
Bayan + Bayani = Bayanihan?

— An Outline of the Philippine
Bayanihan Spirit —

The Bayanihan Spirit



- Traditional - “Obra comun” or “ser juntado para la obra” (1754) - Work of all or coming together for work
- Modern - “Damayan” - mutual, empathetic aid; “Tulungan” - cooperative reciprocity; “Usungan” - community development (1966)

Bayanihan in the Context of Natural Disasters



Deconstructing Bayanihan

BAYAN

Nation

- Place
- People
- Both - a place that evokes a sense of belonging because of shared experience with its people

BAYANI

A person who serves his/her community without asking for anything in return and who perceives everyone as equals

“Kapwa” - perceiving shared identity rather than distinctness

“Pakikipagkapwa” - empathize, enter into the consciousness of others

“Pagkukusang Loob” - of his/her own free will and motivated by positive feelings

What is Bayanihan?

- Members of a community being “bayani” for each other and for their community
- Members of a community working together with a clear understanding of what their community needs

Discussion Questions

1. Is it useful to begin with a culture-driven, bottom-up approach in coalition building in developing countries?
 - a. What are some advantages and disadvantages?
 - b. Where speed is of the essence, do ideals like Bayanihan now only serve a limited purpose?
2. Do similar traditions serve a place in advancing environmental goals? How? (Unifying value, policy, or basis for environmental law)
3. Can Bayanihan or similar concepts be extended to encompass broader, non-anthropocentric goals other than community development?

4. Are there similar concepts in other cultures?