Social Entrepreneurship and Productivity

Dr. Marie Lisa M. Dacanay

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PREFACE

The P-Insights, short for "Productivity Insights," is an extension of the Productivity Talk (P-Talk) series, which is a flagship program under the APO Secretariat's digital information initiative. Born out of both necessity and creativity under the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic, the interactive, livestreamed P-Talks bring practitioners, experts, policymakers, and ordinary citizens from all walks of life with a passion for productivity to share their experience, views, and practical tips on productivity improvement.

With speakers from every corner of the world, the P-Talks effectively convey productivity information to APO member countries and beyond. However, it was recognized that many of the P-Talk speakers had much more to offer beyond the 60-minute presentations and Q&A sessions that are the hallmarks of the series. To take full advantage of their broad knowledge and expertise, some were invited to elaborate on their P-Talks, resulting in this publication. It is hoped that the P-Insights will give readers a deeper understanding of the practices and applications of productivity as they are evolving during the pandemic and being adapted to meet different needs in the anticipated new normal.

VI | SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND PRODUCTIVITY

INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship is a global phenomenon that is broadly about innovative solutions to social problems. It has evolved differently in various national and regional contexts. In developing countries in Asia, social entrepreneurship has evolved as an innovative response to the inability of state and market institutions to effectively cater to the socioeconomic needs of the poor and marginalized sectors of society.

This report discusses the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship and how it has contributed to inclusive development and productivity improvement in developing countries in Asia. It provides concrete examples of social entrepreneurship initiatives in the Philippines, Thailand, India, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. It uses these examples and their links to regional platforms to demonstrate how social entrepreneurship is evolving as a strategy for recognizing, growing, and mainstreaming social enterprises as key partners of government in enabling the poor, marginalized, and women at the grassroots level to become productive stakeholders of inclusive, sustainable development. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, social entrepreneurship is also showing a major pathway toward inclusive recovery and building back fairer.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

A useful starting point for understanding social entrepreneurship as a global phenomenon was provided by Perrini [1]: "Social entrepreneurship entails innovations designed to explicitly improve societal well-being, housed within entrepreneurial organizations, which initiate, guide or contribute to change in society."

The entrepreneurial organizations referred to are social enterprises. In global research covering 55 countries using bottom-up approaches to capture the phenomenon which was published in 2019, scholars concluded that social enterprises are responses toward new ways of sharing responsibility for the common good in today's economics and societies. Social enterprises are responses on the basis of economic and business models driven by a social mission [2]. Three main models of social enterprises were observed across Asia: the entrepreneurial nonprofit model; the social cooperative model; and the social business model (Figure 1) [3]. Entrepreneurial nonprofit social



enterprises are usually nonstock, nonprofit organizations, foundations, or associations that trade for a social purpose. Social cooperatives take the cooperative legal form but beyond just working for the mutual benefit of members, they have embraced community development or contributing to broader societal change as objectives. Social businesses usually take the legal form of stock corporations, single proprietorships, or partnerships but with clear social missions driving their existence. We can see all these models of social enterprises uplifting the lives of the poor and marginalized sectors in various developing countries in Asia.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CASES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN ASIA

It is useful to exemplify the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise models that are serving various segments of poverty groups in different economic subsectors in the region (Figure 2).

	JRE 2 NTREPRENEURSHIP CASES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN ASIA.
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Case 1

Alter Trade and NOFTA: Empowering Small-scale Producers in the Philippines

In the Philippines, Alter Trade Foundation Inc. (Alter Trade) transformed more than 800 assetless agricultural workers into entrepreneurial farmers who became land reform beneficiaries serving as supplier communities for fairly traded organic muscovado sugar. As farmers, they were organized into cooperatives and associations that served as vehicles for diversifying their crops and income sources. These resulted in the achievement of food security, resilience, and raising their household incomes beyond the poverty threshold. They also became lead organizations for community development visioning, planning, and implementation for setting up community-based water and health systems.



Photos reproduced with permission from Alter Trade Foundation, Inc. (ATFI), the Philippines.

In all these processes, Alter Trade introduced a gender-transformative lens and affirmative action for ensuring women's inclusion and empowerment. They encouraged equal opportunities to access to services, ensured equal pay for equal work, and promoted the sharing of household care work between women and men.

The cooperatives and associations were also assisted by Alter Trade to set up a federation, the Negros Organic and Fair Trade Association (NOFTA). NOFTA has served as the voice of farmers on the Alter Trade Board. NOFTA also represented the farmers in negotiations to get better terms for their sugar produce and in joint ventures such as the NOFTA Fair Trade Haus, the marketing arm of their social enterprise system [4].

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Alter Trade partner communities coped better because households were relatively food secure and unpaid care work was shared among household members.

Case 2

Fisherfolk Enterprise and Sustainable Fishery Value Chain Development in Thailand

In Thailand, Fisherfolk Enterprise co-developed a Blue Brand of fresh, responsibly fished and formalin-free seafood in partnership with Oxfam. This enabled fishers from the Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation who were engaged in community-based coastal resource management and sustainable fisheries to benefit from better prices and to receive higher incomes for their harvest. Fisherfolk Enterprise also engaged a social enterprise chain of grocery stores in Bangkok called Lemon Farm Cooperative to serve as a market channel for their Blue Brand-certified seafood. Lemon Farm Cooperative, which is owned by 28,000 consumer and producer households, has 11 grocery store outlets in Bangkok. They carry more than 3,000 natural and organic agricultural products from small-scale producers certified through a participatory guarantee system [4].

The Fisherfolk Enterprise operation center in Prachuab Khiri Khan province is the central operating center in the community where all the fresh fish products are prepared, processed, and packaged before being sold. Women work there to do the cleaning, preparation, quality control, and packaging of the Blue Brandcertified products. An insulated cooler was introduced as a new technology to help extend the shelf life of the fresh products for eight more days. Prior to installing this cooler, fishers lost some profit on the products they were not able to sell on the same day as their catch.



Photos reproduced with permission from Fisherfolk Enterprise, Thailand.

Case 3 Bote Central and the Coffee for Life Program in the Philippines

Bote Central, a social enterprise working in the coffee value chain, led the organization of the Philippine Coffee Alliance (PCA), a network of more than 50 community-based coffee enterprises (CBCEs) in the country. Through the Coffee for Life Program, Bote Central and the PCA assist coffee farmers, women, and youth not only as producers of green coffee beans but also in becoming full-fledged stakeholders in the coffee value chain. These coffee farmers, women, and youth are assisted in processing, developing, and marketing their own brands of coffee. This has resulted in coffee farmers, women, and youth getting a more substantive share of the wealth created in the value chain.



Photos reproduced with permission from Bote Central, Inc., Philippines.

One of the CBCEs developed and assisted was Sultan Kudarat Coffee Ventures Inc. (SKCVI). SKCVI, in partnership with a local nongovernmental development organization (TRICOM) and their partner indigenous people's organization, the Kulaman Manobo Dulangan Organization (KMDO), worked together to undertake the production, processing, and marketing of Kape Dulangan, their own brand of coffee, to a growing local market as part of their Ancestral Domain Development Plan. The Coffee for Life Program has enabled more than 5,000 farmers, women, and youth to become productive stakeholders in the coffee value chain in the Philippines [4].

The COVID-19 pandemic validated the importance of community-based social enterprises producing food and beverages that serve local markets. During the

pandemic, the Coffee for Life partner communities that served local markets did better than other farmers in value chains that mainly served external and export markets.

Case 4

Sustainable Healthcare Advancement in India

In the health sector, the DHAN Foundation in India spearheaded the setting up of Sustainable Healthcare Advancement (SUHAM) as a trust serving the healthcare initiatives of people's organizations. The vision of universal health access for the poor has been pursued through five strategies: 1) wellness centers providing services virtually and at the doorsteps of households; 2) mobile clinics to ensure early diagnosis; 3) primary-care clinics as hubs; 4) secondary hospitals for specialty care; and 5) referrals to tertiary hospitals for highly specialized services. SUHAM promotes community health and nutrition as well as sanitation and safe water, alongside its flagship initiative of building community hospitals. Since its establishment in 2007, the initiative has resulted in setting up eight community hospitals in three states. Through these community hospitals, SUHAM is able to provide cashless services for the poor by charging 60% of the market price of healthcare services, coupled with the support of a mutual health insurance program [5].

SUHAM initiatives in health became critical to the poor in ensuring their access to health education and services during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Photos reproduced with permission from the DHAN Foundation, India.

Case 5 Selyn: Empowering Women in the Crafts Subsector in Sri Lanka

Selyn Sri Lanka is a successful women-led fair-trade social enterprise operating from and working in rural communities for more than 30 years. Selyn provides sustainable livelihoods to more than 200 homeworkers and directly employs another 200 in 10 communities producing fair-trade handicrafts. Selyn provides decent, consistent work to both its homeworkers and workers in its workshops, in the process ensuring fair wages. With women comprising 90% of workers, it has instituted flexible work arrangements and provides childcare facilities. To empower these women, Selyn has a health and wellness program in addition to capacity building in financial management, leadership, and entrepreneurship development. Selyn promotes sustainable consumption and production, with its product lines striving to promote plastic-free alternatives, such as reusable fabric sanitary napkins.



During the pandemic, Selyn also participated in the production and marketing of reusable protective masks [6].

Case 6 Common Room: Bridging the Digital Divide in Indonesia

To bridge the digital divide and connect the unconnected, Common Room Networks Foundation (Common Room) partnered with the Kasepuhan Ciptagelar Indigenous Community in Indonesia. In West Java province, it developed and provided community-based local internet services in partnership with PT. Awinet Global Mandiri (AwiNet) as the partner ISP company. In the partnership, Common Room provides the conceptual framework and operation of the system, manages the tripartite agreement, and handles finance and administration. Kasepuhan Ciptagelar, the village government of the indigenous community in the area, represents and manages the primary stakeholders and beneficiaries of the initiative. It handles resource mobilization, local support, voucher distribution, and local technical assistance. AwiNet handles local internet infrastructure development, bandwidth and licenses, technical support, and maintenance as well as knowledge and skill transfer. By mid-2021, internet connectivity had reached 29 villages, and new local jobs had been created through the initiative's need for local voucher agents and technicians.



Photos reproduced with permission from Common Room, Indonesia.

Internet connectivity has also effectively supported remote education processes in addition to supporting COVID-19 pandemic preparedness in the region [7].

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP PLATFORMS IN ASIA

TOWARD INCLUSIVE RECOVERY, BUILDING BACK FAIRER, AND ACCELERATING THE SDGs

As demonstrated by these six cases in Asia, social entrepreneurship initiatives engage and enable the poor, marginalized, and women at the grassroots level in three ways: 1) providing access to basic social and economic services; 2) enabling them to become productive stakeholders in economic value chains linked to sustainable consumption and production; and 3) contributing to and benefiting from increasing productivity in ways that transform their lives, communities, and living environments.

Unlike regular private businesses that primarily pursue profit, often without due regard for negative social and environmental costs, social enterprises strive to positively impact the lives of the poor and marginalized as well as their communities and habitats. Unlike private enterprises practicing corporate social responsibility which tend to give up their social and environmental objectives when their profits are at risk, social enterprises strive to pursue their social missions even amid challenges posed by pandemics, disasters, and economic downturns. These characteristics of social enterprises, coupled with their track records in providing innovative solutions to social and environmental problems, have resulted in a growing recognition of their relevance and significance as key players in sustainable economic development.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, social enterprises were considered game changers in accelerating the meeting of the UN SDGs. This was one reason why the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) co-convened a conference in September 2020 with UN ESCAP to launch or present social entrepreneurship platforms to accelerate the meeting of the SDGs (SE-SDG Acceleration Platforms) in the region [8].

Considering the impact of COVID-19 on social enterprises and the poor they serve, these SE-SDG Acceleration Platforms have been transformed into Platforms for Inclusive Recovery and Building Back Fairer. The five platforms revolve around the themes shown in Figure 3 [9].

FIGURE 3	
IVE PLATFORM	S FOR INCLUSIVE RECOVERY AND BUILDING BACK FAIRER.
Women's Empo (WE LIVE FOOD	werment, Livelihoods and Food in Agricultural Value Chains)
	r All in Sustainable Value Chains and DECENT WORK)
Rural Revitaliza (YOUTH and SE	tion, Youth and Social Entrepreneurship)
HEALTH for ALL	
5	nnovations for Sustainable Development FECH INNOVATIONS)

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the overdependence of communities on global food systems, the significance of local markets and shorter food miles, the importance of food-secure, resilient farming and fishing communities, and the need to give greater attention to revitalizing rural economies. Many other problems related to women and youth have also lingered and are even more serious today: aging farmer populations in many countries; growing youth unemployment; and the lack of recognition and participation of women as stakeholders in building sustainable economies. The COVID-19 pandemic has also demonstrated the importance of community-based health systems in promoting COVID-free communities as well as in bridging the digital divide through community networks.

It was in consideration of these that the five platforms with their respective themes were chosen as the focus of collaboration among social entrepreneurship practitioners, supporters, and advocates in the Asia-Pacific region from 2020–2030. Through these platforms, social enterprises, as exemplified by the cases presented, could work together to fulfill their roles as catalysts for inclusive recovery and building back fairer and as accelerators in meeting the

SDGs. The SDGs that these platforms were envisioned to contribute to were: no poverty (Goal 1); zero hunger (Goal 2); good health and well-being (Goal 3); gender equality (Goal 5); decent work and inclusive growth (Goal 8); inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation (Goal 9); reduced inequalities (Goal 10); sustainable communities (Goal 11); responsible consumption and production (Goal 12); climate action (Goal 13); peace, justice, and strong institutions (Goal 16); and partnership for the goals (Goal 17) [8].

Various aspects of the cases of Alter Trade and NOFTA, the Fisherfolk Enterprise and its Blue Brand, and Bote Central and its Coffee for Life Program may be seen as inspiring the two interrelated platforms on We Live Food as well as Youth and SE. The case of Selyn may be seen as inspiring the platform on sustainable and decent work. The cases of SUHAM and the Common Room, on the other hand, may be seen as inspiring the platforms on Health for All and Sustainable Tech Innovations, respectively.

These social entrepreneurship platforms have four roles: 1) as platforms for learning exchange and building communities of practice among social enterprises; 2) as platforms for projecting the collective impact of social enterprises; 3) as platforms for engaging governments to support and provide enabling environments for social enterprises; and 4) as platforms for social enterprises to engage with other sectors in mobilizing resources as well as in promoting partnerships and cross-sectoral collaboration.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT

This section highlights insights from ISEA studies on social enterprises on one hand and implications on social entrepreneurship for inclusive development and productivity improvement on the other. The social entrepreneurship cases discussed earlier are used to illustrate the insights.

One major insight from ISEA's research on social entrepreneurship in a developing country context of poverty and inequality is the phenomenon of social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders (SEPPS). All the six cases discussed illustrate SEPPS serving various poverty sectors. SEPPS can be appreciated as having three elements.

First, they are social mission-driven organizations that explicitly pursue poverty reduction or alleviation as the primary objective [10]. The poor are engaged as workers, suppliers, clients, and owners of social enterprises and as partners in social enterprise or value chain management, governance, and/or the pursuit of social change. The six social entrepreneurship cases summarized show various poor or marginalized sectors being served to improve their quality of life and move them out of poverty. The poverty sectors featured include agricultural workers, farmers, fishers, indigenous people, women, and the poor in urban and rural communities.

Second, they are wealth-creating organizations that, like business enterprises, are engaged in the provision of goods and services [10]. The six examples show that the social enterprises were engaged in the provision of organic muscovado sugar, coffee, formalin-free seafood, crafts, healthcare, and internet services. They all pursue a double or triple bottom line, as manifested by their social, environmental, and financial objectives. The social enterprises generate revenues to achieve financial sustainability, supporting their social objectives.

Third, they have a distributive enterprise philosophy [10]. They generate positive economic and social value that is distributed to or benefit the poor as primary stakeholders. Social enterprise surplus or profits accrue to the poor as dividends, are used to support activities and services for the poor to overcome poverty, and are invested or reinvested to fulfill their social enterprise missions. In contrast to regular businesses that primarily generate profits to enrich owners and investors, the social enterprises featured generate positive social value and improve the well-being, productivity, and incomes of the various poverty sectors they serve.

A second set of insights from ISEA's research is on the services provided by social enterprises to the poor and marginalized. There are three types of services: transactional; transformational; and social inclusion (Table 1). Transactional services are oriented toward assisting the poor to become effective workers, suppliers, clients, or microentrepreneurs. Examples of these are training to meet the quality, quantity, and delivery requirements of markets; product development and marketing; and the provision of loans or microinsurance. Transformational services are oriented toward enabling the poor to overcome their capability deprivation and to become actors in their own development. These include organizing the poor into self-governing cooperatives, leadership development, capacity building on gender issues, and the like. Social inclusion services are oriented toward providing the poor immediate access to basic needs and social services. Examples of these are the setting up of community-based systems for water, health, and sanitation; and provision of health services through community hospitals and ICT services. All these three types of services were shown by the six cases [11].

TABLE 1

SERVICES PROVIDED BY SOCIAL ENTERPRISES TO THE POOR AND MARGINALIZED.

Transactional services	Social inclusion services	Transformational services
Oriented at assisting the poor to become effective workers, suppliers, clients, and microentrepreneurs	Oriented at providing the poor immediate access to basic needs and social services	Oriented at enabling the poor to overcome their capability deprivation and become actors in their own development
Examples: training to meet quantity, quality, and delivery requirements of markets; product development and marketing; loans and microinsurance	Examples: setting up community- based systems for water, health, and sanitation; provision of health services through community hospitals; ICT services	Examples: organizing the poor into self-governing cooperatives; leadership development; capacity building on gender issues

Source: Reproduced with permission from the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia [11].

The third insight is about the different ways that social enterprises engage the poor and address poverty. There are two main models: the collaboration model; and the empowerment model. They are differentiated by the nature of roles and capabilities developed among the poor and their impact on the poor (Table 2).

TABLE 2		
DIFFERENT SOCIAL E	NTREPRENEURSHIP MODELS	AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE POOR.
Orientation toward the poor	The poor as transactional partners (collaboration model)	The poor as transformational and transactional partners (empowerment model)
 Nature of roles and capabilities developed among the poor 	 Proactive workers, suppliers, clients Partners in social enterprise and value chain management 	 Empowered workers, suppliers, clients, owners Organized partners in poverty reduction, community sector, and societal change
Impact on the poor	 Increased incomes, access to services→social inclusion 	 Significant outcomes in overcoming capability deprivation and income poverty

Source: Modified with permission from Dacanay M.L. [12].

The collaboration model engages the poor as transactional partners. They engage the poor as proactive workers, suppliers, and clients as well as partners in social enterprise and value chain management [12]. Among the six cases, the Common Room and Selyn illustrate the collaboration model where the poor are engaged as proactive clients and as proactive workers and suppliers, respectively.

On the other hand, empowerment models, as shown by Alter Trade and the Fisherfolk Enterprise cases, engage the poor as both transformational and transactional partners. In concrete terms, they engage farmers and fishers to become empowered workers, suppliers, and owners and as organized partners in poverty reduction and community, sectoral, and societal change. These two models usually result in two different levels of impact. Collaboration models result in social inclusion, while empowerment models result in significant outcomes in overcoming capability deprivation. The latter means building the poor's own capability to improve their means of living [13].

Interestingly, the case of Bote Central and its Coffee for Life Program, as well as SUHAM in partnership with the DHAN Foundation, manifest a combination of

the collaboration and empowerment models. While Bote Central mainly provides transactional services, their nature assists coffee farmers in performing new roles such as processing and marketing their own brands of coffee. This has enabled farmers to reap their fair share from the wealth generated in the coffee value chain and to co-own community-based coffee enterprises. At the same time, Bote Central partnered with nongovernmental organizations such as TRICOM at the local level to holistically provide transformational services directed at organizing and capacity development among the coffee farmers engaged.

In the case of SUHAM, the poor have been engaged as client-owners, made possible through the DHAN Foundation's holistic provision of transformational services to ensure organizational and leadership development among the poverty sectors served. In these two cases, we witness the combined outcome of social inclusion and improving the capability of the poor to improve their means of livelihood.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, what do these insights mean for social entrepreneurship and productivity? On the whole, social entrepreneurship results in inclusive development and productivity improvement in three ways. First, by providing the poor and the marginalized access to basic social and economic services, social entrepreneurship makes a direct contribution to improving their productivity and ensuring that they are not left behind. Second, by enabling the poor to become productive stakeholders in sustainable economic development, social entrepreneurship makes a direct contribution to improving national productivity capability and sustainability. Finally, by empowering the poor to contribute to and benefit from the value and wealth created in the economy in ways that transform their lives, communities, and living environments, social entrepreneurship makes a direct contribution to ensuring that improvements in productivity and the growth of national economies are both inclusive and sustainable.

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