

Good Food Community: A Social Enterprise Story

With permission from the presentation of Ms. Enid Kathleen B. Madarcos, Chief Development Officer (Social Enterprise Development Partnerships, Inc.) during the CEM Seminar Series last August 29, 2017

What makes social entrepreneurship a unique business model is its pursuit not just of making profit per se but for the transformation of this profit into something that includes people and planet, therefore raising the banner for a more inclusive development. Social enterprises continue to innovate with hopes of bringing about social change.

The British Council report, "A Review of Social Enterprise Activity in the Philippines", found that in 2007, there were at least 30,000 social enterprises in the Philippines with majority being run by cooperatives and associations. The number is expected to have grown over the decade as the country continuously sees policy changes that encourage the growth and presence of these enterprises. In recent years, the country has seen the growth and expansion of the likes of Messy Bessy (producer of all-natural cleaning products made by young adults who survived abuse), Taclob (makers of backpacks from recycled materials and produced by Yolanda survivors), Jacinto & Lirio (producer of hyacinth-based products), and many others.

One of the best business models for social enterprises to date is the **Good Food Community** (GoodFoodCo.) with its tagline, "let's change the world with food". The enterprise started with a group of friends who are driven by their desire to improve the quality of life of farmers. Based on an environmental scanning, the group found that poverty among farmers was due to the lack of income. Small farmers cannot compete with large supermarkets that provide better access to consumers. Meanwhile, the group also found that there is opportunity in the growing number of socially aware and health conscious consumer in Metro Manila, which then increases the demand for organic produce. Seeing the match, the group started to organize farmers into a cooperative and encouraged them to engage in organic farming. To test the market, they organized a gathering wherein they prepared dishes for prospective customers to try and from then on, they welcomed orders for organic produce. Eventually, the enterprise developed a subscription system

wherein for a fixed amount, customers will receive a weekly supply of vegetables straight from the farm in a form of *bayong* which they can repeatedly use. To ensure supply, the group developed a system for checking supply from planting to delivery, at the same time, complying with government regulations and book-keeping procedures. They continuously provide trainings especially to women in the community on how to engage in organic farming.

To further the enterprise's presence, it launched its logo and bags for branding. It also established a website and Facebook page which showcase its documented activities. The enterprise regularly joins events and grabs the opportunities to promote its products and services including features in newspapers and television. At present, the GoodFoodCo. has expanded from 4 pick-up points to 10 and has benefited 5 farming communities. It strives to realize its vision to become "a nationwide movement of socially responsible consumers supporting community-shared agriculture" and continues its mission to be a "social enterprise that uplifts the lives of farmers by bringing them into community with socially responsible consumers".

Stories like this are testimony to the contributions of social enterprises in inclusive growth. However, these enterprises still face numerous challenges. The Philippines has to improve in terms of ease of doing business and develop further business support services that are social enterprise-friendly. Funding is also needed since these enterprises are mostly micro to small enterprises which are inadequate in risk and financial controls as well as human resource management. However, with the right support system and capacity building, these enterprises will be able to sustain themselves in the long term and their overall impact towards development.



Source: GoodFoodCo. website
(<https://good-food-coop.myshopify.com/collections/gulay-pambahay>)



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