“OUR BATTLE CRY”  
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*(Balangay Bayani Volunteerism to Strengthen Education Towards a Brighter Nation)*  
Brotherhood is not defined as a means of give and take relationship. We heed a certain call. We listen sincerely to the voices of different articulations. We kneel and lend our hands. We lift everyone so that no one will get left behind. We tell stories of heroism not to gain fame, but to ignite the sleeping embers into flames. We are not perfect. Yes, we are not. God gave us a life out of oblivion to carry and cascade his missions. This is the true comradeship, to look for our companions and even our enemies. The world is the world as it is, and now we are stepping on the ground of hope, shouting our own battle cry, *Walang iwanan!*  

**Bayani.** We are living in the land of resiliency where Filipinos are known to be like the Molave tree. The momentum of peace and silence was shattered when covetous conquerors colonized our nation. They brought terrifying armaments and the only hope was not just our bladed weapons; what we needed were valiant heroes with patriotic deeds. That was when our *mga bayani* were born. They fought for our liberty and rights as their viscous bloods covered the envied land. Lapu-Lapu, Dr. Jose Rizal, Andres Bonifacio, Antonio Luna, Gregorio Del Pilar, Apolinario Mabini, Gabriela Silang, and Melchora Aquino are amongst the known *mga bayani* of our former generation who had their different ways of saving the lives of our fellowmen. Past heroes they may be, but they still live in the hearts of the Filipino bloodline.  

The obnoxious times of lynching are finally over and we have entered an open portal through the new era of livelihood. However, we are going through a new pace of crisis in which different catastrophes suddenly appeared. Yes, there sprouted concocted conflicts out of the seeds of greed, ambiguity, insidiousness, and selfishness – all of these are man versus man and man versus society; out of the seeds of uncaring, devastation, destruction, and deforestation – all of these are man versus nature. Out of the millions of people, only few stepped out of their zones; only few initiated responsible actions; only few were brave and bold to face these laborious dilemmas-on-strike; only few chose to serve selflessly by giving what they got instead of getting
what they still don’t have, believing that it is foremost to consider *Diyos at Bayan bago ang Sarili!* Our heroes in the past were reborn. These people are our today’s *mga bayani*, who, despite of diversity, are willing to use their lives to fulfill God’s purpose.

Our heroes of the past and present may have different ways of selfless service, but they have synonymous advocacies – the call for the new, yet truer act of brotherhood, the new *Bayanihan*, because of strong faith and passionate love for *Diyos at Bayan*, the innovated unison for *ating hakbang bilang mga kabataan*. This is our own style, as we all know, the Filipino version of helping with kindness and compassion. The heroes of long-ago fought for our own freedom, but the heroes of today are fighting for hope by nation-building and by cascading such acts of volunteerism.

*Makabagong Bayanihan.* A man who once lived as a painter showed his love for our country by conceptualizing what nationalism and patriotism are. He left a big mark in the field of painting by creating a portrait which reminds every one of us to not forget our own land and to see and look for each other as we are all brothers and sisters. Fernando Amorsolo may seem to be a common painter, but he is one of the inspirations of being a hero. *Bayanihan* is a Filipino word derived from the word ‘*bayan*’ meaning town, nation, or community in general. It literally means, ‘being a *bayan,*’ and is thus used to refer to a spirit of communal unity and cooperation. This symbolizes and entails a simple meaning as *pagtutulungan*. This word might be serene to be understood or naïve to be felt, but it means a lot to many of us. It means hope. Delving deeper through this term, it is like digging in the heart of benevolence and humanity. It is the culture planted in the hearts of every Filipino who dared, dares, and about to dare to offer his life for the sake of entirety. We lift and carry the nipa hut so that no one will get left behind. There’s no point on crab mentality for it is just a devilish deed of pulling others to their own downfall.

*Kabataan.* The best measure of a man is not what he says he can do but what he does. Words could be playful enough to measure someone’s capabilities. Nevertheless, there is no fruitful deed without an eagerness of serving that comes from a youthful creed. The new activism has begun anew and its will begets youth towards a meaningful change from being mundane to being catalysts of optimistic worldview. This is the *kabataan* of today as what our national hero
foresaw when he uttered, “Ang kabataan ang pag-asa ng bayan.” What can a youth do in order to mar an existing crisis? What can a youth contribute to alleviate the pain felt by too many citizens of being unseen as though they are like ghosts roaming? What can a youth offer to end the aghast wreckage of the many natural resources and the biological ecosystems we had relied to live for a very long time? What can a youth promise to keep every person smiling with the joy of being cared and hand-held? A youth can make a big difference. This is the new activism, to promote volunteerism towards a heart-felt act of heroism.

Ang makabagong Bayanihan ang magsisilbing haligi at suporta sa isang kuboong isinisilong upang maitaguyod ang bawat Pilipinong umaasa at nananalig na hindi nawawala ang pag-asa, na matatapos rin ang karimlan, at bawat isa ay mapapahalagahan, sa tulong ng mga taong handang sumabay sa paggabay at ng Diyos na patuloy na niyayakap ang ating buhay. Ikaw kabataan, ano ang iyong hakbang? Self-service is not the motto of every youth to give hues to the world. It is all about selfless service entailing an act of sacrifice to achieve a momentous kaleidoscope. It may be true that a youth is part of the societal suffering, but every one of us (kabataan) is one of a kind. We can construct a unique plan; we can make steps and ways of varied ideas; and we can implement diverse decisions which in the end, despite of differences, can cause a huge impact of unity and cooperation. No one can stop the rise of the youth alliance whose advocacy is to search for the important parts and pieces to complete a puzzle and to solve the prevailing crises.

Volunteerism. Volunteerism is like a thirst to be quenched; not by availing benefits as the foremost, but by absorbing droplets of what brotherhood gives to our comrades as the utmost. The concept of volunteerism always boils down into a single definition, a paradigm and notion that majority believes, that it is all about helping others without expecting anything in return. From its simplest sense to the most complex connotation, volunteerism, in its greatest form, is indeed a new weapon used to silence the deafening howl of injustices and inequalities; to prevent the continuous growth of demolition against nature; to stop the rapid spin of deadly chaos; to cease the saddening unshackle of each other’s ties towards unity; and to resolve the unalleviated rise of inhumane actions. Believing in our own capabilities is the first step, ito ang unang hakbang ng isang kabataan sa makabagong Bayanihan!
Miss Earth Angelia Gabrena Ong left her words for the youth volunteers, “I will because I can.” This is a noteworthy and inspiring statement as she walks through the path of achieving not just the world peace, but a real action towards great responsibility over power. Ergo, it doesn’t matter how big or small a youth does as a volunteer. What matter most are the heart and the roaring aim of volunteerism for Bayanihan, and to put nothing above all, but the Diyos at Bayan.

**Balangay Bayani.** The quintessence of volunteering cannot be seen to someone working alone. Since it’s all about unity and cooperation, it should also manifest the heart of a family. Balangay Bayani, maybe most people will ask what this organization means. From the very formation of its name is its identity, indeed a bayani. Should anyone catch its brightest purpose, it is to break apathy by encouraging young people and guiding them to take their rights to stand and lead by helping the fellowmen and by serving our creator and savior. Balangay Bayani educates, inspires, ignites, builds hope, saves nature for a better future, creates a loving and caring family, and above all, responds to the call of solidarity. With its battle cry, Walang Iwanan! Surely, no one will be left alone and outcast. Para sa Diyos at para sa Bayan, Kabataan, Walang iwanan!


**Balangay Bayani** is a living proof of an advocacy of cascading volunteerism by encouraging each kabataan to take a step for Makabagong Bayanihan, and by being the rebirth of Bayani ng sariling bayan. Walang iwanan!