

PRESS RELEASE

## **PDRF champions inclusive and accessible COVID-19 vaccine information for PWDs**

**SEPTEMBER 8, 2021, MANILA**— The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF)'s Task Force T3 and Project K3 are currently conducting a campaign to provide essential information on the COVID-19 vaccines for persons with disabilities (PWD) with the support of the Department of Health (DOH) and various PWD organizations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted PWDs because they have had to contend with the burden of navigating this new public health emergency in addition to existing communication, technological, and social barriers and challenges.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF,<sup>1</sup> PWDs are at a greater risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus, severe disease and death upon infection, and new and worsening health conditions due to the different and complex barriers they face. WHO recommends that governments consider PWDs when prioritizing sociodemographic groups for initial immunization phases, including providing accessible information and communication about vaccination against COVID-19.

In response to this issue, PDRF has collaborated with several PWD support networks to bring essential information to the deaf and blind communities. Organizations include the Commission of Human Rights, Resources for the Blind, Inc., ATRIEV, the National Organization of Visually-Impaired Empowered Ladies (NOVEL), FSL Access Team for COVID-19 (FSLACT), and Tagapagsalin ng Wikang Senyas Workers Cooperative (TWSWC).



*Screenshot from virtual Town Hall session on COVID-19 vaccines with representatives from the DOH and the Deaf community*

For the Deaf community, Task Force T3 conducted three virtual Town Halls with Filipino Sign Language (FSL) interpretation in [Luzon](#), [Visayas](#), and [Mindanao](#) where DOH representatives

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-2019-ncov-vaccination-and-disability-policy-brief-20211>

answered questions from the Deaf community about COVID-19 vaccines and their rollout. T3 also co-developed [a series of DOH ResBakuna video clips](#) on essential vaccine information in FSL.



**10 THINGS YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT THE COVID-19 VACCINE** 📌 **Now available in Filipino Sign Language. ? If you have any questions or...**

*Screenshot from video clip of COVID-19 vaccine information with Filipino sign language (FSL) interpretation*

For persons with visual impairment, T3 and Project K3 have organized guestings on the August 22 and 29 episodes of the Resources for the Blind radio show, "Si Bartimeus at Ako" which airs every Sunday, 7:30 PM at 702 DZAS.

Moreover, PDRF participated in [an episode of Inklunasyon](#) entitled "Kung Ikaw ay Bakunado, Protektado Ka Gyud?" last August 18. Inklunasyon is a Facebook Live talk show program discussing the lives and issues of PWDs and the call for an inclusive society. It is a project of the Philippine Coalition for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Education Network (E-Net Philippines), and LAPIS-SeeSaw Channel.

During the episode, PDRF Executive Director Ms. Veronica Gabaldon reaffirmed the organization's commitment to an inclusive communication campaign and encouraged the audience to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

*Nakikiisa po kami sa paghihikayat sa lahat po na magpabakuna kasi kapag mas marami na tayong nabakunahan, we will achieve our target for herd immunity. Unti-unti na po magbubukas ang ekonomiya natin. Importanteng-importante po yan para sa ating kabuhayan, para sa buong bansa. Masaya po kami na makibahagi sa ganitong klaseng platform at sa ganitong pagtutulungan," said Gabaldon. [We are united in enjoining everyone to be vaccinated because when more people are vaccinated, we will achieve our target for herd immunity. Our economy will slowly begin to re-open and this is very important for all our livelihoods and the entire country. We are happy to take part in this kind of platform and collaboration.]"*

Lastly, the PDRF team continues to work on translating existing DOH material into more accessible formats. These will be disseminated to the different PWD support networks as part of this overall campaign for inclusivity and accessibility.

Learn more about Task Force T3 and Project K3 here: <https://iadapt.pdrf.org/k3/>

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### **About PHILIPPINE DISASTER RESILIENCE FOUNDATION**

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](http://www.pdrf.org).

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