

Chapter 34

Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation in Southeast Asia and its Role on Development: Five Cases and an Innovation Model

Miguel Rocha De Sousa
University of Évora, Portugal

Mary Ann Docuyan
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This chapter provides five comprehensive cases of social entrepreneurship and innovation in Southeast Asia and its role on development. We start from a theoretical innovation model based on differential inclusions mathematical theory which is new to the innovation literature. Afterwards we cross-examine the theory with the empirical cases. Main conclusions refer that the differential inclusion model can eventually refer to a more general framework, but nevertheless the five cases are very relevant to specify the use of the model.

INTRODUCTION

Social entrepreneurship has experienced a rapid rise in popularity in recent years resulting in the establishment of various social enterprises aimed at pursuing socially beneficial goals in different parts of the world. Among the most notable ones are Nobel Peace Prize winner Grameen Bank, Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, Acumen Fund and Fair Trade USA. There are also several international conferences and events focused on social entrepreneurship such as the Skoll World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship, Clinton Global Initiative, and the Social Enterprise World Forum. In addition to these, a growing number of academic interests on social entrepreneurship are also evident in the number of academic research

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articles, peer-reviewed journals, and social enterprise curricula in many universities and business schools around the world. However, even with these numerous activities dedicated to an understanding of social entrepreneurship and its activities, it still appears to be a young research field in need of further exploration most especially in region-specific cases.

This research paper intends to discuss the topic of social entrepreneurship as both a product and a driver of social innovation in select Southeast Asian countries – Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand – and its role on development. It has two primary goals: to cross the literature survey on social entrepreneurship and to construct a theoretical model of social innovation. It will be presented as follows:

Part One: Cross the literature survey of social innovation and social entrepreneurship through a global lens and in the specific context of Southeast Asia.

Part Two: Construct a theoretical model of social innovation by means of the mathematical theory of differential inclusions. This theoretical model will present social innovation as an optimal target, not in itself a unique locus, but as a set of optimal social innovation policies.

Part Three: Analysis of some case studies of socially innovative ideas and projects implemented in Southeast Asia in the form of social entrepreneurship, and application of the theoretical model to these case studies.

Part 4: Discuss the past and current issues and challenges in the areas of social innovation and social entrepreneurship in the Southeast Asian region, particularly in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

Part 5: Propose solutions and recommendations in order to deal with the issues and challenges discussed in the preceding section.

It is important to keep in mind that despite the general understanding and definitions in the topics of social innovation and social entrepreneurship, differences in entrepreneurial behavior and perspectives may arise in regional settings. It is in this context that the research also aims to build up the available knowledge on these topics and offer new approaches to explain and depict social innovation and social entrepreneurship both theoretically and empirically. As the results and model depend on the case studies from the selected Southeast Asian countries, the researchers also look forward to the development of the model to address the whole Asian region and eventually, to a global scale. Finally, this generalized model is presented to be used in promoting policy advice for firms, social entrepreneurs, government and non-government organizations, and fellow researchers.

BACKGROUND

Social entrepreneurship, despite the growing academic interest in the area, seems to have no single definition. J. Gregory Dees (1998), one of the pioneer researchers in this field, states that the concept of social entrepreneurship means different things to different people and they tend to associate it to different types of organizations such as non-profits or for-profit businesses as long as it integrates some form of socially responsible activities into their undertakings. Martin and Osberg (2007), on the other hand, look at this ambiguity to be a challenge as it creates a broad range of activities that are socially beneficial such as those endeavors by social activists, philanthropists, and environmentalists to be described as social entrepreneurship.

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