

### **To Get There: Reaching Out to the Unheard**

This project by the Religions for Peace Philippines Youth Committee is a response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the different communities in Metro Manila, Philippines who are receiving less attention and help in this time of crisis. The Youth Committee aims to provide food packages and/or sanitation essentials to the communities of garbage collectors, indigenous communities, and small churches, mosques and Buddhist temples.

In order to efficiently provide aid to the target communities, the Youth Committee has organized a special team to work on the project. This team is further divided into two to distribute the different tasks needed to be accomplished for the success of the project. This team is both supervised and involved in by the two project heads and the Subcommittee of the Projects and Advocacies Chair.

The first team, the Food and Sanitation Essentials Team, were able to gather information on the different brands of canned goods, instant noodles, rice, body soap, 250 mL alcohol, 1L disinfectant solution, and detergent bar that fit the budget. They were also able to compile the different distributors we can purchase these items from, and the couriers who can deliver the donations to the communities. Finally, they have decided which products to purchase for all of the communities.

The second team, the Point Persons Team, aimed to gather a community of garbage collectors, indigenous communities, two small churches, two mosques, and two Buddhist temples. So far, the team was able to gather 136 garbage collectors, 65 Dumagat individuals, one small church, and one mosque.

The Good Shepherd Cathedral Fairview Parish has offered to lend a hand in repacking packages for the garbage collectors. They have also reached out to a group of 23 street sweepers and 50 informal settlers that the team can donate food packages and sanitation essentials to. The team has also decided to reach out to a group of 100 families of contractual workers and displaced families in Quezon City where the Grace Life Church of Payatas has offered to help in repacking and distributing food packages and sanitation essentials to them.

For the worship facilities, the team has been able to reach out to the LGBT's Christian Church Inc. in Quezon City and the Al Huda Mosque in Manila City. The team is still trying to contact other target worship facilities around Metro Manila.

#### **A. Food and Sanitation Essentials Team**

The first team, named Food and Sanitation Essentials Team, are in charge of searching for which brand of each product fits the budget and the different distributors these items can be purchased from. They are also in charge of looking for possible couriers who can deliver the

products to the target communities. With the help of the second team, they are also tasked to place an order for the different items each community will be given.

The team initiated crowdsourcing through social media. The Youth Committee participated through publishing the poster in their own personal social media accounts. The team also researched for local distributors. They then contacted them to inquire regarding their ability to sell items by the bulk and if they can deliver the items on the date the Point Persons Team need to gather all items for their community.

With all of the information gathered on the different items from different distributors, the team has arranged a spreadsheet that shows the compilation of products that fit the project's budget and are sold by a trusted supplier or distributor. The team, together with the project heads and the chair of the Subcommittee on Projects and Advocacies, has also decided on the different products to purchase for all target communities.

## B. Point Persons Team

The second team, named Point Persons Team, are in charge of communicating with the target communities. Each person in the team is assigned to a particular community and they are tasked to communicate the intention of the project, and to gather information on the community such as their number of families, the protocols they may have for accepting donations, and a contact person they may coordinate with for the delivery of the donations. This team is also in charge of collecting the different items the community they are assigned to needs. They will also coordinate with the couriers in picking-up the items from their own locations and delivering to the target community's area. This team is to make sure that the community will receive and distribute the food packages and/or sanitation essentials they will receive.

### a. Garbage Collectors Community

Initially, the team intended to help the garbage collectors employed under the 316 Metro Transport Inc. but they have recently closed their company and have let go of all their employees. This has posed a challenge for the team to deliver the food packages and sanitation essentials to one venue, and make sure each employee receives their own food package and sanitation essentials. To resolve the problem, the team attempted to contact the company, but they can no longer be reached.

In order to gather all of the employees, the team has asked help from the Good Shepherd Cathedral Fairview Parish. The team held a meeting with their priests and ministry together with the Barangay Captain and *Sangguniang Kabataan*, local government unit youth representatives, from Barangay Fairview. They have agreed to help with repacking the different items to distribute to the garbage collectors. Despite not being able to contact the company, the team was still able to 136 collectors through contacting one garbage collector a team member personally knew.

b. Indigenous Community

The indigenous community the team planned to help is the Dumagat Community in Norzagaray, Bulacan. Professor Arvin Eballo, the Director of the SIMBAHAYAN Community Development Office, was reached out to in hopes that he can help the team in reaching out to the Center for the Dumagat. Through him, the team was able to reach Bro. Martin Francisco, who is part of the Sagip Sierra Madre Environmental Society Inc., an organization accompanying the Dumagat Community in the influx of nonindigenous people and modernization.

Bro. Martin has informed the team that they have a centralized system for donations. It is part of their cultural practices and programs to have one Tribal storage unit and a single cooking area for the whole community. Thus there will be no need to repack all of the items into individual or family packages. The team was also made aware that there should be no problem when it comes to delivering donations to them, and that if there are any obstacles in reaching their community we can contact him directly. Lastly, the team was informed that based on the timeline of the project, there would be 65 people in the community that the team can help.

c. Small Churches

The team will be reaching out to two small-scale churches to provide sanitation essentials to prepare for their reopening after the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ). As yet, they were able to reach out to the LGBT's Christian Church Inc. in Quezon City. The team was advised to inform them on the final date of the delivery of donations and keep in touch with their contact person.

d. Mosques

The team has planned to reach out to two mosques to provide sanitation essentials to prepare for their reopening after the ECQ. They were able to reach out to the Al Huda Mosque in Manila City and were able to get their protocols for donations. The team was advised to notify the contact person the day before delivering the donations.

e. Buddhist Temples

The team has planned to reach out to two Buddhist Temples to provide sanitation essentials to prepare for their reopening after the ECQ. The team is still coordinating with Buddhist temples that are in need of support to reopen.

f. Additional Target Communities

The team initially prepared to help 350 garbage collectors. Unfortunately, their employer closed the company. In effect, the team was only able to reach 136 collectors due to the lack of contact information. Although there was a decrease in the number of garbage collectors the team can help, this has opened the opportunity for the whole team to help other communities.

The Good Shepherd Cathedral Fairview Parish was able to gather a community of 23 street sweepers from the Clean and Green Company, and 50 informal settlers around the community. They will be an addition to the target communities the team will be providing food packages and sanitation essentials to.

A member of the team also knew a community of 100 displaced families and contractual workers from Barangay Payatas in Quezon City. They have received very limited help since the start of the ECQ. The team is currently speaking to the representatives from the Grace Life Church of Payatas, to inform them of the project and coordinate with possible help they can provide in distributing the food packages and sanitation essentials.