



PRESS RELEASE

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REINFORCING THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS MESSAGE DURING THE MONSOON SEASON Pfizer Malaysia and MERCY Malaysia Collaborate to Empower Students on Disaster Preparedness under the School Preparedness Programme

CHERAS, 20 November 2014 – Pfizer Malaysia, through its Humanitarian Partnership with MERCY Malaysia, is supporting the second year of its School Preparedness Programme (SPP) which commenced in 2013 after a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the two organisations. The SPP aims to reinforce and supplement the Ministry of Education's information for secondary school students in preparing for disasters when they strike as well as identifying potential hazards surrounding them.

Being Prepared

According to the World Risk Report 2012 by the United Nations University – Institute for Environment and Human Security, Malaysia ranked 91 out of 173 countries on the World Risk Index (WRI), with 1 being the highest risk. The WRI is a tool to assess the disaster risk that a society or country is exposed to by external and internal factors. According to this index, Malaysia lacks 70% of coping capabilities and 43% of adaptive capabilities; further reinforcing the necessity of programmes such as the SPP. MERCY Malaysia developed the SPP to share its expertise to build the resilience of students and teachers to natural disasters. This is in line with the UN International Strategy of Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) pre-crisis emergency and contingency plans to minimize the impact of natural disasters.

"We are very fortunate to be living in a country that is relatively free from disasters – natural or otherwise. Due to our sheltered environment, we often take this for granted. However, changes in the global environment have resulted in Malaysia having landslides, frequent floods and tremors. This calls for the need for at-risk groups such as students to be prepared in the face of these conditions. In fact, they can apply these skills when faced with such situations while travelling abroad as well," said Azwar Kamarudin, Director of Corporate Affairs, Health & Value. "This was the catalyst that spurred Pfizer Malaysia to support a programme that teaches students to be prepared in the event of a disaster."

Learning New Skills

Under the SPP, Pfizer's support includes cash and manpower. Pfizer Malaysia volunteers undergo a Training of the Trainers workshop conducted by MERCY Malaysia to prepare them as facilitators and trainers. As trainers, these volunteers, under the guidance of MERCY Malaysia, will in turn facilitate the workshop with the school children on the principles of risk and hazard mapping through simulation exercises. This is done in two phases.

For Phase 1, the students participated in simulation workshops, which involved them identifying items to prepare for a disaster, and how to 'save' a child, an elderly or disabled person or a pet in such situations. Also of emphasis during this workshop was the importance of being alert to one's surroundings to suss out potential risks. Phase 1 of the programme was deemed a success based on the active participation of the students. Each activity cultivated a sense of teamwork, while instilling the message of being prepared during a natural disaster.

Now, for Phase 2, students involved in Phase 1 will once again gather to recap the skills and knowledge learnt during the initial phase. This is to ensure the efficacy and impact of the programme.

To kick off Phase 2, students are organised into teams for the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Race. The DRR Race is in the format of a competition in order to pique the interest of the students. Here, the fastest team that completes all four activities – Find Words, Cross Words, Grab Bag, and Creative with Disasters – under the race accurately will be declared the winners of the race. For the first and second activity, students are required to find words in a puzzle and complete a crossword puzzle on disaster-related words and questions respectively. They will then move on to the third activity similar to the simulation workshop in Phase 1. Finally, teams will be given newspapers, whereby they will need to form disaster-related words by cutting out words or letters in the newspapers.

Upon completion of the DRR Race, there will be a workbook activity. Following this, students will be asked to share their experience and feedback on the SPP. At the end of Phase 2, participants are reminded to be alert of their surroundings and to continue spreading awareness and education on disaster preparedness among their friends, family and neighbours.

Continuous Empowerment

This year, the SPP has been rolled out to students of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tengku Ampuan Rahimah, Klang; Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seri Bedena, Sabak Bernam and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Sungai Kertas, Batu Caves in Selangor as well as Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Seri Bintang Selatan, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Cochrane Perkasa, and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Bandar Tasik Selatan in Kuala Lumpur.

To date, 46 Pfizer Malaysia volunteers have undergone the Training of the Trainers workshop, with their skills being transferred to over 200 school children from six schools in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur.

"Through this SPP, we hope to empower students to address hazardous situations around them that usually go ignored," said Norzalina Masom, Head of Department, SPP. "MERCY Malaysia is glad to receive the support of Pfizer Malaysia on such an important area and we hope to continue this partnership in the long run."

"By engaging with and giving back to the community, Pfizer Malaysia employees feel fulfilled and satisfied, which in turn contributes to Pfizer's success. Pfizer Malaysia recognises this, and is committed to retaining and developing talent through worthy causes such as the SPP, in order to ensure continuity and sustainability," said Azwar Kamarudin.

For some of the volunteers, the opportunity to train the students means more than just passing on knowledge and skills.

“I am grateful to have been involved in educating the school children on basic knowledge in preparing for a disaster. I myself have a son in primary school and these are skills which I hope to instil in him so that he is prepared at all times. Having been a part of many such community programmes, I feel that it enriches my life to spend some Saturdays committed to training vulnerable groups such as students,” said Susan Leow, a trained volunteer from Pfizer Malaysia.

“Apart from feeling assured that our future generation has the skills and know how to react in the event of a disaster, my role at Pfizer Malaysia has taken on a more meaningful and enriched note. I am grateful that Pfizer Malaysia has provided this platform for me to make a difference in someone else’s life,” said Liza Salleh, another trained volunteer.

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About MERCY Malaysia School Preparedness Programme (SPP)

MERCY Malaysia has developed the SPP for schools in Malaysia. The Programme contributes to disaster awareness in schools and facilitates disaster management planning in schools. It supports the Ministry of Education's Sekolah Selamat programme and Emergency Preparedness Programme, by providing practical, hands-on activities in schools. It engages students to take responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others.

About Pfizer Malaysia

Pfizer Malaysia is committed towards Working Together for a Healthier World™. At Pfizer, we apply science and our global resources to improve health and well-being at every stage of life. We strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value in the discovery, development and manufacturing of medicines for people and animals. Our diversified global health care portfolio includes human and animal biologic and small molecule medicines and vaccines, and many of the world's best-known consumer products. Every day, Pfizer colleagues work across developed and emerging markets to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. Consistent with our responsibility as the world’s leading biopharmaceutical company, we also collaborate with health care providers, governments and local communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care around the world. For more than 150 years, Pfizer has worked to make a difference for all who rely on us. To learn more about our commitments, please visit us at www.pfizer.com.

About MERCY Malaysia

MERCY Malaysia is a non-profit organisation focusing on providing medical relief, sustainable health related development and risk reduction activities for vulnerable communities in both crisis and non-crisis situations. MERCY Malaysia recognises the value of working with partners and volunteers as well as providing opportunities for individuals to serve with professionalism. We uphold the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief

and hold ourselves accountable to our donors and beneficiaries. To ensure independence and impartiality, MERCY Malaysia relies on donations from the general public for financial support. A portion of our income is obtained from institutional donors, individual government grants and other international organizations, which are given on project basis. MERCY Malaysia spends 80% of its income in carrying out its relief operations and support.

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