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Life, as most Metro Manila residents knew it, began its drastic change on Mar. 8, when President Rodrigo Duterte signed Proclamation No. 922, which formally declared a state of public health emergency in the Philippines and suspended classes in public and private schools in the National Capital Region (NCR) from Mar. 10 to 14.

The World Health Organization had just declared COVID-19 a pandemic; 24 persons were infected in the Philippines. Four days later, Duterte announced a partial lockdown and placed the NCR under general community quarantine starting Mar. 15, suspending land, domestic air and sea travel to and from Metro Manila until Apr. 14.

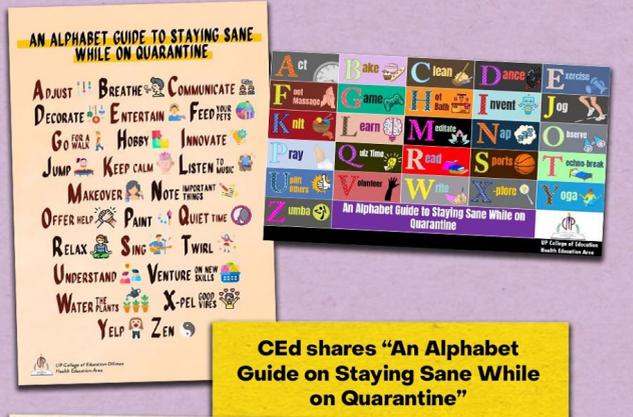
Finally, through Proclamation No. 929 on Mar. 17, the president placed the entire Philippines under the state of calamity on account of COVID-19 and finally locked down the metropolis and the entire Luzon until Apr. 12 through the enhanced community quarantine.

Duterte's spokesman, Salvador Panelo, described the ECQ as an absolute or total lockdown. "It means that all persons will be subjected to strict home quarantine, no movement and no transportation, except only for frontline health workers, authorized government officials, medical or humanitarian [reasons] as well as transport of basic services and necessities," abs.com news quoted Panelo.

What were the effects of the lockdown?

Over 2 million employees were displaced during the first five weeks of the Luzon-wide ECQ where about 70 percent were affected by temporary business closures and 30 percent of employees were subject to alternative work arrangements such as reduced working days and hours; forced leave; and work-from-home, according to Flanders Investment and Trade (<https://www.flandersinvestmentandtrade.com>).

Metro Manila accounted for the biggest number of displaced workers.



The College of Education (CEd) produced "An Alphabet Guide on Staying Sane While on Quarantine," an infographic that will help the public, especially children, cope with the pandemic, and shared on their Facebook page on March 28.



Photos courtesy of UP College of Education Facebook page



The UP Department of Mechanical Engineering, in collaboration with the Electrical and Electronics Engineering Institute and Argonix Medical Corporation, will produce designs and associate prototypes of powered air-purifying respirator, a personal protective equipment for frontliners that functions much like a water purifier.



UP Bike Share shares 92 bikes to frontliners

The UP Bike Share lent out 92 bicycles to several medical institutions to be used by personnel as a temporary mode of transportation during the ECQ.



Photos courtesy of UP Bike Share Facebook page

According to a survey conducted in the Philippines and published by Statista, 78.1 percent of households with a member earning below P9,500 lost a job from the ECQ. (<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1114518/philippines-effect-of-ecq-on-jobs-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19-by-income/#statisticContainer>)

On the ground and closer to home, at UP Diliman (UPD), this meant the loss of jobs and source of living for jeepney drivers plying the various routes on campus; for construction workers in the university's various infrastructure projects, for the food concessionaire workers and the many maninindas.

There were also concerns for the well-being of dormitory residents stranded on campus and agency workers such as security guards and utility workers in the various UPD offices.

Rising to the challenge, UPD faculty and personnel, along with students, alumni and organizations affiliated with the university shared their expertise, talents and resources to address specific concerns posed by the pandemic and ensuing lockdown.

These initiatives have been reported in TatagUP: Tugon ng UP Diliman sa Hamon ng COVID-19 (<https://upd.edu.ph/tatagup/>). Initially called KapitDiliman, the change in the portal's name reflects UPD's new and forward-looking directions in meeting the unique challenges posed by the lifting of severe quarantine measures while flattening the curve at the same time. The title is a play on "Tatak UP" and embodies the University's resilience, survival and response.

Dozens of initiatives were undertaken since the start of the lockdown in March, which may be classified under four categories: knowledge creation, innovations and initiatives, fund-raising and donations and outreach programs.

KNOWLEDGE CREATION. Initiatives of several UPD units sought to assist the general public in understand the virus, cope with the stresses brought by the pandemic and adjust to the changes brought by the "new normal."

Words related to the virus and the disease were explained in infographics made by several faculty members and student groups. One college made a children's dictionary of COVID-19-related words like pandemic and quarantine to help the young ones understand this new virus.

Stress is already part of life, but not undue stress the pandemic has brought. To help the general public cope

#TatagUP features uploaded to the UPD website and social media accounts

with the pandemic, maintain their sanity and keep their bodies healthy, some UPD units produced related videos and posts in social media. Other academic units also conducted webinars and online consultations to help the affected sectors like labor, tourism and economy. cases, air quality and traffic situation during lockdown were also monitoring.

With the loss of jobs as a consequence of the lockdown, local governments assisted many households through food rations. Drawing on their specialization as nutritionists and dieticians, faculty members prepared and compiled recipes for food items regularly found in relief packs like sardines. Infographics were also used to delineate the proper use of spaces during home quarantine and to minimize cabin fever and boredom.

INNOVATIONS AND INITIATIVES. Forty-six major projects came out of the University in this period, ranging from designing powered air-purifying respirators for health care workers setting up an isolation facility inside what would normally be one of the busiest buildings on campus.

Colleges under the Science and Technology Cluster led the way in research/innovation, producing 24 of the 30 listed projects such as the development and deployment of a prototype ultraviolet light chamber to disinfect used personal protective equipment and the design of a central referral complex to process a large influx of COVID-19 patients.

At the same time, COVID-19 initiatives sprung up among the various colleges, offices and student organizations. The UP Health Service and College of Social Sciences and Philosophy teamed up to open Kanlungang Palma, the first on-campus COVID-19 isolation facility.

In the College of Home Economics alone, faculty, alumni and student organizations collectively came up with nine initiatives, from creating a special drink concentrate and sewing PPEs for frontliners to developing learning materials for young children in quarantine.

FUND-RAISING AND DONATIONS. Since March, 36 fundraising/donation drives have been conducted by UPD constituents.

Cash and in-kind donations were solicited for a wide range of beneficiaries. UP students stranded on campus, along with non-UP employees, security personnel and janitorial staff in many academic units

comprised the biggest beneficiary sector. Other recipients included medical and health workers on campus and other hospitals within Metro Manila and a number of provinces, families of maninindas and jeepney drivers on campus and vulnerable communities in Barangay UP campus and other parts of the country, among others.

Of the initiatives, seven donation/fundraising drives were organized by academic units and 29 by student organizations, non-academic units and alumni groups. The seven academic units are the College of Arts and Letters, College of Mass Communication, College of Music, School of Labor and Industrial Relations, Technology Management Center, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy and the School of Statistics.

Meanwhile, the 29 donation/fundraising drives were undertaken by 12 student organizations, two non-academic units, three alumni groups, and 12 student organizations and non-academic units with co-organizers/partner organizations.

OUTREACH. Drawing on their expertise and the support of their extensive network of friends and colleagues, a number of dormitory residents on campus, student organizations, alumni and academic units sought to inform, counsel, mobilize supplies and resources, provide relief and even comfort to the most vulnerable sectors of society in the early months of the pandemic.

Fifteen initiatives were undertaken, most of which were for the general public and health, medical and other frontliners in the Metro and other parts of the country.

Seven activities addressed the concerns of medical and other frontliners while efforts were also undertaken for the public in general. Two of these were a call for volunteer lawyers to assist victims of discrimination because of Covid-19, and an informative guide on the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, among others.

Meanwhile, the UP Varsity Pep squad used their talents to boost the UPD community's morale, while the talents from the College of Music performed online to pay tribute to the frontliners and health workers who passed away from Covid-19 and comfort their bereaved.