



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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RIZAL MICROFINANCE PROJECT UNDER PUNO POSTS 114% ACCOMPLISHMENT RATE

A livelihood assistance project implemented in the province of Rizal under the stewardship of Secretary Ronnie Puno of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) is now benefiting 2,280 families, overshooting its original target of 2,000 for an accomplishment rate of 114%.

Dubbed the Dagdag Puhunan para sa Kabuhayan ng Pamilya or the Micro Finance Assistance to Existing Livelihood Project, this project is among the initiatives implemented by Puno as Cabinet steward for Rizal of President Arroyo's Comprehensive Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program (CLEEP), which is part of her stimulus package to help Filipinos weather the global financial crisis.

Puno is also the CLEEP steward for Quezon province.

Further stepping up the implementation of the job generation and livelihood assistance projects for Rizal, Puno along with Rizal Gov. Casimiro "Junjun" Ynares III and Vice Gov. Frisco San Juan, likewise distributed P2.4 million-worth of assistance packages to 379 beneficiaries, following a dialogue with local chief executives and an information drive on the global economic crisis at the Rizal provincial capitol in Antipolo City.

"Ito'y isang maligayang Pasko sa Hunyo para sa mga kapwa ko taga-Rizal (This is a Merry Christmas in June for my fellow provincemates of Rizal)," Puno said of the distribution of the certificates of assistance packages to the beneficiaries which include displaced factory workers and out-of-school youths.

The DILG. Puno said, has funneled P5 million from its savings for the Dagdag Puhunan project while the participating local government units (LGUs) have provided a combined counterpart fund of P1.34 million.

Under this project, livelihood assistance packages have been given to 2,000 families in 100 barangays to complement existing livelihood programs of LGUs, ranging from backyard swine and poultry raising, goat dispersal and fishnet production to making *bagoong* (fish paste) cubes and beefing up the stocks of sari-sari stores.

Puno said the project exceeded its number of target-beneficiaries because the city government of Antipolo City implemented other livelihood training programs for an extra 280 families on silkscreen printing, candle and soap making, as well as other income-generating activities like handling rolling stores that sell vegetables, meat and fish.

“I am proud to tell you that based on a report submitted by DILG regional director Josie Castilla-Go, this project now boasts an accomplishment rate of 114% as its beneficiaries have already reached 2,280 families as against the original target of just 2,000,” Puno said during a dialogue with local executives of Rizal and Antipolo City.

Puno pointed out that the bold reforms initiated by President Arroyo starting in 2002 has invigorated the economy and spelled nonstop growth even during this early stage of the protracted financial crisis, which has affected two-thirds of the world’s economies.

Besides the Dagdag Puhunan undertaking, Puno said the DILG is also mounting a Roadside Maintenance Project patterned after the Out-of School-Youth Servicing Towards Economic Recovery (OYSTER) program, on maintaining 416 kilometers of provincial roads and 85 kilometers of city roads for six months by out-of-school youths from the poorest families in Quezon and Rizal.

With a funding of P28 million from the Road Board, Puno said the project, which is being handled by the Philippine National Police (PNP), aims to hire two batches each of 4,420 people from Rizal and 6,420 from Quezon who will be hired for 14 days at a minimum daily wage of P231 each.

The DILG has also set aside P7.3 million for the Kalinga sa Manggagawang Pinoy or Package Assistance to Displaced Workers, while LGUs shelled out a counterpart fund of P5 million combined for this project, which is designed to provide temporary jobs to displaced workers, he said.

From the original list provided by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the DILG regional office has identified 1,498 displaced workers who are actual residents of Antipolo City or elsewhere in Rizal province.

Puno also cited the efforts of Gov. Ynares, who formed a Provincial Management Team (PMT) in charge of the profiling and implementation of the Kalinga project.

As agreed upon by the PMT and the DILG regional office, P2.6 million has been earmarked for this project for the emergency employment of a hundred displaced workers; provision of equipment to a group of 35 seamstresses, and provision of *padyak* or tri-bikes for 50 people to sell goods through *padyak* rolling stores.

Moreover, the provincial government of Rizal is also coordinating with Business Process Outsourcing companies like Teletech for the job referrals of displaced workers for possible hiring in these BPOs, and staging job and livelihood fairs like the recent one held at the Ynares Center in Antipolo.

Puno capped his visit to Antipolo with the distribution of assorted packages of assistance to 379 beneficiaries that include tri-bikes worth P10,000 each—along with P5,000-worth of goodies apiece—to 107 beneficiaries; start-up capital of P5,000 to 88 people interested in putting up their own small business; P8,000 each to 25 displaced seamstresses in Antipolo and another 21 in Rizal for the purchase of the necessary equipment for them to continue sewing, and temporary employment in various LGUs at a daily wage of P320 for 69 jobless people in Rizal and 27 more in Antipolo.

As contribution of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the DENR will hire two persons as extension workers, 30 more as farmers, and another 10 as members of its Bantay Gubat unit, Puno noted.

Puno likewise commended not only the DENR for its Sustainable Upland Development and Bantay Kalikasan programs, but the other government agencies as well that have implemented their own CLEEP projects in Rizal and Quezon.

These agencies include the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) for its roadside maintenance project; Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) for its Bantay Dagat livelihood assistance program; DOLE for its Integrated Services for the Livelihood Advancement of the Fisherfolk (ISLA) and Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers projects; Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for its “One Town, One Product or OTOP project, and Department of Energy (DOE) for its Clean Energy Initiatives (Renewable Energy).