

PRESS RELEASE

## PDRF, LoveYourself conduct disaster resilience training series for HIV community-based organizations



*Photo of participants and organizers of the training.*

**March 29, 2022, MANILA** — The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation (PDRF), in partnership with LoveYourself Inc. (LYI) and with support from the Global Fund Sustainability of HIV Services for Key Populations in Asia program, concluded a series of learning sessions on disaster resilience for HIV community-based organizations (CBOs) to help them respond to emergencies and bolster their capacity to provide uninterrupted HIV and other health-related services to their communities.

Also covered in this training series were health resilience, business continuity, mental health, and gender responsiveness. Representatives from seven LoveYourself community centers (Anglo, Victoria, Welcome, Athena, Hero, Bagani, and White House) and seven CBOs (RTHSN Lakan Community Center from Pampanga, POSH Bataan, DIOSSA from Taguig, Amos Tara from Puerto Princesa, FPOP Iloilo, Zamboanga’s Mujer-LGBT Organization, and K-PLUS from Cagayan de Oro) participated in the sessions.

“We aim to provide holistic care to our clientele, especially in the communities that we are trying to reach,” LYI Founder and Executive Director Dr. Ronivin Pagtakhan said in the opening session. “We want this training to familiarize our [community center staff and CBO partners] with the risk profile of the Philippines and the concepts related to risk management and mitigation. Because prevention is always better than cure; just the same in disaster management, preparedness is of utmost importance.”



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“The impact of disasters on our communities will get worse if we do not make our disaster resilience strategies inclusive,” said PDRF Executive Director Veronica Gabaldon. “It is, therefore, the advocacy of PDRF to increase the adaptive capacity of the different sectors of our society to reduce the risks and adverse effects endured by the most vulnerable.”

The first sessions, held in November 2021, focused on Disaster Preparedness. Experts from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) and the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) presented the Philippine hazard profile and discussed practical ways of preparing for disasters such as typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes.

Three sessions were held in December: first, on Principles of Resilience-Focused HIV Care, discussed by an expert from the Department of Health; the second, a roundtable on Mental Health issues experienced during the pandemic, facilitated by trainers from MentalHealthPH, WellBridge Health Inc., UP Visayas, and University of Perpetual Help DALTA; and finally, an orientation on Business Continuity Planning, where participants drafted business continuity plans to help them sustain health services and operations amidst emergencies. Individual CBO follow-up sessions took place in January where technical experts provided feedback and recommendations on the CBOs’ outputs.

The final training session took place last March 14 and focused on strengthening the advocacy for equal rights in the LGBTQIA+ community. A legal expert from the Commission on Human Rights discussed the history and provisions of the Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity or Expression (SOGIE) Equality Bill and Anti-Discrimination Ordinances in local government units. This was followed by a workshop on Advocacy Campaigning, facilitated by a trainer from the Institute of Politics and Governance.

Founded in 2011, LoveYourself Inc. (LYI) has become one of the leading organizations in HIV awareness, testing, and treatment in the Philippines. It operates eight community centers and currently assists 16 CBOs in developing their own community centers offering combination prevention approaches on HIV/STI, sexual health, and mental health.

Due to COVID-19 limitations, the training adopted a blended approach with synchronous and asynchronous online sessions. The latter was done through self-paced e-learning modules on PDRF’s digital platform, iADAPT - Innovations Academy for Disaster Awareness, Preparedness, and Training.

Learn more about iADAPT’s offerings and sign up for free here: <https://iadapt.pdrf.org/>

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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).