

Summary Report of i-genius Asia Summit

Venue: The Banyan Tree, Bangkok, Thailand

Date: 1st – 2nd March, 2012

The i-genius Asia Summit on Social Entrepreneurship invited social entrepreneurs and stake holders to elevate social enterprise in the region to a higher level. 77 participated from 16 countries.

The Summit was opened by Chris Gibson, British Council Country Director, Thailand, who was followed by Prof. Kriengsak Chareonwongsak, Chair Social Entrepreneur Institute, Thailand, who set out 12 recommendations on how to raise social entrepreneurship to a new level in Asia, including education, ease of registration, procurement, media, mobilising finance, networking and promotion. i-genius founder, Tommy Hutchinson, presented the findings of i-genius' regional survey.

The Summit focused on seven key challenges – key points raised in the deliberations:

1) SWOT ASIA (Romy Cahyadi, Indonesia)

Strengths

Growing interest and understanding from young people, CSR departments

Growing support from government, corporation and foundations

Weaknesses

Lack of capacity, networks and connections

Limited access to finance and markets

Opportunities

Promotion of social enterprise sector

Support by government and emerging social entrepreneur networks

Capacity building for emerging social enterprises

Threats

Mission drift of social enterprise

Misunderstanding between various sectors of society

Lack of regulatory support

2) CUSTOMERS FIRST (Sunit Shrestha, Thailand and Vincent Rapisura, Philippines)

Social enterprise should put customers first; by designing products and services that really address the needs of their beneficiaries and customers as well as develop the organizational capacity in order to support their activities.

Have direct contact with customers in order to acquire feedback and reaction from the outside world on your ideas, often measured in terms of sales and revenue. Change business models to be able to quickly fit in with the real demand.

Recognise that customer demand for new products and services created by social enterprises may not materialise overnight. Acquire customers indirectly by partnering with other organisations which may help people to get to know your product, seduce them to their ideas and have access to your products and services.

3) SKILLS AND KNOW-HOW (Yuan Gu, China)

Internal issues; how to run the business, how to generate capital, how to communicate effectively.

External issues: building long term relationships, partnerships and networks

4) BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS AND FINANCIERS

(Vincent Rapisura and Edwin Salonga, Philippines)

3F: Friends, family and fools.

Bootstrap first by using your current income before you can validate the marketing, reinvest in the company until income generated can hire the owners of the business full time and continue to grow the business.

Demonstrate organisation formality by building a consistent operational and financial track record in order to establish credibility quickly to attract philanthropic and/or investor capital. Engage with reputable external auditors in order to validate the legitimacy of your record keeping.



5) DESIGNING A LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNMENTS

(Penny Low MP, Singapore)

Social entrepreneurs need to work with government, the incentives provider, and private sector because they have resources that cannot easily be replicated.

Top 3 ideas:

- Incentives for government to help SE – Recognize what social entrepreneurs are doing and what overlaps with the government role of public safety and wellbeing. Demonstrate that social entrepreneur's activities will lessen the burden on the government resources as an extender that meets public needs. Advocate your ideas to the government in a package that is united and organized since governments respond to organization structure.
- Incentives SE to help Government – social entrepreneur's mission is generally with that of government. Demonstrate clear costs-benefits analysis, social return impact assessment and other performance metrics so that governments recognize the value of the investment.
- Developing a regulatory framework to grow the SE industry – explore ways that regulatory and administrative frameworks can support SE.
- Innovating public policies – brainstorm with various stakeholders in order to develop new and innovative public policies.

6) DEVELOPING NETWORKS, PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

(Edward Rubesch, Thailand)

Business is a social activity. Entrepreneurs are the people in middle. It's your 'only job' to link people up. A skilled entrepreneur finds creative ways to link different groups of interesting people who would not otherwise interact.

7) GOOD COMMUNICATIONS (Kristine Oustrup, Singapore)

Only when you do something that is real and that is new, will you get attention.

Using humour, fun can be useful in helping people change their behaviour.

Be HOP = Happy, Optimistic, Personal.

Design rules: make visual and user-centric PowerPoint slides, videos and website.

There are 3 key influencers; business, public policies and academia. Social entrepreneurship is relatively a new concept that does not fit neatly in any existing framework. Often SE is advanced by youth with limited networks and credibility. Therefore, it is Important to leverage



networks that creates credibility and recognition to get you to where you want to go. Create collaborative innovations and partnerships that can catapult to reach your goals. Know who you are talking to and speak the language of the people who you are trying to persuade. Therefore, social entrepreneurs need to be a good communicator to be the shepherd, liaison, and voice which brings the different people together.

The Summit was presented with three case studies:

- Roberto Cristostomo, Seed Core, Philippines
- Huang Ke, V-Roof, China
- Orapin Sinamonvech, Koko Board, Thailand

All accompanied by Peredur Evans, British Council Thailand and Ari Sutanti, British Council Indonesia.

Participants attended a reception on the first evening at the stunning Latitude Lounge bar overlooking Bangkok and a final evening dinner at Cabbages & Condoms restaurant.

Sherpa report was compiled by Jon Comola, USA, and Amarit Charoenphan, Thailand.

i-genius would like to thank all participants for their enthusiasm and excellent contributions.

Special thanks to British Council for their sponsorship and to partner organisations: SEDPI, Change Fusion, Global Social Venture, Your Story, Synergy Social Ventures, Centre for Sustainable Enterprise, Qi Global, FYSE, Social Innovation Park.

