

I am sure we are aware of the 3 Hs in SUSS, they represent our core philosophy: Head, Heart and Habit. But how many of us have taken a dive into the 3 Hs, and understood, if not, experienced, the meaning behind the acronym?

Business Analytics (BA) trains us to analyse and use data to solve problems. However, there is so much more to business than purely data, and a good enterprise is run from the heart as much as it is run with the head. That is where socio-entrepreneurship comes in. In this edition, we look at the socio-entrepreneurship scene within SUSS, followed by an interview with a BA student who is making an impact through socio-entrepreneurship.

THE SOCIOPRENEURSHIP ISSUE

- What is sociopreneurship?
- How are BA students making an impact?



HEAD 

HEART 

HABIT 

continued from previous page

What is Social Entrepreneurship?

A social enterprise is a business with a social element attached to its operation, as opposed to regular, completely for-profit enterprises. While a social enterprise does seek to earn profit, this is not at the forefront of the social enterprise's objectives (Barone, 2021). Instead, one of its key performance indicators would be the impact it makes in the social cause it champions. Social enterprises generally seek to make an impact via four broad ways

Integration of work - where meaningful work is created for vulnerable and/or disadvantaged groups of people. "Meaningful work" can be broadly described as work that does not rob these individuals of their dignity and allows them to make a tangible contribution. An example would be 18 Chefs (a restaurant), which hires ex-convicts which, in turn, provides them with a second chance at life after incarceration.

Ploughing back profit - where profit from normal operations is directed towards a cause that the organisation stands behind. Patagonia (a clothing company) for instance, participates in the "1% for the Planet" cause. Through this, it directs 1% of its sales to the "preservation and restoration of the natural environment".



continued from previous page

Concessionary services - where services for a target group is provided at a reduced cost, while the same services are provided to the general public at the normal price. Examples include Active Global Home and Community Care. They provide subsidised services such as home therapy to individuals in-need.

Social needs - where the main aim of the social enterprise is to serve a particular social need. A good example of this is I'm Soul Inc, which is a social enterprise that provides "therapy through music and movement" via its unique equipment. I'm Soul Inc directly reaches out to the groups in need and provides its services to them.

A look at a real-life Social Enterprise:

Much closer to home, there is a Social Enterprise whose operations should be familiar to many of us (Business Analytics students). Saturday Kids is an impact-focused Social Enterprise that seeks to give children exposure to digital literacy. It has spearheaded impact programmes such as Code in the Community, a free coding programme catered to children from less fortunate backgrounds in Singapore that is supported by Google and IMDA, and Coding Cats, a programme that offers free lessons in coding to Cambodian children. Saturday Kids' goal is to "create opportunities for every kid on the wrong side" of the divides propagated by structural inequalities, embodying the "Heart" component in SUSS' 3 Hs by being socially conscious with a passion to make a positive impact on society.

continued from previous page

Entrepreneurship, in its purest form, involves four key stages:

1. The pre-idea
2. The idea
3. The validation of the idea
4. Gaining of traction



SUSS supports its students through each of these stages through the many initiatives described below. Moving from the pre-idea stage to formulating a formal idea is a process that can be likened to polishing a diamond. An SUSS student can engage in the various business case competitions/hackathons, the overseas experiential learning or even undertake WA004, Entrepreneurial Mindset. Using business case competitions as an example, a student will be able to gain invaluable insights and inspiration from the other ideas he/she will compete with, and this can contribute immensely towards building a fundamentally sound idea from the pre-idea stage.

continued from previous page

To learn more about socio-entrepreneurship within our Business Analytics programme, we spoke to Miss Pernilla Khoo, a recent graduate. Pernilla is also part of SUSS Sociopreneurs, where she served as the vice-president. Pernilla was a planning-committee member for the SUSS Ministerial Forum held in 2019 and had represented our school in various national summits and symposiums such as the Asia Pacific Regional Conference on Service Learning, or APRCSL for short. Pernilla is also a prominent student within Business Analytics, being one of the founding students of the Business Analytics Interest Group (BAIG).

Below is an interview with her on being a socio-entrepreneur:

Ashwin: Why SUSS Sociopreneurs (SSE), and not any other choice for your Community Engagement (CE)?

Pernilla: My fate with SSE was just a pure coincidence. I happen to have a contact who wanted to build a strong Enactus team in SUSS (previously we were part of the global movement of Enactus). Honestly, it was my leadership skills rather than the heart to serve the people that caught the attention of this person. He wanted me to lead the team and make it grow. It was only 6 months into my time with SSE that I started to gain interest and realise, "Hey! There is actually something I did not know," and that was when I started my socio-entrepreneurship journey.



continued from previous page

Ashwin: What advice would you give to your younger self in year 1, looking back at the start of this journey?

Pernilla: “Go out and explore, have an open mind and heart. You never know what you will see, learn and experience that will change your life”. Life is short, you do not have a lot of time to explore things slowly. I started studying Business IT in the polytechnic and then came to SUSS and dived into Business Analytics. 7 years in the same area and I thought I knew what I wanted in life. 6 months into SSE and it changed my perspective on careers. You never know what you will learn and explore, some may just be a passing experience, others will impact your life altogether.

Ashwin: What advice would you give to your younger self in year 1, looking back at the start of this journey?

Pernilla: “Go out and explore, have an open mind and heart. You never know what you will see, learn and experience that will change your life”. Life is short, you do not have a lot of time to explore things slowly. I started studying Business IT in the polytechnic and then came to SUSS and dived into Business Analytics. 7 years in the same area and I thought I knew what I wanted in life. 6 months into SSE and it changed my perspective on careers. You never know what you will learn and explore, some may just be a passing experience, others will impact your life altogether.

Ashwin: Who/What is one Sociopreneur/Social Enterprise (SE) that you admire in Singapore?

Pernilla: It is definitely “The Social Space”. Everything you see and feel are there to impact others. It started with giving employment opportunities. As it grew, you see that the items being sold in its retail section supports different local and international SE, even the food in its café features different local SE that brings an impact to others. It is just amazing that it builds itself around others in every area of its business

continued from previous page

Ashwin: What is the best resource for people who want to dive deeper into the world of sociopreneurship, and make a difference?

Pernilla: Experience. Push yourself to experience first-hand all the different problems and difficulties faced by the social group that you are hoping to help. These experiences will identify the gaps that you can work on; it will also provide ideas on shaping your solution to meet the needs of others. Not that those second-hand experiences are bad, but you really need to do down to the ground and experience it for yourself also. Everyone has different challenges when it comes to the same problem, it depends on how you perceive things. So personal experience is something very important and valuable.

In conclusion, a social enterprise can take on many forms and sizes, but they are all united at the end of the day in their goal, which is to operate a successful business while making a positive impact on society. These socio-entrepreneurs are definitely worthy of some praise, as only a select few are able to put others ahead of themselves when it comes to making profit. Once you step into the shoes of an entrepreneur, you will be able to understand the challenges that ensue from running a social enterprise.

As mentioned at the start, the 3 Hs really come into play in Social-Entrepreneurship, and I hope that our article has helped you to get a glimpse into this meaningful world. The next time when you decide on a cafe to visit or store to buy clothes from, why not check if any social enterprises are able to serve your needs and take your business to them. You too will be able to make an impact towards a better society, and consequently, a better world.