Women’s Solidarity Initiatives in Promoting Rural Social Enterprises in the Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine women’s solidarity initiatives in promoting rural social enterprises in disaster-prone community. The research used a case study approach and data were gathered through survey, key informant interviews, and community observation. Longwe’s (1995) empowerment framework was employed as a guide in articulating how gender influences the emergence and development of social enterprise initiatives in the context of disaster management.

The study found that majority of the respondents were women, aged 30-39 years old (40%), married (78%), worked as rural farmers (50%), with household size of five (30%), and some belonged to an ethnic group (26%). Less than half of them (34%) attended elementary education and many had a monthly income of Php 1,000-3,000.00 only (42%). Research findings confirmed that SEs have emerged as a response to flooding incidence, which also resulted in the implementation of Marikina Watershed Rehabilitation program. Social enterprises were incubated by TSKC in collaboration with public and private sectors. The stages of women’s empowerment are reflected in the development and growth of these enterprises which include welfare, access, conscientization, mobilization, and control. Likewise, women were perceived as effective leaders in managing the organization (80%). Additional equipment (84%) and technical trainings (78%) were identified to be significant, especially for new women members engaged in reforestation and livelihood activities. Organizational membership can be further enhanced to encourage more indigenous people to participate and be helpful by sharing their indigenous knowledge in sustaining economic and environmental commitment.

Key words: rural social enterprises, women, social development, social entrepreneurship

INTRODUCTION

Social enterprises are continuously acquiring attention because of its rising impact in pursuing inclusive and transformative progress in the community development field (Bacq et al., 2013). The impacts in doing social good are largely driven by its concretized social objectives while harmonizing economic and environmental goals. The complementary support from social enterprises generates solutions to poverty-related issues which result to its recognition as global phenomenon (Defourny, 2001; Keh, 2009; Seelos & Mair, 2005).

Perez (2013) identifies the governance structure of social enterprise as one of the key barriers where if enhance, it can respond to the delivery of equitable and gender sensitive distribution of functions and responsibilities. There are also perspectives framing social
enterprise to empowerment of vulnerable sectors in the community such as women through acting as change agent in addressing complex social, economic, and environmental concerns (Datta & Gailey, 2012). In many cases, women take the lead in start-up social ventures and their involvement in non-profit sector is higher than men (Themudo, 2009). Because of the spaces given to women sector in SEs landscape, the concept of solidarity initiatives is further enhanced and developed. Kimbu and Ngoasong (2016) argued that women can be effective vectors of social entrepreneurship since they can “integrate social transformation and commercial goals in their business strategies while serving defined communities” (p.63). Nicolas & Rubio (2016) offered an interesting conclusion about this noting that gender gap has been lessened in the context of social entrepreneurship and women’s participation is shaped by the developmental stage of the country.

In the Philippine context, SEs have relatively strong presence since the country warrants the SEs movement. The long history of non-government organizations (NGOs) participation and collaboration became instrumental in the emergence of SEs in the country (Dacanay, 2012; Morato, 2019). Ballesteros & Llanto (2017) elaborated this by emphasizing that the country “has a social and cultural environment that is conducive to the framework of social entrepreneurship given that it has had a widespread focus on bottom-of-the-pyramid issues” (p.1). Academic scholars, development practitioners including policy makers firmly believe that social enterprise embraces the appropriate model for poverty reduction and inclusive growth. As noted by Ito & Shanaz (2019) in a policy brief titled Roadmap for Strengthening Social Entrepreneurship in the Philippines, “social enterprises have been recognized nationally and internationally for their potential to achieve development goals, as seen in their inclusion in the Philippine Development Plan 2017–2022 similarly known as AmBisyon Natin 2040” (p.2). In addition to this, Laylo (2018) noticed that there are four macro level enabling conditions that shape the emergence of social business enterprises in the Philippines. These are governance, socially inclusive economic approach, financial services, and entrepreneurial culture. He added that social business enterprises perform in two modes: “they provide basic social services that are supposed to be provided by the government at an affordable price and offer services at an above-average price compared to other commercial products in the market” (p. 6).

In terms of legal support, while there are two pending bills on SE namely PRESENT Bill (SB 176) and the Social Value Bill (HB 6085), the additional policies to strengthen MSMEs (e.g., R.A. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 and R.A. 11057 or the Personal Property Security Act) might benefit the existing SE ecosystem.

While there is a strong reaffirmation that social enterprises are contributing to poverty reduction efforts in the country (Dacanay, 2012), SEs in post-disaster contexts need further elaborations. There is also limited research in disaster studies that discuss the contribution of women’s entrepreneurial activities in the recovery of disaster-affected communities. While women’s participation through SEs is expanding, it is unfortunately less documented and observed in actual research. Thus, this study was conducted to determine women’s solidarity initiatives in promoting rural social enterprises in disaster-affected communities. Specifically, it sought to: (a) describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents; (b) explain the journey of TSKC towards managing social business enterprise; and (c) propose recommendations in further improving the capacity of TSKC as a social enterprise organization.
METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Positions of the Study

This study is anchored on Longwe’s (1995) empowerment framework. The framework takes off from contemplating the idea of progressive rank of equality that reflects the role of women in the emergence and development of rural social enterprises in disaster-prone communities. It also sheds light on how gender needs shape SEs and how SEs facilitate the transformation of gender relations in pursuit of the triple bottom-line perspectives (e.g., economic, social, environmental dimensions). By recognizing and emphasizing women’s issues such as equality in performing socio-economic and environmental roles in the project design, it deepens the discussions on the improvement of the design and enables to set appropriate strategies if the project activities are either in the negative or neutral level. The adoption of this empowerment model is meaningful in effectively demonstrating the case of a women’s group that is dedicated to exemplify the meaning of equality and empowerment in achieving their social objectives. Guided by the empowerment principles, it enhances the political standpoint and can assert behavioral change. While the sense of equality is portrayed in a hierarchical lens, the paper attempted to traverse inclusive ways of understanding other forms of inequalities in engaging in various entrepreneurial activities.

Locale of the Study

Antipolo is a first-class city with total land area of 29,680.861 hectares and has been the second largest among the Local Government Units (LGU) in Rizal Province. Approximately 60 percent of the city’s land area is classified as forestlands or public lands. The city is divided into two districts and is subdivided into 16 barangays.

Barangay Calawis, one of the upland barangays of Antipolo City, is situated in the foothills of Sierra Madre Mountain. It is bounded by the Municipality of Rodriguez on the north, Quezon province on the east, Barangay San Jose on the south, and Municipality of San Mateo on the west. It has a total land area of 9,1443.30 hectares that comprises 18.11% of the total land area of Antipolo. As of 2015, it has a total population of 4,252. Calawis was heavily affected by Typhoon Ondoy in 2009. The damages were seen largely in the agriculture and forestry sectors.

The reported incidence of severe flooding was attributed to the deforested condition of the Upper Marikina Watershed where Barangay Calawis is a part of. People in the area depend on kaingin as their main source of livelihood (Barangay Profile, 2017).

Research Design

The study employed the case study approach (Yin, 2014) in understanding women’s solidarity initiatives in managing rural social enterprises. Based on the SE literature, case study remains to be commonly employed by scholars in the field (Hadad, 2017; Shaw & de Bruin, 2013). Ylikoski (2019) share some thoughts on this by saying that the idea of mechanism-based theorizing provides a fruitful basis for understanding how case studies contribute to a general understanding of social phenomena (p. 14).

Case study offers an attempt to examine a certain phenomenon using an in depth analysis and contextual boundaries which is necessary and appropriate in the field of social entrepreneurship (Ridder, 2017). In this case, SE being explored as a localized solution to environmental problems and change agent to enhance women’s participation serve as context of carrying out case study in this research. Being considered in a nascent phase, it is essential for SE to be employed in different fields for it to attain theoretical and conceptual growth. Some scholars claim that case study may be used at various levels which include individual, collective or group, and organizational (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2014).
This study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were generated through survey interview (TSKC members), key informant interviews (selected TSKC officers & NGO representatives), and community observations. Secondary data came from project reports, government related documents and published journals in SE field. Part of the preparation, coordination was conducted with PBSP as one of the partner non-government organizations (NGOs) of TSKC prior to the actual study to ensure smooth conduct of the study. Representatives from PBSP also served as key informants.

Research Instrument

A survey questionnaire was used in collecting the primary data. The survey questions included socio demographic, organizational management, project management, and the nature of social enterprise engagement. The semi structured interview guide was formulated for the key informant interviews among selected officers of the organizations and representatives from the partner NGO, which has been instrumental in facilitating environmental and livelihood projects.

Data Collection, Analysis and Presentation

Fifty respondents (50) out of the ninety (90) members were interviewed from the case organization. Non-probability sampling technique was employed during the actual data collection. Descriptive statistics like percentage, frequency, and central measures of tendency were used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics, organizational membership, participation to reforestation activities of the respondents and perceived factors affecting project implementation and participation in social enterprise activities of the organization. Respondents were selected based on their availability, accessibility, and willingness to participate. Data from key informant interviews were used to support data from survey interviews. Community observations also supported the information given by key informants. Data were subjected to thematic analysis. Prior to the actual data collection, the researchers conducted a courtesy call with the officers of the selected community organizations. The partner NGO of the organization was coordinated with regards to the research objectives. Likewise, the consent of the members was requested before doing the survey interview. The consent letter was explained during the orientation meeting with the group.

Limitation of the study

The research originally planned to have a complete enumeration as the sampling design. Unfortunately, this was not attained due to several factors that include availability of the members during the actual conduct of survey, accessibility of the sitios (sub villages), and security issues.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The paper is structured as follows. First is about the selected case organization. It is followed by a discussion on how social enterprise has emerged in rural areas as a response to environmental concerns, and describes the spaces where women participate through solidarity initiatives which result to the development of social enterprises in rural communities.

Organizational Profile: TSKC as a Women-led People’s Organization

Tulungan Sa Kaunlaran ng Calawis Inc. (TSKC) is a non-stock, non-profit organization established in May 23, 2011. It started with 27 barangay volunteers as a response to the Typhoon Ondoy in 2009. Since then, it has been committed to restore, rehabilitate, and protect the Marikina Watershed. It is a women-led organization, since majority (70%) are women and the set of elected officers are all women. It is currently composed of 90 members. Accordingly, TSKC envisions a peaceful, abundant, progressive, and equal society where all members are politically, economically, and environmentally
empowered and aware of their social responsibility to enhance their entrepreneurial skills and productivity through climate-resilient agriculture. Their organizational mission are 1) to rehabilitate and protect the environment especially the Marikina Watershed; 2) to uplift the living condition of the members through its entrepreneurial development and capability building; 3) to enhance and defend the interest of the members for their mutual aid and protection; 4) to design and pursue programs that are beneficial to the members and security of the organization, including other activities not contrary to any law; and 5) to work in partnership with government agencies, nongovernment organizations, stakeholders and advocates for affirmative lawful undertaking.

Since its conception, TSKC was confronted with various difficulties and challenges on its operation, particularly on its financial sustainability. Despite this, the organizations strive to exist because of the determination of its members. The organization was registered and accredited by the Department of Labor and Employment on June 21, 2011, by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on December 2013, by the Bureau of Internal Revenue on January 2014, and lastly through the LGU City of Antipolo on August 27, 2013.

In 2011, TSKC had been a recipient of the rain forestation project of Fostering Peoples' Education, Empowerment and Enterprise (FPE3) and capacity building intervention of the Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (PEACE) Foundation Inc. which was funded by Manila Water Company through PDRF. The organization underwent various organizational strengthening through active participation in trainings and educational workshops conducted by PEACE Foundation Inc. from 2011-2013. It has been at the forefront when it comes to building networks and alliances with other People’s Organization, NGO, and government agencies.

The TKSC has served as one of the prime mov-
Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

All of the respondents were female, less than half were 30-39 years old (40%), 78% were married, the average household size is five members (30%). Majority of them (78%) were Roman Catholic. The respondents had low educational attainment. More than half (56%) of the respondents had either reached/finished elementary education, 28% had either reached/finished secondary education, 12% had reached until college level, and 4% were able to obtain vocational training. Half of them (50%) were working as upland farmers, some were housewives (34%), and the rest (12%) were working as security guard, barangay nutritionist, therapist, and bread maker. More than one-fourth of the respondents (26%) belonged to the Dumagat indigenous people. The mean number of years the respondents had lived in the community was 22 years.

Like any other rural communities, half of the members of TSKC’s income generating activity was farming and many of them (42%) belonged to poor households whose monthly income range from Php 1,000-3,000.00 only. In 2015, reports from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) pointed out that farmers, as one of the basic sectors in the country, has the highest poverty incidence at 34.3%. This is not something new since it has been the same socio-economic condition from 2006. Table 1 presents further details on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1. Socio demographic characteristics of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency (N=50)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizational and Project Development

The respondents were members (84%) and officers (16%) of the organization. Forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents had been with the organization for a year. According to the officers, these were the relatively new members who opted to join the organization because they witnessed how the organization worked for the environment coupled with the livelihood opportunities they were accorded. All of them reported that TSKC is a recognized community-based organization at the barangay and city level. This was supported by the accreditation certificate both from the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) and Municipal Local Government Unit (MLGU).

Most of the respondents (94%) were aware of its organizational vision. Many of them (80%) also agreed that women can take the leadership role within their organization, noting a difference when women took charge as officers. As shared by some of the respondents and informants:

*Kapag babae ang lider nyo, makikita mo na masinop sa documents, maayos ang priority, at mas madaming tulong ang nakukuha.*

When your leader is a woman, you will find that documents are properly secured, priorities are good, and more help is being availed of.

*Mas maayos na pamamalakad at masigasig maghanap ng proyekto upang magkaroon ng karagdagang kita.*

(Women have better management and actively seek for project to have additional income.)

Committee Head, TSKC

*Walang nagiving problema sa dokumento dahil nasisinop ito, matiyaga din sa mga gawain at mabilis mag desisyon.*
(There is no problem in terms of documents because these are organized well. They are patient in doing the activities and they can easily make decisions)

President, TSKC

Nahihikayat din ang ibang mga babae at nanay na makilahok sa samahan. Maasahan lalo na sa mga gawain tulad ng pagluluto at pag-aayos ng mga pagkain para sa mga company volunteers.

(They can encourage other women and mothers to participate in the organization. They are reliable especially among activities like cooking and food preparation for the company volunteers.)

Relationship Management Officer, PBSP

Majority of the respondents (70%) mentioned that they were interested to participate in livelihood and social enterprise engagements. Most of them (96%) revealed that they experienced an increase in income after joining various livelihood activities of TSKC. They perceived all their project activities to be highly acceptable (92%) since they knew that they were contributing towards the rehabilitation of the Marikina Watershed.

When it comes to members’ participation, health condition (74%) was the primary reason affecting the participation of the members especially in the reforestation activities. This is because most of the time, they were exposed to various weather conditions that affect their health. Based on their feedback, the reforestation committee, together with the concerned members, usually spend more than a week on the site during the maintenance activities. Other factors include physical capabilities (26%), house chores (22%), and duties and responsibilities as wife and mother (14%). The respondents perceived the duties of wife and taking care of the children as separate from their regular household chores such as cleaning, washing and cooking. It was further supported by an observation from a key informant saying:

May mga pagkakataon na hindi makasama [reforestation activities] dahil sa mga tungkulin sa bahay at mga anak bilang nanay at asawa.

(There are instances that they cannot join because of their responsibilities at home and their being a mother and a wife.)

In terms of how they manage it, one of the respondents shared that:

Iniiwan sa kamag-anak ang anak para alagaan dahil di nakakapag maintainance dahil walang magbabantay.

(We left the children to the relatives to be taken cared of since we cannot do maintenance activities if no one will look after them)

In terms of the factors affecting project implementation particularly on reforestation activities, the respondents pointed out climate change (86%), frequency of strong typhoons (86%), and presence of pests (74%) as the perceived leading factors. The respondents pointed that aside from the additional materials and equipment (84%), having technical training (78%) and additional funds (66%) were essential in operationalizing and sustaining their activities. Moreover, the members shared that they gained better relationship with partner organizations and other private sectors interested in environmental management projects. They expressed that cooperation, effectiveness in work, and being responsible for the organization’s projects may lead to building better relationships.
The Journey towards Managing Women-led Social Enterprise

Social enterprise is used as an agent in empowering marginalized sectors and disadvantaged groups (e.g., women) while generating a sustainable solution to complex societal issues (Levander, 2010). Likewise, it is being viewed as "organizations seeking business solutions to social problems" (Thompson & Doherty, 2006, p. 362).

It is vital to take note of the key challenges of social enterprise that is to construct the governance approaches that may improve the mission of equitable and gender responsive task distribution resulting in the promotion of community well-being (Perez, 2013). The findings of Steinerowski and Steinerowska-Streb (2012) about sustainability of rural social enterprises conclude the importance of the adaptation to existing structural features and manage to control the varying conditions which directly affect SEs performance. The authors highlighted the value of "adaptive structuration" which demonstrate the absence of superiority between structure and agency.

The involvement of the TSKC women members towards Marikina Watershed rehabilitation had resulted in the birth of a social enterprise. This social enterprise had been instrumental in the promotion of women's empowerment. Gender equality was a notable attribute of TSKC's social enterprise endeavor. Women were given the opportunity to serve as guardians of the forests which is similar to what was happening with TSKC women members.

As reflected in the case, respondents reported that while women could perform all works related to reforestation, men took the lead in terms of planting, wildings, and maintenance. Women usually participated with activities related to brushing (32) and hauling (31), and sticking (30)%. Likewise, women were also given leadership positions among people's organizations that signed agreements with the national government. TSKC positions being filled mostly by women made the organization distinctive. It was also surprising to know that even the reforestation activities were led by women officers. Respondents shared some of their observations:

Nabawasan ang member na nag-uuling, mas madami na ang tanim; pangit talaga kung ikaw mismo ang sisira sa kabundukan

(The number of members who are making charcoal reduced. There is a growth in the plantation. It is really not good if you destroy the mountain.)

Nagiging green na ang bundok at unti unting napanunumbalik ang mga samut-saring hayop na dating naninirahan dito.

(The mountain is getting green already and the different animals that used to live here are now going back.)

Women social entrepreneurs are considered under-utilized resource as most of the community organizations found in the community were dominated by men. The inadequacy to have a female role model in social enterprise arena has been identified as key barrier thus, the realization of TSKC to place importance on the presence and potential contribution of women in addressing environmental, economic, and societal concerns overcomes this barrier. This predisposition has been recognized by World Bank (2012) in pointing out that gender equality is meaningful in enhancing economic productivity, improving development outcomes for the next generation, and making institutions exemplary.

The typology of the triple bottom-line being used by Philippine Social Enterprise Network (PhilSEN) and adopted for this paper are: Doing well (business performance and enterprise management); Doing good (social performance and social responsibility); and Doing right (best practices relating to the community empowerment, gender, culture and among others). This summarizes the perspective that social enter-
prise is considered as an agent for women’s empowerment (British Council, 2017).

The triple bottom-line paradigm of TSKC is summarized in Table 2. For TSKC, “doing well” is manifested in the reforestation activities as social responsibility projects of the PBSP member companies to conserve the environment. “Doing good” would mean women members benefitting from reforestation and livelihood activities through the expansion of social networks and resource generation. Lastly, “doing right” was manifested in strengthening gender equality and women empowerment. These triple bottom-line perspectives are in line with a narratives from a key informant:

Mas marami na mga fruit bearing trees na nakatanim sa area tulad ng kasoy at rambutan. Nagkaroon ng dagdag na source of income ang samahan pati ang mga tao doon sa pamamagitan ng nursery management, maintenance operations at pagiging community guides.

(More fruit-bearing trees are planted in the area like cashews and rambutan. There is an additional source of income for the organization including people in the community through nursery management, maintenance operations and community guides.)

Relationship Management Officer, PBSP

Table 2. Triple Bottom-line Paradigm of TSKC as a social enterprise organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRIPLE BOTTOM-LINE DIMENSIONS</th>
<th>Doing well</th>
<th>Women members benefited from reforestation and livelihood activities. TSKC has expanded its social networks with different government agencies and private sector institutions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doing well</td>
<td>TSKC has covered 43 hectares of land for reforestation activities planted with indigenous forest tree species. The areas are allocated for PBSP partner companies whose doing CSR projects related to the environment.</td>
<td>Significant help in the restoration of the Upper Marikina Watershed through partnership building and resource generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing good</td>
<td>Aside from reforestation, women members were also engaged in making ginger tea through the assistance of DOST and DENR.</td>
<td>Strengthening gender equality and women empowerment - inclusion of women members from the Dumagat tribe. This has provided significant help especially in providing indigenous knowledge in reforestation activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing right</td>
<td>Women are also performing tasks that only men once did in reforestation activities (e.g., hauling).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The appearance of women empowerment is mirrored in Longwe’s (1995) empowerment perspective that covers progressive lenses of equality. The articulation with this kind of perspective correspond to the social concern about women’s situation in rural localities. In particular, women have always been the subject when it comes to multilayered nature of marginalization (Alonso & Trillo, 2014). Their vulnerabilities that are related to their gender identity and their physical setting have largely contributed to this incidence of marginalization. The framework validated the findings in the case of TSKC as a social enterprise organization. However, as explained by the proponent of the framework, there is a hierarchy in the context of the organizational stages of empowerment which was not applicable based on the findings in the study. It has been dynamics as reported by some key informants, saying that they have to work at different stages at the same because of some internal and external factors that are anchored to their social objectives. Table 3 describes the various stages of empowerment being experienced by the case organization. The participation of women members at each stage is reported to have an influence in the growth and development of their entrepreneurial activities.
Table 3. Organizational stages of empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empowerment stages</th>
<th>Description of the case</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welfare</strong></td>
<td>Generating additional income from entrepreneurial activities (e.g., reforestation and processing of agricultural products); putting importance on indigenous medicinal plants that has been part of alternative medical care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong></td>
<td>Women members have access to marketing facility and production technology being extended by a government agency; provision of women’s labor counterpart in the reforestation effort from the preparation up to monitoring phase; Equal opportunity to attend technical and non-technical trainings to improve their performance and project results; Non-discrimination among IP members; Members are all exposed to different stakeholders that are part of the rehabilitation program – this includes both private and public sector; access to natural, human, financial and social resources became visible to members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conscientization</strong></td>
<td>Improved gender relations by having women leaders in working committees such as livelihood, reforestation and organizational membership; fair practice when it comes to distribution of tasks and responsibilities; women’s voices are being recognized not only by the group but also by the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participation</strong></td>
<td>Women’s voices and previous experiences are recognized/considered in the decision making, consensus building, project planning and organizing works; women have active role in all phases of the project including in terms of partnership building (e.g., establishing good relationships with private companies doing CSR projects with TSKC); capacity and needs assessment are done during the general assembly with equal participation of both men and women members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control</strong></td>
<td>Participation of women members facilitate the attainment of environmental, social and economic objectives to achieve equal power in facilitating the regulatory processes required in the project continuum; complementation of knowledge, skills and practices that inhibit the dominance of men over women members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Social enterprises in rural areas are constantly rising to the challenge of addressing socio-economic and environmental issues. This study sought to determine the solidarity initiatives of women-led organization in promoting social enterprises in disaster-affected communities. It provides understanding on what kind of social enterprises have emerged in upland rural areas in support to the rehabilitation after Typhoon Ondoy in 2009. Case study approach was used in this study. There were 50 respondents who were surveyed from the selected organization. Key informant interviews were facilitated among selected TSKC officials and representatives from partner NGO. Community observation was also employed in the study. Longwe’s (1995) empowerment framework was used as a guide in articulating how gender influences the emergence and development of social enterprise initiatives in disaster-affected communities.

All of the respondents are women, married (78%), Roman Catholic (78%), with household size of five (30%) and have reached elementary level (56%). Half of them (50%) are upland farmers and having a monthly income of Php 1,000-3,000.00 only (42%). In terms of membership, majority (84%) of them were members and had been with the organization for a year (42%). Awareness with their vision and mission was high (94%) while majority (80%) highly agreed on women’s leadership. There was a distinguished interest on livelihood and enterprise projects among the membership (70%) mainly because they experienced an increase in their income (96%).

The study found that SEs have emerged as a response to the rampant flooding in Metro Manila, which also resulted in the implementation of Marikina Watershed Rehabilitation program. Social enterprises were incubated by community organizations like TSKC in collaboration with the public and private sectors. The initiatives played a significant part in mitigating disaster-related incidents not just in the study site but also among neighboring cities and municipalities.
The findings of the study confirmed that women’s initiatives influenced the implementation and management of entrepreneurial activities that benefitted the members of the organization as well as the entire community and forest ecosystem. Based on the reports, many charcoal makers before have transitioned as forest guardians because of their engagement in the upland reforestation project. The solidarity initiatives of women members are reflected in Longwe’s empowerment framework that positively affected the growth of their entrepreneurial activities. The empowerment stages are welfare, access, conscientization, participation and control. Because of this, equal spaces and opportunity were given among women members particularly in taking care of the natural environment, doing social good with community members and improving their economic capacity. These are clearly illustrated in reforestation activities such brushing, hauling, sticking and ginger power making where women’s participation were noticeable. The triple bottom-line paradigm appeared through the doing well, doing good, and doing right perspectives. “Doing well” is manifested in the commitment to reforest the upland watershed through the private and public sector led environmental projects. “Doing good” equates to women members benefitting from reforestation and other income generating activities by expanding social networks and resource generation. Lastly, “doing right” was manifested in strengthening gender equality and women empowerment. This was supported by the notion that women are effective leaders of the organization (80%).

Majority of the respondents participated to the reforestation project especially when it came to brushing (64%) and sticking (60%) including also with their ginger powder making as their alternative livelihood. Additional equipment (84%) and technical trainings (78%) were identified to be important especially for new women members who will be engaged in reforestation activities thus it is suggested to have regular coaching and mentoring sessions among members. The organization can explore developing a module for beginners with the help of other key stakeholders in the area. While they have reforestation projects and ginger powder production as their income-generating activities, members can still explore other agricultural and non-agricultural products and services to diversify their economic benefits. Market-driven strategy is vital to ensure economic impact among the members. Diversification of local economic activities is also one of the keys that can address poverty issue in the community. In terms of membership, the organization should encourage the membership of people from the Dumagat group and benefit from employing indigenous knowledge to all environmental and entrepreneurial related activities. This is also a strategic way of sustaining the harmonious relationship between humans and the ecosystem since the Dumagat tribe are mostly located within the upland forest.

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