

Concept Note on the RIPESS Asia/ASEC SSE Course
Revitalizing Community Partnership for Sustainable Development
March 14-18, 2016. Manila, Philippines

Prepared by Dr. Benjamin Quiñones, Jr,
Chairman, RIPESS Asia/ASEC

1. Introduction

In addressing the '5Ps' Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 adopted by the UN on 25 September 2015 (i.e. people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership ¹), the Third meeting of the World Forum on Local Economic Development (LED) held in Turin, Italy on 13-16 October 2015 emphasized the importance of partnership among the government, private companies, and civil society organizations (CSOs) in achieving the social development goals (SDGs). Innovative and successful initiatives shared by Municipal Mayors and top executives of local territories at the World LED Forum testify to the immense potential of achieving the SDGs effectively through partnerships among the local government, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and CSOs, and enabling local communities to pool resources and undertake collective action beneficial to the community at large.

Being an initiative of organized groups of people in local territories, social solidarity economy (SSE) is suited to play a vital role in realizing the SDGs by revitalizing the spirit of community solidarity and partnership among the various stakeholders, and focusing on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. SSE is a chain of economic activities undertaken by organized groups of ordinary people to fight "conditions of poverty" and in a purposeful transition to sustainable territories and communities. The chain of economic activities includes primary production, processing/ manufacturing, assembly and transport of products, marketing, financing, and consumption. Organized groups of ordinary people include cooperatives, associations, clubs, workers unions, and non-formal self-help groups. They operate and manage solidarity-based community enterprises (SBCEs) as a vehicle for mobilizing resources and collective action to deal with their problems and achieve their goals.

¹ The '5Ps' are: (1) *People*: End poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment; (2) *Planet*: Protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change, so that it can support the needs of the present and future generations; (3) *Prosperity*: Ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature; (4) *Peace*: Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development; and (5). *Partnership*: Mobilize the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable and with the participation of all countries, all stakeholders and all people.

SSE creates a space for a 'bottom-up' economic development model to develop and grow. In this space, the way out of poverty consists of two inter-related paths: the short-term course of enabling people to have access to resources that are needed for overcoming poverty, and the longer-term course of developing an economy that is inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

2. Introduction to RIPESS Asia/ASEC

RIPESS Asia/ASEC - Asian Solidarity Economy Council is the:

- continental network of RIPESS in Asia
- convenor of the Asian Solidarity Economy Forum
- leading resource center on SSE in Asia
- chapters/focal points in Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines & Thailand
- works with ILO-PARDEV & ILO Local Devt & Social Economy
- member of the Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism, the CSO counterpart of UN-ESCAP in advancing sustainable goals 2030

RIPESS: Réseau Intercontinental de Promotion de l'Economie Social Solidaire **is the:**

- the global network of SSE (social & solidarity economy)
- accredited by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)
- member of the International Leading Group on SSE
- observer status with the UN Task Force on SSE (UNTFSSSE) and UNCTAD
- accreditation by UN ECOSOC in process

3. Course Objectives

In a market-oriented environment where the mastery of competition is considered to be supreme, the virtues of solidarity and cooperation in meeting the needs of people do not have much currency. Weak as they are individually, MSMEs are encouraged to compete for the market and conditioned to link its success to an increasing share of a market already dominated by big businesses. MSMEs have not fully realized the importance of pooling resources and efforts for the purpose of building an alternative, more inclusive economy.

The RIPESS Asia/ASEC SSE Course envisions to transform the mindsets of MSMEs and instill in them the concept and practice of SSE as a vehicle for the transition to inclusive and sustainable communities. Specifically, the Course aims to:

- enhance the transformation of mindsets & strengthen the capabilities of leaders, managers, and workers of MSMEs (micro, small & medium enterprises) in addressing the 5Ps of sustainable development agenda (people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership) by instilling SSE principles and practices;

- facilitate the development of solidarity, cooperation & concerted action on common but differentiated responsibilities² among various stakeholders within & across countries; and
- help broaden the network of SSE stakeholders engaged in South-South & Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)³ in developing SSE in ASEAN.

The expected outcome of the SSE Course is the strengthening of an ASEAN SSE Life Learning Community composed of individual entrepreneurs, companies/ organizations and supply chains of solidarity-based community enterprises. SSE stakeholders are not limited to SSE organizations but also include *professional helping organizations* (e.g. civil society organizations, NGOs, faith-based organizations, shareholding social enterprises, for-profit private companies working with the poor and marginalized, and government agencies) that normally work with membership-based organizations. Professional helping organizations possess the financial means, knowledge, and knowhow in accessing productive resources.

In the transition to the new socio-economic space of SSE, the poor and socially marginalized create jobs and employment for themselves through the operation and management of SBCEs. Strengthening SBCEs would further enhance the capacity of professional helping organizations to reach out to the poor, marginalized and socially excluded and in a more profound way. The development of SSE through a broad partnership among SSE stakeholders will contribute significantly in diversifying the country's economy and to greater possibilities for creating and nurturing decent work.

4. Relevance of the RIPESS Asia/ASEC Course to the ASEAN People's Forum

i) *The RIPESS Asia/ASEC SSE Course 2016 as a precursor to the ASEAN SSE Academy 2017 in the Philippines*

The SSE Course 2016 will serve as a springboard on which RIPESS Asia/ASEC envisages to launch and strengthen SSTC among ASEAN countries towards promoting solidarity based community enterprises (SBCEs) as vehicles for achieving the sustainable development goals.

The general sentiment of RIPESS Asia/ASEC partner networks, which are deeply involved in co-organizing the SSE Course 2016, is that the best occasion for conducting the ASEAN SSE Academy will be during the ASEAN Summit in the first half of 2017 and hosted in the Philippines. The Philippines will serve as Chairman of ASEAN in

² Section 12 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states: "We reaffirm all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including, inter alia, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as set out in principle 7 thereof".

³ South-South & Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) is a partnership between equals that is guided by the principles of solidarity and non-conditionality. This is central to the mainstreaming of the Decent Work Agenda. SSTC implies cooperation between developing countries, whereas, triangular cooperation includes the participation of one (or more) Northern partner (i.e. developed country) supporting the alliances between countries of the South.

2017 and therefore it will be the host of the ASEAN Summit 2017. The occasion is doubly auspicious since ASEAN will celebrate its 50th foundation anniversary in 2017.

ii) *The ASEAN SSE Academy as a means for revitalizing SSTC in advancing local development*
Partner networks of RIPESS Asia/ASEC would like to see the strong participation of local governments, cooperatives, workers unions and civil society organizations in the ASEAN SSE Academy 2017. In pursuit of this goal, they would like to raise greater awareness of SSE by carrying out SSE orientation seminars/ workshops in 2016 in their respective countries for the benefit of executives and senior managers of local governments, cooperatives, workers unions and CSOs.

To help them prepare the SSE orientation seminars/workshops in 2016, they would like to make use of the RIPESS Asia/ ASEC SSE Course scheduled on March 14-18, 2016 to help their resource persons and organizers develop their modules and materials. The sharing of experiences, resources, and ideas among SSE leaders and managers from various ASEAN countries (on the 5 thematic topics of the Course) will strengthen the SSTC component of the RIPESS Asia/ASEC Course.

iii) *Preparation of a joint plan for ASEAN-Phil Affairs Office-RIPESS Asia/ASEC collaboration in co-organizing the ASEAN SSE Academy 2017*

The 4th and 5th days (March 17 & 18) of the RIPESS Asia/ASEC course will be devoted to the joint development of a consolidated plan for replicating the SSE course in their respective countries and for preparations related to the proposed ASEAN SSE Academy in 2017 in the Philippines. The culminating session of the RIPESS Asia/ASEC Course on March 18, 2016 will be chaired by the Executive Director of the ASEAN-Philippines Affairs Office of the Department of Foreign Affairs. During this session, participants from ASEAN countries will present their provisional plans for replicating the SSE course in their respective countries and their preparatory steps towards the ASEAN SSE Academy 2017.

5. Modules of SSE Course 2016: five thematic topics ⁴

To achieve its objectives, the RIPESS Asia/ASEC SSE Course will include five thematic topics. On each thematic topic, course participants from various countries will share their experiences, resources, and ideas. The practice of shared learning among resource persons and participants will contribute to a sound foundation for the SSTC program of RIPESS Asia/ ASEC.

Module 1. Values and Principles of SSE relevant to the 5Ps of sustainable development goals

At the end of Module 1, participants will have understood and appreciated the moral values that constitute the ethical foundation of SSE. They will have shared their own

⁴ The modules of ASEAN SSE Academy 2017 may have additional topics compared to the RIPESS Asia/ASEC SSE Course 2016. The SSE Academy will feature live cases from other ASEAN member countries.

ideas on an SSE Charter that seeks to promote a distinct socio-economic culture where actions are motivated largely by respect for people and the planet, and by justice & fairness in all aspects of relationship.

SSE stakeholders are motivated by ethical / moral values that reinforce social mission-oriented governance and serve as social 'glue' binding people and institutions together in collective action. In SSE, the basic human rights of all community members are respected and defended against injustices including exploitation and psychological and physical harm. Cultural diversity, customs, local treasures and traditions are protected, enhanced, and appreciated. Further, respect for human rights is balanced by a deep sense of awareness and accountability to one's social responsibilities. SSE adheres to the principle of differentiated social responsibilities of the stakeholders: SSE stakeholders who have more - in terms of power, education/ information, wealth/resources, physical strength, etc. - have greater social responsibilities.

Module 2. Performance of SBCE on the 5Ps of SDGs

At the end of Module 2, participants will have visited live cases of SBCEs, and examined and reflected on its behavior and performance. They will have investigated the five dimensions of SBCE performance, namely: governance, organization principles/values, and contributions to local development, environmental conservation, and economic sustainability.

Course participants will also investigate SBCE performance with respect to ILO's 4 pillars of Decent Work Agenda – employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue – which have been incorporated into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. SSE organizations promote the sustainability of SBCEs and the local economies in general by creating and sustaining decent work for the poor, socially excluded and economically disadvantaged. Sustainability of MSMEs can be further enhanced through partnership, networking and collective action amongst themselves and geared towards scaled-up operations and value chain development.

Module 3. Financing arrangements for SBCEs & local communities

The UN Research Institute of Social Development (UNRISD) notes that financial systems act as facilitators of economic growth and innovation, and as such they have contributed to the creation of unprecedented wealth.⁵ However, finance capitalism with its associated processes of commodification and deregulation, has resulted in wealth concentration and environmental disruption. Finance capitalism also tends to exclude low-profit socioeconomic agents, including social and solidarity economy (SSE) actors, from access to appropriate financial services. In this environment, SSE organizations may be tempted to compromise their values and objectives in order to obtain credit through conventional finance, or they develop alternative financing arrangements.

⁵ UNRISD (2015, May 11-12). "Social and solidarity finance: tensions, opportunities and transformative potential".

At the end of Module 3, participants will have reviewed the features of conventional finance and critically examined and appreciated alternative forms of financing by SSE organizations.

Module 4. Developing market access

Many small and medium enterprises have succeeded in overcoming the immense challenges of reaching significant number of clients in a cost effective manner by developing market links between small rural producers and urban vendors/ retailers, if not directly with urban consumers. A good example of a local market that has accompanied the development of organic farming is the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) where consumer groups or cooperatives enter into agreement with rural producers to pre-purchase a certain volume of agricultural produce for the consumption of contracting households.

Some SBCEs have made use of social media marketing to establish a broader market outreach at lower costs. Marketing approaches via social media vary widely and may include B2B marketing (marketing to other businesses), B2C (marketing to consumers), B2P (marketing to individuals) or account-based marketing, affiliate marketing, article marketing (writing articles to promote one's business), brand marketing, buzz marketing, cause-oriented marketing, cloud marketing, community marketing, and many more.

At the end of Module 4, participants will have appreciated the importance of developing market links between rural producers and urban retailers/consumers. They will also have first-hand experience in applying some social media marketing tools.

Module 5. Developing integrated SBCE value chains and the role of social dialogue

Integrating MSMEs into a solidarity-based, cooperation-oriented product value chain is quite effective in enhancing economic efficiency, profitability, social acceptability and environmental sustainability of local economies. The process of integration requires social dialogue, a key instrument for building partnerships among membership-based organization, as well as between the membership-based organization and the professional helping organizations. Social dialogue helps build interpersonal trust among people. It is a primary ingredient for generating social cohesion and the formation of social capital. Membership-based organizations that promote the transformation of individual members from being *self-centered* to being *socially responsible* are more likely to sustain the development of SSE.

At the end of Module 5, participants will have gone through an actual exercise in social dialogue and tested it for themselves as an instrument for building partnerships in value chain development. They will have also acquired some knowledge on Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a way of fostering healthy and mutually beneficial dialogues.

6. How will participants learn?

The Course shall adopt a shared learning approach where resource persons and learners can learn from each other.

The dialogue between resource persons and learners shall be enhanced through exposure to live cases. Resource persons & learners will reflect on the realities on the ground vis-à-vis their thoughts and experiences.

Reflections from the field will inform the discourse on appropriate structure, contents and methodology of training course, seminar & advisory services that may be formulated by participants for the benefit of partners in their respective countries.

Finally, resource persons & the learners shall work together to develop a resource sharing program under the principles of south-south & triangular cooperation (SSTC

In this course, participants will:

- go on field visits to examine live cases of solidarity-based community enterprises and their local environment
- apply one's professional experience in evaluating live cases
- attend/participate in discussions with RIPESS Asia/ASEC resource persons
- work closely with other SSE practitioners and advocates from ASEAN countries
- give group and individual presentations to express views and thoughts
- use reading materials provided by RIPESS Asia/ASEC as well as access resource materials through the internet
- enjoy learning, living and interacting with new friends and colleagues from across the ASEAN sub-region.

7. Who should attend this course?

This is a learning programme for leaders, managers, organizers & development facilitators of solidarity-based community enterprises. Participants should preferably be senior to middle-level government officials, managers of state-owned or international development agencies, or NGO's involved in community development and poverty intervention projects.

Further participants should:

- have a relevant university degree, or equivalent educational background and at least two years of related work experience.
- be able to communicate professionally in written and spoken English.
- be in good health, both physically and mentally.

8. When and Where?

Five days: 14-18 March 2016 . University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon city

9. Course Fee

The course fee of **US\$750** per person covers tuition, materials, field trips, and meals. It **does not cover** daily allowance, international travel to and from Manila, Philippines, visas, hotel accommodation, and personal and sundry items.