



INCLUSIVE AND INNOVATIVE PATHWAYS TO COVID19 RECOVERY:

Social Entrepreneurship as Strategy in Leaving No One Behind
and Building Back Fairer in the Philippines





Background

Social enterprises (SEs) are social mission driven organizations in pursuit of transforming and improving the lives of their primary stakeholders who are usually poor and marginalized. They have taken various forms -- cooperatives, associations, non-stock non-profit corporations, stock for profit corporations, single proprietorships, partnerships or any combination. They work with and for small farmers, fishers, agricultural workers, indigenous peoples, informal settlers, informal laborers, enterprising and entrepreneurial poor, returning overseas Filipino workers, persons with disabilities, and the women and youth belonging to these sectors.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a growing recognition that social enterprises are potential game changers in accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. This was manifested by an evolving partnership between UNESCAP and the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia in co-convening a conference in September 2020 that launched and developed Social Entrepreneurship-SDG Multi-stakeholder Platforms. The gains achieved by SEs in poverty reduction and enabling the poor as stakeholders in economic development are now threatened by the risks and limitations brought about by the pandemic. Aside from meeting new sanitary requirements and physical distancing, other challenges during the pandemic include the lack of public transportation, conflicting guidelines of local government units (LGUs), and strict inspection at checkpoints caused difficulties and delays in the movement of raw materials and essential supplies (e.g. food and health products). SEs not considered essential by the government have lost revenues as they have been forced to close and stop operations. On the other hand, cooperatives (coops) report problems in liquidity, delinquency, loan collection, health and safety of staff, travel restrictions, and risks of face-to-face transactions (NATCCO, 2020).

Social enterprises now face the challenge of reimagining how to sustain serving marginalized groups while the sector itself recovers. There is a need to systematically determine their strategic needs and roles to ensure that appropriate policies, programs, and development initiatives could be installed for their long-term recovery and “building back fairer” efforts.

The COVID-19 Social Enterprise Action Research (SEAR) was undertaken to inform the development of a responsive relief and recovery effort for the social enterprise sector in the Philippines and an agenda for the sector to make a significant contribution towards building back fairer and reimagining and equitable and sustainable future.



Photo Courtesy: BGMPC FB Page

Research Objectives

SEAR was aimed at:

- 1** determining the effects of the COVID-19 health pandemic on social enterprises and the marginalized stakeholders that they serve;
- 2** finding out how social enterprises and their stakeholders are responding to the COVID19 health pandemic and gather suggestions on developing a responsive social enterprise relief, recovery and rebuilding effort; and
- 3** developing strategies and recommendations on how social enterprises and their resource/support institutions could work together to effectively cope and recover from the impact of COVID19, including possible programs, initiatives and policies that resource institutions, government and the private sector could adopt to assist the sector as a significant player in building back fairer and achieving sustainable development.

The study was an action research which primarily employed qualitative data gathering methods and analysis over a period of five months. Data collection methods involved the following: review of secondary methods, on-line nationwide survey, semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and participant observation.

Collecting data likewise involved clustering the research participants into:

- Cluster 1: SE Survivors/Rebuilders**, which are SEs that support and serve the poverty and marginalized groups whose plight has been exacerbated by the pandemic;
- Cluster 2: SE Innovators/Sustainers and their Enablers**, mainly a subsegment of Cluster 1, focusing on those that have sustained their operations during the pandemic;
- Cluster 3: SE Enablers and Policy Movers/Influencers**, those covering government agencies and resource/support institutions that are/could influence the development/refinement of government policies, programs, and mechanisms; and
- Cluster 4: SE Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Actors and Enablers**, those dedicated to the SEs and resource institutions conscious of pursuing a WEE agenda.

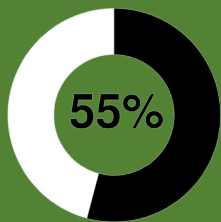
Quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized to process the data gathered from the survey and the clusters, respectively.

Results

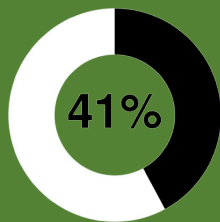
COVID-19 Impact on Social Enterprises and Poverty Sectors

The survey results revealed that SEs have experienced varying levels of downturn due to the pandemic, with more than half (55%) of the survey participants reporting a major turndown while 41% had some turndown. When asked to quantify the impact, more than 90% reported decline in sales/revenues when the Enhanced Community Quarantine was imposed, a third of which lost 100% of revenues.

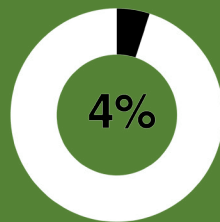
Overall Impact of COVID-19



Major downturn



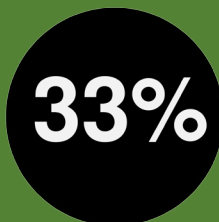
Some downturn



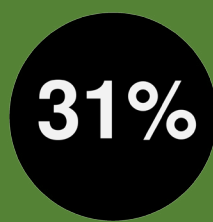
Positive Impact



Sales and Revenue



Declined 50% or below



Declined 100%



Decline by above 50% but not entirely



no effect

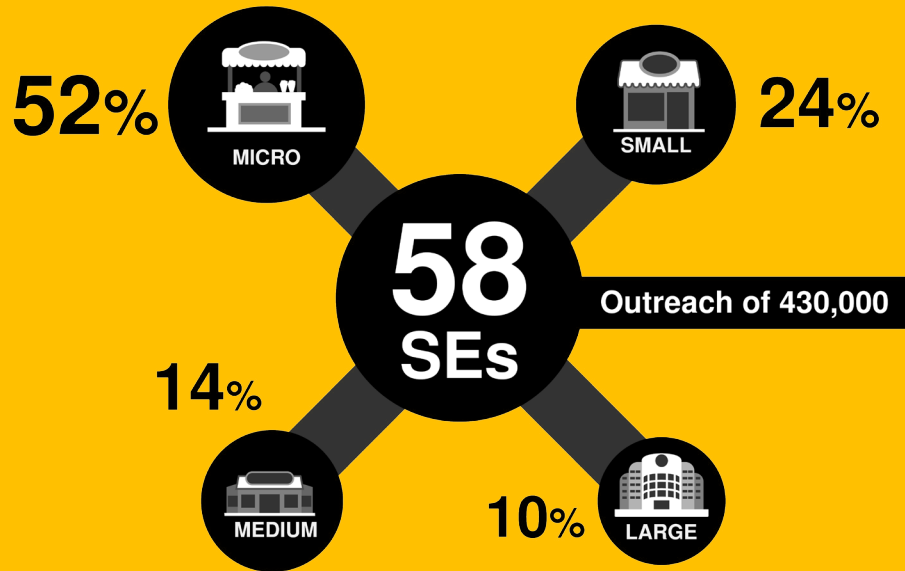


increased

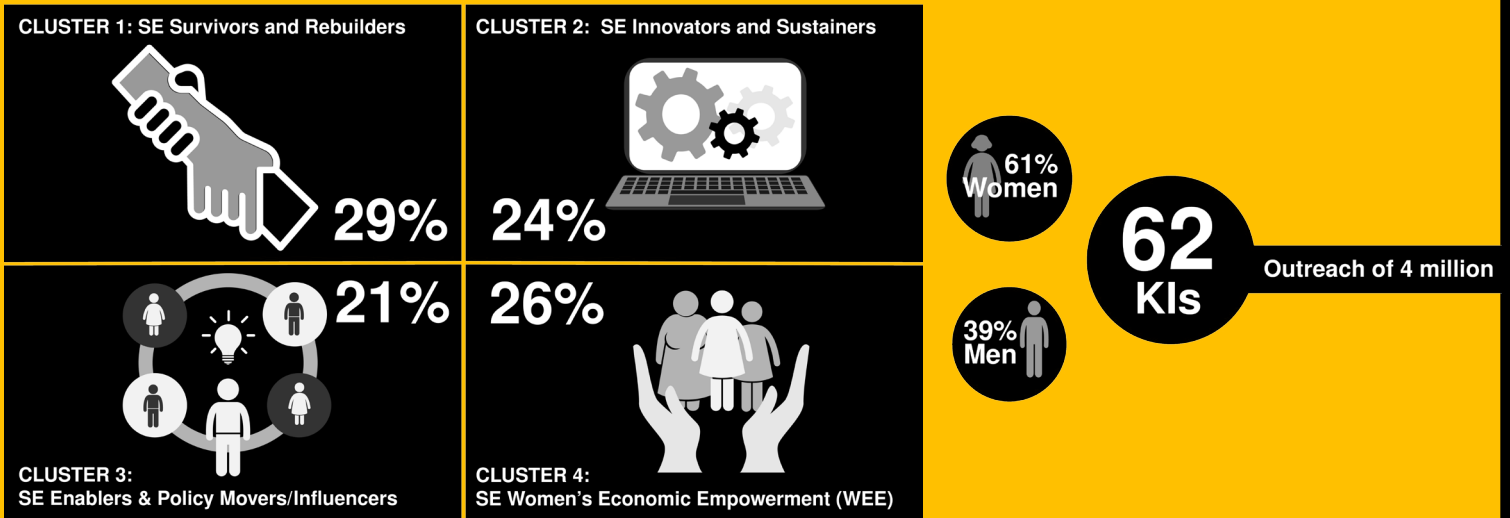


PROFILE OF ONLINE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

While the losses in revenues were a major concern for the SEs involved in this study, even more burdensome was the impact to the poverty and vulnerable sectors they serve. All 58 of the SEs surveyed were serving a total of 430,000 individuals from different poverty sectors as workers, as suppliers/producers, as partners, and/or as co-owners of their social enterprises. Meanwhile, the poverty sectors served by the SEs and resource institutions that participated as key informants in the study was estimated at 4 million.



PROFILE OF KEY INFORMANTS



KIIs and FGDs revealed that the downturn and decline in revenues have been primarily caused by the closure of markets for those in the service and manufacturing sectors (tourism, travel, hotels, restaurant, massage services, manufacturing of nonessentials); severe disruptions in the supply chain for agricultural products; and loss of income of borrowers leading to decrease in collections for SEs engaged in microfinance/savings and credit. For borrowers unable to pay their loans, the more worrisome is the major consequence on production and trading. With people and groups unable to pay their loans, they would not be able to apply for new loans that would serve as capital for production and trading. On the other hand, SEs engaged in financing are facing liquidity concerns as their receivables increase. Nonetheless, SEs engaged in rice production and trading (locally and in Metro Manila), SEs with multiple sources of income, and those supplying the local market reported minimal or positive impact.

All the SEs have made adjustments in operations to comply with the restrictions imposed by the government. They implemented work from home arrangements, adopted skeletal workforce, and provided transportation for their workers/staff. Almost all in the service sectors faced deficits during the ECQ months. So did all SEs based in Mindanao. Others (Luzon and Visayas) did not meet their target revenues and lost potential income. In addition, a clear majority (93%) of the SEs surveyed relayed that the pandemic affected the poverty sectors they served negatively. The impacts mentioned were loss of livelihood/employment, reduced/loss of income, hunger, and mental health concerns.

Responses and Innovations of Social Enterprises and Resource Institutions

Immediate Responses

SEs did what they could to cushion the impact of COVID-19 on the poverty sectors they support.

The survey revealed that about 38% of the SEs provided relief goods in poor communities where social enterprise operated while 17% distributed and/or mobilized food supplies for health/medical front liners. Almost all the cooperatives that participated in the key informant interview gave relief packs (mostly food items) to their staff and/or members as well. Others provided cash assistance. SEs and resource institutions likewise distributed new health essentials (face masks, gloves, alcohol), medicines, and vitamins to their staff and/or poverty sectors served.

Close to half of the SEs surveyed paid the full salaries of staff despite reduced or no operations. All the SEs set up measures to prevent the spread of the virus in their offices. They provided staff with protective gear (face shields, face masks), conducted regular disinfection, set up dividers, and imposed social distancing.

Some resorted to solicitation of support from clients and funding agencies while others maximized their strong relations with LGUs and government agencies for permits and logistical provisions. At the same time, most of the SEs realigned their plans and recalibrated their budget and financial targets. Others applied for or were planning to apply for government support. One launched an information-dissemination campaign meant to help their partners understand COVID 19, while many monitored the support provided by the LGUs to their partners, directly coordinated with the LGUs, or advised their partners on what to do to ensure that they receive relief goods and/or cash assistance. Meanwhile, all the SEs engaged in micro-financing granted a moratorium on payment, penalties, and interests, as well as restructured the loans.

Immediate Responses of SEs

- ▶ Work from home arrangements; skeletal workforce w/ transportation for staff
- ▶ Maximizing online platforms & social media for meetings & communications
- ▶ Sustaining/adjusting workers' salaries and ensuring workplace safety
- ▶ Loan Payment Moratorium and restructuring
- ▶ Data Gathering on the situation of poverty sectors served
- ▶ Assisting poor in accessing gov't relief; relief & health essentials provision
- ▶ Soliciting support of clients & funding agencies; realigning plans & budget
- ▶ Maximizing strong relations with government & availing of COVID19 government support
- ▶ Information dissemination to stakeholders on COVID19

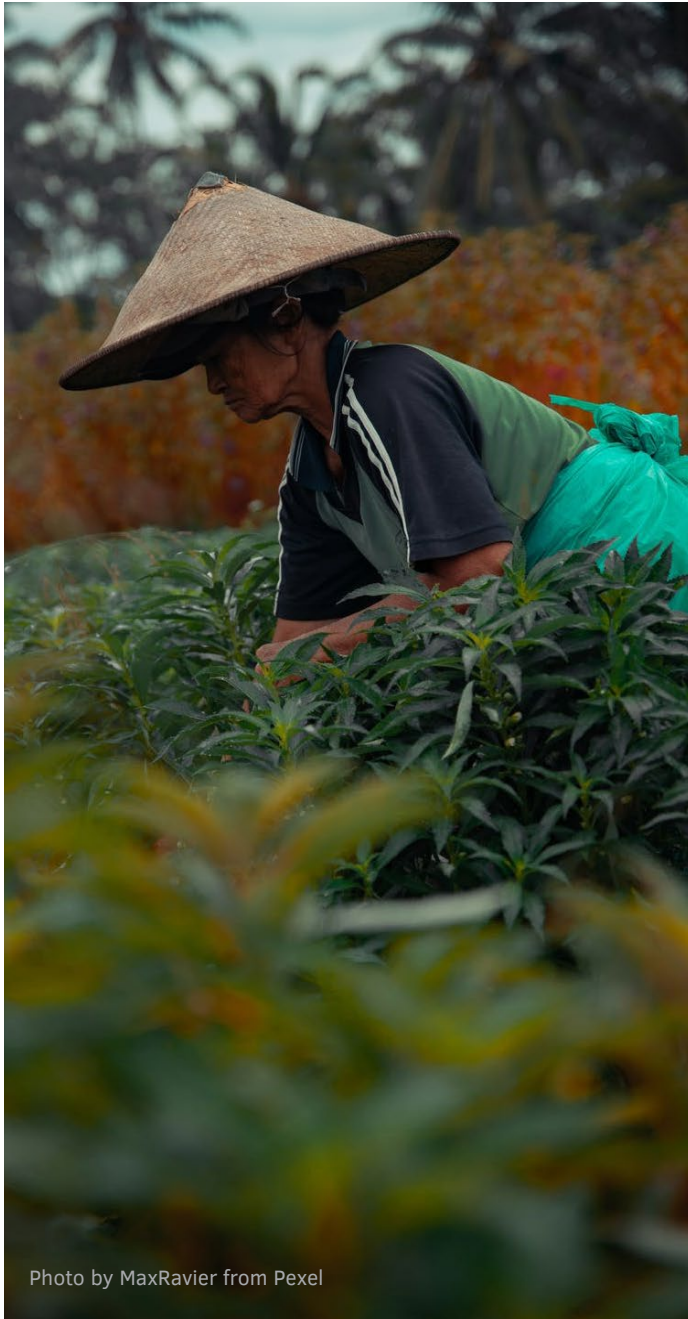


Photo by MaxRavier from Pexel

Moving Towards Recovery and Building Back Better

A little over a third of the survey participants developed new/shifted marketing strategies (e.g. direct trading between cooperatives or social enterprises; online and door-to-door delivery of food packages, etc.), while those interviewed made changes on the processes involved from production, processing, marketing, or delivery of products.

The SEs took advantage of technology and social media for connection, coordination, marketing, and delivery. All the SEs made use of mobile phones and online platforms to regularly coordinate with their stakeholders and/or market their products. Cooperatives made use of mobile phone and Facebook messenger to collect and release payments/loans. Others adopted online mechanisms for all transactions (from registration of members to payment of loans) and opened up online consultations.

Meanwhile, social enterprises that were focused on the production, processing, and marketing of food or non-food products found the need to diversify and engage in alternative livelihood development to ensure food security and sustain the livelihoods of their stakeholders.

Innovations Among Social Enterprises

Most of the innovations were done primarily to minimize the impact of pandemic to the poverty sectors they serve. Distinct to these SE experiences is the adoption of one or two innovation approaches (e.g. combining process and product innovations) or doing several changes under one approach (switching to on-line marketing and delivery for urban market, combined with retailing at the local/rural level) to sustain operations and support the sectors they serve.

Product or service innovation takes place when an enterprise develops an entirely new product or service, or improves their existing product or service. This usually results in the development or extension of new markets. In the SEAR survey conducted, over 30% of SEs surveyed shifted operations to produce personal protective equipment or PPEs such as face masks/shields, etc. A group of women sewers in Rizal, for instance, saw the opportunity and resorted to sewing facial masks and producing soap through the support of its NGO partner, ECOWEB. The masks and soap were then bought by ECOWEB for the hygiene kits distributed as relief. Two more NGOs supporting women sewers also relayed how the women transitioned to facial mask production. Meanwhile, Salay Handmade Paper Industries, Inc. raised the production of facemasks to a higher level by shifting from producing handmade and eco-friendly paper to manufacturing PPEs using abaca fiber.

Social enterprise model innovation entails changes in aspects in which the product or service is brought to market, as well as adjustments in the way SEs address the different poverty groups they serve. In the case of CalaBoo, a company supporting smallholder dairy farmers and women's groups, the pandemic became an opportunity to improve its operations and fully implement its original 2016 SE model of "farm to fridge" milk subscription through online and retail outlets.



Photo Courtesy: BGMPC FB Page

As a result of SE efforts, the poverty sectors they serve have coped better. But among the poverty sectors served, the stakeholders of SEs that have implemented gender-transformative programs as well as food security initiatives were relatively better off in facing the challenges of increased burdens of unpaid care work in their households and of ensuring food for their families and communities during lockdown.

Pre-COVID SE Initiatives/Innovations/Models Proven More Relevant with COVID

The pre-COVID SE innovations/models proven more relevant with COVID 19 could likewise help provide an enabling environment for the youth to engage in sustainable agriculture and SEs. By ensuring that such models are viable, it could encourage greater youth participation.

- ◆ Small farmer-based agro-ecological/regenerative agriculture systems (IIRR)
 - Development of organic and sustainable agriculture-based value chains and services (Busikong MPC)
 - Biodiversity-friendly social enterprises (BDSFEs) in forest/upland areas promoting climate-resilient and diversified native indigenous trees and crops (EVPRD)
 - Community-based seed banking of OPV and inbred seeds linked to seed to table social enterprise systems (PRRM)
- ◆ Agricultural entrepreneurship for coffee farmers, women and youth resulting to
 - community-based coffee enterprises as key actors in the coffee value chain (Coffee for Life program of Bote Central and Philippine Coffee Alliance)
- ◆ Small fisher-based, environment-friendly social enterprises in capture fisheries and aquaculture (Tambuyog)
- ◆ Strengthening the sustainability and innovations of primary cooperatives through social franchising and youth entrepreneurship (FPSDC)
- ◆ Sustainable Local Economic Development endeavors (ATFI)

Responses of SE Resource Institutions

Resource institutions are reviewing their directions and strategies given the changing landscape in trade and value chains, as well as in the overall impact of the pandemic in the country. They are in the process of adjusting their M&E system to ensure that transparency and accountability issues are addressed, and have likewise installed health and safety measures in their offices and operations.

In terms of financing, all the resource institutions providing loans to partner SEs have granted a moratorium on payments, penalties, and interests for at least two months, as well as restructured the loans. In terms of loan releases, the Peace and Equity Foundation consulted SE partners if they want their loans released or not given their current conditions.

Five of the resource institutions are helping their partner SEs assess their business models, come up with strategies given the changing landscape, and/or transform their enterprises to better adapt to the impact of the pandemic. One plans to launch a webinar to enhance the capacities of SEs to access soft loans from government and other resource institutions.

Some resource institutions also supported the recovery of SEs through mentoring, providing livelihood assistance, converting their training modules to online training, and working with Government to reinforce support for SEs and poverty sectors.



Photo Courtesy: BGMPC FB Page



Photo Courtesy: DARC

Immediate Responses

- ▶ Redefining approaches and models
- ▶ Adjusting M&E Systems
- ▶ Establishing health and safety measures
- ▶ Data Gathering
- ▶ Financing

Recovery Assistance

- ▶ Assisting Partners in Strategizing and Pivoting
- ▶ Capacity Building to Help SEs Adjust to the New Normal
- ▶ Mentoring Potential SEs
- ▶ Livelihood Assistance for SE Members
- ▶ Digitalization and On-line Services

Collective Response of the Sector Towards Inclusive Recovery

At the same time, many are still bent on pursuing pre-COVID19 long-term solutions anchored on the principles of rural development, sustainable development, and/or asset reform. A coalition of SEs and resource institutions, known as the PRESENT Coalition, has bridged the recovery and build back fairer initiatives from the ground to policy level by renewing their lobby for the enactment of the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Bill in Congress and holding dialogues with government agencies to explore and secure dedicated programs to support the recovery of SEs and the poor they serve. Specifically, the coalition was able to engage the Department of Agrarian Reform, Department of Agriculture, Department of Education, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Moreover, resource institutions and SEs are spearheading regional platforms for collaboration to ensure the recovery of the SE sector towards leaving no one behind in building back fairer and achieving the nine SDGs for pandemic recovery. The following are the social enterprise-led Multi-Sectoral SE-SDG Platforms for Inclusive Recovery and Building Back Better and Fairer as part of ongoing efforts in the region. This may be convened as national initiatives like the Social Enterprise Recovery Initiative (SERI) which is an immediate cross-cutting endeavor led by the PRESENT Coalition in the Philippines.

- ▶ Women's Empowerment, Livelihoods and Food in Agricultural Value Chains (WE LIVE FOOD in AVCs)
- ▶ Decent Work for All in Sustainable Value Chains (DW4AllinSVCs)
- ▶ Rural Revitalization, Youth and Social Entrepreneurship
- ▶ Health for All
- ▶ Technological Innovations for Sustainable Development



The findings reveal that SEs have experienced various levels of downturn, some more severely than others. They have also differed in dealing with the challenges, with most of them adopting mechanisms to immediately respond to the situation while others have already adjusted their products and/or processes towards recovery. One thing is common among them though, they have persisted in advancing the welfare of the poverty sectors they serve, ensuring that their needs were met, with some fully absorbing the losses to shield these sectors from the harsh impact of the pandemic.

Differentiated Impact on/Response of SEs and Poverty Sectors Served

Influencing Factors

Social entrepreneurship cannot be viewed apart from the larger societal context which is fueling its development. Most of the key informants related systemic issues and barriers that have affected the way SEs were impacted and the way they navigated their operations throughout the pandemic, as well as how such will affect recovery and build back better efforts for the sector. Some of these are existing issues and problems in agriculture, the digital divide, and government laws, policies, and systems.

This research further outlines the internal and external factors that have contributed to the extent and nature by which SEs were affected by the pandemic and how they responded to these impacts:

Internal Factors

- Nature of SE & SE model before pandemic
- Level of SE maturity/sustainability including diversity of income sources and extent of digital/ICT integration
- Nature and extent of partnership/relations with resource institutions and government
- Level of leadership/organizational agility and entrepreneurial management competencies including capacity for managing change and innovation
- Size and nature/composition of poverty/vulnerable sector(s) served
- Presence/absence and nature of gender agenda

External Factors

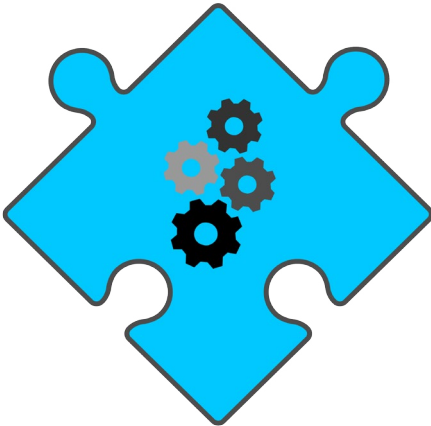
- Nature of pandemic & national government response
- Nature/type of product/service or value chain/economic subsector where SE situated
- Nature of market & distance from sources of inputs
- Location (urban vs rural) and access to infrastructure support, including digital infrastructure
- Local government leadership, capacity and response
- Presence of SE Resource Institutions

Hence, as SEs and resource institutions strive to recover and build back better, they also recognize that this endeavor should be parallel to the efforts to address the root causes of poverty, marginalization, inequality, and sustainability -- issues that SEs and resource institutions cannot solve alone.

Recommendations

Based on the responses of the sector and the opportunities for social entrepreneurship and enterprise development created by the pandemic, five levels of collaborative endeavors and partnerships are ongoing and can serve as the inspiration for pursuing social entrepreneurship as a major strategy for inclusive recovery and building back better in the Philippines:

1



PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE, AGILE AND GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE ENTERPRISES (PARTNERSHIPS FOR SAGE)

This is all about partnerships between and among existing SEs and their partner resource institutions to work towards ensuring the recovery of social enterprises and the poor they serve, in the process catalyzing their transformation to be sustainable,

agile and gender-transformative enterprises. This requires programs enabling SEs to continuously adapt and re-strategize given their internal conditions and the threats and opportunities of their changing environment. Such programs need to include internal capacity enhancement on strategic entrepreneurial management in a social enterprise context across the functional areas of marketing, operations, finance, human resource and organizational development and stakeholder engagement. Given the drastically changed context brought about by the pandemic, managing change, innovation, and digital transformation need to be critical competencies that all SEs should have. Moreover, SE resource institutions with a gender responsive or transformative perspective need to better incentivize SEs to make a more conscious effort of integrating a gender agenda in their organizations and operations. At the same time, Partnerships for SAGE should target the youth as a successor generation of leaders and practitioners of current and future social enterprises.

2



A MASSIVE PROGRAM FOR NEW SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT (NEW SEED)

A massive initiative towards New SEED builds on bilateral and multilateral partnerships between the social enterprise sector and other sectors to develop new social enterprises to assist the recovery and transformation of lives of the growing number of poor and marginalized sectors who have lost their sources of livelihood.

What is needed is a systematic study to map where these marginalized and poverty sectors are situated and invest in gender-inclusive Situation and Needs Assessment (SNA). The SNA would aid in surfacing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and aspirations (KSAA) which can be matched with opportunities for social enterprise development in identified strategic economic subsectors and value chains with the potential of growth and where these marginalized groups/poverty sectors are concentrated or could be major players.

The SNA would need to give attention to mapping the women in these poverty sectors, assessing their needs and capacities and exploring opportunities for SE development that would respond to the needs and capacities of women not only in economic value chains but also in exploring what the United Nations refers to as “transforming the inequities of unpaid care work into a new, inclusive care economy that works for everyone.” A similar attention should be given to the youth in all poverty sectors to determine opportunities to enhance and harness their competencies for social enterprise development including how digital technology can assist new social enterprise development. The mapping could then be followed by a purposive investment in feasibility studies towards setting up these SEs or social enterprise-led value chains. All these can be undertaken by bilateral and multilateral partnerships between the social enterprise sector with LGUs, NGAs, inclusive businesses and corporations pursuing CSR initiatives and multilateral agencies wanting to invest in recovery programs.



Photo Courtesy: Manila FAME, PCW

3

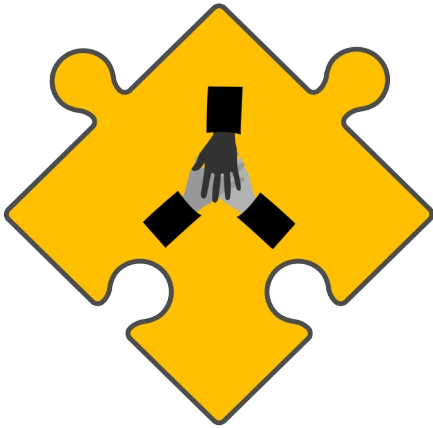


CO-CREATION OF AN ENABLING ECOSYSTEM FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AMIDST COVID-19 (ENABLING SEED)

This is already being pursued by a number of social enterprise resource institutions in partnership with their social enterprise partners. What is needed is to build on these initiatives towards developing customized or specialized support programs for various segments of the social enterprise sector given the varying contexts of existing and potential social enterprises that are undergoing recovery or are needing to be set up.

Building enabling ecosystems for social entrepreneurship and enterprise development amidst COVID19 would also entail addressing relevant crosscutting initiatives that have been shown and/or emphasized by the research participants: focus on capacity building on ICT and digital transformation; the promotion of product, process and social enterprise model innovations; addressing gender issues and women’s economic empowerment in social enterprise development; enhancing youth participation and leadership in SEs, especially in the area of digital technology and transformation; intensifying local food systems, including the need to address the impact of climate change; and the setting up of a Social Enterprise Recovery Fund providing hybrid financing or a combination of grants and soft loans required by social enterprises to effectively engage the poor in their recovery process. On the development of an inclusive care economy in the sector, SEs like Day Care Centers could be strengthened or set up to help reduce the amount of unpaid care work performed by women and provide more time and opportunity for women to participate in SE endeavors.

4



HARNESSING THE POWER OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND CROSS SECTORAL COLLABORATION (SE AND CROSS SECTORAL COLLABORATION)

The first 3 recommendations could be best pursued if the power of cross sectoral collaboration is fully harnessed. This means that social enterprises would engage in collaboration efforts with civil society organizations, financial institutions and social investors, government agencies and LGUs, inclusive businesses and corporations pursuing corporate social responsibility, multilateral banks and agencies -- all towards achieving greater impact in efforts to recover and build back better.

In this effort, the multi-stakeholder platforms (MSPs) being initiated by ISEA at the regional level are potential anchors for a systematic national effort focused on specific sectoral agenda that are critical in inclusive recovery and building back better. Three MSPs at the regional level where Philippine social enterprises and resource institutions are taking lead roles are in Women’s Empowerment, Livelihoods and Food (WE LIVE FOOD) in Agricultural Value Chains (AVCs); Decent Work for All in Sustainable Value Chains; and Rural Revitalization, Youth and Social Entrepreneurship. Two other MSPs that are still being evolved are Health for All and Technological Innovations for Sustainable Development. These two could also become potentially relevant as cross sectoral collaboration platforms.

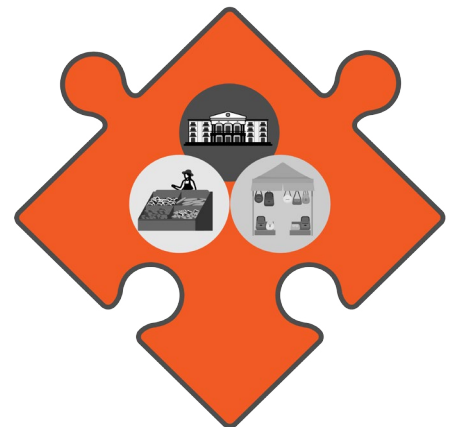
There is an on-going initiative led by ISEA and PRESENT Coalition members to put together a Philippine Convener’s Group for Inclusive Recovery and Building Back Fairer focused on decent work and sustainable livelihoods through



Photo Courtesy: WLB

social entrepreneurship. A first meeting has been convened and plans are underway to engage government agencies to pursue opportunities for social innovation given existing programs; exploring the idea of a Social Enterprise Recovery Fund for the Philippines; and developing a qualification system/undertaking a mapping of social enterprises nationwide to pursue social entrepreneurship and social enterprise development as a major initiative towards providing decent work and sustainable livelihoods.

5



PURSUIT OF SOCIAL INNOVATION WITH GOVERNMENT TOWARDS INSTITUTIONALIZING PRESENT (SOCIAL INNOVATION TOWARDS PRESENT)

For the aforementioned collaborative partnerships to fully prosper, government would need to play a critical developmental role.



Although government agencies do not have dedicated programs for social enterprises, existing government programs can be potentially utilized by social enterprises and social enterprise resource institutions. Opportunities for this have been surfaced by the initial commitments generated by the PRESENT Coalition during dialogues with 5 government agencies namely the DA, DTI, DSWD, DAR and DepEd. The willingness of these 5 agencies to undertake innovative pilot initiatives is a welcome development.



The whole idea of utilizing strategic economic subsectors where the poor or marginalized are concentrated or could be major players, as units of planning, is actually a key provision of the National Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Program enshrined in the PRESENT Bill that has been pending in both houses of Congress since 2012. If social innovations utilizing existing government programs in agricultural and non-agricultural value chains could be pursued to cocreate sustainable livelihoods and decent work, these could assist in building a case for fast tracking the enactment of the PRESENT Bill. The PRESENT Coalition has embarked on a renewed lobby effort to push for the enactment of the PRESENT Bill so that social enterprises may be recognized and effectively supported to become partners of government in the recovery of the poor and building back better. It has also reviewed the provisions of the bill and has made efforts to strengthen the bill's provisions to assist in building resilience of the sector and instituting mechanisms such as a Social Enterprise Recovery and Rehabilitation Fund so that social enterprises could be effectively assisted to recover during pandemics such as that of COVID-19.



The PRESENT Bill covers a number of the recovery and building back better needs/support articulated by the SEs and resource institutions who participated in the research. The PRESENT Bill has provisions promoting access of SEs to hybrid financing which combines grants for capacity building and technical inputs with non-collateralized loans through special credit windows with a guarantee fund pool. The Bill also provides for a comprehensive insurance system for SEs; incentives for SEs through special allocation/preferential treatment in government procurement; tax exemptions and tax breaks; and cash incentives. It also includes mainstreaming social entrepreneurship education in all levels of the educational system, paving the way for the youth to be educated and engaged in developing perspectives and competencies relevant to social entrepreneurship as a pathway towards sustainable development.



As social entrepreneurship and social enterprise development cannot be separated from the broader process of societal transformation, it is essential that SEs and resource institutions participate in efforts to address systemic issues and barriers impacting on the sector. As part of collaborative endeavors and SE sectoral and cross sectoral initiatives, addressing systemic issues and barriers such as but not limited to the lack of control of the poor over productive resources including land; environmental stewardship and climate change; good governance; the digital divide; cultural norms that overburden women with unpaid care work -- all these need to be pursued side by side with broader efforts to transform society and address the root causes of poverty, inequality and sustainability.



Photo Courtesy: BGMPC FB Page

This learning brief presents the social enterprises' (SEs) experiences during the onset of the COVID-19 health pandemic in the Philippines. The paper shows how SEs and their stakeholders were affected by the crisis and their responses towards recovery and rebuilding. Further, it outlines the ways in which SEs, their support institutions, the private sector, and the government can work together to effectively cope and recover from the impact of COVID-19, towards building back better and reimagining an equitable and sustainable future. This is particularly useful to the SE sector, resource institutions, private sector partners and the government.



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For further information on the research, please email Gomer Padong at gpadong@isea-group.net, Research Coordinator.

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