



## Social Enterprise in the Philippines: Social Enterprises with the Poor as Primary Stakeholders

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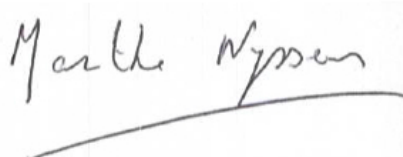
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## ABSTRACT

Collaboration between scholars and practitioners in the Philippines has resulted in the development of a rich tradition of social entrepreneurship that focuses on the poor as key stakeholders in finding innovative and sustainable solutions to poverty and inequality. In this context, social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders (SEPPS) emerged as a unifying conceptual construct of a major type of social enterprise.

Three major research studies on SEPPS have been undertaken by the author and the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia in the period between 2008 and 2015. The major findings of these research studies helped to shape the national discourse on social enterprise, and are shared in this paper.

SEPPS are social-mission-driven organisations that enable the poor to participate in the creation and distribution of wealth. They are a response to the failure of state and market institutions to serve the poor and address the Philippine development paradox, characterised by economic growth combined with high poverty and inequality. In this sense, SEPPS are potential game changers.

Two models of stakeholder engagement are evident among SEPPS: the collaboration model, in which the poor are engaged as transactional partners, and the empowerment model, which engages the poor not only as transactional partners but also as transformational partners. The multidimensional nature of poverty—which involves a state of capability deprivation and exclusion from the market and the economy—explains the relevance of both models. The collaboration model, in which the excluded poor are enabled to become workers, suppliers and clients of SEPPS, results in the development of inclusive and ethical markets. The empowerment model, in which the poor are also enabled to become full-fledged owners and decision makers of SEPPS, results in the transformation of the poor and development of the social economy.

The institutionalisation of SEPPS is being catalysed by a coalition of practitioners and their supporters, who are engaging state and market in a dynamic process of innovation and transformation. As responses to state and market failures and as hybrid organisations engaged in this process of transformation, SEPPS play a dual role in building an equitable and plural Philippine economy. As such, they are important actors in developing a strong social economy and in catalysing the building of inclusive and ethical markets.

## 1. THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CONCEPT IN THE PHILIPPINES

Social enterprise first surfaced as a concept in the Philippines in the 1990s. Social enterprise was then considered as existing “for a community of worker-owners who [sought] to jointly improve their lot through collaborative, cooperative and prosperity-sharing mechanisms” (Morato 1994). Over time, external influences emanating from various schools of thought of social entrepreneurship (Defourny and Nyssens 2010) interfaced with the emerging perspectives and practice of a wide array of stakeholders in the country.

In 2002, a collaboration process between scholars and practitioners in Asia (including the Philippines) was launched under the form of an action research to develop a conceptual framework to understand the phenomenon of social enterprise. Based on significant cases of social enterprises from the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and India, a definition of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise was crafted. Social entrepreneurship was seen as involving “the promotion and building of enterprises or organisations that create wealth, with the intention of benefiting not just a person or family, but a defined constituency, sector or community, usually involving the public at large or the marginalised sectors of society” (Dacanay 2004).

A social enterprise was characterised as being different from a private or traditional business enterprise in terms of its primary stakeholders and beneficiaries, its primary objectives and its enterprise philosophy. The primary stakeholders and beneficiaries of a social enterprise belong to marginalised sectors, in contrast to rich stockholders in a private enterprise. Whereas private enterprises are profit-driven, social enterprises are driven by their development objectives, such as improving the quality of life of marginalised sectors; generating surplus or profits is supportive of the goal of ensuring financial sustainability. A social enterprise was also seen as having a “distributive” philosophy, unlike private enterprises, which were considered to have an “accumulative” philosophy: this means that social enterprises create wealth with due regard to social and environmental costs and distribute the wealth created to a broader segment of society. By contrast, private enterprises often create wealth by externalising social and environmental costs and accumulate the wealth created to enrich stockholders (Dacanay 2004).

The result of this action research paved the way for the identification of “social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders” (hereinafter referred to as SEPPS) as a major type of social enterprise in the Philippines. SEPPS became the subject of a case-based theory building (Eisenhardt 1989) dissertation research, led by the author between 2008 and 2012, to address the following research question: “In those cases where social enterprises serve the poor as stakeholders in a developing country context, how do they engage the poor, and why are they effective in terms of their impact?” (Dacanay 2012b). This research will be referred to as the “Philippine SEPPS Study” in the present paper.

In 2011-2012, the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (ISEA) undertook an action research initiative to define the elements and features of a conducive policy environment for SEPPS to flourish in the country. The main research output was a proposed law that became

the basis for a lobbying effort in the Philippine Congress by stakeholders organised as the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship Coalition (Dacanay 2012a).

A subsequent research, led by ISEA in 2013-2015, surveyed a purposive sample of 32 Philippine SEPPS to explore the roles, potentials and challenges of social enterprises as key actors in poverty reduction and women economic leadership. This was part of a four-country research that also included Indonesia, Bangladesh and India (ISEA 2015b), and will be referred to as the “ISEA SEPPS Study” in the following sections.

## 2. SOCIAL ENTERPRISES WITH THE POOR AS PRIMARY STAKEHOLDERS (SEPPS) IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippine SEPPS Study considers SEPPS as responses to the systemic and widespread poverty, inequality and the continuing failure of state and market institutions to serve the needs of the poor in developing countries such as the Philippines. As such:

*SEPPS are social-mission-driven, wealth-creating organisations that have at least a double bottom line (social and financial), explicitly have as principal objective poverty reduction/alleviation or improving the quality of life of specific segments of the poor, and have a distributive enterprise philosophy.*

(Dacanay 2012b: 51)

There are thus three aspects to the definition of SEPPS.

First, SEPPS are social-mission-driven organisations, explicitly pursuing a goal of poverty reduction/alleviation or aiming to improve the quality of life of specific segments of the poor as primary objective. The poor themselves are engaged not only as workers, clients and/or suppliers of these social enterprises, but also—and more importantly—as partners in the social enterprise and value chain management; as full-fledged owners and decision makers in social enterprise governance; and as change agents for themselves and their community, sector or society as a whole.

Secondly, SEPPS are wealth-creating organisations that have at least a double bottom line (social and financial). Just like business or private enterprises, and unlike traditional non-profit organisations, which are dependent on grants or public subsidies—or wealth created somewhere else—, SEPPS are engaged in the production/provision and sale of goods and services. However, unlike businesses or private for-profit enterprises, which principally produce/provide and sell goods and services to create profit for shareholders, SEPPS do so with the objective of achieving financial sustainability. They create wealth to partially or fully cover the cost of their operations and to invest in other activities related to their social mission. Their financial results support their social goals of poverty reduction/alleviation or improvement of the quality of life of specific groups among the poor.

Thirdly, SEPPS have a distributive enterprise philosophy. SEPPS create social and economic value that accrue to the poor as primary stakeholders. Unlike in a business or a private for-

profit enterprise, where payments made or wages given to the poor are considered as financial costs to be minimised, these are considered in SEPPS as social benefits for primary stakeholders that need to be optimised. The distributive philosophy is expressed both in the distribution of surplus or profits to the poor as dividends and in the reinvestment of benefits back into the enterprise to sustain the fulfilment of its social mission or in activities that benefit and assist the poor in overcoming poverty or improving their quality of life. SEPPS build the assets and capability of the poor to help them move out of poverty as productive citizens in ethical markets and the social economy.

The ISEA SEPPS Study—which, as mentioned above, carried out a survey involving 32 SEPPS—validated these three aspects of the definition. The social-mission-driven nature and focus of SEPPS in serving and empowering the poor was reflected in the perceived impact of SEPPS on the poor and the range of the poor served (ISEA 2015b).

The ISEA SEPPS Study reveals that the most significant groups served among the poor are the enterprising poor, farmers, agricultural workers, indigenous people, poor in urban communities, unemployed and underemployed and, cutting across these segments, women. Indeed, a large percentage of the poor targeted by SEPPS are marginalised or socially and economically challenged women.

The nature of impacts on the poor, as perceived and reported by the SEPPS in the study, include:

- increased, diversified and sustainable sources of income;
- increased capacity to cover basic household needs and improved quality of life;
- improved access to social and community services;
- movement out of poverty;<sup>1</sup>
- improved participation, position and empowerment of the poor;
- improved status and empowerment of women in the community;
- increased capacity for self-governance and improved capacity to contribute to community development;
- increased level of community development and prosperity.

The elements of the definition of SEPPS referring to their being wealth-creating organisations and having a distributive enterprise philosophy were reflected in their being engaged in the sale of a wide array of products and services, the revenues of which were used to sustain their operations, with the profits or surplus ploughed back into the enterprise to provide additional services to the poor. A majority of the SEPPS surveyed were non-stock corporations, foundations, cooperatives and associations, where the distributive philosophy could be operationalised without much difficulty.

The example of *Gandang Kalikasan/Human Nature* shows how SEPPS that take the form of stock corporations can innovate to implement a distributive philosophy. While the minimum wage required by law is PHP 480/day, the lowest paid worker in *Gandang Kalikasan* is

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<sup>1</sup> This was cited by microfinance institutions in the Philippines that utilise the Progress out of Poverty Index (PPI) as a tool in their respective organisations.

receiving a living wage of PHP 750/day. *Gandang Kalikasan* also ploughs back up to 100% of the profits from its best-selling product into partner supplier communities (ISEA 2015b).

### 3. MAIN FORMS OF SEPPS

Five main groups of SEPPS have been identified by the ISEA SEPPS Study. These groups can be differentiated in terms of initiatives' nature and form of organisation, initiators and main services provided to the poor. These groups are: social cooperatives (social coops), social-mission-driven microfinance institutions (SMD-MFIs), fair trade organisations (FTOs), trading development organisations (TRADOs) and new-generation social enterprises (NewGen SEs).

#### Social cooperatives (social coops)

Out of the 23,672 cooperatives registered by the country's Cooperative Development Authority in 2013, the ISEA SEPPS Study estimated that over 11,000 were SEPPS belonging to a group called social cooperatives (social coops). These are cooperatives composed of and serving the poor. They have an estimated membership of around 4.56 million. The poor include farmers, agrarian reform beneficiaries,<sup>2</sup> fishers, vendors, the entrepreneurial poor, persons with disability and women in all these sectors.

#### Social-mission-driven microfinance institutions (SMD-MFIs)

Among the providers of financial or microfinance services to the poor, the ISEA SEPPS Study estimated that about 2,000 MFIs—reaching some 2.5 million poor—might be considered as SEPPS or social-mission-driven microfinance institutions (SMD-MFIs). Many of these are non-governmental development organisations that developed microfinance services, including savings, credit and micro-insurance. Many SMD-MFIs have diversified their services to include various forms of social protection, education and training, business development and value chain development.

#### Fair trade organisations (FTOs)

FTOs provide marginalised producers with access to markets using globally recognised fair trade principles. They enable marginalised or small producers by establishing strategic partnerships with them as supplier communities, offering them fair prices for their produce, pre-financing for production, training and capacity building. Fair trade organisations affiliated with the World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) practice and adhere to a comprehensive WFTO Standard and Guarantee System based on 10 fair trade principles. In 2012, there were 32 fair trade organisations registered in the directory of WFTO-Philippines.

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<sup>2</sup> Agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) are beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL), which distributed land to landless farmers and agricultural workers.



## Trading development organisations (TRADOs)

Trading development organisations (TRADOs) are non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) engaged in the production and/or trading/marketing of goods and/or provision of economic services (i.e. financial services, enterprise development services). They engage in these economic activities to financially support their development-related operations and to serve specific groups among the poor. A subset in this group of initiatives are the NGDO-owned/initiated social enterprises: these were set up or initiated as commercial or trading arms of their parent NGDOs, and they usually take the form of stock for-profit corporations. The number of TRADOs is difficult to ascertain, but the ISEA SEPPS Study made an informed estimate of 2,500.

## New-generation social enterprises (New-Gen SEs)

New-generation social enterprises (New-Gen SEs) constitute a rising segment of the social enterprise sector. Unlike the older generation of trading development organisations, which were NGDO-initiated, these initiatives are established by young professionals or entrepreneurs with a social mission to help the poor. There is not much literature yet on these SEs, but among the more prominent ones are Gandang Kalikasan/Human Nature, Rags2Riches and Hapinoy. It is difficult to ascertain how many New-Gen SEs exist, but this is definitely a group of SEs that is on the rise in the Philippines.

## 4. TYPES OF ROLES PERFORMED BY THE POOR AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY SEPPS

In the Philippine SEPPS Study, on the basis of a rapid appraisal using secondary data and interviews with key informants, three major categories of SEPPS were identified as relevant for the sample to be chosen, using as a criterion the most significant way in which these SEPPS engaged the poor—the poor as suppliers, the poor as workers, the poor as clients—when the initiatives were set up. The poor-as-owner category was also considered, but this was observed to cut across the other three categories. For example, a significant number of social enterprises registered under the form of cooperatives belonged to the category of initiatives that, at the time of their creation, engaged the poor as owners. However, in these cooperatives, the poor were also engaged as workers, clients or suppliers when they were established. The fact that the poor were engaged as owners was therefore not used as a distinguishing criterion for a specific category, but it was seen as an important consideration in the final choice of cases.

A variability criterion of relative social and financial performance was added to the abovementioned criterion to select, with the help of three panels of experts, three “pairs” of organisations: in each of the three categories previously defined, a high-performing and an average-performing social enterprise, both having existed for at least five years, were chosen.

In half of the cases (namely PWD Fed, Lamac MPC and Cordova MPC), the poor were also the owners of the enterprise.

The six SEPPS in the resulting sample (see table 1) had been in existence for 15 to 38 years at the time of the study: PWD Fed was the youngest and Cordova MPC, the oldest. Their level of annual revenues in 2007-2008 ranged from twenty-four million pesos (PHP 24 million, for Tahanan) to a little over two hundred million pesos (PHP 200 million, for Alter Trade).<sup>3</sup> Table 2 shows the groups of poor targeted by the three pairs of social enterprises chosen.

**Table 1. Matched pairs of SEPPS chosen for the study**

<b>Way of engaging the poor</b> <b>Social and financial performance</b>	<b>The poor as suppliers</b>	<b>The poor as workers</b>	<b>The poor as clients</b>
High-performing SEs	Alter Trade Group (Alter Trade)	National Federation of Cooperatives of Persons with Disability (PWD Fed)	Lamac Multi-Purpose Cooperative (Lamac MPC)
Average-performing SEs	Upland Marketing Foundation Inc (Upland Marketing)	Tahanang Walang Hagdanan (Tahanan)	Cordova Multi-Purpose Cooperative (Cordova MPC)

Source: Dacanay (2012b)

The findings of the ISEA SEPPS Study clearly evidenced the nature of SEPPS as hybrid organisations, straddling the for-profit and non-profit sectors as well as the market and non-market spheres of the economy. As hybrid organisations, they provide a combination of market and non-market services to the poor whom they serve: transactional services and transformational services, which were already observed in the Philippine SEPPS Study (Dacanay 2012b; see explanation below), and a third category of services, which the ISEA SEPPS Study called social inclusion services.

The results of the Philippine SEPPS Study highlighted two types of roles that the poor perform: transactional roles and transformational roles.

- Transactional roles are enterprise-related functions performed by the poor that involve an exchange of goods or services for money. This category includes the poor's role as workers, suppliers, clients, or owners.
- Transformational roles are functions performed by the poor as conscious agents of change, to lift themselves out of poverty and to participate in group efforts to improve the quality of life of their community, sector or society as a whole.

<sup>3</sup> The Philippine peso (PHP) is the country's official currency. In 2007, one US dollar (USD 1) was equivalent to PHP 46.15. In the period from 2007 to 2012, the exchange rate of 1 US dollar (USD 1) ranged from PHP 43.28 to PHP 47.64.

Table 2. Groups of poor targeted by and scope of activity of the SEPPS in the sample

Name of social enterprise	Description of the group(s) of poor targeted	Scope/Range
Alter Trade	Sugar farmers having benefitted from the agrarian reform <sup>4</sup> Backyard growers of bananas (naturally grown Balangon variety)	820 sugar farmers in one province (Negros Occidental) and 3,493 banana growers spread nationwide
Upland Marketing	Community-based producers of food: the majority are muscovado sugar producers and organic rice farmers	60 community-based enterprises with 3,000 poor producers as members/partners in upland, lowland and coastal communities nationwide
PWD Fed	Unemployed persons with disabilities (PWD) trained to manufacture school chairs	1,250 PWDs organised in 15 cooperatives nationwide
Tahanan	Unemployed persons with disabilities trained in metal craft, woodwork, needlecraft	273 PWD employees, workers, producers and students
Lamac MPC	In Lamac: upland farmers and livestock raisers; construction, domestic and migrant workers; and entrepreneurial poor In other areas: entrepreneurial poor	35,040 poor, representing 90% of 38,933 members in various provinces located in the Visayan region <sup>5</sup>
Cordova MPC	Artisanal fishermen, handicraft makers, tricycle and trisikad drivers, workers, entrepreneurial poor	5,694 poor, representing 90% of 6,327 members spread in one municipality (Cordova) and in one city (Lapu-Lapu) in Cebu province <sup>6</sup>

Source: Dacanay (2012b).

The results from the Philippine SEPPS Study also indicate that role changes over time were attributable to shifts in management orientation and to the provision of enabling services which, just like the roles, and as mentioned above, can be classified into transactional and transformational services.

- Transactional services correspond to enterprise- or market-driven activities, such as providing loans, sharing new technologies or conducting trainings that are necessary for the poor to perform effectively and efficiently as workers, suppliers, clients and nominal owners.
- Transformational services are those linked to activities that empower the poor, such as leadership training and organisational development, asset build-up and provision of education and experiential learning opportunities, and aim to help the poor become

<sup>4</sup> Former workers of large parcels of land, called *haciendas*, that used to be owned by sugar barons or landlords, and who were awarded part of the land they were tilling under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Programme of the government.

<sup>5</sup> The other 10% of members are professionals and salaried employees, like teachers and government employees.

<sup>6</sup> The other 10% of members are professionals and salaried employees, like teachers and government employees.

conscious decision makers in their SEPPS and change agents for themselves, their communities, sector and society as a whole.

Transactional services may be fee-based (this is for example the case of loans) or non-fee-based (as for example training). Transformational services may be directed at individuals (like scholarships to finish high school and/or college) or at groups (for example, organising individuals into groups and providing leadership training).

The provision of the aforementioned transactional and transformational services by SEPPS was confirmed by the ISEA SEPPS Study. The main transactional services provided by SEPPS were financial services (59%); product development and marketing (53%); and provision of new appropriate technology (44%). Training, capacity building and skills development—which may encompass both transactional and transformational services, depending on the purpose—were the type of services most frequently encountered, with 69% of the SEPPS surveyed providing such services.

Group-directed transformational services related to organising and developing self-governing institutions for the poor, beyond the core organisation of the social enterprise, were provided by 38% of the SEPPS surveyed. Worth noting, among the community-based organisations developed by these SEPPS, was the fact that they involved the government and other institutions in setting up community-based water systems or health centres, or in building public infrastructure such as roads and electrification.

The same percentage of Philippine SEPPS (38%) involved the poor in their planning processes and provided for the poor's representation in the governance and management structures of their social enterprises. Interestingly, SEPPS providing for the poor's participation in their planning processes were to be found across all five types of SEPPS.

The third type of services that were highlighted by the ISEA SEPPS Study and were identified as an enhancement to the concept and nature of SEPPS were social inclusion services. Social inclusion services are non-fee-based social welfare services that directly assist the poor and their families in a way that immediately meets their basic needs or permits them to immediately improve their quality of life. Basic social services (especially education and health) and community services (e.g. community-based systems for water, health and sanitation, natural resource management and disaster risk reduction) were part of the main services provided to the poor by 38% of the SEPPS surveyed. They came in the form of benefits provided by the SEPPS to the poor and/or the families of the poor who were their workers, suppliers, clients and, in the case of cooperatives, their members, or as programmes in the communities where they reside.

## 5. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT MODELS

The Philippine SEPPS Study tracked and analysed the actual roles and role changes of the different groups of poor involved in the SEPPS over a period of 15 to 38 years (depending on the enterprises analysed).

The roles performed by the poor in the SEPPS and in their environment and the changes that these roles underwent over time—and which were made possible by transactional and transformational services—may be seen as indicative of how the poor are engaged as stakeholders in these enterprises. In other words, the various ways in which SEPPS engage the poor may be considered as indicative of their stakeholder engagement strategies.

An overall cross-case analysis of the SEPPS studied suggested the existence of three models of stakeholder engagement among the poor, each with a different impact: control, collaboration, and empowerment (see table 3). This typology builds on earlier studies on stakeholder engagement models, focusing on corporations, but which only conceived of two models—namely control and collaboration (Sloan 2009).

While the control model was noted as usual and acceptable among corporations (Sloan 2009), it was considered by the Philippine SEPPS Study as a form of mission drift among SEPPS. This was exemplified by the case of Tahanan at a point in its history when its business-minded managerial team hired persons with disability as passive beneficiaries, just to give them jobs. By so doing, Tahanan met the expectations of mainstream traders, who demanded the lowest price and the longest possible working hours to meet volume and quality requirements of products for export. After a period of crisis, during which it was forced to shut down, Tahanan recovered from this mission drift by capacitating selected persons with disability from among the rank-and-file staff to become supervisors and managers (individually-directed transformational services) and by putting in place systems and task-related trainings for workers (transactional services), while simultaneously shifting its production to educational toys for schools and the Department of Education. All these changes enabled the enterprise to shift from a control model to a collaboration model.

The empowerment model of stakeholder involvement was considered by the Philippine SEPPS Study as distinct from the other two models and only observable among SEPPS. The empowerment model had the greatest qualitative impact in moving the poor out of income poverty and capability deprivation. This model was exemplified by the case of Alter Trade in their engagement with their sugar farmer partners beyond the initiation stage.

Prior to the intervention of Alter Trade, in 1987, assetless sugar workers were in slave-like conditions in big sugar estates, with no opportunity to go to school beyond the primary or elementary levels. As agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs), they had just been awarded small tracts of land by the government, but the government had no capacity to provide the much-needed support services to most ARBs to make their lands productive, as confirmed by a 2007 government study that showed that only 3% of ARBs in the province had been able to access support services.

Table 3: Models of stakeholder engagement among SEPPS

Dimension	Control model	Collaboration model	Empowerment model
Focus of the enterprise	Purposive engagement with the poor to improve their quality of life	Purposive engagement with the poor to improve their quality of life	Purposive engagement with the poor to improve their quality of life
Managerial orientation towards the poor	Poor considered as passive beneficiaries	Poor considered as transactional partners	Poor considered as transformational partners
Key engagement processes	Monitoring, listening, telling	Collaborating, partnering, learning	Enabling, empowering
Nature of roles and capabilities developed among the poor	Passive workers, suppliers or clients	Pro-active workers, suppliers or clients Partners in social enterprise and value chain management	Empowered workers, suppliers, clients and/or owners Organised partners in poverty reduction and community, sector and/or societal transformation
Nature of programmes/ services and structures/ delivery systems involving the poor	Limited to fee-based transactional services	Transactional services including capability building to ensure effective performance in transactional roles (fee-based and non-fee-based) Delivery system of transactional services integrated into operating systems	Dedicated programmes to enable effective performance in transactional and transformational roles Distinct delivery system for transformational services Distinct structures and systems set up to enable effective performance in transformational roles
Impact on the poor	Limited, with risk of fostering subservience and dependency and thus leading to hardening of social exclusion	Access to social and/or economic services leading to social inclusion Access dependent on continuing relationship with the social enterprise Increases in incomes may not be sufficient to overcome income poverty	Significant outcomes in overcoming capability deprivation and income poverty Outcomes derived from the relationship with the social enterprise and organised initiatives of the poor themselves
Case(s) illustrating the model	Tahanan (control model dominant during development stage)	Tahanan (during initiation and renewal stages); Upland Marketing; Alter Trade (initiation stage for sugar farmers and banana growers; development stage for banana growers); Lamac MPC; Cordova MPC	Alter Trade (development to renewal stage for sugar farmers; renewal stage for banana growers); PWD Fed (initiation, development and renewal stages)

Source: Dacanay (2012b)

In this context, Alter Trade provided a comprehensive set of transactional services, including appropriate technology to allow the conversion to organic farming, affordable credit and an assured market using the principles of fair trade. Alter Trade also provided sustained transformational services in the form of organisational capability building support, and developed ARB cooperatives and associations, intended to become not only capable suppliers of certified organic and fair trade sugar cane but also vehicles for promoting farm and income diversification, asset build-up and management, and community development planning and implementation. Moreover, Alter Trade facilitated the representation of these partner producers in the foundation's board of trustees and assisted in federating them, in 2009, into the Negros Organic Fair Trade Association (NOFTA).

NOFTA was a manifestation of a significant level of empowerment of the sugar farmers: it became a co-equal partner of Alter Trade in organising other ARBs and small producers to practice sustainable agriculture and fair trade. The 18 sugar producer partner organisations in NOFTA had an aggregate membership of 820 farmers, representing about 1% of ARBs in the province. In 2008, these cooperatives and associations of producers were deemed to be at different stages of development: two had become "organisations practicing social entrepreneurship"; four had become "entrepreneurial farmers' organisations", and 12 had become "self-help groups". This assessment was based on a development indexing tool that defined three development stages on the basis of five elements, namely the entities' organisational cohesion and development, capacity to engage in the market, income diversification among members, contribution to community and sector development, and financial growth and sustainability.

An external impact study carried out in 2009 showed that 93.5% of sugar farmers lived below the poverty threshold before their partnership with Alter Trade; when the study was conducted, 32% of sugar farmers were already above the poverty threshold; 13% were at the poverty threshold; and 55% had moved from extreme poverty to food sufficiency. Another external impact study, using social return on investment, showed that every Philippine peso invested in sugar farmers' activities in the period from 2002 to 2007 generated a blended value of PHP 13.

As for the collaboration model, it tends to have a larger scope in terms of providing the poor with access to services, jobs and markets, but less qualitative impact than the empowerment model in terms of holistically building their capability to improve their quality of life and overcome poverty.

The collaboration model was exemplified by Upland Marketing, which provided a comprehensive set of transactional services in the form of product development, marketing and financing to about 3,000 small producers of food, mostly agrarian reform beneficiaries, indigenous peoples and fishers, spread across 60 community-based enterprises nationwide. A majority of the small producers who were organised into cooperatives were producers of organic rice and muscovado sugar. Upland Marketing mainly assisted these cooperatives in developing their production capacity to achieve the levels of quality and quantity required by mainstream supermarket outlets. Much of the impact attributable to Upland Marketing related to access to technologies and markets leading to increased incomes, consistent with Upland



Marketing's mandate. The mandate of Upland Marketing was to be the intermediary marketing arm of a group of non-governmental organisations, with a holistic strategy to serve upland, lowland and coastal communities.

Interestingly, it was also the collaboration model that Alter Trade exemplified in its long years of engagement with its partner banana producers, which resulted in their accessing technologies, markets and increased incomes. Recognising the gap between its intended and realised strategy in engaging their partner banana producers, Alter Trade decided, during the strategic planning process it implemented in 2008, to shift to the empowerment model.

As exemplified by the aforementioned stories of Tahanan, Alter Trade and Upland Marketing, overcoming a mission drift (by shifting away from the control model to the collaboration model) or shifting from the collaboration model to the empowerment model in order to achieve greater impact entailed the following:

- a change of managerial orientation towards the poor, with corresponding changes in engagement processes;
- providing transactional services to make the poor more effective in performing transactional roles, and offering individually-directed transformational services to enable selected individuals to become leaders, supervisors and managers;
- providing a combination of individually-directed and group-directed transformational services—on top of transactional services—to enable the poor to become empowered decision makers and actors in their own development.

Elements of the empowerment model may be considered as part of the defining features of “socio-economic initiatives which belong neither to the traditional private for-profit sector nor to the public sector [but to a sector] which is often called the non-profit sector or the social economy” (Defourny 2001: 1). Cooperatives, mutual-type organisations and associations which have historically made up the social economy adhere to “a democratic decision-making process” involving members and based on the principle of “one member, one vote” (Defourny 2001: 7). This is carried over into social entrepreneurship literature, particularly by scholars of the social economy school. “Mutual social enterprises” have been characterised by social economy scholars as adhering to a democratic decision-making process (Spear et al. 2010). These scholars, as exemplified by Defourny and Nyssens (2008: 202), define social enterprises as not-for-profit private organisations that “rely on a collective dynamics, often involving various types of stakeholders in their governing bodies”.

While collective dynamics and representation of the poor as stakeholders in governing bodies can be noted in SEPPS, the distinctive feature of the empowerment model of stakeholder engagement is its giving primary importance to assisting the poor, who are coming from a state of capability deprivation (Sen 1999), in acquiring the knowledge, skills and confidence to become co-equal partners of the enabling stakeholders in the development process. Through transformational services delivered by the SEPPS, the poor go through a learning process of giving meaning to the democratic exercise of the “one person, one vote” principle and of collective self-governance to become such co-equal partners, as exemplified by NOFTA and its members in the Alter Trade case.



## 6. INSTITUTIONALISATION PROCESS OF SEPPS IN THE PHILIPPINES

On February 16, 2012, social entrepreneurs and leaders of major national networks and resource institutions of social enterprises established the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Coalition. Since then, the PRESENT Coalition has been engaged in both legislative and executive lobbying efforts towards the recognition of SEPPS as partners of government in poverty reduction and the institutionalisation of a Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship Programme.

### Box 1: The PRESENT Bill as proposed by the PRESENT Coalition

The PRESENT Programme is focused on the development of strategic economic subsectors with potential for growth and where poverty groups are concentrated. The poor are expected to benefit the most from subsector development and growth through their effective participation as workers, suppliers, clients and/or owners of social enterprises and as partners in economic and social development. Substantive poverty reduction is envisioned as an outcome.

The proposed law seeks to provide priority support and incentives to social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders in these strategic economic subsectors. Cognizant of the various legal forms that these organisations have taken—cooperatives; non-stock, non-profit corporations; stock for-profit corporations; a combination of these forms—, the proposed Act provides for the qualification of these organisations as social enterprises to avail of support services and incentives from the state.

Support programmes include:

- the provision of accessible non-collateralised loans to these social enterprises, guaranteed by a pool of funds set up for such purpose;
- the setting up of a comprehensive insurance system to reduce the vulnerability of these social enterprises to climate change and natural calamities;
- the provision of resources for comprehensive capacity development for these social enterprises, enablers of social enterprises and their partners among the poor;
- a proactive social enterprise market development programme, promoting the principles of fair trade;
- a research and development programme involving strategic economic subsectors, appropriate social enterprise technologies and innovations in democratising access to quality basic social services; and
- the mainstreaming of social entrepreneurship in the educational system at all levels to ensure strategic human resource development.

Incentives for social enterprises with the poor as primary stakeholders shall include:

- preferential treatment in government procurement, including coverage of their performance bonds;
- tax exemptions and tax breaks; and
- cash incentives equivalent to at least 25% of the minimum wage for social enterprises employing persons with disability.

Source: Dacanay (2013: 273).

As of December 2017, the PRESENT Coalition had obtained the support of three of the 24 members of the Senate (Upper House) and nine of the 290 members of the House of Representatives (Lower House) as principal and co-authors of various versions of the so-called PRESENT Bill (Philippine Senate and Philippine House of Representatives 2017; see box 1). The Coalition has a long way to go in negotiating the provisions of a responsive legislative measure that is acceptable by a majority of both houses of Congress: some of the more controversial bills passed by the Congress have taken more than 10 years of lobbying efforts. 2017 is the fifth year since the first PRESENT Bill was filed. A welcome development has been the inclusion of the PRESENT Bill as a priority legislative measure in the Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022, designed by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA 2017: 134).

In response to Typhoon Haiyan, one of the strongest typhoons that hit the Philippines, in 2013, members of the PRESENT Coalition and other stakeholders of the social enterprise sector came together to set up, in March 2014, a platform called Reconstruction Initiative through Social Enterprise (RISE) (ISEA 2014). RISE was envisioned as a multi-stakeholder effort to build back better local economies through social enterprise development. One of the main strategies to be pursued was social entrepreneurship-oriented subsector development, similar to what has been envisioned in the PRESENT Bill. With the support of Oxfam, ISEA undertook another action research process, which resulted in “Five-Year Strategic Development and Investment Plans” for three strategic subsectors in Eastern Samar, one of the poorest of the Haiyan-devastated provinces. These three economic subsectors were the seaweed, native chicken and naturally grown rice subsectors, in which a significant number of poor farmer and fisher households are active. The Five-Year Strategic Development and Investment Plans were designed based on the results of action research carried out by ISEA in partnership with two of its members in the Philippines.

The Five-Year Development and Investment Plan for the Seaweed Subsector (ISEA 2015a), for example, envisions increasing the number of seaweed producers from 837 to 2,037, and increasing the productivity and annual income of these farmers to PHP 110,000—which would represent a 60% increase on current levels of income and would push these households above what is officially considered as the income poverty threshold. Based on this plan, the target outreach of 2,037 seaweed producer-households would entail an investment of PHP 27,000 per household over a five-year period. Even though the estimated investment still needs to be refined, it is way below the 2013 government cost estimate for creating one job in labour-intensive industries (by way of comparison, the National Economic Development Authority estimates that creating one job in agribusiness would cost PHP 220,000). What this indicates is the potential of the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship Programme to achieve a reduction of income poverty among poor households in a particularly effective and efficient way.

The PRESENT Coalition and its efforts to institutionalise SEPPS may be appreciated as a response to the Philippine development paradox: indeed, the situation in the country is characterised simultaneously by worsening inequality and widespread poverty, on the one hand, and economic growth, on the other.

To illustrate the development paradox, one could review the Philippines' performance in meeting the Millennium Development Goals of cutting by half the incidence of extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. According to the Philippines 5<sup>th</sup> Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals (UNDP 2014), the country's progress in reducing poverty has been slow. The Philippine Statistics Authority (2016) put poverty incidence among Filipinos in the first semester of 2015 at 26.3%, a far cry from the target of 17.2% by 2015. The 5th Progress Report highlighted that the high economic growth in the years preceding the report (the growth of 7.3% registered in 2010 was the highest in over 30 years) had the characteristic of "jobless growth", going hand in hand with rising inequalities, especially in rural areas. It is interesting to study who is really benefiting from such growth. During the 2013-2014 period, poverty incidence during the first semester was recorded by the Philippine Statistics Authority as increasing from 24.3% to 25.8%. During the same period, Forbes Magazine reported an increase in the net worth of the 50 richest families, from 14% to 26% of the Gross Domestic Product (Diola 2015). This shows that the growth in GDP disproportionately benefited the 50 richest families, who increased their net worth as a percentage of GDP by 12%, while 1.2% of the total population, or about 1.2 million people, joined the ranks of the poor.

Overall, the National Statistical Coordination Board (2012) estimated that the bottom 20% of the population accounted, in terms of income, for only 6% of the total national income, while the upper 20% accounted for nearly 50% of the total national income (Torres 2013).

The development paradox is a driver fuelling the growth and institutionalisation of SEPPS in the Philippines. The institutionalisation of these initiatives, as responses to the failure of state and market institutions to meet the needs of the poor, should necessarily entail innovations that would engage state and market institutions in a process of transformation. Under such circumstances, the lobbying for the PRESENT Law and efforts to demonstrate the potential of the PRESENT Programme appear as critical to the institutionalisation process.

## 7. CONCLUDING REMARKS: DUAL ROLE OF SEPPS IN BUILDING A PLURAL PHILIPPINE ECONOMY

SEPPS are a significant model of social enterprise in response to rising inequality and widespread poverty in a context of economic growth in the Philippines. SEPPS operating under the collaboration model engage the poor mainly as transactional partners, ensuring the poor's social inclusion in the Philippine economy. Other SEPPS, particularly those that pursue the empowerment model of stakeholder engagement, involve the poor as transactional and transformational partners, enabling them to move out of income poverty and capability deprivation to become key actors in Philippine economic development.

The institutionalisation process of SEPPS in the Philippines has been a bottom-up process, catalysed by a group of SEPPS practitioners and supporters organised in the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Coalition. This institutionalisation process is characterised, on the one hand, by policy advocacy and development, directed at the legislative and executive branches of government, and aiming to bring these institutions to enact a law and put in place a programme to recognise and support SEPPS. On the other

hand, it is characterised by a complementary process of developing platforms for cooperation, with a view to demonstrating how the National PRESENT Programme, as envisioned by the proposed law, could help support and scale up the impact of social enterprises as vehicles for poverty reduction.

The institutionalisation of SEPPS as a dynamic process of transformation of state and market institutions may be further appreciated as a process of building a plural Philippine economy, wherein market principles operate side by side with the principles of redistribution and reciprocity (Laville 2010). Considering their nature as responses to state and market failures and their being hybrid organisations pursuing change in markets and the economy, SEPPS may be seen as playing a dual role. On one hand, SEPPS may be appreciated as leading actors in building a strong social economy, guided by the principles of reciprocity and redistribution. On the other hand, SEPPS may be appreciated as catalysing the process of giving value to social and environmental costs and returns and providing benchmarks for the pursuit of inclusive and ethical markets.

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