

## What can we do to flatten the curve?

It's easy to lose one's mind these days. We can't help it. It's as if our dystopian future descended on us in the wink of an eye. Our everyday lives have been so rudely interrupted, no thanks to the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 pandemic.

Our contact with other people has been limited to virtual interactions. We can only laugh with those tiny yellow smileys or tear up with crying emoticons. Our meetings are on Zoom and in chat groups. We've become detached from the outside world. But then again, the outside world has disappeared, too. There is nothing out there, but a giant empty city.

### EYES WIDE OPEN



**IRIS GONZALES**

There's no telling when this will end. **Bayanihan** But isolated and detached as we are, there is a way we can help and I am encouraged by the stories of people reaching out to others. The *bayanihan* spirit is very much alive these days. Derived from the Filipino word "bayan," which means town or community, the term *bayanihan* refers to the spirit of communal unity to achieve a particular goal. It stems from the age-old practice of villagers working together to help a family relocate by moving their entire *bahay kubo* to another part of the village.

There's no English word that captures *bayanihan* perfectly because I believe the custom itself is uniquely Filipino and I am happy to see it so strong nowadays as the country grapples with this pandemic.

I hear about stories of strangers helping each other and pooling resources to help frontliners. Individuals are raising funds to help health workers – and strangers are responding to these calls.

From my own circle, one chat group alone has already raised funds to acquire personal protective equipment (PPE) for UP frontliners. We were able to look for suppliers with just a few texts, calls, and posts here and there despite our respective isolated existence.

#### Big business

Conglomerates have rallied their own troops, leading the private sector's response to the crisis.

Lucio Tan-owned LT Group Inc. and Ramon Ang-led San Miguel Corp., for instance, have repurposed their facilities to produce much-needed ethyl alcohol for our frontline health workers.

The Sy-owned SM Foundation has also donated P170 million worth of full protective suits and other equipment to hospitals, while the MVP Group contributed virus specimen collection kits and other supplies needed by medical frontliners.

The Consunji Group's DMCI, with the help of Bloomberg Foundation, also helped retrofit two wards of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) to handle COVID-19 cases. The wards have negative pressure rooms that prevent contaminated air from going out.

From the food sector, Bounty Fresh donated a whopping 105,000 kilograms of fresh, dressed chicken to different areas in Luzon.

Some of these donations are for police frontliners in Bamban, Tarlac and Sta. Maria, Bulacan and frontliners in the cities of Pasig and Taguig through various community kitchens.

Bounty Fresh has also started donating 1,200 Adobo Connection packed meals for the healthcare workers of different hospitals, including the University of the East – Ramon Magsaysay (UERM) Memorial Medical Center, San Juan de Dios Hospital, East Avenue Medical Center and PGH.

The company also pledged 45,000 kilograms of fresh, dressed chickens as support to its merchandisers across Luzon and to its employees who are continuously in service.

#### Pilipinas Shell

Oil giant Pilipinas Shell is also doing its part to help, I was told when I asked about their response.

It has already endorsed P4 million to the Philippine Businesses for Social Progress (PBSP) for the purchase of family packs containing food and protection kits for displaced workers.

In addition, it donated more than 10,000 face masks and complete PPE sets to the Department of Health and the PGH. Shell is also providing fuel support to BGC Bus, Ceres Bus and Ube Transport to help medical frontliners get to where they need to go.

As Pilipinas Shell country chairman Cesar Romero said, "this is an unprecedented time that demands compassion, respect, and kindness from all of us."

#### Let's do our share

There are many more companies and individuals joining in the collective effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The greater your capacity to help, the bigger support you can and you must give.

I hope there will be more. We all need to do our part to flatten the infection curve. We can help even from our own homes.

As one tycoon said to me, "this is not a battle, but a war." Indeed, let's all give our best and join the fight because it's the right thing to do. Respond to calls for help or think of new ways to help. Let's focus on saving Filipino lives.

Whether by sewing an improvised face mask or pooling funds for ventilators, we all can do something. Let the *bayanihan* spirit live on in each of us. In it, we see our dignity and with it, we are able to rise against all odds.

May we always remember that it is always an honor to help our fellow Filipinos. Let us do it today because as this virus has taught us, tomorrow may never come.

Iris Gonzales' email address is [eyesgonzales@gmail.com](mailto:eyesgonzales@gmail.com). Follow her on Twitter [@eyesgonzales](https://twitter.com/eyesgonzales). Column archives at [eyesgonzales.com](http://eyesgonzales.com)

### Factory... From B1

Hopes of a swift return to normal operations and rebound in new contracts partly offset downbeat predictions

"Unsurprisingly, businesses were much less positive regarding the 12-month future period. With no one knowing the full timeline of the pandemic, the extent of the economic impact remains largely unknown," said Owen.

Manufacturing conditions in the ASEAN region also suffered a sharp deterioration in March.

The headline ASEAN Manufacturing PMI fell to 43.4 in March from 50.2 in February, the lowest reading since July 2012. All seven countries covered by the PMI survey registered contractions but the downturn was most severe in Singapore.

All indicators for the region's manufacturing sector hit record lows, with substantial declines

for output and new orders.

"ASEAN manufacturers felt the full force of the coronavirus pandemic in March. The headline PMI dropped to the lowest in the survey's near eight-year history, amid record contractions of output, new orders, inventories and employment. Notably, March was the first time on record that all of the seven constituent countries posted a deterioration in the health of their respective manufacturing sectors simultaneously," said Lewis Cooper, IHS Markit economist.

"Restrictive measures stemming from efforts to contain the COVID-19 outbreak and substantial uncertainty surrounding the outlook also eroded firms output expectations during March. Sentiment was the lowest since the series began in mid-2012, although firms still remain, on average, optimistic output will increase over the next 12 months."

InLife INSULAR LIFE	Variable Unit Linked Investment Funds	
	March 30, 2020	March 27, 2020
Fixed Income Fund	₱ 2.000604	₱ 2.000838
Balanced Fund	₱ 2.470388	₱ 2.494619
Equity Fund	₱ 2.963794	₱ 3.041438
Growth Fund	₱ 1.051431	₱ 1.074156
Select Equities Fund	₱ 0.592324	₱ 0.607603
Guardian Fund	₱ 0.480294	₱ 0.492758
ONE (Own the New Economy) Fund	₱ 0.624372	₱ 0.645746
Peso Money Market Fund	₱ 1.090852	₱ 1.090699
Peso Global Equity Fund	₱ 0.979819	₱ 0.939073
Dollar Money Market Fund	\$ 1.046061	\$ 1.045997
Dollar Fixed Income Fund	\$ 1.623635	\$ 1.627905
Peso Global Technology Fund	₱ 0.880049	₱ 0.859783

  

	March 23, 2020*	March 9, 2020
Philippine Equity Advantage Fund	₱ 951.20	₱ 975.90
Philippine Equity Advantage Fund Tranche 2	₱ 955.30	₱ 986.20
Asian Emerging Companies Dollar Fund	\$ 974.70	\$ 974.70
Euro Blue Chips Dollar Fund	\$ 991.40	\$ 991.40

\*Prices in this column apply to transactions submitted from March 10, 2020 to March 23, 2020.

These Investment funds are specific to Variable Life Insurance contracts and are not considered mutual funds. Life Insurance products are regulated by the Insurance Commission. The unit prices are also available at [www.insularlife.com.ph](http://www.insularlife.com.ph)

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Equity Ventures

Dear Valued Stockholder,

In line with the Aboitiz Group's sustainability efforts, Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. (AEV or the Company) is delivering its Definitive Information Statement (SEC Form 20-IS) for the Annual Stockholders' Meeting (2020 ASM) on April 27, 2020 at 3:00 pm via QR code, which is accessible below:



#### How to access the Information Statement:

- Open a QR code reader on your smartphone
- Allow the QR code reader to scan the code
- Press OK or click the link to view the Information Statement
- QR Code also includes the Notice and Agenda, sample proxy forms, and other details about the 2020 ASM

The documents (Information Statement, Notice and Agenda, sample proxy forms, and other details about the 2020 ASM) are also available at <https://abotiz.com/investor-relations/annual-stockholders-meeting>.

If you wish to receive hard copies of the Information Statement, you may send your request through email to [abotiz.shareholder.services@abotiz.com](mailto:abotiz.shareholder.services@abotiz.com), or contact Ms. Marinel Mangubat at 8886-2800 local 21757. Please note though that due to the Enhanced Community Quarantine in effect and the various restrictions put in place by various local government units, there will be delays in our ability to print and send out hard copies of the Information Statement and we can provide no assurance as to when you may receive your hard copy. Given the special circumstances facing the country this year, we encourage stockholders to take advantage of all online and electronic opportunities to receive their copies of the Information Statement and other documents related to the 2020 ASM.

In addition, due to the Enhanced Community Quarantine in effect and the prohibition on mass gatherings, **THERE WILL BE NO PHYSICAL VENUE FOR THE 2020 ASM**. To know more on how to access the livestream for the 2020 ASM and register your vote using the voting portal, please refer to the Company's website at <https://abotiz.com/investor-relations/annual-stockholders-meeting>.

Stockholders may still vote through Proxy, copy of which is provided together with the QR. Please send scanned copies of the duly executed proxies to [abotiz.shareholder.services@abotiz.com](mailto:abotiz.shareholder.services@abotiz.com) on or before April 20, 2020.

Thank you and we appreciate your continued support and trust in the Company.

From the Corporate Secretary.

(SGD.)  
**Manuel Alberto R. Colayco**  
Corporate Secretary

**AboitizPower**

Dear Valued Stockholder,

In line with the Aboitiz Group's sustainability efforts, Aboitiz Power Corporation (AboitizPower or the Company) is delivering its Definitive Information Statement (SEC Form 20-IS) for the Annual Stockholders Meeting (2020 ASM) on April 27, 2020 at 3:00 pm via QR code, which is accessible below:



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From the Corporate Secretary.

(SGD.)  
**Manuel Alberto R. Colayco**  
Corporate Secretary