

Open Symposium Closing Remarks

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. In behalf of the Conference of Asian Foundations and Organizations or CAFO, I would like to thank all of you for taking the time to come and participate in this workshop-conference. The sharing that transpired today reflects the wealth of social entrepreneurship praxis taking place in Asia.

Please allow me to briefly introduce CAFO and our involvement in social entrepreneurship. The Conference of Asian Foundations and Organizations is a network of grant making and implementing organizations based in 11 countries and territories of Asia. It has been some years now since CAFO and its member networks have taken interest on social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship, as a thematic interest, was first brought to CAFO by members of the CAFO Philippines in 2001. In 2004, CAFO together with the Asian Institute for Management (AIM), published "Creating A Space in the Market: Social Enterprise Stories in Asia" which was the result of more than three years of collaborative research, workshops and conference. The book showcased exemplary initiatives on social entrepreneurship in select countries i.e. Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and India. Looking into the cases compiled in the book, three (3) strategies of social enterprise development were identified. They are as follows: empowerment, intermediation and resource mobilization strategy. In 2005, with the Himalaya Foundation as host, CAFO organized the Asian Social Entrepreneurship Forum in Taiwan. An interesting realization of that conference was the identification of a fourth strategy in social enterprise development i.e. social inclusion strategy. This strategy was based on the sharing made by participants from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Currently, there is an ongoing CAFO tri-city research on social entrepreneurship involving practitioners and academicians from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Many challenges confront us today in our work in social entrepreneurship. How do we manage double, multiple bottom-lines? What competencies are required of the entrepreneur? How do we scale up? What critical engagements do we take to create greater impact? How do we measure impact? What kind of policy environment is needed to nurture social entrepreneurship? And if I may add to this list, coming from the culture sector perspective, how do we ground/locate social entrepreneurship in the realm of values and culture? How do we merge multiple bottom-lines to include cultural integrity? The task of finding the answers to these challenges can be found in the collaborative effort of practitioners, managers, researchers, educators and various institutions promoting social entrepreneurship. After all, social entrepreneurship is a shared journey, a shared passion, a shared commitment by all of us who believe in making a difference by engaging the market with the poor and marginalized as major players and/or beneficiaries.

The models, presentations, workshop discussions that transpired today, are a rich resource of knowledge, ideas, strategies and programs. Our coming here today is a continuation of this process of enriching our knowledge and thereby our praxis of social enterprise development.

Social entrepreneurship is not an easy task. Wealth creation that makes a difference in the lives of the people especially the poor and marginalized is not easy. But the wealth of our creativity and imagination, innovation is limitless. And therefore, the possibilities for social entrepreneurship are endless.

Thank you very much and good afternoon.