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# Emergence of Social Enterprises as Partners for Social Development in the Philippines

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## ABSTRACT

The rise of social development efforts in the Philippines was evident in the 1990s. Most countryside development programs practice putting people's welfare first, then the assumption is that sustainable development will follow. However, sustainability of these programs has been a challenge. Thus, involving the local people in development efforts, including community-based enterprises to address social problems, and creating social enterprises (SEs) emerges. This study characterized eight SEs in Region 4A in the Philippines; analyzed their emergence; and evaluated their effects to stakeholders. A qualitative research methodology was used; specifically, conducting Key Information Interviews (KIIs) with the proprietors of the purposively selected SEs. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and thematic analysis. Results showed that the SEs had various focus areas; used different strategies and SE models; and contributed positive changes to partner communities and groups, making them partners for social development.

*Keywords:* Development programs, social development, social enterprise, sustainability

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## INTRODUCTION

Despite the global commitment to promote quality of life, the endless battle against poverty, and the mounting concern on social inequality, social exclusion and social vulnerabilities remain the marks of social development bottlenecks, especially among developing countries (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

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[UNRISD], 2014). Development aids are directed to address the multidimensional nature of poverty, unfortunately these efforts still fail to take off (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2009).

In 2014, the Human Development Report emphasized that the "challenge is not to keep vulnerable populations from falling back to extreme difficulty and deprivation, but to design an enabling environment for their continuing human development advancement in the upcoming decades" (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2014). The need to stir local entrepreneurial initiatives are proven to be embedded in enabling environment towards enhancing human development and responding to poverty reduction (Mair & Marti 2006; Seelos & Mair, 2005, 2007).

Over the past years, the Philippines had witnessed the increasing number of social development efforts through active involvement of development actors, such as civil society organizations, private sector, government, and donor agencies. A multi-sectoral approach continues to be effective as no particular sector can do the development work alone. However, some programs were not sustained, and some projects failed to achieve their objectives.

Despite the notable economic growth, poverty incidence and inequality persist as a challenge. The emergence of social enterprises (SEs) in the late 1990s was a call for genuine sustainable development programs in the country. It was also during this period where Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) had a lesser funding support from donors; thus, establishing SEs was seen as the key mechanism to generate funds, and to sustain work on the ground.

Proponents of the social entrepreneurship field suggests diverse meanings of social enterprise depending on its utilities and claims across various settings. Related developments include signifying SEs as income-generating strategies for non-profit organizations (Dees, 1998; Millar et al., 2012); volunteer-oriented organizations in public service delivery (Chew & Lyon, 2013; Di Domenico et al., 2009); mutual-based association for social and economic goals (Frances, 2008; Young, 2012); business-oriented enterprise having a strong sense of social conscience or social commitment (Borzaga & Defourny, 2001; Harding, 2004; Moizer & Tracey, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2013); community-based enterprises (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006) as vehicle to address social issues, such as poverty, unemployment, and social injustice (Ebrahim et al., 2014; Williams, 2007); and uphold value-laden approach by embracing innovation in absence or presence of profit-making functions (Choi & Majumdar, 2014).

Accordingly, two major attributes of SE can be drawn from these definitions: the power of social purpose, and the need for economic gains (Peattie & Morley, 2008). For this study, Dacanay's (2012) definition of SE is adopted. It is framed as a social enterprise with the poor as the primary stakeholders, and it is defined as *"a social-mission driven wealth creating organization*

*that has a double or triple bottom line (social, financial, environmental), explicitly has as a principle objective poverty reduction/ alleviation or improving the quality of life of specific segments of the poor, and has a distributive enterprise philosophy"* (Dacanay, 2012).

In 2017, SE enablers such as European Union (EU), British Council, and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) implemented an SE research project entitled *"Reaching the Farthest First: The State of Social Enterprise in the Philippines"*. It revealed relevant findings on SEs: (a) start-ups SEs tripled in the last decade; (b) created jobs have benefited women, and incoming SEs will be spearheaded mostly by women; (c) SEs mostly operated in the agricultural sector; (d) SEs navigated through the objectives of reducing poverty, generating employment, empowering marginalized sector and improving local community; and (e) SEs operated at a local or provincial level. It also revealed an estimate of 164, 473 SEs presently operating in the country.

This reaffirms that SEs in the country emerged primarily to alleviate poverty in the country. However, as the felt needs of the people change, so does the focus of the SEs. There has also been limited discussions in framing SE using social development lenses. Thus, this study was conducted to determine the role of SEs in the country's social development landscape. Specifically, it sought to: (a) characterize the SEs covered; (b) determine the conditions for its emergence and development; (c) identify its focus areas and strategies; and (d) assess its effects to its partner communities and/or organizations. By answering these research objectives, the study offers practical and theoretical implications of critical understanding on the roles and relevance of SEs in the social development realm.

This paper strongly contributes in examining the emergence of SEs as potential partners in pursuing social development objectives. Research findings are valuable in improving social enterprise growth, development and management both at the local and national level. Moreover, the link between social entrepreneurship and social development is concretized through the presented cases. This has been reiterated by Alvord et al. (2004) when they emphasized that there was a need *"to provoke further exploration of the emerging phenomenon of social entrepreneurship, which we believe can make a great difference in the next century of human and societal development"* (Alvord et al., 2004). The study also presents localized approaches, mechanisms, and strategies among complex and interrelated social development problems.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research study used a qualitative research design. Eight business cases were selected through purposive sampling. The criteria for selecting business cases were: (1) an enterprise which has been operating within Southern Luzon (Region 4A); (2) an enterprise with a clear social mission; and (3) an enterprise which strongly adheres to

innovative products and services. Table 1 shows the list of SEs examined for the study. There were many possible sources of the list, because the concept is being rallied strongly by civil society sector. For this study, the list was accessed through the Business in Development website.

Region 4A was prioritized for the study, because of its proximity to the National Capital Region (NCR), where most SEs are believed to be located. NCR is the second most densely populated region in the country where poverty incidence is at 6.7 percent (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2016).

Table 1

*Name of SEs, their nature, location, and year established*

| Name of Social enterprise | Nature of the Business | Location(s) | Year Established |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bote Central Inc. | Locally grown coffee trading and distribution of roasting machines | Guinayangan and Dolores, Quezon; Lipa City and Batangas City, Batangas | 2002 |
| Deo's Aquavermiponics | Distribution of aqua vermiponics model | Sta. Rosa, Laguna | 2011 |
| Costales Nature Farms | Organic farming and agro tourism | Majayjay Laguna | 2005 |
| PineappleFiber Project for Batas Multi-Purpose Cooperative | Pineapple fiber production and handmade paper | Silang, Cavite | 1990 |
| Batangueno's Best Prime Ground Roasted Coffee with Pandan Extract of Aga Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative | Coffee production | Nasugbu, Batangas | 1994 |
| Soap Farm Philippines of Asian Link Bath and Body Essentials | Handmade organic soap | Lucena City, Quezon | 2005 |
| Autism Resource Center (ARC) of the Autism Society Philippines—Laguna Chapter | Enterprise program for young adults with autism and related disorders | Los Baños Laguna | 2005 |
| Infanta Integrated Community Development Assistance, Inc. (ICDAI) | Community managed enterprises | Real, Infanta, and Gen. Nakar, Quezon | 1990 |

The research used several qualitative methods, specifically: 1) Key informant interviews (KIIs) among the owners of SEs using structured questionnaire; 2) community visits for a better appreciation of their operations; and 3) comprehensive secondary data review. The secondary data review included reviewing published journal articles and reports from civil society organizations, government agencies, and funding institutions. The data collection was done for two months.

The qualitative data collected were analyzed through descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. It is important to note that the study did not deal with an in-depth assessment or evaluation of individual SE programs and its overall impact to the stakeholders. Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study which highlights the relationship and relevance of SEs' contextual factors and perspectives on the traditional SD efforts in the country resulting into emergence of SEs as partners for social development. The research also highlights the unique attributes of the selected SEs.

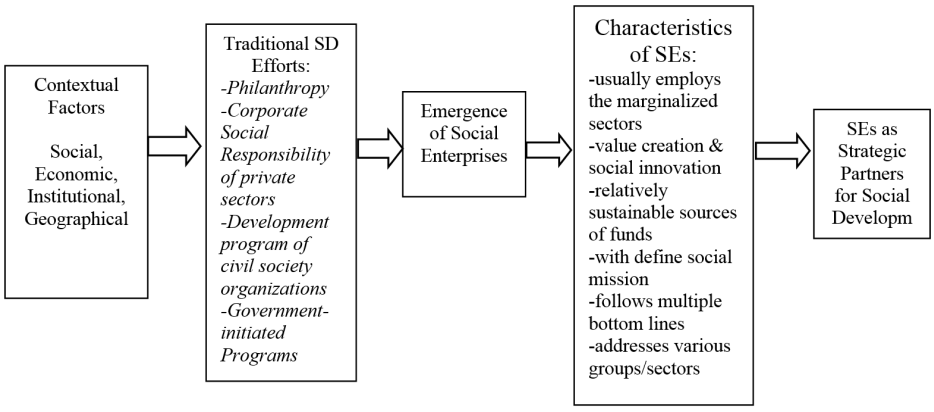


*Figure 1*. The conceptual framework of the study

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The discussion is organized as follows. First, a brief discussion about the progress on SEs' definition including the theoretical support for this study. Discussions clearly elaborate SE using the context-localized perspective (De Bruin & Lewis, 2015) where social entrepreneurship works as a solution to tackle social issues like poverty and inequality. This was articulated by answering all the research objectives stated earlier.

### SE's Definition and Theoretical Perspectives of the Study

SE as a praxis offers myriad of platforms among development workers, academic scholars, policy makers, and researchers to redefine the concept, revisit the contentions, reexamine the claims, and

reoffer perspectives to strengthen the field (Mair & Marti, 2006). The universally accepted definition of SE is still not existing, and there is still rising dispute over it (Brock & Steinder, 2008; Peredo & McLean, 2006; Weerawardena & Mort, 2006; Young, 2012). SE as a concept was positioned and acknowledged according to its geographical, historical, cultural, social, economic, political and technological settings (Diochon & Anderson, 2009; Kerlin, 2009; Bacq & Janssen, 2011).

The strong presence of SE in the academia, development work, and policy arena has elevated the interest in testing theories and constructs (Haugh, 2005). For this study, social development related theories and constructs were explored to concretize the link of social enterprises and its roles in shaping the social development landscape. It is imperative to take note also that social development as a critical concept among educators and practitioners does not have well-established theoretical underpinnings. Midgley (2014) defined social development as a *"process of planned social change designed to promote the well-being of the whole population as a whole within the context of a dynamic multifaceted development process"*. He also cited eight attributes of social development based on his two books entitled *Social Development: The Development Perspective in Social Welfare* (1995) and *Social Development: Theory & Practice* (2014). These characteristics were attempted to reflect in the context of social entrepreneurship which hopefully clarifies its contribution in in addressing a literature gap.

The study embarked with the institutional theory, capitalizing on institutional pillars (Scott, 2001) to look closely into local social condition by which SEs had emerged. By examining the environment that calls for economic and socio-cultural upbringing (Di Maggio & Powell, 1991), it can further help appreciate SEs' growth points, influences and its multiple utilities to address social development issues like poverty and social injustice. External and internal factors which shape SEs' structure and management functions are also items which need further assessment. Adoption of certain institutional beliefs, attitude, skills and practices is a manifestation of the SEs legitimization process. This theory will also shed light on how SEs will behave within the spaces of several opportunities.

The notion of Sen's capability approach seems to be critical in investigating SEs development as partner in social development. Thus, it was included to explore how the varied social interests and capacities of the social entrepreneurs and its stakeholders affected the SEs entrepreneurial pathways in maximizing opportunities and responding to local problems. Poverty concern can be resolved through enhancing the necessary capabilities, and through having the freedom to choose towards valuable functions (Tiglao-Torres, 2011). Putting weights on the individual's capability

*"to do or to be"* is an essential driver among social entrepreneurs and social development practitioners in pushing for inclusive social change through social enterprise. Moreover, it is within this perspective where the concept of social entrepreneurship as a tool to expand social capacities and options are extended.

## Social Enterprise Sector

SEs in Asia generally emerge from the change in the approach taken by the nonprofit sector in terms of obtaining resources. Many of the organizations have shifted from full reliance on donor agencies to actively participating in income-generating activities to guarantee the sustainability or their organization and projects. In addition, SEs have also influenced the creation of new trends in the field of entrepreneurship, specifically the popularization of the use of triple bottom line (Tilley & Young, 2009).

A report produced by the Japan Research Institute (2016) revealed that SEs were not fully mature based on public sector support, presence of specialized intermediaries, participation of the academe, and financial support programs (Figure 2). This means that for a country to maximize social benefits generated by SEs, it is crucial to address the inadequacy among these elements.

| | Public Sector | Specialized Intermediaries | Academia | Financial Support Programs |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Benchmark – Green | A Social Enterprise Law enacted | More than 3 intermediaries, referred by key players interviewed for this study, in each of the following support areas: 1) HR, 2) product & services, 3) info and other support | A social entrepreneurship diploma course (undergraduate/ graduate) established | More than 3 organizations (excluding public agencies), referred by key players interviewed for this study, in each of the following areas: 1) grantmaking, 2) mainstream financial institutions, 3) impact investing funds |
| Benchmark – Yellow | A SE Support Agency established | 1-2 intermediaries referred in each support area | A social entrepreneurship course w/out diploma established | In between above and below. |
| Benchmark – Red | None of the above | No intermediary referred in more than one support area | None of the above | Absence of players referred in two or three areas |
| Japan | 🔴 | 🟡 | 🟡 | 🟡 |
| China | 🔴 | 🟡 | 🔴 | 🟡 |
| South Korea | 🟢 | 🟢 | 🟢 | 🟡 |
| Singapore | 🟡 | 🟡 | 🟡 | 🟡 |
| Thailand | 🔴 | 🔴 | 🟢 | 🔴 |
| Philippines | 🔴 | 🔴 | 🟢 | 🟡 |

Source: Adopted from Japan Research Institute (2016)
*Figure 2.* Maturity level of ecosystem sectors in the six Asian countries

In the Philippines, SEs are important partners in rural development even way back through history. SEs were also commonly known as cooperatives. Aside from this, Filipinos have customs and traditions pertaining to the concept of "mutual

assistance" and "solidarity". The modern concept of SE arises from the inadequacies of the conventional social development efforts, like the unsustainable support from NGOs, and the top-down approach taken by the government in its programs. Moreover, the Magna Carta for Social Enterprises of 2012 (H. B. no. 6085) provides legal framework for the operations of SEs in the country. In addition, SEs in the Philippines typically focus on addressing poverty issues (Beach & Tyrrell, 2012; Community Economies Collective & Gibson, 2009; Doeringer, 2010; May, 2013; Keh, 2012; Yu Jose, 2011).

The British Council (2015) report titled *A Review of Social Enterprise Activity in the Philippines* brought some critical observations among SEs. It made a brief review of the historical development of the concept by presenting institutional landmarks such as the formation of Philippine Social Enterprise Network (PhilSEN), and the implementation of a degree program in SE in Ateneo de Manila University.

In relation to understanding the role of communication in SEs operation, Villar et al., (2011) revealed that social enterprises in the Philippines framed communication as a *"tool and as a process significant to the operations of the social enterprise"*. It played a critical role in enhancing the relationships among diverse stakeholders and an agent in reaching out the public about the merits of SEs engagement. Geges and Javier (2012) looked at the pathways of SEs that joined the Business in Development Program of the Philippine Business for Social Progress. They pointed out that the SEs' partnership with the local government units (LGUs) was a potential strategy to ensure sustainability. It was also observed that the enterprise birth pains during the growth stage became a compelling factor to further pursue its objectives.

SEs continue to flourish and diversify in the country. The huge population of various NGOs contribute to the mainstreaming of social enterprise. The interest of the younger generation also elevates the influence of social entrepreneurship. However, Ballesteros and Llanto (2017) stated that defining SE still needed to be coherent and coordinated to address the vital support of the sector.

Othman and Ab Wahid (2014) contributed to the academic discourse of SE in Malaysia by providing discussions about social entrepreneurship programs contextualizing the Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) Malaysia Foundation. SIFE is designed to *"encourage economic and social activities among undergraduates, thereby simultaneously upgrading the economic and social status of a local community"* (Othman & Ab Wahid, 2014) Despite the prevailing condition of SEs not being mature enough, there is still a positive outlook on how it can contribute in enhancing the perspective of "people-centered economy" in Malaysia.

Teo and Tan (2013) provided a content analysis on social entrepreneurship which were reproduced in print media in Singapore for a period of five years. Results shared

three learning points: a) the government is the focal driving force for social enterprise development; b) most social enterprises are fascinated in generating possible employment for the marginalized sector; and c) the country's social enterprise is conscious of earning revenue to back up its social mission.

**Characteristics of the Selected SEs**

A total of eight SEs from Region 4A were selected for this study: 1) Bote Central, 2) Deo's Aquavermiponics, 3) Costales Nature Farms, 4) Pineapple Fiber Project for Batas Multi-Purpose Cooperative (BMPC), 5) Batangueno's Best Prime Ground Roasted Coffee with Pandan Extract of Aga Farmers Multi-Purpose Cooperative (AGFAMCO), 6) Soap Farm Philippines of Asian Link Bath and Body Essentials, 7) Autism Resource Center (ARC) of the Autism Society Philippines—Laguna Chapter, and 8) the Infanta Integrated Community Development Assistance, Inc. (ICDAI).

Authors in the social entrepreneurship field underscore the merit of having clear social mission in traversing social value creation pathways for marginalized and disadvantaged groups (Dees, 1998; Leadbeater, 2007; Martin & Osberg, 2007). The element of having a clear social mission was also examined in this study; this was done by looking at the Vision-Mission-Goals-Objectives (VMGOs) statements of the selected SEs. It was observed that there was a difference in VMGOs of the SEs depending on its local context (Pérotin, 2014). Bote Central, Costales Nature Farms, and ICDAI dealt with concerns for helping the environment through the protection of natural habitat and forest preservation; advocating eco-friendly initiatives that can mitigate climate change, and the promotion of environmental resource management. These activities supported the claim that SEs generally aimed to promote environmental integrity. It also coincided with the features of SE's multiple bottom lines, which was to include environmental aspirations.

Another observation was that all the eight SEs mentioned their interest in helping people. This strengthens the social function of SEs, and the ability of SEs to help people improve their living conditions. At a micro level, the various SEs expressed these interests differently. Bote Central and BMPC worked on the premise of sustainable livelihood. This meant that these SEs did not only help people find a source of revenue; it also ensured that the project would work in the long-run.

Deo's, Costales Nature Farms, and ICDAI worked on the premise of overall well-being of individuals. Deo's mentioned about the improvement of family nutrition and quality of life through food security. Costales Farm also promoted wellness through having healthy lifestyles; specifically, by encouraging people to consume organic food. ICDAI mentioned different aspects of people's lives, such as health, education, security, and many others.

The remaining three SEs mentioned specific concerns for different sectors. The AGFAMCO would like to help keep the reputation held by the Batangas province in

terms of coffee production. The Soap Farm Philippines aimed to contribute in the fight against poverty through entrepreneurship, and women empowerment. Lastly, ARC aimed to help people with autism get accepted by society, and address the stigma. ARC also explored livelihood activities among youth with autism.

The number of bottom lines being followed, and the groups identified as stakeholders were also used to characterize the SEs. In determining the bottom lines being adopted, this paper used the SEs' VMGOs; program focus (i.e. products/ services); and identified stakeholders as basis. These three pillars of SE would provide an idea of what the SEs engage in, with whom, and for whom. It was found that five out of eight SEs followed double bottom lines, specifically profit and people. This is consistent with the literature which says that SEs generally employ multiple bottom lines. However, it was also reported that striking a balance or harmonizing the bottom lines at an equilibrium was tough (Young et al., 2012).

In terms of stakeholders, it was found that the groups identified varied from one SE to another, and that these were based on their organization's aims and program focus. Only two of the SEs (i.e. Bote Central and Deo's Aquavermiponics) identified individuals belonging to any group or sector as their stakeholders; two (i.e. AGFAMCO and ICDAI) identified their immediate and/or nearby communities; and four (i.e. Costales Nature Farm, BMPC, Soap Farm Philippines, and ARC) identified specific type of groups. Thus, this implies that SEs respond to the needs of different groups (Table 2).

Table 2

*Characteristics of selected SEs*

| SE | VMGOs | Bottom lines | Stakeholders |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pineapple Fiber Project for BMPC | **Vision:** To produce fiber from leftover pineapple leaves and at the same time, benefit the unemployed women and youth in the community | 2Ps—Profit, People | Members of the cooperative; Women; OSY; Manufacturers of handmade paper |
| Batangueno's Best Prime Ground Roasted Coffee with Pandan Extract of AGFAMCO | **Vision:** To preserve the long-earned reputation of Batangas coffee by providing an innovative brew that will help the coffee farmers of Aga in Nasugbu, Batangas | 2Ps—Profit, People | Members of the cooperative; their immediate community |
| Soap Farm Philippines of Asian Link Bath and Body Essentials | **Vision:** To break the cycle of poverty through entrepreneurship<br>**Mission:** To make artisan soaps a lifestyle<br>**Goal/s:** To empower women through work and training; and train artisan soap makers and provide jobs<br>**Objective:** To continuously build and develop the business into a profitable enterprise to be able to provide jobs | 2Ps—Profit, People | Women; Global soap shops, stores and businesses; Local retailers and distributors of novelties |

Table 2 *(Continued)*

| SE | VMGOs | Bottom lines | Stakeholders |
|---|---|---|---|
| ARC of ASP—Laguna | **Vision:** A supportive environment, an enabling community, nurturing independence in people with special needs and helping them to become integrated to their community as much as possible. This community recognizes their strengths and accepts their limitations, and allows them to enjoy the fruits of a truly mainstreamed society as children of God.<br>**Mission:** To establish and maintain community-based support mechanisms across lifespans for persons with special needs particularly with autism in order that they may live fulfilling lives in the highest level of independence they can handle, despite their handicaps | 2Ps—Profit, People | Young adults with Autism as well as their families and community/ies |
| ICDAI | **Vision:** A transformed community wherein stakeholders are God-loving, conscientized and actively participating in alternative social infrastructure which promote environmental sustainability, diversified economy, genuine people's participation and community-managed resource; towards a balanced ecosystem agri-based industry and decentralized governance for the common good and general welfare<br>**Mission:** Commit ourselves to the transformation of the people in the community towards people empowerment through organizing, consciousness raising, education and formation, community-based resource management and mobilization | 2Ps—People, Planet | People from the municipalities of Real, Infanta and Gen. Nakar (REINA) in Quezon Province |

## Conditions and Influences on the Emergence of SEs

Of the eight cases of SEs, three (i.e. BMPC, AGFAMCO, and ICDAI) were established during the 1990s; four (i.e. Bote Central, Costales Nature Farm, Soap Farm Philippines, and ARC) during the 2000s; and one (i.e. Deo's Aquavermiponics) in 2010. This reaffirms that SEs are nascent and are still maturing (Light, 2008; Martin & Osberg 2007; Nicholls, 2010; Roberts & Woods, 2005).

It was found that the startup stories of the establishment of SEs vary, mostly because of various advocacies and interests, which translated to different perceptions of what their partners' or communities' needs. Anchoring on the partners' or communities' needs guarantees the sustainability dimension, because the motivational elements from the entrepreneurs are assured to be integrated (Seelos et al., 2010; Ogilvie, 2012). Bote Central and Costales Nature Farm were initially formed as business ventures, and gradually shifted to being social enterprises. Deo's Aquavermiponics started out by accident, while Soap Farm Philippines was born from a hobby. The rest (i.e. BMPC, AGFAMCO, ARC, and ICDAI) began as a development program of an existing organization that aimed mainly to benefit the members and their immediate and/or nearby communities. It was evident that SEs were stimulated by various institutions which eventually shaped its approaches (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Battilana & Lee, 2014).

SEs may not necessarily be new undertakings. Instead, these may come from already existing organizations or businesses that have taken on a new type of framework (e.g. 3Ps) to cope with the changing local situations. This also shows that people and some organizations are now

embracing this new approach in carrying out social development efforts and initiatives. SEs performance is propelled with its desire to satisfy critical elements, which include social goals, sustainability, and financial resource development (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006).

It was observed that all the eight were created as a response to certain social needs and issues that must be addressed. The concerns to address issues differed for every SE, but were generally anchored on the multifaceted view of local poverty and unemployment. The collected information suggested that SEs, like other SD efforts and most businesses, were opportunities for people in need, basically to help improve their lives through income-generating opportunities, among others.

Like most start-up business organizations, there were several challenges that the social entrepreneurs encountered while establishing their SEs. The most common of these were financial problems, incompetence among management and its members, inadequacy of assets such as land or physical structures for its operations, and weak market linkage for their products and services. Other challenges were time management, linkage building with government agencies, and dependence on external help. These issues were addressed later by designing concrete and collective solutions (Table 3).

Table 3

*Summary of the SEs' history*

| SE | How was it formed? | Why was it founded? | Challenges Encountered | Solutions Employed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bote Central Inc. | The founders were trying to put up a business venture. | To address the problem with civets, and help the community people | The market | Educating, finding, and developing the market; Being brave and committed |
| Deo's Aquavermiponics | It started by accident, while researching on the internet. | To educate the market on the benefits of ecosystem-based farming and provide them with a system that can help them produce their own foods, thereby improving their family nutrition and quality of life | Not applicable in the Philippines—no potential market | Studying more about the idea in terms of theory and practice |
| Costales Nature Farm | It started as a family business. | To fuse the idea of having a place for families to retreat and a source of organically grown foods (e.g. vegetables, livestock, etc.) | Financial problems, Management set-backs, The location is far | Inviting investors, Conduct of monthly staff meetings and weekly monitoring |

Table 3 *(Continued)*

| SE | How was it formed? | Why was it founded? | Challenges Encountered | Solutions Employed |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pineapple Fiber Project for BMPC | The already established cooperative was trying to do something about their production wastes. | To assist the BMPC in engaging in other livelihood activities and employ women and out of school youth to empower them and provide them with sources of income | Lack of technical, financial and management competence; Too much dependence on external advisers in terms of seeking markets | Trainings on values formation, project management, basic accounting for non-accountants, and skills/ livelihood trainings on handloom weaving and handmade paper |
| Batangueno's Best Prime Ground Roasted Coffee with Pandan Extract of AGFAMCO | The cooperative, which was originally formed by corn farmers, is composed of coffee farmers. | For the cooperative to have their own product or label | Legalization matters (i.e. not yet registered), Financial problems (e.g. budgets for going to trade fairs, unpaid loans, etc.), Lack of training among members | Outsourcing from their community, the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and the LGU; Constantly re-minding their members about the payment for their loans |
| Soap Farm Philippines | It started as a hobby and as an upcycling program for soap by-products. | To break the cycle of poverty through entrepreneurship; To make artisan soaps a lifestyle | Gender roles that women workers must do (e.g. chores and taking care of the children), Extended lunch breaks, Punctuality (i.e. late-ness, absences), Presence of mind, Salary advances | Training for work ethics, Disciplinary actions, Trainings on self-empowerment—physical, spiritual and financial literacy |
| Autism Resource Center | Under the ASP—Laguna, it was formed as one of their programs for coping up with Autism. | To have a prevocational center for young adults with Autism | Venue, Financial problems, Time, Some parents don't want to be involved, Difficulty in reaching out to the LGU | Borrowing an empty lot, Making use of their own homes, Making phone calls and scheduling, Reaching out to people, Doing follow-ups |
| ICDAI | The organization was originally founded during the 1970s as a response to poverty. In the 1990s, it embraced the idea of community enterprises as a new approach for dealing with the said problem. | To address rural poverty | Unfamiliarity with the concept of Social Entrepreneurship, Mobilization of people and other resources, Building linkages | Consulting with available literature and/or experts, Outsourcing and tapping the youth |

## Focus Areas and Strategies of the Selected SEs

The SEs determine their products and services based on their focus areas. These products and services are categorized into: agricultural, educational, technological, health and nutritional, environmental, livelihood opportunities, basic non-food commodities, and tourism.

Based on the review conducted, it was found that the SEs have multiple categories. Six SEs have products and services that are

considered as agricultural; four belonged to educational; two had technological; and all maintained livelihood opportunities. Three SEs had health and nutritional outputs, and four had environmental outputs. In addition, one had basic non-food commodities, and another one had tourism outputs. This indicates that SEs have diverse areas of operations. This is consistent with literature, which proposes that SEs adopt more than one bottom line. As a return, it can effectively perform its role as SD partners, because SD problems are interconnected and complex in nature.

The SEs employed various strategies based on the need and existing context in the community. Among the identified strategies, the most common can be summed up under the umbrella concept of "organization development" which include conducting regular program monitoring, holding of meetings among the staff/members, building partnerships and networking with other organizations and sectors, and conducting capacity building activities to enhance the abilities of their own members.

Like other ventures, it was inevitable for SEs to experience certain problems during its operations. It was found that the implementation challenges were generally about financial matters (Mendell & Nogales, 2009) (e.g. lack of funds and unpaid loans), management set-backs, lack of market, and formation of external linkages. It was also found that some SEs encountered the same problems met during its birth. This suggests that the problem was not resolved properly, and it is necessary to revisit the effectiveness and efficiency of the designed solutions (Tracey et al., 2011).

The crafted solutions were considered as win-win situations (Tencati & Zsolnai, 2009); and were generally about seeking more investors, conducting regular staff meetings, making use of creativity and opportunities that come, as well as outsourcing and doing follow-ups. Table 4 provides an overview of the SEs' focus areas and strategies.

Table 4

*SEs focus areas and strategies*

| SE | Focus Areas | Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| Bote Central Inc. | • Agricultural<br>• Technological<br>• Environmental<br>• Livelihood | Being creative or thinking out of the box, Tapping the youth |
| Deo's Aquavermiponics | • Agricultural<br>• Educational<br>• Technological<br>• Health and Nutrition<br>• Environmental<br>• Livelihood | Studying, Researching, Seizing opportunities—investors, schools, etc. |

Table 4 *(Continued)*

| SE | Focus Areas | Strategies |
|---|---|---|
| Costales Nature Farm | • Agricultural<br>• Health and Nutrition<br>• Environmental<br>• Livelihood<br>• Tourism | Meetings, Monitoring |
| Pineapple Fiber Project for BMPC | • Agricultural<br>• Livelihood | Constant monitoring of project activities, Conduct of monthly meetings, Networking with develop-ment partners to source grants |
| Batangueno's Best Prime Ground Roasted Coffee with Pandan Extract of AGFAMCO | • Agricultural<br>• Educational<br>• Health and Nutrition<br>• Livelihood | Application of the learnings from the seminars and trainings attended, Setting of policies, Creation of an operations manual |
| Soap Farm Philippines | • Livelihood<br>• Basic non-food commodities | Opening communication lines, Employing women, Training and Assessment of skills, Scanning the environment for needs assessment |
| Autism Resource Center | • Educational<br>• Livelihood | Reaching out to other families through the LGU, Making an enterprise for people with Autism |
| ICDAI | • Agricultural<br>• Educational<br>• Health and Nutrition<br>• Environmental<br>• Livelihood | Community Organizing & Social Infrastructure Building; Training and Education; Value Formation; Policy Advocacy; Com-munity-based Media; Welfare; Disaster Management |

## Effects of SEs to Partner Communities and Organizations

The effects of SEs on their stakeholders may be analyzed through certain success indicators, and how the SE programs correspond to the needs of its stakeholders (Harding, 2004). It can be noted that social entrepreneurs, together with other members, generally looked at various indicators or measures, and they chose the ones which they thought would best suit their programs. However, not all SEs were conscious of identifying their own indicators.

It was found that SEs responded to the needs of its stakeholders generally through providing them with education, health services, and livelihood opportunities, among others. These solutions highly depended on the kind of needs that social entrepreneurs perceived and observed. The

owners of the SEs were members of the community, so there was a level of certainty that their identified needs are also the needs of their community.

It was found that the most common interventions of the SE to their partner communities and/or organizations were the provision of skills trainings (Bloom & Chatterji, 2012; Smallbone et al., 2001) as well as provision of employment and/or livelihood opportunities. Other interventions involved delivery of basic social services, like education and health; helped increase family income; and provided a certain degree of environmental protection. These SEs are driven to generate innovative products and services (Haugh, 2005). The data suggested that program effectiveness also varied from one SE to another. The reason for this is that SEs have different programs and identified groups of stakeholders, which also have different social realities. Aside from this, the data also showed that SEs had direct influence to people's lives, and bred social gains such as building sense of community, collaboration, creation of mutual trust, strengthening social networks, solidarity and collective decision making (Bagnoli &and Megali, 2011; Borzaga and Tortia, 2006; Heeks & Arun, 2010; Jenner & Oprescu, 2016; Morrow et al., 2009; Peattie & Morley, 2008). There was also an effort to solidify the sense of ownership through a collaborative leadership and governance (Sonnino & Griggs-Trevarthen, 2013; Lyon & Sepulveda, 2009) which can further improve SEs toward sustainable development. It can also be translated through the private-public sector partnership paradigm. Table 5 summarizes the different SEs' success indicators, strategies, and effects to stakeholders.

Table 5

*Indicators of program success, how the programs address the needs of stakeholders, and the effects of these SEs to their partner communities and/or organizations*

| SE | Success indicators | How the programs address the needs of stakeholders? | Effects to Partner Communities and/or Organizations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bote Central Inc. | Reaching the program goals and objectives within the set timetable | Helping them become involved in the production to consumption chain of coffee | Coffee farmers can now roast their own produce/harvest, Women become employed now, thus promoting gender equality, Increases in the family income, Communities get influenced to care for the civet cats and its habitat |
| Deo's Aquavermiponics | Consumer satisfaction (from customer reports), Get recommended/invited more, Improvements in the technology being used | Provision of : new knowledge, livelihood/ income opportunities, healthy and sustainable source of food | Society is now starting to get familiar with the concept of Aquavermiponics and its potential benefits. In addition, the unemployed from the nearby communities acquired a source of livelihood |

Table 5 *(Continued)*

| SE | Success indicators | How the programs address the needs of stakeholders? | Effects to Partner Communities and/or Organizations |
|---|---|---|---|
| Costales Nature Farm | Continuous production, Whether it is still earning or not | Provision of healthy alternatives | Small farmers were inspired to become better agri-preneurs, Students were encouraged to engage into organic agriculture and patronize organic produce for a healthy lifestyle; Business opportunities were opened for OFWs through the Joint-Venture Programs |
| Pineapple Fiber Project for BMPC | Increase in income, Application of knowledge and skills learned from trainings provided | Provision of: skills trainings, livelihood/ income opportunities | The OSY trained were employed in the project, and women groups in the community were also invited to attend the trainings on handmade paper and handloom weaving |
| Batangueno's Best Prime Ground Roasted Coffee with Pandan Extract of AGFAMCO | High repayment rate for loans, Development among members and in their community | Provision of support services for their cooperative's and community's development | Building of a community store, Giving of scholarship grants to the neighborhood students, Provision of health services (e.g. medical missions, feeding programs, etc.), Summer school program for the OSY, Establishment of a day care |
| Soap Farm Philippines | Empowerment of women through financial independence via livelihood, Continuous feedback and communication from stakeholders, Breaking barriers | Provision of skills training and assessment | Skills development and employment for the urban poor women |
| Autism Resource Center | Good performance of the clients on the tools used for measuring skills gained, Reports, Evaluation | Provision of support services for the benefit of the youth who have Autism as well as their families and community | Mitigation on the effects of Autism to children as they grow up, Assimilation of people with Autism into the mainstream society, Relatively higher acceptance of people with Autism to the community and/or society |
| ICDAI | Having the group or community to stand on its own or as a fully operational organization | Provision of trainings needed as well as livelihood opportunities | Established and earning social or community enterprises |

## Roles of SEs as partners in Social Development

SEs play critical roles among areas of employment generation (Bouchard & Rousselière, 2016), poverty reduction (Cooney, 2011; Spear & Bidet, 2005; Xiang & Luk, 2011), local community improvement, and empowerment of marginalized groups and vulnerable sector (Nicholls, 2006; Shaw et al., 2012). The same roles were also evident with the eight cases presented in this paper. As a driver of social change, it was observed that the SEs facilitated the promotion of the following: (a) women's

participation and gender equality, and (b) socially inclusive development approach. SEs' unique attributes also harmonize with social development dimensions as stated by Midgley (2014). These are:

(a) SD as a concept comprises of a systematic process;

(b) SD promotes progressive social change approach which manifest among development plans, programs and policies;

(c) SD processes are integral part of a wider multifaceted process;

(d) SD process is interventionist in nature which needs human agency in delivering social development goals;

(e) the productivity process of SE contributes directly to economic growth;

(f) the universalistic scope of SE cuts across the whole populace;

(g) universalism as an aspect of SD targeting individuals and household; and

(h) social development upholds the advancement of social welfare.

This further links SE in performing various roles in light of social development goals and purposes (Sdrali et al., 2016).

## CONCLUSION

The continuous growth of social enterprises in the country earns positive outlook among development actors, despite the lack of unifying definition. Likewise, its emergence has been promising in the social development field. It attempts to address social, economic, environmental, as well as socio-cultural issues. Various sectors are now clinging with SE, looking at it as a tool to promote social equality, and to empower local communities. Given the contextual landscape of SEs in the Philippines, it would be helpful to revisit key attributes of SEs to optimize its performance and gains. SE is promising when positioned as a poverty reduction strategy. Thus, it is meaningful to comprehend its potential social, economic and ecological benefits to help design interventions and solutions to reduce poverty among communities.

This study analyzed the emergence of social enterprises as partners for social development in the Philippines, particularly in the Southern Luzon area. The SEs were characterized according to the bottom lines adopted and groups identified as their stakeholders. It was found that majority had double bottom lines, and stakeholders' groups varied from one SE to another. Majority of the SEs were established during the 2000s. The way they started out vary, because the social entrepreneurs had different perceived realities, interests, and perceived needs of their communities.

In terms of SE programs, it was found that SEs focus on more than one area. The most common were agricultural and livelihood. Additionally, there were several strategies employed. The popular strategies that were identified were the conduct of regular program monitoring; holding of meetings among the staff/members; forming linkages with other organizations, communities, and sectors; and educating their own members through trainings, seminars, and the like. The effects of SEs to stakeholders also varied from one SE to another. The most common were the

provision of skills improvement, as well as provision of employment and/or livelihood opportunities. Thus, this implies that SEs can be instruments for social development.

It is important to mention that the younger generation has a growing consciousness and interest to establish their own SEs. With this opportunity, it is hoped that the SEs will continue to contribute in shaping the Philippines' social development landscape.

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