“It’s Up To You” Campaign to Inspire Confidence in the COVID-19 Vaccines [VIDEO]

Pope Francis and others from North, Central and South America are featured in a new campaign by the Ad Council and the COVID Collaborative.

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To continue increasing confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines, specifically in communities disproportionately affected by the virus, the Ad Council and COVID Collaborative today announced a new PSA featuring Pope Francis and six Cardinals and Archbishops from North, Central and South America.

Representing the first ever Ad Council campaign designed for and distributed to a global audience, messaging in the video is delivered in English, Spanish and Portuguese to reach communities worldwide, reminding viewers that COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and save lives. The new creative, made in cooperation with the Vatican’s Dicastery for Integral Human Development, is a part of the Ad Council and COVID Collaborative’s groundbreaking COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative.

“Thanks to God’s grace and to the work of many, we now have vaccines to protect us from COVID-19,” Pope Francis says in the PSA. “Getting the vaccines that are authorized by the respective authorities is an act of love. I pray to God that each one of us can make his or her own small gesture of love, no matter how small, love is always grand.”

Recent data shows that the United States has more progress to make with COVID-19 vaccinations in the country. Currently 72% of the American adult population and 67% of Hispanic adults have been vaccinated against COVID-19 with at least one dose. Worldwide, COVID-19 cases are on the rise, especially across North, Central and South America in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico and Peru where rates of individuals fully vaccinated range from only 5.5% (Honduras) to 30% (El Salvador). Though access to vaccines continues to be a challenge, confidence in the vaccines also presents a hurdle.

To reach this global audience and instill confidence in the vaccines as part of their broader “It’s Up To You” campaign, the Ad Council and COVID Collaborative are proud to partner on this PSA with His Holiness Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome, Archbishop José Horacio Gomez Velasco (Los Angeles,

CA, USA), Cardinal Carlos Aguiar Retes (Mexico City, Mexico), Cardinal Óscar Rodríguez Maradiaga (Tegucigalpa, Honduras), Cardinal Cláudio Hummes (Sao Paolo, Brasil), Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chávez (San Salvador, El Salvador) and Archbishop Héctor Miguel Cabrejos Vidarte (Trujillo, Perú).

“The role of trusted messengers to educate and inspire their networks is undeniable – and has been a core element of our COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative since the beginning,” said Lisa Sherman, President and CEO of the Ad Council. “To the world’s billion-plus Catholics, the Pope is one of the most trusted messengers and holds unparalleled influence. We are extremely grateful to him and the Cardinals and Archbishops for lending their voices and platforms to help people across the globe feel more confident in the vaccines.”

This project is one of the “It’s Up To You” campaign’s tentpole collaborations with trusted messengers, delivering fact-based and life-saving information to populations hesitant about the COVID-19 vaccines, helping them to make informed decisions for themselves and their families.

Other influencers and trusted messengers that have been involved include: former Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter and former First Ladies Michelle Obama, Laura Bush, Hillary Clinton and Rosalynn Carter; musicians Foreigner, Eric Church, Ashley McBryde and Darius Rucker; actors Wanda Sykes, John Leguizamo, Luis Guzman and Loni Love; athletes Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jaren Jackson, Jr., Chester Pitts, Sean Johnson, Preston Wilson, Drew McIntyre and RockyNoHands; faith leaders Bishop TD Jakes, Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Rev. Dr. Walter Kim, Fr. Manuel Dorantes, and Rev. Gabriel Salguero; medical experts Dr. Anthony Fauci, Dr. Tom Frieden, Dr. Kizzmekia S. Corbett, PhD, and Dr. Cameron Webb; and more. To date the effort has engaged over 1,124 influencers to develop 1,638 pieces of content, with a cumulative reach of 50 million.

Given the campaign’s commitment to working with a broad range of trusted messengers, incorporating faith-based and community leaders has been a critical component given their influence and trust in their communities. A National Faith Steering Committee was formed at the onset of the COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative to inform elements of the overall strategy, serve as trusted voices in their communities, help develop resources for other faith leaders nationwide and participate in virtual events. Fr. Manuel Dorantes of the Archdiocese of Chicago, who serves on the Faith Steering Committee, helped identify and implement this opportunity with Pope Francis to extend the Ad Council’s work on a global scale.

“Faith-based leaders and institutions play such a significant role in reminding us of our common humanity,” said John Bridgeland, Co-Founder and CEO of the COVID Collaborative. “With these powerful words from Pope Francis and the Cardinals and Archbishops from across the globe, their message will inspire millions to take action to ‘love thy neighbor’ during this pandemic.”

Developed with production companies LANDIA and Big Star, the content is part of the Ad Council and COVID Collaborative’s COVID-19 Vaccine Education Initiative, “It’s Up To You.” The overarching creative platform was developed by Pereira O’Dell, with additional campaign assets created by JOY Collective, Alma, iHeartMedia, Group SJR, Values Partnerships and other partners to

ensure the American public has the latest and most accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccines. To date, the campaign has received $178M in media support and related publicity across all channels, with at least 75% of Americans eligible for the vaccine having seen “It’s Up To You” ads and driving over 8 million sessions to GetVaccineAnswers.org. Of those who visit GetVaccineAnswers.org with concerns, nearly 60% left feeling more confident about getting vaccinated.

In addition to the new PSA, the Ad Council, in partnership with the Eva Longoria Foundation, The National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), Unidos US, the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the Hispanic Federation, and the Justice for Migrant Women, will be hosting a virtual event with various faith leaders to amplify this effort and drive further education on COVID-19 vaccines. Faith leaders include Cardinal Peter Turkson, Prefect for the Vatican’s Dicastery for Integral Human Development, Dr. Walter Kim, President, National Association of Evangelicals, Rev. Dr. Gabriel & Rev. Jeanette Salguero, National Latino Evangelical Coalition, Rabbi Jonah Pesner, Executive Director, Religious Action Center for Reformed Judaism, and Eboo Patel, Founder & President, Interfaith Youth Corps. The event will also feature top medical experts and local community leaders to help address the latest questions around COVID-19 and vaccines.

As the exclusive media partners for the event, Noticias Telemundo and NBC News NOW will stream the virtual event across their digital platforms on YouTube and Facebook on Wednesday, August 25, 5pm EST. Noticias Telemundo and NBC Nightly News Saturday anchor José Díaz-Balart will host the event, *hoy Día* anchor Nicole Suarez will moderate a medical expert panel, renowned actress/activist Eva Longoria will present the historic PSA message delivered by Pope Francis and the Cardinals and Archbishops from North, Central and South America. Maria Cardona, Founder of DSG’s Latinovations and CNN/CNN Espanol Commentator will moderate a Community Leaders Panel, and Values Partnerships Founder and CEO Joshua Dubois will moderate a Faith Leaders panel. Throughout the week of the virtual event, there will be pop-up COVID-19 vaccination sites in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee and Oregon, where there are currently low vaccination rates within the Hispanic community.

Major media partners, including Facebook, Google/YouTube, Telemundo, Universo, Upward Christian Dating from Match Group and WarnerMedia, among others have committed to providing significant donated media time and space to run and amplify the new PSA assets. Per the Ad Council’s model, the creative will be distributed in the United States where it will run in donated media. The PSA will also be distributed globally to international media, with a focus on Spanish-speaking countries.

Leading contributors to date include Amazon, Apple, Bank of America, Cisco, CVS Health, Facebook, General Motors, Google/YouTube, The Humana Foundation, NBCUniversal/Comcast, Reckitt, Salesforce, Verizon, Walgreens and Walmart. Significant contributions have also been provided by Adobe, America’s Health Insurance Plans (AHIP), the American Heart Association, the American Medical Association, BNY Mellon, Business Roundtable, Caterpillar Foundation, Citi, Ford Motor Company, Honeywell, JPMorgan Chase, Kaiser Permanente, Mastercard, the New York Life Foundation, Stanley Black & Decker, Synchrony, Target, Unilever, Wells Fargo and ViacomCBS.

For more information and answers to top questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, visit GetVaccineAnswers.org and DeTiDepende.org.

The Ad Council

The Ad Council has a long history of creating life-saving public service communications in times of national crisis, starting in the organization's earliest days during World War II to September 11th and natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy. Its deep relationships with media outlets, the creative community, issue experts and government leaders make the organization uniquely poised to quickly distribute life-saving information to millions of Americans.

The Ad Council is where creativity and causes converge. The non-profit organization brings together the most creative minds in advertising, media, technology and marketing to address many of the nation's most important causes. The Ad Council has created many of the most iconic campaigns in advertising history. Friends Don't Let Friends Drive Drunk. Smokey Bear. Love Has No Labels.

The Ad Council is a nonpartisan, nondenominational organization, engaging a diverse range of communities, including the faith community, to impact society for good. The organization's innovative social good campaigns raise awareness, inspire action and save lives. To learn more, visit AdCouncil.org, follow the Ad Council's communities on Facebook and Twitter and view the creative on YouTube.

COVID Collaborative

COVID Collaborative, a project of UNITE, is a national assembly of experts, leaders and institutions in health, education and the economy and associations representing the diversity of the country to turn the tide on the pandemic by supporting federal, state and local COVID-19 response efforts.

The COVID Collaborative is co-chaired by former Governor and U.S. Senator Dirk Kempthorne (R-ID) and former Governor Deval Patrick (D-MA) and led by CEO John Bridgeland and President Gary Edson. COVID Collaborative includes expertise from across Republican and Democratic administrations at the federal, state and local levels, including former FDA commissioners, CDC directors, and U.S. surgeon generals; former U.S. secretaries of Education, Homeland Security and Health and Human Services; leading public health experts and institutions that span the country; the Business Roundtable, National Association of Manufacturers and U.S. Chamber of Commerce; the NAACP, UnidosUS and the National Congress of American Indians; the Skoll Foundation, The Allstate Foundation and The Rockefeller Foundation; and associations representing those on the front lines, from the American Public Health Association and Association of State and Territorial Health Officials to the Council of Chief State School Officers and the Council of the Great City Schools. Tim Shriver is Chairman of UNITE.

To learn more, visit www.CovidCollaborative.us, and follow the COVID Collaborative on Twitter and LinkedIn.

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