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Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction <i>Rosalinda Pineda Ofreneo, PhD</i>	i
Rediscovering Social Solidarity Economy in Community-Based Supply Chains <i>Benjamin R. Quiñones Jr., PhD</i>	1
Innovations in Community Social Enterprise Development: The Bohol PACAP FOCAS Experience <i>Lourdes Marina Padilla-Espenido</i>	31
Livelihood Practices of Women in the Informal Economy: Forging Pathways Towards a Feminist Solidarity Economy <i>Nathalie Lourdes Africa-Verceles, DSD</i>	53
CSR and Social Solidarity Economy: Exploring Shared Responsibilities <i>Anna Kristinna N. Palomo</i>	83
SACADA: A Look at the Hacienda System in the Philippines <i>Editha Venus-Maslang, DPA</i>	109

Introduction

The Philippine Journal of Social Development (PJSD) strives to showcase the College of Social Work and Community Development's (CSWCD) brand of scholarship of engagement that is people-centered, community-based, participatory, gender-responsive, life-affirming, integrative, and transformative. It invites contributions from scholars inside and outside the College to shed light on both enduring and cutting-edge themes that are part of its research and extension agenda. Previous issues of the Journal have focused on migration, disaster risk reduction and management, social protection, peace and governance. This issue has for its theme a relatively new and exciting direction to explore: "Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) as an Alternative Path of Development."

It may be recalled that the CSWCD played a leading and strategic role during the 5th international meeting sponsored by RIPESS (Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy) held in UP Diliman. The Meeting attracted more than 160 foreign participants from five continents, and more than 500 participants from various local institutions and organizations, including 42 CSWCD faculty, students, and staff. Of all the foreign participants, the Latin Americans led by Brazilian Minister of Solidarity Economy Paul Singer, were the most passionate and awe-inspiring, sharing decades of praxis and visions of "buen vivir" (the good life). Exchanges during the Meeting integrated various knowledge bases bridging many academic disciplines; e.g., economics, community development, women and development studies, labor and industrial relations, Asian studies. Self-organized activities (SOAs) featured research papers and case studies from the ground. And the cutting edge discourse on solidarity economy as an alternative development model to neoliberal globalization resulted in fresh and liberating ideas on how to empower the poor. The role of public policy and governance was also foregrounded, as policy directions and draft legislation were discussed in plenary to envision and eventually construct an enabling environment for the solidarity economy initiatives of the marginalized.

SSE Definitions, Principles, Concepts, and Visions

In this issue, Dr. Benjamin R. Quinones, Jr., RIPESS Executive Coordinator and a leading proponent of SSE, invites readers to “rediscover solidarity economy” through community-based supply chains. In a previous article, he offered this definition:

Solidarity economy is a socio-economic order and new way of life that deliberately chooses serving the needs of people and ecological sustainability as the goal of economic activity rather than the maximization of profits under the unfettered rule of the market. It places economic and technological developments at the service of social and human development rather than the pursuit of narrow, individual self-interests.” (Quinones, 2008)

In his view, solidarity economy has five distinguishing principles:

- the objective is to serve its members or the community, instead of simply striving for financial profit;
- The economic enterprise is autonomous of the State;
- in its statute and code of conduct, a democratic decision-making process is established that implies the necessary participation of users and workers;
- it gives priority to people and work over capital in the distribution of revenue and surplus;
- its activities are based on principles of participation, empowerment, and individual and collective responsibility. (Quinones, 2008)

There are other ways of defining, conceptualizing, and envisioning solidarity economy in the Philippine context. One is to link it to the broader perspective of sustainable development with its triple bottom lines: people (enhanced social well-being), planet (healthy climate and environment), and profit (economic sustainability) (Dacanay, 2013; Quiñones, 2012). Another is to rediscover it as a revival of indigenous cultural values. The values of solidarity economy include sharing, co-responsibility, reciprocity, freedom, and equality. There is a term in Filipino that conveys all these values. The word is “bayanihan” (Quiñones, in Mercado, 2009, p. 20).

Quiñones points out in his article in this Journal that in the 1950s, the Philippines was second only to Japan in Asia in terms of economic development. This status was eroded by misguided policies imposed from outside. A series of changes, including structural adjustment programs associated with neoliberal globalization, led to high levels of hunger, poverty, unemployment, and disasters associated with environmental degradation and climate change.

Today, Quiñones says in his article, “the destruction wrought by neoliberal policies and programs on community economies” (p. 4) has contributed to the continuing exclusion of the poor and the marginalized in the development process. He is not alone in offering this analysis. Given the harmful impact of neoliberal globalization which has resulted in an overwhelming majority of losers and a tiny minority of winners, many local participants in the RIPESS International meeting pushed for “SSE 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 Compilation, 2013, SOA 6, 10).

There are many challenges, however, in realizing SSE as a strategy or model for alternative and inclusive development. Quinones notes the fragmentation of most local enterprises as they try to integrate themselves in profit-oriented global supply chains whose products are ironically supported by local consumers in an economy dominated by profit-driven food chains, megamalls and extractive industries. He also cites the absence of a well-defined consumer base for SSE products, one that should be developed through the revival of indigenous concepts such as “bayanihan” and “tangkilian.” Given this context, there is need to go beyond the level of the individual social enterprise, and to move towards creating a chain of enterprises linked together and sharing responsibilities in financing, supplying inputs, production, marketing, and consumption. In every link in the chain, the poor must be visible and must have a say.

The pro-poor bias in the SSE discourse is highlighted in the emphasis on participation and control during one of the self-organized activities in the 5th RIPESS Meeting:

SSE is a people centered economy with enterprises controlled and managed by the associations of community people. There is a significant involvement and participation of the basic sectors to control resources such as land, capital, markets, technologies, and policies at different levels: local, national, global. Since poverty is linked to unequal economic relations at the international level, it must have a strong movement fighting against discriminatory global market policies to allow small economies to grow (RIPESS Compilation, 2013, SOA 10).

Focus on Community Based Supply Chains and Social Enterprises

Community-based supply chains, therefore, should become the focal unit of action for shared responsibilities as well as for an enabling policy environment. In this supply chain, the biosphere is considered to be a finite source of resources that motivates the various actors in the chain to veer away from the destructive and unsustainable profit-oriented model to the triple bottom line model. All the actors have shared responsibilities because not one actor can negotiate the paradigm shift alone.

Dr. Quinones' article presents a concrete example of this in the case of the free-range chicken project managed by On Eagle's Wings Development Philippines Foundation (OEWf). He claims that "An evaluation by OEWf shows that civil society organizations (CSOs), people's organizations, local for-profit private companies, and the local government unit managed to work together in developing a socially inclusive community-based supply chain" (p.1). According to him, the insight from this experience "suggests the relevance of a public policy favoring CSO-public partnership in undertaking local development projects as an alternative to the private-public partnership (PPP) which usually excludes CSOs and people's organizations in the development process" (p.1).

Dr. Quinones' conclusions is borne out by the experience of the Bohol Focused Community Assistance Scheme (FOCAS) of the Philippine-Australia Community Assistance Program (PACAP) presented by Lody Padilla Espenido in her article on innovations in community social enterprise development. She emphasized the centrality of community development and organizing processes in building sustainable social enterprises through a multi-stakeholder approach involving local government units, national government agencies, academe, and the private sector.

Introduction

Interventions are not diffused but are area-based and strategically linked through integration in local development plans, thus maximizing synergy and impact. Espenido's article focused on eco-cultural tourism enterprises such as the Loboc Music Heritage Project which supports a Youth Ambassador Band composed of young girls and boys, the Tubigon Loomweavers Cooperative which expanded its market through upgraded product designs, and the Sipatan Eco-tour project which now includes a community-run hanging bridge, souvenir shop, and butterfly garden. All these innovative enterprises had significant impact at the household level through increased income, livelihood, capital, and consumption, and at the community level through increased community awareness and commitment, recycling of waste materials, cleanliness and regeneration of the environment. These enterprises also proved to be resilient, having withstood and recovered from the impact of the devastating earthquake which hit Bohol in late 2013.

Integrating a Gender Perspective

One of the FOCAS objectives cited in Espenido's article was to “develop gender-responsive community-based sustainable livelihoods and enterprises” (p.40). Dr. Nathalie A. Verceles shows how this can be done in her article on “Livelihood Practices of Women in the Informal Economy: Forging Pathways Towards a Feminist Solidarity Economy,” actually a distillation of her dissertation which was adjudged the best by the Doctor of Social Development Program for 2014. This dissertation is groundbreaking work that shows how feminist and solidarity economics can be merged fruitfully and imaginatively as a framework that can shed light and provide new meaning to what grassroots women are doing on the ground to transform their lives and their communities, and in due time society as a whole. More than this, her work was done in the best tradition of feminist research – with passion and compassion, with focus and rigor, with an eye towards foregrounding the lived experiences of grassroots women, capturing their voices, and providing them the visibility so necessary to have them admitted into the portals of academic discourse.

Women in the informal economy, many of whom are classified as among the working poor, comprise the majority of all employed Filipino women. Usually exploited, marginalized, and bereft of legal and social protection in a globalized economy, they include homebased workers, vendors, small farmers, and indigenous women producing traditional craft. Dr. Verceles conducted three case studies: the first on the Cooperative of Women in Health and Development (COWHED) in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, which featured T-boli women engaged in the production and marketing of *tinalak* and other indigenous products; the second on the Pambansang Kalipunan ng mga Manggagawang Impormal sa Pilipinas (PATAMABA) in Sta. Barbara, Iloilo, which highlighted the experiences of organized rural women homebased workers engaged in agriculture and waste recycling; and the third on KILUS Foundation Environmental Multi-purpose Cooperative (KILUS) in Pasig, Metro Manila, which showed how displaced factory workers and other urban informal workers can be organized to produce export-quality recycled products from juice bags.

Through Dr. Verceles' work, we can hear women from these various organizations speak about their multiple burdens, and how their participation in solidarity initiatives help them ease and transcend these burdens towards the enjoyment of both concrete and intangible forms of empowerment. She concludes that the livelihood practices of the women in her three case studies provide the seeds for the creation of an explicitly feminist solidarity economy. These seeds can come into fruition however only with...

“the promotion of shared power and decision-making between women and men, greater access to and control over economic and social resources by women, and support for women's participation and empowerment across the institutions of the state, the market, the community, and the household.” (p.78)

SSE Organizations and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Cooperatives, such as those cited in the contributions of Verceles and Espenido, are considered to be the most well known type of SSE organization since they are formally registered and data about them are readily available. According to Quinones, however,

In more recent years, many new forms of mutual cooperation outside the cooperative movement sprang to life as neoliberal globalization brought about widespread marginalization of workers and small producers. They include activities of neighborhood and community associations, savings and credit associations, collective kitchens, unemployed or landless worker mutual-aid organizations, joint purchase associations, self-managed enterprises, and many similar solidarity-based initiatives. (Quiñones, in RIPESS Compilation, 2013)

Out of the many categories of SSE organizations in the Philippines, Quinones identifies two major types: 1) People working together to advance their own well-being; e.g., savings, credit, producer cooperatives; organizations of informal workers; and 2) People working together to help the poor (microfinance institutions, NGOs, charitable organizations) but in most cases, the poor become dependent on helping organizations for effective use of market mechanisms for social objectives. The main thrust of the latter consists of poverty alleviation, access of the poor to resources, “inclusion in neoliberal market economy, not an alternative economy for, by, and of the poor, socially excluded and marginalized” (Quiñones, in RIPESS Compilation, 2013, slides 10 and 17). What could be worse, some undertakings which call themselves ‘social enterprises’ are run by entrepreneurs who are out to serve their own self-interest while taking advantage of opportunities meant to engage and benefit the poor.

The role of the private sector in SSE is arguably a controversial and contradictory one, as revealed in Anna Kristinna Palomo's article entitled "CSR and Social Solidarity Economy: Exploring Shared Responsibilities." She presents a history of corporate social responsibility (CSR) which shows how it has been used by corporations mainly to improve their public image, enhance their legitimacy and social acceptability, and thereby ensure and increase their profits over the long run. However, due to pressures from trade unions and other social movements, CSR has taken new and interesting turns, shifting to the creation of shared values (CSV) and integration of a human rights based approach (HRBA) in internal and as well as external corporate operations. This shift is accompanied by calls for corporate social accountability, given strong evidence that on balance corporations tend to do much more harm than good to people as well as to the environment, and should therefore be held liable for this harm.

Yet, nothing is impossible in this contradictory world where improbable partnerships are made and are sometimes considered necessary, and not merely expedient. For example, big food chains can provide regular and stable markets for organized onion farmers, as cited in Palomo's article. Private firms and social businesses can play positive roles in community-based supply chains nurtured through multi-stakeholder approaches affirming the notion of shared responsibilities. The new is born from the womb of the old; nascent SSE initiatives can be nurtured by resources embedded in the business models of the past that have to eventually make way for the future. What is perhaps important in the concept of shared or common (but differentiated) responsibilities is the triple bottom line of SSE: people, planet, and then profit. The centrality of social and environmental goals cannot be compromised even in arrangements where conflicting interests are at work and play themselves out towards short-term transactional outcomes or long-term transformational ends.

The Challenge of Continuing Social Exclusion and Disempowerment

Although not strictly on SSE, Dr. Editha Maslang's article on the sacadas shows the gravity of deeply entrenched social problems that any alternative model of development needs to grapple with. It implies the lack of social responsibility on the part of the millers and planters in the sugar industry, who continue to corner the lions' share of the income from sugarcane proceeds at the expense of the migratory, unorganized, and unprotected sacadas who receive a mere pittance. Dr. Maslang's article is deeply disturbing since it shows through the stories of the sacadas themselves how pitiful and disempowering their working and living conditions are to this day. The plight of the sacadas has been told and retold since the 1980s, when a full blown crisis in the sugar industry drove its workers to penury, unemployment, and near starvation. That desperate situation gave birth to an enduring SSE model called Altertrade, which organized sugar farmers in land reform areas into cooperatives to produce organic muscovado for export. Dr. Maslang does not mention Altertrade or any other SSE example as an alternative in the research site which she focused on. Such initiatives may be successful in some sugar areas, but as Dr. Maslang's article implies, many of the most exploited sugar workers, notably the sacadas, remain untouched by them.

This shows how much more needs to be done to include the excluded and empower the disempowered, with beginning steps suggested in her recommendations, among them organizing, critical awareness raising, and accessing livelihood opportunities as well as social protection. SSE development for the sacadas can be integrated into these steps in the empowerment process. Dr. Maslang's schema on empowerment mentions two complementary aspects: 1) ability to access social and economic resources; and 2) ability to create conditions for self- and community-transformation. These are in turn dependent on the resource arrangements and work relations in the hacienda system as well as the institutional support system consisting of enabling policies and programs. The emphasis on empowerment and transformation echoes some of the principles and pillars of SSE.

Other Challenges for the Development and Sustainability of SSEs

The self-organized activities (SOAs) during the 5th RIPESS international meeting identified many other key challenges (phrased in the form of “strategies”) for the development and sustainability of SSEs.

Of particular relevance to academe is building a knowledge base through research, mapping, valuation, and analysis. Related to this is the integration of SSE in the curriculum (thereby targeting the youth in their formative years), professionalization of SSE practitioners, and building technical competence especially in the monitoring and evaluation of SSE organizations. An essential and inspiring element in this endeavor, especially from the perspective of social development, is the challenge of developing, replicating and documenting models and successful cases, highlighting the primacy of organizing and participatory processes. Of particular urgency in the era of climate change is the need to develop effective SSE responses to crises and disasters, as well as the resultant hunger and food insecurity. The reality of intermittent super- typhoons and mega floods provides the backdrop for the necessity of integrating SSE-based shelter and sustainable livelihood in relief, recovery, and rehabilitation efforts.

At the level of practice, the awesome challenge is the “promotion of social enterprises, cooperatives, local exchange systems, fair trade, solidarity finance, inclusive value chains, the open source movement, participatory budgeting, social investment funds, worker-controlled pension funds and credit unions” (Luna, in RIPESS Compilation, 2013, Slide no. 5). Amidst this wide array of SSE actors, consensus building has to take place in order to build unity amidst diversity, facilitate networking, capacity building and upscaling of all key players. Upscaling can be facilitated if investors come in to provide critical levels of capital and markets. Upscaling, however, should not lead to the neglect of grassroots and women’s empowerment, especially with the rise of big SSE players such as huge microfinance institutions (MFIs).

Introduction

Many of these MFIs concentrate on lending activities and charge high interest rates without providing “transformational services” that can lift their clients, mostly grassroots women, out of poverty.

Building a critical mass of SSE players can strengthen recognition and legitimacy. The next step is advocating for an enabling policy environment from local to global levels.

Role of the State and Policy Advocacy

Although SSE organizations need to be independent and autonomous of the state, they are entitled to and can gain from an enabling policy environment and to state support at both national and local levels. This point was brought home by Dr. Quinones and by Prof. Espenido in their articles.

It may be recalled that Article XII Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines provides that “all sectors of the economy and all regions of the country shall be given optimum opportunity to develop. Private enterprises, including corporations, cooperatives, and similar collective organizations, shall be encouraged to broaden the base of their ownership.”

Several laws and policies have been passed that impinge on SSE development and performance, among them the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act (Republic Act 8425 of 1997); An Act to Strengthen the Promotion and Development of, and Assistance to Small-and Medium-Scale Enterprises, Amending for that Purpose Republic Act No. 16977, otherwise known as the “Magna Carta for Small Enterprises” and for Other Purposes (Republic Act 8289 of 1997); and the Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008 (Republic Act 9520).

These, however, are considered inadequate by civil society advocates who have been pushing for two bills: 1) the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Bill, “ordaining the promotion of social enterprises to alleviate poverty, establishing for the purpose the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Program and Providing Incentives and Benefits Therefor”; and 2) the Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy (MACWIE) Bill.

The PRESENT Bill (Aquino, 2014, p.2) defines social enterprise (SE) as:

a wealth-creating organization, however organized, whether an association, single proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or a cooperative or any other legal form, whose primary stakeholders are marginalized sectors of society, engaged in providing goods and services that are directly related to its mission of improving societal well-being. It is established to achieve triple bottom lines such as financial, social, and ecological. It generates profit or surplus with due regard to social and environmental costs, and makes a pro-active contribution to solving social and environmental problems.

The proposed act further explains what is meant by Social Enterprises with the Poor as Primary Stakeholders (SEPPS), estimated to number around 30,000 plus in 2007 (Dacanay, 2013), and which the PRESENT Bill will specifically cover. A SEPPS pursues poverty reduction as principal objective, “engages and invests in the poor to become effective workers, suppliers, clients and /or owners, and/or ensures that a substantive part of the wealth created by the enterprise is distributed to, or benefits them” (Aquino, 2014, p.2). The surplus is used to assist the poor to “become partners in SE or value chain management/governance and to become partners in community, sectoral and societal transformation” (Aquino, 2014, p. 2).

Introduction

MACWIE, on the other hand, is more familiar to CSWCD constituents since it is part of the extension and advocacy agenda of the College. Already being pushed by informal workers' organizations and networks such as PATAMABA, Homenet, and MAGCAISA since the 13th Congress, it has been the subject of Committee hearings in both Houses of Congress, for which purpose the CSWCD drafted a strong statement of support. The statement says in part:

There is a most compelling need for a Magna Carta for Workers in the Informal Economy. We recognize that workers of the informal economy, waged and non-waged, comprise majority of our workers, and that they are marginalized and operate under dire circumstances of insecure work, low and irregular income, lack of access to and control over productive resources, poor and/or exploitative working conditions, and limited or no social protection. (UP CSWCD Constituents, 2014).

The version of Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago (Senate Bill No. 1153), in particular, contains substantial provisions that incorporate the needs and interests articulated by informal workers' organizations - recognition by the state and representation, accreditation, enjoyment of rights and benefits due to them as workers, adherence to minimum employment standards, access to resources and services, the prioritization of the basic sectors, social protection, the promotion of occupational safety and health, security in the workplace, the protection of agricultural lands, the establishment national and local machineries, budget allocations, among others.

There is no certainty that these two bills will be passed soon. What is important, however, is that they serve as focal points for diverse but like-minded forces to converge and use their collective energies to raise awareness and mobilize public opinion in favor of supporting the human rights and social enterprises of the working poor, both women and men. These forces can simultaneously be relied upon to advocate for good governance based on SSE principles: servant leadership, transparency, accountability, subsidiarity and participation (Habito, 2013). CSWCD's development praxis, being anchored on people's participation and empowerment, personal and social transformation, solidarity with marginalized groups, and gender-responsiveness, can be widened and deepened in association with these forces. Publication of this journal on SSE is one step in this long and exciting journey.

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Rediscovering Social Solidarity Economy in Community-Based Supply Chains

Benjamin R. Quiñones, Jr. Ph.D.

The paper argues that there is a need for strengthening the solidarity between local producers and local consumers of community-based supply chains if inclusive and sustainable development is to be achieved. To support this argument and illustrate how social solidarity economy (SSE) is being developed as an alternative model of development, the paper cites the case of the free range chicken managed and operated by On Eagle's Wings Development Philippines Foundation (OEWf). An evaluation by OEWf (2012) shows that civil society organizations (CSOs), people's organizations, local for-profit private companies, and the local government unit managed to work together in developing a socially inclusive community-based supply chain. This suggests the relevance of a public policy favoring CSO-public partnership in undertaking local development projects as an alternative to the private-public partnership (PPP) which usually excludes CSOs and people's organizations in the development process.

Resilient Local Economies

In the 1950s, the Philippine economy was second only to Japan as the strongest in Asia. Many of the country's local communities at that time survived on "subsistence" agricultural economy. Production in subsistence communities was meant largely for consumption, not for exchange (Koukkanen, 2011, p. 217). Local people consumed what they produced. Their community-based food supply chain was self-reliant, relied on multi-crop cultivation, and therefore was resilient and sustainable.

A subsistence economy does not necessarily mean the absence of 'surplus.' In fact, subsistence agricultural communities had to 'save' a portion of their harvest for reinvestment in the next season's production. Savings was a necessary condition for meeting future consumption.

Neoliberal economics, however, is not fond of subsistence economies largely because they constrain the advance of the market economy (Clark, 2012, p. 1; Thorsen & Lie, 2012, p. 2). Believing that economic growth will be faster when subsistence communities are integrated into the market economy, the Philippine government took pains to monetize a greater portion of local transactions. In an effort to 'modernize' agriculture, the Philippine government introduced in the late 1960s new high-yielding varieties (HYVs) of cereal grains together with massive investments funded by foreign borrowings for the expansion of irrigation infrastructure, modernization of management techniques, distribution of hybridized seeds, synthetic fertilizers, and pesticides to farmers. Former United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Director William Gaud was well pleased with the spread of the new technologies and said, "These and other developments in the field of agriculture contain the makings of a new revolution. It is not a violent Red Revolution like that of the Soviets, nor is it a White Revolution like that of the Shah of Iran. I call it the Green Revolution" (Timerime, 2012, para. 1).

The Green Revolution indeed hastened the integration of subsistence economies into the market economy. Community-based production for local consumption was replaced by mass production over vast areas and across territories for the globalizing market economy. The hitherto self-reliant food supply chain was transformed into a supplier of a global supply chain.

In the contemporary global supply chain, the US consumer emerged as the dominant global consumer. In 2008, US consumers, while accounting for only 4.5% of world population, spent over \$9.6 trillion, or 19% of world GDP. By contrast, China and India collectively account for nearly 40% of world population, but their combined consumption was only about \$2.5 trillion in 2008 (Roach, 2009, p. xviii).

US overconsumption brought about a reversal of roles between the West and the East. US increasingly became a consumer and borrower nation, while China and developing Asia turned into producer and lender nations. The Philippines, for one, entered the IMF creditor list in 2010, infusing \$251.1 million in the IMF's Financial Transactions Plan (FTP), for on-lending to troubled nations in Europe.

But in their rush to gain from American overconsumption, economies of China and developing Asia have also become increasingly unbalanced. They relied heavily on energy, industrial materials, and base metals while supporting an export-oriented economic growth. Pollution and environmental degradation increased. Asia now makes the largest contribution to total growth in global pollutants.

Today, a tough problem confronts the U.S. - centric global supply chain: US consumers no longer have the kind of purchasing power they had before. Not even the combined consumption power of China and India can fill up the gap left by the retreating US consumers. It seems inevitable that countries heavily dependent on exports to US and Europe will experience extreme difficulties with the fall of the US and EU economies.

Walden Bello (2012) noted that the world will soon enter the 6th Year of the Great Recession, and there is no end in sight. Some 23 million Americans are unemployed or under-employed. Europe is austerity ridden as it reels from plunging exports. Even the newly emerging economies known as the BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa], once touted as the bright spots of the global economy, are slowing down. Bello (2012) blames the slow down to BRICS' dependence on Northern markets and "their inability to institutionalize domestic demand as the key engine of the economy" (para. 5).

But what the Philippine economy is currently doing is simply going back to the basics: making domestic demand the key engine of the economy. Dr. Cielito Habito (2012) argued that the energy driving Philippine economic growth lately is coming from within. Habito (2012) also explained that "indeed it is internal

demand—that is, we Filipinos ourselves purchasing our goods and services—that has provided the current impetus for heightened economic activity, thereby providing increased jobs and incomes for Filipinos” (para. 1).

Habito (2012) further noted that a big chunk of the domestic purchasing power came from government expenditures (for its own consumption requirements and public construction), private spending on communications, and domestic recreation and leisure. It must be pointed out, however, that economic benefits from these types of expenditures do not necessarily trickle down to the poor, the socially excluded, and the economically disadvantaged. To enhance the social inclusiveness and resilience of our economy, we need to strengthen domestic demand for the products of community-based supply chains.

The Challenges of Building Up SSE as an Alternative Development Model

Building up SSE as an alternative development model poses a big challenge in the midst of destruction wrought by neoliberal policies and programs on community economies. One of the constraining factors to SSE development is the obtaining condition where local economies that hitherto thrived on interdependence and reciprocity have conformed or are increasingly conforming to the profit-oriented global market economy. Integration into profit-oriented global supply chains, whose products are patronized by local consumers, has caused the fragmentation of local enterprises. As a consequence, majority of local business entities have remained in the category of ‘micro’, small or medium enterprises (MSMEs) in terms of capitalization and turnover. Collectively, MSMEs lack both the resources and the motivation to build their own supply chains which, in turn, restrict their ability to provide alternative employment opportunities to those made available by profit-driven food chains, mega malls, and extractive projects such as mining, hydro, and oil and gas exploration.

Another constraining factor to SSE development is the absence of a well-defined market for products and services of SSE organizations (SSEOs). Developing SSE means creating a market base of local consumers who commit to buy the products and services of SSEOs. This implies a re-orientation of the purchasing power of local consumers towards financing the production and distribution of the goods and services of SSEOs. No less than a cultural revolution is needed to revitalize the *Bayanihan* spirit among the Filipinos in the marketplace. *Bayanihan* denotes solidarity among a group of people in a common, collective action. It portrays oneness of purpose, moments of togetherness, caring and sharing.

The Bayanihan spirit among Filipinos today resembles a dormant social capital that comes alive more vibrantly in times of calamities or festivities. Caring and sharing in times of calamities and religious or cultural festivities constitute a domain of people's collective action not yet totally decimated by the neoliberal market economy. The Bayanihan spirit could be harnessed to the initiative of developing solidarity between local producers and local consumers.

A policy-related constraint to SSE development is the lack of consensus on the concept of 'shared responsibilities'. It must be noted that the UN conference on sustainable development goals held in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012 (also known as "Rio + 20") adopted the concept of "common but differentiated responsibilities" (CBDR) of various sectors of society as well as between developing and developed countries with respect to the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. When the UN Open Working Groups (OWG) began discussions on the implementing tools to achieve sustainable development goals, the debates on CBDR got stalled because of the refusal of developed countries to apply the concept beyond the agreements on environmental conservation, while civil society organizations were pressing for the universal application of CBDR to all aspects of the post-2015 development agenda (Muchhala, 2014).

Table 1 enumerates the basic principles of a UDHR being propagated by the Forum on Ethics and Responsibility and the latter's arguments on why the UDHR is needed for building inclusive, resilient, and sustainable communities (Alliance for a Responsible, United and Plural World, 2001; Sizoo, 2011).

Table 1. *The Case for a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities (UDHR)*

Principles of UDHR	Why the need for UDHR?
<p>(1) The exercise of one's responsibilities is the expression of one's freedom and dignity as a citizen of the world community.</p> <p>(2) Individual human beings and everyone together have a shared responsibility to others, to close and distant communities, and to the planet, proportionately to their assets, power and knowledge.</p> <p>(3) Such responsibility involves taking into account the immediate or deferred effects of all acts, preventing or offsetting their damages, whether or not they were perpetrated voluntarily and whether or not they affect subjects of law. It applies to all fields of human activity and to all scales of time and space.</p>	<p>(1) the scope and irreversibility of the <u>interdependences</u> that have been generated among human beings, among societies, and between humankind and the biosphere constitute a radically new situation in the history of humankind, changing it irrevocably into a community of destiny;</p> <p>(2) the indefinite pursuit of <u>current lifestyles and development</u>, together with a trend to <u>limit one's responsibilities</u>, is <u>incompatible</u> with harmony amongst societies, with preservation of the integrity of the planet, and with safekeeping the interests of future generations;</p> <p>(3) the scope of today's <u>necessary changes</u> is out of range of individuals and implies that all people and all public or private institutions become involved in them;</p>

Principles of UDHR	Why the need for UDHR?
<p>(4) Such responsibility is imprescriptible from the moment damage is irreversible.</p> <p>(5) The responsibility of institutions, public and private ones alike, whatever their governing rules, does not exonerate the responsibility of their leaders and vice versa.</p> <p>(6) The possession or enjoyment of a natural resource induces responsibility to manage it to the best of the common good.</p> <p>(7) The exercise of power, whatever the rules through which it is acquired, is legitimate only if it (the wielder of power?) accounts for its acts to those over whom it is exercised and if it comes with rules of responsibility that measure up to the power of influence being exercised.</p> <p>(8) No one is exempt from his or her responsibility for reasons of helplessness if he or she did not make the effort of uniting with others, nor for reasons of ignorance if he or she did not make the effort of becoming informed.</p>	<p>(4) the existing <u>legal, political and financial procedures designed to steer and monitor</u> public and private institutions, in particular those that have an impact worldwide, do not motivate these latter to assume their full responsibilities, and may even encourage their <u>irresponsibility</u>;</p> <p>(5) <u>awareness of our shared responsibilities</u> to the planet is a condition for the survival and progress of humankind;</p> <p>(6) our <u>shared responsibility, beyond the legitimate interests of our peoples</u>, is to preserve our only, fragile planet by preventing major unbalances from bringing about ecological and social disasters that will affect all the peoples of the Earth;</p> <p>(7) <u>consideration of the interests of others and of the community</u>, and reciprocity among its members are the foundations of mutual trust, a sense of security, and respect of each person's dignity and of justice; and</p> <p>(8) the proclamation and <u>pursuit of universal rights</u> are <u>not sufficient to adjust our behavior</u>, as rights are inoperative when there is no single institution able to guarantee the conditions of their application.</p>

All the above constraints to SSE development demand urgent action and give rise to a ‘chicken-or-egg’ dilemma: which action should SSE networks prioritize – the adoption of UDHR by the UN or the working out of CBDR by stakeholders at the local level?

Since SSE is a bottom-up initiative of the people, its development is not totally dependent on the UDHR. Nonetheless, the latter’s adoption by the UN as its third pillar will be a big boost to SSE. At the local level, it is vital that SSE networks actively influence public policies in support of SSE supply chains, considering that the public sector is heavily influenced by the profit -oriented private business sector. In addition, SSE also needs the support of the MSMEs, social enterprises, and the CSOs to build its capacity for harnessing the Filipino Bayanihan spirit particularly in developing its consumer market base.

Building SSE by Strengthening SSEO Supply Chains

SSE stems from two types of synergies (working together): the synergy of persons at the level of the primary SSE organization, and the synergy of SSEOs at the level of the supply chain. Most SSE studies focus on the SSEO. The present paper focuses on the SSEO supply chain. The SSEO supply chain is the focal unit of action for effecting shared responsibilities. Figure 1 illustrates a stylized supply chain.

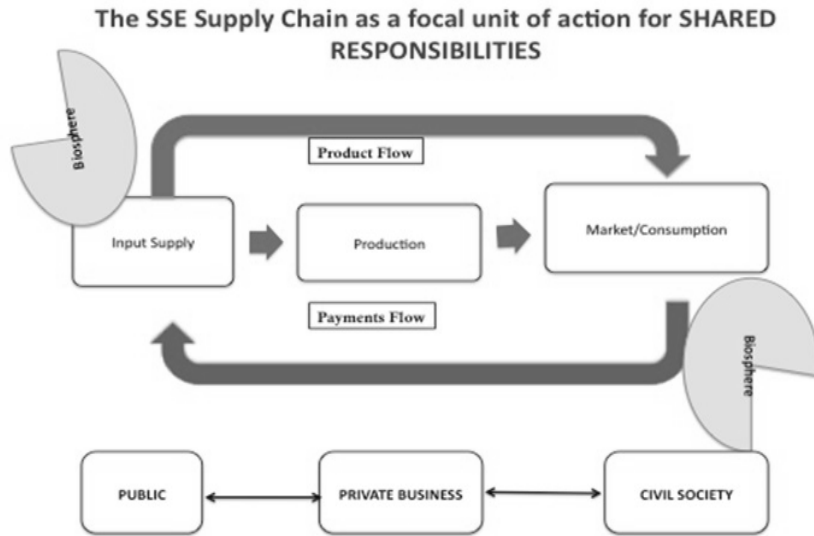


Figure 1: Basic structure of a supply chain

The supply chain takes resources from the biosphere, including base metals and non-renewable energy, as inputs for commodity production. It also throws out wastes into the biosphere from every stage of production to end-user consumption. Because the supply of energy and base metals is not infinite, a development model oriented towards sustained growth will reach its limits as natural resources are depleted. Stakeholders of the supply chain will, therefore, have to take a decision whether to continue with the profit-growth model or to make a transition to an inclusive, more sustainable development model.

Ideally, the SSE as an economic system is composed largely of ‘social enterprises’. As defined social enterprises are mission-oriented organizations that use the business model to achieve economic sustainability while pursuing the goals of social development and ecological conservation (Social Enterprise UK, 2012, p. 1). In reality, not all ‘social enterprises’ embrace the concept and practice of SSE. Some are private enterprises that exploit economic opportunities for the poor without necessarily involving the poor in the ownership and management of the enterprise.

Therefore, as a single unit, the social enterprise cannot adequately portray SSE as an economic system. The SSE results from the *synergy* of several enterprises involved in the production, distribution, and consumption of a particular good. Thus, the smallest model of a SSE is not an individual social enterprise but a supply chain of social enterprises where the poor, economically disadvantaged, or socially excluded (e.g. persons with disability, women, indigenous peoples, etc.) are involved as owner-operators. In a full-scale model of SSE supply chain, the poor, economically disadvantaged or socially excluded people are the ones performing the economic functions of input supply, production, product assembly and distribution, finance, and consumption. The socially excluded and economically disadvantaged manage and operate the SSE supply chain.

Identifying and Evaluating SSE Supply Chains

The Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC) has identified five strategic dimensions of for the purpose of observing, analyzing, and understanding the SSE supply chain's performance (see Table 2). Understanding the components of SSE supply chains and how business risks and social responsibilities are shared among the stakeholders is crucial for developing strategies for integration of SSE supply chains as well as for public policy formulation.

The first two dimensions of a supply chain are governance and the values commonly shared by people in the organization. SSE supply chains are distinguished by social mission-oriented governance and by ethical/spiritual values that confer greater importance to human beings over profits. This contrasts with the growth-oriented governance of market-oriented supply chains and its materialistic values that give greater importance to profits and growth at the expense of human welfare.

The third, fourth, and fifth dimensions relate to the purpose for the supply chain's existence. The market-oriented supply chain exists largely to make profits for the shareholders. On the other hand, the SSE supply chain is intentionally established to uplift the social well being of people and / or to protect the environment. As a business enterprise, the SSE supply chain generates profits in order to achieve social development goals or ecological conservation goals, or both.

For purposes of data generation, a list of 'ideal' or expected descriptors of SSE supply chain is constructed for each supply chain dimension. The list arrived at in this paper is not exhaustive. Moreover, SSE supply chains in their early stages of development may not have fully achieved all the 'ideal' or expected descriptors. As an example, some descriptors of social mission oriented governance (e.g., participation of women in decision-making) might be deemed more important and highly relevant than other descriptors (e.g., profit sharing) in the early developmental stages of the supply chain.

For performance evaluation purposes, a score of '1' is assigned for the supply chain's 'weak' performance in a particular descriptor, '2' for 'strong' performance, and '3' for 'very strong' performance. Descriptors are expressed in terms of actions taken, e.g., women participate in the organization's decision-making process. 'Weak' performance means very few women members or none at all participate in decision-making. 'Strong' performance means many women members, but not the majority, participate in decision-making. 'Very strong' performance means majority of women members are involved in decision-making.

Table 2. SSE Dimensions: Definition, Descriptors, & Indicators

DIMENSION	ASEC DESRIPTORS	OEWf INDICATORS for evaluation of the free range chicken supply chain
<p>1. SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE</p> <p>Socially responsible governance is one that provides guidance and enables SSE stakeholders to achieve the triple bottom line goals: social development, ecological conservation, and economic sustainability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the SSE supply chain is organized voluntarily & managed by citizens, not by the State or the private business sector; b. community members, including the socially excluded (e.g. women) and the economically disadvantaged, are stakeholders of the SSE supply chain; c. the stakeholders are free to participate in or exit from the SSE supply chain activities; d. the SSE supply chain practices profit sharing among its stakeholders; and e. a certain portion of the SSE profits is plowed back to social development services for community members and to ecological conservation measures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. enables participation of poor in ownership & management of the enterprise (SSE organization); and b. shares profits of the enterprise with the poor.

<p>2. EDIFYING VALUES</p> <p>Edifying values are principles or morals that stimulate people to prioritize social well being and conserve the environment over profits and unsustainable growth. In sustainable communities, the basic human rights of all community members are respected and defended against injustices including exploitation and psychological and physical harm. Cultural diversity, customs, local treasures and traditions are protected, enhanced, and appreciated. Respect for human rights is balanced by a deep sense of awareness & accountability to one's social responsibilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. solidarity, mutualism, cooperation, reciprocity; b. social, political and economic democracy; c. equity and justice for all including the dimensions of gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, etc; d. pluralism, inclusivity, and diversity; e. territoriality, and subsidiarity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. cares for and shares with the poor (reciprocity & inclusivity); b. strives to meet the needs of the poor (equity); and c. just and fair in business transactions (justice).
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<p>3. PRODUCTS & SERVICES FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>The SSE supply chain has an explicit aim of community benefit - to serve the community, not just the immediate members of the SSE supply chain. This implies that SSE products & services are meant to contribute to the well-being or 'buen vivir' (Balch, 2013, para. 1) of local communities and to enhance the capacity of local citizens to maintain a dignified, sustainable way of life.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Organic and fair trade products b. affordable education; c. decent housing, clean water, clean air and uncontaminated food; d. management capacity building for enterprises of community members; e. financing for SSE organizations; f. marketing facilities for products of community members; g. core values formation among community members; h. health services including affordable provision of quality health prevention, care, & treatment services for community members; and i. skills development/ job-oriented training for community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. financing for enterprises of the poor; b. marketing the products of the poor; c. skills & management training for the poor; and d. conduct of values formation among the poor;
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<p>4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION MEASURES</p> <p>SSE supply chains have the social responsibility to protect and enhance the local ecosystems and biological diversity. SSE stakeholders, for example, may develop infrastructure and institutional services with the conscious effort of not damaging the environment. SSE supply chains deliberately adopt certain ecological conservation measures that give distinction to their products as being ecologically friendly and may be labeled as ‘organic’, ‘fair trade’, ‘health-enhancer’, or ‘energy-saver’.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. protection and enhancement of local and regional ecosystems and biological diversity; b. conservation of water, land, energy, and nonrenewable resources; c. Utilization of prevention strategies and appropriate technology to minimize pollution; d. use of renewable resources no faster than their rate of renewal; e. infrastructure development that improves access to services & markets without damaging the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. preserving biological diversity; b. use of clean production technology; c. reducing energy consumption; and d. recycling & re-use.
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<p>5. ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Economic sustainability arises from the participation of households – particularly the poor, socially excluded and economically disadvantaged- in the community-based supply chain, from input supply and production to distribution and consumption. This stands in contrast to the profit-oriented neoliberal economy where the vast majority of households are mere suppliers of labor for the dominant supply chains as well as consumers of their products. The community-based supply chain is supported by a diversity of businesses / enterprises operated either by individuals or organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. engaging in business (whether in the production, processing, or trading activity); b. designing and conducting their own education/ training programs; c. designing and undertaking their own production and distribution of technologies; d. mobilizing and investing their own equity capital; e. providing appropriate salary and sales commissions for their workers; f. practicing profit sharing among stakeholders; and g. enhancing customer satisfaction through quality products/ services, and customer retention through rebates on purchases. h. the value added of SSE products and services, employment generation; and i. the value added of ecological conservation measures, and total resources at the disposal of SSE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the SSE supply chain creates entrepreneurial activities for the poor; b. the poor is part of the SSE supply chain: and c. the poor gains financial benefits from the SSE supply chain.
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The performance of an SSE organization in a given dimension is equivalent to the sum of the scores of all descriptors of the said dimension. The overall performance of an SSE organization is equivalent to the sum of scores in all dimensions. The overall performance of the entire supply chain is equivalent to the sum of overall performances of all SSE organizations comprising the supply chain.

Performance Evaluation of Free Range Chicken Supply Chain

On Eagle's Wings Development Foundation Philippines (OEWf) Inc. used the evaluation tool developed by Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC) (see Annex 1) to measure and evaluate the performance of the stakeholders of its free-range chicken supply chain in Barangay Banaban, Angat, Bulacan. OEWf chose the indicators of SSE dimensions which it deemed relevant for its purposes. OEWf also used a slightly different scoring system by assigning the value of '0' for non-performance, '1' for weak practice; '2' for fairly strong practice; and '3' for very strong practice. Figure 2 shows a bird's eye view of the free range chicken supply chain.

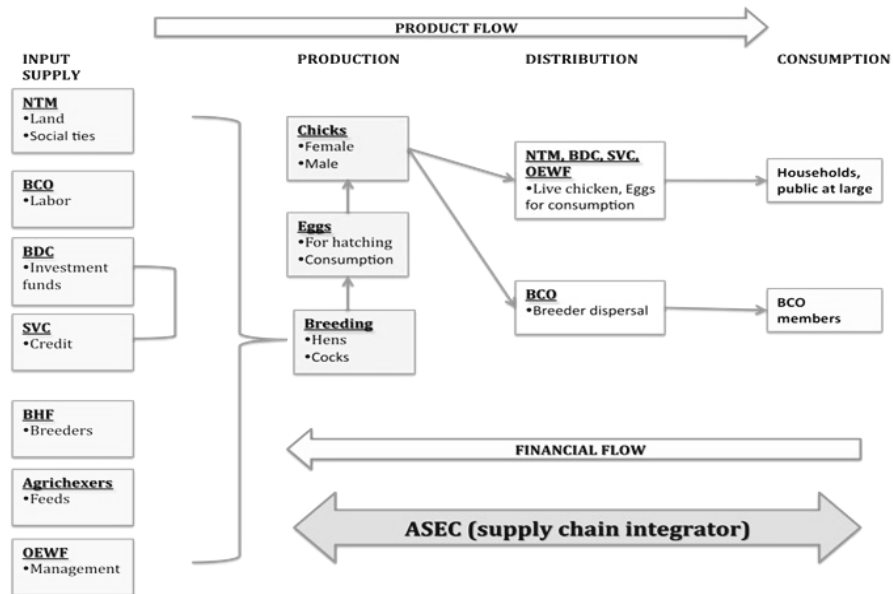


Figure 2: Free Range Chicken Supply Chain (Bernardo, 2012)

Organizations & their resource contributions to the supply chain:

- NTM** – New Tribes Mission: land, social ties with local households
- BCO** – Banaban Community Organization: labor
- BDC** – Bumbaran Development Corp.: Investment (start-up) funds invested through SVC
- SVC**– Shared Vision Cooperative: credit facilities
- BHF**– Brave Heart Farms: chicken breeders
- Agrichexers** – feeds & supplements
- OEWF** – On Eagle’s Wings Development Foundation Philippines, Inc.: management, experts

Eight organizations were involved in the supply chain development. NTM provided the land on which the chicken coops were constructed and also the social ties with the BCO and the households of Angat in general. BCO had members who met the labor requirements of the project. BDC provided the start-up funds channeled through SVC, while SVC on-lent the funds to the OEWF. OEWF provided the professional expertise to set up and manage the poultry project. BHF had the technology to reproduce high-breed free range chicken; it supplied the chicken breeders (99 hens and 11 cocks). And AgriChexers ensured the supply of quality feeds and supplements.

The local government of Angat was involved in the initial dialogue of stakeholders. It provided information about its agricultural extension services that the free range chicken project could have access to. While the local government of Angat had no direct inputs to the development of the free range chicken project, it encouraged the participation of the pupils of Banaban Elementary School in the feeding program of OEWF.

ASEC facilitated the integration of the various components that comprised the supply chain. ASEC conducted a series of dialogues participated in by these organizations from project conceptualization to project planning and the signing of contracts.

Limitations of the OEWF Study

Although BCO was an important stakeholder of the project, the OEWF study failed to record its performance. A profile of the BCO member-workers was lacking, thus it was not possible to ascertain whether they were ‘marginalized’ or the benefits from the project were commensurate compared to the contributions they made. Due to time constraints, the study also did not capture the chain of economic value added from the input suppliers to producer, to distributor/retailer,

and the final consumer. This could have provided an insight into the relative contributions of each stakeholder to the total value added generated by the supply chain.

Results of the Supply Chain Evaluation

The full results of the evaluation study can be found in Annex 1. A summary of the results is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Performance Evaluation of OEWf Free-Range Chicken Supply Chain Stakeholders

Stakeholder	D 1	D 2	D 3	D 4	D 5	Average
OEWf	3.00	3.00	2.25	3.00	3.00	2.85
NTM	3.00	3.00	1.50	3.00	3.00	2.70
SVC	3.00	3.00	2.25	2.25	3.00	2.70
BDC	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	2.60
AgriChexers	0.50	0.33	0	1.25	1.00	0.62
BHF	0.50	0.33	0.75	3.00	2.00	1.32
Average	1.83	2.10	1.62	2.58	2.50	2.13

From: Bernardo, J.M., 2012 Evaluation of the OEWf Free-Range Chicken Project. Unpublished manuscript. On Eagle's Wings Foundation, Quezon City, Philippines.

The not-for-profit stakeholders (OEWf, NTM, and SVC) registered “strong” performance in the dimensions of governance, ethical values, economic sustainability, and ecological conservation dimensions. These CSOs registered not as strong performance in social development not for the lack of zeal but because of limited resources, which was made worse by their practice of community organizing, values formation and skills training on pro-bono basis.

Meanwhile, the for-profit companies (BDC, AgriChexers, and BHF) showed “strong” performance in ecological conservation and economic sustainability dimensions. Their performance was “weak” in socially responsible governance (the poor are not included in their organization), social development (they had no social development services to the poor), and edifying values (they were mainly profit oriented, except for BDC which organizes feeding program for the poor although it had not yet extended this program to Angat as of the study period). These private companies merely supplied on commercial terms chicken feed (AgriChexers), breeder hens (BHF), and operating capital (BDC). They did not extend any form of social development services to the poultry operators or to the local households in Angat.

On the other hand, the private companies scored high in the environment conservation dimension because they adopted ecological conservation measures such as biological diversity and reducing energy consumption (BHF), use of clean technology and recycling/re-use (BDC & AgriChexers).

Graphic illustrations (see Annex 2) of the evaluation results in the governance dimension show the sharp differences in the performance of not-for-profit stakeholders and the private for-profit companies participating in the project.

Despite these differences, or perhaps because of them, the stakeholders of the free range chicken supply chain sought for and found a way to collaborate, thus establishing a common ground for advancing SSE . This was made possible through the intervention of the Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC) which brought the CSOs and private companies together to build the free range chicken supply chain in Angat.

Conclusion

The free range chicken supply chain illustrates a case where SSE is being developed as an alternative model of development. As borne by the results of evaluation done by OEWF, civil society organizations (CSOs), people's organizations, local for-profit private companies, and the local government unit managed to work together in developing a socially inclusive community-based supply chain where the poor and the marginalized are truly included in the development process. This insight suggests the relevance of a public policy favoring CSO-public partnership in undertaking local development projects as an alternative to the private-public partnership (PPP) which usually excludes CSOs and people's organizations in the development process.

In every country, a variety of SSE supply chains exists, although most of them may not have reached full development and maturity. They emerge in situations where people feel the need to work together and collaborate with each other in meeting their own needs. SSE supply chains will last longer and become sustainable when stakeholders are committed to sharing the burden of business risks and social responsibilities.

Benjamin R. Quiñones, Jr. is Chairman of the Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC), aka RIPESS (Reseau de Promotion de l'Economie Sociale Solidaire) Asia, and founding convenor of the Asian Solidarity Economy Forum. He promoted the development of "socially responsible small & medium enterprises" while serving as Programme Coordinator of the Asian and Pacific Development Centre in Kuala Lumpur (1996-2003). He holds a PhD in Organization Development (SAIDI School of Organization Development); Master of Science in Agricultural Economics (University of the Philippines, Los Baños); and Bachelor of Arts in Economics (University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City).

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Annex 1. Assessment of SSE Case:

(Score values: 0- Not practiced; 1 – weak practice;
2- fairly strong practice; 3-very strong practice)

**1. WHAT GOVERNANCE PRACTICES OF THE ENTERPRISE ARE
‘SOCIAL MISSION-ORIENTED’ OR ‘SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE’?**

Indicator/Descriptor of the enterprise’s social mission/ social responsibility	Degree of practice
1. enables participation of poor in ownership & management of the enterprise	
2. shares profits of the enterprise with the poor	

**2. WHAT ETHICAL VALUES ARE IMPORTANT TO THE ENTERPRISE
IN TRANSACTING BUSINESS?**

Indicator/Descriptor of the enterprise’s ethical values	Degree of practice
1. cares for and shares with the poor	
2. strives to meet the needs of the poor	
3. just and fair in its business transactions	

**3. WHAT SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DO THE ENTERPRISE
PROVIDE? ARE THE SERVICES BENEFICIAL TO THE POOR?**

Indicator/Descriptor of types of the enterprise’s social development services to the poor	Degree of practice
1. financing of enterprises of the poor	
2. marketing products of the poor	
3. skills & management training for the poor	
4. conduct of values formation among the poor	

4. WHAT ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION MEASURES DO THE ENTERPRISE ADOPT?

Indicator/Descriptor of the ecological conservation measures undertaken by the enterprise	Degree of practice
1. preserving biological diversity	
2. use of clean production technology	
3. reducing energy consumption	
4. recycling & re-use	

5. WHAT MEASURES CONTRIBUTE TO ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ENTERPRISE?

Indicator/descriptor of the measures of the enterprise to achieve sustainability	Degree of practice
1. the SSE supply chain creates entrepreneurial activities for the poor	
2. the poor is part of the SSE supply chain	
3. the poor gains financial benefits from the SSE supply chain	

Evaluator:

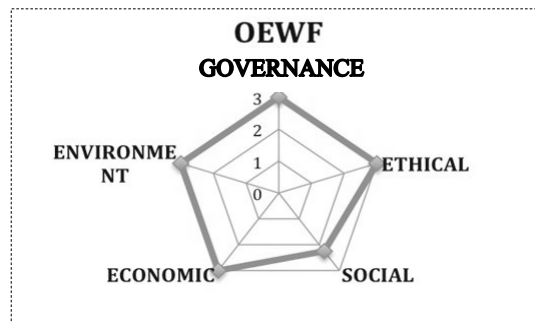
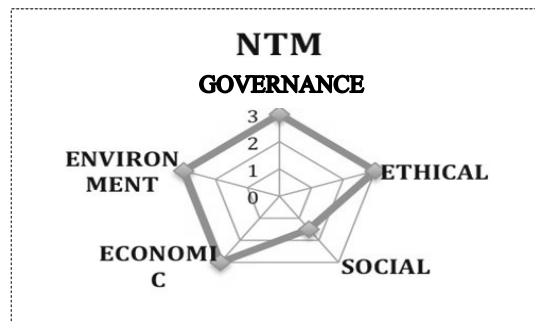
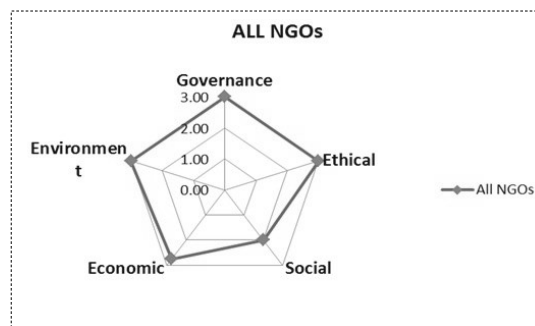
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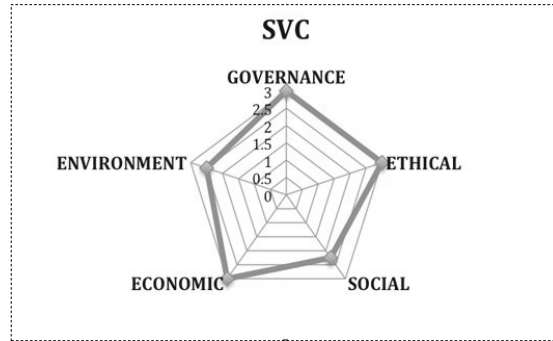
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Annex 2

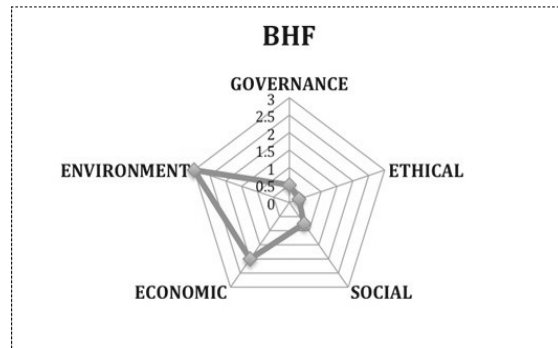
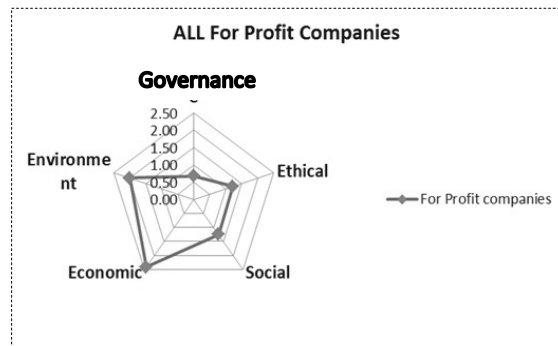
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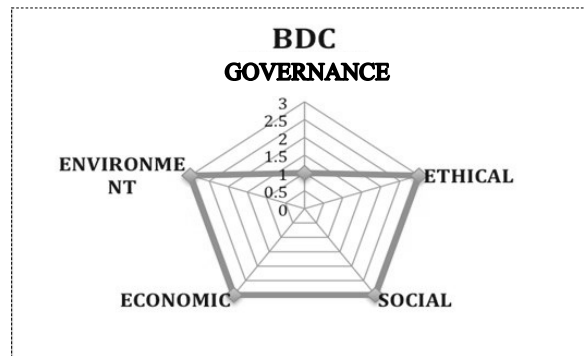
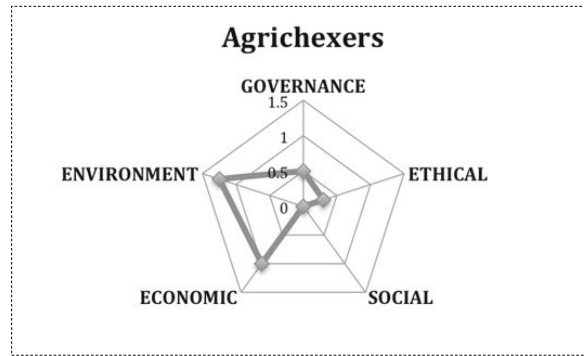
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Innovations in Community Social Enterprise Development: The Bohol PACAP FOCAS Experience

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

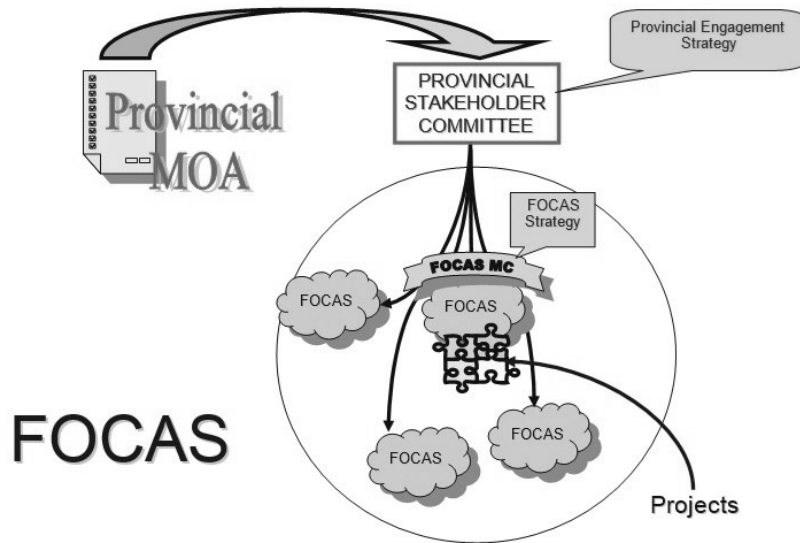


Figure 1. General FOCAS framework and processes of the Provincial Engagement in each of the five target provinces. (PACAP, 2008, p.14)

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

	FOCAS 1	FOCAS 2	FOCAS 3	FOCAS 4
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 3rd 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 4th 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 6th in terms of households living below the income threshold, with 72% or 1,357 households. It ranks 13th 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.

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Livelihood Practices of Women in the Informal Economy: Forging Pathways Towards a Feminist Solidarity Economy

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This research focuses on women in the informal economy, specifically self-employed/ own-account micro-entrepreneurs and sub-contracted workers. Using three case studies, it investigated how livelihood projects which exemplify solidarity economics address and rectify the systematic subordination of women informal workers and build on their capacities for solidarity. It also identified the gaps that need to be bridged towards a more explicit feminist solidarity economy.

In 2012, 6.7 million (or 45.4%) of all employed Filipino women were self-employed without any paid employee, employers in own family-operated farms or businesses, or unpaid family workers (BLES, 2013), thus were part of the informal economy. The term "'informal economy' is preferable to 'informal sector' because the workers and enterprises in question do not fall within any one sector of economic activity, but cut across many sectors" (International Labor Organization [ILO], 2014, p. 68). The informal economy is heterogeneous, and its workers differ widely in terms of income (level, regularity, seasonality), status in employment (employees, employers, own-account workers, casual workers, domestic workers), sector (trade, agriculture, industry), type and size of enterprise, location (urban or rural), social protection (social security contributions) and employment protection (type and duration of contract, annual leave protection) (ILO, 2014, p. 4).

The ILO (2014) elaborated on why women are commonly found in the informal economy.

The feminization of poverty and discrimination by gender, age, ethnicity or disability also mean that the most vulnerable and marginalized groups tend to end up in the informal economy. Women generally have to balance the triple responsibilities of breadwinning, domestic chores, and elder care and childcare. Women are also discriminated against in terms of access to education and training and other economic resources. (p. 71)

Women in the informal economy face other gender-specific challenges. These are an absence of awareness about their rights as workers and women (PATAMABA, n.d.); concentration in “more precarious forms of informal employment” (Pascual, 2008, p.3); lower earnings because of their location in lower-paid employment (Horn, 2010); continued lack of bargaining power in the household (Pascual, 2008); serious occupational safety and health risks such as precarious working conditions and violence against women (Chant & Pedwell, 2008); and lack of time to participate in organizations because of reproductive work (Pineda-Ofreneo, 1999).

Additionally, the women endure the adverse conditions of workers in the informal economy that arise from their class position, viz.

less secure jobs, less access to social protection...less access to basic infrastructure and social services...greater exposure to common contingencies...less means to address these, and therefore... lower levels of health, education, and longevity... greater exclusion from state, market, and political institutions... fewer rights and benefits of employment...

less access to financial, physical, and productive assets, and...less secure property rights over land, housing, or other productive assets. (Pascual, 2008, p. 3)

State adherence to the tenets of neoliberal globalization – principally fiscal austerity, privatization and deregulation, trade and investment liberalization - has resulted in low-income women being pushed into unstable, low-paid informal work because of inadequate employment generation by weak, under-funded, and state-neglected local industry and agriculture. They have lost income and employment because trade liberalization has eroded their ability to compete against lower-priced imports. Grassroots women have responded to these challenges and are visible “in creating the solidarity economy all over the world” (Matthaei, 2012, para. 33). This is attributed to the: 1) discrimination against women in “capitalist labor markets;” 2) ingrained responsibility to care for their families, which leads them to take up productive work in order to meet basic needs; 3) socialization into care work and the prioritization of other’s needs which “leads...to...economic solutions which are distinct from capitalist ones; solutions which place the provisioning of needs above other values” (Matthaei, 2012, para. 15).

The solidarity economy has been proffered as a social development strategy to improve well-being, standards of living, and quality of life. It is an alternative "socio-economic order" where all "economic activities" prioritize meeting "the needs of people and ecological sustainability...rather than the maximization of profits" (Quiñones, 2008, p. 3). It is "grounded on solidarity and cooperation" (Mercado, 2009, p. 1) and not "the pursuit of narrow, individual self-interest" (Quiñones, 2008, p. 3). The solidarity economy, comprised of supply chains and their economic actors, "promotes economic democracy and alternative

models of local economic governance, equity, and sustainability" (Mercado, 2009, pp. 1-2) and "is continuously shaped by groups and individuals keen on building transformative economic institutions" (Mercado, 2009, p. 8). It also "actively rejects gender, class, race, ethnicity hierarchies and all forms of domination and subordination" (Matthaei, 2012, para.31).

Feminist solidarity economics is an acceptance of solidarity economics as a viable alternative to neoliberal economics, but only if it duly and fully incorporates feminist perspectives on gender and the economy and redresses women's adverse gender-specific experiences of mainstream economic processes.

This research focuses on women in the informal economy, specifically self-employed/own-account micro-entrepreneurs and sub-contracted workers. Using Naila Kabeer's (1994) Social Relations Approach as an analytical framework, three solidarity initiatives were examined with the intent of determining how they are able to address and rectify the subordination of women informal workers through their own practices. The solidarity initiatives were also benchmarked against the vision of a feminist solidarity economy in order to identify areas of improvement and provide recommendations towards the practice of a more explicitly feminist solidarity economy.

Research Questions

1. How do livelihood projects which exemplify solidarity economics take into account the systematic subordination of women workers in the informal economy and address it?
2. How do these build on their capacities for solidarity? What are the gaps that still need to be bridged?
3. How can solidarity economics be made even more explicitly feminist in practice?

Research Methodology

The research methodology is qualitative and is guided by “feminist beliefs and concerns” (Brayton, 1997, p.6) with the aim of “transforming and empowering women” (Guerrero, 1997, p. 2). This research endeavored to “generate knowledge about women that will contribute to their liberation and empowerment” (Guerrero, 1997, p. 2), and “improve women’s daily lives and influence public policies and opinion” (Maguire, 1987, p. 121 as cited in Guerrero, 1997, p. 3).

Three case studies in three field sites were accomplished, focusing on the Cooperative of Women in Health and Development (COWHED) in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Pambansang Kalipunan ng mga Manggagawang Impormal sa Pilipinas (PATAMABA) in Sta. Barbara, Iloilo, and KILUS Foundation Environmental Multi-purpose Cooperative (KILUS) in Pasig, Metro Manila. The organizations were selected based on the following criteria: each must have a successful livelihood project operated and managed by grassroots women; the project adheres to solidarity values and principles; at least one of the projects is by indigenous women; and the participants of the project are women in the informal economy.

The study utilized the research methods of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focused group discussions. There were 16 research participants from COWHED, ten from PATAMABA, and 18 from KILUS.

Conceptual Framework: Feminist Solidarity Economics

For it to be responsive to women's needs and interests, solidarity economics must incorporate feminist perspectives on gender and the economy and redress women's adverse gender-specific experiences of mainstream economic processes. The term "economics" refers to the study of ways of producing, distributing, and consuming, while "economy" relates to the actual system and its practices. Quiñones (2008) defines solidarity economy as:

a socio-economic order and new way of life that deliberately chooses serving the needs of people and ecological sustainability as the goal of economic activity rather than maximization of profits under the unfettered rule of the market. It places economic and technological development at the service of social and human development rather than the pursuit of narrow, individual self-interest. (p. 3)

Solidarity economics aims to “change unjust and exploitative economic relations and to improve livelihoods” providing “hope that a different world is possible, with innovative ways of production, commercialisation, and consumption” (Gutberlet, 2009, p. 739). The solidarity economy is proposed as an “alternative economic model to neoliberal capitalism” that “inspires attitudes and behaviors with values such as sharing, co-responsibility, reciprocity, plurality, respect for diversity, freedom, equality, ethics, brotherhood, and sisterhood” (Arruda, 2007, as cited in Quiñones, 2008, pp. 3-4). It “adopts conscious altruism and solidarity, not extreme individualism, as the core of the new socioeconomic culture,” and “tends to favor cooperation, not competition, as the main form of relationship among humans and between them and Nature” (Poirer, 2007, as cited in Quiñones, 2008, p. 4).

Feminists have flagged the “failure of the current (neoliberal) model...to ensure the enforcement of women’s and men’s rights to basic needs, food security, social equality and gender justice, as well as environmental sustainability” (Allaert, 2011, p. 3). Feminist economists, in particular, have advocated for alternatives “based on assumptions of human cooperation, empathy, and collective well-being” (Ferber and Nelson, 1993; Strober, 1994; Folbre, 1994; Himmelweit, 2002, as cited in Beneria, 2003, p. 76).

Beneria (2003) proposed that development be seen as “multidimensional and relational, collective rather than individual leading to shifts in the balance of power” towards the marginalized (p. 167). Development “is much more than increases in GDP and the growth of markets; it's about the fulfillment of human potential in all its dimensions” for all and “economic and political democracy” (Beneria, 2003, pp. 167-168). The goal is to locate “economic activity at the service of human or people-centered development...to reach an era in which productivity and efficiency are achieved...to increase collective well-being” (Beneria, 2003, p. 88). This requires prioritizing “issues of redistribution, inequality, ethics, the environment, and other social goals – as well as the nature of individual happiness, collective well-being, and social change” (Beneria, 2003, p. 88). Leon (2009, as cited in Muñoz-Cabrera, 2012, p. 69), added that there must be “transformations in the productive matrix, in visions and policies relating to who shapes the economy and how it is put into practice, what and how to produce, what and how to consume, and...how to reproduce life” (Leon, 2009, as cited in Muñoz Cabrera, 2012, p. 69).

Solidarity economy “initiatives can also be loosely defined as practices and institutions on all levels and in all sectors of the economy that embody certain values and priorities: cooperation, sustainability, equality, democracy, justice, diversity, and local control” (Allard & Matthaei, 2008, p. 6). They cut across the private (profit-oriented), public (planned provision), and social (self-help, mutual, social purpose) sectors at the community, national, regional, and global levels (Lewis & Swinney, 2008), and across the “traditional lines of formal/informal, market/non-market, and social/economic in search of solidarity-based practices of production, exchange, and consumption” (Miller, 2006, p. 3).

To ensure that solidarity economics is truly feminist, gender must be “endogenous to macroeconomics” and it must be infused with a clear “perspective of women’s cultural, economic, and social rights” (Muñoz Cabrera, 2012, p. 69). The solidarity economy must actively “combat the pervasive social hierarchies, the sexual division of labor, the private accumulation of capital...and the socially constructed image of women as subordinated social subjects” (Quintela, 2006, as cited in Muñoz Cabrera, 2011, p.14). It must “strive for more democratic, participatory and empowering economic structures and organizations” (Nacpil-Alejandro, n.d.). Indeed, the solidarity economy cannot live up to its promise unless it is explicitly feminist in both conception and practice.

Analytical Framework: The Social Relations Approach

Kabeer’s (1994) social relations approach (SRA) is “a methodology for integrating a gender perspective” in policy-making which aims for “a more equitable redistribution of resources and responsibilities between women and men” (p. 270).

In the SRA, “human well-being is the final goal of development, and human resources are one of the key means for achieving this goal” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 279). Production covers all activities that contribute to human well-being, in particular, “survival, security, and autonomy” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 280), and the “means” of production are categorized into “human, tangible, and intangible resources” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 280). Kabeer (1994) called attention to how, within the dominant economic framework, intangible resources such as “collective consciousness, the building of group solidarity and organizational skills” (p. 288) are overlooked (p. 280). Intangible resources are invaluable for women because they “offer...possibly their only route to material resources and claims” and “a measure of autonomy from male authority within the household” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 288).

Within institutions, the SRA examines the following “dimensions” of social relations – “rules; activities; resources; people; and power” (Kabeer, 1994, pp. 281-282).

1. *Rules* are based on “norms, values, traditions, laws, and customs” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 281). Women and men are subject to biologically-based and “culturally constructed rules about the differing aptitudes and capacities of women and men...which underpin the structure of claims and obligations, rights and responsibilities” and dictate “institutional practices” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 284).
2. *Activities* are the “tasks and activities in pursuit of objectives” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 282). Women and men are designated “tasks, activities, and responsibilities” on the basis of rules (Kabeer, 1994, p. 284). The “routinized practice” of the skills required for activities normatively assigned to women through the gender division of labor result in women being tracked into forms of work that require these skills (Kabeer, 1994, p. 284).
3. *Resources* include both those which directly or indirectly contribute to well-being (Kabeer, 1994). The “distribution of resources between women and men” is based on their “culturally-assigned roles and responsibilities” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 284).
4. *People* are considered in terms of “patterns of inclusion, exclusion, placement and progress” which reflect “class, gender, and other social patterns” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 282).
5. *Power* is about the “relations of authority and control” as reflected in practices. (Kabeer, 1994, p.282). The asymmetrical “institutional rules, access to resources, skills and capabilities,...division of labor and responsibilities converge to produce unequal gender relations in which men are more likely than women to command authority and resources” (Kabeer, 1994, pp. 284-285). This has an effect on the “claims between women and men on the outputs produced or distributed by different institutions” (Kabeer, 1994, p. 285).

The Case Study Organizations

COWHED was registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) in 1995 as a multi-purpose cooperative. COWHED was established to support the livelihood needs of T'boli women through the provision of marketing assistance for their home-based handicraft production. It is the only women-managed cooperative and the only market center for handicrafts that practices fair trade in Lake Sebu, and is comprised of women who are from ten of the 19 barangays in the municipality. Out of 232 members, 95% are T'boli and only 11 are non-tribal women.

COWHED is involved in the production of handicrafts, the marketing of these through its souvenir shop and participation in trade fairs and exhibits, and the selling of its members' home-based production on consignment basis. It also accepts bulk orders that are sub-contracted to the members. The COWHED members are skilled at t'nalak cloth and handloom weaving, embroidery, wood carving and bamboo craft, brass casting, beadwork, and the production of items made of t'nalak cloth.

PATAMABA "was founded in 1989 with the objective of creating, strengthening, consolidating and expanding the national network of home-based workers and providing support services for their personal, social and economic well-being" (PATAMABA, n.d.). The total number of members in the Western Visayas region is 3,400, with over 3,300 in the province of Iloilo, and 1,600 in the municipality of Sta. Barbara. The PATAMABA Sta. Barbara chapter was set-up in 1992.

PATAMABA utilizes an "integrated approach to women's empowerment...which combines strategies such as awareness raising, community organizing, capability building, accessing resources (credit, technology, markets,

etc.), social protection, lobbying, advocacy, and networking” (Nebla, 2008, para.32). The organization has also facilitated the “formation of group enterprises... to address the need for an alternative livelihood” (Nebla, 2008, para.1). In these initiatives, members employ “local and indigenous” knowledge and “experiences,” participatory approaches, and put into practice “self-help” and cooperativist values (Nebla, 2008).

Discussion of Findings

The dimensions of the SRA - rules, activities, resources, people, and power - were used to assess and determine how the case study organizations actualize feminist solidarity economics.

Rules

In this research, rules were considered in terms of how the women are viewed by the case study organizations and how they view themselves. The following were gleaned from discussions with the leaders and the members.

COWHED's tribal women members have ventured beyond reproductive work and contribute significantly to the household income. They have shown that they have the creativity and skill to produce saleable goods. They are more empowered, evidenced by their confidence during training, their ability to conduct training themselves, their willingness to speak out and share their problems, and the successes of some members in barangay elections. They are also able to confidently request for assistance from the LGUs and NGOs.

Len, one of the leaders expressed what it meant to be a T'boli woman and a member of COWHED:

We are proud of being T'boli. We are unique, we have our own skills, talents, costumes, and traditions. We have been able to preserve our culture, wherever we go, we are proud that we are T'boli...All of us members are encouraged to do well. We are the only tribal organization in Lake Sebu managed by women. We want to preserve our T'boli culture, to prove that T'boli women can develop their own organization.

As handicraft producers, some of the women earn not only more, but also more regularly, than their husbands. One FGD participant shared,

Until the 1980s, T'boli women were mostly confined to the home and had low status. This changed when women started to earn their own income through craft production. They earn more than the men - twice, even thrice more. The men have difficult jobs, and they earn little; for an entire day they make only between 120 to 180 pesos. When the men do farm work, it is only for three to four months; the women who do bead-work earn an income almost every day. The men recognize the income-generating capacities of the women.

According to another FGD participant, "the women make more than the men, and even if the husbands are not employed, it is okay."

In PATAMABA, members are described as having achieved "empowerment within the home, the organization, and the community" due to participation in PATAMABA's programs (Nebla, 2008, para.32). All the research participants have undergone gender sensitivity training in sessions conducted by the Gender Office of the University of the Philippines in the Visayas, and the leaders

emphasize gender issues. The knowledge is practiced first and foremost at the household level. The women have learned that they have rights and the freedom to make decisions, that women and men are equal, that wife and husband can contribute to the family income, that household chores must be shared by husband and wife, and that they should assert themselves with their husbands when they do not agree with the latter's decisions. They have learned new livelihood skills and improved their existing businesses through training, which have resulted in increased income and standards of living. The women participate actively during barangay meetings and know how to lobby with the municipal government for support for informal economy workers.

The regional coordinator, Maria Nebla, also reported that the members have come into their own and developed themselves through membership in the organization. The chapters of PATAMABA Region VI have proven their sustainability and developed second liners who can take over leadership of the organization. They have exemplified "effective leadership, capacitated membership, and collective decision-making, and have a succession plan coupled with training of the next line of officers and leaders" (Homenet Southeast Asia, 2013).

According to Editha Santiago, its chairperson and president, in an interview, KILUS is an all-women cooperative that is environmentalist. In partnership with the barangay, KILUS has an eco-house center in every *purok* (area) where it purchases recyclable materials. The primary material used in their products - the doypack - is ubiquitous, non-perishable, and an environmental hazard that clogs the canals and causes flooding. KILUS contributes to the protection of the environment by recycling the doypacks, and their use is the cooperative's best selling point. By manifesting concern for the environment, the members are benefited not only financially but also psychologically. Amy articulated,

I realized that out of garbage we could create beautiful things that we could show off to the world. You would not even think the product was made of trash. We are able to help reduce waste and help preserve the environment.

As members of the cooperative, the women have improved their standards of living and have been able to send their children to college. Their self esteem has been boosted - from being confined inside their homes, with little education, they have developed themselves, are able to stand on their own feet, and express themselves during their weekly fellowship sessions. They have become "beautiful" and confident, can talk about themselves, and explain what their organization is about. The members have also been able to harness and profit from their skills - accessories-making, crocheting, sewing, weaving.

Through membership in KILUS, the women have been able improve their families' financial situation. One member, Tonya, said,

My income has helped our family a lot. My husband does not make much as a tricycle driver. When we started, our house had only one floor...Now it has four floors. My house is from the fruits of my labor in KILUS.

During the FGD, the women also shared, "When our husbands do not have an income, we do not worry."

From the various members of the three case study organizations, there were articulations not only of economic freedom but also increased estimation of themselves.

- When I have personal needs, I buy them using my own income. (Jane, KILUS)
- Before we entered (COWHED), we looked at ourselves as lowly and unknowledgeable. COWHED is a well-known organization in Lake Sebu so we are proud to be members. ...COWHED uplifts our confidence. I used to not be outspoken. COWHED changed that. (Anita)
- It is through PATAMABA that I learned to trust myself. I am confident that I can do whatever is asked of me. (Baby)
- I think I found everything I've been looking for in KILUS. I realized my personal capacities. (Suzy, KILUS)

The gains from their wives' membership in the organizations are apparent to their husbands, resulting in respect and recognition for their organizational commitment.

- My husband says to me, "I am grateful that you are able to help me." (from the FGD, COWHED)
- My husband understands that I have to attend meetings as a member of PATAMABA. (Amor, PATAMABA)

Activities

The activities that the women perform in their respective projects are based on their skills and/or interests. The tasks of the COWHED women consist of weaving, doing embroidery and beadwork, brass-casting, sewing products made of t'nalak fabric, and sales and marketing. In PATAMABA's group enterprise project, the women collect, wash, cut, weave, glue, and sew the juice packs. There are also tasks related to purchasing materials marketing and sales. The activities of the KILUS women involve sewing, weaving, sorting, materials control, quality control, purchasing, and accessories making.

The organizations provide working arrangements that are responsive to the women's needs and situation.

- They give us the freedom to decide on everything related to our own products – what to make, the quantity and design. If we have products, we just consign them. (Stella, COWHED)
- There is flexibility in my participation and I can work on the products at home. I can get materials anytime if I have the time to weave. (Olive, PATAMABA)
- I am relaxed especially since I work at home - I can rest and watch television. As long as we don't delay our shipments, we can manage our own time. (Tonya, KILUS)

Resources

The resources provided by the organizations are made available to all the women: a production center with equipment, training, marketing assistance, materials, loans and cash advances. These exigently address the class issues of low-income women's lack of access to capital/credit and non-ownership of the means of production. This provision of resources may also be seen as gender-redistributive, of equitably distributing to women the wherewithal they are otherwise denied by the state and the market. Kabeer (1994) defines gender-redistributive policies as "interventions intended to transform existing distributions in a more egalitarian direction" (p. 307).

The following are the women's thoughts with respect to the financial resources made available to them; e.g., loans, cash advances, weekly wages, patronage refunds and dividends.

- It is especially helpful that members are able to request for cash advances and loans as capital for raw materials. (Isa, COWHED)
- If the project is training, you should be able to apply what you learned; therefore, you should also have capital immediately. We have a microfinance program that helps us with that. (Joanne, PATAMABA)
- It is better to work and earn a wage compared to when I used to sell snacks on the sidewalk...Here I am paid weekly, unlike before when my capital would disappear because I had to use it for our household expenses. They give us our patronage refunds and dividends at the same time, I received a total of three thousand pesos (Php3,000) last year. (Cita, KILUS)

These are what they say about access to materials:

- I make products made of t'nalak such as pencil cases. I am provided with t'nalak fabric...Without COWHED, I wouldn't have any capital to buy materials. (Helen)
- All the materials are provided for us...All you have to do is get materials from the center and sew the slippers there. (Baby, PATAMABA)
- (As an outworker) The materials we are provided are complete. Our only investments are our labor and electricity for the high-speed sewing machine. Even the thread is provided by KILUS. (Tonya)

Facilitation of access to markets is also much appreciated as revealed by the following observations:

- The marketing they do of our products is so important. Even if we make products at home, without COWHED, who would buy them? The products would just lie there. How would they translate to income? That is why I thank COWHED so much. (Fe)
- PATAMABA helps by buying all of our products. Marketing is no longer a concern. There is tangkilikan between PATAMABA chapters. (Olive)
- The cooperative helps us by doing the marketing for us; I don't have to think about anything else but my sewing. (Mayet, KILUS)

Training and seminars conducted by the organization provide much learning to the women:

- I learned a lot from joining COWHED seminars such as designing, costing, selling and making a business plan. We were taught how to make sure that we don't make a loss in our production. (Ina)
- I learned a lot about financial matters, and how to earn an income. The education and training I receive is so valuable, if hadn't joined the seminars, I probably would not know anything. I would have missed the chance to learn about food processing, accounting, business management, and gender sensitivity. It was from the GST that I learned the obligations of women. They are not supposed to just stay at home. They have roles in the community, and it is not just the men who can earn an income, women can too. (Amor, PATAMABA)

The organizations understand that their members are not only workers but also mothers with other financial needs. Below are examples of the additional assistance the women receive.

- If there's anything I need, if there's an emergency, I can run to COWHED. I can get a cash advance even if it's for something my children need in school. (Fe, COWHED)
- Sometimes life gets difficult because of all the expenses. But when you don't have money, it is easy to get a loan from PATAMABA. (Fely)
- KILUS has helped me so much financially. We are able to avail of educational loans. Where else can you borrow 20 thousand pesos (Php20,000) and pay only two thousand pesos (Php2,000) in interest after ten months? (Tonya)
- When we were hit by typhoon Ondoy, we were given ten thousand pesos (Php10,000) to rebuild our house. (Rose, KILUS)

Further, as women who have bonded together in an organization to meet their individual and collective needs, there are intangible resources that have accrued to them: strength as an organization, group cooperation, organizations they can turn to in times of need, and dedicated and committed leaders. These are the result of the people-centered culture discussed below under the "people" dimension.

People

The leaders and members of COWHED, PATAMABA, and KILUS nurture an enabling and supportive organizational culture. The personal characteristics of the organizations' leaders have proven vital, as they are key in shaping this culture. As expressed by the research participants, the traits they most appreciate in their leaders are kindness; commitment to helping the members and readiness to render assistance; being welcoming, empathetic, patient, and non-discriminatory; being understanding about their situation as workers and mothers; being humane, compassionate, and responsive to the members' needs; being approachable about personal and financial problems; and openness to criticism and suggestions.

The women value trust, unity, and cooperation among the members:

- If I have a problem, even if it's not about financial matters, I can share it with the manager and my co-members. (Evelyn, COWHED)
- There is cooperation in PATAMABA. We trust each other, there is bayanihan. We need to work together. (Amor, PATAMABA)
- It is good to be part of a cooperative, you feel at peace. We work at being united. (Cita, KILUS)

They also appreciate an environment that is caring and compassionate, that provides a sense of security:

- COWHED provides us a sense of security that there is a place we can go to when we need help. (Fe)
- You're sure that there is an organization you can lean on in times of need, and sure that you have a place to run to whenever you have a problem. (Dina, PATAMABA)
- We help each other here. When someone is sick, the organization helps. KILUS and my co-members helped me when my father died. There is damayan and pagkukusang-loob. I owe them a lot. It's different when you have an organization you can lean on, that supports you. (Amy)

They have approachable, kind, and committed management and staff:

- When their children are sick, it is only the cooperative they can rely on...Once there was a member whose grandchild had just died. I gave her the Php200 we had left over from our sales because there were other members who already asked for help earlier that day. I asked her to come back on Monday, because we might have more cash. The member cried and embraced me, she was so grateful to be able to talk to someone. (Len, COWHED)

- As leaders, we are very approachable. (Olive, PATAMABA)
- Here, management is concerned about us. They ask us what we need, they show concern when we are sick, and they lend us money when we need to have repairs made in our houses. (Remy, KILUS)

There is also non-discrimination with respect to age, as Jane shared, "KILUS has been such a big help, at the age of 50, where else can I find a job?"

Power

The organizations' management style is also people-centered, with the interests of the members and the organization paramount. There is open communication between the leaders and the members and a willingness on the part of the leaders to listen to and follow the suggestions of the members.

- We told them to be open to us about what they would like us to improve on, and that we would accept their suggestions...I ask them to visit the center everyday...so that they can relax and give us suggestions on what we can do. (Len, COWHED)
- I like the freedom in PATAMABA. You can voice out your opinions and they listen to your complaints. (Luisa)
- On the first Monday of each month, we have a one-hour open forum during the fellowship. Everyone is present, including the board members. We discuss problems that have to do with work. The members are already accustomed to speaking out. (Tonya, KILUS)

In the PATAMABA group enterprise project, particularly, decision-making is accomplished non-hierarchically.

Our relationships are strong because we are all equal. I am a leader but not of a higher level. We let the members know and feel that no one is superior or inferior here. It is not the leaders who are always followed, everyone participates in

decision-making...It is important that the members can stand on their own feet, and that they are able to manage their organization. (Tessie, PATAMABA)

How Solidarity Is Strengthened

The narratives below illustrate that solidarity is built and strengthened within the organizations through general assemblies, meetings, out-of-town trips, gatherings for celebrations, group participation in municipal and city events, and open fora. Other modes are on-site monitoring by leaders of the members, reinforcement of the cooperative's/organization's vision and mission, and fellowship sessions.

- We have members from various barangays and when one of the staff members of the microfinance program does monitoring, a marketing staff member joins her. We also emphasize the vision and mission of the cooperative and its policies. When we have activities we tell the members that they should be present so they could feel their membership in the cooperative. The method we use to encourage them to visit the center is by giving them orders or ordering from them. We want them to come here even if there are no transactions. (Len, COWHED)
- We have bonding activities. We made a trip to Antique so that the leaders of the different chapters could meet each other...I visit the barangay chapters to see how they are doing. (Tessie, PATAMABA)
- We have outings, we go to the beach and swim. Once a month, we have a one-hour open forum during the fellowship where we talk about our work issues - for example, we resolve our problems about sewing, and how to eliminate rejects, how to make our products sturdier so we don't lose our customers. Our president also discusses our activities as a cooperative. Our ill feelings disappear because of the fellowship. (Mayet, KILUS)

Conclusion

For the solidarity economy to truly serve and benefit low-income women, it must be inclusive and feminist. A feminist solidarity economy requires both sensitivity and responsiveness to low-income women's practical and strategic gender needs and interests. Practical gender needs refer to the "needs women identify in their socially-accepted roles in society...and are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context" (Moser, 1993, p. 40). Strategic gender needs "are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position in society, "vary according to particular context," and are "feminist" (Moser, 1993, pp. 39). Strategic gender needs address women's strategic gender interests of "emancipation from subordination...equality, equity, and empowerment" (Moser, 1993, p. 1). Only by encompassing women's strategic gender needs and interests in the conceptualization of the solidarity economy can it be genuinely feminist.

COWHED, PATAMABA, and KILUS regard women not only as reproductive workers but also as productive workers who can contribute significantly to total household income, and provide staunch and steadfast support for women's income-generating activities. These organizations provide, as a redistributive and ameliorative measure, access to resources that low-women are often denied as workers - a production center, equipment, training and capability-building, marketing assistance, materials, credit and cash advances. The organizations also recognize that their members are mothers and ensure that provisions are made for financial assistance for the education of their children, housing, health, and family emergencies. As members of solidarity organizations, the women have also come into possession of intangible yet valuable resources such as recognition and respect for their organizations by others, organizational strength, group cooperation, an organization they can run to in times of need, and dedicated and committed leaders. Thus, it can be said that COWHED, PATAMABA, and KILUS are fully sensitive and responsive to women's practical gender needs.

Support for women and their livelihood through the provision of tangible and intangible resources is a practical gender need that addresses their interest of earning an income but it may also be considered a strategic gender need and a way of promoting their strategic gender interests. But unless this is clearly framed as a strategy to counter gender and class oppression, and as one of many other possible strategies that should be implemented, its positive impacts will remain incidental and its power to effect comprehensive transformation not maximized.

While appreciating that the women members of COWHED, PATAMABA, and KILUS must prioritize their livelihood and that their organizations strive to meet this and other practical gender needs, feminist solidarity enterprises must endeavor to persistently address women's strategic gender interests. The transformation of unequal gender and class relations, as an imperative, is recognized only by PATAMABA, which adheres to the integrated approach to women's empowerment. The research participants from PATAMABA have been conscientized on their rights as women, their expanded roles in the community, market, and household, and their freedom to make and assert their decisions.

The reality is that the solidarity economy does not exist in a social vacuum. It is situated in a context wherein women are obstinately discriminated against, exploited, marginalized, and subordinated on the basis of gender, class, race, other differentiating social factors and their intersectionality. The intersectionality results in gender, class, race, etc. discrimination, exploitation, marginalization, and subordination being experienced not only simultaneously but also synergistically. While the solidarity economy seeks to create a universe of its own, its actors are socially and culturally conditioned by mainstream society's beliefs about women and by orthodox economics' disregard of women's realities. Further, women's role as productive worker, whether in the solidarity or mainstream economy, is not discrete nor is it separate from their other roles as

reproductive and/or community workers. Feminist economists have called attention to the need to view women's work holistically, of valorizing all as equally contributing to human welfare. Women's work is not merely confined to the market; it is also accomplished within households and in communities. The locus of activism, thus, cannot only be the solidarity economy. The struggles for a feminist solidarity economy cannot be divorced from the struggles of women for a just, fair, equal, and equitable society, and from the attainment by women of their strategic gender interests in all the spheres of their lives.

There are already apparent positive transformations in how the women members of COWHED, PATAMABA and KILUS view themselves. These may be seen as contributing to the erosion of the prevailing gender ideology that characterizes women as subordinate, weak, and powerless, and it is because they are organized. The reported personal changes of women - self-confidence, self-improvement, new knowledge and skills, freedom - reflect improvements in individual well-being that go beyond the economic and relational. These can empower women to more directly oppose socio-culturally constructed notions of women's subjugation based on gender and class.

Feminist solidarity enterprises can utilize the Gender and Development (GAD) approach as a take-off point for consciousness-raising. The GAD approach to women's development operates from the perspective that women's condition (in relation to their practical gender needs) and position (in relation to their strategic gender interests) are mediated by both class and gender and that "their material conditions and patriarchal authority are both defined by the accepted norms and values that define women's and men's roles and duties in a particular society" (Sen & Grown, 1987, as cited in Connelly, Li, MacDonald, & Parpart, 2000, p. 62). It "focuses on gender, class, and race and the social construction of their defining characteristics" (Connelly et al., 2000, p. 62). Gender, class, and race relations as social constructs and as maintained and reproduced by norms and values, therefore, are not immutable and can be changed.

The challenges of the feminist solidarity economy are the same challenges that low-income women face as women and workers, as are the constraints - the multiple burdens of reproductive, productive, and community work and the exigency of meeting practical gender needs on a daily basis. These pressing concerns impede participation in consciousness-raising exercises which are pivotal in spurring low-income women to realize, mobilize and act towards the attainment of their strategic gender interests. Conscientization is a long process that demands energy, commitment, and time, resources that low-income women struggling to make ends meet are not abundantly endowed with, but meaningful transformation is built on this.

In the process of conscientization, the women are made aware of the contradictions of class from their specific vantage point as producers and workers (R. Ofreneo, personal communication, March 24, 2014). The issue of class "has to be stressed through awareness raising on the solidarity economy and why it is needed" to counter capitalist globalization" (R. Ofreneo, personal communication, March 24, 2014). The women realize that as they "resist" capitalist globalization, they can "build" the solidarity economy as its alternative (R. Ofreneo, personal communication, March 24, 2014).

The transformation of unequal gender and class relations must clearly be on the agenda for action, otherwise there is the danger that low-income women will continue to be discriminated against, exploited, marginalized, and subordinated even within the solidarity economy. This requires the promotion of shared power and decision-making between women and men, greater access to and control over economic and social resources by women, and support for women's participation and empowerment across the institutions of the state, the market, the community, and the household.

It can be done. The all-women solidarity enterprises of this research - COWHED, PATAMABA, and KILUS - are showing us the way, and are currently, if inchoately, forging pathways towards a feminist solidarity economy.

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CSR and Social Solidarity Economy: Exploring Shared Responsibilities

Anna Kristinna N. Palomo

This paper reviews the evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) globally and within the Philippines. It discusses the contradictory nature of CSR and looks how CSR and Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) can be harmonized through shared responsibilities in building social enterprises, local economies and sustainable communities; adherence to global human rights and labor standards; and shifting to corporate social accountability.

RIPESS (Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy) takes the position that social solidarity economy should seek to change the neoliberal capitalist economic system through a different paradigm of development. Here, profit is no longer the primary goal; people and the environment are the priorities. Links in the supply chain connecting input suppliers, producers, consumers, and financiers are truly valued on the same level as the goods or services that are produced. Every aspect - from management to delivery of business operations - ideally should protect, respect and fulfill human rights and work towards the sustainability of the environment. The triple bottom line of people, planet and then profit is pursued towards inclusive national growth and development.

Defining CSR

What is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)? It is defined as:

The responsibility of an organization for the impact of its decisions and activities on society and the environment through transparent and ethical behavior that is consistent with sustainable development and the welfare of society; it takes into account the expectations of its stakeholders; is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior; and is integrated throughout the organization. (Hohnen, 2007, p. 4)

Despite CSR being in the literature for over 45 years, it seems that it still has no standard accepted definition (Wood, 1991). In fact, it seems companies define and take on CSR in different ways that suit them. There are some that have an environmental take on CSR, going green. This is the latest consumer expectation and one of the most common forms of CSR. For others, CSR is just about being philanthropic, exemplified by sponsoring a fun run for a cause or sending a medical mission. Then there is CSR being stakeholder-driven, finding out stakeholder's needs and building a program around these needs.

CSR also has the reputation of being a strategic smokescreen for unethical business practices or a convenient justification for putting up foundations that are the ultimate tax shield. Nowadays in social media, businesses feature their CSR programs to develop good public relations. CSR has been a way for companies to legitimize themselves especially when faced with doubts and criticisms. Take for instance mining companies that "adopt" nearby communities by building schools and homes and providing a health center. At the same time, they mine the natural resources, and destroy the very land where the communities are located. In such cases, the mining companies present themselves as benevolent philanthropists, their good deeds appearing to compensate for the harm that they cause.

The best way to look at how CSR is executed is to first look at the different motivations or objectives that lead towards the different types of CSR. We can summarize these into four different levels of CSR (Saatchi and Urper, 2013). Each level has an increasing impact on business operations:

Corporate Philanthropy: The most common or widely accepted yet passive form of CSR. This consists of donations to charitable foundations, sponsoring community events. There is no link between the CSR acts to the business' overall mission, vision or goals.

Stakeholder Management: This is where a business voluntarily adheres to global standards of CSR such as the creation of the United Nations Global Compact or the ISO 26000 Guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility. Doing so will have impact within the internal operational system of the business as well as affect the external stakeholder relationships.

Social Investment: Social businesses are created using business operations to address social issues that affect the stakeholders and shareholders of the business.

Creation of Shared Value: This has the highest impact on core business operations as it is the most active form of CSR. Here, CSR is linked and designed to cohere with the mission, vision, internal and external operations of the business. There is a focus on sustainability and creating shared market opportunities.

The above strategies range in approaches and objectives yet share the same goal of trying to solve a social problem or issue. The mechanism, process, motive, strategy and even philosophy differ yet the common aim is to achieve social impact.

CSR: A Force for Good or Evil Under Capitalism?

CSR has been adopted increasingly by the Fortune 500 Companies. These companies are the 500 largest companies in the United States as compiled by FORTUNE magazine. In 2007, over US\$ 500 billion dollars has been spent in creating socially responsible investments; this amounts to 27% of the global economy (UNRISD, 2010, p. 234).

Carroll (1991) suggested that “an organization’s responsibility is to act in a socially responsible way, doing this not only to be profitable but also to obey the law, be ethical, and be a good corporate citizen” (p. 48). However, in an article entitled “What’s Wrong with Capitalism?” Milligan (2010) wrote,

The capitalist system, by promoting the voracious pursuit of profit and incessant economic growth has promoted unparalleled scientific and technical innovation and development — this development has created, perhaps for the first time in history, the means of abolishing poverty. Yet, this striking, indeed unparalleled achievement — the real capacity to feed, house, clothe, and educate everybody on the planet — is constantly undermined by the pursuit of profit. This is the bitter paradox of the system — capitalism is the system that has created the possibility of fair shares for all — yet appears to be, inherently, incapable of bringing an end to the brutal physical poverty which blights the lives of billions of people. (pp. 1-2)

This paradox can be seen in certain examples. For instance, a well known global soft drink company which put up its own charitable foundation reports in its website how, within one decade, it donated more than \$690 million towards initiatives that support community needs. However, this same soft drink company has been listed as one of the world's 14 Worst Corporate Evildoers by the International Labor Rights Forum (International Labor Rights Forum, 2005). The Forum found this said company to be guilty of abusing worker's rights, destroying agriculture, and contaminating sources of drinking water.

Another example is that of an equally well known food and beverage manufacturing company that was named in December 2013 by KPMG as one of the world's top ten companies reporting on CSR. This same company is also the only food and beverage company to be among the top tier of firms analyzed as part of KPMG's Survey of Corporate Responsibility (2013). In the article, KPMG (2013) noted that this firm succeeded in its objective of Creating Shared Value, where a company does business in ways that can help improve global and local health and sanitation problems. Yet this same food and beverage company is also on the aforementioned list of the 15 Worst Companies of due to alleged exploitation of child labor - using children to harvest cocoa from the Ivory Coast.

Can business then ever do good? Business exists to earn a profit and to succeed, it needs to follow laws and ethics. William Shaw, in his 2009 article, *Marxism, Business Ethics and CSR*, stated that "Yes, there is greed and they can cut corners, but there are also business people capable of moral choices even if the state authority is weak" (p. 565). Marx rejects the idea of corporations doing good, but why, asked Shaw, should we take as face value that corporations cannot help but act except in a selfish manner? (p.570). Shaw argued, "if individuals can and sometimes do act for moral reasons on the basis of regarding others- then surely companies they direct can pursue goals other than profit and can act on the basis of non-economic considerations" (p. 570). It is profitable for a company to do good, and managers can choose business strategies that make profit while also being in line with their social and moral obligations.

CSR today struggles to adhere to a form of global governance. However, this governance is one that relies on the private sector. This is what poses the most controversy to development workers especially since the private sector tends to generate issues of inequality, power struggle, vulnerability of worker's rights, and unjust working conditions (Harcourt, 2004).

How then can businesses be held more accountable in showcasing their CSR programs by making sure they also uphold fair labor relations and human rights?

CSR and The Global Compact

One attempt towards exacting accountability from business is The Global Compact, the current largest CSR initiative in the world created by the United Nations. The UN Global Compact has over 1000 corporate members that have pledged to...

alter the way a company carries out its operations in relation to how it treats the immediate stakeholders - clients, employees, vendors, local communities where it operates and the impact of its activities in society at large, without having recourse to direct regulation and with the objective of promoting social justice and sustainability. (Amalric, 2004, pp. 3-4)

This Global Compact has ten guiding principles which are to be used as a foundation for applying CSR. Looking at these principles, they are very different from a "how to" guide on philanthropy or putting up a community center (UN Global Impact, n.d., para. 2):

Human Rights

1. Business should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and
2. Make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

Labour Standards

Businesses should uphold:

3. The freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
4. The elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
5. The effective abolition of child labour; and
6. The elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

Environment

7. Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; (this means a business should take precautions and preventive measures to ensure that the way it operates does not harm the environment)
8. Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
9. Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Anti-corruption

10. Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

While the UN Global Compact's guidelines are lacking a gender lens or an important guideline for business products that should not be sold or marketed if harmful, these guiding principles match with the International Labour Organization's (ILO website, n.d.) view on CSR that focuses on how business can impact their operations on society - focusing on how their principles and values affect their own internal methods and business processes.

These standards have an internal focus where CSR is integrated within company performance or company operations and not merely an outward program, and where CSR has a Human Rights component as its priority. Given this diversity of arguments, frameworks and perceptions on the matter - where can businesses locate themselves to determine social impact and respect for human rights?

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History of CSR

Perhaps it is good to briefly look at its beginnings to best understand or recommend a direction for the future of CSR. The first academic literature that discussed responsibilities of business was published in the ' 1930s through a "responsibility debate between Columbia University Professor Adolf Berle who proposed that managers were responsible only to their shareholders and Harvard's Merrick Dodd who argued that the responsibility included the public and society as a whole (Cochran, 2007).

The concept Corporate Social Responsibility was first used in 1953. It was found in the writing of Bowen's 'Social Responsibility of Businessmen'. Bowen (1953) asked "what responsibilities to society can business people be reasonably expected to assume?" (p. ix). He explored morality and ethics in the way a company behaved towards stakeholders and recognized that beyond legal obligations, companies had certain responsibilities to society.

During the 1970s came the heyday of the best known free market economist, Milton Friedman. It is well known how he attacked CSR and pointed out in a New York Times Magazine article that the use of a company's resources for other causes aside from profit - guarantees economic inefficiency. He went on to say that asking shareholders to take on social responsibility was not in the best interest of the shareholders and the company. Funds for social projects belonged and needed to be distributed to shareholders. Why should shareholders pay tax for profit they cannot use and is given away? To Friedman, CSR was a form of "theft" (as cited in Wells, 2002, p. 124). Others argued that what was really important was not that companies were 'assuming a responsibility', but that companies were responding to the social environment. It was also about placing an emphasis on the outcomes of socially responsible initiatives in response to the era's changing social consciousness in which there was a focus on charitable donations (Carroll, 2010).

In the 1980s, the arguments on CSR died down as corporations began to focus on mergers and acquisitions. In America alone in 1980, \$45 billion were spent in takeovers, which grew to \$226 billion by 1988 (Wells, 2002, p. 126). Not one cent went towards CSR. In fact, these takeovers put more workers in the streets more than ever as well as produced the lowest productivity rate at that time. However, in developing countries where these corporations had operations as well, they were seen as liberators of these local economies as they created employment opportunities and favorable wages (Blowfield and Frynas, 2005).

Yet there was a strong and steady rise in anti-corporate activism over environmental and human rights also in the 1970s and 1980s as more companies were being called towards accountability. Notable were the international boycotts of companies investing in developing countries such as South Africa, which promoted racial segregation. Among them was Barclays Bank, and the Nestlé boycott over the company's aggressive milk formula marketing strategies in the global South. "This period was typified by confrontational campaigning that forced change from companies by attacking the brand," Bendell said (2004, p.14).

The anti-corporate backlash reached a climax in 1995, as the spotlight turned on Shell. This happened in November, when the Nigerian dictator arbitrarily executed writer-activist Ken Saro-Wiw and eight other fellow Ogonis. Shell, the largest foreign multinational investor in Nigeria, refused to condemn this act and tried to stay neutral due to its plants in the Niger Delta. This ignited a firestorm that proved detrimental to Shell's reputation and led to international protests which in turn resulted in the blocking of Shell's plans to expand in other places globally. This, according to Chandler (2003), was the "watershed moment" during which a company realized it needed to be aware and support human rights movements. As a result, Shell would include responsibility for human rights in its corporate principles. To quote Chandler (2003):

For NGOs, the most important lesson from these developments was that, while protest could raise issues, engagement was needed to win the argument. For the companies, the chief lesson was that it was not enough to avoid harm, but it was also their responsibility to support human rights positively, as called for by the UDHR, if they were to avoid the accusation of complicity with oppressive regimes (p. 5).

This Shell situation was the turning point for CSR and the call that ensued was to be responsible, not just charitable.

After this backlash came the search for ways to hold corporations more responsible. In 1992, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro was a key moment in the evolution of CSR as corporate involvement succeeded in finding ways to establish guidelines to halt the destruction of irreplaceable natural resources and pollution of the planet (Earth Summit, 1992, para. 1). A coalition of 48 companies was formed specifically to influence the summit's outcomes. This coalition, the Business Council

for Sustainable Development (BCSD), later to become the World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD), was established by Swedish millionaire Stephan Schmidheiny at the invitation of Maurice Strong, the chair of the Summit. At one meeting in Rio, Strong asked, "How can we achieve [sustainable development] without the participation of business?" (Bruno, 1992, para. 7). The BCSD trumpeted the 'changing course of industry' towards voluntary self-regulation. BCSD still meets annually and now has grown to 65 council members that represent thousands of businesses from developing nations. There had been two Earth summits since then, one in 2002 and most recent in 2012 (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2012, para. 1).

Yet the collapse of Enron, a day after its CSR program won an award for best CSR in 2011, shows just how deeply a corporation's claims of social responsibility can differ from the reality. Enron was seen as an "unstoppable" force as an energy trader at the beginning of the year 2001. However, it declared bankruptcy around November of the same year. As a result, "nearly 62% of 15,000 employees' savings plans relied on Enron stock that was purchased at \$83 in early 2001 and was now practically worthless" (The Economist, 2002). As Joel Bakan argues in *The Corporation*, "Enron's story... suggests, at a minimum, that skepticism about corporate social responsibility is well warranted" (Bakan, 2004, p.58).

This look at CSR's evolution shows how it has come about due to the threat anti-corporate campaigns pose to companies' very existence to operate. The debate has two sides: one side argues that CSR is just an effective PR strategy that distracts and covers their contribution to social ills caused by corporate operations and protects companies' interests; the other side maintains that companies can and should make a positive contribution to society as they manage their social, environmental and economic impact. That debate will be one that continues unless Corporate Accountability is no longer voluntary and strong regulations are enforced.

CSR in the Philippines

There is a Filipino term or concept of mutual aid called “bayanihan,” which is taken from the word “bayan” or to a nation, country, town or community. The whole term bayanihan refers to a spirit of communal unity or effort to achieve a particular objective. How have Philippine companies expressed their bayanihan spirit through the years? Gisela Velasco (1996), cited in the Asian Institute of Management’s (AIM) Corporate Social Responsibility in the APEC Region (2005), provided a quick glance on the evolution of CSR in the Philippines (p.2). Velasco call the 1960s the “The Decade of Donations.” During this decade, CSR was expressed through “charitable institution donations” in cash and in kind. Then came the “Decade of Organizations” in the 1970s. Here, businesses established organizations to address social issues such as the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). In the ‘80s, the “Decade of Involvement,” COMREL or community relations projects were offered by companies. The 1990s or the “Decade of Institutionalization” challenged companies to move beyond COMREL and to be part of contributing to society’s well being through Corporate Citizenship. This meant that business should be involved in policy formulation and networking.

For the subsequent decade of “Decade of Continuous Improvement,” Velasco (1996) as cited in AIM (2005) described how CSR is practiced as,

Social organizations persisted in their quest to help the poor using management frameworks. For example, PBSP pushed for the participation of corporate citizens in improving access to basic services, education, credit and the development of new skills for the workforce to help them improve their lives. (p.2)

A visit to their website shows that PBSP currently has 250 member corporations and this generates almost Php 30 million in membership contribution. However, the bulk of their funding comes from international donor agencies that choose to course their funds through PBSP. In their 2009 Financial Report, PBSP received over Php 250 million from donor agencies such as United Way. PBSP is the first organization of its kind in Asia that has the largest corporate led foundation, and in collaboration with their partner and member agencies, they have, through CSR, reached five million Filipinos.

It is interesting to see the evolution of the different expressions of CSR programs in the country. The Decade of Continuous Improvement still shows how Philippine companies are evolving to have their CSR programs have their responsibilities reach inward, touching their very workforce. In 2007, the League of Corporate Foundations (LCF) commissioned Newsbreak media group, to conduct a survey to find out if businesses in the country do have CSR and if it is integrated within their business practices (Rimando, 2012, para.2). This survey was funded by the British Embassy. Newsbreak then contacted 104 businesses, ranging from local and multinational companies with annual revenues of at least P60 million. They had to have employees ranging from 24 to 32,000. Fifty four companies responded and also agreed to follow-up FGDs. Their key findings were as follows:

In most of the companies:

- The CEO initiates CSR programs.
- The entry point for CSR practice has been concentrated on two aspects: community work and PR.
- Getting the other functional groups involved in embedding the CSR strategy into the way the company plans and implements products and services is rare.

- Most companies leave the CSR implementation to the corporate foundation, while half say they let the public relations or corporate communications group take the lead.
- Next to the community, the employees are the stakeholders that the companies target for their CSR. Investors are low priority (AIM, 2005).

In 2012, a follow up to the 2007 survey done by Newsbreak was conducted by Rappler. Rappler (2012) surveyed 81 of the Philippine's largest companies that have more than Php60 million in revenues every year. They ranged in business activities from manufacturing and extractive industries, to retail, and real estate. Key findings this time were:

- Favorable enabling environment for CSR to thrive in Philippine companies remains because people at the top support and push it within the organization
- Most of the CSR activities are still mainly philanthropy and event-driven, but employee volunteerism has become more prominent in the CSR designs
- Results assessment, which is basis for further improvement, is generally weak while communication means still traditional
- "Goodwill" is a main motivation for companies to engage in, report, and communicate about their CSR, but business economics motivate financial support (Rimando, 2012, para.8)

One can see that the push for CSR in the country still is determined by the top executives. For the multinationals, it is influenced by the head office abroad, according to the Rappler report. What is common among corporations is they establish foundations, usually headed or run by their public relations group from

planning to implementation. Rappler (2012) also reports that 43% is run by PR and the others outsource their CSR to NGOs. It seems that the trend for Public Relations to lead CSR and not to hire development workers is based on the fact that it is a company's reputation and their social investment that continues to be the top reason for motivating companies to fund its CSR initiatives.

Currently, there is a proposed House Bill 4575 (or the CSR Act of 2009) that was approved by the House on May 2011 and received by the Senate on June 2011. It is unclear as to what stage this bill is to be passed. The bill does not establish standards for CSR, or even completely follows the standards set by the Global Compact. It will require corporations to consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, employees, shareholders, communities and environment all aspects of their operations. Rep. Diosdado Arroyo, (House of Representatives, 2011) author of this bill, said:

All business organizations established and operating under Philippine laws, whether domestic or foreign, are encouraged to observe CSR or the commitment of business to contribute on a voluntary basis, to sustainable economic development by working with relevant stakeholders to improve their lives in ways that are good for business, a sustainable development agenda and society at large. (House of Representatives, 2011, para.3)

Forging ahead, there is still a long way for CSR in the Philippine context to move from the idea that it is the same as philanthropy or donating money or resources. There needs to be a stronger push for more companies to not just do CSR to feel good about themselves or look good - but to embrace and integrate the principles of CSR standards, such as that laid out in the UN Global Compact, in their

business strategies. “CSR is a work in progress, don’t condemn the good for being imperfect, we should examine the process underway and explore whether they are likely to fulfill their promise” (Blowfield and Frynas, 2006, p. 506).

Solidarity Economy and CSR: Differences and Shared Responsibilities

Shared responsibility needs to be included in the CSR discourse, where poverty eradication is not merely looked at through a growth-oriented economic system but through ethical principles within a multi-stakeholder framework of cooperation and solidarity. Such a framework becomes a model that is a requirement towards sparking collective action to meet targeted and specific needs of the people (Quiñones, 2013, pp.12-13). Perhaps this is where we can look to Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) to push CSR in this direction. Is there a possible link between CSR and the SSE?

Solidarity Economy and CSR share certain principles. They both have the “social” concern. This “is applying the principles of business and entrepreneurship to social problems...where social enterprises are enterprises devoted to solving social problems...the reason for their existence is not to maximize return to shareholders, but to make a positive social impact” (Cochran, 2007, p.451).

“Solidarity Economy” as described by CSRSME Asia is “a people and eco-centered governance of the production, financing, distribution and consumption of goods and services in order to generate sustainable conditions for self-managed development of each and every member of societies, the peoples and the planet.” CSRSME Asia organized the Asian Forum 2007 in the Philippines to help delegates understand the basic dynamics of solidarity which is “to stand for an economic system that is oriented towards people and ecological balance as opposed to the mainstream economy which gears towards maximization of profit and wanton accumulation of private wealth” (INAISE website, n.d. para.1).

Solidarity Economy uses the supply chain as its focal unit of action for shared responsibilities. In this supply chain, there are various actors: the state, private business, and civil society. The supply chain exists within the biosphere now threatened by unsustainable profit-motivated business models. To save the biosphere, all the actors need to work together and share responsibilities to achieve the triple bottom line of caring for people and planet while earning a profit. It is in this sense that private business can partner with cooperatives, fair trade groups, and NGO-led social enterprises as well as local government units to produce ecologically beneficial products and help build local economies for sustainable community development.

We have seen that CSR is a way for businesses to redistribute their surplus profit towards addressing social issues and at the same time enhancing their public image. In the Philippines, CSR still has to go a long way before being able to change business operations to fit the SSE supply chain model explained above.

In 2011, the ILO published “Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE): Our Common Road towards Decent Work.” ILO’s tripartite framework is designed to harmonize the interests of three actors: government, employers, and workers. ILO (2011, p. 9) is now promoting SSE and claims it can be advanced when:

- partnerships with commercial enterprises are frequent in the fair trade sector (e.g., joint partnerships in procurement contracts)
- these partnerships can also influence CSR policy that would go beyond their primary objective and would improve or complement their internal operations toward staff or members
- businesses are encouraged to promote community and cooperative production initiatives for sustainable development in developing countries.

Both Solidarity Economy (through social business or social enterprises) and Corporations (through the more active type of CSR) has a place in working towards an economy that is inclusive, sustainable and that all production, distribution and consumption within economic activities addresses social and environmental concerns.

However, it is also important to note their stark differences. To simplify, these differences are tabled below based on table created by Saatchi and Urper, 2013.

Table 1. CSR versus Social Business. A Comparison.

Program	CSR	Social Business
Focus	Profit sharing among shareholders	Non-dividend; focus on stakeholders
Goal	Profit Maximizing is the goal	Maximum Social benefit delivery is the focus
Base	Project based /Time Limitation	Company based/ Enduring-Sustainable
How Social Projects are created	Social projects created within the core business strategies	Social projects created within the recognition of diversified social problems
Target	Targeting general society/ satisfaction of stakeholders expectations	Targeting the poorest of the poor, or the ones in most urgent needs
Sustainability	Temporarily solutions to social problems/non-sustainable in general	Consequences oriented-permanent solution
Funding Source	Devoting a small portion of profit	Raising its financial funds
Standards	Compliance with the moral/ religious or legal obligations to engage in a social problem solving	Compliance with the “selflessness” to engage in a social problem solving
Allocation of Profit	Shareholders and entrepreneurs bias on allocating profit on social problems	Shareholders and entrepreneurs full support on allocating profit on social problems

Note: From Saatchi, E. and Urper, C. (2013) Corporate Social Responsibility versus Social Business. Journal of Economics, Business and Management vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 64

One can see the many differences in the approach in addressing social and environmental concerns. Yet it is possible for the two to work together towards social change or making an impact towards social development. One way is working through the supply chain. We can find big business working with social enterprise especially those that are starting up or are struggling with their finances. Collaborations and partnerships sustain social entrepreneurship. According to Mitra and Borza (2013),

active participation by an effective contribution in the form of partnership involves a more complex relationship holding some defining characteristics that give uniqueness and a growing significance because it requires a two-way transfer of resources and mutually beneficial trade between the company and organization with social mission. (p. 69)

A concrete example is that of Jollibee Foods Corporation (JFC). With more than 1,200 stores nationwide, the firm decided to buy produce needed for their products from domestic farmers instead of importing. It launched this CSR initiative in 2008 and called the program “Bridging Farmers to Jollibee Supply Chain.” The project links small farmers to JFC with the goal of targeting 3,000 farmers growing onions in six provinces. Joining together, they sell more. Ten to fifteen onion farmers are clustered into a social enterprise. “Because we can consolidate our crop, we can provide a larger volume to Jollibee,” said by Henelito Idagan cited in Catholic Relief Services (n.d, para. 5). He is a Cluster Leader in Impasugong, Mindanao and he further explained that “the advantage of these groups is that if there are members who are failing to produce, I can help them, and also they can help me” (Catholic Relief Services, n.d. para.5).

Marrying big corporations such as JFC with social enterprises of small farmers forms a partnership towards creating maximum impact for both shareholders' concern and stakeholders that belong to poorest communities. Granted that donations and charity is still the "go to" CSR of most big businesses, yet as more successful partnerships are formed, companies may learn to adapt the solidarity economy's vision of integrating CSR at the heart of business operations rather than it just being relegated to a side project.

CSR may never be able to produce large scale social reform but this is still possible through the social enterprise movement which does share some of CSR's concerns and attempts to advance them to make businesses more socially responsible (Page & Katz, 2011).

The Need for Corporate Accountability

Some advocates say that there should be a shift from corporate responsibility to corporate accountability within shared responsibilities (Utting, 2005). Taking CSR towards accountability will begin with adapting a perspective where CSR requires systematic planning and a major commitment in collaboration among the private, public and NGO sector and the leveraging of the strengths and resources of all partners (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007).

As global CSR standards call for a deeper scope of responsibility that should extend to the labor force, it is hoped CSR assessments for rewards or recognition here in the Philippines will put less emphasis on feel-good inspirational stories and more on accountability that will call for legal compliance to be included in the criteria. Business leaders would then give compliance to labor laws equal billing with their community CSR if they see the increased scrutiny.

In contrast to the mainstream CSR agenda, the corporate accountability movement is moving towards issues of power, law and public policy (UNRISD, 2010). As Solidarity Economy moves to meet the needs of people and communities through livelihood and economic activities, there is hope that CSR can move towards a collaborative direction with civil society. This collaboration can lead towards a social dialogue between NGOs and business where the power relations will lean towards social well-being for low-income groups. Despite the opposite poles on perspectives, setting standards of accountability for CSR in relation to working conditions, human rights and the environment can play an important role towards inclusive development and a true solidarity economy.

To increase the impact of corporate social responsibility, standards should be set for businesses in relation to working conditions, human rights and how core operations affect the environment. More importantly, businesses that choose to share responsibilities with social enterprises can be considered an important partner in supporting the social entrepreneurship process towards solidarity economy.

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Sacada: A look at the Hacienda System in the Philippines

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In examining the situation of sacadas, the author used the 'empowerment' theory – one's capacity for critical thinking and understanding of structural inequalities. The sacadas have remained marginalized and disempowered over the past years owing to the transitory and migratory nature of their work, their lack of access to social protection, and the socio-economic inequities that pervade in their work environment.

This paper discusses the results of the study done by the author and her team on the situation of sacadas in the Philippines. The study is one of the three major components of the ABK3 Livelihoods, Education, Advocacy and Protection (LEAP) to Reduce Child Labor in Sugarcane Areas. It is carried out by the University of the Philippines Social Action and Research for Development Foundation (UPSARDF) with funding support from the United States Department of Labour and with technical oversight from World Vision Development Foundation in partnership with the following: Child Fund Philippines; Educational Research and Development Assistance Foundation; Community Economic Ventures, Inc.; and Sugar Industry Foundation, Inc.¹

¹ Note however that this paper focuses on the general situation of sacada workers and not on child labor, which topic will be tackled in another research paper.

The paper is divided into the following main parts: a) introduction; b) analytical framework; c) tracing the roots of the hacienda system and the sacadas; d) contemporary setting of the sacadas: the sugar industry; e) the hacienda system: how it works; f) personal, work and living conditions of the sacadas; g) institutional support system; and h) analyses, conclusions and implications.

More specifically, the paper seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the personal, work and living conditions of the sacada workers?
2. What forms of support are being made available to the sacada workers?
3. How do the situations of sacada workers contribute to their empowerment or disempowerment?

The data and information integrated in this report were culled from various sources such as: reviews of existing literature and studies on the sacadas; case studies; survey interviews; and key informant interviews. Selection of respondents was purposive given the lack of prior information on the number of sacada workers, their exact locations and their availability for the interviews. A total of 168 individual interviews were conducted in the provinces of Batangas (53), Negros Occidental (52) and Negros Oriental (63).

Analytical Framework

Poverty, which pushes individuals to engage in low-paying and often exploitative work, is both a structural and a relationship issue. The struggle of farm workers in sugar areas is basically an agrarian issue that stems from poverty, exacerbated by its concomitant effects (lack of access to resources, basic services and facilities, etc.). The author used the theory of 'empowerment' as it focuses on internal and external forces that influence the capacities of individuals and groups to bring about changes in their personal and community living conditions.

‘Empowerment’ is essentially defined as one’s ability or control to create and take action to achieve personal and collective aims; and one’s capacity for critical thinking and understanding of structural inequalities towards greater access to resources, influence and power that can yield positive changes within persons and their environment.

For instance, Craig (2002) as cited by Toomey (2009, p. 183) defines empowerment as “the creation of sustainable structures, processes, and mechanism, over which local communities have an increased degree of control, and from which they have a measurable impact on public and social policies affecting these communities.” On the same vein, Hicks (2006, p. 381) as cited by Garlick (2012) posits that empowerment involves the creation and taking of action of people, groups and communities for them to meet their physical, spiritual and psychological needs in order to enhance their well-being and increase their personal and interpersonal power.

From another perspective, empowerment is not viewed as an alternative solution to the redistribution of unequally divided resources but rather as an act of providing the necessary tools to shape the whole person and promote a critical way of thinking and consciousness (Ledwith, 2005). In the context of social work, empowerment includes an intentional process of people taking the initiative and action in gaining power, taking over control in their lives and gaining a greater access to social resources with the aim of achieving personal and collective goals (Radovic, 2008). In the process of empowerment, users are helped to become aware of and critically understand structural inequalities and obstacles, and support them in the development of those skills and actions through which they can more considerably expand their influence and power in society. The final results of empowerment are expected to lead to changes in the approach to social resources and to an increased social power of deprived individuals, groups or communities.

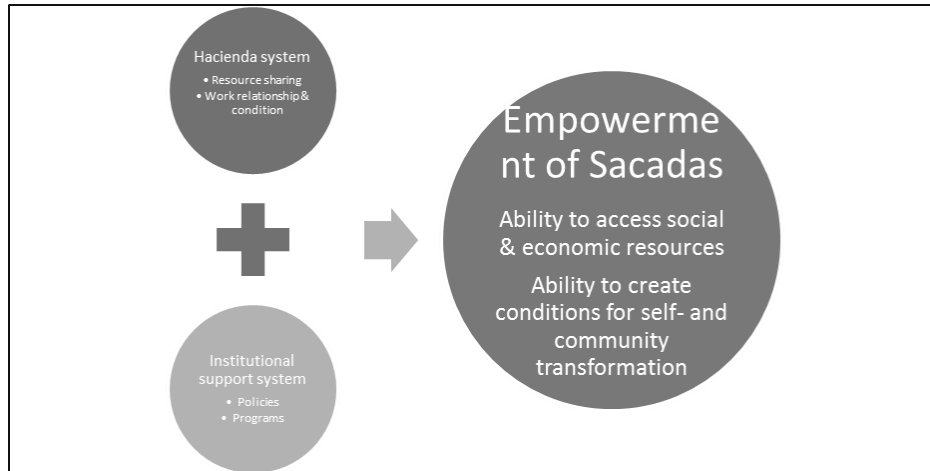


Figure 1: Analytical Framework on the Empowerment of the Sacadas

The preceding figure shows the interplay of factors that can influence the degree of empowerment or disempowerment of the sacadas: a) the hacienda system, and b) the presence or absence of needed institutional support. The hacienda system refers to the sharing of resources and the decision-making process involved in the sharing process. It also includes the relationship between and among the key players within the hacienda-sacada work system, and the work and living conditions of the sacada workers. Institutional support system refers to the enabling environment (policies and programs) that promotes and ensures the safety and welfare of the sacada workers and their families.

‘Empowerment’ is defined in this paper as the ability of the sacadas to access social and economic resources and services, and their capacity to bring about positive and long-lasting changes (transformations) in their lives.

Tracing the Roots of the Hacienda System and the Sacadas

The origin of the *hacienda* system dates back to the colonial past of the Philippines. It was instituted by the Spanish colonialists as an economic and political unit and was entrusted to loyal natives. The *haciendas* served in producing surplus for the consumption of the colonialists and imposing control in the communities. Natives who resisted colonization were displaced and escaped to areas where the colonial government's control was weak. They eventually joined the armed uprisings against the colonizers. They were hunted as "bandits" for resisting the invaders. *Hacienderos* aided the Spanish colonizers in pacifying the native inhabitants. Property rights over the haciendas were protected under the American rule up to the present (Deduro, 2005).

As early as the 1850s, sugar was introduced in the Philippines and became a subsistence crop among early Filipino farmers. The United States, through the Laurel-Langley Agreement, granted the Philippine a high quota for sugar into the US markets. Soon, sugar became a leading export earning crop of the country. One of the effects of the sugar boom in the country was that lands planted with sugar increased tenfold. In Negros, the leading sugar producing province in the Visayas, 70% of its total agricultural lands were turned into sugar lands (PhilDHRRRA, 2009). Vast fertile lands tilled by peasants for centuries were expropriated and converted into sugar lands and other export-producing agricultural estates (Ito & Olea, 2004).

In the 1860s, Negros Occidental was the leading sugar producing province in the Philippines, well on its way to becoming known as the "sugar bowl of the Philippines." The hacienda system that evolved in Negros was built on sharecropping and debt relations. The rich sugar families, all of Spanish roots, created a classic *hacienda* system much like the Latin American model. They took paternalistic care of "their" people pretty much from cradle to grave, serving as godparents, paying their medical bills, and occasionally bailing them out of jail. In return, they demanded and received complete subservience based on sharecropping and the "company store" model (Henderson, 2000).

In the mid-1980s, more than 60% of total production and about 80% of Negros' output came from farms 25 hectares or larger. Countrywide, tenancy arrangements existed for approximately half the sugarcane farms; however, they were generally the smaller ones, averaging 2.5 hectares in size and accounting for only slightly more than 20% of land planted in the crop (The Library of Congress Country Studies, 1991).

Elsewhere, laborers were employed, generally at very low wages. A survey undertaken in 1990 by the governor of Negros Occidental found that only one-third of the island's sugar planters were paying the then-mandated minimum wage of Php72.50 per day. The contrast between the lavish lifestyles of Negros *hacienderos* and the poverty of their workers, particularly migrant laborers known as *sacadas*, epitomized the vast social and economic gulf separating the elite in the Philippines from the great mass of the population (The Library of Congress Country Studies, 1991). The *hacienda* system in Negros has made many peasants more dependent and susceptible to hunger, maltreatment and indebtedness (Billig, 2003, p. 37).

Who are the Sacadas?

Sugar is a labor intensive crop, but labor remained in short supply particularly in Negros up to the 1920s. The need for *sacadas* or seasonal laborers was due to the persistent shortage of labor and the unsuccessful methods employed by *hacienderos* to secure an adequate labor supply at cutting time. These resulted in substantial loss in crop production, which necessitated the hiring of *sacadas* from nearby provinces (mostly from Antique, Panay's poorest province) just for the harvest season (Billig, 2003).

Historically, *sacadas* are the farm workers in the sugar plantations of Negros. They are described as exploited both by the *hacenderos* and the *contratistas*. The latter are labor contractors who earn money by serving as middlemen with the *sacadas* serving as their “merchandise.” They are also called seasonal cane cutters, or seasonal daily wage laborers. They usually receive a wage during the peak labor season from November to April for being temporary workers usually in sugarcane plantations (Corpuz, 1992).

There are two categories of workers in *haciendas* – *sacada* and *dumaan*. *Sacadas* are migrant workers who render work usually during the milling season (October to May) particularly in the cutting and loading of sugarcane. Land preparation, planting and weeding are also done during this time. On the other hand, *dumaan* (or *duma-an*) are permanent farm workers who work in the *haciendas* whole-year round, albeit for two to three days a week only. (Deduro, 2005)

The Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) considers both *sacadas* and *dumaans* as seasonal farm workers, or those who are employed on a recurrent, periodic or intermittent basis by an agricultural enterprise or farm, whether as a permanent or non-permanent laborer. Sabangan (2009) reported that 70% to 80% of the workforce in Negros are seasonal farm workers. Most of the regular farm workers in the province are composed of only a few individuals loyal to the landowners, namely the *encargados*, *cabos*, drivers, and watchmen or *ronda*. *Encargador* is a Spanish term for a person who manages the petty cash for *sacada* work operations. *Cabo* is a term used to refer to the right-hand person of the contractor who is entrusted to supervise the work of the *sacadas* and to ensure that their basic needs (food, shelter) are provided.

The Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law

The *hacienda* system can also be called a *haciendero-sacada* system, which is a system of agrarian relations (Corpuz, 1992, p. 145). Ownership of land began to concentrate in the hands of a few but rich families. They emerged as the dominant political and social forces in the Philippine society wresting control over key economic institutions, occupying or influencing key government offices and dominating political institutions in the country. On the other hand, the small farmers became landless – merely working as tenants and farm workers, which resulted in extreme poverty of the rural areas where they were found (PhilDHRRA, 2009).

On 10 June 1988, the Philippine Government enacted Republic Act No. 657 otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law, which provides for the acquisition and distribution of all agricultural lands within a period of ten years. Through the government's Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP), all lands exceeding seven hectares were bought by the government and sold to the landless farmers who pay for it in installments over 15 years (Velasco, 2014). Under CARP, large land-holdings are broken up and distributed to farmers and workers in particular *haciendas*. Each farmer is given a Certificate of Land Ownership Award (CLOA) for their new property. Under the law, a landowner can only retain five hectares, regardless of the size of the *hacienda* (DAR, n.d.). On 7 August 2009, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reforms (CARPER) was signed into law, extending the deadline of distributing agricultural lands to farmers for five years (DAR, n.d.).

The implementation of CARP is not without problems for the sugar workers. Studies have shown that since sugarcane is harvested only once a year, a sugar planter may need at the very least ten hectares to be able to support his family's needs. It is another story for peasants and sugar workers who won one to 1.5 hectares through land reform. They would need more than the land they own to survive

(Velasco, 2014). Furthermore, many of the land-owning elite refused to give up their property and in their resistance to comply, employed violent tactics against workers' groups. This included using goons to intimidate or trick workers to lease back their land to the landlords in return for lower prices (Velasco, 2014).

The *hacenderos* are not only the economic elite, they are also the "king makers" in politics. Most of the Philippine political elite came from sugar baron families. They are a big power bloc in national politics (Deduro, 2005). The powerful sugar elites continue to enjoy strong influence in government. Agricultural lands owned by the sugar political elites continue to circumvent the implementation of agrarian reform (PhilDHRRA, 2009).

Under the Philippine land reform program, transfer of control and ownership of agricultural land to the actual tillers should have been implemented. However, it has not been the case for sugarcane plantations because many planters have been exempted. Others believed that the fragmentation of lands into small farms resulted in negative impact on productivity because small farmers began employing family members including children in the farm to recoup earnings (UPSARDF, 2013).

Although not directly referring to the land reform situation in the sugar industry, nonetheless the following situations resulting in long delays could apply. DAR reported that in some cases, technical descriptions in the land titles (which determine the boundaries of the land) were found to be erroneous and had to be corrected. Some titles were destroyed, and therefore, had to be reissued by undergoing a court process, similar to filing a case. Potential beneficiaries argued among themselves on who should or should not be qualified as beneficiaries; these disputes had to be mediated or resolved by the government. In other cases, landowners petitioned that their lands be exempted or excluded from CARP coverage, and some of these petitions went all the way up to the Supreme Court.

In addition, smaller parcels of land (five to ten hectares) were only processed in the last year of implementation of CARPER (July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014). Past efforts focused on bigger parcels of land, which involved more paperwork to process. Now that efforts are focused on smaller but more numerous cuts of land, there are more claim folders to process and distribute (DAR, n.d.).

Contemporary Setting for the Sacadas: the Sugar Industry

There are at least 19 provinces and 11 regions that produce sugarcane in the Philippines. A range from 360,000 to 390,000 hectares is devoted to sugarcane production. It is estimated that as of 2012, the industry provided direct employment to 700,000 sugarcane workers spread across 19 sugar producing provinces (Sugar Master Plan Foundation, Inc. 2010, p. 7). On average, a sugarcane worker earns a little over USD3 a day, less than half of the government mandated minimum wage. A seasonal worker earns roughly USD2 (Velasco, 2014).

As of 2012, the island of Negros still continued to account for a large portion (57%) of total domestic sugar production. Luzon produced 14%; Mindanao, 19%; Panay, 6%; and Eastern Visayas, 4%. Total domestic sugar production comes primarily from four major planter federations and three major miller associations. Producers who belong to these organized federations account for 90% of the total domestic sugar production (Global Agriculture Information Network, 2012).

As of Crop Year 2012-2013, 29 mills were operational in Luzon (6), Negros (13) Panay (3), Eastern Visayas (4), and Mindanao (3). Victorias Milling Corporation (VMC) is known as the biggest refinery in the country and in Asia and the third largest in the world (Sugar Regulatory Administration, 2014).

Structures were established over the years to oversee the sugar industry and address the exponential increase in world price as well as the precipitous dip in local prices of sugar: the Philippine Sugar Administration (PSA) in 1937; the Philippine Sugar Institute (PHILSUGIN) in 1951; the Philippine Sugar Commission (PHILSUCOM) in 1976; and the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) in 1986. All these structures performed regulatory functions, including ensuring sugar price stability, economic viability, and continued research and technological development.

The SRA is a member of the District Tripartite Council (DTC) that monitors the sugar industry operations. It is purely government-funded, with all its projects delegated to the Mill District Development Foundation, Inc. (MDDFI). The SRA provides technical assistance to sugarcane planters, in the form of demonstration farms, eco-tests, and testing of new technical varieties. SRA membership is based on production volume; small planters do not qualify.

MDDFI was formerly known as Mill District Development Councils (MDDC), registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on 8 November 2000. As a government partner and a conduit for funds, MDDFI joins the monthly tripartite meetings chaired by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and receives money for project implementation. It also develops and submits project proposals to the Sugar Regulatory Administration. MDDFI has a direct relationship with cooperatives and gives training (upon request by cooperatives) to sacadas on the proper cutting of sugarcanes. However, it deals mainly with local farmers and is composed of planters' organizations; thus, it is not directly involved with sacadas.

The federations of sugarcane planters associations are designated to monitor milling operations in their areas of operation. They serve as “guardians”, watching the relationship between planters and the sugar central (milling company). In Batangas, the Federation was heavily involved in the setting of cutters’ minimum wage, time and motion study of migrant workers, specifically the hours needed to cut sugarcane, and the establishment of a code of conduct for children below 18 years old. Its primary task is the exercise of significant control points, from arrival of trucks in yards to sugar production. It is concerned with the wages and welfare of the maggapak (cutters) and matters related to sugar planters.

An organization of sugar producers, the Philippine Sugar Millers Association (PSMA) was organized in 1922 as the Philippine Sugar Association (PSA). A non-stock, non-profit organization, PSMA was initially involved in research and development, and later earned credit for having substantially helped in increasing sugar yield in the country and improving milling efficiency. It also concerned itself with the protection of the interests of the sugar industry in working for favorable legislation both in the Philippines and in the United States, which was the country's principal export market. This activity was of utmost importance as the survival of the sugar industry depended, to a large extent, on the entry of Philippine sugar in the US market (PSMA, n.d.).

Among the major challenges faced by the sugar industry is the impending enforcement of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 2015 whereby tariffs will be reduced to only five percent. The influx of imported sugar products in the local markets will lower the demand for locally produced sugar thus could “imperil the livelihood of about 62,000 farmers and 600,000 workers in the country’s sugar industry” (Medenilla, 2014). To hurdle the effects of AFTA, the House of Representatives approved on third and final reading House Bill No. 52 or the Sugarcane Industry Development Act of 2014, which contains measures including government assistance to the sugar industry such as the setting up of the sugar industry fund. If passed, the bill is envisioned to help the sugar industry become competitive (*House Approves Sugarcane Bill*, 2014).

How are the sugar industry players preparing themselves for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Free Trade Agreement (AFTA)? The deputy administrator of the Philippines' SRA noted that some mills and refiners may consider consolidation because they can't afford the investments to modernize. Upgrades will bring down production costs and increase the recovery rate of sugar, which is lower than in other countries. Pressure for sugar companies to become more competitive -- and consolidate -- is growing ahead of a reduction in regional sugar tariffs in 2015. The margins of Philippine sugar refiners are being squeezed because of their production costs, creating opportunities for companies that can bring greater efficiency (Sayson & Yap, 2014).

The foregoing scenario is favorable for those who have huge capital to buy small sugar companies or acquire mills and refineries. In the Philippines, prominent Chinese business tycoons have invested in large corporations, including ownership of sugar milling companies and sugar trading. For instance, billionaire Lucio Tan has increased his stake in VMC with the acquisition of shares and has been beefing up his interest in it in a move seen to foil efforts of other entities interested to invest in the sugar mill (Montealegre, 2014).

The Hacienda System: How it Works

In order to understand the system of operation within a *hacienda*, interviews were conducted with sugarcane plantation owners, contractors, and known cooperatives of sugarcane plantation owners. There is no organization set up solely for the sacadas. Although they operate in groups (usually a group is composed of relatives and neighbors), they are for the most part working more as individuals.

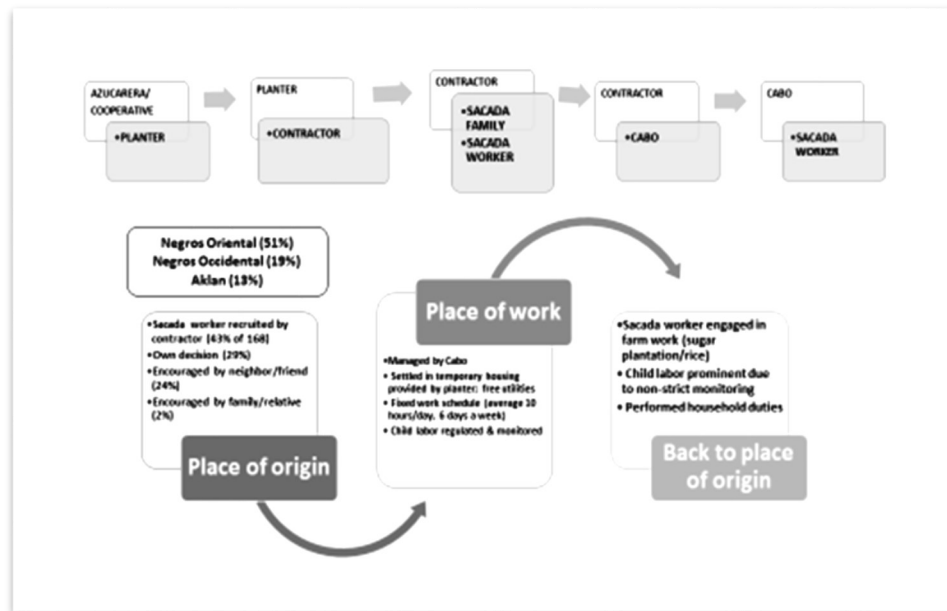


Figure 2: Sacada work process

A key informant from one of two big sugar milling corporations in Negros Oriental revealed that there are more than 4,000 sugar planters in the whole province. A Chinese businessman, John Gokongwei, had purchased the corporation from a group of sugar planters in 1988.

The average sugar cane production in lowland areas before was 90-100 tons per hectare; at the time of interview (May 2014), it was 120 tons per hectare. The corporation does *pesada* or the actual cane weighing and juice analysis before issuing payment to planters.

Payment of milled sugar is done by bidding although the corporation itself can also buy sugar. There is a standardized price set but it can go higher depending on bidding result. The corporation pays the planters after the bidding. Cash advances made by planters are deducted from the total payment. The milling rate is 330 tons/hour but the corporation can only process an average of 300 tons/hour or a total of 2,400 tons of cane per day (short of the targeted 8,000 tons/day). One ton of cane is equivalent to 50 kilos or one bag of sugar. The price per bag ranged from Php1,400 to Php1,690, depending on sugar quality. The plantation owner's share is 67% of the total price of milled sugar.

Sugarcane plantation owners deal either directly with a sugar mill company (*azucarera*) or indirectly through a planters' cooperative. They hardly interact directly with the sacada workers. They hire a contractor who in turn hires sacadas from other places, mostly coming from Negros and Aklan. A big-time contractor may subcontract the hiring of workers to a barangay official. The contractor or sub-contractor hires sacada workers from poor and far-flung communities.

A sacada is normally given a cash advance equivalent to Php5,000 but the amount can go as high as Php15,000 depending on his years of experience, strength and previous work performance. The cash advance is usually given to the spouse of the sacada at the shipping terminal/port before he departs to his place of work. The amount is deducted later on from his wages.

At place of work, the contractor appoints a *cabo* or foreman who manages the day-to-day affairs of the sacadas, including providing them with cash advances for their daily needs. The sacadas purchase grocery items from the *cabo*, usually consisting of rice, noodles, sardines, soap, and other basic necessities. Sacadas have very limited decision-making power as they do not have full control of their resources, time and activities. Even their interactions with people in the community are restricted by the *cabo* for fear that they might encounter troubles or might abscond while searching for another job.

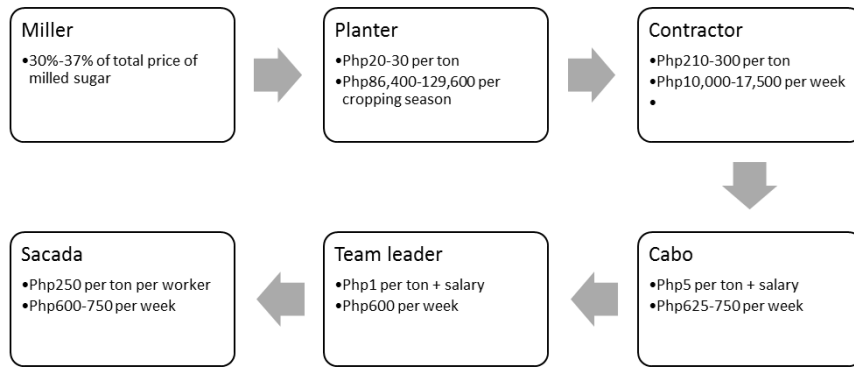


Figure 3: Distribution of income from sugarcane proceeds

The above flowchart shows the distribution of income from the sugar mill corporation down to the sacada worker. Note that it was difficult to get the exact income figure from the planters interviewed as they were hesitant to divulge this information, except for one who mentioned that he was able to gain a net profit of Php20-30 per ton. Estimating the total number of tons of sugarcane produced at 4,320 per cropping/harvesting season (based on 180 tons per week or 720 tons per month multiplied by six months), a plantation owner can generate Php86,400 to Php129,600 as net profit from the sugar plantation business.

Based on a key informant interview, a contractor gets paid on the average Php300 per ton. A group (composed of 10-12 workers) can harvest and haul an average of 20 tons per truck. Of this amount, the contractor pays a group of sacada workers Php125 per ton or Php2,500 for 20 tons, which is equally divided among the members (Php208 to Php250 per member). The frequency of truck loading ranges from three to five times per week. Thus, each group of workers can receive Php7,500 to Pp12,500 per week, or Php600 to Php750 per individual worker each week. The contractor gets Php10,000 to Php17,500 per week.

The average daily wages of sacadas (Php208 to Php250) fall slightly below the minimum daily wage mandated by the Philippine government for agricultural (plantation) workers - Php255 for Region 6 and Php261 to Php337.50 for Region 4-A (DOLE, 2014).

After six months of harvesting work, sacada workers return home to their province and look for other means of livelihood. Thus begins ‘tiempo muerto’ or ‘dead season’, the time between planting and harvesting (usually between April and September) when there is no work in the cane fields (Velasco, 2014). However, the current study found that some sacadas are either hired to work in a rice farm or in another sugarcane plantation in the same or neighboring community. Since they then become permanent residents in their community, their status shifts from *sacada* (seasonal farm workers) to *dumaan* (resident farm workers). A few others are engaged in backyard gardening or tending a small variety store. This shows the very limited livelihood options for the sacada workers.

The resident farm workers live on cash advances deducted from their wages when work resumes, but those who are not regularly employed by their *hacienderos* either make their way to the coast or cities to try and get temporary work, or get employed in their landlords’ houses as domestic help. Others turn to loan sharks (Velasco, 2014).

Personal, Work and Living Conditions of the Sacadas

Characteristics of Sacada Workers

Of the 168 sacada workers interviewed, slightly more than half (54%) were able to reach but not graduate from elementary school. About the same number (51%) came from Negros Oriental. They have worked as sacada for an average of 11 years (ranging from less than one month to 53 years). Their nature of work was

mainly harvesting (53%), followed by hauling (28%). A few others did weeding and sugarcane peeling. Sacadas worked for an average of 10 hours a day and six days per week.

Four out of ten (43%) respondents were hired by a contractor while the others decided to work as sacada on their own (29%) or with the prodding of a friend or neighbor (24%). A big majority (83%) said that they did not pay anything to the contractor. This could indicate their lack of knowledge about the income distribution arrangement that is taking place in the sacada contracting business.

Table 1. Sacada Workers' Perception of Family's Living Condition

Perceptions	Batangas	Negros Oriental	Negros Occidental	Total
	N = 53	N = 63	N = 52	N = 168
Able to sufficiently provide for all its needs.	43%	19%	10%	24%
Sometimes fails to provide all for its needs.	32%	48%	40%	40%
Oftentimes unable to provide for its needs.	6%	24%	25%	18%
Finds it really difficult to provide for its needs.	15%	10%	23%	15%

The above table shows that the sacadas' families were generally able to provide for their needs but not all the time. They reasoned out that it was because their income was very insufficient given their numerous expenses (mainly on food).

Respondents were asked to compare the living condition in their place of work to that of their own community. Many (45% of 168) said that their place of work is much better than their place of residence while slightly more than one-fourth (27%) considered the conditions in both locations as just the same. The next table shows the descriptions given by respondents of their own community.

Table 2. Survey Respondents' Description of their Place of Origin

Living condition in place of origin	Batangas	Negros Oriental	Negros Occidental	Total
	(N=53)	(N= 63)	(N= 52)	(N= 168)
Own community far from the city; difficult to reach	55%	54%	63%	57%
Many unemployed people.	62%	41%	38%	47%
Many people not having anything to eat due to poverty.	68%	29%	44%	47%
Many children unable to go to school.	74%	37%	48%	53%
Own community lacks basic facilities (school, health center, etc.)	28%	32%	48%	36%
Own community lacks basic services (education, health, etc.)	47%	27%	60%	45%
Poor road condition	55%	46%	69%	57%
Often flooded	64%	27%	58%	50%
Own community has peace and order problem.	38%	22%	27%	29%

Problems with distance, road condition, and education were most commonly cited by the sacada respondents. However, while they view their place of work as much better than their own community, sacada respondents usually experienced body pains, lack of sleep, and homesickness; these are aggravated by insufficient food, absence of health services, and sometimes relationship issues with their fellow sacada worker.

The following case illustrates the typical work and living conditions of sacada workers.

Case of Tito

Tito, 21 years old, is from Mabinay, Negros Oriental. His live-in partner of five years, Jessa, is 19 years old. The couple is blessed with a one year old baby girl. They all lived with 40 other migrant workers in a big concrete living quarter by the main road along Cadiz Crossing, Daga, Cadiz City.

Tito was one of the 40 “tabaseros” or sugar cane cutters brought to Hacienda Bayabas, Cadiz- Agro by a contractor from Antique. The group arrived on May 1 and their contract ended in June of the same year (2014) when the central mill closed. “Tabaseros” who brought their families normally lived in separate tents or quarters, according to the foreman. However, since the contractor was in a rush to get the 40 “emergency workers” settled, Tito’s family had to stay in the same quarter as the others.

The living quarter is a big but messy, cluttered, dimly lit quarter made of concrete walls (10x20 meters) and tin roof. Each worker has a cubicle or sleeping area (3 x 3 meters), and a double decked bed made of Gmelina wood. The young couple had to hang a blanket and used plastic rice bag to serve as a wall for their own cubicle. There are only two big windows on one side of the quarter, and ventilation

comes through small (4 x 12 inches) openings on the other end by the ceiling. There is a cooking area inside the quarter which is good for six people cooking at a time, using charcoal. The rest do their cooking outside using three stones to support the cooking pots. There is water from an artesian well manually pumped near the quarter for all purposes: cooking, drinking, washing, and bathing. A small sari-sari store owned by the contractor is attached to the entrance of the quarter. And there are also toilets inside the quarter.

Before coming to Negros Occidental, Tito's family lived with his parents. Tito is third among nine children. Their house is made of bamboo and nipa shingles. Their place is mountainous, remote and they had to walk three hours to reach the main road. The family plant corn, bananas, sweet potatoes in a three hectare "kaingin," or slash and burn agriculture area, which they claim "they own." They also engage in charcoal making. There were no livelihood opportunities so Tito and his four older siblings had to find work elsewhere. In recent years, five of them worked as "tabaseros" in Negros Occidental.

Tito worked for six days a week. Sunday is a free day. He received Php130 per ton per day, with his group's performance of 13 tons (output of 10 workers). According to the "cabo" or foreman, Tito is a good worker and he stayed with his original team. In each team, the workers would appoint from among themselves their leader. The team would strategize how to fast track their daily work. Their daily routine consisted of the following: wake up at 5 a.m., take breakfast, take a bath; go to the sugar cane fields at 6 a.m.; work until 9 a.m., go back to the quarter, take lunch; work in the field from 1-5 p.m.; and have dinner at 6-7 p.m. Their only social activity was their team meeting at 9 p.m., during which they discussed their work and strategy for the following day.

Tito considered his “tabasero” or cut and load work as both light and hard work. The lighter part was the cutting of canes which was done through longer hours. The harder part was the loading of heavy canes through shorter hours. Many times Tito would complain to Jessa of body pain, exhaustion, and sleepless nights due to aching muscles. What he liked best was the fact that they were assured of three meals a day and he got paid regularly.

Institutional Support System

As the government’s direct response to the plight of sacadas, the DOLE issued Department Order No. 08-10, Series of 2010 (Guideline on the Implementation of the Integrated Services for Migratory Sugar Workers (I-SERVE) Project in November 2010. The guideline is pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 3 of Section 9 of Republic Act No. 6982 (Sugar Amelioration Act of 1991) and paragraph 2 of Section of Rule VIII of the Amended Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) and the Department Order No. 35-02, Series of 2002, and upon the recommendation of the Sugar Tripartite Council as embodied in its Resolution No. 9, Series of 2010.

I-SERVE SACADAS Project is an integrated approach geared towards changing the socio-economic condition of the migratory sugar workers (MSWs) by augmenting their income, ensuring compliance of employers / contractors to protective and welfare policies, and providing the workers the opportunity to participate in policy making processes so that their problems and concerns may be addressed appropriately. This is supposed to be accomplished through capacity building interventions, strengthening enforcement of existing policies on their protection and welfare, facilitating access to social protection, and providing opportunities to workers to participate in decision making processes. These include all migratory sugar workers (MSW) and their families who are interested to benefit from employment and income generating projects, and other support services.

Initially, the project was to be implemented in Regions V, VI and VII. Replication in other areas with high concentration of MSW shall be subject to availability of funds.

In a report, Labor and Employment Secretary Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said that a Php10.7 million fund had been allotted for the project that would provide for social protection and welfare for sacadas, and strengthen the enforcement of existing policies under RA 6982, or the Sugar Amelioration Act, and the DOLE Department Order 18-02 on migratory sugar workers. The project also intended to strengthen Sagip Batang Manggagawa Program for child laborers in sugar plantations and advocacies aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labor under RA 9231. She further said that there were initially about 2,000 families or 30,000 sacadas in selected communities in the pilot provinces of Aklan, Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, Antique and Camarines Sur who would benefit from the I-SERVE package of services (DOLE, 2010).

However, the communities and local government units visited by the team hardly knew about the DOLE's I-SERVE SACADAS, perhaps since it was only promulgated in 2010. They have not submitted any proposal for funding by the latter. An interview with the DOLE's I-SERVE SACADAS project focal point revealed that it already supported some projects in its covered regions; unfortunately, not in the areas that were sampled for the study.

A series of Presidential Decrees was issued in 1970-71 for amendments to the domestic sugar amelioration fund. The President directed the Sugar Quota Board to issue an order for the collection of a "Stabilization Fee of P1.00 per picul on all sugar produced, 90 % of which would be distributed to the sugar workers and/or disposed of according to any agreement between the employer and the labor union of his employees, and the balance of 10% would form the working fund of the Sugar

Industry Foundation.” This was further amended on 21 December 1974 through Presidential Decree No. 388, which ordered the Secretary of Labor to issue the necessary rules and regulations on the proper and equitable implementation of the social amelioration program of the sugar industry ("Presidential Decree No. 621," 1974).

The Sugar industry has a social component, benefiting sugarcane workers. Through the Social Amelioration Fund (SAF), a lien is imposed on the volume of sugar produced. This fund is shouldered by sugar planters and millers and collected by the Bureau of Rural Workers. The benefits for the sugarcane workers under the lien include cash bonus, death benefit, maternity benefit, educational grant and livelihood projects (Sugar Master Plan Foundation, Inc., 2010).

A DOLE representative who handles the social amelioration program of the sugar industry in Batangas province shared that the government and the milling districts agreed to give cash bonus for small sugar plantation workers. Each would receive Php20-30 as accumulated fund, which DOLE deposits in a bank. According to him, funds had not been distributed because workers already left. Also, the amount was very small and for workers to go to the DOLE office to receive it would not be cost-efficient as they would have to shoulder the transportation cost. Funds forfeited are brought to the Treasury.

Although discussions regarding social amelioration programs for the sacadas took place among sugarcane planters associations and cooperatives, some key informants said that it would be difficult to comply with the government's social amelioration requirements owing to the sacadas' temporary period of stay in the communities and the seasonal nature of their work. Moreover, some sacadas themselves are not interested in receiving benefits because they believe that these will be deducted from their already insufficient wages.

Survey respondents were asked whether they had received any form of support from any agency or organization to help them with their basic needs. Majority of the respondents from Batangas (70%), Negros Oriental (54%) and Negros Occidental (62%) answered in the negative. For the few who did, they named the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) through its 4Ps and the DOLE as service providers.

Analyses, Conclusions and Implications

The findings reveal that the relationship patterns between the *hacenderos* and the sugar plantation workers/sacadas have not changed much over the years. As reported in 1990:

There was no equal distribution of benefits. Sugar has brought a lot of fortune and has enriched the sugar barons and foreign transnational corporations, and added to the government coffers as well but the sugar workers have not benefited from it. The life of the sugar workers has not been uplifted, and yet, they are the ones who labored hard for it. They toiled in the fields from dawn to dusk, enduring the heat of the sun and the coldness of the rain, suffering all the bitterness of hard work. But never have they tasted the sweetness of their produce. (Asia Watch Report, 1990, p. 89)

The sacadas have remained poor and low- paid, forced to bear the scorching heat of the sun and the back-breaking nature of their work. Despite these, the percentage shares of the income of both owner and contractor are much higher compared to that of the sacadas. This reflects the unequal distribution of power and resources as the sacadas have almost no option to negotiate and decide on what would be a 'fair' and 'just' share amidst their hard work and sacrifices.

Further, sacada workers receive no forms of social protection beyond their wages. Although cognizant of their plight, they suffer in silence. Without a collective voice (no organization to back them up), they simply accept that because of their low education and the absence of livelihood options in their own community, they could not rise above their impoverished condition. In short, they have been disempowered by the virtual absence of opportunities for an alternative way of living, stemming from both personal limitations and unfavorable community environment coupled with the lack of institutional support from the barangay and higher governmental structures.

The sugar mill industry admittedly has not been supportive of the plight of sacadas. They have no programs or services that directly cater to them because they only concentrate on the best interest of the industry itself, and that of the sugarcane plantation owners. The transitory nature of sacada work has become an excuse for the milling companies to not provide the benefits that normally accrue to ordinary workers. But as they say, “if there is a will, there is a way”. The bottom-line is, sacadas have not been a priority (even by the local government units) because they come in and go from their place of work. They do not have a voice because they are transients and ‘strangers’ in their workplace, and are overly dependent on their *cabo* or team leader who exercises much control over their daily routines and resources.

The sacadas describe their own communities less favorably than their place of work. The conditions in their own communities have pushed them to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. They consider sacada work as better than the one they had at home. At least, they get to eat three meals a day and have regular earnings during their six months at work. They view ‘exploitation’ in a different light, that is, as a ‘necessary’ means to survive. Thus, their personal, work and overall living conditions in their home province and in their place of work have not created opportunities for their self-empowerment and transformation.

Ledwith's proposition that empowerment is not an alternative solution to the redistribution of unequally divided resources but rather the act of providing the necessary tools to shape the whole person and promote a critical way of thinking and consciousness may apply in this particular case. Sacadas may need to develop critical thinking about their situation before they can seek changes in their work relations and conditions. But the political and economic environment will need to be adjusted to facilitate the change process.

The communities of sacadas lacked control to create sustainable structures, processes and mechanisms. Being among the least developed communities, they do not have adequate capacities and resources to enable their constituents to resort to alternative means of living. Further, the sacadas have not been helped to "take action to enhance their well-being" as posited by Garlick (2012). Within poor communities, meeting the requisites for economic and social transformations remains a strong challenge.

Institutional support for the sacadas has been wanting. Thus far, many of the sacadas interviewed have not been assisted by any government agency or by any non-government organization, except for issues concerning child labor in sugarcane plantations. Although the development of the I-SERVE SACADAS project is a laudable move by the government (in terms of policy and program support), its actual contributions in addressing the plight of the sacadas have yet to be established.

To recapitulate, there is absence of the elements of 'empowerment' among the sacadas. The study thus affirms the framework of analysis.

To empower the sacadas, concerned individuals or organizations can help them develop a critical mindset about their situation – what can be done, what they can do, and what they will do. The *strengths perspective* in social work does not deny that a problem exists but rather recognizes that people have the innate capacity to address it. Empowerment involves enabling the sacadas to access opportunities for economic self-sufficiency through livelihood skills building, and building their knowledge, social awareness and self-confidence. At the same time, there is a need to pursue active advocacy and mobilization to confront the social and economic inequities that pervade their work environment.

More specifically, the author suggests the following courses of action:

- Facilitate their access to alternative livelihood opportunities coupled with raising their level of self-confidence to address the specific issues that confront them and their families.
- Conduct massive information and education campaigns about the situation and needs of the sacadas and their families to garner support for their cause and ensure respect for their human rights.
- Vigorously advocate for the passage of law that will provide social protection to the sacadas – ensuring their entitlements to social security, health and similar benefits.
- Form an association of sacadas in every community where they are located to facilitate critical awareness-raising, capacity building and social mobilization.
- Integrate a session on the plight of sacada workers in discussions of development issues.
- Develop a course module on organizing and working with the sacadas, including building partnerships with organizations that deal with their issues.

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