

## **Covenant Community Multipurpose Cooperative**

*Trabaho, Serbisyo, at Maka-Diyos na Pagbabago  
(2012-2016)*

The Center for Community Transformation's (CCT) first involvement with factory workers was in 2009 when it introduced the Sagip ATM program to a garments factory in Dasmariñas, Cavite. CCT, through its credit cooperative, bought back their ATMs by paying their loans in full. The workers paid their loans to CCT Credit Cooperative at only 1% monthly interest compared to 20% from the moneylenders. With this and through weekly Bible studies, the workers learned to manage their finances better.

Three years later, the owner of the same garments factory in Dasmariñas, Cavite made the painful decision to call off operations because of labor issues. More than 1,400 workers lost their jobs that day with no way of providing for their families. Even the tricycle drivers, vendors, and the people running the canteen suffered from the factory shutdown. Because of this, the owner sought CCT's help in reopening the factory.

Thus, in 2012, the Covenant Community Service Cooperative (CCSC) found itself in a factory setting. It was no easy feat, but with the Lord's guidance, CCSC was able to finish the complex accreditation process from DOLE. Two months after the shutdown, former workers and supervisors were rehired and the factory was up and running again. One of the supervisors observed, "It was the same people in the same setting, but this time, the outcomes were totally different."

The first evident change that the management saw after cooperativizing the factory was in productivity. Before the shutdown, more than 2,000 workers had a sewing output of 117,625 pieces with an average of 2.44 hours spent per piece (by 20 sewing lines with around 100 people per sewing line). In 2012, their output decreased to 91,910 pieces (by 11 sewing line with around 100 people per sewing line). However, the owner as well as the supervisors were surprised to find that this was accomplished by only around 1,100 people who spent an average of 1.13 hours per piece. They worked shorter hours but their outputs were bigger.

One reason for this was the shift in management style. Supervisors learned to be proactive in addressing work slowdowns. They would assist workers when there is a bottleneck in a production line. Workers, on the other hand, learned to appreciate their work better. Because of the sense of ownership that being in a cooperative entailed, they became more responsible for their output. Those waiting down the production line no longer stand idly by, berating the slow workers. Instead, they started helping each other in meeting their quotas. The workers felt that they were all in it together.

### **Self-Development**

Because CCT believes that transformation starts in the heart, workers were introduced to the Word of God. They were reluctant at first but later on, they started voluntarily attending the morning devotions. There were also retreats and team-building activities, which enhanced their relationship with God and with one another. Through these intentional values formation activities, they found purpose and joy in

their work. People who used to be production centered became Christ centered, realizing that their work was not only a means to earn an income, but also an avenue to worship the Lord.

CCSC uses Christ's discipleship model as a human resource strategy. Similar to CCT Credit Cooperative's CSLs, they are volunteer factory workers who are trained by pastors to lead Bible studies. From 12 factory workers who accepted the challenge of being a leader in 2012, the year 2016 ended with 204 CSLs committed to serving the Lord. They have regular fellowship with their group. They usually meet during their lunch break, maximizing personal free time to study the Word of God.

Through constant Bible studies, workers have strengthened their relationship with one another. As they share their life stories and challenges with each other, they have become like a family.

### **Social Security and Social Services**

CCSC has been continuously providing for government-mandated benefits of its workers. In 2013, the CCT Credit Cooperative started offering multi-purpose loans to CCMC member-workers which they used for the education of their children, house repairs, and business start-ups. This prevented the workers from getting caught in debt traps from usurious moneylenders. They also learned the value of savings through financial literacy training. Workers also availed of insurance benefits through the CCT Mutual Benefit Association Inc., in 2017.

Through the Lord's guidance, CCSC developed safety net programs that would shield the workers from economic downturns or work stoppage. Unemployed family members of the workers were given skills training and job deployment assistance in partnership with Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, AMG Skilled Hands Technological College, and the CCT Training and Development Institute Inc.

The Kaya Mo Yan Training Center was launched in 2015. It is a two-week basic sewing course wherein participants are directly employed after the course. Workers and their families developed an entrepreneurial mindset. CCSC conducted livelihood training and encouraged them to form business enterprises.

Also in 2015, The Covenant Sewing Group (TCSG) was formed by 15 former sewing line workers. CCSC supported them by referring clients to TCSG. The group was blessed to find God at work in their endeavor. CCSC entered into a usufruct agreement with TCSG for the sewing machines needed to jumpstart their business. TCSG continued with the morning devotions and worship services. They also received business mentoring from CCSC.

Two years later, TCSG has fully paid the usufruct sewing machines. As they have abundantly received blessings from the Lord, so they have cheerfully shared them with others. TCSG, along with CCMC, is mentoring another enterprise called the Philipians Sewing Group, which was founded in 2017.

## **Relationship Building**

As part of its mission of uplifting the lives of workers and their families, CCSC hosted group weddings throughout the years. With constant intentional discipleship, workers learned the value of marriage. All couples underwent marriage counseling under CCMC pastors.

Conflict among workers frequently disrupted operations in the factory. CCSC, through the example of CSLs, saw that volunteerism and community empowerment were effective strategies in transforming the workplace. Thus, Ugnayan Peacemakers was created. Ugnayans are volunteer workers who are trained in conflict resolution. Since then, complaints and grievances that used to flood the HR department are now resolved peacefully among workers themselves.

Team-Up activities were also launched in 2016. It aims to promote solidarity among workers, thus improving their productivity. After participating in the activities, most workers were able to strengthen their relationship and working dynamics with their group. Others were able to settle long-running conflicts. The management staff have also seen their employees go about their work with joy and enthusiasm after the Team-Up events.

## **Love and Care Ministry**

Through its Love and Care Ministry, workers and their families experienced God's love and developed a deeper appreciation for their work. They would receive benevolence funds when workers experience death in the family. They would also receive hospitalization assistance. But more than these, it was the time and effort of the pastors and co-workers in visiting and praying for the grieving or hospitalized families.

One worker ministered by the Love and Care Ministry was Emelyn Silorio. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2014 and was only given three months to live. Cherry Reganit and Arsenia Mayores, in the spirit of Christian love and compassion, resigned from CCSC Dasmariñas to care for Emelyn. Since Emelyn lived away from her family, Cherry and Arsenia became her adopted family, providing her with constant care until she was taken by the Lord in September 2016. CCSC provided funeral services for Emelyn. During the service, Emelyn's brother shared that he was blessed by how CCSC and the workers cared for his sister. Truly, it is only through a genuine transformation that workers can magnify God's love in their lives.

In 2017, CCSC transitioned to becoming a multipurpose cooperative —Covenant Community Multipurpose Cooperative (CCMC)—in response to the current administration's new direction for labor service contractors. Despite this, the organization did not waver in exemplifying Christlike character through its Love and Care Ministry. CCMC continuously aims to strengthen and empower workers and their families, creating a ripple effect in their communities.

# LOVE & CARE



## SOCIAL SECURITY

- Sagip ATM
- Multi-purpose loans
- Safety Net Programs
- Livelihood Enterprises



## SELF-DEVELOPMENT

- Bible Studies
- Morning Devotions
- Worship Services
- CSLs



## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Love and Care Ministry
- CSLs



## RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Ugnayan Peacemakers
- Team-Up Events
- Mass Wedding
- Marriage Counseling
- Prayer Intercessions

# SPIRITUAL NURTURING

CCMC, as part of the CCT Group of Ministries, has a sector-specific and holistic approach in ministering to the factory workers. This figure shows that beyond the cooperative set-up, CCMC is about caring for the entire dimension of the life of every employee its various programs and services. Over the years, CCMC has been consistent in exemplifying love and care, and in bringing them closer to Christ, resulting to cooperative and individual transformation.