

REACHING THE FARTHEST FIRST

The State of Social Enterprise in the Philippines

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Social Enterprise is
A business, with a primary
Social and/or environmental
purpose, which re-invests
to advance its
purpose or Mission.





EUROPEAN UNION

FOREWORD BY THE EU AMBASSADOR



The relationship between the European Union and the Republic of the Philippines is a longstanding one, which has broadened and deepened remarkably in recent years. Over the past four decades, the EU has been a major partner of the Philippines and has contributed more than a billion Euro (more than Php 60 billion) of grants to combating poverty and raising standards of living for the poor. This is echoed once again in the seven-year EU strategy for the period of 2014-2020 which is anchored on the Philippine Development Plan and puts focus on inclusive growth, a high trust society and a globally-competitive knowledge economy.

The overall framework of the EU development policy is the “**European Consensus on Development**” which sets out a shared vision and framework for action for development cooperation for the EU and its Member States. The Consensus takes account of a range of global challenges and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, including using the structure of the 5P’s: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. Poverty eradication remains the primary objective of development policy under the new Consensus. According to the European Consensus, the levels and geography of poverty and inequality have shifted and developing countries have become increasingly diversified. By 2030 the majority of the world’s poor will be concentrated in fragile and conflict-affected states and in sub-Saharan Africa, although substantial pockets of poverty will remain in some middle-income countries like the Philippines. Reaching the poor in such divergent situations requires varying approaches. Inequality within countries is a growing concern for growth and stability. Over 70% of the world’s population live in countries where inequality has increased over the last two decades.

The publication *Reaching the Farthest First* is a significant undertaking under the project jointly funded by the European Union and the British Council entitled “Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Social Enterprise Education and Development, (CSO-SEED)” which attempts to measure the current size and scale of social enterprises in the Philippines. Although the implementation of the project is focused only in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), the publication covers 206 social enterprises all over the Philippines and shall serve as an important baseline reference for the CSO-SEED project.

The EU support under the CSO-SEED project is in line with the inclusive growth through job creation focus of the EU strategy in the Philippines. Social enterprises as both a job creation and poverty alleviation tool, reaching the most impoverished and marginalised sector of society is a growing sector where its breadth and depth need to be understood more in order to create bigger impact. I hope that this publication will contribute to a better understanding of the operations of social enterprises and its potential for generating more jobs and for empowering communities and increasing their participation in the overall economy.

Franz Jessen

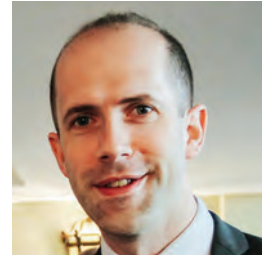
Ambassador

Head of Delegation

European Union to the Philippines



MESSAGE FROM THE BRITISH COUNCIL



The British Council aims to promote a friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and people worldwide, making a positive contribution in all of the countries where we operate and a lasting difference to the UK's security, prosperity and influence.

Our Global Social Enterprise programme is one of the ways we put this mission into practice. Social enterprise and social investment offer a mechanism of harnessing business activity for social and environmental ends. They offer a route beyond aid and grant-giving – a third way of addressing entrenched problems.

Drawing on the success of UK's approach to the sector, British Council in the Philippines initiated its own social enterprise programme in 2009. To date, we have trained close to 1000 individuals across the country through our programme. In the earlier years, our role has been to increase the awareness on social enterprise and to build the capacity in the sector. With European Union (EU) support, we expanded our reach to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in 2016 working with civil society, including cooperatives, non-profits and academia, government and chambers of commerce to build a robust social enterprise environment in ARMM, complementing traditional livelihood models. This project is called CSO-SEED or Strengthening CSO Participation in Social Enterprise Education and Development (CSO-SEED) for Decent Work, Job Creation and SME Development.

This report *Reaching the Farthest First: The State of Social Enterprise in the Philippines* is borne out of a strong partnership with the EU, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Philippine Social Enterprise Network (PhilSEN) and a joint desire to offer insight into an important sector. It seeks to provide an estimate of the size and economic contribution of social enterprises to the Philippine economy.

I hope that the results of the research will give the sector and its stakeholders an intimate understanding of general trends, strengths and challenges that can inform both policy and practice.

The findings and conclusions of this research provide a clearer picture of social enterprises in the Philippines. The social enterprise movement in the Philippines is growing and evolving fast. The report offers a snapshot of the state of social enterprises in the country and an evidence-based baseline that can guide future action.

Most importantly, I would wish to thank the individuals that participated in this research and the people of the Bangsamoro for their enthusiasm and active participation in CSO-SEED.

Nicholas Thomas

Country Director

British Council – Philippines



MESSAGE FROM PHILSEN

Social enterprises in the Philippines may be characterised as responses to the current development paradox of high poverty and inequality despite constant economic growth. Social enterprise stories in the country are moving not only increasing incomes of households but also remain true to certain causes such as poverty alleviation, gender empowerment, social inclusion, environmental awareness, among others.

Oftentimes when we relate to government and legislators, we are asked about the number of social enterprises, where are they located geographically and sector-wise and the extent of impact that these do for the people and the communities.

This research then is a very good attempt to qualify these questions beyond the anecdotes. It attempts to provide evidence of the growing sector, the promise of engaging both governments and the private sector and the challenges the sector face.

While we have initial gains to build upon, policy-makers are still enjoined to focus on the consistent social enterprise narrative of employing, engaging and empowering sectors which are almost always left behind, if not the farthest behind. Putting them in the forefront of social enterprise initiatives coupled with private sector and government support paints a picture that we can change the paradoxical story we are in – that of high economic growth with high poverty and growing inequality.

It is in this context also that the Philippine Social Enterprise Network together with the PRESENT Coalition, a group SE and like-minded organisations, resource institutions and advocates, have been pushing for the Poverty Reduction through Social Entrepreneurship (PRESENT) Bill to recognise the positive contributions of social enterprises in the Philippines.

We thank our partners in the British Council, the European Union and UNESCAP for trusting us in this endeavour. The same level of appreciation also extends to all who have participated in the survey. As we always say in the Network, let's continue to do good, do well and do right!

The PhilSEN Board of Trustees and Staff



About the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) serves as the United Nations' regional hub promoting cooperation among countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable development. The largest regional intergovernmental platform with 53 member States and 9 associate members, ESCAP has emerged as a strong regional think-tank offering countries sound analytical products that shed insight into the evolving economic, social and environmental dynamics of the region.

The Commission's strategic focus is to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which it does by reinforcing and deepening regional cooperation and integration to advance connectivity, financial cooperation and market integration. ESCAP's research and analysis coupled with its policy advisory services, capacity building and technical assistance to governments aims to support countries' sustainable and inclusive development ambitions.

About the ESCAP – British Council partnership

In February 2017, the British Council and ESCAP signed a collaborative agreement to promote the growth of social enterprise and impact investment across the Asia-Pacific region as a means of supporting progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Together we are cooperating to provide research, analysis, training, policy dialogues and offer guidance to support policy makers and other stakeholders in formulating and implementing policies and strategies that foster social enterprise and create enabling environments for impact investment.

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