

Love, light and hope kindles cooperativism in time of Corona Crisis

WESTERN VISAYAS - Cooperatives continues to give love, light and hope that kindled the spirit of cooperativism of oneness, while people face hunger and unemployment caused by COVID-19.

Since its first outbreak in Wuhan, China thousands of lives have been taken by an unseen virus with an unknown origin and only familiar to us as the 2019 Novel Corona Virus. It has been declared as a Global Pandemic by the World Health Organization(WHO) killing hundreds and thousands of lives from across the world to include Italy, Spain, and the United States. The said virus has also reached our dear country, the Philippines, which has greatly affected our economy and the lives of many Filipinos.

The government then made necessary steps to contain the virus in order to save many lives as possible giving rise to the promotion of measures such as social and physical distancing, proper handwashing, border restrictions, lockdowns and enhanced community quarantines among others. Thereby leading to the fact that most Filipinos are having work-from-home arrangements in order to still maintain their jobs and earn, or if not losing them. While others left with no choice but to close their businesses for the meantime. Thereby leaving most of the Filipinos hungry, which made the situation even worse.

Then stories of inspiration sprung, the light of day came when we have found our modern day heroes in the person of the medical frontliners- doctors, nurses and all those in the field of medical practice who help us fight and cure the unseen enemy in our midst. They risk their lives every day in order to save those of others. We also identify frontliners in the person of the military, police, cashiers, salesmen, and even the utility workers in the groceries. People from all walks of life from artists and

celebrities, to students, and other ordinary citizens of the country thought of ways to help.

Not to forget, the cooperatives from all around the country took initiative to help their members and their community especially by means of sustaining one of life's basic necessity-FOOD.

The social and economic benefits of cooperatives can have far-reaching impact, and 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-impacted 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 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 convey a huge impact. Through its Board of Directors initiative, the cooperatives 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) kilogram rice, three (3) packs of noodles, ten (10) pieces of eggs and dried fish was 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 said goods and distributing them

notwithstanding the fact of facing 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 Tumalalod Multi-Purpose Cooperative gave cash donations to the Mambusao Fire Station which will be utilized for constructing decontamination tents. Also 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 support in the fight against COVID-19 preparing 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 foodpacks to 123 beneficiaries coming from seven (7) zones of Barangay Buyuan, Tigbauan, Iloilo. They also gave out vitamins, face masks and twenty (20) pieces of

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



Personal Protective Equipments (PPEs) to the medical frontliners with 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 the 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 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 only think of themselves, rather their actions speak that generosity and kindness should foster in this very trying moments. Now is the proper time to break-free from selfishness and instead being able to think of ways 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.

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