

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

#CoopsAgainstCovid19

**Cooperativism: Love, light and hope in the time of the Corona Crisis**

WESTERN VISAYAS - While people face hunger and unemployment caused by COVID-19, cooperatives continued to give love, light and hope that kindle the spirit of cooperativism and unity.

Since its first outbreak in Wuhan, China, thousands of lives have been taken by an unseen virus with an unknown origin and is only familiar to us as the 2019 Novel Corona Virus. This global pandemic declared by the World Health Organization(WHO) has been killing hundreds and thousands of lives from across the world including Italy, Spain, and the United States. The said virus has also reached our country, the Philippines, affecting our economy, and claiming the lives of many Filipinos.

To contain the virus and to save as many lives as possible, the government implemented measures such as social and physical distancing, proper handwashing, border restrictions, and the enhanced community quarantine. This prompted work-from-home arrangements in order for companies to keep their businesses afloat, help their employees maintain their jobs, and keep on earning. Unfortunately, other businesses were left with no choice but to close for the meantime. Thereby leaving their employees without salary and hungry .

While this stark reality is upon our country, stories of inspiration have sprung up and we find modern day heroes in the person of medical frontliners- doctors, nurses and all those in the field of medical practice, who help us fight the unseen enemy in our midst. They risk their lives every day in order to save those of others. We also include among our heroic frontliners the military, police, cashiers, salesmen, security personnel, garbage collectors, and grocery workers. We also see people from all walks of life including artists and celebrities, students and other ordinary citizens finding ways to help.

Worth mentioning as well are the cooperatives from all around the country which took initiative to help their members and their community by providing the basic necessity --- FOOD.

True enough, the social and economic benefits of cooperatives can have a far-reaching impact. During difficult times, one of the most important roles of coops is to let the people in their communities know that they are not alone.

On April 1, 2020, the Calatrava Municipal Government Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative (CAMGEM-MPC), aided by the local government unit led by Mayor Marilyn A. Era, provided rice to its coop members and to non-members who are not only vulnerable to but also whose livelihoods have been negatively-affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. All 161 coop members received five (5) kilos of rice while 747 fisherfolks, pedicab drivers, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) were each given two (2) kilograms of rice. Aside from this, CAMGEM-MPC also granted a calamity loan to its members. True to its mission of sharing whatever benefits and gains it can derive from its cooperative ventures, CAMGEM-MPC has proven its commitment of helping its members and the community.



The Philippine Normal University Faculty and Staff Multi-Purpose Cooperative otherwise known as PNUFAS MPC proved that amidst the pandemic a simple step could have a huge impact. Through its Board of Directors initiative, the cooperative's



Community Development Fund (CDF) was utilized in order to purchase and pack goods that would be distributed to the community in order to alleviate the hunger felt by the Cadiznons. Food packs were distributed to the different barangays in the City of Cadiz namely Barangays Zone 1 to 6 and Barangay Daga.

*Officers of PNUFAS MPC turn-over food packs to the different barangays in Cadiz City.*

*Box and plastic bags containing relief goods packed and distributed by the officers of PNUFAS to the community.*





Another CDA registered, DAR and LGU assisted cooperative who answered the call of spreading love, light and hope in this time of crisis is San Juan Torena Agrarian Reform Cooperative. Food packs composed of five (5) kilograms of rice, three (3) packs of noodles, ten (10) pieces of eggs and dried fish were distributed last April 4, 2020 to its members and to the people living in the nearby community. The cooperative officers and members took time and effort packing the said goods and distributing them notwithstanding the danger brought about by the Corona Virus Disease.

*Rice, eggs, noodles and dried fish composed the food packs which were given by San Juan Torena ARC to their members and to the people in the community.*

In Capiz, cooperatives such as the Tumalalod Multi-Purpose Cooperative gave cash donations to the Mambusao Fire Station which will be utilized for constructing decontamination tents. Also, the Capiz Transport Services Cooperative prepared relief packs for distribution to the community.

On the other hand, in the Province of Antique, cooperatives such as Bugasong Multi-Purpose Cooperative utilized their CDF to finance the cooperatives' fight against COVID-19. They are preparing the partial release of one hundred (100) cavans of rice for distribution to the community. Barbaza Multi-Purpose Cooperative and Valderrama Municipal Officials and Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative also sent out food packs and relief goods of which shall be given to the people in the community.

*Cavans of rice to be donated by Bugasong MPC*



Meanwhile in Iloilo both provincial and city cooperatives took initiative to alleviate the hunger felt by their member and the community.

Kooperatiba Naton Multi-Purpose Cooperative had a series of activities and projects to aid the needs of their members and the community. Among these were the distribution of food packs to 123 beneficiaries coming from seven (7) zones of Barangay Buyuan at Tigbauan, Iloilo. They also gave out vitamins, face masks and twenty (20)

*The beneficiaries of the food packs and the frontliners who received the Natural Juice and PPE that was given by Kooperatiba Naton MPC.*



pieces of Personal Protective Equipments (PPEs) to the medical frontliners of the province. As of date, Kooperatiba Naton Multi-Purpose Cooperative already had three (3) waves of giving out their Natural Juice, owned, processed and manufactured by them, with ingredients that could help boost one's immune system. They gave these out to the frontliners who are situated at some borders in the province such as those at the Cabanbanan-Oton Checkpoint, Mohon Terminal and Brgy. San Nicolas, Oton. Also, Guimaras and Aklan coops did the same widely focusing on the utilization of their respective funds especially their CDF to combat the impact to the people giving food to every household that may be in need.

These people did not think only of themselves, rather their actions showed that generosity and kindness should be fostered in this very trying moment. Now is the proper time to break-free from selfishness and instead think of ways on how to help the government and unite as one to combat the effects brought by the virus.

Around the country, not only are the professionals in the medical field nor the men and women in the uniform service are to be considered as frontliners in this pandemic. Most of the Filipinos, especially the people in the cooperative movement are to be acknowledged too as this era's modern day heroes. Though their efforts may be simple and small, yet it gave love, light, and hope to people who are at this time experiencing trouble, hunger, and darkness.

CASSY S. JIMENO and ANN MARIE P. CASTOR  
Cooperative Development Specialist II  
Province of Negros Occidental  
CDA-Iloilo Extension Office

Edited by: MERCY J. GABASA  
Acting Supervising CDS

Mae Joi Pia S. Santos  
Supervising CDS  
IED-CSF / CDA Clearinghouse