



SUSTAINABLE UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: ENACTUS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP BEST PRACTICES IN THE PHILIPPINES

CARMELO JOHN E. VIDAL, IMELDA E. CUARTEL, AND DARWIN M. JUGUILON

University of Luzon
carmelovidal@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Enactus is an international network of university students that initiate educational outreach projects undertaken in more than 1,600 university campuses in 36 countries offering the opportunity to develop leadership, teamwork and communication skills through learning, practicing and teaching the principles of free enterprise. The social entrepreneurship initiatives under Enactus introduce concepts such as market economics, personal and financial success and business ethics to marginalized groups and communities. Against this backdrop, this descriptive-documentary study attempted to determine the profile of best practices in educational outreach projects of Enactus teams in the various HEIs in the Philippines and probed into the effective use of entrepreneurial action to empower people to improve their livelihoods in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable way. These social entrepreneurship projects, ventured in the provision of livelihood to marginalized sectors like rebel-returnees, housewives, out-of-school youth and indigenous people featuring best practices relative to manufacturing and marketing of innovative and organic products in addressing of social problems through entrepreneurial action and meeting the triple bottom-line requirements of social enterprises – people, planet and profit. These projects involved the process of seeing opportunities, taking action and enabling progress towards ensuring quality of life and standards of living of their intended beneficiaries.

Keywords: *Social Entrepreneurship, Enactus Philippines, Social Entrepreneurship*

1. INTRODUCTION

With the end in view of implementing integrative and participatory strategies attuned to the achievement of the core of the Millennium and Sustainable Development Goals (M/SDGs) that range from reducing poverty to improving health care especially among children and women, increasing literacy levels and ensuring environmental stewardship, the perspective in development brought in the concept of social entrepreneurship that backs up the article of Clark (2010) in <http://content.undp.org> to promote the economic recovery as a way to achieve the MDGs.

Corollarily, Yunus (2005), as mentioned in www.globalurban.org, in his treatise “Eliminating Poverty through Market-Based Social Entrepreneurship,” capsulated the essence of social entrepreneurship with this thesis that the most important step to ending poverty is to create employment and income opportunities for the poor. Indeed, social entrepreneurship has become very important in the context of the race for globalization in the purview of poverty alleviation in both developed and developing countries.

The idea of business opportunity and entrepreneurial development through social entrepreneurship in meeting the challenges of the 21st Century World has led to formation of organizations and redirection of existing institutions like the Enactus, formerly Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE), which was established in 1975 in the United States.



Enactus Team teach important concepts through educational projects, including market economics, entrepreneurship, personal and financial success, and business ethics to better themselves, their communities and their countries.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have always had a strong social mission and work extensively within and support their local communities. More recently we have seen a renewed focus in this area through the significant role that universities play in supporting and developing social enterprise.

Social enterprise provides students and graduates with the opportunity to develop enterprise skills, which are applicable in all types of business, and to actively demonstrate these skills to potential employers; it offers an opportunity for staff to develop enterprise solutions within their own areas of interest; and it enables educational institutions to interact with and offer solutions to local businesses or in response to local issues and work closely with the community.

The contribution of HEIs to social enterprise forms part of a wider sector that makes a significant contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of the country. HEI engagement with social enterprise is at a relatively early stage and the knowledge of what universities have to offer across the wider social enterprise sector can be variable. For the Philippines, as in every country around the world, promotion of social entrepreneurship is facilitated by Enactus Teams in more than 30 active HEIs that are annually evaluated where top performing teams are recognized to have excelled among the various HEIs based on the criterion with the following elements: Relevant economic, social and environmental factors considered; Target audience(s) effectively empowered; People in need targeted; Business and economic concepts and an entrepreneurial approach applied; and Quality of life and Standard of living for its project beneficiaries improved as cited by Sison (2012).

With the foregoing premises, the investigation zeroed in on accounting for the impact of the social entrepreneurship projects of the top Enactus Teams that featured their best practices across the Archipelago that were adjudged top performers for the Academic Years 2015 and 2016. Results of the study, will serve as point of reference for future Enactus projects and by the different teams in the country for relevant and effective project management educational outreach towards sustainable social entrepreneurship.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Consistent with the research objective, this investigation employed qualitative approach particularly utilizing the multiple case study. To a large extent, analysis and interpretation of the meaning of what is being described. The only elements that the researcher manipulates are his methods of description and by the way in which he analyzed.

To this end, the researchers used documents in exploring causation in order to find underlying principles. Case studies as per the definition of Thomas as mentioned by Dul and Hak (2008) are analyses of persons, events, decision, xxx or projects that are studied holistically by one or more methods. Various Enactus documents and records specifically, but is not limited to, the annual reports of the higher education institution-members of Enactus Philippines, the national organization of the international organization were reviewed to attain the said purpose. The annual reports of the teams were perused and assessed guided by the Enactus Judging Criterion. This mandatory report provides overview of the Enactus team efforts, results and achievements. It also included information on future plans for growth and expansion.

An in-depth scrutiny of the written records constituted the main part of the data-gathering process. Series of review were observed in order to extract the most reliable data for the study from the seven (7) subject-



Enactus teams. Due to ethical considerations, the teams are assigned with codes as Enactus Team A (from General Santos City), Enactus Team B (from Laguna), Enactus Team C (Tagbilaran, Bohol), Enactus Team D (Sibalom, Antique), Enactus Team E (Nueva Vizcaya), Enactus Team F (Isulan, Sultan Kudarat) and Enactus Team G (Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat). These Teams were adjudged as the top performers for academic years 2015-2016 by competent panel of evaluators representing multi-national companies, industry experts and government/non-government agency representatives.

The data generated were then validated with the observations and responses of the selected Enactus team advisers, project leaders and the members gathered in the course of the informal interviews. Enactus Philippines staff were also covered in the validation process.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Seeing Opportunity

Seeking to address unemployment, financial crisis, environmental issues such as improper disposal of solid waste and depletion of natural resources as well as spread of diseases, Enactus Team A implemented a project that leveraged on the abundance organic and indigenous materials in the area involving housewives, the University's auxiliary staff, alternative learning system (ALS) students with their teachers and out-of-school youth in creating positive change by converting raw materials into highly marketable products that served as source of additional income for the project beneficiaries and their families and endeavored to boost their self-esteem by increasing their purchasing power.

For Enactus Team B, as the area of concentration is home to farmers and rebel returnees, the Team deemed it significant to concentrating on agricultural development as way to mainstreaming marginalized sectors in the society with the improvement of their farm management capacity. The Team ventured into formulation of fertilizer and introduced alternative farming techniques. It also saw the potentials of putting in place integrated farming system to upscale the beneficiaries' productivity.

Meanwhile, for Enactus Team C, it addressed the community hardly hit by a catastrophic disaster in 2015 leaving its people in dire need of financial assistance and technical support in recovering from the damages brought about by a 7.2 magnitude earthquake in terms of lives and properties resulting to displacement of families and million-worth of losses in infrastructure. The Team have thought of utilizing locally-abundant resources for livelihood purposes while at the same curbing carbon emission that is detrimental to the environment.

However, for Enactus Team D, challenged by scarcity of raw materials unsustainable organic farming, low demand for the agricultural produce of its beneficiaries, lack of technological know-how on the modern farming practices, low-yielding farming practices, low profit margin, insufficiency in capital/financial resources, lack of marketing and entrepreneurial competence of the farmers and widely dispersed harvest time, the group introduced livelihood packages consisting of organic farming and production of tea and its derivatives out of native ginger and turmeric.

In like manner, Enactus Team E ventured in rural-urban organic gardening in the barangays (villages) of Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, and promoted environmental conservation sense through 3 R's (reuse, reduce and recycle). Also engaged in organic production of fertilizer through vermi-composting, mudfish, and balut (fertilized duck egg), Enactus Team F initiated a project that centered on issues relative to climate change. In the case of Enactus Team G, it pursued initiatives consistent with food security and urban poor problems.



Taking Action

Guided by its aims, the Team A executed a three-phase project consisting of (1) training 10 unemployed housewives on the use and health benefits of stevia (natural sweetener) as alternative to the commercial sugar, stevia jam and wine making and product development with emphasis on quality assurance; (2) manufacturing and production of the new and innovated products; and (3) marketing through segmentation, diversification and promotion of the products.

Motivated by its goals, Team B designed and intervention employing a systematic model of: (i) equipping the farmer-beneficiaries with the necessary business and entrepreneurial skills and registration of the association with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) (short-term); (2) conduct of series of capability enhancement trainings, capital build-ups and focusing on addressing environmental factors (medium-term); and ensuring sustainability through comprehensive production and marketing schemes (long-term).

Liberating from financial distress as its primary goal, Team C has developed a community-based entrepreneurial venture out of waste material from the coconut trees that abound in the place that is an environmentally-sound solution in improving the fruit-bearing capacities of tree while at the same time prevents vector-borne disease by eliminating the breeding ground of the dengue-carrier mosquitoes and reduces carbon emission via proper waste management.

Team D created 5 part-time jobs and increased student-beneficiaries by 384% to support their financial needs, augmented income of farmer-beneficiaries, afforded \$ 435.00 to 100 farmers through the SLP-DSWD, generated income in the amount of \$1027.00 with the tea product, trained the beneficiaries on various soft and hard skills, diverted about 120 tons of solid waste, provided access to clean and sustainable energy source and promoted health lifestyle with natural, organic and chemical-free products.

Team E introduced the concept of rural-urban gardening as well as organic farming where they put up a social enterprise in collaboration with the farmers and the local government units plus people's organization.

Similarly, Teams F and G invested on series of financial literacy sessions and livelihood trainings taking into account green technology and community-based business models.

Enabling Progress

The project of Team A heightened community partners' self-esteem and reinforced beneficiaries in terms of business ethics and marketing strategies. It also amplified the assurance for social empowerment and maximized the use of natural resources by creating, innovating and sustaining eco-friendly product thereby promoting environmental preservation and conservation.

The Team generated USD 7,000.00 (est.) profit from June 2016 to June 2017 for Allura Soap and opened opportunities for working students, women of Purok Pitogo and farmers a network for an income generating source. The products are registered with DTI, IPO, DOST and DOLE.

Team B, considering the triple bottom line impact of the project, the following outputs and outcomes were noted:

Resiliency and sustainability trainings were conducted by the Team delving on climate change adaptation initiatives on crop and farm management. Further, series of livelihood skills trainings were offered to the beneficiaries in stabilizing the economic status of the group. These initiatives gave former armed



revolutionary group member –beneficiaries the opportunity to be back in mainstream of the society improving their self-esteem and enabling them to become more productive members of their communities. As a result of the project implementation by the Team C, 7 unemployed, lowly housewives were energized by increasing their earning power enabling them to earn an average of \$10.00 per month to augment their family's income and contributing to the association fund savings equal to 28% of the total product sales.

Through of the interventions of Team D, healthy lifestyle was promoted with the use of all-natural, organic and chemical-free native ginger and turmeric products which at the same time improving their project beneficiaries' income in the amount of \$1,030.00. In like manner, the student-beneficiaries posted increase in income by 384%, the farmers increased their income to 100% and provided \$435.00 for the farmers in the SLP/DSWD initiative in 2016.

Team E reached out to 20 households enabling them to earn a net sales amounting USD 2,800.00. The team also organized their beneficiaries and provided them financial literacy and entrepreneurial development trainings for financial independence.

The beneficiaries of Team F were able to generate a net income amounting to USD 7,400.00 converting 3600 kg of trash and reducing waste. Moreover, organic produce were harvested and provided healthy food source for the beneficiaries and the market. Organic farming restored soil fertility and maintained biological diversity. The 3-crop harvest enabled the beneficiaries to generate an additional income of USD 1,000.00. Team G improved its beneficiaries' confidence and self-esteem through entrepreneurial skills that gave them the opportunity to augment their family income through sustainable livelihood. Moreover, the Team collaborated and closely coordinated with local government units for regular monitoring and evaluation of the project.

4. CONCLUSION

The top Enactus teams in the Philippines implemented social entrepreneurship projects exhibiting best practices that are determined on the basis of the three performance indicators: seeing opportunity such that focus is on relevance and urgency of the actions based on locally abundant resources; taking actions, i.e. using sustainable business and sound economic practices; and enabling progress or develop innovative business models based on risk, commitment and a willingness to follow through.

Evidently, these initiatives equip the target audience with the knowledge, skills, and/or confidence to move from dependency to self-determination and independence through collaboration and with a strong focus on long-term capacity building. Further, entrepreneurial action is an integrated point, clarifying the broad range of activities that are delivered as project solutions resulting in the demonstration of creativity, innovation and an entrepreneurial culture through the team's efforts such as that of pioneering new approaches and designs, using innovative solutions, developing new opportunities, constantly striving to enhance substantially any existing projects, utilizing industry experts, and the like, thus enabling more lives impacted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researchers are pleased to recognize the people behind the realization of this research study. Their support and trust made possible the completion and fulfillment of scholarly pursuit.

Special mention and heartfelt gratitude is extended to: (1) University of Luzon – Dagupan City, Philippines; (2) Enactus Philippines; and (3) Enactus Teams of Holy Trinity College of General Santos, University of



the Philippines – Visayas, Bohol Island State University, University of Antique, Nueva Vizcaya State University, and Sultan Kudarat State University – Isulan and Access Campuses.

REFERENCES

- Aronsson, M., & Birch, D., Education Matters: But Does Entrepreneurship Education? An Interview with David Birch. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*. Vol. 3(3), p. 289-292, 2004.
- Blenker, P., Dreisler, P., & Kjeldsen, J., Entrepreneurship Education–the New Challenge Facing the Universities: PILE group Aarhus School of Business and University of Aarhus, Working paper, 2006.
- Blok, V., Lubberink, R., Lans, T., Omta, S.W.F., Managing the Improvement of Entrepreneurship Education Programs: A comparison of universities in the life sciences in Europe, USA and Canada, 2013.
- Carpinetti, L. C. R., & De Melo, A. M., What to benchmark?: A systematic approach and cases, 2002.
- Clark, B. R., Creating Entrepreneurial Universities: Organizational Pathways of Transformation. *Issues in Higher Education*: Elsevier Science Regional Sales, 665 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10010 (paperback: ISBN-0-08-0433545; hardcover: ISBN-0-08-0433421, \$27), 1998.
- Dana, L. P., Towards a Skills Model for Entrepreneurs. *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*. Vol. 5(1), p. 4, 1987.
- Enactus Team Handbook 2015-2016, Enactus Worldwide, pp. 7-45, 2015.
- Fan-qi Zeng, Xiang-zhi Bu, Li Su, "Study on entrepreneurial process model for SIFE student team based on Timmons model", *Journal of Chinese Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 3 Iss: 3, pp.204 – 214, 2011.
- Garavan, T. N., & O'Cinneide, B., Entrepreneurship Education and Training Programmes: A Review and Evaluation–Part 1. *Journal of European Industrial Training*. Vol. 18(8), p. 3-12, 1994.
- http://www.enactusireland.org/wp-content/uploads/Judging_Criterion.pdf
- Lans, T., Gulikers, J., Assessing entrepreneurial competence in education and training. In A. Fayolle, ed. *Handbook of research in entrepreneurship education*. Vol. 3, international perspectives, 2010.
- Ridder, A., & van der Sijde, P., Raising awareness of entrepreneurship and e-commerce: a case study on student-entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management*. Vol. 3(5), p. 609-620, 2003.
- Sison, M., "The Social Entrepreneurship Projects of the University of Luzon Students In Free Enterprise: SIFE World Cup 2011 Achievements" Unpublished Thesis, University of Luzon, Dagupan City, Philippines, 2012.