

**COOPERATIVES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY GOING THE EXTRA MILE TO
SERVE THEIR MEMBERS AND COMMUNITIES AMIDST COVID-19
PANDEMIC:
REPORT FROM REGION 6
#CoopsAgainstCOVID19**

Cooperatives in the Service for Western Visayas
Ma. Ginette T. Barranco, CDS II

“When Noah built the ark, it wasn’t raining.” Truth be told, most of us have not thought of “building our arks” in case of flood, aye? Almost everyone did not expect COVID-19 will reach our country this fast, thinking that the virus will remain at bay- much like how people did not believe Noah that a flood is coming.

COVID-19 is highly contagious, it does not choose gender, economic status, and knows no age. It can penetrate your system through close contact, whether you are healthy or not. As numbers are rising, Western Visayas was not spared from this mare’s nest. Because of this, Local Government Units (LGUs) implemented the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) in their respective territories as early as March 20, 2020. Citizens were advised to stay home, work was suspended and mass gatherings were cancelled. Non-essential businesses are currently on temporary closure and only banks, hospitals, grocery stores or establishments which offer essential commodities and services remain open.

Under these circumstances, everyone is affected and the underprivileged communities are most seriously impinged. The LGUs are now mobilizing its budget for social welfare. The Cooperative Development Authority, thru its Chairman Usec. Orlando R. Ravanera, released a memorandum encouraging Cooperatives to utilize its Community Development Fund, and Optional Fund, if needed, to extend help and assistance in any form.

The Cooperative Sector, on the other hand, wasted no time. In Iloilo City, the Iloilo City Government Employees Credit Cooperative donated twenty (20) sacks of rice. The local government in Iloilo City has been putting-up community kitchens and giving out relief packs since the ECQ started last 3rd week of March 2020.

Guimaras Electric Cooperative, for its part, continued to serve with skeletal workforce in its physical office. It assigned workforce in its social media account, and has set a hotline available 24/7, for immediate and urgent concerns of its consumers. And to make certain that the health and basic needs of its members are prioritized, it has extended its due dates without penalty.

The same goes true with Progressive Women Agrarian Reform Cooperative in Dumarao, Capiz. It also made an extension to loan payments and waived penalties. It provided allowances to its employees. Moreover, the cooperative extended its appreciation to frontliners who operate checkpoints along national highways in the 2nd District of Capiz, by giving them Calamansi Juice and Banana Chips- the cooperative’s products. Photo Credit: Tonyo Capiz non/FB





In Aklan, the frontliners- Libacao PNP, Libacao Infirmary and Libacao Rural Health Unit, enjoyed free meals offered by Libacao Development Cooperative. Concerned citizens also gave them washable face masks for protection as they continue to serve, thru their satellite office. Photo Credit: Libacao Dev't Coop./FB

Antique's very own billionaire cooperative, the Barbaza Multipurpose Cooperative, has stretched-out its assistance to frontliners via branches in Iloilo and Aklan as a form of gratitude for their sacrifices. The cooperative donated cash for purchase of protective suits to Salazar Memorial General Hospital in San Jose de Buenavista Antique. It also provided hand-made face shields for rural health units, hospitals and other frontliners. Photo Credit: Barbaza Multipurpose Coop./FB



In Negros Occidental, Kabankalan-Ilog Teachers and Employees Multipurpose Cooperative, felt the needs of the community. The cooperative allocated a certain amount for food and distributed it in the depressed areas of Kabankalan City and La Carlota City. They also turned-over to Kabankalan City Mayor Pedro P. Zayco Jr, groceries for frontliners. Photo Credit: Kitempc Mpc/FB



These are just few of the many cooperatives, taking an extra mile to contribute to the spontaneous solidarity of Western Visayas to fight the spread of COVID-19, in order to heal as one. As the old adage goes: "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." Cooperation is the way!
