

BARBAZA MULTI-PURPOSE COOPERATIVE

The insurgence of the deadly Coronavirus has brought chaos and panic to the world which did not make the Philippines an exemption. As we know it, the virus causes respiratory illness to infected patients which could be transferred by symptomatic people to others who are in close contact through respiratory droplets, by direct contact with infected persons, or by contact with contaminated objects and surfaces. To minimize the spread of the virus, all means of transportation has been shut down, businesses and



offices were ordered to close and public mobility has been disabled. But few institutions were allowed to operate to provide the essentials for human consumption like food production, banks and financial institutions, hospitals and grocery stores. The government's limited resources were maximized to cope up with the growing needs of community quarantined citizens, health care providers, military personnel who are ordered to enforce the restrictions by the Enhance Community Quarantine or ECQ.

For a long time, Cooperatives has been a reliable partner of the government in providing solutions to problems of the community that they are in. **Barbaza Multi-Purpose Cooperative**, a multi-awarded billionaire cooperative in Western Visayas, took the challenge and the risk to be of service not only to its members but also to the community during this time of the pandemic. With the guidance and leadership of the Board of Directors headed by Mrs. Corazon C. Tingson and the Chief-Executive-Officer, Mr. Felimon M. Espares, the cooperative led notable initiatives.

A. COVID-19

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE – this activity is for regular members. Barbaza MPC gives relief goods or cash assistance with its almost 69,310 regular members all over Western Visayas. With an estimated budget of P26, 000,000.00, this the coop's biggest community assistance yet.



Assisted by the municipal health officers, the staff and volunteers of BMPC risks their lives in giving relief goods composed of food packs or cash to members especially those who live in mountainous and rural areas whose access to foods and basic necessities is hindered due to Enhanced Community

Quarantine.

A. Purchasing of Members' Products

Barbaza MPC is very keen on supporting the backbone of our economy, the farmers. Due to travel restrictions brought by the ECQ, food supply is greatly affected and farmers find it difficult to sell their harvests. Due to this, the cooperative centers its thrust in supporting local farmers and producers by buying their products (vegetables, legumes, pickled products and dried fish) and distributes as food packs to its members. This way, the farmers are taking their part in contributing to the community.



B. Donating PPEs, Alcohol, and Face Mask Government Hospitals and RHUs



Barbaza MPC also donated volumes of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Alcohols and N95 and Surgical Face Masks to hospitals and rural health units in response to the calling of our healthcare providers to further protect themselves.

This activity is implemented by its 10 branches reaching out more than 15 hospitals and RHUs all over Western Visayas. San Jose and Sibalom Branch also donated cash to hospitals for the procurement of other needed materials and equipment.

C. COOP RESPONSE AGAINST COVID-19

Not only healthcare providers are the priority of the cooperative but also the military and PNP personnel who were in charge of the strict implementation of the border and municipal checkpoints to stop the possible entry and spread of the virus from one place to another.



The officers and staff prepared food packs composed of bread, coffee, fresh fruits, fresh juice and vitamins for the personnel in charge of the checkpoints. Also, this initiative is replicated to all branches where military personnel, who were also Barbaza MPC members.

D. PAMUNITAN KANG TANAN



Barbaza MPC, furthermore extended help to local fishermen by establishing Six (6) fishing zones in the municipal waters of Tibiao, Antique, Philippines. This project, in partnership with Katahum Tours, BFAR, DENR, LGU Tibiao, MFARMC and Antique Eco-Tourism Association, Inc, aims to provide fishing zones to local fishermen to improve their catch and also food for their families. In each fishing

zone, one balsa or fish aggregating device and five (padugmon) or indigenous artificial reefs were deployed near the shore with the depth that ranges from 15-40 fathoms.

This environment-friendly artificial reef was used by local fishermen during WWII. The design is similar to "tangkal" or pig pen made of dried coconut and nipa leaves which serves as the food and shelter for the small fishes, the smell of the bamboo as an attractant to demersal fishes, and the head size boulders will serve as the natural sinker as home of moray eels or endong. Each zone has "padugmon" watchers who are assigned to monitor the daily activities of the padugmon and the fishermen.

As of today, Barbaza Multi-Purpose Cooperative continues to provide services and hospital needs and is more willing and committed support the government in order to further the efforts in defeating the deadly virus.

This pandemic may have disabled the economy, businesses, offices and even placed the general public in anxiety and fear but one fact remains, that despite the world is in shambles, we could still stand head strong if we implore unity, compassion and cooperation in all our actions.

By: John Paul M. Gimotea
Membership Recruitment and Development Specialist
Barbaza Multi-Purpose Cooperative