

PDRF, international partners show why messaging matters in COVID-19 vaccine rollout



JUNE 10, 2021, MANILA— The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)’s Project K3, in partnership with New Zealand Aid and Brown University, highlighted the importance of risk communications and effective public health messaging in national campaigns to get everyone vaccinated against COVID-19 in an online learning event last June 4.

“Risk communication is obviously very crucial, very critical at this time. We’re battling several items: fake news, doubts about our own supply, vaccine hesitancy, among others,” said PDRF Chief Resilience Officer Bill Luz. “Ultimately, the only number that matters is how many people we get vaccinated.”

Nearly 700 representatives from local government units (LGUs), hospitals, and other sectors around the country attended the session entitled “Risk Communications and the Road to Pandemic Recovery”, the second in the webinar series “Vacci-Nation: Pathways to Health Resilience Beyond COVID-19.”

Experts from Brown University discussed vaccine safety, herd immunity, and effective risk communication strategies while resource speakers from Deloitte Philippines, Makati DRRMO, and the Department of Health, showed how risk communication plays a role in vaccine demand generation, continuity planning, community engagement, and dialogue.

“During a crisis, communication is everything, especially when people’s lives and livelihoods are at stake,” said PDRF President Butch Meily. “As we inch our way slowly into a new future and as the promise of vaccines appears on the horizon, we need to inform everyone about their choices and about the reality that COVID-19 may be with us for some time to come,” he added.

Resource speakers from PDRF and the Commission on Human Rights also introduced the LGU Toolbox for Gender Equity, a joint project with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization, and other experts, which aims to provide LGUs with practical actions to ensure that all marginalized groups will be reached during the vaccine rollout.

Project K3 or Kalinga para sa Kalusugan ng Komunidad is an initiative of PDRF and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Aid Programme that aims to strengthen the health system capacities of LGUs, hospitals, and communities around the country to deal with the COVID-19 crisis and future disruptions through innovative training and community education. Project K3 is also working with DOH and Ingat Angat Campaign in promoting accurate COVID-19 information and vaccines.

In her opening message, New Zealand Embassy Chargé D’Affaires Jocelyn Ng reaffirmed New Zealand’s support for Project K3.

“We believe in investing in improved health risk communication on COVID-19 and responsive public health messaging. Through our partnership with PDRF on this project, the New Zealand Embassy is pleased to contribute meaningful inputs towards the ongoing fight against COVID-19,” said Ms. Ng.

The webinar series covers essential information on COVID-19 and has been converted into e-learning courses uploaded to PDRF’s digital learning platform, iADAPT. The first session, “Bridges and Barriers to Vaccine Deployment” took place last March 18.

For those interested in taking these online courses and earning certificates, you may access them here: <https://iadapt.pdrf.org/vacci-nation>