23 SEPTEMBER 2019, CLARK, PAMPANGA—Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), the country’s leading business sector network for disaster management, together with Brown University’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs gathered representatives from Southeast Asia for the Brown University – PDRF Humanitarian Field Program: An Intensive Course on Innovation in International and Local Humanitarian Coordination in the ASEAN Region. The week-long fellowship program took place from September 15 to 21 at the PDRF Operations Center in Clark, Pampanga.

Aiming to pinpoint gaps in multi-sectoral, multi-level, and international humanitarian coordination, the event convened 44 early to mid-career professionals from government agencies, the private sector, civic organizations, and the academe to address pressing humanitarian issues through collaboration across geographic boundaries. Through a combination of lectures and field exercises designed for cross-disciplinary learning, participants were able to work with local and international humanitarian experts on improving humanitarian coordination efforts.

”When natural disasters strike, it is important for responders to move quickly and in a coordinated manner. This is the purpose of courses and field programs like the one we just held with Brown University. We believe that innovation and coordination within a large group of players will lead to more effective response. PDRF believes that partnerships like this make us all better humanitarian workers,” said PDRF Chief Resilience Officer Guillermo Luz.

“The partnership between Brown University and PDRF highlights the growing influence of the Philippines in general and our Clark Operations Center in particular as a focus of international study in all phases of disaster management,” added PDRF President Butch Meily.
First held in 2018 with the theme, “community resilience for natural disasters,” the Brown University-PDRF Humanitarian Field Program is headed by Dr. Adam Levine, Director of the Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies (Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University); Guillermo Luz, Chief Resilience Officer of PDRF; and Alfredo Ayala, CEO of AC Education and Managing Director of Ayala Corporation. This year’s course was supported by the New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Aid Programme, Smart Communications, and the Russell Berrie Foundation.

Since 2015, PDRF has been partnering with local and international organizations in capacity building initiatives. Recognized by the United Nations as a global model for establishing public-private partnerships in disaster risk reduction, it is actively involved in helping build local business disaster management networks across the globe.