

PRESS RELEASE

PDRF launches SIKAP digital hub for MSME resilience

19 FEBRUARY 2021, MANILA—The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)'s micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) online resource hub—SIKAP—recently launched its improved gamified platform geared towards building MSME resilience and introduced new public and private sector initiatives that will help businesses bounce forward to the new normal.

SIKAP or Synergizing Recovery Initiatives, Knowledge, and Adaptation Practices for MSMEs is a free online resilience hub developed by PDRF, with the support of Connecting Business initiative, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the United Nations Development Programme, that provides information on the latest available loans, programs, and online events specifically for MSMEs while also offering exclusive mentorship opportunities provided by industry leaders and experts. While the online platform has been around since June 2020, it was relaunched to showcase new and exciting features as well as introduce new partners to the MSME community.

Among the new features of the SIKAP platform is an interactive journey tracker where users can earn badges after completing activities related to building their resilience. This gamified approach to learning is the only one of its kind.

PDRF's design partner for SIKAP, Limitless Lab, represented by CEO Joie Cruz, presented the new platform and encouraged users to be more proactive in their journey to protect their businesses.

"We named this platform SIKAP because all the opportunities are there for you but at the end of the day, it all depends on your action. Your business success and resilience all depend on what you will do, how better you will strive and make an effort," she said.

MSMEs, which form 99.6% of registered establishments in the country and contribute 62.6% to the labor force, have disproportionately been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Already vulnerable to natural and human-induced hazards, MSMEs must now face challenges of maintaining their financial resources, sustaining their workforce, and managing the production of goods and delivery of services while dealing with restrictions due to the pandemic. Helping MSMEs survive in these trying times is a key factor for national economic recovery.

PDRF President Butch Meily and Department of Trade and Industry Bureau of Small and Medium Enterprise Development Director Jerry Clavesillas both emphasized the importance of solid public and private sector partnerships to best help the MSMEs in the country.

"If we can all work together, we have the opportunity to revive small businesses and give our people a chance to rebuild their lives and recover their future," said Meily.

"We hope that through the advocacies of PDRF as well as our other partners this afternoon, we can continuously provide these interventions to our MSMEs in order for them to become capacitated and ultimately become contributors to our economic recovery," said Clavesillas.

PDRF Executive Director Veronica Gabaldon presented the different programs and projects PDRF has implemented specifically to help MSMEs in their road to recovery.

"Forging MSME resilience requires long-term, sustainable strategies. We'll ensure that all our plans and activities are pandemic-adaptive and responsive to your needs," she said, "The MSME success story is everyone's success story."

Another unique MSME resilience tool was the comic book, "Dimatinag: The Entrepreneurs' Unbreakable Spirit," which was developed in partnership with UPS Foundation. This material aims to bring hope and inspiration to struggling MSMEs in a creative way while also educating them on the basics of business continuity.

Attended by more than 300 MSMEs, the online launch also featured presentations by UnionBank and Canva, showcasing their respective organizations' tools tailored for MSMEs: the UnionBank SME mobile app and the “Canva for Negosyo” platform for digital marketing.

One of the graduates of SIKAP's mentorship program, Cherrylin Casuga of Casuga Integrated Farm School, shared her own experience and encouraged MSME owners to identify problems and simplify solutions to collaborate better with their teams.

In her remarks, UN OCHA Philippines Head Manja Vidic described the journey that led to the creation of SIKAP and emphasized the importance of partnership when it comes to crafting sustainable solutions to complex problems.

“Humanitarian assistance goes hand-in-hand with MSME support. We have similar objectives: a sustainable mode of addressing problems for them not to become an even bigger set of problems,” she said.

She likewise envisioned taking SIKAP globally, beginning with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, deepening its local ties (reaching even the far-flung areas in Mindanao), and making it disaster-specific by using the tool to create opportunities for early recovery.

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About PHILIPPINE DISASTER RESILIENCE FOUNDATION

The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) is the country's major private sector vehicle and coordinator for disaster resilience. As an alliance of businesses dedicated to building the disaster risk management capabilities of the private sector in the country, PDRF aims to contribute to the sustainable development and the general welfare of the Filipino people. For more information, visit www.pdrf.org.

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