



Photo by ANGKASA Malaysia / ICA-AP

Living up to Society's Expectations

The global community of co-operatives has just finished the year-long celebration of the International Year of Co-operatives 2025. Co-operatives at the primary, secondary and national levels in many countries conducted activities meant to highlight the contribution of co-operatives to development in their respective communities and for society as a whole. In Mindanao, MASS-SPECC led these activities on behalf of or in conjunction with member co-operatives.

Ms. Mattie Milliken, the Coordinator for the IYC 2025 summarized what the celebration accomplished, thus:

“The year demonstrated the importance of aligning co-operative action with priorities such as decent work,

social protection, care systems, climate resilience, and financing for development. It reinforced the value of combining evidence with lived experience.”

“One of the clearest lessons from IYC 2025 is that co-ops gain the greatest traction when they are embedded within broader development frameworks, rather than treated as stand-alone actors.”

“Ultimately, IYC 2025 stands as a reminder that co-operation is not only a principle, but a practical and proven pathway toward building more equitable, resilient, and people-centred economies.”

“Overall, the International Year of Co-operatives 2025 marked a year of sustained global engagement, recognition, and collective action across regions and sectors. It helped position co-operatives as people-centered enterprises that contribute directly to inclusive, equitable and sustainable development”

Mattie Milliken, the Coordinator for the IYC 2025

IYC Every Ten Years

The United Nations adopted Resolution A/RES/80/182 on 15 December 2025 calling for the proclamation of an International Year of Co-operatives every 10 years in recognition of “the vital role of co-operatives in promoting inclusive economic and social development worldwide... (and) to encourage effective leveraging of the co-operative enterprise model to advance social and economic development.”

The resolution cites the important role of financial co-operatives in expanding access to credit and financial services to rural and remote areas to reduce inequalities and strengthen the resilience of communities; the importance of building the capacity of all forms of co-operatives run by the poor, young people, women, older persons, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and those in vulnerable situations; and the important role of co-operative enterprises in serving the socially excluded and vulnerable sectors of the population that traditional profit-driven businesses may not be best placed to address.

Also cited are the important contributions co-operatives make towards food security, in promoting sustainable agricultural practices, improving the agricultural productivity of farmers through capacity-building and training, and facilitating access to markets, savings, credit, insurance and technology, and in so doing strengthen sustainable food systems. Co-operatives likewise are recognized for raising awareness of their contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular, in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

What does this mean to co-operatives in the Philippines?



Who We Serve Matters

In looking back to IYC 2025 and looking forward to the next IYC 2035, it is important to reflect on the role of co-operatives – in the words of the UN – in “**promoting inclusive economic and social development ... (and) in serving the socially excluded and vulnerable sectors of the population**” (*underscoring mine*). This is the unique contribution of co-operatives to society and what

society itself expects from co-operatives as people-centered enterprises imbued with a social mission.

This societal expectation is most relevant to co-operatives in the Philippines today as many have already established presence in their communities.

Although the co-operative movement as a whole is still developing, with many co-operatives still struggling to survive, there are those that have grown in resources and are expanding geographically and into different lines of business. The question is: have co-operatives here included the socially excluded and vulnerable sectors of the Philippine population in their growth story?

The data coming out of our surveys suggest this is not the case especially if we measure inclusion in terms of improving the quality of life of individual members. If so, the challenge for the next decade is to ensure that our IYC report in 2035 will show real change in the lives and well-being of our members, supported by concrete data instead of advocacy statements and symbolic activities.

Collective Action Matters

The uncomfortable truth is that co-operatives in the country have not yet made significant impact on national development. The various activities undertaken to join the IYC celebration were mostly localized and did not draw national attention. Outsiders looking in could not be faulted for wondering what was really happening. This is a shame because there are co-operatives that are doing real development work on the ground, and there are co-op leaders who have dedicated their lives to contributing to social change through organized co-operation.

One reason for this lack of public acceptance and recognition of the work co-operatives do in the field of development is the fragmented approach characterizing most co-operative activities. Co-operatives and, for that matter, co-op leaders still think they can do it alone. Even in rare instances when they work together, efforts are mostly tentative and easily degenerate into self-



conscious accomplishments. As a result, whatever contributions co-operatives and co-op leaders think they are making for the good of society are very limited, invisible, and rarely matter in the grand scheme of things, considering the economic and social problems we continue to face as a nation.

This is the continuing challenge of co-operatives in the country – to outgrow this tendency of “doing it alone” and being content with whatever they do. This continues to manifest in the fact that co-operatives are growing individually rather than as a system.

There is competition among co-operatives. Co-op unions and federations are mostly weak, many

times working at cross purposes with one another, and there is no unifying center at the national level.

As pointed out in the concluding report of IYC 2025, “co-ops gain the greatest traction when they are embedded within broader development frameworks, rather than treated as stand-alone actors.” Unless co-operatives in the country work together and mature as a real movement pursuing a common vision of development, they will never establish national presence and gain the public recognition that they deserve.

And in the next IYC in 2035, we may end up proclaiming the same advocacy statements and counting similar symbolic activities. **RMV**

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

BUILDING FUTURES TOGETHER



MASS-SPECC UNVEILS IYC CO-OPMUNITY MURALS ACROSS MINDANAO

A collective celebration of co-operatives, community, and 60 years of shared legacy.

Walls across Mindanao were transformed into powerful symbols of unity, identity, and hope as MASS-SPECC Cooperative Development Center culminated its Mindanao-wide celebration of the International Year of Cooperatives (IYC) 2025 through the launching and unveiling of the IYC CO-OPmunity Murals.

Declared by the United Nations, IYC 2025 recognizes the vital role of co-operatives in building inclusive, equitable, and sustainable organizations worldwide.

In response to this global call, MASS-SPECC — the oldest and largest regional co-operative federation in Philippines— spearheaded the IYC CO-OPmunity Mural Campaign, a federation-wide creative initiative that brought together co-op members, leaders, staff, volunteers, youth, and artists in the regions.

More than an art project, the campaign served as a shared expression of the co-op movement's values and aspirations, making the co-op identity visible, accessible, and meaningful to the wider public.

From regional painting days to a shared unveiling

The campaign unfolded through coordinated mural painting activities across regions and clusters, held on October 30 (Regions 9, 10, 11, and 13), October 31 (Region 12), and November 3 (ZBST Region).

During these regional painting days, volunteers from various co-operative sectors — agriculture, transport, savings and credit, and multi-purpose co-operatives — worked side-by-side with professional mural artists.

Each brushstroke symbolized cooperation in action, reflecting how diverse co-ops work together toward a shared mission.

While the murals were developed in stages, this process itself carried meaning. Co-operative work, like the murals, is continuous. What mattered was starting together, sustaining the collective effort, and completing the work as one community.

The completed murals were later officially unveiled in their respective regions, marking the culminating activity of the Mindanao-wide celebration of IYC 2025.

The unveiling ceremonies were held on November 17 in Region 9, November 21 in Regions 12 and Caraga, November 26 in Region 11, November 27 in the ZBST Region, and December 19 in Region 10 — each gathering co-operative leaders, members, partners, and communities in a shared celebration of co-operative identity and solidarity.

A mural with a message and a mission

At the heart of every CO-OPmunity mural is a clear and unifying message: “Co-operatives Build a Better World.”

Each mural reflects both local identity and shared co-operative values. Cultural elements and regional symbols honor community roots, while common visual themes — people working together, nurturing the environment, supporting families, and embracing innovation — highlight the lived realities of cooperation.

Central images such as the globe and interlocking gears emphasize that co-ops are part of a global movement built on interdependence and solidarity. Icons representing



inclusive finance, digital services, and member participation underscore the movement’s commitment to relevance, accessibility, and shared prosperity.

Across every mural, diverse people — young and old, women and men, farmers and workers—stand together, affirming that co-operatives are built by people, for people.

One unveiling, three milestones

Beyond celebrating IYC 2025, the unveiling of the CO-OPmunity Murals also carried deeper significance.

Each launching simultaneously served as the official kick-off of

SPECC’s 60th Anniversary, a celebration of six decades of co-operative development and service, and a reaffirmation of MASS-SPECC’s enduring advocacy for values-based, people-centered co-operatives.

For sixty years, SPECC — and later MASS-SPECC — has played a pivotal

role in shaping the co-operative movement in Mindanao and beyond. From building co-operative leaders and institutions to advancing education, finance, and digital services, the federation’s legacy is rooted in one enduring principle: building co-operators first, guided by shared values and collective responsibility.



Painting the co-operative story together

Through the CO-OPmunity Mural Campaign, MASS-SPECC aims to spark curiosity and deepen public understanding of co-operatives. As the murals now stand in public spaces across Mindanao, they invite people to ask:

“What are co-operatives? Why do they matter?” And the walls themselves respond: “Co-operatives are present, active, and continuing to build a better world—together.”

The CO-OPmunity murals stand as lasting reminders that cooperation is both an idea and a practice.

As MASS-SPECC moves forward toward its 60th year, these murals remain visible testaments to a living legacy — one painted by many hands, strengthened by many voices, and guided by a common vision of inclusive and sustainable development.

“Together we paint. Together we build a better world. Together, we celebrate the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 and the enduring legacy of MASS-SPECC.”



MASS-SPECC CO-OPmunication Bootcamp empowers new generation of co-op brand advocates

MASS-SPECC Cooperative Development Center gathered communication practitioners, young leaders, and co-operative advocates from across Mindanao for its newest flagship learning initiative — the “CO-OPmunication Bootcamp: Empowering Co-op Movement Brand Advocates,” held from November 12 to 14, 2025.

In a rapidly evolving communication landscape where visibility shapes credibility and influence, MASS-SPECC responded to one of the most urgent needs of the co-operative movement: ensuring that the stories, values, and impact of co-operatives are seen, heard, and understood by the communities they serve.

Despite their far-reaching contributions to social and economic

development, many co-operatives continue to face challenges in showcasing their work and asserting their identity in the digital space.

With the global celebration of the International Year of Cooperatives 2025 (IYC 2025), the timing could not have been more fitting.

The bootcamp highlighted a key insight within the movement: the co-operative story is powerful — but it must be told boldly and consistently. Strengthening a unified communication front is essential, and the initiative aimed to cultivate a community of practitioners who can champion the co-operative identity across all platforms.

The CO-OPmunication Bootcamp provided an integrated and

immersive learning experience, equipping participants with essential communication and digital media skills while grounding them in both the global and Mindanawon co-operative identity.

Participants underwent comprehensive sessions covering: (1) Visibility and Impact; (2) Brand Identity and Co-op Messaging; (3) Storytelling for Advocacy; (4) Digital Communication Mastery; and (5) Social Media Management and Analytics.

Throughout the three-day training, participants collaborated in teams, produced integrated multimedia outputs, and designed re-entry plans to ensure that their learnings would be applied within their respective co-operatives.



A special highlight of the bootcamp was the Pledge of Commitment, where participants affirmed their dedication to promoting and strengthening the co-operative identity within their organizations and communities.

This pledge marked the beginning of their journey as Co-op Movement Brand Advocates (CMBA) — a collective of communicators committed to elevating the visibility and identity of the co-operative sector.

Upon completion of the post-training requirements, participants will be formally conferred the Badge of Recognition as official CMBAs, symbolizing their role in advancing unified branding and storytelling for the movement.



By empowering co-operatives with the tools, skills, and shared identity needed to communicate effectively, MASS-SPECC reaffirmed its commitment to building a movement that is united, visible, and impactful. This bootcamp went beyond training; it was an investment in the storytellers and advocates who will ensure that the co-operative movement's voice grows stronger, louder, and more influential in the years to come.





MASS-SPECC recognized as Digital Champion at the 4th Digital Financial Inclusion Awards

MASS-SPECC Cooperative Development Center was recognized as a Digital Champion during the 4th Digital Financial Inclusion Awards, held at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Main Office, affirming the federation's sustained commitment to advancing inclusive, people-centered digital finance within the Philippine co-operative and microfinance sector.

Conferred by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Citi Foundation, and the Microfinance Council of the Philippines, Inc. (MCPI), the Digital Financial Inclusion Awards annually honor institutions and individuals

that have effectively leveraged digital solutions to expand access to financial services, particularly for underserved and low-income communities.

This year, 17 individual awardees and three (3) microfinance institutions were honored for exemplifying how digitalization can improve efficiency, broaden outreach, and empower microentrepreneurs in an evolving financial landscape.

MASS-SPECC's recognition highlights its sustained digital transformation journey through Pinoy Coop Digital Solutions — an

integrated cooperative-led ecosystem composed of Pinoy Coop Core, Pinoy Coop ATM, Pinoy Coop Kard, and Pinoy Coop Mobile. Designed specifically for co-operatives, these platforms enable end-to-end digital operations, 24/7 access to financial services, and greater reach in rural and underserved areas.

Through Pinoy Coop, MASS-SPECC has empowered its network of member co-operatives to deliver secure, affordable, and convenient financial services to hundreds of thousands of members, including women, farmers, and micro-



entrepreneurs — ensuring that technology truly serves people where it matters most.

Beyond recognition, the Digital Financial Inclusion Awards also serve as a platform to promote digital readiness across the microfinance sector, encouraging institutions to adopt innovation while remaining responsive to the needs of their communities. MASS-SPECC's recognition as a Digital Champion reinforces a shared vision: a cooperative-driven, digitally enabled Philippine economy where financial inclusion leaves no member behind.





Building Stronger Co-operatives through Professional Development: Management Development Program Batch 2025

The Management Development Program (MDP) Batch 2025 culminated in a formal Culmination Program held on December 19, 2025, at La Verandah, Chali Beach Resort and Conference Center in Cugman, Cagayan de Oro City. The ceremony marked the successful completion of the program by twenty-five branch managers, supervisors and technical staff from various co-ops across Mindanao, and served as a celebration of their collective journey of learning, growth, and commitment to professional development.

Organized by MASS-SPECC Cooperative Development Center through the Institute of Cooperative Studies (ICS), the culminating activity reaffirmed the federation's continuing commitment to nurturing value-driven managers who are equipped to respond to the evolving economic and social landscape facing co-operatives today.

The ceremony proceeded with the awarding of Certificates of Completion and tokens of appreciation, acknowledging the participants' successful fulfillment of the program requirements.

A symbolic pinning of the Co-op Marquee further highlighted the graduates' readiness to apply their learnings and uphold co-operative identity within their respective organizations.

A special feature of the program was a recorded lecture by Dr. Peter Davis, a Teaching Fellow at the University of Leicester School of Business and a previous MDP resource speaker. The lecture reinforced the global relevance of co-operative identity and values-based management, particularly in navigating organizational change and contemporary challenges.



One of the highlights of the ceremony was the sharing of testimonial and commitment messages by selected graduates. Vanessa A. Torrefranca of Surigao del Sur Community Initiative Multi-Purpose Cooperative (SCI MPC) and Gipre F. Naparan of Bukidnon Government Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative (BUGEMCO) reflected on how the program strengthened their professional competencies, deepened their appreciation of co-operative values, and inspired them to lead with greater integrity and purpose.



The MDP is composed of four core modules designed to develop well-rounded co-operative managers: rediscovering the co-operative identity for competitive advantage; strengthening co-operative operations for financial sustainability and resilience; leading others to foster positive organizational culture; and leading self through personal leadership development using the DISC assessment tool. Together, these modules aim to strengthen the identity and competitiveness of co-operatives.



MDP Batch 2025 stands as another milestone in MASS-SPECC's mission to strengthen co-operatives through transformative and values-based education. In the spirit of *Sharing and Growing Together*, the federation remains committed to developing managers who will help build resilient, innovative, and member-centered co-operatives across Mindanao.

AdvocaSEE Corner



MASS-SPECC activates SCOOPS Disaster Response strategy: Channels ₱15M aid for Typhoon Tino affected families via Pinoy Coop



Demonstrating the agility of its Sustainable Cooperatives (SCOOPS) Program, MASS-SPECC Cooperative Development Center mobilized its Disaster Response pillar to channel ₱15 million in urgent financial aid to families devastated by Typhoon Tino.

In the aftermath of Typhoon Tino, communities across Dinagat and Siargao Islands grappled with widespread destruction. Homes, livelihoods, and critical infrastructure were damaged, leaving thousands in urgent need. Responding to this crisis, MASS-SPECC activated the SCOOPS Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)

Early Response Plan, funded by CARE Philippines and the START Network and implemented alongside Agri-Aqua Development Coalition (AADC) - Mindanao.

This initiative operationalized the SCOOPS program's core purpose of developing co-operative resiliency against natural disasters. The response targeted 1,800 families across Loreto and Tubajon in Dinagat Islands, and Santa Monica, Dapa, and Ana-aon in Surigao del Norte. Each household received ₱8,500 in direct financial assistance, designed to meet immediate needs and accelerate early recovery.

Digital Infrastructure for Resilient Response

At the core of the operation was the SCOOPS strategy of utilizing Digital Payment Channels to ensure timely and transparent delivery. By leveraging MASS-SPECC's Pinoy Coop Digital Solutions' infrastructure and the core banking platforms of local partners, the program executed a secure "Cash-Online" deployment.

Following the SCOOPS Standard MPCA Deployment Model, beneficiaries in Loreto and Tubajon were enrolled with savings accounts in NEWS MPC's MBWin core

banking system. The cash assistance was credited directly into these accounts, allowing beneficiaries to withdraw funds from designated payout centers.

In Siargao and Ana-aon, the response utilized the SCOOPS Early Relief mechanism, where beneficiaries received assistance through over-the-counter withdrawals facilitated by MASS-SPECC’s Core Banking System. This digital integration ensured that every transaction was documented, auditable, and protected against duplication—a key component of the SCOOPS disaster preparedness and continuity planning standards.

Co-operative Solidarity in Action

NEWS Multi-Purpose Cooperative led implementation in Dinagat Islands, while PILAR Multi-Purpose Cooperative headed operations in Siargao Island. SAFRAGEMC oversaw distribution in Ana-aon, and BAUG CARP Beneficiaries MPC facilitated the rollout in Mainit, Surigao del Norte. By leveraging these local member co-operatives, the SCOOPS program ensured that assistance reached beneficiaries efficiently through trusted community institutions.

On the ground, operations teams adhered to strict protocols. Cash-out operations included orientations for payout personnel and security teams. MASS-SPECC organized a dedicated multi-agency operations team to manage finance, ICT readiness, and logistics. Daily progress updates and reconciliation reports were submitted to ensure the distribution pace met the urgent needs of the survivors.

The successful rollout of this ₱15 million aid package reflects MASS-SPECC’s unwavering commitment to the SCOOPS goal: to mobilize co-operatives in unified action that strengthens climate resilience and protects communities. In moments of crisis, the Mindanawon co-operative movement proves itself as a steadfast partner of communities in delivering support with transparency, dignity, and compassion.



Sustainable Cooperatives (SCOOPS) is MASS-SPECC’s flagship environmental and disaster-risk reduction initiative. It empowers co-operatives to strengthen climate resilience through four strategic pillars: Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Disaster Preparedness, Disaster Response, and Disaster Rehabilitation.

Economic highlights and market trends Q4, FY 2025

These reports aim to equip co-operators with a comprehensive information on the economic landscape and market trends that shaped the Philippines in the fourth and final quarter of 2025.

Amid significant economic challenges, the country underwent transformative changes, profoundly influencing the cooperative movement. Dynamic shifts across various sectors — emerging opportunities, disruptive innovations, policy reforms, and evolving consumer behavior — have created both challenges and opportunities for co-operatives. By understanding and capitalizing on these trends, co-operatives can adapt, innovate, and drive inclusive and sustainable socio-economic growth.



21% OF FILIPINOS PRIORITIZE SAVING FOR EMERGENCY FUNDS, METROBANK SURVEY SHOWS

Source: *Business World*

More than 20% of Filipinos said building their emergency funds is their top savings priority over home improvement, personal purchases, and leisure spending, according to a survey by Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. (Metrobank).

The bank's survey of over 1,200 respondents conducted in October showed 21% said they save to build

an emergency fund or set aside money for future needs when asked what they are saving for.

"For many Filipinos, saving is a way to feel prepared for the future. Elders often remind the younger generation to 'mag-ipon (to save),' advice that continues to resonate," Metrobank said in a statement on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, 16% of respondents said they are saving to buy or improve a home, while 14% said they set aside

money for leisure activities, such as travel, concerts, or their hobbies.

Metrobank added that savings behavior also varies by age, though financial security and peace of mind remained top priorities.

The survey showed that most young adults aged 18 to 24 years old primarily save for financial security, while 21% of them said they save for personal purchases, and 18% do so for education-related expenses.

100% PUBLIC-SCHOOL CONNECTIVITY EXPECTED BY YEAR'S END, DICT SAYS

Source: *Business World*

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) said it is expecting to connect all public schools to the internet by the end of 2025.

“We’re at 80%. It just so happened that (there have been) typhoons,” Information and Communications Technology Secretary Henry Rhoel R. Aguda told reporters last week. “Our target is 90% (of public schools) by end-November and 100% by December. We had to temporarily pause deployment due to typhoons Tino and Uwan,” he said.

Mr. Aguda said the DICT is looking to connect more schools to its internet



Photo by: ABS-CBN

nodes ahead of more possible weather disturbances by year’s end.

“Science and Technology Secretary (Renato U.) Solidum, Jr. just informed me that two more (typhoons) are expected. But hopefully, they’ll be weak.”

Internet connectivity in schools is hindered by unreliable electricity and underutilization of state infrastructure budgets, the Second Congressional Commission on Education has said.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE: HOW CLIMATE IMPACTS FINANCING



Photo by: Philippine Star/Walter Bollozos

Source: *Business World*

Another Super typhoon, Uwan, is upon us even as communities try to recover the extreme flooding in the central Philippines from Typhoon Kalmaegi (Tino). These events are a significant escalation from historical patterns. Streets and communities that were previously considered safe

were inundated, highlighting a new and expanded risk profile for these areas.

Internationally, extreme flood events have produced striking images of vehicles piled on streets or even lodged in trees, as well as significant

river debris after flood surges. Such scenes have been reported following extreme floods in parts of Italy and Spain.

When a disaster strikes, damage to people and property is obvious. Central Philippines has again experienced extreme flooding, marking a significant escalation from historical patterns.

Major floods can significantly increase the losses banks face from unpaid loans—especially when the property securing that loan, like a car, is damaged.

As climate impacts worsen, Loss Given Default (LGD) estimates must be reviewed and/or adjusted to also reflect the increasing severity and frequency of future scenarios, such as extreme and recurring flooding events, on top of existing information.

ARBS TARGETED TO BROADER MARKET, FINANCING ACCESS

Source: *Business World*



Photo by: Philippine Information Agency

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) said it is expanding the links between agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) and buyers and institutional partners offering financing opportunities.

At the opening of the 2025 Agraryo Trade Fair, Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado M. Estrella III said improving access to buyers and markets is essential for making ARB livelihoods more viable.

“We need to show that our products are competitive. We need to show the world that we have products that we can be proud of, that we can

market not just locally but globally,” he said.

Mr. Estrella said this includes organizing trade fairs to showcase produce and processed goods, while also linking ARBs and their organizations to financing and support programs.

This year’s trade fair, which runs from Dec. 1 to 5 at Gateway Mall, Quezon City, features more than 80 booths, including those from more than 40 agrarian reform beneficiary organizations (ARBOs) from 17 regions.

UNDP ESTIMATES 3.9% OF PHL POPULATION SUFFERS FROM ‘MULTIDIMENSIONAL’ POVERTY

Source: *Business World*

About 3.9% of the Philippine population can be classified as suffering from “multidimensional” poverty, meaning poor in terms of living standards, education, and health, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said.

According to the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2025, the UNDP said the “multidimensionally poor” in the Philippines is equivalent to 4.3 million people.

The report covers 109 countries and territories representing 6.3 billion people and updates the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) for 13 countries.

The UNDP also classified an additional 5.2% or 6.02 million people in the Philippines as vulnerable to falling into multidimensional poverty.

The UNDP said the Philippine MPI rating is based on 2022. “The largest contributions to the country’s MPI come from deprivations in standard of living (42.7%), followed by education (32.7%) and health (24.7%),” it added.

Globally, nearly 8 in 10 people live in multidimensional poverty, equivalent to 887 million people, including those directly exposed to climate hazards like extreme heat, flooding, drought, or air pollution.



BANKS' NPL RATIO EASES TO SIX-MONTH LOW IN SEPTEMBER

Source: *Business World*

The Philippine banking sector's gross nonperforming loan (NPL) ratio eased to a six-month low in September, preliminary data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) showed.

The banking industry's gross NPL ratio slid to 3.31% in September from 3.5% in August and 3.47% in the same month last year.

This was the lowest bad loan ratio in six months or since the 3.3% logged in March.

Loans are considered nonperforming once they remain unpaid for at least 90 days after the due date. These are deemed risk assets since borrowers are unlikely to pay.

Based on preliminary BSP data, banks' soured loans slipped by 2.1% to P538.661 billion in September from P550.095 billion in August. Year on year, it increased by 4.1% from P517.453 billion.

The total loan portfolio of Philippine banks reached P16.263 trillion in September, climbing by 3.5% from P15.709 trillion in August and by 9.1% from P14.904 trillion last year.



Photo by: AMRO/Andrew Tsang



Photo by: Philippine Star /Michael Varcas

TO BENEFIT INDIGENTS, FAMILIES AFFECTED BY DISASTERS: FREE FUNERAL SERVICES BILL LAPSES INTO LAW

Source: *Philippine Daily Inquirer*

The bill providing free funeral services to poor Filipino families has lapsed into law without the signature of President Marcos.

Republic Act (RA) No. 12309 or the Free Funeral Services Act became a law on Sept. 28 after President Marcos failed to act on the measure 30 days since it was transmitted by Congress, as provided under Article VI, Section 27(1) of the 1987 Constitution.

Aside from institutionalizing the funeral assistance being currently provided by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the law also imposes jail time and

fining individuals found to be scamming the government to avail themselves of free funeral service.

Under the law, the government will provide free funeral services to families who are considered "in crisis situations," including indigents and those affected by disasters and other emergency situations, as determined by the DSWD.

The funeral package covers the preparation of funeral documents, embalming, burial services, transport, cremation, and inurnment, including the provision of a casket or urn.

ONLINE LENDERS TARGET TO BRING MORE FILIPINOS INTO FORMAL FINANCIAL SECTOR

Source: *Business World*

Online lending companies target to onboard 300,000 additional borrowers monthly next year as the sector wants to help in bringing more Filipinos into the formal financial sector, an industry group said.

Consumer Lending Association of the Philippines, Inc. (CLAP) President and Tala Financing Philippines Inc. External Affairs Director Arianne Ferrer said their member companies want to help reach those individuals that do not have access to financial products and services.

“If there is regulatory stability, consistency, and in general, the amount of support we’re currently



getting from the government, we are hoping to reach as much as 300,000 new borrowers every month,” Ms. Ferrer said during a media roundtable on Thursday.

“We would always really give the opportunity to people who do not have financial credit history, who may not have lots of documentation, to have their first financial account.”

CLAP members include some of the biggest online lending platforms in the country that are registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Ms. Ferrer said CLAP members’ apps have a combined 33 million downloads on Google Play Store and 10 million in Apple Store and Huawei AppGallery.

OVER 60% OF FILIPINOS TARGETED BY FINANCIAL SCAMS, REPORT SAYS

Source: *Business World*

Over 60% of Filipino adults experience financial scams each year, with attempts happening nearly every other day and average losses per person amounting to nearly P12,000, according to a survey.

The State of Scams in the Philippines 2025 Report, which is based on a survey conducted by the Global Anti-Scam Alliance (GASA) in collaboration with Mastercard and Whoscall, said 65% of the 1,000 respondents claimed to have been scammed from February 2024 to

February 2025, with each victim experiencing an average of 2.3 scams.

Meanwhile, 77% said they encountered a scam in the period for an average of 239 scam attempts per year.

Some 31% of the respondents said they lost an average of P11,896.30 per person to scams, with a total of P280.5 billion stolen for the period.

The GASA said that e-wallets (74%) are typically used by fraudsters to receive illicit proceeds of fraudulent activities, followed by wire or bank transfers (14%).



SCAM CALLS IN THE PHILIPPINES RISE OVER 78% IN Q3

Source: *Business World*

Scam calls in the Philippines rose 78.44% quarter on quarter to 62,390 in the three months to September, anti-scam application Whoscall reported.

According to the Whoscall Scam Report, the scam callers “are taking advantage of legitimate promotional calls like credit card limit upgrades, making their scams sound more believable to unsuspecting consumers,” according to Mel Migriño, the Gogolook Philippines country head and general manager, at a briefing on Tuesday. Gogolook developed the Whoscall app.

She noted that scam callers typically impersonate banks or businesses offering fake rewards or loans to mobile users.

These scams are expected to surge until the end of the year in the runup to the holidays.

On a year-on-year basis, scam calls fell 62.24% during the third quarter.

Scam texts declined 42.17% from a quarter earlier to 37,609 in the three months to September, it said. They were down 97.71% year on year.



Photo by: Philippine National Police Anti-Cybercrime Group / AFP

PCCI BACKS SUSPENSION OF BIR FIELD AUDITS

Source: *Business World*

The suspension of all Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) field audits will provide immediate relief to businesses and allow them to focus their attention on other priorities, a business chamber said on Tuesday.

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) said that the Department of Finance’s intervention provides “crucial and immediate relief” to businesses, especially micro, small and medium enterprises.

In particular, the PCCI said that the suspension gives businesses “much-

needed operational breathing room to better focus on year-end priorities such as strategic planning, inventory management, and holiday season sales without the added pressure of a BIR audit.”

Revenue Memorandum Circular 107-2025 ordered the suspension of all field audits and related operations. PCCI also welcomed the establishment of the technical working group (TWG) reviewing and updating the BIR’s policy frameworks related to the issuance of letters of authority (LoA).



Photo by: PRIME INFRA

PHL SPENDS 54 HOURS WEEKLY ON ONLINE MEDIA, SAYS REPORT

Source: *Business World*

A report by consumer intelligence firm Meltwater and creative agency We Are Social said that Filipinos spend an average of 54 hours per week on online media, significantly higher than the global average of 33 hours and 27 minutes.

“APAC remains one of the most dynamic digital regions in the world. Internet and social media usage in several markets consistently outpaces global averages,” Meltwater APAC Vice President Mimrah Mahmood said in a statement.

The firms’ Digital 2026 report ranked the country as the second-longest consumers of online media globally, with over 98 million internet users.



Photo by: *Kyodo News via Getty Images*

Of these internet users, 97.8% use a mobile phone to access online media.

“While user numbers continue to climb, how people spend their time is changing,” the firms said in a statement.

All sorts of video content (91.1%) are the most consumed media by internet users aged 16 and above

globally, followed by social media (88.1%), short-form videos like TikTok (86.9%), television (85.5%), and media outlets (81.2%).

The report also noted that worldwide internet users spend an average of 4.21 days per week consuming social media. For video content, 4.15 days are spent on short-form videos, while long-form videos consume 3.28 days.



Photo by: *Veejay Villafranca/Bloomberg*

SARI-SARI STORES’ E-WALLET ACCEPTANCE UP 75% AT END-AUG

Source: *Philippine Daily Inquirer*

The availability of e-wallet payments at small mom-and-pop stores grew 75% year on year at the end of August, tech startup Packworks said.

In a report, Packworks also found that 20% of such stores, known in the Philippines as sari-sari store registered a doubling in e-wallet use by their customers, while 20% showed a 50% increase, while 10% recorded a 10% rise.

Packworks Co-founder Chief Platform Officer Hubert T. Yap noted that store owners have been adopting digital tools to diversify their services.

“They are now diversifying their product range, offering high-margin, value-added financial services and integrating digital tools such as our app to fundamentally improve their operations and function as near-frictionless nano-banks for the neighborhoods they serve,” Mr. Yap said.

Digital wallet use allows store owners to keep up with their customer preferences in terms of goods purchases, funds access, and bill settlement, Packworks said.

CO-OP Member Story

Inclusivity and Impact



FROM CURIOSITY TO LIVESTOCK BUSINESS OWNER

The Story of Chona G. Magtuba of Davao Oriental Market Multipurpose Cooperative

In the bustling markets of Davao City, Chona G. Magtuba, a 47-year-old mother of four, navigates the familiar crowd with a confident stride. A member of the Davao Oriental Market Multipurpose Cooperative (DOMMUPCO) for a decade now, Chona's journey with the co-op began with a simple question – a curiosity sparked by her friend's frequent cash purchases of dressed chicken. It was this curiosity that led Chona to the doors of DOMMUPCO, and into a world of opportunity.

DOMMUPCO became more than just a source of fresh chicken for Chona. It transformed into a springboard for her own ambitions. With the support of the co-op, she wasn't just buying

chickens, she was acquiring the tools to become a business owner herself. The co-op's guidance and financial programs empowered Chona to take a significant leap — the purchase of a 1.2-hectare livestock farm.

This wasn't the end of her growth, however. Fueled by her determination and the co-op's loan program, Chona expanded her reach by opening two stalls in the public market.

Chona isn't just a successful entrepreneur; she's a testament to the power of co-operative principles. She religiously participates in the co-op's daily savings program, a habit that has instilled a culture of saving within her family.

This dedication to saving has gone hand-in-hand with her smart utilization of the co-op's loan program, allowing her to strategically invest back into her business and increase her share capital in DOMMUPCO.

Chona's story is an inspiration for many in Davao City. It is a narrative woven with threads of curiosity, determination, and support of a co-operative community.

As Chona looks towards the future, one thing is certain: her journey with DOMMUPCO has only just begun. Together, they will continue to write a story of success anchored on the power of collective action and shared dreams.

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