

PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE TO MITIGATE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A case study in Central Visayas



A DECLARATION OF PANDEMIC

The world in great peril



World Map



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION'S DECLARATION

MARCH 11, 2020

- The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 as a global pandemic and
- Nations struggling to keep the virus at bay
- Changed the lives of millions of people

WESTERN PACIFIC REGION AS OF AUGUST 18, 2021 (WHO)

5,526,878

Confirmed Cases

65,873

New Cases



77,951

Regional fatalities as of August 18, 2021



PHILIPPINE COVID-19 Data AS OF AUGUST 18, 2021 (WHO)

1,765,675

Confirmed Cases

10,035

New Cases



30,462

National fatalities as of 18,2021



COVID-19 IN THE PHILIPPINES

DECLARATION OF A PANDEMIC

MARCH 11, 2020

The World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic and has called on nations to employ all measures in dealing with the spread of the virus.

THE PHILIPPINES INITIAL RESPONSE

Selected individuals were quarantined
who were suspected to be positive.

To monitor incoming overseas Filipino
workers (OFW's)



DECLARATION OF QUARANTINE

- Manila on March 13, 2020 declared a quarantine for NCR
- Manila on March 17, 2020 issued Luzon wide Enhanced Community Quarantine to end on the 30th of April

CENTRAL VISAYAS

- In Central Visayas, only classes were suspended on the 13th of March
- 15th of March a quarantine was issued



WHAT TRANSPIRED DURING THE QUARANTINE?

Transportation and movement of people were very limited

The transition from face-to-face, to a digital online cyberspace from across all sectors in Philippine society.

Many small and medium businesses would close, and big companies would have to resort to cost cutting, resulting in the rise of unemployment rate.

Impacts of COVID-19

- Devastated the economy
- Families losing a portion of their income or losing it entirely
- Families who cannot provide for their needs have become vulnerable sectors to the virus

LAWS TO MITIGATE THE CRISIS

In response to the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic to the health care system, social security, and economy, the government of the Philippines has passed into law the ***BAYANIHAN TO HEAL AS ONE ACT (Republic Act 11469)*** on the 23rd of March 2020.

PHILIPPINE
GOVERNMENT'S
POLICIES AIMED TO
MITIGATE THE EFFECTS
OF THE PANDEMIC



BAYANIHAN TO HEAL AS ONE ACT (RA 11469)

Ultimate goal is to protect and promote the welfare of the Filipino people

Which means that it should be able to:

- Mitigate and contain the transmission of COVID-19
- Immediate mobilization of assistance for the provision of basic necessities, esp to the poor.
- Provide ample healthcare, including medical tests and treatment to Persons under investigation (PUI) and persons under monitoring (PUM)
- Provide a social amelioration program, and undertake rehabilitation programs
- Partnership with private sectors and stakeholders to hasten the delivery of such measures

SOCIAL AMELIORATION PROGRAM (SAP)

Identifies low income families for the purpose of distributing either money or in kind for the families to be able to provide themselves with the basic necessities needed to get through the pandemic.

A minimum of PHP 5,000.00 to a max of PHP 8,000 is given to each household

It will be dependent on the prevailing minimum wage rate of the beneficiary's region of residence. As for central Visayas, the minimum wage would be P404.00 which would equal to a monthly subsidy of PHP 6,000.00

Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS)

An ongoing program of Philippine's Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)

Provided outright monetary cash of PHP 3,000.00 to families with at least one member, and PHP 5,000 to families with two or more members.

This so called AICS focuses on families belonging to the “vulnerable sector”

AICS (VULNERABLE SECTOR)

THESE SO CALLED VULNERABLE SECTORS INCLUDE:

- Senior citizens
- Persons with disability
- Pregnant and lactating women
- Solo parents
- Overseas Filipinos in distress
- Indigents
- Indigenous peoples
- Underprivileged sectors

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- Underprivileged sectors
- Homeless citizens
- Informal economy workers

PANTAWID PAMPAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM (4Ps)

- A pre-existing program of the Philippine government. This was the flagship poverty alleviation program of former administrations.
- Enhanced and expanded under the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act
- Provided in cash or kind directly to households with no income or savings to allow for their purchase of basic necessities

COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP)

A program by Philippine's Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)

- Design to alleviate those in the formal working sector
- A one time financial assistance of PHP 5,000.00 is to be provided
- To be provided to all those in the formal working sector regardless of their job positions
- For those who lost their jobs, they would be given labor opportunities through referral, job matching, employment coaching and placement services

BEFORE RECEIVING THE ASSISTANCE:

The company in which these workers are employed must submit certain requirements to DOLE to avail for CAMP, if the requirements were met and approved then they would be able to receive the financial assistance of PHP 5,000.00

THE EXTENSION OF STATUTORY DEADLINES & LOANS

The Bayanihan to heal as One Act has also allowed for the extension of statutory deadlines, and filing of official documents, payments of taxes, and other fees beyond the quarantine period.

Banks and other financial institutions, both public and private, were also mandated to extend the payment period of all loans and credit card payments without incurring in any shape or form, interests penalties or other charges.

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BAYANIHAN TO RECOVER AS ONE ACT RATIFIED

Also known as Bayanihan 2

The ratification would allow for the allocation of more funds to create programs and aid packages that would help counter the health and economic problems caused by the pandemic.

The ratification would see the inclusion of PHP 140 billion worth of aid package for affected sectors and PHP 25.52- billion standby fund for the government

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

- The Philippines borrowed USD 18.4 billion (roughly PHP 888.5 billion) for the response of COVID-19 from multilateral sources such as the Asian Development Bank, World Bank, and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (Cordero, 2021)
- This is used for budget support to augment the government's programs and to support its other projects.
- The international assistance received has ramped up the capacity of the country to test almost 60,000 reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction tests per day as of April 2021 (Bordey, 2021).



CENTRAL VISAYAS

CENTRAL VISAYAS

- During the height of the quarantine, Cebu saw an increase of infected individuals during the month of June
- A total of 930 new cases and 44 deaths were reported in its first week of quarantine (Macasero, 2020)
- Cebu city's cases rose the highest in just a short amount of time and was the most affected
- Malacañang palace and the local government intervened in local government affairs by sending a team from IATF-EID (Inter-Agency Task Force on the Emergence of Infectious Diseases) to handle the rising infection rates

A CASE OF FLATTENING THE CURVE

- The ones sent by the national government were retired generals Roy Cimatu and Mel Feliciano (IATF-EID)
- A stringent lockdown was implemented
- Checkpoints as a common sight, were now stricter and required more valid papers to pass through them, such as Certificate of employment, IDs from the company you are working, and a quarantine pass

CEBU HAS:

- Capacitated itself by creating more teams for contact tracing to allow for the fast identification of infected individuals and to allow for the fast isolation of suspected individuals in isolation facilities
- Created more isolation facilities, and made use of schools and the like as makeshift isolation centers to bolster the bed capacity

- During the 24th of March 2021 Cebu City has started its vaccination program.
- The city of Cebu with a population of 1 Million people aim to vaccinate at least 70% of its constituents to achieve herd immunity against the disease.
- There are a total of 37,461 who are now fully vaccinated which means that they have received their second dose
- City of Cebu has also set up vaccination centers for the mountain residents/communities. These vaccination centers are set-up in Technical Colleges, Barangay Gym's, and government buildings capable of being converted into a vaccination center. All of them being accessible to said mountain communities.

ISSUES PLAGUING THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

A GOOD CAUSE FOR REASSESSMENT



PHILIPPINE RESPONSE LAG

- Delayed distribution of relief goods and assistance
- Identification problems of individuals who are supposedly eligible for certain programs that would aim to relieve financial burden through monetary assistance
- Duplication problems when identifying eligible individuals and non eligible individuals
- Different region means different procedures when it comes to the releasing of government funds
- Bureaucracy has been a great possible factor as to why there were delays in the distribution of the many programs that the government has enacted (Gordon, 2020)

THE DRACONIC RESPONSE



A DRACONIC RESPONSE

- IATF-EID has no single epidemiologist in sight or any representative from the medical field whatsoever, they are retired generals, old soldiers.
- The IATF being a non-consultative Inter-Agency Task force. (*Ofreneo, 2021*)
- The COVID-19 pandemic pinned as “the enemy” and the current dilemma pinned as “Philippines being at war”.
- Bullheaded or stubborn Filipinos coined in Filipino language as “pasaway” are being ridiculed and given too much attention by the government.
- Quarantine program which is launched without a comprehensive and well thought-out medical response in mind.

A DRACONIC RESPONSE

- The lack of proper planning and implementation and the reluctance of the government to listen to health experts have flattened economy and jobs alike. (*Ofreneo, 2021*)
- Strict and seemingly purposeless lockdowns and the poor health-economic programs of the government have greatly affected the Filipino people



CONCLUSIONS



The local government's efforts in flattening the curve in central Visayas has been effective so far and has yielded positive and lasting results

Lasting effects:

- The cases are no longer as high as they were back in June
- Strategies of contact tracing and isolation has been greatly improved and will most likely be implemented until the pandemic has passed
- The ability to create makeshift hospitals if needed, an ability that most regions were not able to do
- Better equipments were purchased and will most likely be used for future responses
- The information that the Local government units receive are now congruent with that of the national government's database

THE GOVERNMENTS EFFECTIVE EFFORTS

- Augmented plans that were already pre-existing
- Capacitating itself by acquiring the proper equipment to combat the virus equipments such as ventilators, negative pressure ambulances, etc.
- Improving on the contact tracing capacity of the local government unit
- Close coordination with non-local government entities to help in the efforts of mitigating the pandemic

THE INNEFFECTIVE STRATEGIES OF THE GOVERNMENT

- The failure to act decisively to prevent the spread of the virus during its first announcement. (*Ofreneo, 2021*)
- Quarantine protocols and the program itself was not comprehensive enough and was not planned thoroughly. (*Ofreneo, 2021*)
- The Philippine health system was totally unprepared for the pandemic. (*Ofreneo, 2021*)
- The government did not provide enough social amelioration to the people and recovery stimulus to those who lost their livelihoods. (*Ofreneo, 2021*)

THINGS THE GOVERNMENT CAN IMPROVE ON

- Timely and improved disaster response
- Employment of up to date technology for disaster response
- Labor assistance
- Science based, data-driven decision-making
- Enhanced Health care capacity
- Enhanced People's Stimulus program (*Ofreneo, 2021*)
- The exhaustive review and the reconsideration of passing into law Senate **Bill No. 1573** or the "Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act." Filed by the late Senator. Miriam Defensor Santiago



When it rains, look for
rainbows; when it's dark, look
for *stars*.

— Oscar  Wilde

-End-

The background features a dark blue field with several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes. A large, bright orange rectangle is positioned in the upper-middle section. To its right, a large, light blue rectangle is visible. In the lower-right corner, there is a smaller, bright yellow rectangle. The overall composition is abstract and modern.