

SERVICE-LEARNING AS A MEANS TO HELP SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

WONG SIN YAN (Joan)

Hong Kong, China

**E-mail : sinyanwong2@LN.hk ,
sywjoanna0201@gmail.com**

BACKGROUND

SERVICE-LEARNING IN HONG KONG

- Service-Learning did not exist in Hong Kong before 2006
- Today, it is more prevalent and integrated in higher education (HK)
- Today, it is still almost non-existent in primary and secondary schools (HK)



BACKGROUND

SERVICE-LEARNING AT LINGNAN UNIVERSITY

2004

- Pilot program funded by Kwan Fong Charitable Foundation
- Formed Service-Learning and Research Scheme (SLRS)

Nov 2006

- Formation of the Office of Service-Learning (OSL)
- 1st Service-Learning office among universities in Hong Kong

2015

- International reputation
- Variety of programmes offered to students.

DEFINITION OF A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

- A business with a social mission, which aspires to become self-sustaining by generating income and profit.
- Profits, however, should be reinvested in the business or in the community to help achieve specific social objectives
 - Maximizing profit is **not** the ultimate goal
- There are three basic elements:
 - a) Social mission
 - b) Self-sustainable business model
 - c) Distribution of profit

BACKGROUND

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN HONG KONG

2007

- 1st Appeared in 2007-2008 Policy Address by the former Chief Executive Donald Tsang Yam Kwen
- Social Enterprises Promotion Unit formed for SEs

2014

- Evaluation on the development of SE in Hong Kong



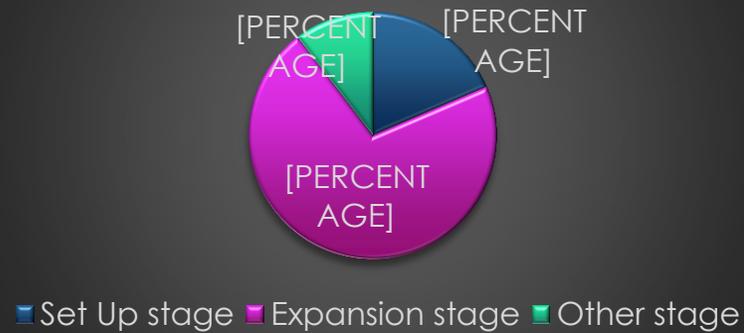
BACKGROUND

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN HONG KONG

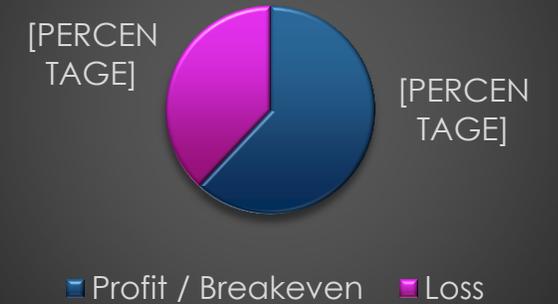
Number of SE in Hong Kong



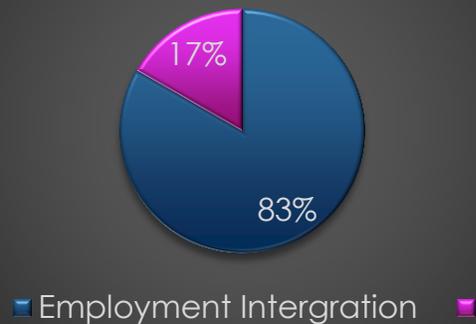
Stage of SE



Business Profitability



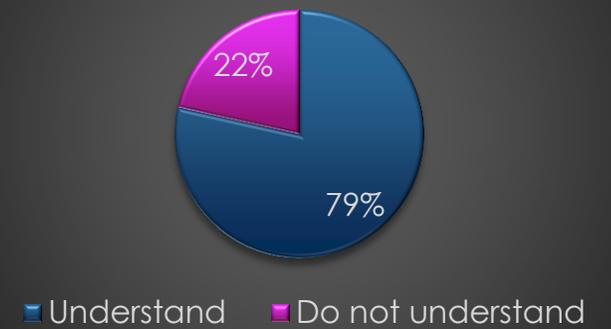
Nature of Business



Registration



Understand SE in HK



BACKGROUND

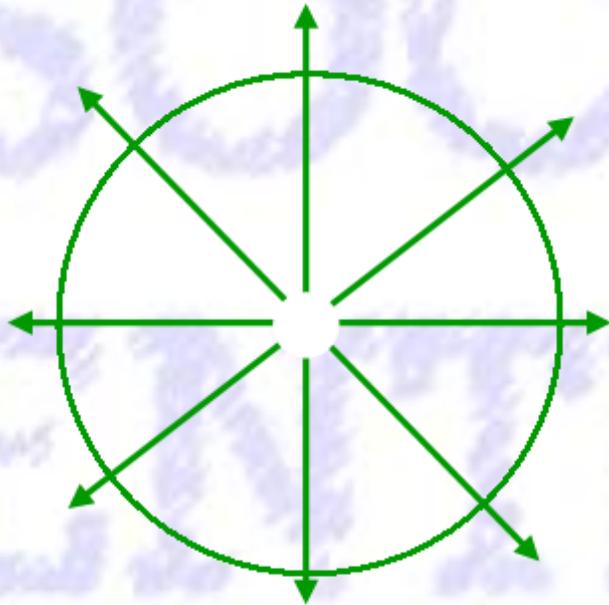
SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN HONG KONG

- Many Social Enterprises are struggling to survive in Hong Kong.
- This is because it is hard to have a self-sustainable business model, without having the ultimate goal be “profit-making.”
- Since 22% (almost a quarter) of the population does not understand the term Social Enterprise, it makes it even harder for Social Enterprises to accomplish their missions.

BACKGROUND

SERVICE-LEARNING (S-L) AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES (SEs)

- Partnerships at Lingnan University



Possibility

- Between 2009-2013, there have been 22 S-L partnerships between Lingnan University and SEs.
- 13/22 partnerships have included students in Business Faculty courses.
- 9/13 Business Faculty courses involved in a S-L partnership have been BUS301: Strategic Management (different sections.)

RESEARCH:

CAN SERVICE-LEARNING ACT AS A MEANS TO
HELP SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN HONG KONG?



METHODOGY – INTERVIEW 5 PARTICIPANTS

Professors of BUS301

**2 students studying
BUS301**

Interviews

**Business Faculty
OSL Coordinator**

**Manager of Social
Enterprise**

COURSE INFORMATION

BUS301 STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT



CASE STUDY

Course Code & Course Title	Professor
BUS 301 Strategic Management	Dr. Chen Tingting
BUS 301 Strategic Management	Prof. Robin Stanley SNELL

BUS301 Strategic Management (3 credits)

(Prerequisite: Completion of all Core Courses or permission of the Director of Business Programmes)

The course introduces students to the concept, theories, principles and techniques associated with Strategic Management. It is the capstone course in the programme that, in addition to familiarising students with new subject matter, requires them to apply their prior learning to various business issues of a strategic nature. Planning issues explored include the importance of the vision, mission and objectives, the nature of effective strategic leadership and decision making, frameworks for external and internal analysis, and functional, business, global and corporate strategies. Implementation addresses topics such as corporate governance and business ethics.

CASE STUDY (S-L PROJECT IN BUS301)

NATURAL NETWORK



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE INFORMATION

NATURAL NETWORK

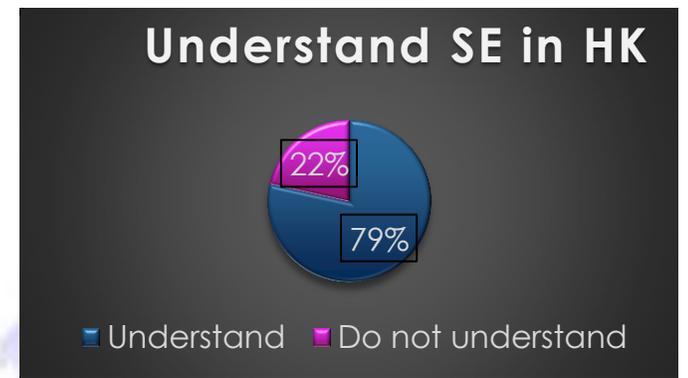
Founder	MR MOK HO KWONG and friends
Mission	To be a good educational institution that provides excellent and professional teaching services about natural and environmental knowledge and experiences, and allows individuals to create and live a more green life
Motto	Humans and nature can communicate and should be harmonious
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Founded in 2004, staff have voluntarily organized more than several thousand natural and environmental activities and trainings for community members• Presently, it is registered as a social enterprise
Business Focus	Organize environmental guided tours, workshops and environmental activities for the public (especially students)

RESEARCH FOCUS AND QUESTIONS:

- Do both S-L students and the SE (Natural Network) benefit from the S-L partnership?
- Do the outcomes of the S-L partnership match with the S-L expectations?
- What problems/challenges does the SE (Natural Network) face?
- Are S-L students able to help the SE (Natural Network) with these problems/challenges?

OVERALL FINDINGS (1)

MISCONCEPTION ON SOCIAL ENTERPRISES



- Data showed over 79% people in HK believe that they understand the definition of a SE.
- However, all interviewees believe that most people (more than 50%) are unaware of the definition of a SE.
 - Believe data does not match reality.
- The concept of SE is spreading, especially in universities, and as a result of campus-community partnerships, such as S-L.
 - Students of BUS301 did not know what a SE was before their S-L experience.
 - However, their S-L experience taught them the definition of a SE and the challenges/problems SEs currently face.

OVERALL FINDINGS (2)

MATCHING THE EXPECTATION

- The purpose of this course is to enable students to apply the knowledge (strategic management) they learned in BUS301 and use it to benefit SEs (especially helping to address the problems and difficulties SEs are facing in Hong Kong.)
- This enable a win-win situation.
 - Students can understand SEs and how they work.
 - Students can apply real life knowledge in a real-world experience that benefits the community.
 - Social enterprises can receive support and advice from students (especially in areas they may be lacking.)
- The expectations are met and goals are achieved.

OVERALL FINDINGS (3)

CHALLENGES FROM SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Economic Sustainability

- Managers of SEs are motivated by social missions, and often do not have much business knowledge.
- However, since a SEs needs to make profit in order to sustain, many SEs are facing financial problems.
- The HK government promised to support many SEs, but because of the suffering economy, less support has been given to SEs than what was originally promised.
 - *“Unfortunately, the government does not provide support for my SE in terms of tax reduction and also treats my organization similar to a regular business. Yet, I do not have the same business knowledge as regular business managers.”*

– Manager of Natural Network

OVERALL FINDINGS (3)

CHALLENGES FROM SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

Management Challenges

- Management challenges are a great problem for SEs.
- Natural Network's challenges:
 - Lack of branding and insufficient administrative and marketing expertise.
 - Funding
 - Low staff pay
 - Few opportunities for staff development
 - Most staff motivated by social mission; therefore, it is hard to find staff knowledgeable about the social mission and business.

OVERALL FINDINGS (4)

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT BENEFIT FROM PARTNERSHIP

- All interviewees believe that all stakeholders can benefit from the S-L partnership.
- Professor: Students are able to understand the definition of a SE and apply course knowledge to benefit the community and a particular social mission.
 - *“When compared with non-SL sessions, this is a good change for students to conduct Strategic Management knowledge in a real SE.”*
– Professor of BUS301

OVERALL FINDINGS (4)

SERVICE LEARNING PROJECT BENEFIT FROM PARTNERSHIP

- Students: (similar to Professor)
 - Gain knowledge in strategic planning
 - Gain knowledge about SEs and problems/challenges they face
 - Hands on experience and ability to apply course knowledge into the real-world
- Manager of SE:
 - Appreciated students' creativity
 - Students suggested solutions to deal with the problems that he did not think of before
 - He will explore ways to incorporate students proposals into his current work.

OVERALL FINDINGS (5)

S-L CAN HELP SOLVE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS SE FACE

- Close relationship is essential in partnership
 - Mutually-beneficial
 - Matching of Goals/Learning Outcomes/Project Outcomes between all stakeholders
 - Open, honest relationship
 - Find out real problems and able to offer real solutions
- Students provided support and recommendations to Natural Network
 - Financial, administration, marketing and promotion, and human resource management

LIMITATIONS

- This study is based upon interviewees' comments and opinions, and thus the results can be subjective.
- This study included a small sample population, and thus the results may not be representative of all Service-Learning partnerships.

DISCUSSION

- This study is mainly focused on how S-L can benefit a SE in terms of its strategic planning. In the future, more investigation should be done on the partnership between S-L and SEs in other disciplines (outside of strategic planning and/or business.)
- Further research needs to be done on whether or not the strategic plans and recommendations made by students will be used by Natural Network and whether or not they help to eliminate some of the SEs problems/challenges
 - It is projected, however, that proposals will be helpful

CONCLUSION

- Service-learning can act as a means to help social enterprises in Hong Kong.
- Through the course BUS301, university students are able to provide Business expertise and knowledge to a SE and aid in its strategic planning.
- In particular, business S-L students can compensate for a SE's lack of business knowledge.
- University students can provide valuable suggestions to SEs and help to reduce the problems/challenges SEs face.