



A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY IN AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS

Benchmarks for Transformational Partnerships and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agricultural Value Chains

An Integrative Report of an ISEA-Oxfam-SIDA Project on
Gender Transformative Agricultural Investments in Southeast Asia

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Women produce over 50 percent of the world's food (Akter et. al., 2017 citing FAO, 2011) and comprise about 43 percent of the agricultural labor force, both globally and in developing countries (Akter et. al., 2017 citing Doss, 2014). Yet, official statistics often underestimate the value of women's work and their overall contribution to national wealth (FAO, 2006).

This study covers 8 case studies of social enterprises and inclusive businesses engaging women small-scale producers in agricultural value chains (AVCs) across Southeast Asia, particularly in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. They are cases of transformational partnerships in AVCs that have had a significant impact on small-scale producers, especially women.

The 8 case studies provided a rich source of stories of transformation among women small scale producers. These stories are living proof that women's economic empowerment is possible among women in agriculture and the informal economy with transformational partnerships in AVC interventions.

STORIES OF WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



Imelda Cervantes was an assetless agricultural worker who has become an entrepreneurial farmer-leader of the Negros Organic and Fair Trade Association (NOFTA) in the Philippines. NOFTA is a federation of small producers' associations and cooperatives organized by Alter Trade Foundation Inc. as partners in the organic muscovado sugar value chain and beyond.

In partnership with Alter Trade and NOFTA, Imelda has led her association of agrarian reform beneficiaries not only to be the best supplier of organic sugar, but to serve as a vehicle for crop and income diversification and community development. From sub-human conditions of hunger, Imelda's household has achieved food security and has moved out of poverty, like most of NOFTA's member-households. NOFTA also owns 60% of NOFTA Fair Trade Haus, the marketing arm of the social enterprise system initiated by Alter Trade Foundation Inc.



Wasti is the chairperson of ISM Sinar Abadi Cooperative, organized by Dompot Dhuafa's KMM in Indonesia to serve as vehicle for enabling asset-less mussel strippers to become owners of bagans, the means of production for mussels. KMM has also enabled the cooperative to do the processing and trading of green mussels in the local market. With the households now earning more than the minimum wage as a result of the intervention, Wasti and the women she leads have been transformed from being receivers of alms or zakat (mustahik) to being givers of zakat (muzzaki).

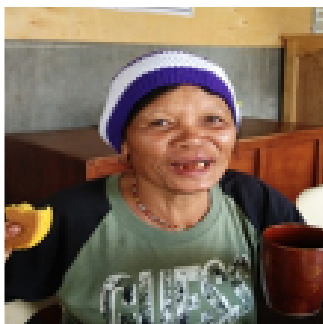


Ly Thi Dung has been part of an Interest Group that Dragon Vietnam Investment Company (DVIC) organized among the H'mong people of Vietnam. Exporting fresh and processed ginger carrying the Global G.A.P Standard, DVIC enabled indigenous women like Dung to diversify their farms to sustainably cultivate ginger. As a result, they earned 5-10 times more compared to their income from corn.



Pin heads the fish processing and slicing group of the Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation's Fisherfolk Enterprise, assisted by Oxfam in Thailand to develop the Blue Brand of responsibly-fished, formalin-free seafood.

Pin trains women fishers to ensure they produce quality and standardized Blue Brand products marketed through Fisherfolk Shops and Lemon Farm, a Bangkok-based social enterprise chain of groceries. Pin and other women from the Fisherfolk Enterprise have earned up to 100% more from their engagement in the Blue Brand value chain.



From being a voiceless indigenous woman in a male-dominated tribe, Juanita Mamo is now the elected chairperson of the Council of Elders of the Kulaman Manobo Dulangan Organization (KMDO). KMDO is a partner indigenous people's organization of a non-governmental organization, TRICOM, and their social enterprise arm, the Sultan Kudarat Coffee Ventures Inc (SKCVI).

Through a partnership between KMDO and SKCVI, women and men members of the Kulaman Manobo Dulangan tribe in Sultan Kudarat, Philippines are engaged in the production, processing and marketing of Kape Dulangan, their own brand of coffee. Kape Dulangan caters to a growing local market and developing this coffee value chain is part of the tribe's Ancestral Domain Development Plan. SKCVI is one of more than 50 community-based coffee enterprises comprising the Philippine Coffee Alliance led and assisted by Bote Central with their Coffee for Life Program.

Juanita, Wasti, Dung, Pin and Imelda exemplify grassroots women in Southeast Asia who have been empowered through partnerships with social enterprises and inclusive businesses working with resource institutions and civil society organizations in various value chain and development interventions. They are stories from cases of transformational partnerships in agricultural value chains that have had a significant impact on small scale producers, especially women.

From these cases of partnerships in agricultural value chains, the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia has identified and analyzed the most important elements bringing about such transformation. These elements have been synthesized in a set of benchmarks for transformational partnerships and women's economic empowerment in agricultural value chains. This paper is about these benchmarks.

THE BENCHMARKS AS ASPIRATIONAL STANDARDS AND SDG GUIDEPOSTS

The benchmarks are aspirational standards that raise the bar on how enterprises and other stakeholders in agricultural value chains (AVCs) could sustainably impact on the lives of small scale producers, especially women, their households and their communities. They are, collectively, a pathway to sustainability as these benchmarks are meant to provide guideposts among enterprises and other stakeholders in AVCs who aspire to make a meaningful contribution to the achievement of the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015).

The interrelated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that agricultural value chain interventions adhering to these benchmarks could contribute to are: no poverty, zero hunger and reduced inequality (Goals 1, 2 and 10); decent work and inclusive economic growth (Goal 8); inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation (Goal 9); sustainable consumption and production as well as sustainable communities (Goals 11 and 12); climate action, life below water and life on land (Goals 13, 14 and 15); peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16); partnerships to achieve the SDGs (Goal 17); and gender equality focusing on women's economic empowerment (Goal 5) as cross-cutting goal. (United Nations, 2015).

These benchmarks evolved from a study of selected social enterprises and inclusive business cases that have engaged small producers with a significant number of women in their respective value chain interventions in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand. The cases were chosen from a rapid appraisal that identified significant agricultural value chain interventions led by social enterprises and inclusive businesses manifesting positive impact on women and men small scale producers.

The study was part of Promoting Social Enterprises (PROSE), a component under a project called Gender transformative and Responsible Agribusiness Investments in Southeast Asia (GRAISEA) that was undertaken from April 2015 to September 2017. PROSE GRAISEA was a project implemented by the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) in partnership with Oxfam with the support of the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok. Implementing partners were Dompot Dhuafa and Bina Swadaya in Indonesia; Center for Social Innovation Promotion (CSIP) in Vietnam; and Change Fusion in Thailand. After September 2017, a follow up project implemented by ISEA under GRAISEA has evolved a set of scorecards and modules to promote the practice of these benchmarks among social enterprises, small and medium enterprises and other AVC stakeholders in Southeast Asia.

These benchmarks aid in the identification of the barriers and enablers for transformational partnerships and women's economic empowerment in agricultural value chains. They raise the bar for agribusiness enterprises to go beyond the usual transactional way in engaging small scale producers. They challenge agribusiness enterprises to develop transformational partnerships with small scale producers. This means engaging the small-scale producers as stakeholders and moving them out of capability deprivation¹. This means making a significant difference not only in their position and the benefits they derive from value chain participation, but in their overall capacity to improve their means of living (Sen, 1999; 2009). This means engaging not only small-scale producers, who are usually men, but ensuring that women small scale producers are recognized and meaningfully partake in the process and fruits of value chain and sustainable development. With the aid of these benchmarks, women small scale producers are enabled with knowledge, skills, choices and opportunities that over time improve their standing and position in their respective households and communities, and shape their aspirations and strivings for a better future.

These benchmarks likewise serve as an important framework and input for consideration by policy makers, support institutions and social investors in crafting policy, program and investment support for social enterprises and inclusive businesses to effectively lead agricultural value chain interventions that would optimize their contributions to the SDGs.

Through multi-stakeholder platforms promoting these benchmarks, the scale and depth of impact of agricultural value chain interventions would greatly contribute to accelerating the achievement of the SDGs. This is specially important in the Asia-Pacific region, home to 2/3 of the world's poorest, a big number of whom depend on agriculture, fishery and forestry for their livelihoods.

METHODOLOGY AND SELECTION OF CASES

The research started with a rapid appraisal, in the four countries covered, of agricultural value-chain (AVC) interventions initiated mainly by social enterprises. Through key informant interviews among organisations that had studied, implemented or supported social enterprises in AVC interventions and a review of literature, a long list of social enterprises in the covered countries was generated. These social enterprises had initiated interventions in various agricultural value chains that were recognised by at least one previous study or by at least one key informant as a best or significant practice in terms of scale of intervention and/or depth of impact on women and men small-scale producers.

From this long list, a short list of five cases was chosen for each country through triangulation. The five cases chosen were the top five most cited as best or significant practices by two or more types of key informants from governmental and non-governmental development agencies, the academe, social enterprise resource institutions and other social enterprises, and in some cases, they were also cited as best or significant practices by past studies. The five cases per country were then ranked according to their relative scale and depth of impact on women and men small-scale producers. The two highest ranking case subjects who were willing to participate in the study were the final cases chosen in each country.

Research teams were deployed to undertake the study using a common set of guidelines and guide questions. The research teams were composed of in-house researchers of social enterprise resource institutions such as Bina Swadaya and Dompot Dhuafa in Indonesia; the Centre for Social Initiatives Promotion in Vietnam; the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) in the Philippines; and research associates from academic institutions contracted by Change Fusion in Thailand.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE and INCLUSIVE BUSINESS AND SIGNIFICANT STAKEHOLDERS IN AVCS

For purposes of this research, the following definitions of social enterprises, inclusive businesses, value chains, and economic subsectors were used.

Value chains are vertical networks of economic actors that buy and sell from each other as they perform various functions to produce or provide and deliver products or services to end markets.

Economic subsectors are economic subsystems where social enterprises and micro, small and medium enterprises operate. They are networks of related actors and enterprises that procure/transform raw materials/inputs into finished products or develop services and distribute/provide them through supply channels to final consumers. They may be identified by key raw material source, finished product or final service provided.

Economic subsectors that have been chosen for the PROSE GRAISEA case studies include muscovado sugar and coffee subsectors in the Philippines; formalin-free and organic fish subsectors in Thailand; organic coconut sugar and green mussel subsectors in Indonesia; and tea, ginger and gac subsectors in Vietnam. Economic subsectors may be composed of competing value chains. What were studied by this research focused on the value chains led by the identified social enterprises and/or inclusive businesses. All of the social enterprises/inclusive businesses and their partners intervened in most functions in the value chain, from sourcing of inputs and management of the natural resource base, to production and harvesting, consolidation and trading/distribution. Six of the eight interventions also undertook semi-processing or processing. Three of the interventions involved marketing and retailing to end consumers.

This research focused on value chains led by inclusive businesses and social enterprises that engage small producers as primary stakeholders. These social enterprises are hybrid organizations located in agricultural value chains that have evolved as a response to rural poverty and inequality in developing countries. They are like non-government development organizations (NGDOs) in the sense that they pursue a social mission of addressing poverty and uplifting the lives of these small producers. But unlike NGDOs that usually depend on grants for their operations, these social enterprises derive a substantive part of their revenues from the sale of products and services. So like business enterprises, they create wealth. But unlike business enterprises that create wealth mainly to enrich the owners of capital, these social enterprises distribute the wealth created to a broader constituency specially the marginalized small producers who are the main reason for their being.²(Dacanay, 2012; ISEA, 2015)

Inclusive businesses may be defined in a variety of ways. The G20 defines inclusive business as “a private sector approach to providing goods, services, and livelihoods on a commercially viable basis, either at scale or scalable, to people at the base of the pyramid by making them part of the value chain of companies’ core business as suppliers, distributors, retailers, or customers”.³ The Asian Development Bank defines them as “private sector investments... with the double purpose of making reasonable profit and creating tangible development impact through the provision of sustainable jobs and better income opportunities, as well as services that matter for the poor”.⁴ At their best, inclusive businesses in agricultural value chains may be seen as “generating social, economic and environmental value that sustain their long-term profitable interdependence”⁵ with small scale producers, who are mainly engaged as their supplier communities.

The cases studied in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia are value chains led by social enterprises that have taken one or a combination of legal forms: cooperatives, stock for profit corporations, limited companies and non-stock, non-profit corporations. The cases in Vietnam are value chains led by inclusive businesses that have taken the form of stock, for profit corporations or limited companies.

Table 1 presents the selected social enterprise/inclusive business value chain interventions studied with data on the main market segments they serve and the number of small producers and women engaged.

Table 1. Social enterprise value-chain interventions studied, PROSE-GRAISEA⁶

Country/Social enterprise leading intervention (year of establishment)	Value chain	Market segment served	No. of small producers or households engaged in value chain	No. (and share) of women among small producers engaged in value chain
1. Alter Trade Foundation Inc. (1997) and Negros Organic Fair Trade Association (2009), PHILIPPINES	Muscovado sugar ⁷	Local market (Negros Occidental province) and Metro Manila; International Market – Germany (FLO-CERT)	729 farmers	311 women (43%)
2. Bote Central (2002) & Philippine Coffee Alliance, or PCA (2013), PHILIPPINES	Coffee	Domestic (institutional; retail-middle class and upwards) and export	34,221 farming households engaged by 51 community-based coffee enterprises (CBCEs)	At least 18 CBCEs (i.e. 35% of the 51 CBCEs) are women-led ⁸ 50-100% of the small producers engaged by the 2 CBCEs studied were women.
3. KSU Jatirogo, a multipurpose cooperative (2008), INDONESIA	Organic coconut sap sugar	International market (Japan, Europe and Canada; certified organic) Domestic market (Jogyakarta)	1,731 farming households	1,731 women (100%) are engaged by the cooperative; of these, 119 (7%) are heads of households and, as such, are members of the cooperative. ⁹

Country/Social enterprise leading intervention (year of establishment)	Value chain	Market segment served	No. of small producers or households engaged in value chain	No. (and share) of women among small producers engaged in value chain
4. P.T. Karya Masyarakat Mandiri (KMM), a limited company and subsidiary of Dompot Dhuafa (2012) and ISM Sinar Abadi Cooperative, INDONESIA	Green mussel	Middle class consumers of Indonesia	200 small producers ¹⁰	Of the 200 small producers, 90 (45%) are women. In one community, 30 women were directly engaged as members of the ISM Sinar Abadi Cooperative.
5. Hiep Khanh Tea Joint-Stock Company, or HITEACO (2007), VIETNAM	Tea	Export market, particularly Middle East and Europe	1,000 households	600 women (60%)
6. Dragon Vietnam Investment Company, or DVIC (2012), VIETNAM	Ginger and gac ¹¹ (fresh and processed)	Middle East (Turkey, Dubai), Asia (Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal) and Europe (The Netherlands); GLOBALG.A.P. standard Domestic market	2,000 smallholder producers	1,000 women (50%)
7. Lemon Farm ¹² Cooperative (1999) and Fisherfolk Enterprise (created by the Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation ¹³) (2014), THAILAND	Blue Brand Certified fish and seafood (90% frozen)	Consumers in Bangkok, reached through Lemon Farm's 11 grocery outlets; Blue Brand Certified (fresh, responsibly fished and formaldehyde-free) Local consumers, reached through Fisherfolk Shops in 4 provinces	50 small-scale fisher groups with a base of 4,000 fisherfolk household members 160 fisher members of Fisherfolk Enterprise	2,400 women (60%) 96 women members of Fisherfolk Enterprise (60%)
8. GreenNet ¹⁴ Cooperative (1993) and Earth Net Foundation (2000), THAILAND	Certified organic fish and seafood (fresh and processed)	Organic and fair-trade market in Bangkok, reached through 7 on-line and 9 event-based physical markets; certified organic fish, the first in Thailand	400 small fishers organised in Community Fish Markets	160 women (40%)

KEY ELEMENTS OF BENCHMARKS FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS

As demonstrated by the eight cases across the four countries covered by the study, agricultural value chain interventions have shown greater depth of impact and a higher level of sustainability when they engage a critical mass of women and men small scale producers in **STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS** that:

Promote appropriate technology and community-based innovations that are friendly to women and men small scale producers, and contribute to sustainable production and consumption.

Progressively position women and men small scale producers towards reaping a bigger share of value created in the agricultural value chain over time, while building their resilience to natural, social and economic disasters.

Pave the way for the empowerment of women and men small scale producers to become actors in their own development and that of their community and sector, and to become stewards of the natural resource base that sustain their livelihoods.

Provide a combination of transactional and transformational services among women and men small scale producers to more effectively participate in value chain and community/sectoral development that is both equitable and sustainable.

Proactively choose value chains and invest in transparent and accountable value chain development practices that enhance women's participation and empowerment.

Produce significant and measurable outcomes of transformational change at the level of small scale producers, especially women, at the level of households and communities, and at the level of value chains and subsectors.

BENCHMARK #1

APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY, COMMUNITY BASED INNOVATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Benchmark 1 is about the promotion of appropriate technology and community-based innovations that are friendly to women and men small scale producers, and contribute to sustainable production and consumption.

All the cases, without exception, introduced technologies and innovations that were appropriate, culturally sensitive and environmentally sound. They were oriented at enabling women and men small scale producers to become effective supplier communities serving new or growing markets linked to promoting healthy food and ethical lifestyles. Healthy and ethical lifestyles are at the heart of SDG 11, which promotes sustainable consumption and production.

All the cases showed how the social enterprises and inclusive businesses considered the health and welfare of both the consumers and small producers, and the health of the environment that sustains their enterprise and livelihood systems, as being of paramount importance in their choice of products, in their choice of production and processing technologies as well as in their branding and choice of markets served.

In all the cases studied, the women and men small scale producers were assisted to increase their productivity and incomes. In seven out of eight or 88% of the cases, organic or sustainable agriculture or fishery technologies were introduced, with five or 63% having corresponding certification systems including Global G.A.P. or Good Agricultural Practice Standard (DVIC in Vietnam), Certified Organic (KSU Jatirogo in Indonesia and Green Net in Thailand), Certified Organic and Fairtrade with Fairtrade Labeling Organization or FLO-CERT, Fair Trade Marketing Organization-Fairtrade Philippines and One Negros Organic Producers Association or ONOPRA (Alter Trade/NOFTA in the Philippines) and Blue Brand Certification (Fisherfolk Enterprise/Lemon Farm in Thailand).

Appropriate, ecologically and culturally sensitive technology and community-based innovations linked to sustainable consumption and production systems as exemplified by the cases studied are discussed below.

Bote Central (Philippines) introduced a coffee processing technology package that made possible the setting up of community based coffee enterprises that could process, roast and market their own brands of coffee. This is exemplified by Kape Maramag, owned by the women farmers of the



Rural Improvement Club Maramag and Kape Dulangan, owned by a joint venture of the Kulaman Manobo Dulangan Organization and TRICOM, a non-government organization assisting the Manobo Dulangan tribe with their ancestral domain claims and development plans. Under the Kape't Buhay (Coffee for Life) program promoted by Bote Central in partnership with the Philippine Coffee Alliance, women and men coffee farmers were taught the selective harvesting technique where they would choose mature coffee fruit for harvesting rather than use the strip harvesting technique, where coffee farmers did not discriminate whether the coffee fruit was mature or not. Harvesting only the mature coffee fruit resulted to higher quality, yield and pricing for their coffee. The Kape't Buhay program also encouraged coffee farmers to shift from chemical based coffee farming to organic farming. Having witnessed the development of Kape Dulangan, TRICOM raised awareness about the benefits of organic fertilizer, facilitated organic fertilizer production (storage and sale of inputs and fertilizer) and integrated it as a part of their agricultural value chain intervention.

HITEACO (Vietnam) established tea processing facilities in Son La province where their target farming households were located. HITEACO equally engaged women and men as household partners in their value chain by signing contracts with both of them. They provided an initial incentive package of seedlings and fertilizers covering 70% of the inputs required. To sustain the quality of the tea products, the company provided regular technical assistance. HITEACO also assured the farmer households that they would buy all their produce. Through its technical assistance services, HITEACO also introduced bio-fertilizers and provided clear guidelines for strict adherence against the use of chemical fertilizers. This resulted to increased production by the tea farmers as well as compliance to the needs of the market that HITEACO served.



DVIC (Vietnam) prioritized and organized poor households from ethnic minorities and mountainous regions, into interest groups of farming households to diversify from just planting rice and corn, to serve as their partner suppliers for ginger and gac. DVIC signed contracts with these interest groups, usually composed of 10-30 women and men farmers, assuring them that they would buy all their produce at flexible market rates, but with a minimum purchase price to protect the farmers when market prices went down. DVIC provided input support, trainings as well as continuing technical staff support and guidance from soil preparation, planting, caring, fertilizing, protection and harvesting. They promoted sustainable agriculture and forestry, in the process teaching the households biological composting and the non-usage of herbicides, consistent with the requirements of the Global G.A.P. (Good Agricultural Practice) Standards.

To enable women from coconut farming communities to have greater access to markets, KSU Jatirogo (Indonesia) assisted them to shift from producing 'batok'¹⁵ and rough brown sugar for local markets to organic coconut sap sugar for export. KSU Jatirogo introduced innovations in the form of better technology at the level of the household and a community-based Central Processing Unit (CPU) where the women could easily sell their finished product. The CPU saved the women about 3 hours of walking to the local market where they used to sell the 'batok' they made twice a week.

As a structure under KSU Jatirogo, a cooperative where the coconut farmers were the members, the CPU did not only serve as their community-based marketing arm but also served as a facilitator and controller in the implementation of the traceability system required for their organic certification process. KSU Jatirogo introduced a healthy and energy-saving furnace with a specially-manufactured wok. The furnace was designed to make fuel use more efficient as the fire was protected from dying easily and conserved heat. Compared to the traditional wok, the new wok saved fuel due to better conductivity. Made from more durable raw materials and with a thickness of 1 centimeter, the use of the new wok allowed the women to cook the palm sap more quickly and to produce cleaner brown sugar. The energy-saving furnace and special wok also provided a healthier working and living environment for the women and their families as it produced less smoke and was designed with an exhaust system.



GreenNet Cooperative (Thailand) introduced and assisted its partner fisherfolk groups from five areas to secure the first third party organic fishery certification in the country. GreenNet organized local Community Fish Markets (CFM), who officially registered members committed to develop their products for organic certification. They also organized an Organic Fishers Group, a network that managed and checked the fishery products before being dispatched to intended markets. Organic fishery products included banana prawn, giant fresh water shrimp, yellow shrimp, Indo-Pacific mackerel, king mackerel, blue crab, mud crab, ornate threadfin bream, chevron barracuda, silver perch, squid, marine catfish, spotted scat, sardine fillet, sweet and salted sardines. CFM members were guaranteed a price that was 20-100% higher than the price given by traders. Seventy five percent of the income from sales was shared between CFMs and their members, while 25% was collected and saved as mutual fund for market operation. The intervention of GreenNet has also driven traders to buy fish in areas covered at more competitive prices.



Lemon Farm Cooperative (Thailand), with its Bangkok chain of groceries for organic products, has provided a stable market for the Fisherfolk Enterprise, an initiative of the 5000-strong Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation in the South of the country. The Fisherfolk Enterprise introduced a Blue Brand Certification system with the assistance of Oxfam. The Blue Brand Certification is an assurance system that guarantees product quality to consumers and reassures the sustainable management of the fishing waters by the producers. Blue Brand Certification enables Fisherfolk Enterprise members to get a 20% premium price for their naturally harvested and formalin-free seafood products. The Fisherfolk Enterprise set up a community-based model for consolidating and processing fish founded on local ownership and accountability among the fisher-members. The Fisherfolk Enterprise established a community-based Central Processing Unit (CPU) that provided an accessible place for the women fishers to process the seafood using local knowledge and capacity. The CPU introduced an efficient standardized process that saved working hours for women in the community. The process ended with the use of a fill seal machine that completed the packaging required to help justify fetching a higher price to be paid by the consumers.

To jumpstart the engagement of landless agricultural workers in sugar estates who had become small owners of land under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program towards serving Fair Trade markets in Europe with organic muscovado sugar, Alter Trade Foundation Inc (Philippines) introduced block farming and a Bio-Organic Conversion Program with support from Bread for the World, Germany. This was followed through with another Bread for the World-supported comprehensive program called Sustainable Agriculture for Sustainable Community (SASC) that assisted these sugar farmers with technology, financing and capacity building to become effective supplier communities for organic sugarcane. Through SASC, the women and men sugar farmers were organized into cooperatives and associations that were federated into the Negros Organic Fair Trade Association. These became vehicles for promoting crop and income diversification as well as for undertaking community development visioning, planning and implementation towards moving these small producer households out of food insecurity and poverty. Over a period of 20 years, these small producer households have become co-equal partners of Alter Trade in the promotion of sustainable agriculture and fair trade among other small producers, with government agencies such as the Sugar Regulatory Administration and the Department of Agriculture recognizing the Alter Trade model as worthy of replication.

BENCHMARK #2

MORE SUBSTANTIVE SHARE OF VALUE CREATED, FOOD SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

Benchmark 2 is about progressively positioning women and men small scale producers towards reaping a bigger share of value created in the agricultural value chain over time, while enabling them to achieve food security and building their resilience to natural, social and economic disasters.

Models of corporate-led agricultural value chain interventions tend to focus mainly on developing small producers as suppliers of raw materials or semi-finished products needed by the corporation's core business. The intent is to engage small producers in agricultural value chains as being contract farmers, contract growers, or producers of inputs they require. This model of creating shared value, while providing access to markets and initial benefits to small producers have been under scrutiny by thought leaders who would like to see agricultural value chain interventions contribute more to addressing poverty and inequality. Citing the experience in the global value chain of cocoa, Oxfam's private sector adviser Erinch Sahan points out that in the 80s, cocoa farmers used to get 16 percent of the value of a chocolate bar, but today they get less than 6% (Sahan, 2016). Sahan proposes measuring the share of value that small producers get from the agricultural value chain as an important part of agricultural value chain interventions of companies wishing to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals of zero poverty and reduced inequality.

In six or 75% of the cases, the small producers and women were assisted to set up their own cooperatives or community-based social enterprises or to co-own social enterprises. In the process, the small producers and women were enabled to take over functions in the value chain such as input provision, semi-processing and processing, consolidation, distribution and marketing. These enabled the small producers and women not only to have a better position in the value chain but also to increase their share of value created over time.

The Kape't Buhay Program of the Philippine Coffee Alliance introduced by Bote Central and made real through partnerships with civil society (such as TRICOM and Catholic Relief Services) and government agencies (such as the Department of Agriculture) enabled indigenous people (organized into the Kulaman Manobo Dulangan Organization) and an all-women farmers organization, the Rural Improvement Club Maramag, to become not only effective suppliers of coffee beans but to become key stakeholders in coffee processing and marketing, as manifested by their selling their own brands of coffee. By processing and selling their own brand of coffee in local markets, the share of value of the social enterprise system is 100%, although such can still be nuanced in terms of percentage going directly to the small producer households.



Alter Trade Foundation Inc (Philippines) organized producers' cooperatives and associations that they assisted to be federated into the Negros Organic Fair Trade Association (NOFTA). Alter Trade assisted NOFTA and its members to get organic and Fair Trade certification, developed NOFTA's capacity to negotiate better terms with the sugar mills buying their members' sugar, and engaged NOFTA to be the majority owner (60% of the equity) of a joint venture called NOFTA Fair Trade Haus, which now serves as the marketing and trading arm of their social enterprise group.

The concept of measuring the share of value of the small producers is key to addressing inequality and is at the heart of the distributive enterprise philosophy of social enterprises.

At the same time, in the context of climate change and the unexpected occurrences of natural, social and economic disasters, increasing the share of value of small producers from agricultural value chain interventions would not be sustainable unless they are prepared to face these disasters and have the resilience or capability to bounce back.

Exemplifying resilience over more than 20 years is Alter Trade and NOFTA (Philippines). From the beginning, Alter Trade itself was a response to the economic crisis that caused hunger among landless agricultural workers in sugar estates that were abandoned by big land owners in the mid-80s as the Philippines' sugar export quota to the United States was lowered. The agricultural workers, who were awarded lands through the agrarian reform program of government, became the primary stakeholders whom Alter Trade transformed to become the entrepreneurial farmer-leaders and members of NOFTA. NOFTA members use sustainable agriculture technologies that lower production cost and reliance on external inputs as well as sustain soil health and productivity.

The farmer cooperatives and associations under NOFTA also became vehicles for the diversification of crops and income sources to ensure food security and prevent dependence on one income source. The diversification of crops and income sources have ended what used to be an annual cycle of hunger referred to as 'Tiempo Muerto' or dead season, called such because during the months of April-August, in between the planting and harvesting season of sugar cane, sugar cane workers and small producers had no other sources of livelihood.

Alter Trade and NOFTA have likewise weathered an organizational crisis where the corporation that used to be their marketing arm broke away – a crisis that they transformed into an opportunity to set up NOFTA Fair Trade Haus as their marketing arm, which is 60% owned by the small producers. All NOFTA members have also undergone training and planning on climate change and disaster risk reduction (CCDRR), mitigation and adaptation.



BENCHMARK #3

EMPOWERMENT AND STEWARDSHIP AMONG SMALL PRODUCERS

Benchmark 3 is about paving the way for the empowerment of women and men small scale producers to become actors in their own development and that of their community and sector, and to become stewards of the natural resource base that sustain their livelihoods.

The process of economic empowerment of women and men small scale producers who are starting from a position of marginalization may be characterized as having three critical elements: enabling them to own, control or have access to land, fishing waters, capital and other productive resources; assisting them to have power or influence in decision making processes in households, value chains, markets, communities and other relevant arenas of decision making; and building their capacity to sustainably use and manage such productive resources and decision making processes to improve their quality of life and that of their community and living environments.

Critical to this process of empowerment is organizing the women and men small producers and enabling them to have self-governing institutions that become instruments for planning and implementing their own interventions as actors not only in the value chain where they are situated but in the development process of their households, communities and sectors.



Dompot Dhuafa's KMM (Indonesia) developed a Mustahik Move to Muzaki (M3) initiative, an innovative empowerment program that engaged women mussel strippers, who were receivers (mustahik) of Zakat to become givers (muzaki) of Zakat¹⁶. The intervention provided assistance to 30 households to become owners of 3 bagans each, the means of production for green mussels. Women mussel strippers from these households were also organized and capacitated to become entrepreneurial leaders and members of ISM Sinar Abadi Cooperative which managed the collection, processing and trading of the green mussels. Over a period of only 2 years, dramatic results were noted with the quality of life of the women and the households. Initial manifestations of a movement out of income poverty and capability deprivation are evident.

Wasti, who despite only finishing elementary school, rose above her difficulties to become the Chair of the Cooperative: "Now I have the confidence to write and more courage to speak in front of the members."

The case that best exemplifies a full process of empowerment over a period of about 20 years is that of Alter Trade Foundation Inc. (Philippines). Over this 20-year period, Alter Trade consciously developed their partner producer associations and cooperatives, and the Negros Organic Fair Trade Association (NOFTA) to become self-governing institutions serving as vehicles for planning, and implementing their own interventions in and beyond the value chain of sugar. The producers' associations and cooperatives were enabled to lead processes of crop and income diversification and community development visioning, planning and implementation. As a result, these producer communities, in partnership with Alter Trade and NOFTA have achieved food security, demonstrated resilience and moved out of poverty, in the process also becoming actors in the development of their respective communities and the sector of farmers and small producers as a whole.

In four or 50% of the cases studied, the value chain interventions were part of a holistic process of assisting the marginalized producers secure their claim over land or control over their municipal fishing grounds and to sustainably manage these resources to improve their quality of life and that of their communities and living environment.

This was exemplified by the case of sugar workers turned agrarian reform beneficiaries who were assisted by Alter Trade (Philippines) with land redemption and comprehensive support services to make the lands productive. This was also exemplified by the case of the Kulaman Manobo Dulangan Organization whose coffee value chain intervention in partnership with TRICOM (Philippines) was part of their Ancestral Domain Development Plan. Both Alter Trade and TRICOM promote sustainable agriculture technologies.

The Fisherfolk Enterprise linked to Lemon Farm was an initiative of the 5,000-strong Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation (ATFF) in the South of Thailand to sustain their efforts towards community-based coastal resource management. ATFF saw the need to improve the economic situation of their members and the communities that supported their efforts in sustainable fishing and marine ecosystem conservation. With more stable and increased incomes of the households in the Fisherfolk Enterprise, they were able to sustain their participation in preventing destructive practices and conserving marine biological resources. The Fisherfolk Enterprise also set up the first Fisherfolk Shop in Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, where they created a benefit sharing scheme for fisherfolks who were practicing marine ecosystem conservation and sustainable fishing methods.

In the case of Green Net (Thailand), their assistance in securing organic fishery certification for their partner communities to effectively serve Bangkok markets was part of a broader multi-stakeholder platform to undertake community-based coastal resource management and promote sustainable fishery. This was manifested by their efforts to create local Community Fish Markets (CFMs) and to undertake the “Save our Sea- Save our Fish” Network public campaign. By engaging their partner fishers in securing organic fishery certification, the “Save our Sea-Save our Fish” public campaign and the CFMs, Green Net was able to create community actors who support good and responsible fishing practices that respect the rights of communities and small scale producers to sustainably manage and protect their fishing grounds.



BENCHMARK #4

TRANSACTIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIONAL SERVICES

Benchmark 4 is about providing a combination of transactional and transformational services among women and men small scale producers to more effectively participate in value chain and community and sectoral development that is both equitable and sustainable.

In previous studies (Dacanay, 2012; ISEA, 2015), social enterprises have been found to provide or to facilitate the provision of two types of services to small scale producers, consistent with their hybrid character: transactional and transformational services.

Transactional services pertain to enterprise or market-driven activities, such as providing loans, demonstrating new technologies or conducting trainings that are necessary for the small producers in the social enterprise system to effectively and efficiently perform their roles as suppliers and workers in the social enterprise system (ISEA, 2015).

Transformational services pertain to activities that empower the small producers such as the provision of education and experiential learning opportunities; asset build up; and leadership formation and organizational development towards becoming full-fledged or partial owners as well as conscious decision makers of social enterprises; towards taking over new roles or functions in value chains where they are situated; and towards becoming change agents for themselves, their communities and sectors (ISEA, 2015).

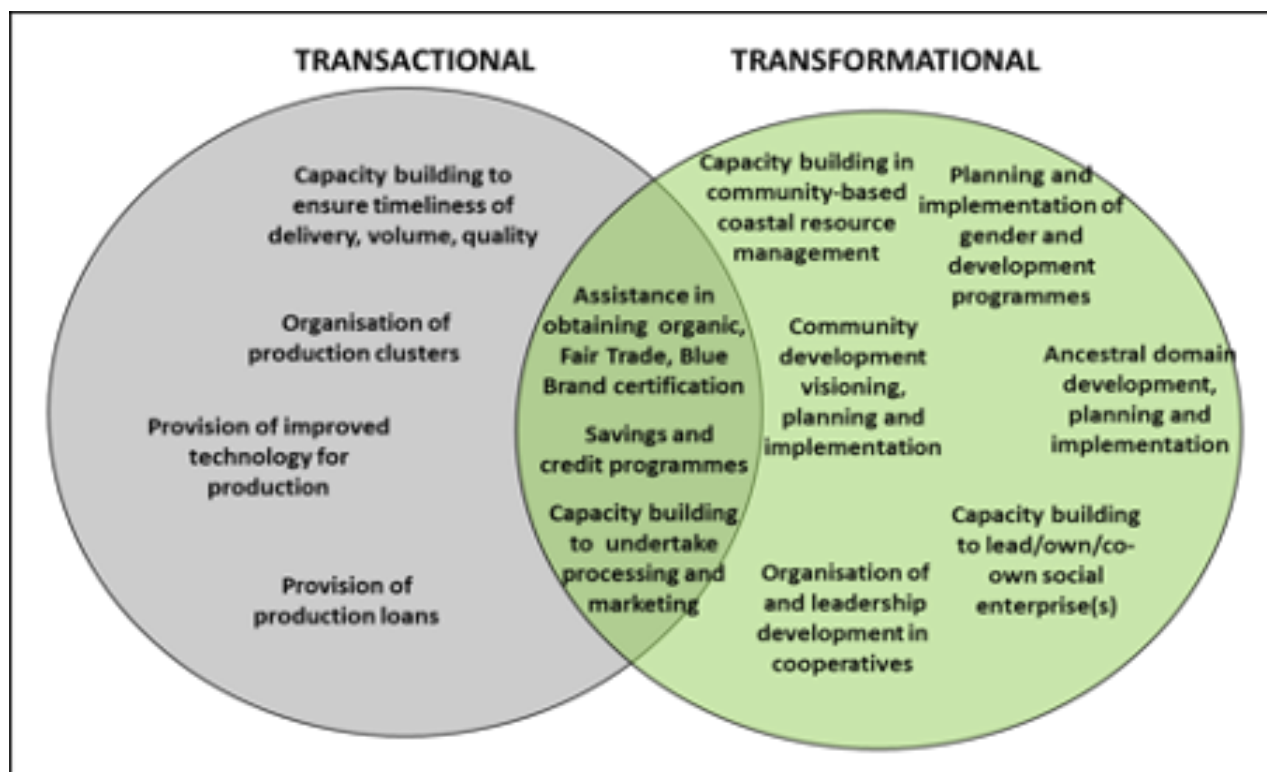
The cases studied validated the provision of a combination of these two types of services, at varying levels and degrees. What was interesting was that a number of services provided by the social enterprises also had a hybrid character – they simultaneously exhibited the characteristics of being both transactional and transformational in nature. A case in point is the assistance provided by the social enterprises to acquire Organic, Fair Trade, Blue Brand or GAP certification. While these certifications are required by the markets they serve, they also contribute to assisting the small producers to become change agents for the promotion of sustainable consumption and production and to become stewards of the natural resource base that sustain their livelihoods. While introducing a savings and credit program assists the small producers to finance the production required by the social enterprise and its market, its transformational character is manifested by its enabling the small producers to undertake capital build-up to increase their assets. While assisting the small producers to undertake processing and marketing to reach the social enterprise target market has a transactional side, its transformational nature is in enabling these small producers to improve their position so they may get a higher share of the value created over time.

Figure 1 shows the variety of transactional and transformational services provided to the small producers and their organizations by the social enterprises and their partners in the agricultural value chain intervention cases studied across the four countries.

The social enterprise-led value chain interventions that exemplified consistently providing a comprehensive combination of transactional and transformational services that have strategically resulted to different levels of economic empowerment of small producers were cases in the Philippines and Thailand.

Two broad types are evident. The first type are those that started out, were part or were linked to a broader development program of a civil society organization (that provided the transformational services) and in partnership with an established social enterprise, ensured access to technologies or markets for their partner small producers. The second type are those that were part of a multi-organizational social enterprise system that assigned different roles of providing transactional or transformational services to members of the system.

Figure 1: Transactional and Transformational Services Provided to Small Producers by Social Enterprises and their Partners in Agricultural Value Chains



In Thailand, the first type is exemplified by the Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation (ATFF) that set up the Fisherfolk Enterprise as its socio-economic arm, to give better financial returns to fishers engaged in community-based coastal resource management and a public campaign to support sustainable fisheries. With the support of Oxfam, the ATFF and the Fisherfolk Enterprise developed a formalin-free fish value chain and a system for Blue Brand Certification. To reach consumers, they partnered with Lemon Farm, an established social enterprise with a grocery chain in Bangkok that provides market access to small producers of organic and natural products.

In the Philippines, the first type is exemplified by TRICOM and the Kulaman Manobo Dulangan Organization that gave birth to the Sultan Kudarat Coffee Ventures Inc as part of its efforts to actualize the socio-economic component of an Ancestral Domain Development Plan for the Kulaman Manobo Dulangan tribe and accessed the technological package of support provided by Bote Central for their Kape't Buhay Program.

The second type are exemplified by Alter Trade Foundation Inc (Philippines) that at the beginning was set up by Alter Trade Corporation to provide transformational services to the farmers; and Green Net Cooperative (Thailand) whose interventions have been interlinked with Earth Net Foundation that ensured the provision of transformational services.

What is evident is that internal and external partnerships played a critical role in the effective and consistent provision of transactional and transformational services, as these two types of services have very different logics and require very different delivery systems.

BENCHMARK #5

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

Benchmark 5 is about proactively choosing value chains and investing in transparent and accountable value chain development practices that enhance women's participation and empowerment.

Based on the cases studied, there are three interrelated elements in the selection of value chains and value chain development practices that enhance women's participation and empowerment. These are: that the value chain chosen for intervention has a transformative potential for women; that the approaches and strategies employed in the value chain intervention are transparent and follow an accountable system of governance, and increase women's participation and capabilities; and that increased participation and capabilities result to significant contributions of women to household incomes, greater control over resources and decisions and improvements in their welfare and position in households, communities and the value chain.



In all the 8 cases, the chosen value chains had significant market potential and were identified as value chains where women could play significant roles and could realize significant income increases. In this sense, the value chains chosen may be characterized as having transformative potential for empowering the women small producers.

However, the differentiated impact on women's empowerment that the cases manifested indicate that the realization of such transformative potential depends on whether the approaches and strategies for the engagement of the small producers are gender-responsive or gender-transformative and translate to concrete gains in terms of women's economic empowerment. There were at least two approaches and strategies that were gender-transformative: an approach and strategy where a gender and development program was consciously implemented in the context of organizing and engaging mixed groups of women and men small producers in the value chain; and an approach and strategy focused on organizing and engaging only women into groups of small producers, with a gender and development program introduced at a later stage of consolidation. On the other hand, there was one approach and strategy that was gender-responsive: women and men were both consciously sought out as equally representing their households as production partners in the value chain.

On social enterprise value chain interventions with mixed groups of women and men that have a conscious gender and development program

In value chain interventions that deal with mixed groups of women and men small scale producers, a conscious gender and development program that would ensure that women are oriented and consistently assisted to become equal partners of men in the development process is critical. There were 2 cases where there was a conscious gender and development orientation and program in the social enterprise value chain interventions studied: the case of Alter Trade Foundation Inc/Negros Organic Fair Trade Association and the case of Kape Dulangan. In both cases, the target of the value chain interventions were mixed groups of women and men with a baseline of a patriarchal culture where women are considered subordinates of men.

Women's economic empowerment as a process in value chain interventions engaging a mixed group of women and men, with a clear gender and development orientation may go through various stages.

STAGE 1:

An initial stage where the women and men are both oriented on gender and development, and women are given the same opportunity as men to participate in the value chain, coupled with support to overcome major obstacles to their meaningful participation such as removal of discriminatory policies against women (e.g. equal pay for equal work) and assistance in addressing cultural barriers of being mainly responsible for unpaid care work (e.g. providing day care services for children and making unpaid care work a shared responsibility among all adult family members)

STAGE 2:

A succeeding stage where women are provided equal rights and opportunities to be organized and to participate in capacity building programs, from which a set of potential women leaders emerge.

STAGE 3:

As potential women leaders emerge, women and men members of small producers organizations start to recognize these women leaders whom they elect into positions of leadership. These women leaders are recognized as leaders of mixed producers' organizations and become role models of other women in the organization.

STAGE 4:

Women leaders initiate processes to become more conscious leaders not only for their organizations but also as women leaders uplifting the conditions of other women in their organizations and their community.



The case of Alter Trade Foundation Inc and NOFTA (Philippines) manifested going through stages one to four while the case of Kape Dulangan manifested going through stages one to three.

Stage four was where both the women leaders of STARFA and MIARBA, mixed organizations of small producers under NOFTA are in. They are now organizing women's groups in their respective organizations, to respond to women's felt needs and concerns, with the support of STARFA, MIARBA and NOFTA, with the membership going beyond the original membership of their mixed organizations.

In the case of Kape Dulangan, the Kulaman Manobo Dulangan Organization, the main partner producer organization, is headed by a woman. Even if she is the only woman in a leadership body composing 5 members, the baseline of a historically patriarchal culture among the Manobo Dulangan, where women are not even allowed to speak and participate in meetings and gatherings, indicates an important milestone manifesting women's empowerment.

On social enterprise value chain interventions with women small producers as sole or main target participants or where women are recognized as household representatives, with expanding women's participation as agenda

In value chain interventions where women are the sole target participants, and they are organized formally into a women's association as main participants in the value chain intervention (as manifested in the case of RIC Maramag, Philippines) or as the main members of the producers' organization (as in the case of the mussel producers organized under the ISM Sinar Abadi Cooperative in Indonesia), or where women are recognized as representatives of households in a value chain intervention (as manifested in the case of HITEACO and DVIC on Vietnam): even without a clear gender and development orientation, the choice of a growing subsector that is or could be a major and stable source of income, rather than simply a supplementary source of income for the household, tends to have a significant transformational potential for empowering women to be recognized as significant partners of men at the household, the community and the value chain, as they are able to make a more significant contribution to the household income and are able to exercise a bigger influence in farm planning with the new knowledge and technologies they learn from the value chain intervention. In the Kape Maramag, HITEACO and DVIC cases, the significant contribution of the women to the household income and the new knowledge they have brought in that impacts positively on household food security and income, created conditions for change in power relations at the level of the household and the community. In the case of the mussel producers in KMM's Sinar Abadi Cooperative, the women were empowered as leaders and members of the cooperative, as owners of bagans or productive assets that paved the way towards their significant contribution to the household income. Earlier interventions by KMM in the mussel value chain that focused on organizing and engaging the men had failed. This indicates the opportunity loss of not engaging women in AVCs. However, the increase in the productive work of women, without a corresponding change in the sharing of care work within the family would create a greater burden on the women. To a certain extent, the burden of the women was partially addressed by the ISM Sinar Abadi Cooperative as they initiated the setting up of a playground for children adjacent to the strip house, where the women did the mussel stripping. This indicates the potential for social enterprises to undertake interventions in assisting women to manage their responsibility for care work as the women take a bigger role in productive work.

On social enterprise value chain interventions with households as target stakeholders where men as household heads are the recognized representatives of households, and women are mobilized as participants

In producer communities where the household is formally considered as the basis of membership/engagement, it is the prevailing culture and practice for the men to be registered/recognized as representatives of the household. In such context, value chain interventions that significantly engage women may improve their conditions of work through appropriate technological innovations and community-based marketing mechanisms, and may increase the actual contributions of these women in terms of the household income. However, these interventions would tend to increase their burden as their share of productive work increases. Without corresponding changes in the sharing of reproductive and unpaid care work within the family, women would tend to cope by giving up their precious time for personal care, rest and relaxation. This was what happened in the case of KSU Jatirogo.

Policies on cooperative membership and legal ownership over land/property (e.g. house) that do not recognize and explicitly affirm women's equal rights, pose serious constraints to women's economic empowerment as an outcome of agricultural value chain interventions. As shown by the KSU Jatirogo case, even if in practice, the women's role in productive activities in the organic coconut sugar value chain has been dominant relative to the men, the discriminatory policy of considering households as the unit of membership with men as the culturally accepted representatives of households (except in the case of women headed households) relegates women to a subordinate position, and does not provide favorable conditions for giving recognition and support to their important contributions to the family's economic well-being.

The KSU Jatirogo case showed how a social enterprise intervention did improve the role and capacity of women to contribute substantively to the family income by as much as 50%. The case also showed how the working conditions of women and the health and security of their households was improved through the introduction of appropriate technology (with the healthy furnace program and provisions of a more efficient wok) and substantively cutting down their time to walk to the market by 3 hours (with the CPU as a community-based marketing mechanism that assures them better terms and prices). However, the dominant culture served as a constraint in improving the position of women. Their increased role in productive activities resulted to less time for the women to undertake rest/sleep/relaxation and social activities. Such exemplifies the unintended negative impacts of well-intentioned initiatives of increasing the participation of women in economic activities without addressing issues of unpaid care work.

As shown above, different types of interventions engaging women in agricultural value chains have a differentiated impact on women and women's economic empowerment. As a whole, they show:

- the critical importance of implementing a conscious gender-transformative program from the start in agricultural value chain interventions where the target participants are mixed groups of women and men, for women's economic empowerment to be realized. This was positively manifested by the Alter Trade and TRICOM/KMDO/SKCVI interventions.
- the enhancing power of a conscious gender-transformative program to fully realize women's economic empowerment in value chain interventions where the sole participants are women. This was positively manifested by the case of RIC Maramag
- the significance of recognizing women as legitimate or as equally important representatives of households, and ensuring mechanisms for their participation. This was positively manifested by the cases of KMM, HITEACO, DVIC.
- the opportunity loss of not effectively recognizing and engaging women in value chain interventions. The opportunity loss and corresponding gain when they were recognized and engaged was clearly manifested in the KMM intervention that shifted from organizing the men to organizing the women in the ISM Sinar Abadi Cooperative.
- the problematic nature of value chain interventions that formally engage households, but only recognize men as household representatives, as they exacerbate the double burden of women specially when the interventions increase the role of women in productive work. This was manifested by the case of KSU Jatirogo.



BENCHMARK #6

MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OF TRANSFORMATION

Benchmark 6 is about producing significant and measurable outcomes of transformational change at the level of small scale producers, especially women, at the level of households and communities, and at the level of value chains and subsectors.

The following are observable outcomes manifesting transformational change that were culled from the various cases studied:

At the household level, observable outcomes included:

- increased food security for households, with a significant share of such increased security resulting from increased participation in and contribution to productive work on the part of women;
- increased amount and diversity of sources of household income, with a significant share of such improvement resulting from the increased contribution of women to the diversification of household economic activities;
- improved control on and access to land, fishery, capital, technology and other productive resources on the part of households;
- increased capacity and role of women in decision making about household economic activities, including farm planning and the combination of economic activities to be undertaken by the women;
- increased participation of men in the performance of unpaid care work and in supporting women in their productive work.

At the level of individual women, observable outcomes included:

- increased self-esteem and awareness of one's capacities and potentials;
- increased time and opportunities for rest, relaxation and socialisation;
- expanded role in decision making in the household and as leaders and members of organisations;
- expanded role and better recognition of these women's contribution to productive and community work.

At the level of producers' organisations, communities, value chains and economic subsectors, observable outcomes included:

- expanded choices (directly attributable to the intervention) in the economic activities undertaken by small producers and women;
- equal opportunities for women and men in terms of self-development and to avail of the economic and social benefits derived from productive activities;
- enhanced capacity of producers' organisations in terms of self-management and of contribution to community and sectoral development;
- increased share of value reaped by women and men small-scale producers in the value chain;
- enhanced roles and improved position of the small producers' organisations in the performance of various functions in the value chain.

But even as these are observed positive outcomes, most of the social enterprises studied did not have a system installed for measuring their social outcomes. Among the cases studied, Alter Trade Foundation Inc and Bote Central in the Philippines as well as KMM in Indonesia had initiated efforts to develop measurement systems or tools. The tools included the use of simple proxy measures, Development Indexing (DI) and Social Return on Investment (SROI).

Alter Trade and Bote Central were assisted by Oikocredit/ISEA and Shujog-IIX respectively to apply Social Return on Investment (SROI) to track their blended financial and social outcomes. However, both have not as of yet, engaged in efforts to institutionalize SROI as a measure in their management information systems.

Alter Trade Foundation Inc's monitoring of their partners' movement out of poverty showed that as of December 2015, 100% of their over 729 partner producers had achieved self-sufficiency and 80% had moved out of income poverty. Over a shorter period time, KMM's M3 had resulted to 30 women owning productive assets of 3-5 bagans each with an overall increase in household incomes from Rp600-900,000/mo before M3 to Rp2.9-5.8 million per month, above the provincial minimum wage of Rp2.3 million.

In terms of Development Indexing, Alter Trade Foundation developed a Partner People's Organization Development Index (PPO-DI) that they use to track the level of their partner producers' level of empowerment. The PPO-DI is essentially a score card that has the following elements:

- Organizational cohesion and development;
- Capacity to engage the market;
- Practice of sustainable agriculture;
- Income diversification of members;
- Contribution to community and sectoral development; and
- Financial growth and sustainability

On the whole however, effectively measuring social enterprise outcomes was an area of weakness of the social enterprises studied, even as they were already considered best or significant practices. This weakness needs to be effectively addressed in any intervention to promote the benchmarks.

A PATHWAY TO SUSTAINABILITY AND WEE IN AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAINS

The benchmarks for transformational partnerships and women's economic empowerment (BTP WEE) in agricultural value chains (AVCs) is an articulation of a pathway to sustainability. These benchmarks directly contribute to the interrelated goals of no poverty, zero hunger and reduced inequality (Goals 1, 2 and 10); decent work and inclusive economic growth (Goal 8); inclusive and sustainable industrialization and innovation (Goal 9); sustainable consumption and production as well as sustainable communities (Goals 11 and 12); climate action, life below water and life on land (Goals 13, 14 and 15); peace, justice and strong institutions (Goal 16); partnerships to achieve the SDGs (Goal 17); and gender equality focusing on women's economic empowerment (Goal 5) as cross-cutting goal.

The benchmarks for transformational partnerships and women's economic empowerment in agricultural value chains (AVCs) defines a pathway that helps resolve the development paradox of economic growth that has not effectively addressed poverty, that has increased inequality, that has marginalized grassroots women, and that has worsened prospects for sustainability in many developing countries in ASEAN and beyond. With the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), such development paradox needs to be effectively addressed to reverse the marginalization of small scale producers, specially women, who comprise a substantive segment of the poor in the region. With dim prospects of achieving the SDGs in the Asia-Pacific region including trends of reversal with some of the goals, leaving no one behind will not be achieved unless the marginalization of small scale producers is effectively addressed.

Reversing the marginalization of small scale producers specially women, entails a concerted effort to change current mindsets and practices in agricultural value chains. Current mindsets and practices focus purely on enterprise growth and profits, engage small producers in purely transactional terms, drive down the prices of agricultural produce to the lowest possible levels regardless of environmental and social impact, and relegate women as invisible players.

As shown by the best practices of social enterprises and inclusive businesses in various agricultural value chains, enterprises can serve as transformational partners of women and men small scale producers in AVCs. With enterprises serving as transformational partners, there are ways to achieve food security and provide sustainable livelihoods among women and men small scale producers. With enterprises serving as transformational partners in AVCs, there are ways to move small producers and their families out of poverty and narrow the rich-poor gap. With enterprises as transformational partners of both consumers and small-scale producers, products and services as well as production systems in AVCs could become compatible with promoting environment-friendly, healthy and ethical lifestyles. With enterprises as transformational partners, there is a pathway to growth that fosters innovation and empowers women and men small scale producers as stakeholders in co-creating a future of equitable and sustainable development.

Developing a deeper understanding of these benchmarks as well as evolving the tools so they may be effectively operationalized by social enterprises, inclusive businesses and other AVC stakeholders willing to make a shift towards a pathway to sustainability and women's economic empowerment in agricultural value chains is a big challenge by itself. But such cannot be isolated from the challenge of generating support for the practice of these benchmarks among enabling institutions. While social enterprises, inclusive businesses and other enterprises willing to shift towards a pathway to sustainability are key players, governments and intergovernmental bodies such as the ASEAN and the United Nations, civil society, the business sector as well as social and impact investors need to play enabling and supportive roles. Providing policy, program and investment support to enable the mainstreaming of these benchmarks is not only relevant. It is critical for all stakeholders who realize the need to go beyond business as usual pathways to accelerate the achievement of the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More importantly, it is the way to go for those who aspire to empower grassroots women like Imelda, Wasti, Pin, Dung and Juanita as significant stakeholders in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Integrative report of the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) for the research involving best practices of social enterprises and inclusive businesses that have had a significant impact on women and men small scale producers in agricultural value chains, under the Promoting Social Enterprise (PROSE) component of the Gender Transformative and Responsive Agricultural Investments in Southeast Asia Phase 1 (GRAISEA1), led by Oxfam with the support of the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok. The report is written by Marie Lisa M. Dacanay, PhD based on a review of the country outputs of the Promoting Social Enterprise (PROSE) research teams in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand with the assistance of Bina Swadaya and Dompot Dhuafa, Change Fusion and CSIP, as well as inputs from Oxfam.
- 2 This is also called the distributive enterprise philosophy of SEPPS
- 3 <http://www.g20challenge.com/what-is-inclusive-business/>
- 4 <https://www.adb.org/themes/social-development/inclusive-business>
- 5 Adapted from the International Center for Tropical Agriculture's Participatory guide to business models that link smallholders to markets.
- 6 Data as of September 2017
- 7 Since 2014, Negros Organic Fair Trade Association (NOFTA), the federation of small producer partners of Alter Trade Foundation Inc, accepted four new associations of small producers engaged in the production of vegetable, rice and fish.
- 8 No data are available on the breakdown by gender of farming household representatives engaged by CBCEs. Data on women-led CBCEs is from the first 20 CBCEs who participated in the Kape't Buhay Programme of the Philippine Coffee Alliance.
- 9 KSU Jatirogo's policy is to have heads of farming households as members of their cooperative. Culturally, household heads are usually men; women become the household head only if their husbands have died or have abandoned them.
- 10 KMM engages a total of 2,400 farmers in various value chains. The mussel value chain was chosen because of the pioneering engagement of women as members of a cooperative.
- 11 Gac is a crop that is rich in vitamin A, used as an ingredient by pharmaceutical companies. Locals add gac when cooking rice.
- 12 Lemon Farm Cooperative is co-owned by 28,000 consumer and producer households and serves as major market channel for 3,000 organic (certified through Peer Guarantee System) and natural agricultural products. The fish value chain was chosen for the study because of the significant number of women participants.
- 13 The Association of Thai Fisherfolk Federation has about 5,000 small-scale fisher members.
- 14 GreenNet is also engaged in other fair trade value chains, such as rice and coffee, but their engagement in the fish value chain was chosen as focus because of the significant participation of women.
- 15 'Batok' is a form of solid brown sugar, a usual product made from coconut sap and sold to local markets in the rural areas.
- 16 Zakat is the practice of giving alms to the poor and the needy, which is obligatory upon every adult Muslim of sound mind and means.

ANNEX 1

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or the Sustainable Development Goals



Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere



Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



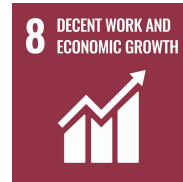
Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all



Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation



Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries



Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts



Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss



Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



Goal 17. Strengthen the means of Implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

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ABOUT THE INTEGRATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

This Integrative Research Report was written by Marie Lisa M. Dacanay, PhD based on a review of the country outputs of research teams in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand. The research teams were deployed by the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) in 2015-2017 in partnership with Bina Swadaya and Dompot Dhuafa, Change Fusion and the Center for Social Initiatives Promotion. The research report also benefitted from inputs of Oxfam and consultants of ISEA.

The multi-country research of the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) involved eight case studies of best practices of social enterprises and inclusive businesses chosen for their significant impact on women and men small scale producers in agricultural value chains. The research was conducted under the Promoting Social Enterprise (PROSE) component of the Gender Transformative and Responsive Agricultural Investments in Southeast Asia Phase 1 (GRAISEA1), implemented from 2015-2017. GRAISEA is a project led by Oxfam with the support of the Swedish Embassy in Bangkok.

ABOUT THE COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

ISEA

The Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) is a learning and action network set up by social enterprises and social enterprise resource institutions to catalyze knowledge creation, capacity development and movement-building for social entrepreneurship in the region.

www.isea-group.net

OXFAM

Oxfam is an international confederation of 17 organizations networked together in 97 countries, as part of a global movement for change, to build a future free from injustice of poverty.

www.oxfam.org

CHANGE FUSION

Change Fusion is a Bangkok-based organization that grows social entrepreneurs for creative and sustainable change. It is a non-profit institute that is a subsidiary of the Thai Rural Reconstruction Movement Foundation under the Royal Patronage.

www.changefusion.org

CSIP

Centre for Social Initiatives Promotion (CSIP) is a leading Vietnam-based, not-for-profit organization working to promote social and environmental changes by building a social entrepreneurship movement in Vietnam.

www.csip.vn

YAYASAN DOMPET DHUafa

Yayasan Dompot Dhuafa is a non-stock, non-profit organization with a goal to improve the conditions of the poorest around the world by managing Islamic philanthropies such as Zakat and other halal and legal funds obtained from individual, group or corporation donors.

www.dompetdhuafa.org

BINA SWADAYA

Bina Swadaya Foundation is a social entrepreneurial organization that engages in the development of micro finance institutions, agribusiness development and community empowerment consultancy in Indonesia.

www.binaswadaya.org



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