

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTERPRISE IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

CINTA and the
Malaysian Social Research
Institute

November, 2016

CAPI BLOGPOST #6: KIMBERLY COPELAND

NOVEMBER 2016

Social Entrepreneurship Opportunities in Malaysia

by Kimberly Copeland

Blog 6. Month 6. I cannot speak for all of the 2016 Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives interns but this amazing, challenging, and humbling experience is flying by. Currently I am sure that every intern feels that there is not enough time left to work on the tasks, responsibilities or personal development that this unique experience sets us up for – yet here we are (almost) at the end of our CAPI experience.

The **Malaysian Social Research Institute** is as lively, bustling and exciting as ever. The MSRI SSC School has opened and relocated after a grueling weekend of perhaps one of the quickest moves in 'Malaysian time' history that involved MSRI teachers, managers, students, and interns coming together and packing up the dozens of chairs, tables, art projects and then again unpacking in the span of 48 hours. We celebrated with a lunch of chicken biriyani and toasted our success with 100 Plus drinks (basically the Malaysian equivalent of Gatorade). These are some of my favourite quieter moments of this internship. The comradery and sense of humour that bonds

all MSRI staff, volunteers, and clients together through these shared experiences.



Photo: An empty grade six classroom at MSRI's new primary and secondary school.

Another opportunity at MSRI I have been able to collaborate on is MSRI's **vocational training program-turned social enterprise, CINTA**. CINTA is the Malay word meaning *love*. CINTA targets the female refugee and asylum-seeker population of MSRI and hopes to provide them with the technical skills to make handicrafts such as jewelry, handbags, napkins, aprons, etc. that are sold in fairs, bazaars, and private functions. The money collected from these events becomes a

source of revenue for the women (and their families) who participate in the program. This blog explores the opportunities of social entrepreneurship in Malaysia through my limited experience.

A **social enterprise** is an organization that uses business and commercial strategies to successfully improve human and/or environmental well-being. Social enterprises can be structured and managed in a variety of ways; however, the two most common structures are either a for-profit social enterprise or a non-profit. This is often dependent on the legal, commercial and social regulations working within the country and the organization.



Photo: The grade three classroom at the school – moving in the furniture.

Vocational Training

In the case of MSRI's vocational training program, CINTA involved handicraft vocations based on manual, practical, and social welfare principles. This is related to making handbags, jewelry, cutlery, and sewing under the fashion and accessories market occupation. While vocational training is traditionally non-academic, MSRI also now supplements English classes in the pairing of our Adult English Program with the CINTA program.

Vocational training is a form of skilled education that prepares people to work in a trade, craft, or in support roles such as business administration, medicine, and tailoring. This unique form of education may take place at the secondary, post-secondary, and ongoing education (sometimes coinciding with an apprenticeship course under the supervision of a skilled person of the trade). In the past, this is exactly how MSRI's vocational training program worked. Those members of CINTA that had been around since CINTA's inception in 2011 and had the qualifications, drive, and skill were the leaders of each group of CINTA products.

This method of educational training provided a psycho-social benefit to the women of CINTA. Volunteers involved become wonderful friends of the refugee members of CINTA and women from different backgrounds came together to participate and socialize over making crafts and designing fashion and jewelry. With a large waitlist of women wanting to participate in CINTA and the change to earn money, MSRI recently chose a different model for CINTA: a social enterprise.

Social Enterprise

As previously mentioned, social enterprises are a form of business that are either for-profit or non-for-profit created to intentionally combat social issues, improve a community (often a marginalized group), provide access to skills training, employment, and revenue; and often at the same time attempt to provide some sort of environmental aid simultaneously. Using the strengths of the organization coupled with an emerging powerful marketplace, social enterprises are commercially viable businesses that exist to better communities.

Going forward with CINTA as a more active and autonomous (for those refugee women members) social enterprise program required a fair bit of research into social entrepreneurial businesses – particularly within a Malaysian context. Here are some of my findings:

1. There are at least two dozen fairly prominent social enterprise handicraft groups in Malaysia that work to better marginalized communities within the country. This list includes communities such as: refugees, migrant workers, the visually impaired, the aboriginal population of Malaysia, and at-risk women.
2. Many large and powerful nongovernmental organizations that work with the refugee population in Malaysia are eager to partner with or provide donations to this form of social enterprise.
3. Networking is crucial! CINTA members and volunteers need to be active in attending bazaars, community gatherings, and other events. Other social enterprises – I have learnt from attending these workshops and events – are eager to work with everyone. There is a definite lack of competition between these social enterprises.
4. This market is relatively new and emerging in dominance in Malaysia. Young students care about social issues and are educated in passionate in human rights.
5. The most popular and successful group in the Malaysian market segmentation for CINTA's products to sell to is expat women (predominately from Europe and North America).
6. The expat community in Malaysia – in particular Kuala Lumpur – feel very positive buying similar products to CINTA. They often will recommend to friends, fellow employees and family through word of mouth. People feel connected to the products and like they are directly helping the women who made the handicraft products.
7. Women in social enterprise groups get a lot more out of these organizations than just money. They experience independence, decision-making, leadership, friendship, social networks and solidarity in the form of a group (that provides support and advice).



CINTA REPRESENTS

ARE YOU CREATIVE? COMMITTED? PASSIONATE ABOUT REFUGEE RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT?

IF YOU ANSWER ALL YES THEN WE'RE LOOKING AT YOU!

CINTA Sahabat Support Centre - Handmade by Refugees group needs a VOLUNTEER! Someone who can join them every Monday from 10:30am to 12:00pm. At our centre located in Ampang Point, you will train a group of refugee women with crafts making and language skills, do quality checks, and perform administrative tasks. There are also opportunities to get involved in bazaars.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT KATERINA AT VOLUNTEERS@MSRI.ORG.MY FOR MORE INFO

www.msri.org.my



‘Socializing’ with the Market

The Malaysian Social Research Institute is undergoing many changes and adaptations to programs and projects. This is a time of constant growth and program monitoring and evaluation. Managers are looking for structure and planning. In saying this, we are implementing a lot of surveys and requesting a lot of feedback and commentary.

After attending at least half a dozen CINTA bazaars and markets over the last three months, I decided to ask those who approached our table a set of simple questions about CINTA products and the likelihood of returning to purchase other items at a later date.

Below are my findings from a CINTA bazaar in mid-October, 2016:

CINTA BAZAAR FINDINGS

58%

Of purchasers at local and expat bazaars (and other associated events) are returning customers and have previously purchased other similar products.

43%

Of first time customers informed us that they would return to similar events and tell their family and friends about CINTA and similar brands.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Check out MSRI's website and learn more about upcoming CINTA events here:

<http://msri.org.my/v5/>

Photo: Poster for MSRI CINTA sales event celebrating the International Day of Non Violence (event took place early October).

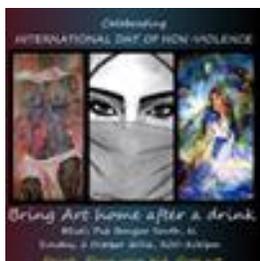


Photo: Margot, myself, and Siti at PJ Arts, The School, Jaya One in early October, 2016 selling CINTA products and MSRI publications. This event was an all-day education and awareness for migrant and refugee populations in Malaysia. Refugee and Asylum-Seekers were also invited to speak about their personal experiences.

HOW A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE CAN FIND SUCCESS:

1. Know the people you are working with;
2. Understand your products, prices, and the market you are situated in;
3. Have a clear mission and objective;
4. Find your unique selling proposition;
5. Engage with grassroots organizations and networks and empower them to help make social change happen;
6. Prioritize your partnerships;
7. Be accountable and transparent with funding, donors, and your customer;
8. Use the majority of the profits to support the people involved in the social enterprise; and,
9. Empower and engage the community you are working with.

Sources:

7 Tips for Success for Social Entrepreneurs. By Kate Harrison, Forbes Magazine: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/kateharrison/2016/07/26/7-tips-for-success-for-social-entrepreneurs/#722fc6b420e9>

Successful Stories of Social Enterprise. Cheryl Kernot and Joanne McNeil, University of New South Wales: http://www.csi.edu.au/media/uploads/Australian_Stories_of_Social_Enterprise_-_April_2011.pdf



REMEMBER:

Social enterprises are *not* synonymous with charity or 'giving back' by setting up a foundation for others. Social enterprise is about self-empowerment!

Photo: Myself, Claire and Danae working together on a concept note for a UNHCR submission. Often we work until 7pm or 8pm!



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ENTERPRISE IN NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Malaysia Social Research
Institute
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Photo: Margot, Siti and I holding up Support Comango's Demands! Posters at The School, Jaya One. For more information about Malaysia's nongovernmental organizations, see here: <https://www.facebook.com/COMANGO/>

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

CHECK OUT THESE WEBSITES:

1. <https://socialenterprise.us/marketplace/#results>
The Social Enterprise Alliance is the largest online website where you can purchase online socially and environmentally friendly goods in America. They also provide resources that social enterprises need to succeed and grow to have a sustainable social impact.
2. <http://www.shopforsocial.com/>
Shop for Social is a social business that sets out to support social enterprises and non-profit organizations through online marketing and value-add of their products and services. They wish to raise the online profile of the organizations that they support in Singapore.
3. <https://www.goodspender.com.au/>
This Australian website provides a huge platform for an even larger amount of hip and trendy products. You can shop products under causes.

What I have taken away from working closely over the last few months on the 'MSRI side' of CINTA is this: the female refugee population that work in CINTA are smart, business-savvy and eager ladies who have fantastic ideas about product design that incorporates a lot of their home countries' backgrounds and cultures. These women want to have independence and a voice. They want to attend the sales bazaars and tell their stories to those who purchase the goods they make. They want to learn accounting, English, business management and have positions in the CINTA committee. And they are proud of the work that they do. Meeting weekly with those women involved in CINTA and with other social enterprises in Kuala Lumpur I have witnessed the creative partnerships and networking women make. I too am eagerly awaiting to see the changes and developments in the next upcoming months!



Photo: The members of Mangtha (a Chin social enterprise), myself and two representatives from AMES Australia after a group meeting.