanga in the southern Philippines was devastated by a civil war. This was followed the next month by Typhoon Nari which flooded the area. Many of the city's schools were destroyed by these man-made and natural disasters. For the children to continue their education, the foundation decided to build 160 pre-fabricated classrooms for students so that they could resume their education. However, in November, Typhoon Haiyan caused severe damage. After discussions, the foundation decided to send 60 of the classrooms to the affected areas as part of its emergency relief.



The pre-fabricated rooms have a round roof and dimensions of 11 meters by 7 meters and 3.4 meters; they have windows on both sides and doors at the front and back. The roof has exhaust vents to increase air circulation. Tzu Chi volunteer Chang Shih-wen, one of the designers, said the pre-fabricated houses were very easy to assemble: "even a housewife with no experience in industry can assemble it. The house has about 1,000 screws and takes 15 people to finish in two hours. The design also has water-proofing to prevent water percolating through" he said.

In order that the volunteers in the Philippines can finish the assembly quickly, a large number of volunteers in Taiwan worked nearly 2,000 shifts and finished the pre-cutting and pre-drilling works. The 60 houses are expected to arrive in the Philippines on November 25. They will be used as shelters for the survivors and as medical service stations to care for them physically and mentally.