

## **PDRF, Aboitiz Foundation promotes digitalization for MSMEs**



**25 MAY 2021, MANILA**—The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF) presented its various projects supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) during the recent online launch of Aboitiz Foundation’s “Biyaheng Digiskarte” Project.

During the launch, PDRF Program Officer Michelle Vigilia presented SIKAP, Synergizing Recovery Initiatives, Knowledge, and Adaptation Practices for MSMEs—a unified online resilience hub that provides information on the latest available loans, programs, and online events specifically for MSMEs in the Philippines. SIKAP also offers mentorship opportunities for MSMEs provided by industry leaders and experts, with some tracks focused on digital transformation. SIKAP is in partnership with the United Nations (UN) Development Programme, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and the Connecting Business Initiative.

Similar to SIKAP, the “Biyaheng Digiskarte: Digitalization of Small Businesses for Recovery and Competitiveness” is a mentoring program which aims to equip MSMEs with the knowledge and skills in using appropriate digital tools and technologies to aid in their business recovery. It is designed to help individual entrepreneurs, cooperative members and officers, and community-based organizations assess their digital readiness in a time when digital transformation has become the key to success in the constantly-changing circumstances.

Aboitiz Foundation defines “Digiskarte” as the use of digital tools, approaches and innovations in doing business, incorporating gadgets, Internet, social media, and online platforms in business strategies. This new approach allows MSMEs to expand their customer base and sell their products and services online. It also enables more

efficient and cost-effective coordination along the supply chain, streamlining raw materials sourcing, logistics, warehousing, payments, and remote work setups.

Aboitiz Foundation President and COO Maribeth Marasigan emphasized the need to educate more business owners on using digital technology solutions for complex problems.

“Ang paggamit ng digital technology ay hindi nag-iisang solusyon, kundi isang powerful tool upang makatulong sa iba’t-ibang problema ng MSMEs. Sa Aboitiz Foundation, naiintindihan namin na maraming MSMEs at mga kooperatiba, lalo na ang mga agri-enterprises, ang hindi pa nakikita ang potensyal ng paggamit nito para sa pagbangon ng mga negosyo. At dahil dito, kasama ang aming mga partners, DTI-BSMED, Cooperative Development Authority, at PDRF SIKAP, inilulunsad ng Aboitiz Foundation ang Biyaheng Ma-DigiSkarte Project,” said Marasigan.

(“The use of digital technology is not the only solution, but it is a powerful tool to help MSMEs deal with different problems. At the Aboitiz Foundation, we understand that many MSMEs and cooperatives, particularly agri-enterprises, still cannot see the potential of using this to help their businesses recover. And it is to address this gap that Aboitiz Foundation, together with our partners DTI-BSMED, Cooperative Development Authority and PDRF SIKAP, has launched the Biyaheng Ma-Digiskarte Project,” said Marasigan.)

The project will develop learning modules and materials. These will be conducted in various formats: webinars, coaching/mentoring, self-directed exercises, and experience-sharing opportunities with co-mentees. The project will also establish a pool of volunteer expert mentors and establish partnerships with organizations with existing MSME development programs such as SIKAP, Go Negosyo, Philippine Partnerships for Sustainable Agriculture, and many others.

As a PDRF member company, Aboitiz has partnered with the Foundation in several initiatives through the years from capacity building, disaster risk reduction and management, relief operations, and digital transformation. The resources presented during the webinar are available for download on the SIKAP platform. Users may sign up for free to access these materials by going to <https://sikap.com.ph/>