

Correspondence

‘Because we care’: private companies to embody the corporate social responsibility for a successful COVID-19 vaccination program in the Philippines

To the editor

In a recent correspondence published in this journal, the author proposed a multisectoral approach to achieve a higher public trust concerning the government’s vaccination program. This approach involves a deliberate collaboration among various stakeholder groups and sectors to achieve a policy outcome.¹ In line with this, one important sector that is vital in the government’s vaccination program is the private-owned companies. The major business groups in the Philippines has urged the Duterte administration to allow the private sectors in buying COVID-19 vaccines directly without any restrictions or conditions as the country risks getting left behind by neighbors that have already vaccinated far more people.² In fact, many big businesses can afford to purchase the vaccines for their employees. The only challenge is how can the government motivate these company owners to do such charitable act for the sake of their employees?

Thus, this paper proposes two points that can be considered in encouraging these private companies buy their own vaccines. First, the government should implement a full tax exemption for these companies on this transaction only. The exemption from tax will lessen of course the expenses of these companies. Any saved amount can actually be allotted to an increase order of vaccines. The supposed to be payment as tax will just be considered as a token of gratitude to these companies for being helpful builders of the economy in the country. The second point is to remind these companies of their corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders.³ Every company has its own way to evaluate their impact on society. The presence of CSR simply reflects that the company is true to its identified vision–mission. This vaccination program for every company is a perfect example of being faithful to its promise of protecting and promoting the rights of its employees.

In this critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic, ordinary citizens/employees are filled with fear and some are losing hope. The companies where they work need to adopt their CSR strategies in order to establish a business commitment to society and vulnerable groups, especially those closest to them, which is the local environment associated with the country of origin of the firms or territories in which companies operate and have a greater presence.⁴ While it is true that even business communities are also affected, they should not treat their employees as an additional burden but a source of hope for the company to keep steady. They must remember that human resource is still the heart of their business and so taking care of them is a must. If the government, on the other hand, would tag the vaccination as a CSR it would encourage these corporations not only to offer the program for their employees but also for various communities and organizations that would serve as their beneficiaries. With these steps, the Philippine government could expect a big boost in its vaccination program for the whole country.

References

- 1 Corpuz JCG. Multisectoral approach on COVID-19 vaccination: a proposed solution on vaccine hesitancy. *J Public Health* 2021. doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdab085.
- 2 Canivel RSC. *Allow private companies to import vaccines tax-free*. <https://business.inquirer.net/319644/allow-private-companies-to-import-vaccines-tax-free>. (4 April 2021, date last accessed).
- 3 United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). *What is CSR?* <https://www.unido.org/our-focus/advancing-economic-competitiveness/competitive-trade-capacities-and-corporate-responsibility/corporate-social-responsibility-market-integration/what-csr>. (3 April 2021, date last accessed).
- 4 García-Sánchez I, García-Sánchez A. Corporate social responsibility during COVID-19 pandemic. *J Open Innov Technol Mark Complex* 2020;6(4):126–47.

Niku E. Vicente¹, Dalmacito A. Cordero Jr.²

¹Center for Social Concern and Action (COSCA), De La Salle University, 2401 Taft Avenue, Manila 1004, Philippines

²Theology and Religious Education Department, De La Salle University, 2401 Taft Avenue, Manila 1004, Philippines
doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdab140