


UP CIDS DISCUSSION PAPER • 2022-06

Pasadang Pandemic

The Impact of COVID-19 on Transport Workers

Mikhail Ambrose R. Aggabao
Erik Dane I. Belarmino
Benjamin B. Velasco



ISSN 2619-7448 (PRINT)

ISSN 2619-7456 (ONLINE)

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
PROGRAM ON ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

UP CIDS DISCUSSION PAPER • 2022-06

Pasadang Pandemic

The Impact of COVID-19 on Transport Workers

Mikhail Ambrose R. Aggabao
Erik Dane I. Belarmino
Benjamin B. Velasco



COVER IMAGE: JUDGEFLORO | WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1055Queues_at_bus_stops_during_the_COVID-19_pandemic_in_the_Philippines_16.jpg

Pasadang Pandemic: The Impact of COVID-19 on Transport Workers

Mikhail Ambrose R. Aggabao¹

Erik Dane I. Belarmino²

Benjamin B. Velasco³

Introduction

In the first quarter of 2022, repeated increases in retail oil prices brought renewed economic difficulties to informal workers in the transport sector, especially among jeepney⁴ drivers and those in other modes. As self-employed workers in a regulated sector, jeepney drivers and operators absorb such additional operational costs, which cannot be automatically passed on to consumers. Unsurprisingly, the situation generated unrest among jeepney drivers and operators. By

1 Mikhail Ambrose R. Aggabao (mraggabao@up.edu.ph) is a University Researcher at the Center for Labor and Grassroots Initiatives of the School of Labor and Industrial Relations (SOLAIR), University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman.

2 Erik Dane I. Belarmino (eibelarmino@up.edu.ph) is a Public Administration undergraduate at the National College of Public Administration and Governance (NCPAG), UP Diliman and a legislative staff member of a Naga City councilor.

3 Benjamin B. Velasco (bbvelasco@up.edu.ph) is an Assistant Professor at SOLAIR, UP Diliman and Co-convenor of the Alternative Development Program (AltDev) of the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS).

4 Jeepneys “are minibus-like public utility vehicles, serving as the most popular means of public transportation in the Philippines. They are known for their crowded seating and kitsch decorations, which have become a widespread symbol of Philippine culture and art.” “Jeepney,” Wikipedia, last edited 20 October 2022, 18:28 UTC, accessed 5 November 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeepney>

late February 2022,⁵ and again in the middle of that year,⁶ jeepney associations were threatening strikes unless the government immediately released a fuel subsidy or stopped the oil price hikes. As a result of these demands, the minimum jeepney fare was raised to PHP 11 on 1 July 2022⁷ and again to PHP 12 on 4 October 2022.⁸

Almost at the same time, discontent was also brewing among workers engaged in the Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) Carousel bus transit system. The reopening of the economy after the initial lockdown saw public utility buses (PUBs) once more plying their routes, but under new regulations. In the EDSA thoroughfare, a carousel transit was instituted under a system of service contracting. The government contracted the services of public buses for a fee, and commuters could ride them for free. However, in February 2022, bus workers protested at the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) offices. They complained that they had not been paid for the labor they had rendered.⁹ Amidst the controversy, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the bus companies blamed each other for the problem.¹⁰ The bus workers who protested

5 Richa Noriega, "Jeepney Drivers Mull Transport Strike Over Fuel Costs," *GMA News*, 18 February 2022, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/822362/jeepney-drivers-mull-transport-strike-over-fuel-costs/story/>

6 Samuel Medenilla, "Palace Urges Jeepney Drivers, Operators to Forego Strike," *BusinessMirror*, 6 June 2022, <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/06/06/palace-urges-jeepney-drivers-operators-to-forego-strike/>

7 Aika Rey, "Jeepney Minimum Fare Hiked to P11 Nationwide," *Rappler*, 29 June 2022, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/jeepney-minimum-fare-hike-philippines-starting-july-1-2022/>

8 Dempsey Reyes, "Fare Hikes OK'd for Bus, Jeepney, Taxi, TNVS Sectors," *Inquirer.net*, 17 September 2022, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1665646/fare-hikes-okd-for-bus-jeepney-taxi-tnvs-sectors>

9 Neil Jayson Servallos, "Bus Drivers Protest Delayed P20 Million Salaries," *Philstar*, 8 February 2022, <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2022/02/08/2159249/bus-drivers-protest-delayed-p20-million-salaries>

10 Pola Rubio, "LTFRB Pays EDSA Carousel Operators P310 Million; Drivers Yet to Get Dues," *Yahoo! News*, 20 July 2022, <https://ph.news.yahoo.com/lfrb-pays-edsa-carousel-operators-p-310-million-drivers-yet-to-get-dues-081256937.html>

were terminated after they held the protest. These terminations were denounced as illegal.¹¹

The troubles faced by bus workers were just one dimension of the problems encountered in the EDSA carousel system. Commuters were enduring long lines.¹² To appease the riding public, the government extended the *libreng sakay* (free ride) at the EDSA carousel system until the end of 2022.¹³

These incidents of labor grievances and protests highlight the grave plight of transport workers during the pandemic. With the pandemic going onto its third year, there seems to be no end to the predicaments facing transport workers. Aside from jeepney and bus workers, food delivery riders and pedicab drivers similarly have experienced economic difficulties and discriminatory policies for the past two years.

The first section of the paper contextualizes transport issues through a quick historical overview of the beginnings of public transport in the country. The main part of the paper looks at the scope and scale of the difficulties confronting workers in the transport industry amidst the pandemic, using a human-rights-based approach as a lens. Likewise, the paper will probe the responses and the agency exercised by transport workers and their organizations as they attempted to resolve these challenges. The paper ends with a set of

11 CNN Philippines Staff, "House Probe Sought on Alleged Illegal Dismissal, Delayed Salaries of EDSA Carousel Bus Drivers," CNN Philippines, 19 July 2022, <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/7/19/house-probe-edsa-carousel-bus-drivers-dismissal-delayed-salaries.html>

12 Anna Cerezo, "Commuters Endure Long lines at EDSA Bus Carousel Amid Rush Hour," ABS-CBN News, 12 July 2022, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/11/22/commuters-endure-long-lines-at-edsa-bus-carousel-amid-rush-hour>

13 Anna Cerezo, "Commuters Endure Long lines at EDSA Bus Carousel Amid Rush Hour," ABS-CBN News, 12 July 2022, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/11/22/commuters-endure-long-lines-at-edsa-bus-carousel-amid-rush-hour>

policy recommendations founded on the transport workers' own demands for the redress of grievances.

Brief History of Transport in the Philippines

The present condition of transportation can be analyzed through the lens of the country's historical evolution: how colonial relations and the ruling elite have shaped the mode of transportation along the lines of capitalist development. The growth in the transportation system is primarily observed in the capital, Manila, and its surrounding areas—the country's primary economic hub and the political seat of power.¹⁴

Spain's rule transformed and siphoned the Filipinos' labor and natural resources to serve the colonial power's interests, leaving the country generally underdeveloped. The feudal and mercantile capitalist economic model failed to keep up with other countries, which were powered by industrial capital and saw huge increases in the manufacturing of goods and machinery.¹⁵

By 1880, Manila had around 200,000 inhabitants with houses lining the areas of Tondo, Malate, Sampaloc, and San Miguel. Commerce flowed through rivers and canals while land-based transport was based on carabao and horse-drawn carriages. As capital investments increased, so did business, which pulled people from less developed rural areas to the capital.¹⁶

It was only by 1883 that *tranzias* would appear. These were streetcars that ran along rails, powered either by horses or by steam engines. Its development would be funded by business capital through

14 Ricardo Jose, "Tranvia: Ang mga Riles sa Kamaynilaan," Documentaries: The Filipino, TVUP, 30 June 2018, video, <https://tvup.ph/?p=27445>

15 Jose.

16 Jose.

the Compañía de las Tranvias de Filipinas (literally, “Tranvia Company of the Philippines”) under local businessman Don Jacobo Zóbel y Zangroniz, the forebearer of the contemporary business elite family Zóbel de Ayala.¹⁷

The first trains to connect Manila to other areas of Luzon started running in 1892. The Manila–Dagupan railway was managed by English businessmen through the Manila Railway Company. Export goods and other crops such as rice and sugar would be transported to the capital through these new railways, enabling not only smoother trade but also a new means for mass transport.¹⁸

At the onset of the American colonial era, American businessmen led by Charles Swift acquired the Compañía de las Tranvias de Filipinas, along with all its assets. It also acquired an electrical franchise to build the first electric streetcars. This would lead to the founding of the Manila Electric and Railroad and Light Company—now more popularly known as Meralco—effectively monopolizing the electricity and transportation market in the capital.¹⁹

By 1936, the railways connecting Manila to nearby provinces would be reduced and dismantled to favor railway projects that would stretch to farther provinces such as Bicol. Streetcars and trains would be further downscaled to accommodate the influx of American-manufactured cars and buses brought about by a boom in the 1920s.²⁰ In the postwar period, economic hardship and devastation would lead to innovations such as the repurposing of American jeepneys for public transport, which later became today’s jeepneys. Mass transit, particularly trains and streetcars, were sidelined, if not abandoned.

17 Jose.

18 Jose.

19 Jose.

20 Jose.

The trend of mass transport provision in the Philippines is unmistakable—it has been developed for the pursuit of profit, in the interest of both the foreign and local business elite.²¹ In recognition of this trend and to effectively point out and account for the resulting gaps and shortcomings in the formulation and implementation of policies relating to public transportation, it is thus prudent to consistently monitor the conditions and the overall welfare of the working classes and other marginalized populations. It is they who make a living in, and heavily rely on, public transportation, more so under crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Documenting the impacts of this health crisis as experienced by transport workers and related civil society groups, and recognizing their self-initiated efforts not only to address their present situation but also to transform the transportation sector landscape are steps to understanding the current overall transportation situation more fully. They may also be means to determine whether it has remained elite-dominated and elite-centered.

Impact of the Pandemic

Highlighting the experiences of those from the transportation subsectors²² reveal that policies restricting mobility, as well as

21 Jose.

22 Representatives from the public utility bus (PUB) subsector (Ross Natividad, President, Yellow Bus Line Employees Union), the public utility jeepney subsector (Angie Mata, Chair, National Confederation of Transport Workers' Union–Cebu Chapter), and the motorcycle subsector (Don Pangan, Secretary General, Kapatiran ng Dalawang Gulong) were invited to record a podcast for the Lawan Alternative Grassroots Narratives in Southeast Asia project of the UP CIDS Program on Alternative Development. The podcast episode, recorded in August 2021, featured the situation of transport workers under the COVID-19 pandemic as directly narrated by those from the transportation industry. Experiences from civil society (Hyacinth Bendaña, Move as One Coalition), the nonmotorized transportation subsector (Arvin Dimalanta, Save San Roque Alliance) as well as insights from the academe (Benjamin Velasco, Director, Center for Labor and Grassroots Initiatives, UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations) were also featured in the podcast. This paper primarily draws inputs from the podcast interviews and supplements the discussion with information available online from the press, relevant government agencies, and existing related studies among others.

several other facets of the government's COVID-19 response, continue to inhibit the normalization or stabilization of transport sector operations. These policies also unreasonably place operators and drivers in key subsectors at a further disadvantage, and deny essential workers and the general public access to much-needed public transport services.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) has repeatedly and rather haphazardly restricted the mobility of people since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020.²³ Earlier restrictions on nonessential travel between regions such as Bicol and Metro Manila²⁴ have displaced bus drivers. They forced bus companies either to repurpose buses for intraprovincial travel or suspend their operations altogether. Tricycle operations have also been restricted to accommodate only one²⁵ to two passengers at a time.²⁶

23 Metro Manila was first placed under lockdown ("community quarantine") on 12 March 2020 and initially only involved restrictions on travel to and from Metro Manila and a directive for the DOTr to issue guidelines for social distancing in public transportation. An enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) was later implemented on 17 March 2020 and should have lasted only until 12 April but was repeatedly extended until 15 May 2020. From 16 through 31 May 2020, Metro Manila, Laguna, and Cebu City were placed under a modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ), while other areas transitioned to a general community quarantine (GCQ) classification. The total ban on public transportation was effective under the ECQ and its MECQ subcategory, while gradual (i.e., partial and incomplete) resumption of public transportation operations commenced in areas under GCQ classifications. See Argyll Geducos, "Metro Manila Under 30-Day Lockdown," *Manila Bulletin*, 12 March 2020; Azer Parrocha and Raymond Carl Dela Cruz, "Mass Transport Suspended under Enhanced Community Quarantine," *Philippine News Agency*, 17 March 2020; Krixia Subingsubing and Miguel Camus, "Still No Public Transport in Areas Under Prolonged Quarantine," *Inquirer.net*, 25 April 2020; "Still No Public Transport as More Businesses Allowed to Reopen in Modified ECQ Areas," *CNN Philippines*, 13 May 2020.

24 Mar Serrano, "Bicol IATF to Implement Stricter Border Patrol Guidelines," *Philippine News Agency*, 6 April 2021, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1135862>

25 Jairo Bolledo, "DILG to Impose '1-Tricycle, 1-Passenger' Policy in ECQ Areas," *Rappler*, 2 August 2021, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/dilg-tricycle-passenger-policy-areas-under-ecq/>

26 Raymond Carl Dela Cruz, "Tricycle Operations in MECQ Areas Up to LGUs: DOTr," *Philippine News Agency*, 13 May 2020, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1102770>

Even more disastrous is the situation of public utility jeepney (PUJ) drivers and operators. They had to deal not only with the initial total ban on all mass transport and lapses in the disbursement of financial aid but also with the threat of phaseout under the current PUV modernization plan.²⁷ An untimely exodus of PUJs due to inadequate policymaking would lead to the unemployment of the drivers and operators of around 200,000 units of PUJs, according to one estimate.²⁸ Furthermore, this would also greatly affect the riding public since the number comprises around 40 percent of the total public transport trips being made.²⁹

While the abovementioned restrictions to mobility may seem reasonable during a pandemic, several factors in the formulation and implementation of these policies determine how they ultimately affect concerned sectors of society.

Top-Down Policies

Experiences from subsectors of the transportation industry provide valuable insights into whether prevailing COVID-19-related policies indeed protect, support, and address the actual needs of transport workers and the riding public. They continue to deal with the risks and challenges in a protracted struggle to manage a pandemic. Accounts across the transport subsectors reveal a recurring theme:

27 Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department Order 2017-011, "Omnibus Guidelines on the Planning and Identification of Public Road Transportation Services and Franchise Issuance," 19 June 2017.

28 Patricia Mariano, "Modernizing Public Transport in the Philippines," *Changing Transport*, accessed 5 November 2022, <https://www.changing-transport.org/modernizing-public-transport-in-the-philippines/>

29 Mariano.

policies seem to consistently fail to consider realities on the ground that are readily apparent to transport workers and commuters.

A total ban on public transport under the initial enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) implemented in March 2020³⁰ ignored the obvious need of healthcare and essential workers for humane means of transportation. Workers were stranded at checkpoints and were forced to walk great distances; concrete plans and actions to aid their mobility were absent.³¹ More importantly, the total ban and its further extension meant the loss of livelihood for transport workers,³² some of whom were forced to beg on the streets for financial assistance.³³

The mismatch of supply and demand for transportation services persisted despite the gradual easing, in some areas, to less restrictive

30 Parrocha and Dela Cruz, "Mass Transport Suspended."

31 Kristine Joy Patag, "Health Workers Walk to Work, Sleep in Clinics as Quarantine Halts Transportation," Philstar Global, 17 March 2020, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/03/17/2001601/health-workers-walk-work-sleep-clinics-quarantine-halts-transportation>; Neil Arwin Mercado, "Without Public Transport, Workers Resort to Walking for Hours," Inquirer.net, 17 March 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1243803/without-public-transport-workers-resort-to-walking-for-hours>; Glee Jalea, "'Commuting Pains': Cramped PUVs, Workers Stranded on First Day of Metro-Wide Quarantine," CNN Philippines, 16 March 2020, <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/3/16/Commuters-struggle-first-work-day-of-Metro-Manila-community-quarantine-Covid.html>; Arianne Merez, "COVID-19 Frontliners, Workers Walk to Work as Lockdown stops Public Transport," ABS-CBN News, 17 March 2020, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/17/20/some-health-workers-walk-to-hospitals-as-quarantine-stops-public-transport>; Sofia Virtudes, "'Pasaway' Commuters Amid Lockdown? These People Don't Have a Choice," Rappler, 19 March 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/voices/rappler-blogs/commuters-do-not-have-choice-coronavirus-luzon-lockdown>

32 Romina Marie Cabrera, "Tigil Pasada: Millions of Public Transport Drivers To Be Affected by Quarantine," OneNews, 20 March 2020, <https://www.onenews.ph/articles/tigil-pasada-millions-of-public-transport-drivers-to-be-affected-by-quarantine>

33 Ron Lopez (Agence France-Presse), "Jeepney Drivers Beg for Help on Metro Manila's Roads Amid Pandemic," GMA News, 17 August 2020, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/751601/jeepney-drivers-beg-for-help-on-metro-manila-s-roads-amid-pandemic/story/>

community quarantine classifications.³⁴ Some PUVs were still required to obtain permits before they could operate, and even then, their operations were subject to additional regulations on capacity, routes, curfews, strict physical distancing, and other sanitary measures.³⁵

Hyacenth Bendaña, a member of the Move as One Coalition, lamented that their partner jeepney drivers had to endure sluggish permit application processes. Permit applications initiated online were never approved even after three to four months of waiting. Bendaña and Angie Mata, chair of the Cebu chapter of the National Confederation of Transport Workers' Union (NCTU), also shared that local government units (LGUs), particularly in Cebu, practically assumed the role of the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB)³⁶ in authorizing vehicles that may operate within and across³⁷ their boundaries. This again involved lengthy processes and additional requirements, which further delayed the public's access to additional transport services³⁸ and deprived transport workers of earlier opportunities to earn a living.

34 "Philippine Commuters Face Spotty Transportation as Lockdown Relaxed," Kyodo News, 1 June 2020, <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/76f15d6b2bbc-philippine-commuters-face-spotty-transportation-as-lockdown-relaxed.html>

35 DOTr, "Protocol/Guidelines for Public Transport Operations," 26 April 2020; DOTr, "DOTr Issues Guidelines for Road Transport Sector in Areas Under GCQ," 30 April 2020, <https://dotr.gov.ph/55-dotnews/1315-dotr-issues-guidelines-for-road-transport-sector-in-areas-under-gcq.html>

36 Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Memorandum Circular No. 2020-083, secs. 4.4.2.1.2 and 4.4.2.1.7, 19 May 2020.

37 Delta Dyrecka Letigio, "LTFRB-7: Inter-LGU Jeepneys Will Help Address Demand for Public Transportation," Cebu Daily News, 20 November 2020, <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/351684/ltrfb-7-inter-lgu-jeepneys-will-help-address-demand-for-public-transportation>

38 "Cebu City Allows Resumption of Traditional Jeepney Operations," CNN Philippines, 3 November 2020, <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/regional/2020/11/3/cebu-city-allows-resumption-of-traditional-jeep-operations.html>; "Cebu City Hall Clears Initial Return of Over 1,300 Traditional Jeepneys," SunStar Cebu, 3 November 2020, <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1875583/Cebu/Local-News/Cebu-City-Hall-clears-initial-return-of-over-1300-traditional-jeepneys>

Persistent restrictions during the pandemic were sustained by the government's insistence to adhere to, and strictly implement, the hierarchy of public transportation modes³⁹ laid out in the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Plan (PUVMP),⁴⁰ which was first published in 2017. This disregarded the special circumstances and demands brought about by COVID-19. Consequently, workers in nonpriority transport subsectors were unfairly denied their sources of livelihood, and commuters were burdened with inconvenient public transportation. As sufficient physical distancing in public transportation (i.e., fewer passengers per vehicle) was recognized and implemented as a key strategy to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, the prepandemic shortage of public transportation relative to the riding population was bound to worsen. Under normal circumstances, there is logic behind a hierarchy among public transportation modes that prioritizes those with larger passenger capacities. But it is counterintuitive to discriminate among available means of travel during a pandemic, especially with an expected shortage of transport services, given the implementation of physical distancing measures.

Ross Natividad, President of the Yellow Bus Line Employees Union, shared the peculiar case of transport services in Central and Southern Mindanao, where mobility restrictions and the hierarchy of public transportation modes sustained gaps between the supply and demand for public transportation, albeit in a different fashion. As priority transportation, intraprovincial operations of buses were

39 "The identification of PUV mode to operate per route shall be according to its capacity to ferry passengers. PUV modes with higher passenger capacity shall be prioritized consistent with the Department Order No. 2017-011." DOTr, "Protocol/Guidelines for Public Transport Operations" (Road Sector, sec. III. A.).

40 DOTr, Department Order No. 2017-011, "Omnibus Guidelines on the Planning and Identification of Public Road Transportation Services and Franchise Issuance," 19 June 2017.

allowed. However, for areas in the region under general community quarantine (GCQ) and the less restrictive modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) since 16 May 2020,⁴¹ the shortage of bus passengers remained. Natividad explained that this shortage may have been due to the public's fear of contracting COVID-19 despite the implementation of safeguards, such as minimum health protocols on social distancing, passenger limits, and the mandatory wearing of face masks and/or face shields. Natividad added that different local government restrictions and guidelines have also prevented them from undertaking trips along certain routes and destinations. These have limited the options available for passengers who would have been willing to avail of their services.

Some specific policy aspects of the overall government response to COVID-19, aside from generally exacerbating the gap between the supply and demand for public transportation, also point to uninformed decision- and policymaking. One such example is the excessively constraining regulation on open-air vehicles (i.e., traditional jeepneys, motorcycle taxis,⁴² and pedicabs) which happen to be lower-

41 Local government-imposed granular lockdowns and a subsequent national government-imposed ECQ classification characterized the initial heightened restrictions in southern (Davao Region, or Region XI) and central Mindanao (SOCCSKSARGEN, or Region XII), until IATF Resolution No. 35-A placed the entire country under a GCQ classification starting 16 May 2020. Pia Ranada, "Cebu, Davao City, Other Areas in VisMin on Lockdown Until May 15," *Rappler*, 24 April 2020; Genalyn Kabiling, "Entire PH Under GCQ Effective May 16, Except for NCR, Laguna, Cebu City," *Manila Bulletin*, 14 May 2020,

42 Motorcycle taxis had no basis to operate and were thus not allowed to ply the roads in March 2020 when the government's pilot test to supposedly facilitate the formulation of guidelines for their operation ended. It was not until November 2020, eight months into the pandemic, that Malacañang released guidelines that finally allowed motorcycle taxis to serve passengers. Denise Valdez, "DoTr, Angkas to Pilot Test Motorcycle Taxis," *BusinessWorld*, 10 May 2019, <https://www.bworldonline.com/dotr-angkas-to-pilot-test-motorcycle-taxis/>; Raymond Carl Dela Cruz, "No Motorcycle Taxis Until Congress Drafts Law DOTr," *Philippine News Agency*, 9 October 2020, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1118025>; Franco Luna, "Palace Releases Guidelines on Motorcycle Taxi Operations," *Philstar Global*, 10 November 2020, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/11/10/2055906/palace-releases-guidelines-motorcycle-taxi-operations>

or nonpriority transport subsectors following the PUVMP hierarchy of modes of transport. Groups and lawmakers have repeatedly called out the government for arbitrarily prohibiting the operation of open-air transportation—traditional jeepneys in particular⁴³—despite evidence that indicates their relative advantage over airconditioned vehicles in preventing COVID-19 infections.⁴⁴

Another specific rule decried by the public as nonsensical was the motorcycle barrier requirement, which was a precondition for motorcycle back-riding even for private motorcycles with passengers from the same household.⁴⁵ Kapatiran ng Dalawang Gulong (Kagulong) Secretary General Don Pangan shared that this additional requirement impeded the added mobility that motorcycles could have afforded the public under the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) or GCQ classifications. The motorcycle barrier requirement was eventually lifted for private motorcycles, with engineers⁴⁶ and health professionals⁴⁷ disputing its safety in motorcycle operations and effectiveness in preventing COVID-19 infections.

43 Kristine Sabillo, "Jeepney a Safe Transportation Option During the Pandemic, Doctors Say," ABS-CBN News, 5 August 2020, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/08/05/20/jeepney-a-safe-transportation-option-during-the-pandemic-doctors-say>; JC Gotinga, "Recto: Jeepney One of Safest Modes of Public Transport," Rappler, 17 September 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/recto-says-jeepney-one-of-safest-modes-public-transport>

44 "Open-Air Jeepneys Safer Against COVID-19 Than Enclosed Modernized Counterparts," IBON Foundation, 21 June 2020, <https://www.ibon.org/open-air-jeepneys-safer-against-covid-19-than-enclosed-modernized-counterparts/>

45 "DILG: Motorcycle Backriding Allowed During MECQ Under Certain Conditions," DILG, 5 August 2020, <https://dilg.gov.ph/news/DILG-Motorcycle-backriding-allowed-during-MECQ-under-certain-conditions/NC-2020-1270>

46 Philippine Society of Mechanical Engineers, "Position Paper on the Motorcycle Barrier," 23 July 2020; Minerva Newman, "Engineers Cite Disadvantages of Motorcycle Barriers," Manila Bulletin, 28 July 2020, <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/28/engineers-cite-disadvantages-of-motorcycle-barriers/>

47 Kristine Sabillo, "Face Mask, Hand Hygiene Enough to Protect Motorcycle Riders, Says Health Expert," ABS-CBN News, 14 July 2020, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/14/20/face-mask-hand-hygiene-enough-to-protect-motorcycle-riders-says-health-expert>

The lack of clear consultations and social dialogue is apparent in the government's resolve to heavily regulate and restrict, if not completely prohibit, public transportation, despite the glaring need for the mobility of passenger-workers and livelihood for transport workers. Specific policies, such as the motorcycle barrier requirement and the crackdown on traditional jeepneys and other open-air transportation, make this shortcoming even more obvious.

Discriminatory Policies and Punitive Measures

Whether rooted in the absence of consultations and social dialogue, a deliberate or willful disregard for the welfare of specific sectors, or from the lack of critical and technical policymaking capability, there is a strong indication that the government's COVID-19 policies on transportation are discriminatory by their nature and implementation.

Transport workers and commuters grappled with an initial total ban on public transportation in March 2020 and continued to contend with several regulations even as some areas later eased into GCQ classifications. However, the use of private vehicles remained relatively unrestricted. Discriminatory regulations favoring private vehicle use pertained only to passenger limits⁴⁸ and restrictions on the purpose and destination of travel.⁴⁹ The absence of any real effort to facilitate the same reasonable mobility for those without the prior

48 The one- to two-person-per-household limit for areas under the initial ECQ classification (i.e., Luzon) applied to private vehicles. This limit was later eased to allow at most two passengers per row for areas under GCQ. Arriane Merez, "Luzon Quarantine: A Breakdown of the Implementing Guidelines," ABS-CBN News, 17 March 2020, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/17/20/luzon-quarantine-a-breakdown-of-the-implementing-guidelines>; DOTr, "DOTr issues Guidelines."

49 Under the initial Luzon-wide ECQ, the use of private vehicles was allowed, to access basic necessities and to accompany passengers departing from the Philippines. Merez, "A Breakdown of Implementing Guidelines."

and present capacity to own and maintain private vehicles placed the commuting public at an unreasonable disadvantage in a time of universal need. Lower-income essential workers without their own vehicles were thus disproportionately affected by the overall transport policy even when society at large continued to rely on their work and service during the pandemic.

The hierarchy of modes of public transportation under the PUVMP, aside from unnecessarily limiting available transportation options during the pandemic, seems to have contributed to an overall discriminatory treatment against lower- or nonpriority modes of transportation, as evidenced by experiences from the pedicab, motorcycle, and public utility jeepney transport subsectors.

Arvin Dimalanta, a representative from the Save San Roque Alliance, shared the circumstances of pedicab drivers from Sitio San Roque, North Triangle, Quezon City. He reported that enforcers from various government agencies and groups such as the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the Quezon City Department of Public Order and Safety (DPOS), and the Quezon City Task Force Disiplina remain unforgiving towards pedicab drivers from Sitio San Roque, even amidst a pandemic.

Pedicabs could have been a small relief to the working public in the absence of motorized transportation during the pandemic. Despite being integral to mobility within smaller rural and urban communities, they were still relentlessly apprehended, fined, and their sidecars confiscated. This may be due to the lack of clear guidelines for pedicab operations or public awareness thereof. These could have afforded pedicab drivers, operators, and their passengers protection against due-process violations and some leverage to negotiate a more humane and compassionate treatment during crises. As Dimalanta shared, pedicab drivers simply forgo their attempts to recover their confiscated sidecars because of their collective experiences: the dispute of penalties and attempts to reclaim them often prove futile

and at times even unaffordable. Affected pedicab drivers already expect a bureaucratic and costly runaround from government offices and authorities in addressing their predicament. Even more concerning are accounts from pedicab drivers from Sitio San Roque whose sidecars were unjustly sold to other buyers by the confiscating authorities themselves.

The treatment of motorcycles during the pandemic was not far from the experience of pedicab drivers and operators from Sitio San Roque. They were similarly and arbitrarily subject to harsher and stricter treatment by those enforcing COVID-19 protocols. Kagulong Secretary General Don Pangan observed that, at checkpoints, motorcycles were more closely and frequently scrutinized than four-wheeled vehicles.⁵⁰ Pangan shared that such scrutiny was without basis; it was as if COVID-19 only exclusively infects, and is borne only by, motorcycle riders. This is despite the known advantages of open-air vehicles over closed ones against the transmission of COVID-19. Motorcycle riders were thus unfairly inconvenienced and put at risk since they had to deal with noticeably longer motorcycle queues. These also led to higher chances of exposure to COVID-19 due to the excessive crowding on motorcycle lanes caused by the checkpoint bottleneck.

The severely uncoordinated implementation of confusing policies also victimized motorcycle riders. Enforcers themselves were unaware of, and confused by, constantly changing policies. Unclear

50 Franco Luna, "Familiar Transport Woes Show No Lessons Learned From Last ECQ," *Philstar Global*, 29 March 2021, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/03/29/2087821/familiar-transport-woes-show-no-lessons-learned-last-ecq>; Maricar Cinco, "Checkpoints Lead to Crowds, Chaos," *Inquirer.net*, 17 March 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1243304/checkpoints-lead-to-crowds-chaos>; Drei Laurel, "Organized Chaos: Riders Flood ECQ Checkpoint at Cavite-Manila Border," *Top Gear Philippines*, 17 April 2020, <https://www.topgear.com.ph/news/motoring-news/ecq-cavite-manila-border-photos-a962-20200417>

border limits and curfew policies, for example, led to a viral incident in the City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. A motorcycle rider was wrongfully barred from making a delivery of *lugaw*⁵¹ during curfew hours.⁵² This incident was widely discussed, and even Malacañang needed to clarify that all food items, including *lugaw*, “are considered essential goods” and that the delivery of such items “should remain unhampered” even during curfew hours and even in areas under lockdown.⁵³ Several private motorcycles were also disadvantaged by the flip-flop on the policy pertaining to the anti-COVID motorcycle barriers that were required for pillion riding in late July 2020. Pangan expressed dismay that private motorcycle owners had already needlessly spent on barriers, only for the requirement to be lifted for those coming from the same household on 19 August 2020, barely a month after its initial implementation. This may be evidence of discrimination even among types of privately owned and used vehicles (i.e., closed four-wheeled private vehicles as against private motorcycles) in the implementation of COVID-19 policies.

The government’s insistence to push through with the PUVMP (i.e., hierarchy of modes of transport) arguably affected traditional public utility jeepneys (TPUJs) more during the pandemic. TPUJs had been facing the already impending threat of their phaseout should they fail to consolidate their franchises, as well as update their vehicles’ body make and features, to comply with national standards. These demands and expectations persisted, despite known work

51 Rice porridge.

52 Neil Arwin Mercado, “Barangay Exec, Officers Apologize Over ‘Lugaw’ Incident That went Viral,” *Inquirer.net*, 2 April 2021, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1414081/barangay-officials-apologize-over-viral-lugaw-incident>; Neil Arwin Mercado, “Any Kind of Food Legitimately Delivered Is Essential, Says PNP,” *Inquirer.net*, 1 April 2021, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1413668/any-kind-of-food-legitimately-delivered-is-essential-says-pnp>

53 “‘Lugaw an Essential Good’: Palace Settles Question on Viral Video,” *CNN Philippines*, 31 March 2021, <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/3/31/malacanang-lugaw-essential-good.html>

deficits of TPUJ drivers and operators brought about by the continued suspension of their operations during the pandemic. While modern jeepneys were already allowed to operate earlier,⁵⁴ TPUJ operations only partially resumed in June 2020, the last among mass transport options to do so since their suspension during the onset of the health crisis.⁵⁵ More TPUs were eventually, but belatedly, allowed to ply their routes in the following months.⁵⁶ The prolonged suspension of TPUJ operations and their painfully gradual resumption seems counterintuitive. It resulted in fewer income opportunities—or even their complete absence—despite operators and drivers being expected to spend much money to comply with modernization requirements. The separate and differing treatment between modernized jeepneys and TPUs was later even challenged in the Supreme Court. The petitioners—leaders of jeepney operators and drivers’ associations—sought to nullify and declare the policies restricting their operations as unconstitutional and violative of “the separation of powers, the valid exercise of police power, equal protection, [and international] law.”⁵⁷

Aside from the prolonged restrictions on their operations as low- or nonpriority modes of transport under the PUVMP, TPUs

54 Dexter Cabalza, Marlon Ramos, and Matthew Reysio-Cruz, “Modern Jeepneys Start Plying Metro Manila Routes,” *Inquirer.net*, 22 June 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1295343/modern-jeepneys-start-plying-metro-routes>

55 Aika Rey, “LTFRB Allows 49 Routes for Traditional Jeepneys Starting July 3,” *Rappler*, 1 July 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/265438-ltfrb-allow-routes-jeepney-july-3-2020/>

56 Raymond Carl Dela Cruz, “5K More Jeepneys Return to Metro Manila Streets,” *Philippine News Agency*, 13 October 2020, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1118410>; Emmanuel Tupas, “More Traditional Jeepneys Back on Metro Manila Roads,” *Philstar Global*, 11 November 2020, <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/11/11/2056006/more-traditional-jeepneys-back-metro-manila-roads>

57 Dona Pazzibugan, “Crying Discrimination, Jeepney Drivers Turn to Supreme Court,” *Inquirer.net*, September 30, 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1341751/crying-discrimination-jeepney-drivers-turn-to-supreme-court>

were even further disadvantaged by the harsh treatment of traffic authorities in regulating their operations when they were eventually allowed to operate. Bendaña shared that authorities, instead of cooperating with and showing compassion for jeepney drivers, who were already heavily burdened with operational requirements⁵⁸ during the pandemic, resorted to apprehending jeepneys and imposing fines for alleged violations of health and safety protocols. She expressed that law enforcement should have instead focused on complementing the already extensive COVID-19 mitigation efforts of drivers and operators,⁵⁹ which are often made at their own expense, in order to truly and more effectively carry out their mandate to keep the riding public safe during the pandemic. They should have also expected that the continued shortage of available options for mobility was bound to make the enforcement of health and safety protocols difficult, considering the higher volume of passengers relative to the available means of public transport. Bendaña pointed out that commuters, forced by their circumstances to avail of the immediately available means of transport, are sometimes the ones who knowingly violate protocols and insist on riding jeepneys despite overcrowding or failing to comply with face-mask and face-shield requirements.

Bendaña's account and insights are consistent with public outrage on the news that jeepney drivers were excessively fined not for their failure to carry out protocols immediately pertaining to their own operation but for their passengers' failure to comply with

58 Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), Memorandum Circular No. 2020-026, 30 June 2020.

59 Aside from preparations prior to their operation, such as undergoing temperature checks, screening symptoms, disinfecting vehicles, installing of impermeable barriers, providing footbaths, and implementing thermal screening for boarding passengers, jeepney drivers also still had to contend with enforcing health and safety protocols. These measures include physical distancing and the wearing of face masks and face shields among passengers within their vehicles, all while plying their routes and collecting fares.

health and safety protocols.⁶⁰ Social media posts called out the bigger fines charged against jeepney drivers who were simply trying to earn a living, as compared to fines against those who willfully disregard protocols to attend social gatherings. It was pointed out that such fines are comparatively greater burdens for jeepney operators, drivers, and passengers. Netizens also sympathized with the already difficult job of drivers when multitasking between driving and collecting fares. They lamented the fact that they now also had to closely monitor each of their passengers' compliance with health and safety protocols. Others questioned the basis for the government's policy on requiring face shields, as well as the unnecessary crackdown on TPUJs despite being relatively well-ventilated, open-air vehicles.

The abovementioned accounts of excessive restriction and punitive treatment against lower- or nonpriority transport sectors (i.e., pedicabs, motorcycles, TPUJs), which are traditionally composed of operators, drivers, and passengers from lower socioeconomic classes, may be explained through Hapal's⁶¹ characterization of the Duterte administration's pandemic response as having "securitized" the pandemic. This approach is simultaneously produced and justified by the *pasaway*⁶² archetype. The *pasaway* archetype, which arguably includes the discriminated nonpriority transport sectors, is traditionally based on preexisting class prejudices and has alarmingly evolved to encompass those who dissent against prevailing government policies and practices. The nonpriority transport sectors were branded as *pasaways*. They

60 Catalina Ricci Madarang, "Criticisms Vs Higher Fine Slapped on Jeepney Drivers Over Face Shield, Mask Policy Violations," *Interaksyon*, 17 February 2021, <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/politics-issues/2021/02/17/185691/criticisms-vs-higher-fine-slapped-on-jeepney-drivers-over-face-shield-mask-policy-violations/>

61 Karl Hapal, "The Philippines' COVID-19 Response: Securitising the Pandemic and Disciplining the Pasaway," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 40, no. 2 (2021): 224–44. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1868103421994261>

62 "Pasaway" in Tagalog refers to behavior that is "uncontrollable, contrarian, hardheaded, stubborn, in such a way as to merit reprimand." In the current context, however, such behavior appears rational and understandable. "Pasaway," Tagalog Lang, accessed 6 November 2022, <https://www.tagaloglang.com/pasaway/>

were framed as people who embody and perpetuate the enemy, the otherwise invisible COVID-19 virus, in a war that the government claims to be absolutely necessary for the protection of the Filipino people's welfare. These transport sectors have thus received the brunt of the government's draconian COVID-19 response in its supposed attempt to protect law-abiding Filipinos. It must be noted that, similar to Hapal's analysis of the pasaway, the discrimination and harsh treatment against nonpriority transport sectors often appear baseless and unfounded: this is belied by the abovementioned accounts from those who belong to the concerned transport sectors themselves, from various experts and professional organizations, and from the general public.

Natividad's description of the government's COVID-19 response also aligns with Hapal's characterizations. He explains the public's reluctance to take public transportation, particularly bus services in central and southern Mindanao. Natividad points to the government's preference in employing militaristic strategies, such as imposing community lockdowns and curfews, setting up several checkpoints, and deploying of uniformed personnel in order to control people, if not instill fear among them. By highlighting the supposed threat and risks that pasaway among society may bring, state forces effectively divert attention away from the shortcomings of government in employing health- and welfare-related solutions, such as the procurement and administration of vaccines to attain herd immunity and the provision of financial assistance.

The plight of transport workers correlates with the discrimination suffered by export processing zones (EPZ) workers, education employees and the labor force as a whole during the pandemic. Garment workers in the Mactan, Cebu EPZ endured numerous labor rights violations, ranging from discrimination against pregnant workers and hypertensive employees to outright harassment by superiors, union busting by employers and repression by security personnel. Employers and the government were involved

in the breach of labor rights.⁶³ Likewise, academic and staff employees in colleges and universities faced unfair treatment from school administrations, resulting in wage cuts, job losses, heavy workloads, suspension in collective bargaining negotiations, and inability to access justice due to glaring loopholes in the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) department orders.⁶⁴ These same government issuances infringed upon the rights and welfare of workers in other sectors and industries. The working class experienced harm from the double whammy of employers disrespecting labor rights amidst the pandemic, and of DOLE issuances that unfairly disadvantaged wage laborers. Worse, workers asserting their right to strike, protest, and assemble were subjected to arrests and dispersals by state authorities.⁶⁵

Decent Work Deficits

The lack of public consultation and the government's discriminatory policies and practices against those from the public transportation sector in general, even further against some of its more specific subsectors, immediately and significantly resulted in the loss of livelihood and income opportunities.

Mata, Natividad, Pangan, Bendaña, and Dimalanta all reported the loss of jobs, followed by a severe reduction in income, as some of the primary concerns of the transportation sector during the pandemic. Indeed, the initial total ban on the operation of public transportation completely deprived most transport workers of their primary livelihood, which often only pays on a day-to-day basis. Speaking for the

63 Benjamin Velasco and Judy Ann C. Miranda, "COVID-Related Discrimination of Workers in the Mactan Export Processing Zone during the Pandemic," Forthcoming, UP CIDS.

64 Josephine E. Prudente and Benjamin B. Velasco, "Impact of COVID-19 on Education Workers and Union Responses," Forthcoming, UP CIDS.

65 Velasco, Benjamin, "[OPINION] Manggagawa naman: The labor movement's COVID response," Rappler, 9 April 2021. <https://www.rappler.com/voices/thought-leaders/opinion-manggagawa-naman-labor-movement-covid-response/>

pedicab drivers of Sitio San Roque, Dimalanta detailed how their daily income has drastically declined from PHP 500–600, prepandemic, to only PHP 60–400 under the ECQ. Considering a PHP 400 estimated daily expense for food and water alone, the decline in income resulted in zero daily profit for pedicab drivers, forcing them to borrow money to meet their daily basic needs. The circumstances of those from the TPUJ subsector during the suspension of their operations were not so different. Drivers and operators, lacking their primary source of income, were forced to beg for money and support on the streets. Bendaña shared that income remained insufficient even when TPUs were eventually allowed to operate. Passenger capacity limits and the persistence of the boundary system even during the pandemic have continued to limit their daily earnings. The suffering brought by the deprivation of daily income was further made frustrating by the prolonged, painstakingly slow, and uncertain normalization of public transport operations despite subsequent transitions to less restrictive community lockdowns in some areas.

Even transport workers for PUBs, who are afforded fixed wage rates under DOLE Order No. 118, were still affected by the shortage of passengers. Operators and transport workers in Central and Southern Mindanao were particularly affected. According to Natividad, his colleagues received reduced income due to the smaller performance-based component of their wages. This aspect of their pay depends on ridership and revenues, or profitability. Natividad also shared that many of his colleagues have already resigned from their company because it was unable to provide sufficient wages for a larger workforce due to sustained limited operations.

All resource persons from the transport subsectors equally recognized the government's failure to effectively provide financial and in-kind subsidies, which could have mitigated the income deficits brought about by their own restrictive policies on public transportation. Angie Mata narrated the experiences of NCTU member jeepney drivers from the province of Cebu. She shared that their members received no financial and in-kind assistance from the

national government. While LGUs extended some assistance, it took some time before it was effectively distributed. Don Pangan added that there was no clear policy on providing financial or in-kind support for drivers of motorcycle taxis who were not able to operate for months—from March to November 2020. As to the more formal sectors of the industry, it seems that little support was provided for transportation companies. Natividad shared that members of their union were able to receive some form of cash assistance from their employer, but this was a one-time benefit. It was also relatively smaller than the assistance that their union, through a mutual aid fund program, was able to extend.

Bendaña and Benjamin Velasco of the Center for Labor and Grassroots Initiatives (CLGI) of the University of the Philippines School of Labor and Industrial Relations (UP SOLAIR) both agreed that counterpart and sufficient financial and in-kind support should have accompanied government-imposed restrictions on mobility. Financial support was absolutely necessary for the well-being of those most vulnerable to, and most affected by, the pandemic. It would have also prevented people from leaving their homes to earn money for their basic needs, as Bendaña explained. Withholding aid is thus counterproductive to efforts against COVID-19, particularly as restrictions to mobility will eventually be disregarded. Velasco added that cash and in-kind assistance from the Philippine government was relatively erratic and spotty compared to other similarly situated countries. The distribution of cash assistance was fraught with irregularities⁶⁶ and delays.⁶⁷ Assistance was also not sustained, which is necessary to effectively respond to peoples' needs in a prolonged pandemic with recurring cycles of lockdowns. While emergency cash subsidies and similar programs were made available by law

66 Michelle Abad, "What Went Wrong in 2020 COVID-19 'Ayuda,' Lessons Learned for 2021," Rappler, 8 April 2021, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/explainers/coronavirus-ayuda-government-aid-what-went-wrong-2020-lessons-learned-2021/>

67 "DSWD Admits Delay in COVID-19 Cash Aid Distribution to More Than Half of Target Beneficiaries," CNN Philippines, 22 April 2020, <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/22/cash-aid-distribution-delays.html>

during the first year of the pandemic in 2020 through *Bayanihan 1*⁶⁸ and *Bayanihan 2*,⁶⁹ there were no allocations for unconditional cash grants in the 2021 national budget. Therefore, agencies such as the DSWD were left with their prepandemic programs and allocations to deal with the persisting public health crisis.⁷⁰ The COVID-19 pandemic also revealed issues regarding the employment status of members of the transportation sector. Central to these discussions were motorcycle taxi riders, delivery riders, and transport network vehicle service drivers (TNVS), who are all part of the gig economy and whose employment status continues to be debated. As the DOLE struggled to provide clear-cut categorizations or guidelines for the protection of these workers,⁷¹ legislation for for-hire motorcycles⁷² and other transport workers in the gig economy⁷³ seemed to have remained at a standstill (Footnotes 72 and 73 are in the next page).

68 Republic Act No. 11469, “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act,” 24 March 2020. Sections 4(c) and 4(cc) of RA 11469 provided for emergency cash subsidies for low-income households for a period of two months and provided for the expansion and enhancement of the existing Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program (4Ps), respectively.

69 Republic Act No. 11494, “Bayanihan to Recover as One Act,” 11 September 2020. Section 4(f) of RA 11494 provided for (1) emergency subsidies for low-income households in (a) areas under granular lockdowns and (b) who were not yet granted but were otherwise qualified to receive cash subsidy under RA 11469, and for (2) unemployment or involuntary separation assistance for displaced workers due to COVID-19. Section 4(gg) specifically directs and empowers the DOTr to extend assistance in the form of subsidies and grants to critically impacted businesses in the transportation industry including transport cooperatives.

70 Aika Rey, “In Duterte’s 2021 Budget, Filipinos Are On Their Own,” Rappler, 29 September 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/filipinos-welfare-employment-education-duterte-2021-national-budget/>

71 Initial statements from DOLE, for example, categorized motorcycle delivery riders as workers under contracts of service without employer-employee relations. A later press advisory from DOLE clarified that employment status and thus the corresponding benefits and protections must still essentially be determined on a case-to-case basis. Revin Mikhael Ochave, “Motorcycle Delivery riders, More Essential Than Ever, Have Seen Job Security Elude Them,” BusinessWorld, 18 December 2020, <https://www.bworldonline.com/motorcycle-delivery-riders-more-essential-than-ever-have-seen-job-security-elude->

Linked to uncertainties on employment status are uncertainties on eligibility for protections granted by the Labor Code and other labor laws. These include, but are not limited to, regulations concerning minimum wage, overtime pay, night shift differential, separation pay, occupational safety and health standards, and social benefits. Velasco remarked that transport workers generally belong to the informal sector and are often not covered by the aforementioned protections. These protections could have provided workers some peace of mind and a degree of relatively certain economic relief during the pandemic.

Motorcycle riders, Pangan mentioned, fear the possibility of losing their jobs at any time, with no guarantee of benefits or assistance should they lose their source of income. Concerns include the continued fall in motorcycle riders' earnings, as the competition intensifies between mobile application companies that offer ride-hailing and delivery services. Without minimum wage protections, a rider may end up taking home lower daily pays even after having taken more rides. They are hailed as "lockdown heroes" for the vital role that they have played and continue to fulfill in light of limited mobility. However, in the absence of clear policy directives and provisions for government protections, motorcycle delivery riders are forced to personally deal with uncertainties and risks in their line of work.

them/; DOLE, Labor Advisory No. 14, Series of 2021, "Working Conditions of Delivery Riders in Food Delivery and Courier Activities," 23 July 2021, <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/labor-advisory-no-14-21-working-conditions-of-delivery-riders-in-food-delivery-and-courier-activities/>; "Delivery riders protected by labor law, contract – DOLE," DOLE, 27 July 2021, <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/delivery-riders-protected-by-labor-law-contract-dole/>

72 Senate Bill No. 1341, "An Act Allowing and Regulating the Use of Motorcycles as Public Utility Vehicles . . ." 12 February 2020. http://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lis/bill_res.aspx?congress=18&q=SBN-1341. Senate Bill No. 1341 remained pending for second reading since 18 February 2020, and even then, such legislation only pertains to regulatory and franchising matters.

73 It was only in 2021 that a resolution was filed to investigate, in aid of legislation, the unfair working conditions of those in the gig economy. Senate Resolution No. 732, "Resolution Calling for an Investigation in Aid of Legislation into Providing Employment Benefits and Other Forms of Social Protection for Workers in the 'Gig Economy,'" 25 May 2021. https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lis/bill_res.aspx?congress=18&q=SRN-732

TPUJ drivers and operators, whose group is likewise composed of people in the informal sector, face the same predicament with regards to social protection. This is especially true for TPUJ operators and drivers who have yet to consolidate their franchises. They have no resources to upgrade their fleets to comply with modernization requirements, and they are still subject to the “boundary system.”⁷⁴ Bendaña also pointed to jeepney drivers’ extremely long working hours,⁷⁵ which are necessary so they are able to take home income sufficient for their daily expenses during the pandemic. Insufficient and irregular income from plying routes at reduced capacity, while still being compelled to meet and exceed a boundary and facing additional expenses for franchise consolidation and fleet upgrading, makes compliance with registration and contribution requirements for social protection programs extremely difficult for TPUJs. It is thus least prioritized by the TPUJs.

Without clear and sufficient protections, workers in the transportation sector are extremely vulnerable to workplace risks and uncertainties, which are arguably more prevalent during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aside from the ever-present risk of contracting the virus, more frequent suspension of operations, business closures, and the discriminatory or unfair treatment of employees/contractors by employers/contractees and even by law enforcement authorities all contribute to the overall higher risks to transport workers’ livelihoods. Motorcycle delivery riders, for example, even when largely claimed as being individual contractors, are usually subject to customer rating policies laid down by companies running the ride and courier service-hailing applications. Negative ratings from customers ultimately affect a transport worker’s ability to use and earn through the service-hailing application. Riders report that temporary suspension from

74 An informal arrangement between jeepney drivers and operators where the driver’s daily income will depend on how much they earn over and above the “boundary,” a predetermined amount intended for the operator.

75 Twenty-one working hours for a take-home pay of PHP 800.

work is the usual consequence of getting bad reviews, Pangan shared. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that delivery riders are made more prone to negative reviews because of delays and interruptions to their service, as when they are held up at checkpoints and/or wrongly apprehended by law enforcers despite rightfully being authorized persons outside residence (APORs). Pangan added that some motorcycle riders have also reported not having received any benefits after having been laid off by service-hailing application companies due to the suspension of operations.

Transport workers from the PUB sector, while under relatively more formal employment arrangements, were not completely spared from uncertainties and abuses in the workplace. Natividad doubted whether the DOLE Department Order No. 118 is actually and properly implemented and enforced. He shared that probably only a few bus companies in the country faithfully comply with that department order's provisions on security of tenure, work and rest hours, fixed wages, minimum benefits, and occupational health and safety. Natividad also shared that some companies have turned to work redundancy to justify the practice of firing conductors and having their duties and responsibilities carried out by bus drivers instead. They point to the fact that there are fewer passengers during the pandemic to downplay the increased workload bus drivers are forced to bear.

It is worth mentioning that accounts of experiences and difficulties from representatives of the different transportation subsectors also point to decent work deficits among workers outside the sector. An example is the increased risk of contracting COVID-19 among low-income commuters who are cramped inside public transportation terminals, and who insist, even when against COVID-19 prevention policies, to board public vehicles that are already exceeding the recommended carrying capacity in light of low vehicle availability. These workers will have to personally risk their health and shoulder medical expenses in the absence of sufficient

health benefits should they ever contract the virus as they travel to and from their workplaces. Worker-commuters who choose to walk to their workplaces also suffer from losing valuable hours for rest and reproductive work without any corresponding compensation from their employers.

Difficulties in Organizing

Under normal circumstances, transportation subsector groups such as Kagulong, NCTU, and Move as One Coalition undertake a wide repertoire of organized responses in order to solicit and demand responses from government authorities and to effectively broadcast their interests, concerns, and advocacies. These organized responses were limited and were challenging to carry out with the risk brought by COVID-19 and with the restrictions to mobility and physical gatherings. The government's antagonistic and militaristic approach was opposed by its detractors and staunch critics, and by those who simply pointed out unmet expectations and attempted to register their pressing needs and concerns. It also harmed those who undertook community-based efforts to fill the absence of public services, which has made organizing not only difficult but also dangerous⁷⁶ for various groups to carry out.

Mata noted that NCTU has regularly carried out organized activities before the pandemic to facilitate and advocate for a better and inclusive transportation industry and for a just transition amidst transportation modernization. She expressed that it has been difficult to organize amidst the pandemic, with their members needing immediate assistance in the face of repeated lockdowns. In Sitio San Roque, community efforts, while successfully launched

76 Meg Adonis, "6 Jeepney Drivers Protesting Loss of Livelihood Face Raps," *Inquirer.net*, 4 June 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1285949/6-jeepney-drivers-protesting-loss-of-livelihood-face-raps>; Rambo Talabong, "10 Feeding Program Volunteers Arrested in

and organized, were undermined and suppressed⁷⁷ through police intimidation and arrests. Despite these challenges, however, groups from the various transportation subsectors carried on with other efforts in lobbying and engaging with various government agencies, and in their rights claiming and advocacy work.

Human-Rights-Based Approach: Summary of COVID-19 Experiences

The extent of the issues encountered by key stakeholders of the transportation sector begs the question as to whether their overall welfare and more importantly, their fundamental rights, were protected, preserved, or even at all considered in the formulation and implementation of the governments' COVID-19 response. The government's seeming disregard for the rights and welfare of transport workers and the commuting public during a global health emergency calls for an assessment using a human-rights-based approach (HRBA). It is indeed precisely during such emergencies when fundamental rights are especially at risk of being sidelined⁷⁸ (see next page). There are several conceptions of what a human rights-based approach is, but these substantially converge along several lines, despite some early divergence and inconsistencies in

Marikina," Rappler, 1 May 2020, <https://www.rappler.com/nation/259615-feeding-program-volunteers-arrested-marikina-may-2020/>; Mariejo Ramos, "QC Police Arrest 18 for Quarantine Violations," Inquirer.net, 3 May 2020, <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1268650/qc-police-arrest-18-for-quarantine-violations>; Barnaby Lo, "COVID Food Pantry Operators Draw Accusations of Communism in the Philippines," CBS News, 26 April 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/philippines-covid-community-food-pantry-accusations-communism-red-tagging/>

77 Franco Luna, "'Conducting dialogue': Cops Raid San Roque Community Kitchens, Tear Protest Materials," Philstar Global, 6 April 2020, <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/04/06/2005868/conducting-dialogue-cops-raid-san-roque-community-kitchens-tear-protest-materials>; "21 Protesters Demanding Food Aid arrested in Quezon City," CNN Philippines, 1 April 2020, <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/1/quezon-city-protesters-arrested-.html>

practice.⁷⁹ Prominent in later HRBA literature and practice are three points of common understanding of its characteristics that relate to development. The HRBA was birthed from interagency workshops of the United Nations (UN).⁸⁰ This approach is comprised of programs and policies that primarily aim to (i.e., not just incidentally) (1) contribute to the realization of human rights; (2) that are guided by human rights standards (i.e., human rights, *per se*) and principles;⁸¹ and (3) that recognize the relation between and roles of “rights-holders” and “duty-bearers.” The former have valid claims and the latter have correlative obligations based on human rights. Both parties are empowered to effectively claim their rights or fulfill their obligations respectively.⁸²

It is apparent from the abovementioned issues encountered by the various transportation subsectors that the government’s COVID-19 response for the transportation industry fails an HRBA assessment. Against the earlier three points of common understanding alone, it can be seen that the government’s COVID-19 transportation policies endanger, if not violate, several fundamental rights of transport workers and commuters. These include their freedom of movement and residence; their right against arbitrary deprivation of property;

78 António Guterres, *The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights* (United Nations, 2020), 5–6, https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The_Highest_Aspiration_A_Call_To_Action_For_Human_Right_English.pdf

79 Morten Broberg and Hans-Otto Sano, “Strengths and Weaknesses in a Human-Rights-Based Approach to International Development—An Analysis of a Rights-Based Approach to Development Assistance Based in Practical Experiences,” *International Journal of Human Rights* 22, no. 5 (2018): 664–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2017.1408591>

80 United Nations Development Group (UNDG), *The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies*, 2003, https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/6959-The_Human_Rights_Based_Approach_to_Development_Cooperation_Towards_a_Common_Understanding_among_UN.pdf. Cited thereafter as HRBA Common Understanding.

81 UNDG. Principles of (1) “universality and inalienability”; (2) “indivisibility”; (3) “interdependence and interrelatedness”; (4) “equality and non-discrimination”; (5) “participation and inclusion”; and (6) “accountability and rule of law.”

82 UNDG, 2.

their “freedom of opinion and expression without interference;” their “freedom to peacefully assemble;” their “right to take part in government;” their “right to equal access to public service;” their “right to social security;” their “right to work under just and favorable conditions;” their “right to be protected against unemployment;” their “right to rest and leisure and to reasonable limitations to working hours;” their “right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being;” and their “right to security in the event of unemployment or lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control.”⁸³

The wide array of fundamental rights and protections affected by the government’s COVID-19 response in the transportation sector emerges from, and simultaneously produces, issues in terms of adhering to the human rights standards under the HRBA. The governments’ top-down policies and discriminatory and punitive measures point to a glaring disregard for the “principles of non-discrimination, participation and inclusion.”⁸⁴ The “principles of indivisibility, interdependence, and interrelatedness”⁸⁵ seem to have also been disregarded; the government lent no support to address decent work deficits that resulted from COVID-19 policies and practices. Departure from the first two characteristics of an HRBA also inevitably leads to issues between “rights-holders” and “duty-bearers,” impacting their relations. The violation and disregard of the fundamental rights of rights-holders, and the failure or refusal of duty-bearers to incorporate human rights standards in the exercise of their powers, run counter to the conceived ideal: rights-holders are empowered and duty-bearers are bound or obligated to respect, protect, and fulfill human rights mandates.

83 United Nations (UN), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948, arts. 14, 15, 19, 20–25, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english>

84 UNDG, HRBA Common Understanding, 2.

85 UNDG. Principles of (1) “universality and inalienability”; (2) “indivisibility”; (3) “interdependence and interrelatedness”; (4) “equality and non-discrimination”; (5) “participation and inclusion”; and (6) “accountability and rule of law.”

In keeping with an HRBA, the UN identified tools to help evaluate human rights considerations in its own COVID-19 responses. These include the “ten key indicators for monitoring human rights implications of COVID-19” in its socioeconomic response framework (SERF).⁸⁶ Supplementing the SERF is a checklist for an HRBA to socioeconomic country responses to COVID-19.⁸⁷ While these tools primarily serve as internal guides for the UN’s humanitarian and socioeconomic responses, they prove to be useful tools in monitoring government responses. It essentially operationalizes several aspects of the HRBA, more importantly in the context of the implementation of COVID-19 responses.

A cursory evaluation shows that the government’s COVID-19 response related to the transportation sector fails in five out of the ten key indicators immediately included in the UN’s SERF. Based on the abovementioned accounts from transport workers, the government fell short in identifying and “mapping of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups” and adopting “special measures for their protection” (Indicator 1).⁸⁸ It engaged in censorship and harassment against whistleblowers and critics within the transportation industry (Indicator 5). The government failed to support and “ensure occupational health and safety” of transport workers in terms of providing for “adequate protective equipment [and] reasonable working hours”⁸⁹ etc. (Indicator 7, see next page for footnote). It also did not ensure access to sufficient social protection, including the provision of opportunities for a basic income (Indicator 8). With

86 UN, A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, April 2020. <https://laopdr.un.org/en/download/15539/54660>. Cited thereafter as SERF.

87 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), Checklist for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19, July 2020, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Events/COVID-19/Checklist_HR-Based_Approach_Socio-Economic_Country_Responses_COVID-19.pdf. Cited thereafter as HRBA Checklist.

88 UN, SERF, 41.

the lack of “alternatives to deprivation of liberty,”⁹⁰ the government instead resorted to detention to force compliance with restrictions to mobility and overcrowding (Indicator 9).

Still, according to the experiences of those from the various transport subsectors, the government continues to fail in several items of the “Non-Exhaustive List of Human Rights Considerations”⁹¹ of the UN’s checklist for an HRBA to socioeconomic country responses to COVID-19. In terms of “protecting health services and systems” (Pillar 1 of UN’s SERF),⁹² the government did not sufficiently involve the transport subsectors’ communities in the design and implementation of health responses (Item 7 of Pillar 1); and did not provide support to reduce possible health-related “out-of-pocket payments” through “expanding health insurance schemes or . . . social assistance programs” (Item 9 of Pillar 1).⁹³

In terms of “social protection and basic services” (Pillar 2 of UN’s SERF),⁹⁴ the government took no clear measures to provide “universal coverage of all basic goods and services” with transparency and without discrimination (Item 1 of Pillar 2),⁹⁵ or even to provide “targeted protection measures” for “relevant at-risk groups” such as the transportation sector (Item 2 of Pillar 2).⁹⁶ The development and implementation of social protection measures for the transportation sector were not visible or participatory (Item 3 of Pillar 2) since social protection benefits remain “administratively and physically”⁹⁷ inaccessible to them (Item 4 of Pillar 2)(See footnote 96 and 97 in

89 UN, SERF, 44.

90 UN, SERF, 45.

91 OHCHR, UNDP, and UNSDG, HRBA Checklist, 14–19.

92 UN, SERF, 14.

93 UN, SERF, 14.

94 UN, SERF, 15.

95 UN, SERF, 15.

the next page). In terms of “economic responses” (Pillar 3),⁹⁸ no clear measures were taken to “ensure the occupational health and safety”⁹⁹ of transport workers when they were eventually allowed to operate (Item 1 of Pillar 3). Similarly, no “measures . . . to protect jobs, pensions . . . health, and social benefits”¹⁰⁰ of transport workers were undertaken (Item 3 of Pillar 3). These were instead further put at risk with the continued implementation of the PUVMP.

Adverse economic impacts of COVID-19-related responses, such as the suspension of public modes of transportation, were belatedly and insufficiently addressed or mitigated (Item 4 of Pillar 3). Wage subsidies, “tax relief . . . and supplementary social security and income protection programmes”¹⁰¹ (Item 6 of Pillar 3) were also either belatedly provided or insufficient, if not completely absent. In terms of “social cohesion and community resilience”¹⁰² (Pillar 5 of UN’s SERF),¹⁰³ accounts point to the government using the pandemic as an opportunity to forward interests (e.g., the PUVMP, quashing dissent, shrinking civic space, banning peaceful protests, etc.) other than those legitimately for public health purposes (Item 1 of Pillar 5). No clear assessment of emergency measures was documented, and the duration of these measures was unclear (Item 2 of Pillar 5). And while the Philippine Commission on Human Rights (CHR) serves to ensure that the government conducts itself in compliance with the principles of human rights, the office seems insufficient with respect

96 UN, SERF, 15.

97 UN, SERF, 15.

98 UN, SERF, 16.

99 UN, SERF, 16.

100 UN, SERF, 16.

101 UN, SERF, 14.

102 UN, SERF, 15.

103 Accounts from transport workers and other members of the transportation sector did not capture or directly refer to any macroeconomic responses (Pillar 4 of the UN’s SERF) listed in the UN’s checklist. Hence, no reference to such Pillar is made herein.

to the scale of lockdowns and curfews implemented nationwide, along with the punitive implementation of restrictions (Item 3 of Pillar 5). Consultation and participation of the “most affected groups” and those most “at risk of being left behind”¹⁰⁴ were either absent or insufficient as shown by top-down policies as earlier discussed (Items 6 and 7 of Pillar 5). Furthermore, as earlier mentioned, “civil society groups and human rights defenders”¹⁰⁵ were subject to threats and intimidation, supposedly as part of the lockdowns, curfews, social distancing, etc. that comprise the government’s anti-COVID-19 measures (Item 11 of Pillar 5).

An evaluation using a human-rights-based approach, taking into consideration the experiences and grievances of members of the public transportation subsectors, reveals an overall failure in the Philippine government’s COVID-19 response. Its top-down policies on mobility and transportation were not properly informed by circumstances on the ground and arguably enforced without consulting the most important stakeholders on the matter—transport workers and the commuting public. These birthed several issues in terms of the propriety and manner of implementation of specific policies and several other problems that were undeniably detrimental to the welfare of these supposed key stakeholders. The policies implemented to alleviate and address the immediate health risks brought by the pandemic instead exacerbated the conditions of key transportation stakeholders.

Transportation Subsectors’ Responses

Transport workers have been facing several problems and challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. These involve not only

104 OHCHR, UNDP, and UNSDG, HRBA Checklist, 18.

105 OHCHR, UNDP, and UNSDG, 18.

their livelihood but also the exercise of their rights to organize, direct their grievances to the government, and seek redress. They have resorted to a wide array of practices to address their respective predicaments. As Velasco commented, transport workers are not simply captives and victims. They have actively exercised agency to take control of, and improve, their situation. This is evidenced by the various lobbying, government engagement, rights claiming, advocacy, and empowerment activities that representatives from transport-worker and civil society groups have undertaken, sometimes even in the face of harassment and intimidation.

Lobbying and Government Engagement Activities

Accounts from the transportation subsector and civil society representatives reveal that continuous engagement and lobbying with different government agencies and instrumentalities are necessary to realize long-sought reliefs, protections, and ideals to better the situation of transport workers and the transportation industry in general.

Transport workers and civil society groups essentially exhaust all channels of engagement to achieve several different goals. For the Cebu chapter of NCTU, constant coordination and cooperation with implementing agencies are necessary to ensure and monitor the implementation of already existing programs. These programs are underpinned by laws and policies to provide goods, services, and benefits. Mata shared that through constant engagement with implementing agencies such as the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the DOLE, they were able to register 1,000 NCTU beneficiaries to the Tsuper Iskolar Program in 2020¹⁰⁶ (see next page). Mata argues that without such consistent engagement, the programs that should rightfully benefit stakeholders run the risk of not being implemented at all. The Cebu chapter of NTCU continues to engage the implementing agencies of the Tsuper Iskolar Program to ensure its continuation by 2021 and to hopefully

make more courses, such as dressmaking and caregiving, available to its beneficiaries. Other government-engagement activities of NCTU have also been effective. Mata shared that they were able to successfully lobby with Cebu City councilors for the return to operations of traditional jeepneys in the city.

For Pangan of Kagulong, engaging legislative and executive bodies is necessary. Motorcycle riders seek to institutionalize rules and policies that will not only regulate but also protect the rights of those who are part of the fledgling but rapidly growing gig economy. Among the successes of Kagulong's persistent engagement with the legislature are the filing of the Motorcycle-For-Hire Act and the App Workers' Welfare Act. Kagulong has also sought the commitment of the DOLE to issue a department order that may temporarily set rules and standards for delivery riders, and continue to negotiate for the creation of a technical working group to investigate their working conditions on the ground.

While definite and long-term policy standards are yet to be defined for those in the gig economy, Kagulong has been diligent in safeguarding the welfare of motorcycle riders by formally communicating their grievances and concerns to relevant government agencies. In light of the incident in the city of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan—where a motorcycle delivery rider was apprehended for simply delivering lugaw—Kagulong has written to and sought clarification from the IATF on the status of delivery riders under the

106 The Tsuper Iskolar program aims to capacitate stakeholders of the PUVMP through training and skills development. Its target beneficiaries include (a) persons displaced by the PUVMP, (b) stakeholders who opt to voluntarily exit the transportation industry, (c) those who opt to continue in the industry, (d) new stakeholders in the industry, (e) and family members or dependents of stakeholders up to the third degree of consanguinity or affinity. Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Circular 020, series of 2019, "Implementing Guidelines for the Scholarship Program of DOTr Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program," 28 February 2019, <https://intranet.tesda.gov.ph/circulariframe/DownloadFile/1000035807>

prevailing community quarantine classifications. This prompted the IATF to clarify that delivery riders are considered APORs and should not be apprehended because curfew hours and other restrictions do not apply to them. The IATF further clarified that motorcycle riders who do not deliver goods but need to pass through checkpoints to report to their respective workplaces should only be required to present a company ID in order to be allowed through.

Move as One Coalition places a premium on engaging the government early in the national budget deliberations. Bendaña explained that without a specific allocation for the transportation sector, it will most likely be difficult for transport workers and groups to be invited to, and effectively participate in, the legislation and policymaking processes. The implementation of the service contracting program during the COVID-19 pandemic, although leaving much to be desired, was made possible through Move as One Coalition's consistent involvement in budget deliberations. These deliberations led to a PHP 5.5 billion allocation for the program under the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act and a PHP 3 billion allocation under the 2021 General Appropriations Act.

Another practice from Move as One Coalition is engaging the government on issues and concerns with well-thought-out proposals already in hand. This strategy was applied as Move as One Coalition advocated for the service contracting program. Bendaña added, as an example, the proposed minimum health standards that they were able to prepare in coordination with key stakeholders, such as transport worker groups, academic engineering institutions, and commuters' groups. The government based its safety protocols on the coalition's proposal when it was finally convinced to allow public utility vehicles to resume operations. In preparing proposals for submission to, and consideration by, the government, but still in close coordination with these key stakeholders, Move as One Coalition essentially and effectively relays on-the-ground realities and concerns to budget and policymaking bodies.

In addition to the abovementioned strategies in engagement, Bendaña also shared that Move as One Coalition has also reached out specifically to LGUs to explain that transport workers and commuters, who are affected by issues related to the unjust PUV modernization program, are also their constituents. It is thus in their interest to assist in providing subsidies that will ensure a just and inclusive transition.

Meanwhile, the activities of Save San Roque Alliance highlight alternative practices outside official and formal engagements with the government. While conventional rallies are effective, especially when groups are essentially ignored and excluded by legislative and policymaking bodies, risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic make organizing and holding such activities extremely difficult. Save San Roque Alliance thus innovated their practices accordingly. They utilized online platforms to hold selfie protests and to disseminate content documenting the injustices and difficulties experienced by the urban poor. Community members of Sitio San Roque have also resorted to bringing their grievances and concerns directly to smaller but immediately accessible fronts such as the barangay and city halls, effectively opening democratic spaces even during the pandemic.

Formalization of Transport Workers

A common aspiration for all transport worker subsectors and groups is the formalization of their employment status. This is immediately visible in the calls of the jeepney sector, including NCTU as well as the Move as One Coalition, for the institutionalization of service contracting as a replacement to the age-old boundary system. Furthermore, NCTU frames this transition to formality as an integral part of a just transition for the jeepney sector as part of the mitigation of climate change and traffic congestion, which are the avowed aims of the PUVMP.

In service contracting, the government engages PUV operators and drivers to provide transportation services to the public, and

compensates them accordingly. Their pay depends on the routes they ply or the distance they often travel, regardless of the number of passengers they transport. For Bendaña, service contracting helps guarantee a fixed take-home pay for drivers; it protects drivers from the worst effects of severe traffic conditions and fluctuating fuel prices. This income-security aspect of service contracting mitigates the informal character of employment usually endured by jeepney drivers. According to Mata, NCTU's partnership with a local company in Danao, Cebu, where NCTU members were contracted to provide shuttle services for its employees, pioneered service contracting in the Philippines. Move as One Coalition has also already attempted to deploy a matching service to refer passengers and jeepney drivers to each other during the pandemic even before the implementation of a government-run service contracting program. Unfortunately, this effort was not realized because of significant delays in the approval of the return of operations of their partner jeepney drivers. Move as One Coalition has since then been at the forefront of advocating for the budget allocation for, and the immediate implementation of, the government's service contracting program.

A service contracting program may help address informality within the public utility jeepney subsector by providing a degree of income security. However, Bendaña believes that the next step towards further formalizing the employment status of jeepney drivers is to ensure their access to social security. This may be challenging in the face of high projected costs that current PUVMP demands from jeepney drivers and operators. While service contracting may provide some income security, this may easily be offset by expenses required for modernization.

Move as One Coalition thus calls for a just transition in the process of modernization. Adequate support and consideration of circumstances must be given to existing members of the industry. As Bendaña clarifies, the Move as One Coalition does not oppose modernization; the group actually shares the same aspiration for

a more efficient, effective, and sustainable public transportation system. The advocacy for just transition includes wider demands for greater government subsidies to cover costs for fleet modernization and for an extension of the period for franchise consolidation. Consistent lobbying by groups, including Move as One Coalition, has helped increase the initial PHP 80,000 subsidy amount committed by the government to PHP 160,000.¹⁰⁷ Bendaña shared that they would continue to lobby for a PHP 500,000 subsidy, or 25 percent of the price of a modern jeepney unit, as the minimum for a just and manageable transition.

Employing inclusive policies in the transition to a modern transportation system will ensure that transport workers can avail of social security programs. This can be made possible by further stabilizing their income, and through heightened assurance that operators and drivers will properly consolidate into formal organizations. Cooperatives, for instance, may be more effective in maintaining good employer–employee relations and in properly enforcing their reciprocal rights and obligations.

In line with the abovementioned calls for just transition in the jeepney subsector are the aspirations of the motorcycle and pedicab subsectors for a more inclusive transportation system. Kagulong calls for the immediate recognition of workers in the gig economy through clear policies that will guide and protect their operations. Similarly, Dimalanta, on behalf of the pedicab drivers of Sitio San Roque, advocates for the promotion of a more people-oriented policy direction and mindset. In people-centered policies, smaller nonmotorized modes of transportation are properly appreciated as integral to smaller communities. They are afforded adequate consideration and protections, instead of being treated as mere nuisances to the bigger motorized forms of transport.

107 DOTr, Department Order No. 2018-016, “Guidelines on the Availment of the Equity Subsidy under the Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program,” 6 August 2018, <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/10/91262>

Rights Claiming and Empowerment

As ongoing efforts for the increased formalization of the transportation industry progress, transport groups have also diligently carried out efforts to secure and claim their rights amid still prevailing uncertainties and threats, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the face of continued discriminatory treatment by law enforcement authorities, Kagulong has empowered its members. It holds weekly human rights training sessions as part of its advocacy known as the four “Ks”: *karapatan* (rights), *kapakanan* (welfare), *kaligtasan* (safety), and *kalikasan* (nature/environment). Kagulong also plans to set up a grievance hotline named Bantay Kagulong. Through this platform, riders can report violations of their rights and the wrongful implementation of COVID-19 policies, especially in areas under ECQ. The Save San Roque Alliance has also helped make the community more aware of their own situation and of their capability to deal with, and address, this issue. Dimalanta shared that community members now take matters, such as the continued development and protection of their community, into their own hands.

To complement rights-claiming activities, Kagulong, NCTU, and the Save San Roque Alliance have also extended support to their members and the communities they serve. They help organize activities that will empower them to meet their most pressing needs. Community-based efforts, like community kitchens, community pantries, and an agroecological food garden, were central to providing the sustenance needed by Sitio San Roque residents. The alliance also formed a health response team to disseminate more effectively information and increase awareness about COVID-19. NCTU has also assisted its members in creating cooperatives to comply with the franchise consolidation requirement under the PUVMP; it further helps members by providing them with skills to effectively manage these cooperatives. Kagulong aims to do the same—assist

riders to organize their own cooperatives—for motorcycle riders once legislation and more specific policies on their operations have been laid down.

Also noteworthy are the efforts by and foresight of members of the Yellow Bus Line Employees Union to establish a mutual aid fund. It was able to provide employees cash assistance during the COVID-19 lockdowns. While the fund may not be sufficient to see all employees through the pandemic, this effort was a source of pride for the union members. They had been able to provide subsidies greater than those that they received from their employer. The union has mitigated the worst economic effects of the pandemic on its own. But it continues to call for immediate and corresponding actions and programs from the DOTr and the DOLE to address the loss of income and jobs in the transport industry.

The welfare and lobby activities of transport workers' associations fit with the pattern of organized labor's COVID-19 response. As part of solidarity, trade unions and labor groups launched efforts to distribute *ayuda* (literally, help/support) to their own members and even to other workers outside their ranks. In the face of widespread employer abuses and discriminatory government issuances, organized labor petitioned and demanded for redress and repeal. In a few instances, workers' groups were successful. However, in most cases, organized labor failed to rollback discriminatory policies implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰⁸

Summary and Recommendations

Accounts from the various transportation subsectors and civil society groups show the resilience of one of the most marginalized and disadvantaged sectors during the pandemic. But more importantly, it reveals the willingness and full intent of the marginalized and disadvantaged to participate in policymaking and implementation—

108 Velasco, "Manggagawa naman."

processes that greatly impact their livelihood, dignity, and security, especially under crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. The accounts also show that excluding these groups from policymaking processes does not deter and disable them from attempting to improve their circumstances. It instead forces them to amplify their calls for more representation and opportunities for participation. It also urges them to resort to, and explore, several alternative channels and practices through which they can attain the goals that they had originally hoped to achieve through more formal and conventional channels.

The vicissitudes and difficulties of life during the pandemic, and the discriminatory policies they experienced, led transport workers to formulate and innovate collective responses. These included grassroots organizing, seeking allies, advocating demands, engaging with authorities, and launching protests. There were varying degrees of success in these endeavors, but they all revealed that transport workers exercised agency to resolve their grievances and did not become passive victims.

The paper makes the following policy recommendations, which take as their starting point the transport workers' own experiences and demands:

1. *The good-faith implementation of social dialogue with transport workers in sectors such as jeepney, bus, pedicab, food delivery, and courier apps.* The Constitution, in Article XIII (Social Justice and Human Rights), Section 16, clearly mandates consultation and dialogue as a prerequisite to the formulation of policies affecting the general public and particularly workers. However, the practice is evidently wanting.
2. *The application of the just transition framework to the jeepney modernization program.* The modernization program was rationalized as a measure to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, aside from reducing traffic

congestion. It has, however, been resisted due to the perceived aim of phasing out the traditional jeepneys and the resulting loss of livelihood for operators and drivers. Implementing the modernization program amidst the pandemic clearly violates the tenets of a just transition. Just transition aims at improving the living and working conditions of affected workers, while policies to mitigate climate change are implemented.

3. *Lengthening the transition period for traditional jeepneys and increasing the government subsidy for the purchase of modern jeepneys.* Groups have been demanding that the subsidy be raised to PHP 500,000 per vehicle, up from the present PHP 160,000, given that the minimum cost of a modern jeepney is around PHP 1 million. Jeepney operators and drivers also need time to form transport cooperatives and run them efficiently as part of the consolidation mandated in the modernization program.
4. *The institutionalization of the service contracting scheme as the new normal in public transportation for both buses and jeepneys.* It must be transformed from its present limited modality as a form of ayuda/assistance. Service contracting will abolish the boundary system in both buses and jeepneys. This will lead to more formal employment relations that can guarantee decent work and social protection.
5. *The full implementation of the rules mandating fixed salaries for bus drivers and conductors in place of the boundary system.* This 2012 reform was questioned by bus companies but the Supreme Court decided in 2019 to junk the appeal. This is a crucial step forward in ensuring decent work and social protection for bus workers. The DOLE must strictly enforce this reform toward decent work.
6. *The recognition of the value of nonmotorized informal transport such as pedicabs, and implementation of just systems that acknowledge the right to livelihood of pedicab*

drivers and operators. This may take the form of establishing formally recognized pedicab routes; setting up pedicab terminals; including pedicab associations in transport planning; and stopping indiscriminate and arbitrary confiscations of pedicabs by the MMDA and other local government instrumentalities.

7. *The formation of a technical working group with representation from workers engaged in food delivery, courier, and ride-hailing apps.* This remains an unimplemented DOLE resolution that was drafted during consultations with both labor and employers in the run-up to Labor Day 2019. The eruption of more protests by app riders over pay cuts and working conditions make the convening of the technical working group even more urgent.

8. *The resolution of the employment status of platform workers in food delivery, courier services, and ride-hailing platforms.* Jurisprudence or legislation in other countries has already resolved that app workers are employees and that their freelancer or independent contractor status is disguised employment. The recent decision of an arbiter of the National Labor Relations Commission that Foodpanda riders in Davao are regular employees¹⁰⁹ paves the way forward in the resolution of this dispute. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives must enact pending bills that provide for recognition of employee-employer relationship based on the four-fold test and economic dependency test for platform riders.

109 Antonio K. Colina IV, "NLRC-Davao finds Foodpanda guilty of illegal termination of seven delivery riders," Minda News, 2022 July 29. <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2022/07/nlrc-davao-finds-foodpanda-guilty-of-illegal-termination-of-seven-delivery-riders/>

Issuances by International Bodies/Organizations

OHCHR, UNDP, and UNSDG (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Development Programme, and United Nations Sustainable Development Group). “Checklist for a Human Rights-Based Approach to Socio-Economic Country Responses to COVID-19.” July 2020. https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Events/COVID-19/Checklist_HR-Based_Approach_Socio-Economic_Country_Responses_COVID-19.pdf

UN (United Nations). “The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights.” António Guterres, 2020, 5-6. https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The_Highest_Aspiration_A_Call_To_Action_For_Human_Right_English.pdf (accessed July 2021)

———. “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” 1948. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english>

———. “A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19.” April 2020. <https://laopdr.un.org/en/download/15539/54660>

UNDG (United Nations Development Group). “The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies.” 2003. https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/6959-The_Human_Rights_Based_Approach_to_Development_Cooperation_Towards_a_Common_Understanding_among_UN.pdf

National Legislation and Issuances

Republic Act No. 11469. “*Bayanihan* to Heal as One Act.” 24 March 2020.

Republic Act No. 11494. “*Bayanihan* to Recover as One Act.” 11 September 2020.

Senate Bill No. 1341. “An Act Allowing and Regulating the Use of Motorcycles as Public Utility Vehicles . . .” 12 February 2020. http://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lis/bill_res.aspx?congress=18&q=SBN-1341

Senate Resolution No. 732. “Resolution Calling for an Investigation in Aid of Legislation into Providing Employment Benefits and Other Forms of Social Protection for Workers in the ‘Gig Economy.’” 25 May 2021. https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lis/bill_res.aspx?congress=18&q=SRN-732.

Issuances from National Government Agencies and Offices

DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government). “Memorandum Circular No. 2020-083.” 19 May 2020.

DOLE (Department of Labor and Employment). “Labor Advisory No. 14, Series of 2021: Working Conditions of Delivery Riders in Food Delivery and Courier Activities.” 23 July 2021. <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/labor-advisory-no-14-21-working-conditions-of-delivery-riders-in-food-delivery-and-courier-activities/>

DOTr (Department of Transportation). “Department Order 2017-011: Omnibus Guidelines on the Planning and Identification of Public Road Transportation Services and Franchise Issuance.” 19 June 2017.

———. “Department Order No. 2018-016: Guidelines on the Availment of the Equity Subsidy under the Public Utility Vehicle

Modernization Program.” 6 August 2018. <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/10/91262>

———. “Protocol/Guidelines for Public Transport Operations.” 26 April 2020.

LTFRB (Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board). “Memorandum Circular No. 2020-026.” 30 June 2020.

TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority). 2019. “Circular 020, series of 2019: Implementing Guidelines for the Scholarship Program of DOTr Public Utility Vehicle Modernization Program.” 28 February 2019. <https://intranet.tesda.gov.ph/circulariframe/DownloadFile/1000035807>

Bibliography

- Abad, Michelle. 2021. "What Went Wrong in 2020 COVID-19 'Ayuda,' Lessons Learned for 2021." *Rappler*, 8 April 2021. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/explainers/coronavirus-ayuda-government-aid-what-went-wrong-2020-lessons-learned-2021/>
- Adonis, Meg. 2020. "6 Jeepney Drivers Protesting Loss of Livelihood Face Raps." *Inquirer.net*, 4 June 2020. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1285949/6-jeepney-drivers-protesting-loss-of-livelihood-face-raps>
- Bolledo, Jairo. 2020. "DILG to Impose '1-Tricycle, 1-Passenger' Policy in ECQ Areas." *Rappler*, 2 August 2021. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/dilg-tricycle-passenger-policy-areas-under-ecq/>
- Brobert, Morten, and Hans-Otto Sano. 2018. "Strengths and Weaknesses in a Human-Rights Based Approach to International Development—An Analysis of a Rights-Based Approach to Development Assistance Based in Practical Experiences." *The International Journal of Human Rights* 22 (5, 2018): 664–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13642987.2017.1408591>
- Cabalza, Dexter, Matthew Reysio-Cruz, and Marlon Ramos. 2020. "Modern Jeepneys Start Plying Metro Manila Routes." *Inquirer.net*, 22 June 2020. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1295343/modern-jeepneys-start-plying-metro-routes>
- Cabrera, Romina Marie. 2020. "Tigil Pasada: Millions of Public Transport Drivers to Be Affected by Quarantine." *OneNews*, 20 March 2020. <https://www.onenews.ph/articles/tigil-pasada-millions-of-public-transport-drivers-to-be-affected-by-quarantine>
- Camus, Miguel, and Krixia Subingsubing. 2020. "Still No Public Transport in Areas Under Prolonged Quarantine." *Inquirer.net*, 25 April 2020. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1264466/still-no-public-transport-in-areas-under-prolonged-quarantine>

- Cerezo, Anna. 2022. "Commuters Endure Long Lines at EDSA Bus Carousel Amid Rush Hour." *ABS-CBN News*, 12 July 2022. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/11/22/commuters-endure-long-lines-at-edsa-bus-carousel-amid-rush-hour>
- Cinco, Maricar. "Checkpoints Lead to Crowds, Chaos." 2020. *Inquirer.net*, 17 March 2020. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1243304/checkpoints-lead-to-crowds-chaos>
- CNN Philippines Staff. 2020. "Cebu City Allows Resumption of Traditional Jeepney Operations." *CNN Philippines*, 3 November 2020. <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/regional/2020/11/3/cebu-city-allows-resumption-of-traditional-jeep-operations.html>
- . 2020. "DSWD Admits Delay in COVID-19 Cash Aid Distribution to More Than half of target beneficiaries." *CNN Philippines*, 22 April 2020. <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/22/cash-aid-distribution-delays.html>
- . 2020. "House Probe Sought on Alleged Illegal Dismissal, Delayed Salaries of EDSA Carousel Bus Drivers." *CNN Philippines*, 19 July 2022. <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/7/19/house-probe-edsa-carousel-bus-drivers-dismissal-delayed-salaries.html>
- . 2020. "Still No Public Transport as More Businesses Allowed to Reopen in Modified ECQ Areas." *CNN Philippines*, May 13, 2020. <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/5/13/no-public-transport-modified-ECQ-areas.html>
- . "21 Protesters Demanding Food Aid Arrested in Quezon City." *CNN Philippines*, 1 April 2020. <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/1/quezon-city-protesters-arrested-.html>
- . 2021. "'Lugaw an Essential Good': Palace Settles Question on Viral Video." *CNN Philippines*, 31 March 2021. <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/3/31/malacanang-lugaw-essential-good.html>

- Colina IV, Antonio K. 2022. “NLRC-Davao finds Foodpanda guilty of illegal termination of seven delivery riders.” *Minda News*, 29 July 2022. <https://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2022/07/nlrc-davao-finds-foodpanda-guilty-of-illegal-termination-of-seven-delivery-riders/>
- Dela Cruz, Raymond Carl. 2020. “5K More Jeepneys Return to Metro Manila Streets.” *Philippine News Agency*, 13 October 2020. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1118410>
- . 2020. “No Motorcycle Taxis Until Congress Drafts Law: DOTr.” *Philippine News Agency*, 9 October 2020. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1118025>
- . 2020. “Tricycle Operations in MECQ Areas Up to LGUs: DOTr.” *Philippine News Agency*, 13 May 2020. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1102770>
- DMB (Department of Budget and Management). 2022. “DBM Releases P1.4B Funding for the Extended DOTr-LTFRB Libreng Sakay at the EDSA Busway.” 16 August 2022. <https://www.dbm.gov.ph/index.php/secretary-s-corner/press-releases/list-of-press-releases/2323-dbm-releases-p1-4b-funding-for-the-extended-dotr-ltfrb-libreng-sakay-at-the-edsa-busway>
- DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government). 2020. “DILG: Motorcycle Backriding Allowed During MECQ Under Certain Conditions.” 5 August 2020. <https://dilg.gov.ph/news/DILG-Motorcycle-backriding-allowed-during-MECQ-under-certain-conditions/NC-2020-1270>
- DOLE (Department of Labor and Employment). 2021. “Delivery Riders Protected by Labor Law, Contract—DOLE.” 27 July 2021. <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/delivery-riders-protected-by-labor-law-contract-dole/>
- DOTr (Department of Transportation). 2020. “DOTr Issues Guidelines for Road Transport Sector in Areas Under GCQ.” 30

- April 2020. <https://dotr.gov.ph/55-dotrnews/1315-dotr-issues-guidelines-for-road-transport-sector-in-areas-under-gcq.html>
- Geducos, Argyll. 2020. "Metro Manila Under 30-Day Lockdown." *Manila Bulletin*, 12 March 2020. <https://mb.com.ph/2020/03/12/metro-manila-under-30-day-lockdown/>
- Gotinga, JC. 2020. "Recto: Jeepney One of Safest Modes of Public Transport." *Rappler*, 17 September 2020. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/recto-says-jeepney-one-of-safest-modes-public-transport>
- Hapal, Karl. 2021. "The Philippines' COVID-19 Response: Securitising the Pandemic and Disciplining the *Pasaway*." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 40 (2, 2021): 224–44. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1868103421994261>
- IBON Foundation. 2020. "Open-Air Jeepneys Safer Against COVID-19 Than Enclosed Modernized Counterparts." IBON Foundation. 21 June 2020. <https://www.ibon.org/open-air-jeepneys-safer-against-covid-19-than-enclosed-modernized-counterparts/>
- Jalea, Glee. 2020. "Commuting Pains: Cramped PUVs, Workers Stranded on First Day of Metro-Wide Quarantine." *CNN Philippines*, 16 March 2020. <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/3/16/Commuters-struggle-first-work-day-of-Metro-Manila-community-quarantine-Covid.html>
- Jose, Ricardo. 2018. *Tranvia: Ang mga Riles sa Kamaynilaan. Documentaries: The Filipino*. TVUP, 30 June 2018, video, <https://tvup.ph/?p=27445>
- Kabiling, Genalyn. 2020. "Entire PH Under GCQ Effective May 16, Except for NCR, Laguna, Cebu City." *Manila Bulletin*, 14 May 2020. <https://mb.com.ph/2020/05/14/entire-ph-under-gcq-effective-may-16-except-for-ncr-laguna-cebu-city/>

- Kyodo News. 2020. "Philippine Commuters Face Spotty Transportation as Lockdown Relaxed." *Kyodo News*, 1 June 2020. <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/76f15d6b2bbc-philippine-commuters-face-spotty-transportation-as-lockdown-relaxed.html>
- Laurel, Drei. 2020. "Organized Chaos: Riders Flood ECQ Checkpoint at Cavite–Manila Border." *Top Gear Philippines*, 17 April 2020. <https://www.topgear.com.ph/news/motoring-news/ecq-cavite-manila-border-photos-a962-20200417>
- Letigio, Delta Dyrecka. 2020. "LTFRB-7: Inter-LGU Jeepneys Will Help Address Demand for Public Transportation." *Cebu Daily News*, 20 November 2020. <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/351684/ltfrb-7-inter-lgu-jeepneys-will-help-address-demand-for-public-transportation>
- Lopez, Ron. 2020. "Jeepney Drivers Beg for Help on Metro Manila's Roads Amid Pandemic." *Agence France-Presse*, via *GMA News Online*, 17 August 2020. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/751601/jeepney-drivers-beg-for-help-on-metro-manila-s-roads-amid-pandemic/story/>
- Lo, Barnaby. 2021. "COVID Food Pantry Operators Draw Accusations of Communism in the Philippines." *CBS News*, 26 April 2021. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/philippines-covid-community-food-pantry-accusations-communism-red-tagging/>
- Luna, Franco. 2020. "'Conducting Dialogue': Cops Raid San Roque Community Kitchens, Tear Protest Materials." *Philstar Global*, 6 April 2020. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/04/06/2005868/conducting-dialogue-cops-raid-san-roque-community-kitchens-tear-protest-materials>
- . 2021. "Familiar Transport Woes Show No Lessons Learned from Last ECQ." *Philstar Global*, 29 March 2021. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/03/29/2087821/familiar-transport-woes-show-no-lessons-learned-last-ecq>

- . 2020. “Palace Releases Guidelines on Motorcycle Taxi Operations.” *Philstar Global*, 10 November 2020. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/11/10/2055906/palace-releases-guidelines-motorcycle-taxi-operations>
- Madarang, Catalina Ricci. 2021. “Criticisms Vs. Higher Fine Slapped on Jeepney Drivers Over Face Shield, Mask Policy Violations.” *Interaksyon*, 17 February 2021. <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/politics-issues/2021/02/17/185691/criticisms-vs-higher-fine-slapped-on-jeepney-drivers-over-face-shield-mask-policy-violations/>
- Mariano, Patricia. 2022. “Modernizing Public Transport in the Philippines.” *Changing Transport*. Accessed 5 November 2022. <https://www.changing-transport.org/modernizing-public-transport-in-the-philippines/>
- Medenilla, Samuel. 2022. “Palace Urges Jeepney Drivers, Operators to Forego Strike.” *BusinessMirror*, 6 June 2022. <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/06/06/palace-urges-jeepney-drivers-operators-to-forego-strike/>
- Mercado, Neil Arwin. 2020. “Without Public Transport, Workers Resort to Walking for Hours.” *Inquirer.net*, 17 March 2020. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1243803/without-public-transport-workers-resort-to-walking-for-hours>
- . 2021. “Any Kind of Food Legitimately Delivered Is Essential, Says PNP.” *Inquirer.net*, 1 April 2021. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1413668/any-kind-of-food-legitimately-delivered-is-essential-says-ppnp>
- . 2021. “Barangay Exec, Officers Apologize Over ‘Lugaw’ Incident That Went Viral.” *Inquirer.net*, 2 April 2021. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1414081/barangay-officials-apologize-over-viral-lugaw-incident>

- Merez, Arianne. 2020. "COVID-19 Frontliners, Workers Walk to Work as Lockdown Stops Public Transport." *ABS-CBN News*, 17 March 2020. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/17/20/some-health-workers-walk-to-hospitals-as-quarantine-stops-public-transport>
- . 2020. "Luzon Quarantine: A Breakdown of the Implementing Guidelines." *ABS-CBN News*, 17 March 2020. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/17/20/luzon-quarantine-a-breakdown-of-the-implementing-guidelines>
- Newman, Minerva. 2020. "Engineers Cite Disadvantages of Motorcycle Barriers." *Manila Bulletin*, 28 July 2020. <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/28/engineers-cite-disadvantages-of-motorcycle-barriers/>
- Noriega, Richa. 2022. "Jeepney Drivers Mull Transport Strike Over Fuel Costs." *GMA News*, 18 February 2022. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/nation/822362/jeepney-drivers-mull-transport-strike-over-fuel-costs/story/>
- Ochave, Revin Mikhael. 2020. "Motorcycle Delivery Riders, More Essential Than Ever, Have Seen Job Security Elude Them." *BusinessWorld*, 18 December 2020. <https://www.bworldonline.com/motorcycle-delivery-riders-more-essential-than-ever-have-seen-job-security-elude-them/>
- Parrocha, Azer, and Raymond Carl Dela Cruz. 2020. "Mass Transport Suspended Under Enhanced Community Quarantine." *Philippine News Agency*, 17 March 2020. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1096849>
- Patag, Kristine Joy. 2020. "Health Workers Walk to Work, Sleep in Clinics as Quarantine Halts Transportation." *Philstar Global*, 17 March 2020. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/03/17/2001601/health-workers-walk-work-sleep-clinics-quarantine-halts-transportation>

- Pazzibugan, Dona. 2020. "Crying Discrimination, Jeepney Drivers Turn to Supreme Court." *Inquirer.net*, 30 September 2020. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1341751/crying-discrimination-jeepney-drivers-turn-to-supreme-court>
- Prudente, Josephine E. and Benjamin B. Velasco. Forthcoming. "Impact of COVID-19 on Education Workers and Union Responses." Discussion Paper. Quezon City: UP CIDS.
- PSME (Philippine Society of Mechanical Engineers). 2020. "Position Paper on the Motorcycle Barrier." 23 July 2020.
- Ramos, Mariejo. 2020. "QC Police Arrest 18 for Quarantine Violations." *Inquirer.net*, 3 May 2020. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1268650/qc-police-arrest-18-for-quarantine-violations>;
- Ranada, Pia. 2020. "Cebu, Davao City, Other Areas in VisMin on Lockdon Until May 15." *Rappler*, 24 April 2020. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/258863-cebu-davao-city-other-areas-visayas-mindanao-on-lockdown-until-may-15-2020/>
- Rey, Aika. 2020. "In Duterte's 2021 Budget, Filipinos Are On Their Own." *Rappler*, 29 September 2020. <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/in-depth/filipinos-welfare-employment-education-duterte-2021-national-budget/>
- . 2020. "LTFRB Allows 49 Routes for Traditional Jeepneys Starting July 3." *Rappler*, 01 July 2020. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/265438-ltfrb-allow-routes-jeepney-july-3-2020/>
- . 2022. "Jeepney Minimum Fare Hiked to P11 Nationwide." *Rappler*, 29 June 2022. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/jeepney-minimum-fare-hike-philippines-starting-july-1-2022/>
- Reyes, Dempsey. 2022. "Fare Hikes OK'd for Bus, Jeepney, Taxi, TNVS Sectors." *Inquirer.net*, 17 September 2022. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1665646/fare-hikes-okd-for-bus-jeepney-taxi-tnvs-sectors>
- Rubio, Pola. 2022. "LTFRB Pays EDSA Carousel Operators P310 Million; Drivers Yet to Get Dues." *Yahoo! News*, 20 July 2022.

<https://ph.news.yahoo.com/ltfrb-pays-edsa-carousel-operators-p-310-million-drivers-yet-to-get-dues-081256937.html>

Sabillo, Kristine. 2020. "Face Mask, Hand Hygiene Enough to Protect Motorcycle Riders, Says Health Expert." *ABS-CBN News*, 14 July 2020. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/14/20/face-mask-hand-hygiene-enough-to-protect-motorcycle-riders-says-health-expert>

———. 2020. "Jeepney a Safe Transportation Option During the Pandemic, Doctors Say." *ABS-CBN News*, 5 August 2020. <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/08/05/20/jeepney-a-safe-transportation-option-during-the-pandemic-doctors-say>;

Serrano, Mar. 2021. "Bicol IATF to Implement Stricter Border Patrol Guidelines." *Philippine News Agency*, 6 April 2021. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1135862>

Servallos, Neil Jayson. 2022. "Bus Drivers Protest Delayed P20 Million Salaries." *Philstar*, 8 February 2022. <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2022/02/08/2159249/bus-drivers-protest-delayed-p20-million-salaries>

Sunstar Cebu. 2020. "Cebu City Hall Clears Initial Return of Over 1,300 Traditional Jeepneys," *SunStar Cebu*, 3 November 2020. <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1875583/Cebu/Local-News/Cebu-City-Hall-clears-initial-return-of-over-1300-traditional-jeepneys>

Talabong, Rambo. 2020. "10 Feeding Program Volunteers Arrested in Marikina." *Rappler*, 1 May 2020. <https://www.rappler.com/nation/259615-feeding-program-volunteers-arrested-marikina-may-2020/>

Tupas, Emmanuel. 2020. "More Traditional Jeepneys Back on Metro Manila Roads." *Philstar Global*, 11 November 2020. <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/11/11/2056006/more-traditional-jeepneys-back-metro-manila-roads>

- Tagalog Lang. 2022. "Pasaway." Accessed 6 November 2022. <https://www.tagaloglang.com/pasaway/>
- Valdez, Denise. 2019. "DoTr, Angkas to Pilot Test Motorcycle Taxis." *BusinessWorld*, 10 May 2019. <https://www.bworldonline.com/dotr-angkas-to-pilot-test-motorcycle-taxis/>;
- Velasco, Benjamin. 2021. "[OPINION] Manggagawa naman: The labor movement's COVID response." *Rappler*, 9 April 2021. <https://www.rappler.com/voices/thought-leaders/opinion-manggagawa-naman-labor-movement-covid-response/>
- Velasco, Benjamin and Judy Ann C. Miranda. 2022. "COVID-19-Related Discrimination of Workers in the Mactan Export Processing Zone during the Pandemic." Monograph. Quezon City: UP CIDS. <https://cids.up.edu.ph/download/covid-19-related-discrimination-workers-mactan-export-processing-zone-during-pandemic/>
- Virtudes, Sofia. 2020. "'Pasaway' Commuters Amid Lockdown? These People Don't Have a Choice." *Rappler*, 19 March 2020. <https://www.rappler.com/voices/Rappler-blogs/commuters-do-not-have-choice-coronavirus-luzon-lockdown>
- Wikipedia. n.d. "Jeepney." Wikimedia Foundation, last edited 20 October 2022, 18:28 UTC. Accessed 5 November 2022. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeepney>

THE CENTER

Established in 1985 by University of the Philippines (UP) President Edgardo J. Angara, the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS) is the policy research unit of the University that connects disciplines and scholars across the several units of the UP System. It is mandated to encourage collaborative and rigorous research addressing issues of national significance by supporting scholars and securing funding, enabling them to produce outputs and recommendations for public policy.

The UP CIDS currently has twelve research programs that are clustered under the areas of education and capacity building, development, and social, political, and cultural studies.

THE PROGRAM

The **Program on Alternative Development (AltDev)** aims to look at paradigms, policies, practices, and projects that are largely marginalized and excluded from the mainstream. The program aims to bring these alternatives out of the margins and into the mainstream to level the playing field so that they may be regarded on an equal footing with dominant discourses and thus offer alternatives to the existing system.

The **UP CIDS Discussion Paper Series** is published quarterly by the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies.

Editorial Office

Lower Ground Floor, Ang Bahay ng Alumni, Magsaysay Avenue,
University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City 1101

Telephone

(02) 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 68 • (02) 8426-0955

Email

cids@up.edu.ph • cidspublications@up.edu.ph

EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Editor-in-Chief, the Deputy Editor-in-Chief, and the Program Editors ensure that monographs contain findings on issues that are aligned with the core agenda of the research programs under the University of the Philippines Center for Integrative and Development Studies (UP CIDS).

The Editor-in-Chief, the Deputy Editor-in-Chief, and the Program Editors are responsible for maintaining high standards of scholarship, and for generating and disseminating new knowledge that can be utilized for the public good.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Teresa S. Encarnacion Tadem
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Janus Isaac V. Nolasco
DEPUTY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PROGRAM EDITORS

EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING CLUSTER

Dina S. Ocampo
Lorina Y. Calingasan
Education Research Program

Fernando dIC. Paragas
Program on Higher Education
Research and Policy Reform

Marie Therese Angeline P. Bustos
Kevin Carl P. Santos
Assessment, Curriculum, and
Technology Research Program

Jalton G. Taguibao
Program on Data Science for
Public Policy

DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER

Annette O. Balaoing-Pelkmans
Program on Escaping the
Middle-Income Trap: Chains for Change

Antoinette R. Raquiza
Political Economy Program

Eduardo C. Tadem
Benjamin V. Velasco
Program on Alternative Development

Antonio Miguel L. Dans
Jose Rafael A. Marfori
Program on Health Systems
Development

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND CULTURAL STUDIES CLUSTER

Maria Ela L. Atienza
Jorge V. Tigno
Program on Social and Political Change

Darwin J. Absari
Islamic Studies Program

Herman Joseph S. Kraft
Strategic Studies Program

Marie Aubrey J. Villaceran
Frances Antoinette C. Cruz
Decolonial Studies Program

EDITORIAL STAFF

Virna Liza O. Guaño
Angeli P. Lacson
**SENIOR EDITORIAL
ASSOCIATES**

Mika Andrea O. Ramirez
EDITORIAL ASSOCIATE

Thea V. Paez
Zylyka F. Gendraule
LAYOUT ARTISTS

The **UP CIDS Discussion Paper Series** features preliminary researches that may be subject to further revisions and are circulated to elicit comments and suggestions for enrichment and refinement. The views and opinions expressed in this discussion paper are those of the author/s and neither reflect nor represent those of the University of the Philippines or the UP Center for Integrative and Development Studies. Papers in the series are not for quotation or reprinting without permission from the author/s and the Center.



**UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

Lower Ground Floor, Ang Bahay ng Alumni
Magsaysay Avenue, University of the Philippines
Diliman, Quezon City 1101

Telephone: (02) 8981-8500 loc. 4266 to 4268 / (02) 8426-0955
Email: cids@up.edu.ph / cidspublications@up.edu.ph
Website: cids.up.edu.ph