

RISING FROM THE ASHES

"The Rise of Coops in Marawi After The War"





INTRODUCTION

PRIDING itself as the only Islamic City in the Philippines, Marawi is home of the Maranaws or “the people of the lake.”

As the one of the more prominent urban centers of the Bangsamoro Region, Marawi is a bustling commercial area that is also rich in natural resources, particularly Lake Lanao, where many Maranaws have depended on for their livelihood for generations. The lake is also one of Mindanao’s hydropower sources.

Marawi, a fourth class city with the land area of 87.55 square kilometres subdivided into 96 barangays, is the capital of Lanao del Sur province, one of the areas within the newly created Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

Before it was renamed as Marawi and prior to its declaration as a city, it used to be called Dansalan, which means “destination point.”

Based on the 2015 census, Marawi is inhabited by 201,785 individuals, majority of them Maranaws.

During the 2017 siege, an estimated 55,000 residents have been displaced from the city and had to seek residence elsewhere.

The conflict that erupted on May 23, 2017 shook Marawi to the core. It started when a group of armed men, who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, attacked the city. The conflict that followed is now recorded as one of the darkest chapters of Mara-

wi's history.

As the fighting raged on between government forces and armed extremists, lives and properties were destroyed, families were separated, and Maranaws were driven away from their homes.

Parts of the city where the war took place turned into rubbles and ashes. Many of its people were scattered living in evacuation centers, in temporary shelters, and in relatives' homes.

In spite of what happened to them, the Maranaws refused to give up. With only optimism and their innate ability to survive, the people of Marawi began to rebuild their lives, even if that means restarting it outside the communities they have residing in before the conflict.

It was during the period of recovery that the Maranaw people saw a ray of hope through the various forms of assistance extended by the government to the Marawi conflict survivors, through the Task Force Bangon Marawi.

Before the siege, Marawi City is home to 173 active cooperatives with more than 9,000 members. Everything was destroyed because of the conflict.

With this, the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) launched the program dubbed as "Marawi Rehabilitation through Cooperativism Project," a P76-million project of the CDA under the Task Force Bangon Marawi initiatives of the national government on July 7, 2018. This is in line with the

mandate of the CDA to promote the viability and growth of cooperatives as instruments of social justice, equity and economic development.

The CDA put Marawi rehabilitation on top of its priority because aside from being included in as one of the poorest province in the country, it suffered extreme economic, social, and physiological downfall during the "Marawi Siege" where people's enthusiasm and drive were weakened by losses and fears.

In the 6-month project implementation based on the Memorandum of Agreement, 103 beneficiary cooperatives with some 4,347 cooperative members composed of farmers, fisherfolk, vendors, women, and internally displaced persons have benefited from the program and now establishing their respective ventures based on the Principles of Cooperativism.

Among the recipients of the financial grant handed out by CDA to new and established Marawi-based cooperatives, 10 of them are featured in this documentary. These cooperatives were asked to retell their stories during those dark times hoping these might inspire other cooperatives to strive harder in the face of adversities.

With the only intent to help the downtrodden cooperatives in mind, the CDA, through its national and regional offices, downloaded the financial assistance that directly and indirectly benefited thousands of coop members and the communities they live in.

Today, these beneficiary cooperatives have utilized the funding given to them by the CDA by investing in much-needed equipment and other implements that they can use in their daily operations.

The monetary aid extended by the CDA to these cooperatives has also helped them rise above the ruins of Marawi's past as they look forward to the future.

These cooperatives have proven that amid the dark cloud of hopelessness that hovered above them during those days, they still managed to rise and continue to be the agents of change in their communities:

- 1. Al Hijra Women's Marketing Cooperative**
- 2. Alkhayrat Cooperative Pharmacy**
- 3. Al Sahara Producer Cooperative**
- 4. Darussalam Jamah Marketing Cooperative**
- 5. Kathagompiya Consumer Cooperative**
- 6. Masaganang Farmers Agri Cooperative**
- 7. Pila Consumer Cooperative**
- 8. Oisca Farm Multipurpose Cooperative**
- 9. Sugodian Farmers and Fisherman Multipurpose Cooperative**
- 10. Tuca Marinaut Peoples Consumer Cooperative**

Thanks to the CDA's timely intervention, these cooperatives are now thriving and their collective morale restored, with the resolve to take their respective coops to even greater heights. Their stories have proven that no matter how bad the storm is, there will always be sunshine that comes after it.

OISCA FARM MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE

MARAWI is a long way from Japan but this Asian country's influence on a group of Maranaws who attended an agricultural training there was so meaningful that the participants decided to form a cooperative the moment they got back home.

After that one-year training in Japan in 1995, the people in the village of Upper Lancaf created the Oisca Farm Multipurpose Cooperative, named after the place in Japan where they obtained their knowledge on agriculture.

More than two decades have passed and the coop was on its way to further expanding, when Marawi was plunged into a devastating war in 2017.

Many of Oisca Farm Multipurpose Cooperative were not spared by the conflict in Marawi, as it affected their lives, their properties, and their livelihood.

Many of the coop members found it difficult to get back on their feet due to the devastation brought by the war in Marawi.

It was only when government entities such as the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) began to reach out to the survivors of the Marawi conflict that their lives started to turn around.

Through the Task Force Bangon Marawi, the CDA extended some P2 million in financial assistance to the Oisca Farm Multipurpose Cooperative that actually benefit-

ed not just its members but two other cooperatives as well.

The P2 million grant was channeled through the CDA Kidapawan Extension Office and was given to Oisca Farm Multipurpose



Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) personnel Ronde Alicaya poses with two of the officers of the Oisca Farm Multipurpose Cooperative.

Cooperative, Asahi Agribiz Producers Cooperative, and Asada Women's Multipurpose Cooperative.

The members of the Oisca Farm Multipurpose Cooperative used the financial aid

to expand its operation, which now includes vegetable seedling production, open-range chicken poultry production, and other agricultural ventures.

"We believe [in the cooperative] be-

cause the Koran says 'help each other for the common good.' We have seen the advantages of having a cooperative. Without it, there is no help from the government, and we would not have helped each other if we have not been united," the coop's general manager said.

The coop is also planning to go into farm tourism using portion of the financial assistance it received from CDA to further develop their proposed project.

What started as a small coop, the Oisca Farm Multipurpose Cooperative has grown, in spite of what happened to Marawi city. With more than a thousand members presently after the conflict in Marawi erupted, the coop is determined to sustain its undertakings for the sake of its members and their families.

"Once this farm tourism will flourish, it will help the economy. We can also accommodate visitors, and the youth will have the chance to visit our farm," the general manager said.



Aside from planting fruits, vegetables and spices, the Oisca Farm Multipurpose Cooperative also raise livestock at its farm site in Barangay Upper Lancaf, Marawi City.

SUGODIAN FARMERS AND FISHERMAN MULTIPURPOSE COOPERATIVE

ESTABLISHED in 2004, the Sugodian Farmers and Fisherman Multipurpose Cooperative started with 40 members in Barangay Sugod Proper, Marawi City, most of them dependent on Lake Lanao for their daily needs.

Aside from fishing, the fisherfolk also make their own fish traps and cages to help them catch more fish for food, and the rest they sell in the market.

When the Marawi Siege erupted, the fisherfolks' livelihood was greatly affected since the military forbade them to fish in the lake for security reason.

To aggravate the situation, many of the fishers' boats were destroyed due to bad weather conditions. Because of this, most of them were not able to fish and provide for their families' needs.

To address the plight of the cooperatives in Marawi City, the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), through the Task Force Bangon Marawi (TFBM), extended financial aid and other forms of assistance that benefited the Sugodian Farmers and Fisherman Multipurpose Cooperative and a

few more other coops.

Members of the Sugodian Farmers and Fisherman Multipurpose Cooperative who were affected by the conflict were given P12,000.00 in financial assistance, to each 40 of them, who have attended capability-building seminars and trainings conducted by the CDA.

The other members of the coop, mostly women, are awaiting training on dressmaking.

This is the first time that the coop received financial assistance from the CDA, but they put the money given to them to good use.

Today, the lives of the cooperative members have changed after the war almost shattered their lives. The held CDA has extended to them became a beacon of hope and motivated them to rise up again and work hard for them and their families.





Officers and members of the Sugodian Farmers and Fisherman Multipurpose Cooperative have a discussion with Cooperative Development Authority officials on how to improve their livelihood beside the lake in Barangay Sugod Proper, Marawi City.

AL-SAHARA PRODUCER COOPERATIVE

LIKE most cooperatives operating in Marawi, the Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative was a thriving enterprise whose main goal was to help its members by providing basic commodities they needed to survive each day. That was until the armed conflict sparked by a group of extremists shattered the peaceful life of the Marawi residents that fateful day on Mary 23, 2017.

As Marawi was plunged into war that lasted for a few months, its residents sought shelter elsewhere, many of them living in evacuation centers in nearby cities and towns.

The members of Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative were not exempted from the displacement as most of them fled the city, living behind their homes, and, unfortunately, their cooperative store.

When the coop members came back to save what was left, they found out, there was nothing left of their coop store.

“When the war erupted, we had to flee and leave everything behind, including our coop store. When we returned, it was empty. Everything was gone,” said Jamalia Abdulmalic, general manager of Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative.

Instead of wallowing in grief and desperation, the members of Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative started to pick up the pieces, and with the help of the Cooperative Development Authority or CDA in the form of financial aid worth P350,000.00, they were able to take off again and began a new chapter in their existence.

Following the Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative’s recovery was the members’ desire to grow larger to serve more people in Marawi, especially their member-farmers, who also need assistance for the operation of their farmlands.

While they have been longing to reach new heights, the Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative has not forgotten the CDA for extending a helping hand when they were on the brink of losing many of the things they hold dear, including their cooperative.

“If not for the assistance from the CDA National, our coop store might have not been able to recover. We are very grateful to the CDA, that because of them the Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative was able to stand on its feet again,” she said.

Today, the Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative has begun its recovery period. Its store is selling consumer products that their members and other people in the community need for their daily sustenance. Thanks to the Cooperative Development Authority, the Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative was able to survive and thrive again.



AL-SAHARA PRODUCER COOPERATIVE
Raya Guimba, Marawi City
CDA-ARMM R.E.G. No. 9520-14022514
CIN 0103140501

AL-SAHARA PRODUCER COOPERATIVE
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Implemented by CDA - National thru CDA - Region 12



Flashing the "C" hand sign (signifying the term 'cooperative'), members and officers of the Al-Sahara Producer Cooperative pose with CDA-Marawi based team outside the coop's store.

DARUSSALAM JAMAH MARKETING COOPERATIVE

A PEACEFUL and progressive city, Marawi prospered because of its people, most of them entrepreneurs at heart. Whether they run their businesses or are members of a cooperative, the Maranaws are known to be adept at trade and commerce.

But that all changed when war erupted in Marawi in 2017. During the fighting, the once business-minded Maranaws had been scattered to nearby towns and cities, leaving behind their once-comfortable lives and the violence they had experienced, just trying to live each day.

Thankfully, all forms of intervention from national government agencies – the Cooperative Development Authority, in particular – came pouring in for the displaced Marawi residents, including the businesses and cooperatives.

The Darussalam Jamah Marketing Cooperative, one of such entities that operated in Marawi, practically closed shop during the siege, leaving its members with no means of livelihood.

“It was so hard when we came back [to Marawi], we all went back to zero,” said Darussalam Jamah Marketing Cooperative general manager Titing Marangit Dipandi.

But for the officers and members of the Darussalam Jamah Marketing Cooperative, the help from the government was like a breath of fresh air, for it meant additional factor for their struggle towards a better life after the tribulations they had gone through.

“When we received the assistance from the CDA, our members were very grateful as they really needed it,” Dipandi said.

The Darussalam Jamah Marketing Cooperative has a small grocery. Some members are into farming, but all of them are working hard to improve their lives. And the assistance from the CDA is one of the ways that they can transcend the tragedy of their lives.

“[Since] the CDA funding was a grant, it helped us in a lot of ways,” he said, adding, “We rarely receive help, but even those were not enough. We still needed more assistance.”

Surviving from the displacement and difficulties brought by the Marawi siege was just the beginning for the officers and members of the Darussalam Jamah Marketing Cooperative. Making their cooperative prosper through the CDA intervention is not just another chapter of their existence but a vital part of who they are and where they are going.

“We are very thankful, a thousand more times thankful, for the assistance that they (CDA) extended to us. Even during meetings that we attended, they are paying for the time that we were there,” Dipandi said.



BANGON
MARAWI
MARKETING COOPERATIVE
of the
COOPERATIVISM PROJECT
led thru CDA - Region 12



Darussalam Jamah Marketing Cooperative General Manager Titing Marangit Dipandi recalls how the Cooperative Development Authority's intervention has helped them through the tough times during the Marawi siege.

KATHAGOMPIYA CONSUMER COOPERATIVE

WHEN relatives, friends and neighbors band together for a common cause, they can overcome any hardship that come their way. The story of the Kathagompiya Consumer Cooperative is a perfect example of that.

Amid the war that the people of Marawi experienced, its people, who displayed a deep sense of humanity despite the devastation that lay around them during those months that the Islamic City was under siege, showed courage and optimism.

Prior to the war in Marawi, the people behind the Kathagompiya Consumer Cooperative have already organized themselves not as a cooperative but as a business organization whose aim was to help one another.

The armed conflict had dispersed the group's members, but eventually most of them have reunited, giving way for the birth of the Kathagompiya Consumer Cooperative.

It was around that time that the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) began to extend assistance to cooperatives affected by the Marawi Siege.

"We learned that the CDA was offering an opportunity and it was just timely that the group applied for it. We organized

ourselves again. The team decided to revive our rice-dealing enterprise, which we went into before the siege," said the Kathagompiya Consumer Cooperative general manager.

With the financial aid poured by CDA to the Marawi coops, the Kathagompiya Consumer Cooperative diversified its business, this time going into selling baking ingredients and materials.

"We all operated actually a business, so it was easier for us to start something as we already have a target market," he said.

As soon as they were able, the Kathagompiya Consumers Cooperative hit the ground running with a diversified enterprise. Managing a business is not a new concept to the members who are used to running a business in the past.

"Within the family, within the circle of members of the cooperative, all of them are into baking. Because this business has a ready market, it makes it easier for us," he added.

Even with the P1.2-million financial assistance from the CDA, there were still challenges along the way.

"We hope that this is the start of change, the start of hope, the hope that those families who suffered during the Marawi siege can rise again," the general manager said.

But the Kathagompiya Consumers Cooperative did not allow these challenges to hinder them from running the coop smoothly. From those challenges, the cooperative also learned some lessons as they go





A store staff member checks the items on display inside the Kathagompiya Consumer Cooperative store in downtown Marawi City.

along.

With the capital that the Cooperative Development Authority has infused to the Kathagompiya Consumers Cooperative, it won't be long before this coop will reap the fruits of hard work and determination that will help define the resiliency of cooperatives with the able assistance of the CDA to its affiliates in Marawi.

"Inshallah (God willing), we can already see how far this cooperative can go in terms of profitability and how it can expand," he concluded.

MASAGANANG FARMERS AGRI COOPERATIVE

THE Marawi Siege that erupted more than 2 years ago may have destroyed the structures and dwellings in the city, but it did not destroy the spirit of its people.

While it is true that the aftermath of the war in the Islamic City was felt and will continue to be felt in the coming years, the residents of Marawi did not allow the loss of loved ones and the trauma that goes with it to get in the way of their determination to get back on their feet.

In consonance with the Marawi siege survivors' desire to start anew, came the assistance in various forms from national government agencies, foremost of which was the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), which allotted millions of pesos to numerous cooperatives affected by the conflict.

One of those who benefited from the financial assistance CDA has given was the Masaganang Farmers Agri Cooperative. Like the hundreds of collective enterprises whose existence was threatened by the war in Marawi, the Masaganang Farmers Agri Cooperative has lived on, through the determination of its members.

For Sansia Pilandoc, Masaganang Farmers Agri Cooperative Chairperson, it

took them a year for their members to go back to their homes. What greeted them was heart-breaking. Their houses were destroyed, their belongings gone.

"Most of our possessions at home were gone. All that was left were our clothes, all tattered and unusable," Pilandoc said.

Amid the desolation, the members of the Masaganang Farmers Agri Cooperative braved the trials, and thanks to the CDA, they were able to slowly recover from the tragedy.

From that CDA assistance, the cooperative was able to put up a small grocery shop that caters to its members and neighbors.

For its members, primarily, the help was in the form of capital for those who are operating sari-sari stores and farmers who want to avail of farming needs.

"We could not thank the CDA enough for their assistance in our time of need. They helped us start again. If not for CDA's help, our cooperative would not have been around today," Pilandoc said.

The Masaganang Farmers Agri Cooperative said they need to grow to serve more people in their community. The grant that CDA extended to them was just the beginning and they hope it will not be last. There will be struggles but with the guiding hand of the CDA, the cooperative is very optimistic that they can achieve their goals.





The officers and members of the Masaganang Farmers Agri Cooperative pose with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) officials and representatives from Central Office, together with the implementing team based in Marawi City.



AL HIJRA WOMEN'S MARKETING COOPERATIVE

THE story of Al Hijra Women's Marketing Cooperative is a living testament to the power that women yield, that power to remain strong in times of hardships and trials. That power women possess will only intensify in the face of harsh conditions.

In Marawi where its peace-loving citizens have just experienced probably the worst episode of their lives, the Al Hijra Women's Marketing Cooperative chose to stand firm.

Many of the women in Marawi have lost their loved ones, their friends, their neighbors at the ground zero where the fighting was intense causing massive destruction.

On top of that, their physical and financial assets were lost during the war. When they evacuated, they left everything behind.

But instead of wallowing in despair and grief, the mothers, daughters, and sisters behind this cooperative have chosen to stand again.

"We decided to organize ourselves as most of us women have lost our means of livelihood. Forming a cooperative was our way of helping our family," said the coop's general manager



Some of the Al Hijra Women's Marketing Cooperative members outside the coop's store in Barangay Cabasaran Tomarumun, Marawi City. Part of the grant given by CDA to the coop was spent to put up the store and stocked it with various consumer goods.



AL HIJRA WOMEN'S MARKETING COOPERATIVE

A Beneficiary of the
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Implemented by CDA - National thru CDA - Region 12



Drawing from that power, the members of Al Hijra Women's Marketing Cooperative banded together, with the help of the Cooperative Development Authority. They began to put up seven (7) small businesses from the P580,000 that was given to them by the CDA.

"What we did with the grant was we used it to fund seven businesses, so that if one failed, we can still continue with the other six," she said.

Even though the cooperative's income is not as lucrative with its new location, still the members of Al Hijra Women's Marketing Cooperative are striving to grow.

"That is why we are very grateful to the Cooperative Development Authority. If CDA has not given us the grant, we would not have acquired the capital needed to start again," she added.

The rise of the Al Hijra Women's Marketing Cooperative might not have happened overnight, but these women have shown that they are willing and able to grow. And with CDA's intervention, growth is no longer an impossible prospect for this cooperative.

PILA CONSUMERS COOPERATIVE

RESILIENCY is a vital part of human nature. The ability to bounce back after an unfortunate event is one of the reasons people recover from their tragic experience. This was the same mindset that has kept the spirit of the residents of Marawi alive after the siege in 2017.

One of the factors that has contributed to the Maranaw's recovery is the intervention provided by national government agencies, foremost of which is the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), which has been on the forefront of giving assistance to Marawi-based cooperatives affected by the conflict.

Among the beneficiaries of this CDA-initiated assistance is the Pila Consumer Cooperative, who like all the other coops that used to operate in the Most Affected Area (MAA) and Ground Zero, had its share of pains and feeling of despair when the war broke out in Marawi.

But with CDA's financial help, the women-members of Pila Consumer Cooperative began to rebuild their coop, starting from scratch. And with the collective determination, the all-women cooperative has expanded its business, this time going into selling ready-to-wear clothes apart from its grocery store.



Cooperative Development Authority officers and members of Pila Consumer Cooperative pose outside the coop's store.

MARAWI
COOPERATIVE
of the
COOPERATIVISM PROJECT
thru CDA - Region 12



What make the Pila Consumer Cooperative story worth emulating is their strong resolve to rise again from the ashes of war, from the ravages of the massive tragedy that the members have endured in that bleak period of their lives.

And now that government agencies like the CDA has shown them that they can make it, the members of Pila Consumer Cooperative will not let the past stand in the way of their ascent to the future.

“We are grateful to the CDA because it became our source of strength and hope after the war,” said Pila Consumer Cooperative member Normalah Jabbar. “When we returned to Marawi, it was the CDA that gave us the capital we needed to slowly recover.”

The road to recovery may be slow, but for the members of Pila Consumer Cooperative, their journey to regaining their dignity was full of hope, with the CDA on their side.

“We did not totally feel the loss because of the help that we received. We are even more determined to grow our cooperative so we can fully recover,” Jabbar said.

ALKHAYRAT COOPERATIVE PHARMACY

BEFORE the armed conflict broke out in 2017, Marawi was a peaceful place populated by equally peace-loving people. But with the destruction that the war brought to Marawi never before seen in its modern history, it also brought death and destruction, diseases and despair.

Those who survived the siege, especially the internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have been living in temporary shelters, had contracted illnesses and medical conditions that needed to be addressed.

This was the mission of Alkhayrat Cooperative Pharmacy – to provide medicines for the Marawi siege survivors. The coop’s existence was born out of the residents’ need for cheap and available medicines.

“We want to help our members and our fellow IDPs, to provide them with cheaper medicines,” said the cooperative’s general manager.

With the funding that the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) has extended to the cooperatives in the war-torn city, a group of survivors from the ground zero in Marawi formed the Alkhayrat Coop-



An Alkhayrat Cooperative Pharmacy storekeeper arranges the stacks of medicines and other items on the shelf inside the coop's pharmacy.



erative Pharmacy, whose primary aim was to help their fellow evacuees avail of inexpensive medicines.

Situated in Barangay Marawi Poblacion, the Alkhayrat Cooperative Pharmacy's shelves are not only filled with medicines but also other essential everyday products.

"It is our hope that the IDPs will patronize the products that the cooperative is selling, as these are cheap and of good quality. They will be getting their money's worth," the general manager said.

The P1.5 million funding that CDA has granted to the coop has been used as capital to purchase the various products it sells and for its daily operations.

"We are very grateful that CDA came. We are also thankful to President Duterte for giving us the chance to get back on our feet," he said.

As the pharmacy is thriving, the cooperative wants to sustain its existence by buying medicines direct from the source in

India.

"If we can establish a linkage with India, that would mean we can sell medicines to the Marawi IDPs at a lower price. What we will be selling are not only affordable but high-quality medicines. If that becomes reality, we can become a supplier of medicines not just for Lanao, but also the whole of Mindanao," he said.

The Alkhayrat Cooperative Pharmacy's aim of selling medicines and other products that everyone can afford is a noble cause. With CDA by its side willing to help in many aspects, it will not be hard for the cooperative to achieve its mission.

"This is a very significant help to us. We hope the CDA will not get tired of helping us, and to expand their assistances to the Marawi IDPs," he said.

He added: "Our life is like a cycle. The more people that will buy, the more the cooperative will survive, and the more that it can help others."

TUCA MARINAUT PEOPLES CONSUMER COOPERATIVE

MISFORTUNES are a part of the human existence. But there are those who can handle adversities better than others. During the war which historians will now recount as perhaps the most trying time in the modern history of Marawi, its people were driven out of their homes, their properties and homes ruined as the conflict raged on for months.

The Marawi Siege may have obliterated the physical identity of the city, but it has not destroyed the spirit of its people and the institutions and entities that have been a part of the Maranaw culture, including the cooperatives that have been in existence long before.

The Tuca Marinaut Peoples Consumer Cooperative may be a new group, but its story is worth retelling as it joined the hundreds of other coops which have to struggle in the wake of the Marawi conflict.

“When our cooperative registration documents were released, the siege happened. At that point, we had to get out of ground zero. We brought nothing with us when we left, not even our coop docu-

ments,” said Nanayaon Ala, chairperson of the Tuca Marinaut Peoples Consumer Cooperative.

At the time, despair and hopelessness were being felt all around, but Ala said she remained optimistic amid the violence and destruction.

“I did not know how we can recover, but I did not lose hope. I know that our cooperative will stand again,” she said.

The cooperative’s high optimism was what brought them back to life, starting with the retrieval of their papers at the Cooperative Development Authority’s (CDA) Marawi satellite office.

When they heard the news that CDA will be giving financial aid, Ala said it was a breath of fresh air, a beacon of light for the members.

“It is so difficult when you have no one to turn to when you’re on the verge of dying,” she said.

Now that the Tuca Marinaut Peoples Consumer Cooperative is on its way to becoming a stable coop, the members are hoping that the CDA will continue to guide them and help them in their growth.

“Our dream is to make our cooperative larger. But our utmost priority is to ensure that all of us can live decent lives,” Ala said.

She added: “Helping each other is very important. That’s why I kept telling my members, do not lose hope.”





Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) officials visit the Tuca Marinaut Peoples Consumer Cooperative store at a relocation site in Marawi City.

