



COOPERATIVE BAYANIHAN IN TIMES OF CRISIS

The start of year 2020 for the Philippine archipelago did not bid well for its citizens as we continue to be overwhelmed by series of events that threaten to break our spirit. But we Filipinos are known to have a brave spirit in the face of adversities which we display time and again when confronted with such challenges.

Thus, as the world faces one of its biggest trials --- the Corona Virus Disease-19 (COVID), Filipinos have once again proven that we meet this crisis head on by showing our *bayanihan spirit*. And what is the *bayanihan spirit* if not the very essence of cooperativism?

Cooperatives all over the country have joined together and risen up to this challenge by providing for the basic needs not only of their members, but those of their communities and frontliners as well during the community quarantine.

Almost 4,299 cooperatives nationwide have provided assistance to Local Government Units (LGUs), hospitals, frontliners, and sectors of the communities that were badly hit by the lockdown with regard to their livelihood. The assistance given were in the form of donations, financial, food packs, manpower, transportation, loan moratorium, advance provision of Interest on Share Capital and Patronage Refund (ISCPR), medicines, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), face masks, relief goods, and partnership with agencies to facilitate easy transaction or release of aid, to name a few.

The cooperatives have released at least Php 450 Million through their Community Development Fund (CDF), Optional Fund, and the voluntary contribution of officers and members in support of the fight against COVID-19.

Further, as shown in the Bayanihan Report of the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), the agency has taken steps to assist the national government and endeavors were made to mobilize and monitor the activities of cooperatives, to wit:

- 1) **Supply and Value Chain Readiness Program through Cooperatives** via the **Cooperative Business Matching Information System**. A platform for

online business transaction between and among suppliers/retailers and consumers. The program is intended as a channel to ensure that food and other essential services reach all the affected communities;

- 2) **Koop Bayanihan Program.** It is where cooperatives collaborate and coordinate with LGUs to make their services and other necessities available to their members and the public. Through this program, cooperatives can offer or extend assistance to frontline personnel, clinics/hospitals/health facilities, and other volunteers;
- 3) **CDA/DA Partnership on KADIWA Center** is a joint effort to help link cooperatives with LGUs so the former can supply, deliver, distribute and find a market (retail) for their agricultural products in the Kadiwa centers; and
- 4) The **Cooperative Regulatory Relief Program: Ease in Cooperative Registration, Membership and Public Protection.** In this program, memorandum circulars were issued to grant regulatory reliefs and create an environment responsive to the needs of cooperative stakeholders in this time of national distress.

We have seen first-hand the economic, social and political effects of this pandemic, not only in the Philippines, but also worldwide. However, through such changes, the environment is slowly healing as the inundation of people and machines trying to destroy mother earth through pollution, or mindless abuse of natural resources have slowed down.

As we celebrate the International Day of Cooperatives this July 4, 2020, with the theme "**Cooperatives for Climate Action**", the CDA joins the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) in the call for a paradigm shift and to realize that climate change does not only affect the environment, but every one of us. We must be part of that change as we have go through this COVID-19 pandemic. **#Coops4ClimateAction #COOPSDAY** - CBMarders