

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: FINDING COHERENCE BETWEEN SOCIAL SOLIDARITY ECONOMY (SSE), SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) & ASEAN COMMUNITY VISION 2025

By Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria

Chair Asian Solidarity Economy Council (ASEC)/RIPESS ASIA

INTRODUCTION

There is a contemporary search for a new framework for development especially in the context of the current economic approaches while providing economic growth also results in rising economic inequalities and destruction of the environment. Most scholars, development practitioners as well as policy makers agree that sustainability is now the key benchmark for development.

In this context the **Social Solidarity Economy (SSE)** movement is a global initiative of grassroots actors who are focused alternatives to the current dominant market driven and pro liberal economic policies. While utilising the need of profits for community and business sustainability SSE has shifted the focus from profit maximising to holistic development of communities with a clear commitment for the environment as well as human rights.

The global community's launch of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** on Sept 25, 2015 is a major effort by world leaders in addressing many of the issues pertaining to poverty, inequality, discrimination, environment conservation and sustainability. The 17 SDGs with 169 targets and 230 indicators seeks to ensure that the global crisis of sustainability could be addressed in collective partnership approach among the countries of the world. While there are major challenges with regards to financing for development there are major consensus towards the 2030 Agenda.

All the ten ASEAN countries accepted the SDGs and four have already presented the Voluntary Review Report namely Philippines in 2016 and in 2017 Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand made their presentations. In 2018 it will be Laos, Singapore and Vietnam. Those that have presented the VNR have shown that they have made some process especially in the areas pertaining to poverty, education, health but have not been very strong in address access to justice issues, meaningful stakeholder engagement or introducing social protection programs for workers and not effectively addressing the negative aspects an over reliance to market oriented solutions which is creating inequalities and destroying the environment.

However one major initiative of the ASEAN leaders is the **ASEAN Community Vision 2025** with the three key policy documents pertaining to ASEAN political-security community, ASEAN Economic Community & the ASEAN Socio-Cultural community

The objective of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis especially noting the coherence between the three key documents namely the SSE principles, SDG goals and ASEAN community agenda. The attempt here is to draw out the key aspects for both policy and practice implications.

ASEC/RIPRESS Asia is undertaking this exercise on the 50th anniversary of ASEAN and therefore it is very timely to shed light on the future agenda of ASEAN based on both an SSE as well as SDG agenda thereby building on the foundations of the ASEAN community vision.

FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

In the case of SSE the framework drawn up by Dr Ben Quinones fivefold dimensions. The first is socially responsible governance which is a socially oriented governance. The second is edifying values and the three others are traditionally know as the triple bottom line namely people, planate and profits.

For Dr Quinones the triple bottom line in itself does not constitute SSE although it is a departure from traditional business approaches which is profit maximising approaches. This is because the governance structure will reveal whether there is a sense of ownership and equity in the participation in decision making and accountability process. Edifying values enhances the theme of respect and dignity for all as well as a personal transformation so as to have the objective of serving humanity rather than just self.

The SSE fivefold framework could be strengthen drawing key targets and indicators from the SDG which is an exercise undertaken in the table analysis enclosed.

REFLECTING ON THE SDGS

The 17 stages goals with the 169 targets and 230indicators. The five dimensions of the SDG in the preamble is significant and has close parallels to the SDG agenda namely People, Planate, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. The overarching theme of the SDGs is “Leaving no one behind”. There is a very strong commitment to environmental sustainability as well as human rights.

While there are no specific references to the term SSE however the community and cooperative theme is in the SDG language. In para 41 there is a ref to “the role of ... micro enterprises to cooperatives ... of civil society organisations ... in the implementation of the new agenda”. (UN 2015). The principles of SSE in terms of its collective and community nature can be found in all sections of the 17 SDG goals.

However the most significant breakthrough for the SSE movement is the formation of the UN Taskforce on SSE. Peter Utting writes about this and the website provides more details. “The UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (TFSSE) aims to raise the visibility of debates about Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) within the UN system and beyond”.

TFSSE brings together UN agencies and other inter-governmental organizations, as well as umbrella associations of SSE networks as members and observers. This includes 19 UN agencies and the OECD. There are 8 observers including RIPRESS Global.

This places not just RIPRESS Global but its members including ASEC/RIPRESS Asia at the forefronts of a creative initiative and therefore we in ASEAN and Asia must add value not

just for reflective practice but advocacy in the policy realm as the SDGs and the Asean community vision provides us with such an opportunity.

ASEAN COMMUNITY VISION 2025

The three fold documents which make up the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 can be regarded as the most significant achievement of ASEAN as it celebrates its 50th anniversary. It was in 2015 at the Kuala Lumpur Summit that the ASEAN leaders adopted the 2025 vision agenda for ASEAN. It builds upon the earlier roadmap to build a “peaceful, stable and resilient community”. The leaders acknowledged “the complementarity of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development with ASEAN community building efforts to uplift the standards of living of our peoples”.

This paper draw on some of the specific themes for this three folds and find some synergies between the SSE, SDGs and the ASEAN agenda. This comparative analysis is found in Table 1

Conclusion

ASEC/RIPES Asia takes the position that adopting an SSE framework for the implementation of SDGs and the ASEAN agenda will ensure a stronger community participation and involvement both in policy formulation as well as program/project implementation. This process will enhance transparency & accountability especially to those unreached especially those at the Bottom 40% of society among indigenous people, migrant workers, urban poor, ethnic and religious minorities including women, children, young people and people with disabilities.

The ultimate objective is to ensure inclusive development and to ensure no one is left behind.

Some References

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Datuk Dr Denison Jayasooria is the Chair of ASEC and he is the Principal Research Fellow of the Institute of Ethnic Studies (KITA) UKM, Malaysia. He also serves as the Co-chair of the Malaysian CSO-SDG Alliance.