

# Innovations in Community Social Enterprise Development: The Bohol PACAP FOCAS Experience

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**Lourdes Marina Padilla-Espenido**

*Social Solidarity Economics is “a strategy for inclusive development where the people and NGOs utilize social enterprise to improve the well-being of the poor and increase their incomes, promote environmental protection, and contribute to community economies.” (RIPESS Proceedings, 2013, cited in Ofreneo, n.d.)*

*An example is the Focused Community Assistance Scheme (FOCAS) of the Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP).*

Social enterprises are defined as “mission-oriented organizations that use the business model to achieve economic sustainability while pursuing the goals of social development and ecological conservation” (Quiñones, 2012, p.6). Quiñones (2012) explains the role of social enterprises in achieving the triple bottom line goals of social development as meeting the needs of people, ecological conservation, and economic sustainability or the 3Ps: People, Planet, and Profit.

The RIPESS II Working Paper on the “Differences and Convergences in Social Solidarity Economy Concepts, Definitions and Frameworks” describes the following common features of social enterprises:

1. that the enterprise serves a social aim such as fighting poverty or social exclusion;

2. that it primarily generates income based on the sale of goods and services rather than depending on grant funding; and
3. profits are reinvested in the social mission rather than maximizing value for stockholders. (RIPESS II, n.d.)

Going further, “social solidarity economics is defined as a strategy for inclusive development where the people and non-governmental organizations utilize social enterprise to improve the well-being of the poor and increase their incomes, promote environmental protection, and contribute to community economies.” (RIPESS Proceedings, 2013, as cited in Ofreneo, n.d.)

Many social enterprises in the Philippines fit the above characterization. They are owned by community associations or cooperatives of the socially-disadvantaged groups. Most of these social enterprises are local initiatives that rallied the communities together in response to their specific economic and social needs and situations such as livelihood, jobs and income, the need for recognition and acceptance of a sector and to be useful as persons. The social enterprises became the vehicle for the marginalized sectors such as the poor women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples to become organized and work together to push their economic interests. In so doing, they are able to subsequently promote their sectoral and political interests. When established, these SEs had no conscious political agenda with regards to either mainstreaming neoliberal economy or transforming the economy towards a more democratic and inclusive alternative. They only had clear principles and values of equity, work, dignity, environment, fair share. But their nature and organization and workings made them a transformative alternative.

As the different players in social enterprise development gained experience, they innovated, tried new approaches and evolved their practice, assessing and building on the past. One such example was the Focused Community Assistance Scheme (FOCAS) of the Philippines-Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP), a community fund support modality from 2005- 2010.

The following case is taken from the reports, presentations and studies done by PACAP, its partner community organizations and government agencies as they implemented the FOCAS.

### **Philippines- Australia Community Assistance Program**

The Philippines- Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP) is a bilateral development program of the Governments of Australia and the Philippines through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA). Since 1986, PACAP supported community-initiated, economically sustainable, ecologically sound and gender responsive development efforts through financial assistance and multi-level capability building. This was done in partnership with local government units (LGUs), government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and people's organisations (POs) with the end-view of improving the quality of life of poor communities. From February 1986 to September 2010, PACAP provided approximately 2,145 grants in partnership with about 1,250 proponent organizations, benefiting an estimated 1,460,000 people (PACAP, 2008; Swete Kelly & Crawford, 2010).

The program undertook an assessment in 1997. In order to maximize the program's strategic advantage, experience and potential, the review recommended that PACAP transform its assistance scheme "from an aggregation of individual projects into a responsive program of area development with a strong capability building focus" (PACAP, 2008, p.12). Another review in 2002 expanded further the AFA into the FOCAS.

In contrast with the Responsive Assistance Scheme (RAS), PACAP's original fund support modality of assisting stand-alone community projects, FOCAS was a suite of strategically linked but separately funded activities. FOCAS projects

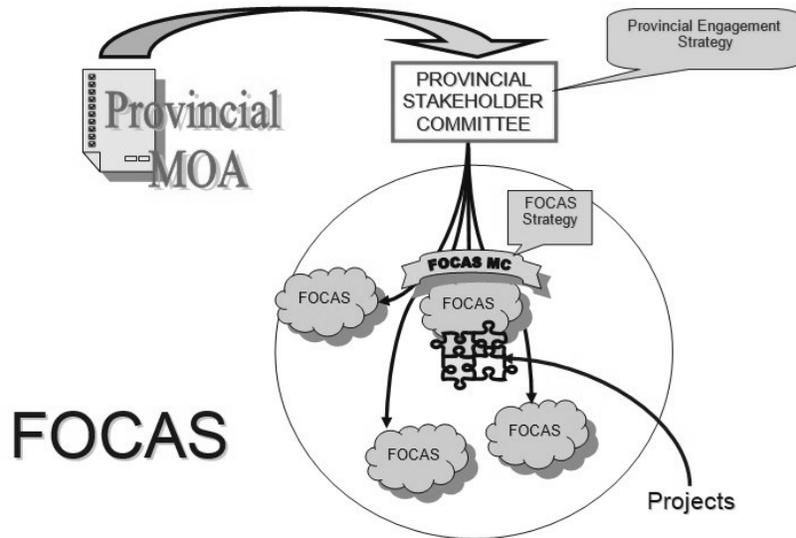
promoted community development of selected communities and met LGU planning priorities. From 2005 to 2010, FOCAS became the main strategic mode for the provincial engagement in the five target provinces of Agusan del Sur, Bohol, Misamis Occidental, Northern Samar and Surigao del Norte.

In FOCAS, the rationale was for an increased impact to be derived from the creation of a critical mass of activities which overlapped and interacted. It established multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms involving local government units, national government agencies, civil society organisations like NGOs, POs, other AusAID bilateral programs, and other donors. The projects were normally for 5 years thus allowing PACAP's long-term engagement with communities and the ability to work with, integrate and build sustainable capacity amongst all potential service providers to meet community identified needs. Grant funding assistance was for a long-term, multiyear commitment of 3- 5 years per project in the amount of approximately Php1.5 million per year. From simple stand-alone livelihood activities, PACAP through FOCAS ventured into social enterprise development in a local integrated manner, bringing together people's organizations, NGOs, LGUs and some other local business.

The FOCAS objective stated that:

Devolved networks of civil society, government and private sector organizations are collaborating to identify and meet local priorities in selected provinces, and creating an enabling environment for further development. (PACAP, 2008, P. 12)

### FOCAS Organizational Mechanisms



**Figure 1. General FOCAS framework and processes of the Provincial Engagement in each of the five target provinces. (PACAP, 2008, p.14)**

The signing of the PACAP Memorandum of Agreement with the Provincial government signalled the start of the provincial engagement. At the provincial level, the strategy was to engage the stakeholders in planning and giving direction to PACAP interventions and offered an opportunity for LGUs and the NGOs to (a) agree on the most critical issues affecting poor communities and (b) influence the allocation of PACAP resources towards these priority concerns. In order to maximize the opportunities that provincial level institutions can offer to attain broader project impact, the engagement strategy was to concentrate efforts on provincial strategic-level planning, monitoring and related policy reform. This was done through the Provincial Stakeholders Committee (PSC).

The PSC analyzed the PACAP Strategic Guidance Framework (SGF), provincial plans and priorities, and the FOCAS interventions in which PACAP could engage. The PSC defined the goals and targets of PACAP's five-year provincial engagement. Each FOCAS recommendation included the likely impact, its link to the appropriate Local Development Plan (Provincial, Municipal or Barangay) and the SGF priorities, a timeframe for engagement, and an assessment of institutional capacity. The PSC assisted in leveraging support from other groups to improve collaboration and integration of the proponents involved in delivering PACAP projects. In particular, build links between NGO and LGU groups to ensure multi-stakeholder participation.

Within each FOCAS area, a FOCAS Management Committee of local service providers was formed to develop a FOCAS Strategy to PACAP engagement in the area, identify integration with other development efforts, and plan an exit strategy to ensure ongoing support once PACAP engagement was complete. Once the strategy was in place, the FMC concerned itself mostly with maintaining a good mix of projects to address the FOCAS strategy. The FMC provided a regular venue for collaboration and sharing of resources among the different implementing partners as envisioned by the FOCAS Strategy. In coordination with the PACAP Secretariat in each province, the FMC also assisted in conducting appraisal and monitoring of the FOCAS program and its component projects. The FMC reviewed, monitored and audited the implementation of FOCAS projects. As a committee, the FMC was an oversight body and therefore could not directly implement any project.

Through the FOCAS secretariat, PACAP provided funding assistance for operations of the FMC, capability building of service providers, strengthening of LGU, NGO and PO networks, and facilitation of FMC activities. At the project level, the project proponents took the lead in carrying out planned activities and were responsible for completing and delivering outputs in accordance with the grant agreement. The object of the engagement strategy was to build institutional

capacity at the community level for implementation and management of projects. Aside from managing project activities efficiently and effectively, and disbursing funds judiciously, project partners ensured that projects contributed to the realization of the FOCAS strategy and the provincial goal. They linked with LGUs, NGOs, private sector, donor agencies and other stakeholders for fund leveraging, technical support, marketing linkages, knowledge sharing, etc. (PACAP, 2008 & 2009).

### **The Bohol FOCAS Experience**

After the organization of the Bohol Provincial Stakeholder Committee (PSC), the different provincial stakeholders studied Bohol's Vision-Mission, Provincial Development Plan, Agenda 10 in 2010, Priority Growth Focus, the Bohol Poverty Reduction Program Framework and Bohol's Poverty Database and Monitoring System (PDMS), a locally-developed poverty monitoring software. They agreed to have a common goal of contributing to the provincial government's poverty reduction goal of halving the province's poverty incidence in 12 years (2003-2015). Since FOCAS projects ran for only three years, each FOCAS just set modest targets addressing selected indicators from the Local Poverty Reduction Action Plan mainly income, unemployment, food threshold, meals, malnutrition, water, and sanitation.

The provincial FOCAS goal set was "to reduce poverty incidence in the 17 priority municipalities in Bohol and build the capability of poor communities to access services and manage resources while enhancing their cultural and natural resources" (Blanco, 2005, p.1).

The potential FOCAS areas were later firmed up and strategies defined as framework for project development. The Committee decided that to ensure considerable program impact, FOCAS would be implemented only in the 17 municipalities identified by the Provincial Planning and Development Office (PPDO) based on a ranking process that used four indicators of deprivation, namely: (1) inaccessibility of safe drinking water, (2) absence of household sanitary toilets, (3) prevalence of malnutrition among pre-school age children, and (4) incidence of school dropouts among the youth of each municipality. The 17 municipalities were selected by congressional district, considering the significant amount of resources that can be accessed from Congress representatives and the Sanggunian Panlalawigan members.

The Bohol FOCAS areas and strategies identified were the following:

**Table 1. Bohol PACAP FOCAS Strategies, 2005-2010**

	<b>FOCAS 1</b>	<b>FOCAS 2</b>	<b>FOCAS 3</b>	<b>FOCAS 4</b>
Descriptive Title	Sustainable agri-business and enterprise development in support of eco-tourism in northwestern Bohol (ECONOMIC and ENVIRONMENT)	Enhancing eco-cultural tourism in central-eastern Bohol (CULTURE and ENVIRONMENT)	Sustainable agricultural development/ agri-business development for food security and economic development (ECONOMIC and ENVIRONMENT)	Provision of water and sanitation facilities/ services to the 17 priority municipalities (SOCIAL)
LGUs Covered	Maribojoc Catigbian Loon Tubigon Inabanga Clarin	Albur Loboc Sevilla Bilar Batuan Sierra Bullones Anda	Dagohoy Sagbayan San Isidro Alicia	17 municipalities
Purpose	Increase household income through ecotourism-linked sustainable and community-initiated agribusinesses and enterprises that effectively protect and conserve the environment	Develop sustainable livelihoods that enhance ecological-cultural tourism and the community management of natural and cultural resources	Ensure food sufficiency and increase the net income of farmers through sustainable organic farming (Rice as anchor crop in a diversified farming system)	Provide potable water and sanitation services to the most deprived communities while enabling them to protect and rehabilitate water sources
Cross-cutting Themes	Governance and Gender			
Secretariat	Feed the Children Phils.	BANGON	CASEC, Inc.	PROCESS

Note: Blanco (2005, p. 19)

### **Focusing on the Bohol FOCAS on Eco-cultural Tourism Social Enterprises**

With the Provincial Government prioritizing Loboc and Sevilla as the area on eco-cultural tourism in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District, PACAP broadened this into an ecological-cultural tourism circuit with assistance in ecological and cultural resource inventory, skills and technology enhancement, product and site development, organizational strengthening and institution building, enterprise development, and marketing.

FOCAS 1 on sustainable agri-business and enterprise development in support of eco-tourism in northwestern Bohol and FOCAS 2 on Eco- cultural tourism responded to the above challenges.

The objectives of these FOCASes were: (1) develop gender-responsive community-based sustainable livelihoods and enterprises that support ecological-cultural tourism; (2) effectively manage the natural resource base and cultural heritage to support ecological-cultural tourism development in the target municipalities; and (3) develop enabling multi-stakeholder partnerships and support mechanisms to sustain ecological-cultural tourism initiatives towards poverty reduction in the target sites.

In these FOCASes, PACAP provided a package of assistance for the development of sustainable community-based eco-tourism destinations, product design and development, production technology improvement, and marketing, cultural resource inventory and development, and nature and culture-based enterprise development financial and organizational management systems installation to bring about products and services that can be marketed at eco-tourism destinations in and even outside of Bohol. This was strengthened with technical assistance and capacity building for tour packaging, operating and marketing services, and natural resource management to enhance 'eco' aspect and ensure sustainable supply of raw materials. (PACAP, 2009).

## **Some Samples of Sustainable FOCAS Social Enterprises**

### **Loboc Music Heritage**

Loboc is a 4<sup>th</sup> class municipality with a population of 16,312 (Melisimo, A. 2014). More than half of Loboc's households live below the income threshold and unemployment rate is pegged at 16.77%. This is higher than the province's 14.52%. Such poverty puts a lot of pressure on the natural resource base of the municipality. On the other hand, Loboc is also known as the music capital of the province and is home to the world acclaimed Loboc Children's Choir. This rich cultural heritage became threatened with master band musicians already growing old and having no avenue to pass on their skills to the youth and very little instruments for young people to play.

The Loboc Youth Ambassador Band was created through the Loboc Music Project of the Loboc Youth Education Association, Inc. with the aim of creating avenues for income generation to the townspeople through music while preserving and enhancing their rich musical heritage. Organized and registered in 2004, the Loboc Youth Education Association Corp. is composed of civic-minded Lobocanons coming from the business and professional sectors, and the Loboc community of band musicians. It worked closely with the Local Government of Bohol, the Center for Culture and Arts Development (CCAD), Office of the Governor and the First Consolidated Bank, Inc.

The project addressed four major issues and concerns in Loboc: poverty, gender and development, vanishing cultural heritage, and environmental degradation by using music as an alternative livelihood for Lobocanons particularly the youth and their families. Young musicians were able to avail of college scholarships by being band members. They earned allowances for school expenses through their performances and their families were encouraged to engage in ecotourism-linked enterprises. The project movers-- two musician brothers, a businessman and the town mayor -- hoped to see more young musicians in Loboc

reviving its musical traditions, more Lobocanons finishing college, and Loboc becoming a music-based ecotourism destination in the province. Project components were Research and Databanking, Community Organizing, Training and Capacity Building, and IEC and Networking.

With the goal of providing alternative livelihoods for the youth through the revival of the local musical traditions while providing scholarship to poor but deserving students, the LYAB helped more than 500 students to have free college education. For school year 2013-2014 the project had 118 scholars in various universities and colleges in Tagbilaran. At an average of Php10,000 per semester, the project saved 118 parents approximately Php2,360,000.00 per year. Aside from the scholarship, the students also earned honorarium from shows and concerts. They have become enriched with new experiences from the free travel to foreign lands and other provinces in the country. The group has been regularly performing in China for the past five (5) years. The students were likewise given financial management and leadership trainings.

In addition to the two- 2 storey buildings housing the Loboc Music School, LYAB now has a 3-storey dormitory that can accommodate 68 college scholars in Tagbilaran. At an average of Php800.00 per month for the cost of the dormitory, the project has been able to further save for the parents some Php700,000.00 in annual boarding fees.

The project revived and preserved the cultural tradition of Loboc as the center of brass band and orchestra in the province of Bohol. The vanishing and dwindling brass band with its aging members is now revived. The twice a week concert at the Loboc Children's Theater has become a major eco-cultural attraction of the town. A night cruise has been added to the daytime famous Loboc river cruise. Other tourist destinations have also sprouted in the nearby areas, e.g., the firefly tours.

While these twice a week concerts were temporarily suspended because of the big earthquake which hit Bohol in October 2013, performances in other places and their scholarships continued. Tourist establishments in Bohol have asked for the band to arrange for quartet and quintet performances.

Another major impact is that women now participate in the historically male dominated Loboc Brass Band. Of the more than 500 student musicians, girls comprise the majority 60% while boys comprise the minority 40%. This is the first time that girls are given the equal chance to excel in the brass band music. LYAB conducted seminars on children's rights and responsibilities and on rights of women especially freedom from sexual harassment. Child protection and anti-sexual harassment policies have also been put in place.

On environmental protection, the project has diverted the project beneficiaries from excessive use of the forest to the creation of alternative livelihood activities and income generating projects to support their children to college. The band also included in its repertoire musical pieces with environmental themes.

Further, the project continues to be sustainable. LYAB has held an average of 18 paid shows annually with total annual revenue of over Php700 thousand pesos since 2009. Funds are used for operations and maintenance of the school of music and uniforms and food for the band members. The band has recorded and produced two CDs with selected band repertoire under the Label "Tilaob" and "kajam." Various recording studio equipments have been acquired and 360 musical instruments have been purchased and distributed to the recipient students (Melisimo, 2014).

A big boost to the project was the multi-stakeholders support from among the communities in Loboc and from other individuals and institutions. While the PACAP grant helped jumpstart the project, annual institutional financial support

came from the Province of Bohol, Municipality of Loboc, and the First Consolidated Bank, and other regular donors. The National Government donated a 55-seater fully air-conditioned bus. The First Consolidated Bank gave a long term usufruct agreement for the land for the dormitory (Melisimo, 2014).

### **Sevilla-Loboc Community Enterprises in Support to Eco-Cultural Tourism (SLECE)**

Sevilla ranks 6<sup>th</sup> in terms of households living below the income threshold, with 72% or 1,357 households. It ranks 13<sup>th</sup> in unemployment rate. It has a wealth of indigenous plants and forest species, birds and butterflies, fishes, caves, hills and forests, a terrain for mountaineering and nature appreciation. Ewon and Lobgob are among the poorest barangays of Sevilla. It is connected by a bamboo hanging bridge known as the Sipatan Bridge.

Located along the highway, the Sipatan hanging bridge unwittingly became a tourist attraction. Tourists came by busloads and enjoyed the adventure of crossing the bridge, even jumping up and down. Yet, it was the people of the two barangays who still shouldered the costs of maintenance and repair. Tourists did not pay even when the community placed donation boxes.

This became the starting point of the PACAP FOCAS Project. The community approached the University of Bohol Extension Office to assist them. Thus, the Sipatan Eco-tour Project was born. The Sipatan Eco-tour includes the Sipatan Hanging Bridge, the souvenir shop and the butterfly garden. There are now two hanging bridges.

The Sipatan complex has been transformed into a popular ecological tourism destination providing increased income to the People's Organization and the barangay. The Ewon Small Coconut Farmer's Organization (ESCFO) produces and sells banana chips, vegetables, bananas and organic fertilizers. The 12 concessionaires

renting stalls at Sipatan tourist shop earn an average daily income of Php1,000.00. Previously they had no income. Whereas in the past, the Lobgob Mothers' Association (LMA) only made *amakan* (woven flattened bamboo), they now produce and sell handicraft at the tourist shop. The average daily collection of toll fees at Sipatan hanging bridge increased to Php 4,000.00 from only Php700.00 monthly.

The Ewon Children's Rondalla plays beautiful traditional music at Sipatan complex on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. They too earn from their performances. Selected children are trained on craft making, visual arts, painting on raffia materials and making refrigerator magnets. These are sold in the shops and during the Sandugo trade fairs. The cultural activities also became venues for increasing environmental awareness.

Multi-sectoral partnerships continue to be strengthened among the concerned Municipal and Barangay Local Government Units (LGUs), Government Agencies, the University of Bohol (UB) and the community Peoples' Organizations. The Sevilla MLGU provided counterpart in the construction of tourist shop, mini docking port, toilet facilities, collection booth and maintenance of Sipatan hanging bridge. The Ewon and Lobgob BLGUs gave their counterpart in the maintenance of these tourist destinations. DTI assisted the Lobgob Mothers' Association (LMA) in enhancing their handicraft products. DOST assisted in improving the packaging of products and in the BFAD licensing. The UB College of Liberal Arts made Ewon as their "Adopted Barangay" and conducted joint community activities and various environmental and cultural trainings.

Together with their increased household income the families are aware of protecting and conserving their environment and culture. PO members now conduct quarterly Biodiversity Monitoring System (BMS). Host plants had been planted at the butterfly garden and the residents regularly clean the river and river

banks. The quarterly BMS monitoring played a role in checking illegal practices such as illegal cutting of trees and wild life hunting and poaching. The farmers of Ewon produce organic vegetables and organic fertilizers. They are now shifting from inorganic to organic farming practices. Likewise, training activities on environmental laws and issues, solid waste management continue. There are also seminars on gender and development, organizational development, leadership development and financial and social enterprise management.

After three years of implementation, the project has contributed to the FOCAS strategy of improving the standard of living of the beneficiaries through development of enterprises in support of ecological-cultural tourism. These enterprises are managed by the Peoples' Organizations and aside from providing employment opportunities, the income is shared among the members. The enterprises initiated in the different barangays contributed to the provincial poverty reduction thrust through employment opportunities and increased income of the beneficiaries. Resources have been mobilized, capability and skills training conducted and improvement of facilities done. The women availed of handicraft loan, while the farmers availed of loans for ginger, peanut, organic vegetable production (Casabal, 2009).

### **Loomweaving Industry Upscaling for Development (LOUD)**

The Tubigon Loomweavers Multi-purpose Cooperative (TLMPC) has gone a long way since it became part of the PACAP FOCAS. Its 2014 report, *TLMPC: Challenges and Milestones*, talked of how their shifting economies have transformed their lives from micro production to small and medium production, from traditional income sources to alternative income sources, from local markets to intra regional and international markets, and from stand alone production unit to networked production (Panong, 2014, p. 2).

Before the PACAP FOCAS, the TLMPC faced the problem on low market competitiveness or inability to compete with the big, mainstream brands. This resulted in (a) low income, and (b) losses and/or bankruptcy, which led to low quality of life. On the other hand, low market competitiveness was caused by, among others: (a) poor product quality, and (b) lack of market linkages and exposure. Poor product quality, in turn, is a result of: (a) lack of capital, (b) lack of technical assistance on research and development (R & D), (c) low knowledge and skills of enterprise workers/producers, and (d) poor product labelling and packaging. Lack of market linkages and exposure is the effect of: (a) lack of knowledge and skills in product branding and marketing and (b) lack of funds for marketing and promotions.

These issues were responded to through the LOUD Project. The LOUD Project provided skills and entrepreneurial training on fiber extraction, dyeing and bleaching, weaving, training, pricing and costing, and marketing trainings. The skills and entrepreneurial training modalities are now upgraded using metal handlooms.

For the product development (R & D) and local designer program, TLMPC collaborated with the Bohol Island State University (BISU), a local state university training their design students on product designs and prototype preparation and community based product development. For product marketing, TLMPC has since the PACAP project, participated in local, regional and national trade fair and exhibits. The cooperative is planning to participate in international fair(s) for 2015.

The Department of Trade and Industry assisted in the provision of experts on small business management and design development to make sure new and upgraded product lines are offered to the market every year. Through exporters, TLMPC products have been introduced to Issey Miyake, LV, Channel, Hermes and Dior, etc. The shared service facility of DTI provides TLMPC with upgraded handlooms from 36'' width to 72'' width with metal framed looms and metal reeds, and mechanical dryers. TLMPC is developing new lines to include polyester and raffia, polyester and abaca, polyester and *buntal*. TLMPC has developed products with architectural applications and home decors. Products also include gifts, toys and houseware.

Project impacts include establishment of viable group enterprises/ livelihood, increase in family income, enhanced capacity of people's organization to manage their own enterprise projects, community empowerment, and strengthened networks and effective resource mobilization. Two TLMPC leaders have also been elected to the Sangguniang Bayan (town council) (Panong, 2014; TLMPC, 2014).

### **PACAP FOCAS Impacts**

The PACAP FOCAS Impact Review 2010 found that FOCAS engagements achieved major benefits such as (a) increases in family income, (b) increases in livelihood activities, (c) increases in capital used for livelihood activities, (d) decreases in household expenditure, (e) increases in household consumption, and (f) establishment

of viable group enterprises. Significant Community Empowerment impacts include: (a) enhanced capacity of People's Organizations, (b) greater community commitment to address problems, (c) greater community awareness of their situation, and (d) improved skills of residents. Impacts related to improved access to social services include: (a) decrease in the time spent in collecting water, (b) increased number of households engaged in waste segregation, (c) increased recycling of waste materials and (d) increased cleanliness of the environment. In terms of environmental protection, the Impact Review found that there have been significant increases in the areas protected, regenerated or conserved. These include reforestation of mountain slopes and other upland areas, rehabilitation and protection of watershed areas, establishment of marine sanctuaries, rehabilitation of mangrove areas and mobilization of Bantay Dagat and other volunteer groups to guard rehabilitated areas.

It is important to note that the above impacts are often mutually reinforcing within a single project. This is because of the multi-dimensional nature of FOCAS projects; that is, they are designed to respond, in a holistic way, to the inter-related causes of poverty. Thus, it is normal for FOCAS projects to generate a number of impacts.

The role of the local governments—provincial, municipal and barangays and the provincial offices of national government agencies like the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) have been crucial for the success of FOCAS and the communities. They served as pivots and lead coordinating bodies. They provided the policy and organizational enabling environment as well as counterpart funds and technical assistance, and ensured project and program sustainability. It should be noted that a number of enacted resolutions and ordinances facilitated community access to basic services.

Lastly, the ECT FOCAS community enterprises increased family income through the sale of products like handicrafts, souvenir items, *salabat* (ginger tea powder), banana chips, and native chicken, and capitalization assistance for livelihood activities particularly by cooperatives, as well as through honorarium and savings (PACAP, 2010).

For PACAP, the shift in approach from an unfocused and responsive program of assistance to a strategically planned set of closely linked interventions has significant benefits in terms of realizing greater impact from the use of program resources.

While the FOCAS engagement ended in 2010, the community enterprises have persisted and their linkages have continued. The groups experienced some setbacks with the strong earthquake which devastated the province in 2013, but have since picked up the pieces. They are now back in business, although some with adjustments. These community social enterprises have adapted, sustained themselves and become stronger.

### **FOCAS' Significance to Social Solidarity Economics (SSE)**

In the October 9, 2014 ASEC Roundtable discussion, Quiñones (2012) opined that SSE could be seen as working first in a local setting where there is strong coordination with the social enterprises, local government, civil society groups, and some local businesses. This is what FOCAS was all about.

FOCAS subscribes to the community development strategy. It starts from the people's collective experience on its community needs, gaps and how together they responded to their livelihood requirements. Organizing and organization follows, ensuring and sustaining the collective action. As the social enterprise grows, its organization further develops, and its governance systems and mechanisms rise to keep up with the expanding complexity.

Networking and linkage building, bringing local businesses and the local government in all levels from the provincial and municipal to the barangay, seal in the local community buy-in. The national government agencies guide the technical capacity building in coordination with civil society organizations. Donor organizations like PACAP inject funds for initial additional capital and capability building.

The community development and organizing processes start the journey on the right note and direction. The multi-stakeholder approach ensures participatory development and is necessary for the success and sustainability of the social enterprise. The community buy-in cushions the imminent withdrawal of donor funds, increasing resilience and guaranteeing survival against all odds, odds including disasters.

The FOCAS model of having strategically linked and area integrated community social enterprises, can be studied and replicated in some form or another. Furthering the cause and advocacy for community social enterprises and social solidarity economy requires creative, innovative ways.

*Lourdes “Lody” Padilla Espenido is a Social Worker and Community Development practitioner. She is a faculty member of the Department of Community Development, UP CSWCD. She was the National Coordinator of AusAID’s Philippines- Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP) as well as CIDA’s Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI). Currently, she is the Project Manager of the CHR- AECID Fortaleza Project of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID).*

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