



**Local Governments and Social Economy:  
co-creation of paths for a green and inclusive economy**

**GSEF Global Virtual Forum  
4-8 October 2020**

**Report format**

<b>Title of the session:</b>	Social Investment for Community Empowerment
<b>Type of session</b>	Self-Organised Session
<b>Language:</b>	English
<b>Date:</b>	October 5, 2021
<b>Time:</b>	4.30-6.30pm (Seoul time)
<b>Participants</b>	70

**Name of moderator**

<p><b>Opening and Closing Session Moderator:</b> Benjamin Quiñones, Jr, PhD. Founder, ASEC  <b>Plenary Session Moderator:</b> Dr. Nathalie Verceles, Executive Director of the University of the Philippines Center for Women's &amp; Gender Studies (UP-CWGS)</p>
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**Speakers**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ms. Emilia Setyowati, Board Secretary, Bina Swadaya Foundation, Indonesia</li> <li>2. Ms. Diordre Moraes, Manager, LEADS, Sri Lanka</li> <li>3. Ms. R. Keerthana, Director, Association of Social Services &amp; Community Development, Malaysia</li> <li>4. Josephine Parilla, Chairperson, PATAMABA WISE, Philippines</li> <li>5. Mr. Shah Abdus Salam, Founder &amp; CEO, Development Wheel &amp; DEW Crafts, Bangladesh</li> <li>6. Mr. Ravindra Dolare, Managing Director, Ecofrost Technologies Pvt Ltd, India</li> <li>7. Mr. Rolando Victoria, President &amp; CEO, ASKI Group of Companies, Philippines</li> </ol>
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**Main question**

<p>What should be the actions or strategies of individuals, governments, groups, societies, countries, to achieve a better and more inclusive world?          What key actions should be promoted from the local level?</p>
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1. The national Government/local government units (LGUs) should pass legislation/ordinance to give social enterprises legal personality through registration/ accreditation, and to provide technical and financial support for the development of accredited social enterprises, particularly those that employ people who are poor, marginalized, women, elderly, and/or with disabilities
2. The national Government/LGUs should proactively encourage social investors, impact investors and financing institutions to provide funding support to social enterprises by providing platforms for interface between investors/ financiers and the social enterprises.
3. Supporting organizations such as the Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC) and the national network partners of ASEC level up the “Social Investment for Community Empowerment” forum by including resource persons from the public and private sectors particularly those involved in extending support to social enterprises.
4. GSEF is kindly enjoined to include in future GSEF conferences a plenary session dedicated to discussions on public policies, programs and funding instrument in support of the development of social enterprises. ASEC strongly recommends GSEF support for the convening of the “Social Investment for Community Empowerment” session by inviting representatives from the public and private sectors to the said session.

#### Summary of presentations:

1. Ms. Emily Setyowati presented the Kelas Trubus of Bina Swadaya Foundation, a capacity building platform for social entrepreneurs in local communities that combines online training and offline/onsite exposure and practical application. The platform is offered to operators of micro and small entrepreneurs from rural communities for an affordable fee, and which has become attractive particularly those involved in establishing and operating the Badan Usaha Milik Desa (BUM Desa, or village enterprise). Bina Swadaya also facilitates the access of Kelas Trubus participants to input supply, credit, and market for the products of BUM Desa and the micro/small enterprises. Kelas Trubus provides a one-stop platform where social entrepreneurs avail of technical assistance for preparing their business plans as well as for accessing various resources for developing the village enterprise.
2. Ms. Diordre Moraes presented the primary product of LEADS - the compressed, stabilized, engineered blocks - which they offer largely to poor communities in order to improve their housing conditions. The low-cost blocks are produced using only 5% to 7% cement, its interlocking technique saves construction time, cost and labour and is convenient for plumbing and pipe-laying. It does not require plaster, further saving on cost and labour. It provides a cooler room temperature due to its thermal insulation properties, thus providing poor households an alternative low-cost housing material that enables them to enjoy decent living.
3. Ms. R. Keerthana presented the Bites and Beans Cafe, a social enterprise coffee shop established and operated by youth entrepreneurs from poor households in Malaysia. Bites and Beans Cafe sources its baked products from home-based women bakers in urban poor communities, providing employment and jobs to poor urban women. The clients of Bites and Beans are mostly the youth who patronize the cafe not only for the splendid taste of its coffee and pastries but also because they know their patronage helps financially the poor home-based women bakers. There have been inquiries from entrepreneurial-minded youth about the possibilities of replicating/establishing Bites and Bean cafe in other parts of Kuala Lumpur through franchising.
4. Ms. Josephine Parilla presented the Community Kitchen established by women members of the PATAMABA-Workers in the Informal Sector Enterprise, particularly in response to the economic dislocation of home-based



women micro-entrepreneurs due to the government's quarantine restriction on movements of people and goods. Home-based women micro-entrepreneurs suffered loss of sales and income, increasing hunger and malnutrition, especially among children. PATAMABA-WISE rented a small shop at the Angono Lakeside Eco Park of the municipal government and enjoined its women members to cook their best recipe and supply them for sale in the "Sarap Kusina" food stall of PATAMABA-WISE. Initially, the target clients of Sarap Kusina were the PATAMABA-WISE members, but since the food stall was located in a public place, it also drew other customers as clients. Packaging of the freshly cooked food items were neat, clean, attractive. Soon, there were online orders on top of the patronage of walk-in customers. In view of Sarap Kusina's growing business, PATAMABA-WISE has enjoined the members of PATAMABA-Youth to help in discharging the tasks involved in operating the community kitchen.

5. Mr. Shah Abdus Salam presented the Fair Trade people-to-people trading business of DewCrafts. DewCrafts works with the small scale artisans and producers in Bangladesh with the view to accessing fair trade markets in developed countries. Prior to their engagement with DewCrafts, crafts producers undergo orientation seminars Fair Trade principles and practices. They are exposed to and familiarized with the design of Fair Trade products that Fair Trade buyers have placed orders for. DewCrafts conducts training of the local craftsmen to inculcate the skills required for producing the Fair Trade products. Currently, DewCrafts is transitioning its operations to an e-commerce platform through which the local craftsmen may connect directly to raw material suppliers, financing institutions, logistics provider and Fair Trade buyers. Fair Trade as a people-to-people trading system enables local craftsmen to access Fair Trade buyers/customers in developed countries and benefit from higher price for their products and better income. Fair Trade products of Bangladeshi craftsmen are world-renowned for good quality & workmanship and attractive design.

6. Mr. Ravindra Dolare presented the modular solar-powered cold storage unit of EcoFrost Technologies Private Ltd which is economical and ecofriendly as well. It reduces wastage and ensures better value for fresh farm and fishery produce and raw processed meat. It is even suitable for use in remote areas where power supply is weak or none at all. It also operates using grid or alternative power supply from a generator set. When it's cloudy or stormy, the solar cold storage room automatically switches to the available alternative power supply. It charges itself completely with just 5-6 hours of grid power.

7. Mr. Rolando Victoria presented Micro-insurance - the people's social protection alternative. ASKI established the ASKI Mutual Benefit Association (AMBA) in 2006 in partnership with its member-clients. The primary microinsurance products of AMBA are the Basic Life Insurance (BLIP) and the Credit Life Insurance (CLIP). The ASKI member-clients are part owners of the enterprise. 5 out of 9 members of the Board are member-clients. The main advantages of ASKI microinsurance are the low-premium and fast processing claims (1-3-5 days) AMBA is a founding member of Microinsurance MBA Association of the Philippines. AMBA is also affiliated with the International Cooperative and Mutual Insurance Federation (ICMIF) in UK and Asia and the Oceania Association of ICMIF in Japan. As of September 30, 2021 AMBA had 194, 216 active members and 776,864 insured persons. For the period 2006 to August 2021, AMBA had benefited a total of 3,456 families who received insurance indemnities totalling Php 208.63 Million (USD 4,172,600). ASKI is open to partnership in extending microinsurance to overseas contract workers.



**Answers to the QUESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS:**

<p>1. <u>Full name:</u> Emilia Setyowati.  <u>Organizational affiliation:</u> Bina Swadaya Foundation  <u>Country of Participation:</u> Indonesia  <u>Answer:</u> : Yes, Bina Swadaya charges a modest fee for the maintenance cost of the platform.</p> <p>2. <u>Full name:</u> Diordre Moraes  <u>Organizational affiliation:</u> LEADS  <u>Country of Participation:</u> Sri Lanka  <u>-Answer:</u> LEADS enjoins the members of the community to help each other in building their own houses, so that the cost of manpower is borne by the members of the community. Since the raw materials for the bricks are available locally, and the cost of the bricks are affordable, most households of the community join hands to build better and more comfortable homes.</p> <p>3. <u>Full name:</u> R. Keerthana  <u>Organizational affiliation:</u> Association of Social Services &amp; Community Development  <u>Country of Participation:</u> Malaysia  <u>Answer:</u> Many of our customers, especially the youth, do admire the character of our coffeeshop especially because it helps poor women market their products. Some have expressed the desire to replicate it in their own communities but they don't have the needed capital.</p> <p>4. <u>Full name:</u> Josephine Parilla  <u>Organizational affiliation:</u> PATAMABA-WISE  <u>Country of Participation:</u> Philippines  <u>Answer:</u> We accept online orders but we can only arrange delivery service to nearby clients who reside in the vicinity of the Angono community. We have not made any arrangements yet with Grab Food delivery service.</p> <p>5. <u>Full name:</u> Ravindra Dolare  <u>Organizational affiliation:</u> Ecofrost Technologies Pvy Ltd  <u>Country of Participation:</u> India  <u>Answer:</u> Yes, we do have a sales office in Chennai. I'll give you my mobile phone number and let's arrange for your visit to our office.</p>	
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**Relevant Questions and Answers from Audience:**



## QUESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

**Question 1 :** On the Kelas Trubus service, does Bina Swadaya charge the trainees a fee?

**Question 2:** On the engineered blocks, does LEADS provide subsidies to the poor people to ensure that they can really use the bricks to build their own brick houses?

**Question3:** It appears that the Bites and Beans cafe can easily be replicated in other urban areas where there are home-based women bakers and youth who are willing and capable of running the Cafe. Has the Association considered replicating the cafe to serve other poor urban communities?

**Question 4:** The dishes of WISE Sarap Kusina are appealing and looks delicious. Do you accept online orders and also provide delivey service?

**Question 5:** I'm interested in the solar-power cold storage. It must be useful to our women cattle owners for their milk production and storage. Does your company have a sales outlet that I can visit? Our office is based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

**Add summary or conclusion of the moderator at the end of the session in case there was no closing remarks per presenter/speaker**

### Concluding remarks of Dr. Benjamin Quinones Jr, Moderator of the Closing session

Under the challenging conditions of the Covid19 pandemic, during which many have lost their jobs and sources of income, it is encouraging to note that social solidarity economy (SSE) organizations/enterprises (SSEOs) have found ways to survive and continue operations. It is highly commendable that the strategy for the continuing operations of the SSEOs featured in our session today have reached out to and collaborated with poor communities. This only goes to show that solidarity and cooperation with poor, disadvantaged people in crisis situations and in pursuit of solutions to social and economic needs is a viable strategy for building the resilience and recovery of local communities. When local communities have rehabilitated and recovered, this will spur the national economy to move forward.

I would like to congratulate ASEC for organizing this highly productive session and especially for creating a platform for dialogue between SSEOs and the potential clients and support organizations. ASEC should consider conducting more of this kind of sessions because it would certainly be beneficial for the advancement of SSEOs as well as for those people and institutions who are seeking practical solutions to the health and food problems confronted by ordinary people.

Finally, I would like to thank the resource speakers, the panel reactors, the participants, the ASEC secretariat and with a special shoutout for the GSEF secretariat for their valuable contributions in making this session fruitful.



Screenshots of the zoom session (preferably gallery view with all the participants, so please take a minute before closing the session to ask all the participants to turn on their videos and take a group photo. This can be also used for the video recording later.)

**ASEC-GSEF WORKSHOP. OCTOBER 5, 2021**

