



UP SYSTEM REPORT

ON COVID19-RELATED ACTIVITIES:

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



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UP Constituent Universities Involvement in COVID19-related Research/Technology/Extension Activities

Webinars and Other Initiatives Undertaken via Online Platforms

For almost half a year, online platforms such as Zoom, Facebook, and Youtube have become the reliable partners of the University in engaging not only its constituents but also the general public. Through these platforms, the University of the Philippines and its eight constituent universities (CUs) were able to continuously disseminate crucial, timely, and relevant information not only about COVID-19, but also about the different issues and concerns related to the pandemic. The expertise of different disciplines has been harnessed and various units have worked hand in hand to deliver interdisciplinary solutions in addressing the different issues born out of the pandemic. Through this comprehensive and inclusive approach, various units from the different CUs were able to successfully come up with innovative means of addressing the vast impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The impact of the pandemic on different sectors was the main discussion point of various webinars organized by CUs. These webinars aimed to assess the impact of the pandemic to sectors such as the local government units (LGUs), academe, health sector, as well as vulnerable sectors such as the agricultural sector, fisheries, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSMEs), Persons with Disabilities (PWD), and women and children. More importantly, these webinars also aimed to equip sectors with the necessary resources to mitigate the pandemic's impact.

Following the declaration of national health emergency in the Philippines, LGUs have been empowered to implement policies aligned with the national government's whole-of-government and whole-of-society plan of action and were tasked to ensure that no constituent will be left behind. The webinar entitled *Local Governments in the Frontline: Local Practices and Challenges on the Fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic* looked at how the LGUs responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and how they strived to solve the complex web of issues linked to it.

Understandably, it was the health sector that bore the brunt of the pandemic. Various public hospitals have been assigned as COVID-19 facilities, with the frontline health workers doing their utmost effort to curb the spread of the pandemic while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of

patients and individuals at risk. However, with the increasing number of cases in the country, our healthcare workers have been put at great risk. Several webinars delved into the ongoing struggles and tales of heroism of health workers. These were highlighted in the recent installments of the *STOP COVID DEATHS: Clinical Management Updates*, entitled *Mental Health and Mindfulness* and *The Doctor as Patient: The Journey of Dr. Rody Sy*. The first webinar presented some mindfulness exercises that may be used by both patients and health care workers when they are overwhelmed by the circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The second took a closer look at the diagnostic and therapeutic dilemmas of doctors during the early stage of COVID-19 in the Philippines and the lessons that have been learned. On a similar note, a webinar entitled *Philippine Nursing Service Preparedness amidst Pandemic* focused on the importance of preparedness in coping with the pandemic. The webinar highlighted the best practices in managing nurse services during the pandemic to encourage their replication.

Given the pandemic-driven transition to Alternative Mode of Learning (AML), particularly the adoption of remote and blended learning, CUs have also worked tirelessly in highlighting the different ways that teachers and students could cope with and prepare for the new normal. The UP Open University, as the leading distance learning institution, has organized various webinars that tackled these issues. To prime fellow educators for the transition to a different mode of teaching and learning, UPOU organized a webinar entitled *Gearing up for the New Normal in Teaching and Learning*, where they also enjoined the participation of other major stakeholders of the teaching-learning process—the students, their parents, and the whole community. The webinar entitled *Edu-Hack: Navigating a Turbulent Educational Landscape* featured the experiences of elementary education teachers as they transitioned to remote and blended learning and the recommendations for parents to be partners in learning. Meanwhile, the three webinars organized in partnership with Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Mindanao Cluster 1 entitled *DICT Webinar for Educators on Quality Assurance Framework in Remote Teaching and Learning*, *Webinar- Workshop on Course Module Development* and *Student Support System in Remote Teaching and Learning* aimed to provide educators with the necessary information, tools, and resources that will aid in the seamless transition to remote and blended learning. Aside from educators, even writers in the academe must deal with the changes brought about by the pandemic. The experiences of writers were discussed in the webinar entitled *Staying Lit in the Time of Corona* which was organized by the Likhaan: University of the Philippines Institute of Creative Writing.



Experts from the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, UP Visayas (UPV-CFOS) shared new innovations and technologies for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the fisheries sector via webinar on July 16~17, 2020.

Other webinars addressed the concerns and challenges of other vulnerable sectors. The webinar entitled *Gend-ER Live! Violence against women and children (VAWC) during the pandemic* discussed the susceptibility of women and children to domestic abuse during the pandemic. The effects of the pandemic to children were tackled in the online panel discussion entitled *E-Storya sang Kabakod sa Tion sang Pandemya (Stories of Resilience in Times of Pandemic)* which was organized by UPV Center for West Visayan Studies, Community Outreach Program-BIDANI, and TEACH DRR-UPVFI. The said online panel discussion highlighted the voice of the children by sharing their stories of coping and resilience and harnessed these experiences to provide tangible solutions that will help children move forward to the new normal. In the webinar entitled *Arts and Disability 20/20: The Value of Expressive Arts to Physical, Social, and Emotional Well Being of Persons with Disability*, the value of expressive arts to physical, social, and emotional well-being of PWDs was discussed. The impact of the pandemic on the agricultural sector was discussed in the webinar entitled *The Nation's State on Health and Agriculture* organized by the Rise for Education Alliance - UP Diliman. Lastly, as one of the sectors severely affected by the pandemic, the MSMEs, particularly in the fisheries sector, were given assistance through the webinar entitled *Business Opportunities for MSMEs in the Fisheries Sector to assist entrepreneurs to recover amidst the COVID-19 pandemic*. New innovations and technologies were shared during the webinar, in the hopes that it may help them recoup the losses they have incurred during the pandemic.

COVID-19 Related Services and Resources

Aside from UP Diliman, various buildings in UP Mindanao have been also used as *COVID-19 facilities*. The city government, in partnership with the UP Mindanao administration, assigned two buildings for use as quarantine facilities. The UP Mindanao Faculty and Staff Housing, with a capacity of 35 beds, can accommodate mild suspect and mild confirmed COVID-19 cases. Meanwhile, the Davao City-UP Sports Complex Training Gym, with its 128 beds, could accommodate mild suspect cases. Recognizing that the different health units in the CUs could only accommodate a limited number of people, the CUs have come up with various ways to share their expertise on health-related matters such as the UP Manila College of Pharmacy's *Telepharmacy*, a free online service that sought to guide and answer queries of the general public on medicine, vitamins, supplements, and other herbal remedies; and the Tele-Online Consultation Platform of UP Visayas which an initiative that aimed to continually provide medical services to the UPV Community while keeping the university COVID-free. Given the uncertainty brought by the pandemic to various sectors, services that aimed to assist their constituents towards resilience and coping were also organized by the different CUs. Various counseling, emotional first aid, and support services were offered by UP Mindanao Office of Student Affairs (OSA)'s *Mental Health Helpline*, UP Baguio Task Force Counseling and Psychosocial Support's *Let's talk... Mag-usap tayo! Online/Offline/ Other platforms style of Counseling*, and UP Cebu GSS-OSA's *Cebu COPES - Counselors Online Psychological and Emotional Support for COVID-19*.

Resources from webinars were also made available in UP Open University's Networks. These include, *Offline Learning: An Introduction*, *Offline Access to an Online Class*, *Mobile Video Recording for Video Lectures – Audio Management and Creativity and Innovation in R&D Organization – Segment I and II*.

Developments in Science, Technology and Health Research during the Pandemic

The odds may have been against our scientists and researchers, but the pandemic has only inspired them to pursue development and breakthroughs in science and technology and health research. Some of these developments were shared in the webinars entitled *Antimicrobial Stewardship in the Era of COVID* and *Genetic Sequencing Research: Mutation of SARS-CoV-2 (Implications for Clinical Management and Vaccine Development)*, *Immunization in a time of Pandemia: Balik-Tiwala*, *Balik Bakuna: Debunking Vaccination Myths Around the COVID-19 Pandemic*, and *Genetic Sequencing Research: Mutation of SARS-CoV-2*.

UP Constituent Universities Involvement in Various Donation and Support Campaigns for the General Public

On-Going Research

UP Manila is currently involved in two COVID19-related research and technology. The team led by Dr. Leonila Dans of the University of the Philippines Manila and the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (DOST- PCHRD) is planning to conduct a *study on rapid antibody test*. On a similar note, the National Institutes of Health is currently developing a *Simulation-Based Learning Laboratory* which aims to advance disaster response among health care professionals and first responders.

On-Going Donation Drives

Various donation drives geared towards assisting financially challenged students and students who do not have access to the necessary devices to facilitate remote learning have been organized, as the University moves towards this alternative form of learning. The UP System recently launched the *Kaagapay sa Pag-aaral ng mga Iskolar ng Bayan* program which aimed to raise funds to provide financially challenged students with their own laptop computers and internet connection that can help them access UP's remote learning courses starting AY 2020-2021. CUs have also launched their local *Kaagapay* campaigns to help raise funds, such as UP Diliman's *#TulongIsko: A Donation Drive for Alternative Learning of UP Diliman Students* and UP Visayas' *ISKompyuter Drive* and *Learning Devices Campaign for Deserving UP High School Students*. Other than providing financial help to students, CUs have also organized various donation drives for other sectors such as UP Los Baños' *Oplan Damayan 3.0*, an initiative that brought vegetables from Benguet farmers to jeepney drivers in Los Baños who were affected by the lockdown. UP Visayas also organized the *Bookathon*, soliciting book donations for the high school students of MAG-ABA NHS Library in Pandan, Antique, and the *Dugo Mo, Kinabuhi Ko* initiative to help secure enough supply of blood for hospitals attending to COVID-19 cases, dengue, and other medical emergencies. The UP PGH has also organized another *call for blood donors*, this time addressed to the public and not just COVID survivors.

UP Constituent Universities Involvement in COVID19-Related Coping Mechanisms (for students, faculty, researchers, staff, and community/residents)

Provision for IEC materials

The use of information, education, and communication materials has remained to be one of the effective means by which CUs were able to disseminate useful, relevant, and timely information about issues and concerns related to COVID-19. The UP Diliman PsycServ released an infographic series called *Suporta sa Special Population sa Panahon ng COVID-19* which aimed to guide the general public on how one can care for and attend to the needs of patients with chronic illness, PWDs, pregnant women and new mothers, and people with eating disorders. The UP Los Baños University Student Council released an infographic series that collated a list of online paralegal organizations and institutions that the public may consult in cases of warrantless arrests, illegal detention, and other human rights violations. Lastly, the UP PGH released its FAQs on COVID-19 and an infographic which shared how one can show compassion to others by keeping others safe as one keeps himself safe.

Provision for New Work Arrangements

Gearing up for the new normal, the UP System has decided to adjust its academic calendar. The first semester, which will have a duration of 14 weeks, will begin in September. It has also released guidelines (Memorandum No. NGY 20-105) for personnel who are part of the COVID-19 Vulnerable and High-Risk Groups to stay at home except when it is necessary to work in the office. UP Diliman has also chosen to continue the implementation of its post-ECQ guidelines to contain the number of COVID-19 cases in campus.

Other Initiatives

The UP Haniti Batch 2008 of the University of the Philippines Visayas Tacloban College (UPVTC) recently donated 100 COVID-19 PCR-based kits to the Eastern Visayas Regional CoViD-19 Testing Center (EVRCTC) on 16 July 2020 under their *Haniti Cares* project. On the other hand, UP Mindanao donated two gallons of sanitizing alcohol, a pack of face masks, and two sacks of quality used clothing to residents of Barangay Talle in the UP Laak Land Reservation.



Haniti Cares concluded two weeks of fundraising with the turnover of the testing kits to EVCTC at a time when another batch of locally stranded individuals (LSIs) is expected to arrive through the Balik Probinsya Program.