



PIONEERING POOLED TESTING
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Frontliners welcome the arrival of equipment that will be used for pooled RT-PCR testing.



The pilot implementation in Makati served as a model for cities and municipalities across the country to replicate.

BDO Foundation pioneers pooled testing in the Philippines

“The first to respond to our call for support was BDO Foundation. They have been really supportive of every effort needed to address the health situation. Thank you for your untiring support and helping the people overcome this crisis.”

This was the resounding message of Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion at the online launch of the pooled testing program for Makati City, a COVID-19 mass testing initiative supported by BDO Foundation, Philippine Children’s Medical Center, Philippine Society of Pathologists and the local government of Makati City. As part of concerted efforts to contain the coronavirus, the corporate social responsibility arm of BDO Unibank sponsored the pilot implementation of pooled testing in the city.

Immediately afterwards, the foundation took steps to expand the scope of its initiative to cover beneficiaries outside the National Capital Region. BDO Foundation sponsored pooled testing in Cebu City in partnership with Go Negosyo, University of Cebu Medical Center, Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center and the local government of Cebu City. The project was backed by the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and the Office of the Presidential Assistant for the Visayas.

Pooled testing combines swab samples from individuals and examines them together using a single reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test kit. Groups of five, 10 or 20 persons are tested depending on the prevalence of COVID-19 in an area. The method is highly touted by the medical community as a very effective and aggressive approach, a game changer in efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The strategy is expected to boost capacities, expedite procedures and significantly reduce the cost of mass testing.

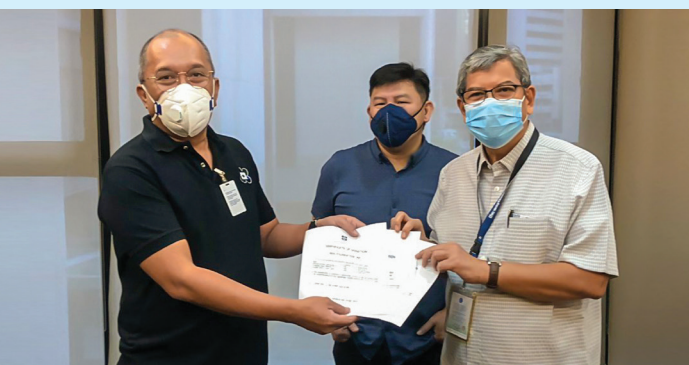
BDO Foundation’s sponsorship made RT-PCR testing available for economically disadvantaged communities at risk of contracting COVID-19. The pooled testing program in Makati City and Cebu City initially targeted a total of 10,000 market vendors and public utility vehicle drivers.

“We believe in this worthy cause,” BDO Unibank and BDO Foundation chairperson Teresita Sy-Coson said. “When we learned that it will be pilot tested in Makati, we were excited to participate. We look forward to working with our partners in making this project possible.”

“We at BDO Foundation support pooled testing because we believe the method has immense potential in making RT-PCR testing more affordable and accessible to as many Filipinos as possible,” BDO Foundation president Mario Deriquito remarked. “We expect this intervention to have a remarkable impact not only on cities and provinces but on the country as a whole.”



Pooled testing programs for Makati City and Cebu City were launched in virtual events witnessed by BDO Unibank and BDO Foundation chairperson Teresita Sy-Coson, BDO Unibank president and CEO and BDO Foundation trustee Nestor V. Tan, BDO Foundation president Mario Deriquito and BDO Foundation trustees Lazaro Jerome Guevarra, Ma. Corazon Mallillin and Ismael Estela Jr.



BDO Foundation president Mario Deriquito (right) turns over smartphones to DOST National Capital Region regional director Jose Patalinjug III (left) as DevCon Philippines chief executive Winston Damarillo looks on.

The smartphones were used to scan QR codes at checkpoints.

BDO Foundation backs RapidPass and ReliefAgad

In line with its COVID-19 response, BDO Foundation supported government efforts to contain the coronavirus, assist frontliners and help underserved Filipinos severely affected by the pandemic.

The foundation contributed to the government's RapidPass System, donating 300 smartphones with prepaid loads and 550 power banks to the Department of Science and Technology (DOST). The donation enabled the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines to safely and efficiently scan QR codes at checkpoints and facilitate the quick passage of vehicles of more than 500,000 authorized frontliners and critical service personnel.

RapidPass saved time by allowing authorized frontline personnel to pass through special lanes without the need for additional documents. The system minimized vehicle congestion at 180 control points and sped up the delivery of essential goods during the enhanced community quarantine. It prevented COVID-19 transmissions and ultimately helped stimulate economic activity.

BDO Foundation also supported ReliefAgad, a web application that automated and accelerated the distribution of financial assistance to beneficiaries of the government's Social Amelioration Program (SAP). Managed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Information and Communications Technology, the app enabled the efficient collection of beneficiary information.

According to Winston Damarillo, chief executive of Developers Connect Philippines, the non-profit organization behind ReliefAgad, "BDO Foundation provided support to facilitate one-time passwords to users of ReliefAgad. Through its assistance, the foundation ensured that SAP beneficiaries received their subsidies in a timely and secure manner."

With the ReliefAgad Program in place, millions of Filipinos—underserved individuals who lost their incomes due to the pandemic—received cash aid while avoiding long lines in crowded public spaces and exposure to COVID-19.



A BDO Remit volunteer prepares to distribute hygiene kits to OFWs.

Stranded OFWs receive hygiene kits

BDO Remit donated 1,900 hygiene kits to overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) stranded at Terminals 1 and 2 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and passengers at the Paranaque Integrated Terminal Exchange.

Procured through BDO Foundation, the hygiene kits contained essential items—alcohol, powder, sanitary napkins, shampoo, soap, tissue, toothpaste and detergents—to help beneficiaries cope with their extended stay in transport terminals.

The donation benefited repatriated OFWs—many of whom arrived from Japan, Qatar, Lebanon and Taiwan—and locally stranded individuals, who could not travel back to their provinces due to quarantine restrictions. Cancelled flights forced many people to stay in airports and public spaces for days while waiting for the results of their COVID-19 tests.



Frontliners stationed at NAIA also received hygiene kits courtesy of BDO Remit and BDO Foundation.



**PESO
FOR
PESO**
DONATION
DRIVE

Donation drive launched

BDO Foundation launched the Peso for Peso Donation Drive, inviting BDO personnel, partners, clients and the public to send donations, which the foundation matched peso for peso. The donation drive was aimed at raising resources to purchase food packs and medical supplies such as test kits for distribution nationwide to underserved communities with high incidence of COVID-19.

The initiative was made possible with the support of the Branch Banking Group, Consumer Banking Group, Central Operations Group, Human Resources Group, Institutional Banking Group, Marketing Communications Group, Private Bank, Transaction Banking Group, and Trust and Investments Group.

Rehabilitated health centers help contain COVID-19

Amid the novel coronavirus pandemic, rural health units have stepped up to the challenge of helping hospitals overwhelmed with COVID-19 cases. These health centers have been instrumental in conducting tests, providing patient care and slowing the spread of the virus. As part of efforts to strengthen the healthcare delivery system and help contain the contagion, BDO Foundation has sustained its initiative to rehabilitate rural health units across the country.

The undertaking—which contributes to the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal no. 3 to ensure healthy lives and promote the well-being of people of all ages—is critical as the country comes to grips with COVID-19.

Since the rehabilitation program’s inception in 2012, BDO Foundation has been renovating rural health units particularly in economically disadvantaged and disaster-affected communities. With 89 rural health units successfully rehabilitated and turned over, the foundation is close to achieving a major milestone. The corporate social responsibility arm of BDO Unibank is gearing up to rehabilitate its 100th health center in 2020, a feat made possible with the support of BDO and BDO Network Bank branches, whose officers recommend health centers that need support.

Most recently, BDO Foundation rehabilitated Magallanes Rural Health Unit in Agusan del Norte and Calatrava Rural Health Unit and Birthing Facility in Negros Occidental. With both projects completed, doctors, nurses and midwives are now better equipped to provide primary healthcare services more efficiently to more than 104,000 people from 48 barangays.

According to Calatrava municipal health officer Dr. Karl Bonifacio, “We dreamed of a better health center that the people could be proud of—a health center that we could truly call our home. This dream became reality thanks to the extraordinary generosity and persistence of BDO Foundation.”

“Now more than ever, with the novel coronavirus pandemic, our people need the attention of our health workers. We humbly dedicate this beautiful, newly rehabilitated rural health unit to the people of Calatrava, especially the sick, the poor and the vulnerable. Larga Calatrava!” the doctor added.



Improvements in the rural health units included their layout and interior design, lobbies and waiting areas, offices, clinics, consultation rooms, treatment rooms, facilities and spaces for health workers and patients. Waiting lounges for the elderly and play areas for children were also constructed.



BDO Negros Occidental-San Carlos branch head Karen Maypa recommended the rural health unit in Calatrava to the foundation.



BDO Butuan-J.C. Aquino Avenue branch head Janice Arapan thanks local government leaders for supporting the renovation of the health center in Magallanes.



Donations for disaster response efforts

Time and again, BDO personnel have shown that they are socially responsible individuals. Officers and staff of the Branch Banking Group and Marketing Communications Group have made donations to BDO Foundation in support of its disaster response advocacy. These contributions and the active participation of volunteers from branches and satellite offices enable the foundation to mount relief operations in disaster-affected communities. Photo shows BDO Foundation president Mario Deriquito accepting donations pooled by BDO branches in the Greenhills area.



Collaboration with local government

Officers of BDO Foundation and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Center for Learning and Inclusion Advocacy paid a courtesy call to Pasig City mayor Vico Sotto (center). The corporate social responsibility arm of BDO Unibank and BSP explored the possibility of working together with the city on financial education initiatives and the rehabilitation of rural health units, both of which are key programs of the foundation. The parties were led by BSP managing director Pia Roman Tayag (third from left) and BDO Foundation president Mario Deriquito (third from right).



Support for Nueva Ecija farmers

Spurred by a shared goal to make a difference for economically disadvantaged communities, BDO Foundation and global integrated business enterprise Mitsubishi Corporation joined forces to support more than 100 farmers in Nueva Ecija. The partners provided capacity enhancement and equipment for a farmers’ cooperative in the province, helping improve the financial literacy and productivity of the beneficiaries. Project managed by the foundation, the corporate citizenship initiative was made possible by a donation from Tokyo-based Mitsubishi Corporation.