DYNAMICS OF MALAYSIAN RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & ROLE OF STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

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MALAYSIA – FACTS AND FIGURES

- Land mass – 329,847 sq.km (127,355 sq.m)
- Population – 28.3 million
- Per Capita GDP – USD10,381
- Gini Index – 46.2
- Middle income emerging economy highly dependent on external trade (exports constitute 118% of GDP) with aspiration for developed country status by 2020
- Growing rural – urban divide
RURAL COMMUNITY ISSUES & CHALLENGES

• Low income levels
• Low educational levels
• High unemployment / underemployment
• Inadequate infrastructure / poor accessibility to markets
• Youth disenfranchisement
• Danger of being left behind as urban communities continue to grow and progress
GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS TOWARDS RURAL UPLIFT

- Creation and deployment of economic growth centres
- Strong emphasis on rural (physical) social infrastructure development in government budgets
- Creation of specific and specialized agencies and programs (primarily economic in nature) to address rural issues
- Direct handouts and subsidies
SO WHERE ARE THE GAPS?

• Dealing with people and communities, the “wholistic-ness” of government programs and planning often tend to be an issue
  • “Solutions” sometimes create their own set of unexpected problems
  • Need a way for micro, ground-level views and perspectives to be opened up, addressed and expressed
  • Hence, was born the idea of “POKOK” – Pembangunan Oleh Komuniti Untuk Komuniti (Development By the Community For the Community)
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP?

- We are no expert in rural community development.
- We got involved in trying to develop a digital community uplift platform for the government but we soon learned that technology is no solution without prior engagement with, understanding of and seeing the world through the eyes of the target communities.
- Engagement has to be continuing and long term, and digital “solutions” ever evolving.
- We are currently still a work-in-process and we need to address and resolve question of sustainability.
OUR DIRECTIONS

• We are looking at incorporating a Foundation to draw in donor funding as one mechanism for maintaining financial sustainability

• Our main thrust will be in building capacity and developing social enterprises as the way forward for achieving social uplift

• Some projects in the pipeline: (a) domestic home services in urban areas using rural manpower resources; (b) Moving Roselle growers up the production value chain; (c) Creating tourism products in rural areas; (d) Developing K2K supply chains (Kampung-to-Kota or Village-to-Cities)

• Sharing and learning from others
THANK YOU