

A year on in the pandemic & the imperatives of solidarity & equity for the Philippines' COVID-19 vaccination program

Nina T. Castillo-Carandang, MA, MSc, PhD

Health Social Scientist and Professor
Department of Clinical Epidemiology
College of Medicine
University of the Philippines Manila

and

Member, WHO Social Science Working Group on COVID-19
Member, Republic of the Philippines - National Immunization Technical
Advisory Group (NITAG) for COVID-19 Vaccines



Outline

- Context Matters
- The Philippines as 100 People (Philippines Statistics Authority)
- Fully Immunized Children (Philippines Dept of Health – DOH - 2021)
- Willingness to be Vaccinated for Dengue vis-à-vis COVID-19 (Social Weather Stations, Sept 2020)
- Acceptability of COVID-19 Vaccines (DOH Health Technology Assessment Unit, Feb 2021)
- KAP COVID Dashboard (Wave 17. Feb 15 to Mar 1, 2021)
- Philippines: Eligible Priority Groups for COVID-19 Vaccination; Vaccine Statistics
- 3 Distinct Yet Intertwined Global Epidemics (Mann 1988)
- Social Impacts of COVID-19 in LMICs (Rohwerder, 2020)
- Pivoting to a **BETTER EVERYDAY** in a Just and Human Society
- Health is a Human Right . . . Leaving No One Behind!

Context Matters

- **Watch out for bias!**
- **“We are HUMAN therefore we are biased.”**

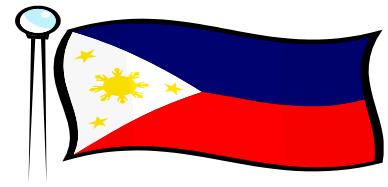
(Chmielarz, 2015)

Science, Equity & Ethics

- "I have always believed that when the best science & scientists are devoted to the problems of those who have less in life, that is *equity* and *ethics* at its best.
- If science is to serve a human purpose, what better human purpose is there?"

Dr. Gelia Tagumpay-Castillo⁺, PhD

(National Scientist & Rural Sociologist)



THE PHILIPPINES AS 100 PEOPLE

AREA

51 URBAN AREAS
49 RURAL AREAS



USUAL PLACE OF RESIDENCE

57 LUZON
24 MINDANAO
19 VISAYAS



7,641 islands
110.8 million Filipinos

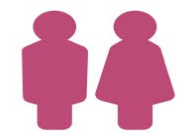
MARITAL STATUS¹

44 SINGLE
41 MARRIED
9 LIVE-IN
4 WIDOWED
2 DIVORCED/SEPARATED



SEX

51 MALE
49 FEMALE



EDUCATION²

36 HIGH SCHOOL
34 ELEMENTARY
11 COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE
11 COLLEGE GRADUATE
3 NO GRADE COMPLETED
3 PRE-SCHOOL
2 POST SECONDARY



AGE

63 15 TO 64 YEAR OLD
32 0 TO 14 YEARS OLD
5 65 YEARS OLD AND ABOVE



LITERACY¹

98 ABLE TO READ & WRITE
2 UNABLE



RELIGION

80 ROMAN CATHOLIC
6 ISLAM
3 IGLESIA NI CRISTO
2 EVANGELICALS
9 OTHERS

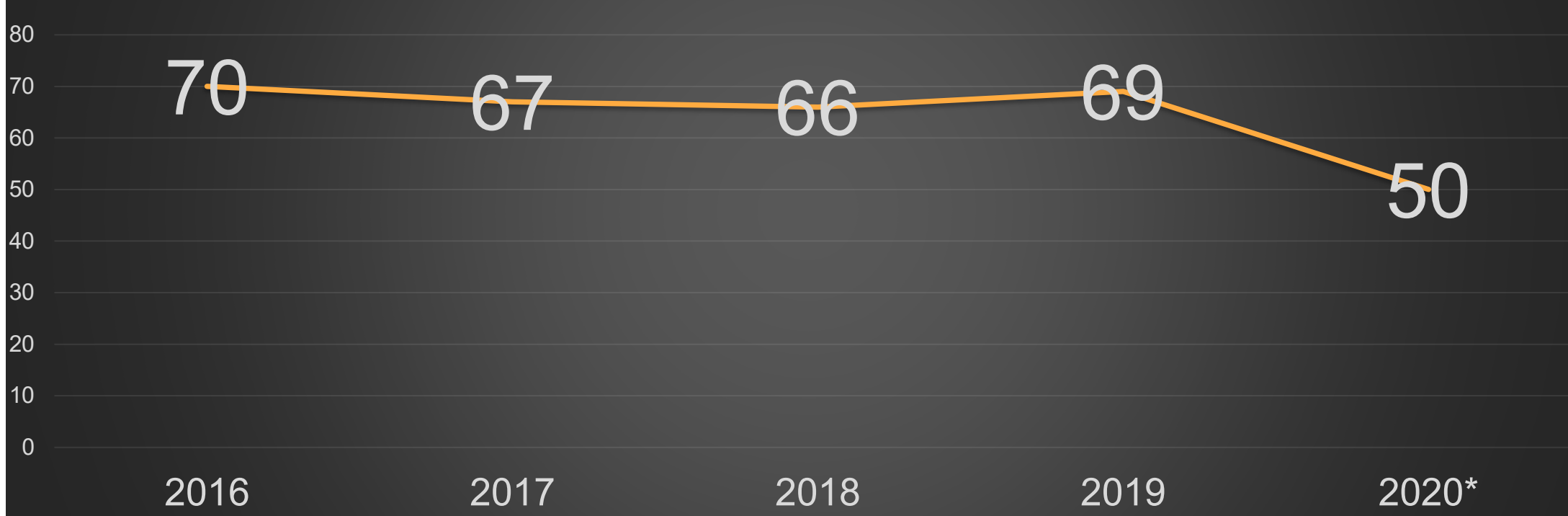


¹Total Population aged 10 years old and over
²Total Population aged 5 years old and over
SOURCE: PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY, 2015 CENSUS OF POPULATION

Coverage of ROUTINE CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION from 2016-2020

(Philippines' Dept of Health. 22 March 2021)

Coverage of ROUTINE CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION from 2016-2020



| FIC | |
|-----------|----|
| No. | % |
| 1,955,718 | 70 |
| 1,911,352 | 67 |
| 1,896,269 | 66 |
| 1,534,612 | 69 |
| 1,066,440 | 50 |

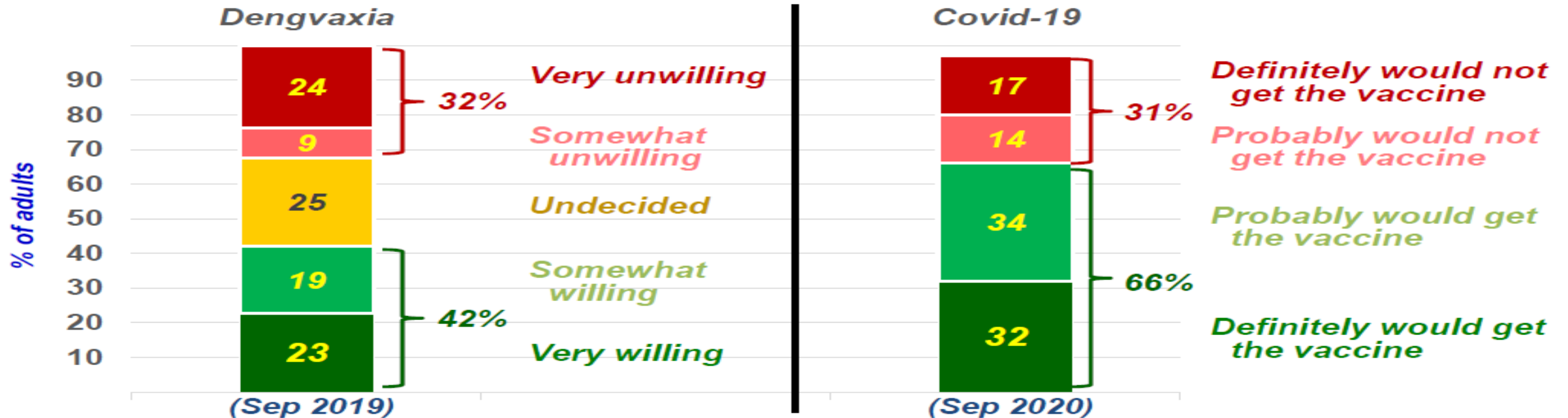
PCV13 only implemented in 14 regions (excluding NCR,4A and 4B in 2016-2018)

*2020 partial data from Jan-Dec

Source: Dr. Kim Patrick Tejano. Manager, National Immunization Program, Philippines' Dept of Health

“Filipinos are more willing to get the Covid-19 vaccine than they were to get Dengvaxia” (Social Weather Stations, 19 Nov 2020)

WILLINGNESS TO GET THE VACCINE: COMPARISON OF DENGVAXIA AND COVID-19 VACCINES, PHILIPPINES, SEP 2019 AND SEP 2020



Note: Blank spaces are Don't Know and non-responses. Figures are correctly rounded.

Acceptability of COVID-19 Vaccines among Key Stakeholders in the Philippines: Key Findings from FGDs

Philippines' Department of Health (DOH). Health Technology Assessment Council & Health Technology Assessment Unit. Feb 2021

Philippines' Health Technology Assessment Council (HTAC)

Evaluation Framework Selection & Financing of COVID-19 Vaccines

1. Responsiveness to magnitude & severity
2. Clinical efficacy & safety
3. Affordability & viability
4. Household financial impact
5. Social impact
6. Responsiveness to equity

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS of a COVID-19 vaccine to be used in the national immunization program (FGDs)

1. Safety of the vaccine
2. Vaccine efficacy in terms of preventing COVID-19
3. Availability to Filipinos
4. Transparency in the regulatory/approval process & information on the vaccines
5. Cost-efficiency to the government
6. Potential for high & equitable coverage
7. Ease in logistical & implementation requirements
8. Availability of mechanisms to compensate vaccine recipients for any untoward effect following vaccination including treatment & management of adverse events
9. Appropriateness of the vaccine to special at-risk groups & patients with comorbidities

Main Concerns (FGDs)

- Safety & Effectiveness
- Need for clear communication & information on the benefits & risks of current COVID-19 vaccines by the FDA, DOH & trusted health experts.
- All stakeholder groups generally *preferred vaccines with higher efficacy* (i.e., >90%)

- Many participants expressed *willingness to accept vaccines with lower efficacy* (i.e., 50-70%) rather than have no protection at all considering other factors such as:
 - logistical requirements
 - cost-efficiency
 - equitable access especially to poor, far-flung & disadvantaged areas

Desired Vaccine Characteristics across Different Groups

| Health Care Workers | Patient Groups | Civil Society Organizations | Community Leaders (Low Risk Areas) | Community Leaders (High Risk Areas) |
|--|--|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Effectiveness | Recommended by their physician | Efficacy of the vaccine | Safety of the vaccine | Clinical trials |
| Credibility of the vaccine manufacturers | Vaccines' efficacy for specific patient groups | Transparency & due process to increase vaccine confidence | FDA approved | Safety |
| | | Real time monitoring of both the patients & the distribution of the vaccine | | Efficacy |
| | | | | FDA approval |

Sources of Information of Different Groups

| Health Care Workers | Patient Groups | Civil Society Organizations | Community Leaders (Low Risk Areas) | Community Leaders (High Risk Areas) |
|--|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Clinical trial results from reputable health organizations | DOH | All sources Mostly from social media platforms used daily for communication Instant messaging applications & exchanges with colleagues | TV news | Social media accounts of news agencies and personalities |
| FDA (& CDC) | Television | Internet | Radio | Partner NGOs |
| Vaccine studies, publications | Medical society websites, webinars | | Social media FB pages of DOH, news agencies | Government representatives whom they follow on TV & social media platforms |
| Internet | | | Religious groups | |



KAP COVID

EXPLORING KNOWLEDGE,
ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES
FOR COVID-19 PREVENTION



In collaboration with
WHO, GOARN, MIT
and Facebook

Country
Philippines

Vaccine Acceptance in Philippines

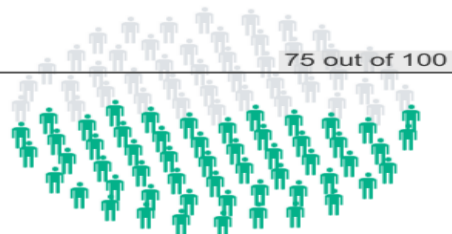
Wave 17: February 15, 2021 - March 1, 2021



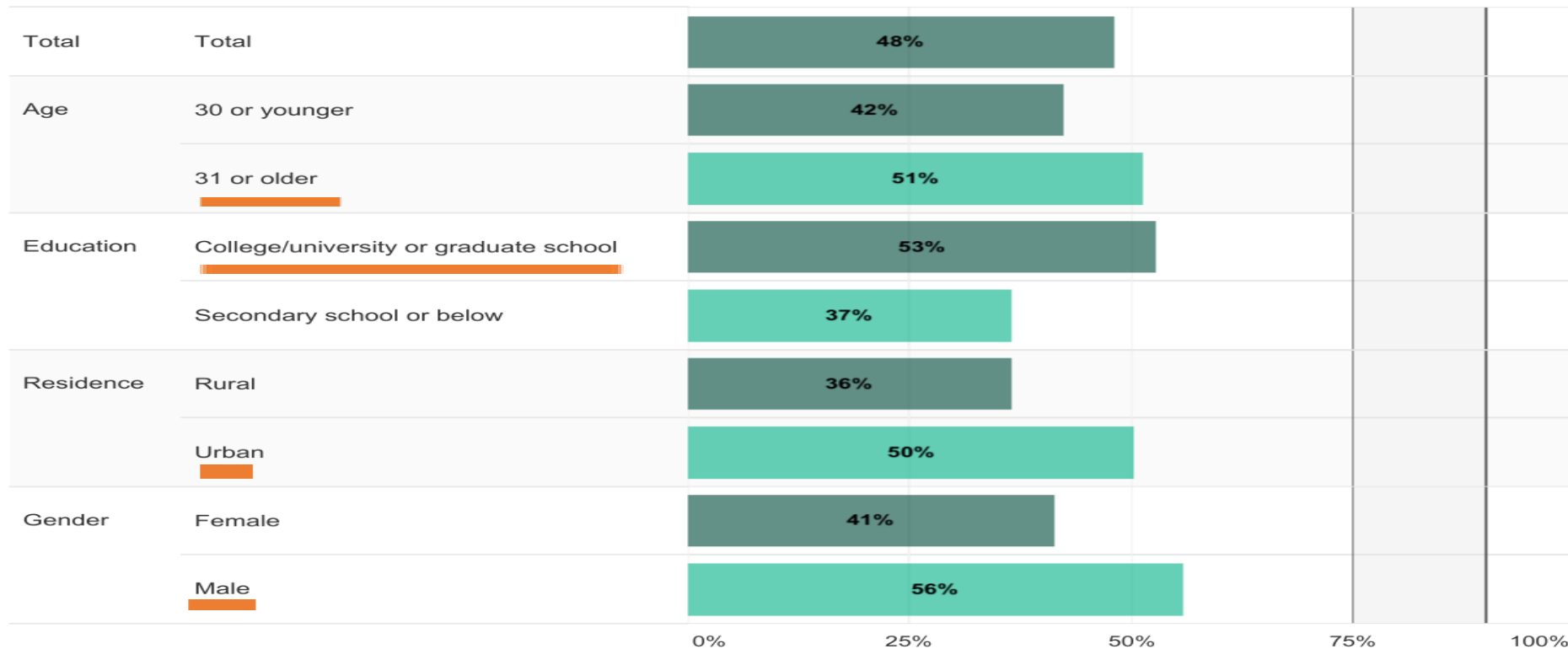
In Philippines, **48.2%** of unvaccinated individuals reported they will get a vaccine when available.



While people think that **56 out of 100** people in their community will get the COVID-19 vaccine.



How does vaccine acceptance vary by demographic groups in Philippines among unvaccinated individuals?



Wave 17 = 3,598 respondents. Feb 15 to March 1, 2021

KNOW THE RIGHT INFORMATION!



1/3

WHO ARE THE ELIGIBLE PRIORITY GROUPS?



PRIORITY GROUP A

- A1** Workers in frontline health services
- A2** All senior citizens
- A3** Person with comorbidities
- A4** Frontline personnel in essential sectors, including uniformed personnel
- A5** Indigent population

BE PART OF THE BIDA BAKUNATION!

RESBAKUNA
KASANGGA NG BIDA

For more information, visit our digital channels: /officialDOHgov @DOHgovph www.doh.gov.ph DOH Philippines

KNOW THE RIGHT INFORMATION!



2/3

WHO ARE THE ELIGIBLE PRIORITY GROUPS?



PRIORITY GROUP B

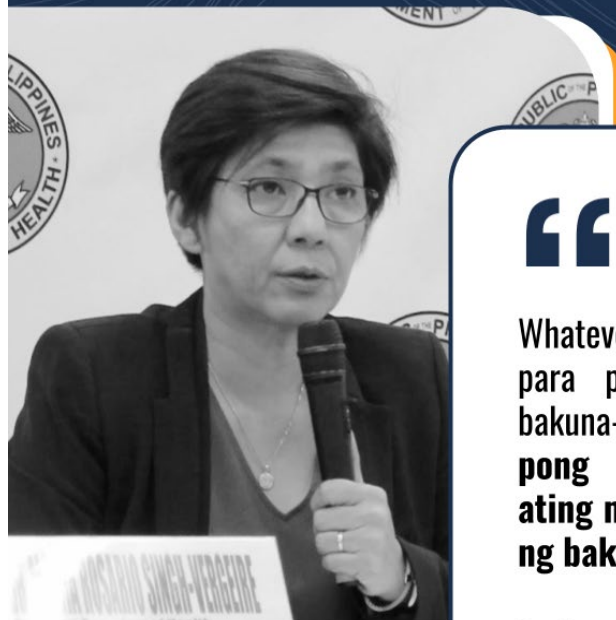
- B1** Teachers and social workers
- B2** Other government workers
- B3** Other essential workers
- B4** Other groups at significantly higher risk for COVID-19 (other than senior citizens and indigent population)
- B5** Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)
- B6** Other remaining workforce

BE PART OF THE BIDA BAKUNATION!

RESBAKUNA
KASANGGA NG BIDA

For more information, visit our digital channels: /officialDOHgov @DOHgovph www.doh.gov.ph DOH Philippines

RESBAKUNA KASANGGA NG BIDA



“

Whatever agreements there may be para po dito sa mga pagbili ng bakuna--at the end of the day, wala pong mawawalan. Lahat po ng ating mga kababayan [ay] bibigyan ng bakuna ng gobyerno.

Each and every Filipino has the right, and will be provided by that right to have these vaccines.

Usec. Maria Rosario S. Vergeire

Undersecretary
Department of Health

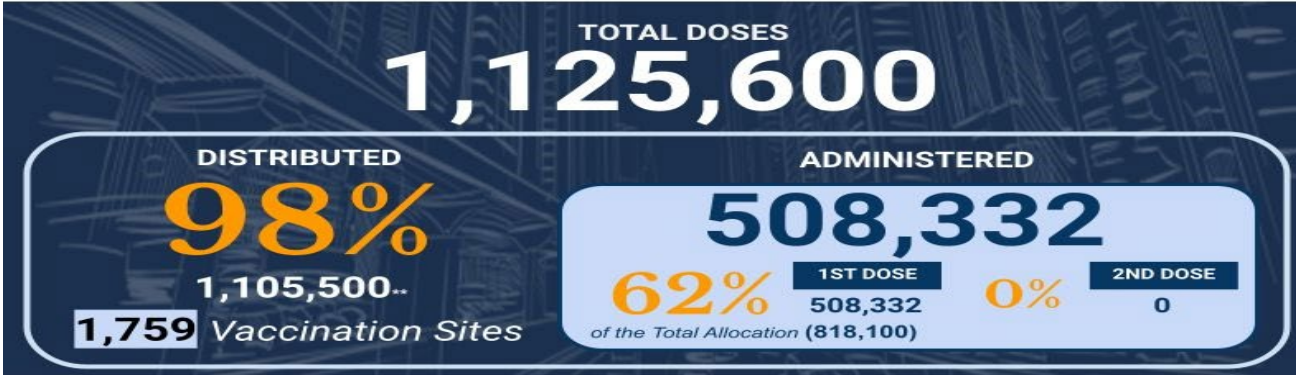
Para sa iba pang impormasyon, bumisita sa: /officialDOHgov @DOHgovph www.doh.gov.ph





VACCINE STATISTICS

As of March 23, 2021



7-DAY AVERAGE OF DAILY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS: **32,756**

| | NO. OF 1ST DOSES ADMINISTERED (%) VS TOTAL ALLOCATION PER REGION FOR 1ST DOSE | NO. OF 2ND DOSES ADMINISTERED (%) VS TOTAL ALLOCATION PER REGION FOR 2ND DOSE | NO. OF DOSES RECEIVED | | NO. OF 1ST DOSES ADMINISTERED (%) VS TOTAL ALLOCATION PER REGION FOR 1ST DOSE | NO. OF 2ND DOSES ADMINISTERED (%) VS TOTAL ALLOCATION PER REGION FOR 2ND DOSE | NO. OF DOSES RECEIVED |
|-----------|---|---|-----------------------|-----------|---|---|-----------------------|
| CAR | 17,791/19,300 (92.2%) | | 25,600 | REGION 9 | 16,756/20,900 (80.2%) | | 30,000 |
| REGION 1 | 21,661/25,600 (84.6%) | | 40,000 | REGION 10 | 32,132*/31,300 (102.7%)* | | 39,400 |
| REGION 2 | 21,419/21,640 (99.0%) | | 31,980 | REGION 11 | 27,542/38,000 (72.5%) | | 53,600 |
| REGION 3 | 27,436/81,320 (33.7%) | | 88,740 | REGION 12 | 22,655/43,970 (51.5%) | | 52,940 |
| REGION 4A | 48,497/87,480 (55.4%) | | 94,560 | CARAGA | 9,757/19,270 (50.6%) | | 23,740 |
| NCR | 149,256/251,235 (59.4%) | | 279,870 | BARMM | 5,170/14,800 (34.9%) | | 18,400 |
| REGION 4B | 11,728/20,300 (57.8%) | | 25,000 | | | | |
| REGION 5 | 16,741/21,100 (79.3%) | | 34,000 | | | | |
| REGION 6 | 23,497/29,180 (80.5%) | | 47,160 | | | | |
| REGION 7 | 39,066/71,280 (54.8%) | | 110,760 | | | | |
| REGION 8 | 17,228/21,425 (80.4%) | | 27,650 | | | | |

* Out of the 2,200 vials of AstraZeneca vaccines allocated for Region 10, more than 10 doses were extracted from approximately 800 vials, hence the vaccination of an additional 844 eligible population, and the resulting utilization rate.

** DND and AFP have received a total of 82,100 doses of vaccines. Data on vaccines administered are incorporated in the Regional breakdown.

Current deployment is limited to **Priority Group-A1** or **frontline healthcare workers**, who were given the option between CoronaVac or AstraZeneca vaccines.

The vaccination of HCWs is being done in batches to ensure adequate staffing in health facilities, in light of possible adverse events.

- “ . . . *Imposed harsh lockdown restrictions & still failed to control the spread of the virus*”
- . . One of the worst economic performers globally” (Rajah 2021)

1,759 vaccination sites in 17 regions
 98% of available doses have been distributed to the vaccination sites
 = 1,105,500 out of 1,125,600
 62% of the allocated 1st doses have already been administered
 = **508,332 administered 1st doses**



Halina't mag-pabakuna, at sama-sama tayo sa **BIDA BAKUNATION!**



Rajah, Roland (15 March 2021) ORDER FROM CHAOS: Southeast Asia's post-pandemic recovery outlook. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/03/15/southeast-asias-post-pandemic-recovery-outlook/> (accessed 25 March 2021)

Have you (as a health care worker) already received your COVID-19 Vaccine?

| | | |
|---|------------|------------|
| Yes, I have already been vaccinated | 423 | 68% |
| No, I am not likely to be vaccinated | 17 | 3% |
| Not yet. But I am already scheduled for vaccination | 136 | 22% |
| Not yet. I am still thinking if I will have myself vaccinated or not for COVID-19 | 50 | 8% |
| | 626 | |

For those who have not yet received their COVID-19 vaccination – How likely are you to get yourself vaccinated for COVID-19?

| | | |
|--|------------|------------|
| Highly likely to get a COVID-19 Vaccine | 272 | 85% |
| Not sure if I will get a COVID-19 Vaccine | 42 | 13% |
| Not likely to get a COVID-19 Vaccine | 8 | 2% |
| | 322 | |

Webinar on vaccination sponsored by a French pharmaceutical company. (approx. 1,100 HCW participants) 24 March 2021

“Three **Distinct** Yet **Intertwined** Global Epidemics”

(Jonathan M. Mann, MD, MPH. Director, Special Programme on AIDS, World Health Organization.
Statement at an Informal Briefing on AIDS to the 42nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. 20 Oct 1987)

3rd epidemic: **social, cultural, economic & political reactions to COVID-19**
worldwide &
as central to the global COVID-19 challenge as the disease itself

**1st epidemic of SARS-CoV-2:
Viral INFECTION itself**

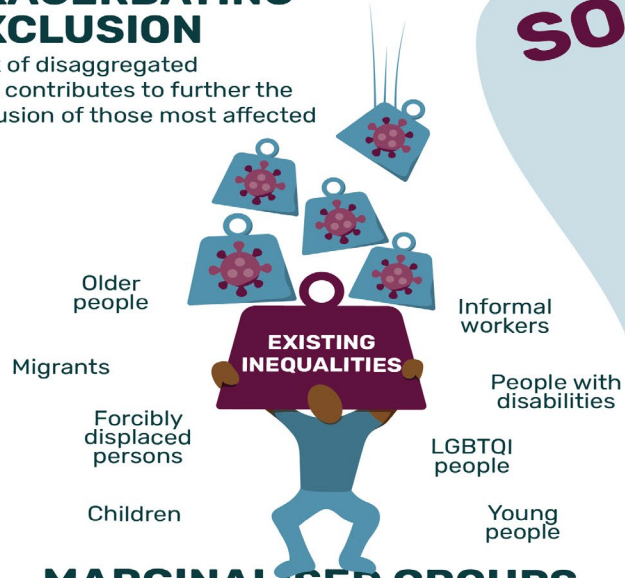
**3rd epidemic:
Social, Cultural,
Economic &
Political reactions
to COVID-19**

**2nd epidemic (inexorably
following the 1st):
Epidemic of the
disease COVID-19**



LACK OF DATA EXACERBATING EXCLUSION

Lack of disaggregated data contributes to further the exclusion of those most affected

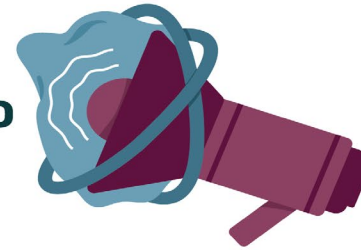


MARGINALISED GROUPS MOST AFFECTED

Existing inequalities have been exposed and worsened by COVID-19

MARGINALISED VOICES NOT HEARD

The spaces in which marginalised groups can be heard are being closed

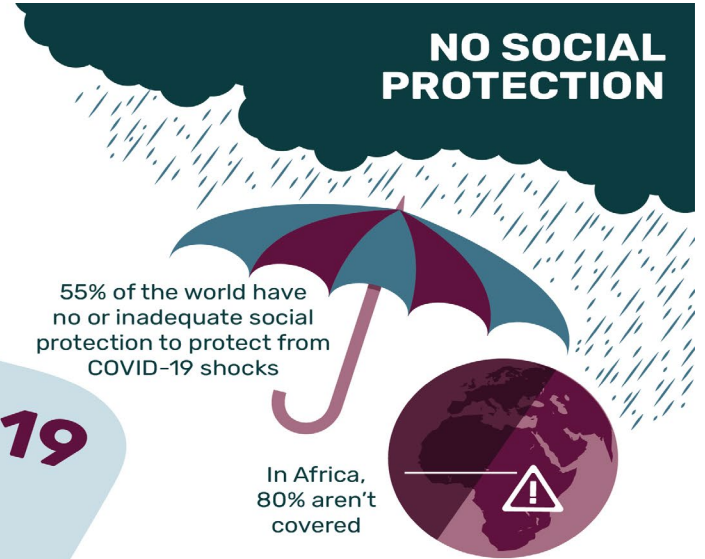


SOCIAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19 IN LOW- & MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES



POOR AND NEAR POOR AT RISK OF EXTREME POVERTY
Up to **395 million more** will fall into extreme poverty in 2020

NO SOCIAL PROTECTION



55% of the world have no or inadequate social protection to protect from COVID-19 shocks

In Africa, 80% aren't covered



WOMEN & GIRLS MOST AFFECTED

COVID-19 has the potential to reverse decades of progress in their development and rights

Policies for COVID-19 should be based on transdisciplinary & evidence-based science and good public health. Sociocultural and behavioral realities, working together, and communicating with each other are integral to a holistic response to the challenges of the pandemic. The so-called 'new normal' is not normal. We need to pivot our responses (priorities, policies, interventions, actions, behaviors) so that we can transition to what hopefully will be a 'Better Everyday' in a just and humane society.

 **COVID-19:**
**Where We Are and
Where We Want To Be** 
WEBINAR SERIES

"This THING Called CORONA"

DR. NINA T. CASTILLO - CARANDANG

Health Social Scientist
Department of Clinical
Epidemiology, College of Medicine
University of the Philippines Manila



#PilipiNAST

"A progressive Philippines anchored on science"



Health is a fundamental human right

- People & groups who experience health inequities lack power (political, social, economic)
- Vaccination programs need to be effective & sustainable
- ***Access to the vaccine alone is insufficient***
- Systemic changes (e.g., policy reform, changes in economic or social relationships) are imperative to help empower marginalized groups & ensure that No one is left behind!

References

- Babalola S., Krenn S., Rimal R., Serlemitos E., Shaivitz M., Shattuck D., Storey, D. KAP COVID Dashboard. Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Global Outbreak Alert & Response Network, Facebook Data for Good. Published September 2020. Data retrieved 25 Mar 2021. [KAP COVID Trend Analysis for 23 Countries - Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs \(jhu.edu\)](#)
- Mann, Jonathan M. (1988) Statement at an Informal Briefing on AIDS to the 42nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Journal of the Royal Statistical Society. Series A (Statistics in Society), Vol. 151, No. 1, pp. 131-136
- Philippine Statistics Authority. The Philippines as 100 People. <https://psa.gov.ph/infographics/subject-area/Population%20and%20Housing>
- Republic of the Philippines - Department of Health (DOH). . Health Technology Assessment Council & Health Technology Assessment Unit. (23 Feb 2021) Acceptability of COVID-19 Vaccines among Key Stakeholders in the Philippines: Key Findings from Focus Group Discussions.
- Rajah, Roland (15 March 2021) ORDER FROM CHAOS: Southeast Asia's post-pandemic recovery outlook. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/03/15/southeast-asias-post-pandemic-recovery-outlook/> (accessed 25 March 2021)
- Rohwerder, B. (2020). Social impacts & responses related to Covid-19 in low- & middle-income countries. K4D Emerging Issues Report 35. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies. <https://www.ids.ac.uk/publications/social-impacts-&-responses-related-to-covid-19-in-low-&-middle-income-countries/> (accessed 25 March 2021)
- Social Weather Stations. National Mobile Phone Survey. Sept 17-20, 2021.– Report No. 17: 66% of adult Filipinos are willing to get the Covid-19 vaccine

Maraming salamat po!



Hibiscus rosa-sinensis GELIA CASTILLO was specially bred and named after my late Nanay (National Scientist Gelia Tagumpay Castillo, PhD) by the Institute of Plant Breeding in the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). Part of the Millennium Series – seven Hibiscus hybrids named in honor of female UPLB scientists who helped advance Philippine agriculture. Released in the year 2000 to mark the start of the Millennium.

The Mérieux Foundation Vaccine Acceptance Initiative

- Valentina Picot
- Marianne Gojon-Gerbelot
- Matteo Mazzeri