

FOREWORD

In this volume of the Philippine Journal of Social Development, we present six research articles and one feature article. All except for one share stories and the lessons to be learned of how grassroots communities and civil society organizations responded creatively to the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These are indeed welcome contributions to the body of literature on social and community development especially in the context that both mainstream and social media coverage of the unprecedented crisis mostly highlighted how government was responding and the precarious plight of ordinary citizens and communities as COVID-19 continues to rage. We were looking for accounts that would demonstrate resistance and hope from the fringes—distinctive and inspiring narratives of communities and civil society groups who resisted victimhood and hopelessness and chose to take bold actions to address their needs and promote the collective good.

In “Ambagan,” Paul Edward N. Muego takes us to Brgy. Janosa in Talim Island, Binangonan, Rizal where the Sto. Domingo Parish together with local parishioners launched emergency relief operations to address deprivation as a result of the government-imposed lockdowns. Guided by basic concepts from the Catholic Social Teachings and social development, the author reflects on peoples’ collective action by highlighting *pagtutulungan*, *pagdadamayán*, and *pagkakapatiran* as key driving forces, and solidarity, participation, human rights, social responsibility, and accountability as important ingredients in mobilizing communities.

The second article written by Aleli B. Bawagan, Rose Angelie M. Hernandez, and Celeste F. Vallejos describes the widescale economic dislocation that the pandemic wrought on many sectors of UP Diliman. With the University’s drastic shift to remote, online learning, and work-from-home arrangements, jeepney drivers, vendors, and some urban poor residents in the UPD Campus lost their main sources of livelihood, thus needing relief assistance. “Sa Gitna ng Pandemya” narrates the formation and activities of the UP Diliman COVID-19 Response Volunteers (UPD CRV), a volunteer group composed of UP employees, faculty, students, and organizations such as the All UP Workers Union. The article details the strategies utilized by the UPD CRV to fulfill its mandate. These include not only mobilizing humanitarian assistance but also community education and organizing, information dissemination, and advocacy

work. The authors conclude with important lessons that can enrich the discipline and practice of Community Development and disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM).

In “Surviving the Pandemic,” Lisa Victoria N. Rosel and Victor G. Obedicen apply a gender lens to analyze the impacts of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) on the lives of women leaders and members of the Samahan ng Kababaihan para sa Kaunlaran at Kinabukasan ng Sitio Sapang Munti, an organization of women in Sapang Munti, Brgy. San Mateo, Norzagaray, Bulacan. Existing gender inequalities rooted in their differing position and condition in society render poor women more vulnerable to the impacts of disasters compared to their men counterparts. While the ECQ affected the lives of families in Sapang Munti in general, women’s economic activities came to a halt, even while the multiple burden of their reproductive and care work intensified. The authors give an account of how these women, through their organization, exercised leadership in different fronts such as in planning and organizing the distribution of much-needed food assistance, and in fundraising and resource generation from within and outside their community. More importantly, the women saw the pandemic as an opportunity to strengthen their organization and leadership abilities. The article concludes by putting in center stage the importance of organizing women as partners, building their capacities, and creating gender-responsive organizational processes.

“Seeds of Hope” discusses the experiences of MASIPAG, a network of small farmers’ organizations in the Philippines, in building social solidarity and collective responses to the pandemic. The author, Maria Corazon Jimenez-Tan, asserts that the COVID-19 pandemic only brought to the surface the deep-seated problems of the country’s public health system, the absence of adequate and accessible basic social services, and the long-standing crisis in the agriculture and food systems. She then describes the challenging yet creative ways through which small farmers and women farmers persisted in feeding their families and their communities through their practice and promotion of collective, sustainable, and agroecological agriculture. Reflecting on the meaning and practice of social solidarity, the article ends by underscoring the important foundations or building blocks: long years of painstaking organizing and advocacy work, organizational strengthening, and social movement building of people’s organizations and grassroots communities towards radical social transformation.

The article “Network Formation,” written by Remvert Bryan G. Placido, Louise Jashil R. Sonido, and Judy M. Taguiwalo, focuses on the experience of the Citizen’s Urgent Response to End COVID-19 (CURE COVID) in creating and sustaining a network of community and development organizations, groups, and individuals to address concerns related to the pandemic. The prolonged and recurring lockdowns, the strict health protocols setting restrictions on people’s mobility and gathering, the inadequate government response amidst state repression, and the ensuing economic and health problems created new challenges to community organizing and required new forms of community engagement and mobilization. From the experience of CURE COVID, network building utilizing social media and other online platforms and participation in protest actions while observing proper health protocols were proven to be effective strategies for amplifying and asserting the voices and demands of civil society organizations and communities in the time of pandemic.

The sixth research article by Jiza Mari S. Jimenez examines the Family Farm School (FFS) in Roxas, Mindoro Oriental from the lens of human capabilities building and as a strategy for Community Development. Using a qualitative research design, the study looks into the context, perceptions, and experiences of FFS students, parents, tutors, and partners who served as research participants. The author proposes a framework on human capabilities development organized into three categories—foundational capabilities, relational capabilities, and transformational capabilities—emphasizing its potential as an agent of Community Development.

Finally, this volume ends with a feature article collectively written by the members of the Department of Community Development Field Instruction Program (DCD FIP) Committee. Regarded as the “heart and soul” of the Community Development academic program, the FIP is a requirement for all graduate and undergraduate students, with their participation in the program being essential and non-negotiable. However, the abrupt shift to online, remote learning and teaching in the whole UP System as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic led to the deferment of the FIP for two terms due to the continuing lockdowns. The DCD embarked on redesigning the program in search of more adaptive modes of social solidarity and partnership, thus paving the way for the Modified Field Instruction Program. The feature article provides a description of the Modified FIP’s bubble and remote modes, narrates initial experiences, and shares preliminary learning from reflecting on

these experiences. The article brings to the fore the emerging challenges and questions for reflection on the choice of methods and technologies that are appropriate to a crisis context while ensuring the twin imperatives of learning and service.

Coming out with Volume 14 in the time of a pandemic took a longer time than we expected and presented us with what initially seemed to be insurmountable challenges. Our heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to all the authors for plodding on, to our peer reviewers for sharing their time and expertise, and to the PJSD Volume 14 editorial team, for holding on and never giving up amidst the many hurdles, COVID-19 related or otherwise.

We hope that we have managed to fulfill your expectations and that you will look forward to succeeding issues of the PJSD. Thank you very much.

Lenore Polotan-dela Cruz

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