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## The last mile: anti-vaxxers

Joey Concepcion 6 days ago

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© STAR/FILE The last mile: anti-vaxxers

As presidential adviser on entrepreneurship, I took on the cudgels for the MSMEs and advocated for a policy that would make it easier for our millions of small entrepreneurs—who make up 99.5 percent of businesses in the Philippines—gain access to money, markets, and mentorship.

When the pandemic broke out, I found myself championing the reopening of businesses. But I soon realized that in order to return our businesses to normal operations, we needed to vaccinate as many

Filipinos as we could. And so my role expanded; I was thrust into the company of experts on epidemiology, data science, public health, and vaccine logistics and development. Through it all, one thing became crystal clear: vaccines work, and they will hasten our return to normal.

I had my share of differences of opinion when it came to strategies to open up the economy. At some point, I had to push for a lockdown so we could have a safe reopening in the fourth quarter, to the dismay of those who insisted otherwise.

Luckily, I have had very little opposition to vaccinations. I think Filipinos have a high level of empathy for their neighbors. And they have more common sense than most.

Anti-vaxxers remain a fringe movement in the Philippines. One just has to look around. You will not find Filipino bus drivers or truck drivers parking their rigs or buses at busy intersections just to protest vaccine mandates. Only a handful – not thousands – show up at rallies to oppose vaccinations. And if you make known your conspiracy theories, you might be laughed out of the carinderia for basing your health

decisions on a YouTube video or on hearsay about this friend of a neighbor's cousin's sister-in-law's

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