

Rescue operations of street dwellers intensified

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To protect them from the risk of acquiring various diseases such as the coronavirus disease, the Quezon City (QC) local government has ramped up its rescue operation efforts for street dwellers roaming around the city's major thoroughfares.

Dubbed as "Oplan Kalingang QC," the campaign aims to reach out to vagrants and bring them home to their respective barangays or even provinces.

Task Force Disiplina and the city's Social Services Development Department (SSDD) are conducting the operations, bringing the dwellers to the processing center in Barangay NS Amoranto.

Operations in the past three days have already reached 425 street dwellers, including some indigenous people or Badjaos from Pampanga and Batangas.

Vagrants brought to the processing center immediately undergo a medical check-up by the QC Health Department, followed by an interview and assessment by the city's social workers.

Drug testing is provided by the QC Anti-Drug Abuse Advisory Council.

Health and safety protocols are strictly implemented at the processing center, as well as during the rescue operations.

After determining and verifying their addresses, QC residents are brought to their respective barangays.

They are also offered city programs, such as livelihood, capital assistance and educational assistance, depending on what is applicable to them, based on the SSDD assessment. They will then be revisited by social workers.

Street dwellers from other NCR cities are brought to their homes by SSDD and the QC Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, while those who are from the provinces are assisted through the Balik Probinsya Program.

QC Police District (QCPD) personnel are also at the processing center to ensure the security of the site and to issue travel passes for those who are going home to the provinces.

Since Thursday, 17 December, the city has helped 276 vagrants return to their respective homes.

The street dwellers also have been assured that, in just one or two days, they can return to their respective homes.

QCPD will be the ones who will arrange the necessary documents, such as medical certificate and travel pass, so that they can return to their province.

Nonie Metran of SSDD said the street dwellers usually flock the streets to ask for alms, especially during the Christmas season.

“Even before there was no

pandemic, we rescued them because it was very dangerous to stay on the streets, because they were exposed to all diseases and accidents,” Metran explained.

Oplan Kalingang QC is also part of the city’s response to Department of the Interior and Local Government Memorandum Circular 2020- 145, or the continuation of the road clearing operation.