



ALBUKHARY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL BUSINESS CASE STUDIES

**THEME:
UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL ISSUES THROUGH
THE ICEBERG MODEL : SYSTEMS THINKING**



VOLUME 01



ALBUKHARY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

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PREFACE

This case study (volume 01) is a compilation of social business projects by Albukhary International University's students in 2021 and 2022. The projects are related to the 3ZERO initiative towards achieving the world of three zeros; zero wealth concentration for ending poverty, zero unemployment and zero net carbon emission by unleashing entrepreneurship in all. The initiative aligns with the university's mission to serve humanity through social business in a redesigned learning environment.

The case study begins with an explanation of the social business concept with the title understanding social business. It then follows five case studies based on social business projects conducted. The case studies provide knowledge on identifying social issues through a structured system thinking from the Iceberg Model. It also provides insight into how social business theory is turned into practice.



UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL BUSINESS



1.0 INTRODUCTION

A social business, as defined by Professor Muhammad Yunus, is a business created to solve social issues in a financially sustainable way. A social business is established primarily to pursue social or environmental goals rather than personal economic gain. Any business that follows these seven principles is categorised as a social business (Yunus & Weber, 2007). The seven principles are as Table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1: Social business principles.

| No. | Social Business Principles |
|-----|--|
| 1. | The business objective is to overcome poverty or other issues such as education, health, technology access, and the environment. |
| 2. | The business promotes financial and economic sustainability. |
| 3. | Investors receive only the investment amount in return; no dividend is given beyond the investment money. |
| 4. | When the investment amount is paid back, the company profit stays with the company for expansion and improvement. |
| 5. | The business is gender-sensitive and environmentally conscious. |
| 6. | The workforce accepts market wages with better working conditions. |
| 7. | The business is conducted with joy. |

The seven principles mentioned above must adhere to one enterprise to be categorised as a social business. The most important principle of social business is that it is created because the business aims to solve social issues. It is different from a conventional business, which is primarily due to product demand, supply force, and profit maximisation motives. The unique feature of social business is that it generates profit from social work and then uses it to sustain itself. This practice is unlike other social work conducted by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) or Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs that rely on grants or donations to sustain themselves. Overall, with a no-loss-no-dividend concept and impact-driven motive, the social business model is a business that turns the motive of profit maximisation into benefit maximisation (Yunus & Weber, 2010).

On top of that, a social business also needs to achieve financial sustainability, whereby the profit gained must be sufficient to support the business operation. The business cannot rely on grants or donations. Thus, compared to conventional business, which mainly focuses on profit maximisation alone, social business has dual objectives; (i) social benefits maximisation and (ii) profit maximisation. The main comparisons between the conventional and social businesses are shown in Table 1.2 below:

Table 1.2: The comparison between conventional and social business.

| No | Criteria | Conventional Business | Social Business |
|----|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1. | The objective of establishment. | To meet a product/service demand and supply forces. | To solve social issues. (<i>poverty, unemployment, environment</i>) |
| | | Profit-maximisation motive. | Benefit-maximisation motive. |
| 2. | Financial self-sufficiency. | YES | YES |
| 3. | Dividend payment to investor. | YES | NO |

**SOCIAL BUSINESS EDUCATION
ALBUKHARY INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**



2.0 SOCIAL BUSINESS EDUCATION AT ALBUKHARY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Albukhary International University (AIU) is a private non-profit education institution located in Alor Setar, Kedah. The mission of the university is to provide opportunity to serve humanity through social business in a redesigned learning environment. Albukhary International University is committed to ensuring human dignity in line with the concept of *"Inspiring Minds"* as the ethos and tagline of the University.

Align with the university niche area which is "Social Business", Albukhary International University embedded social business courses in its curriculum. There are two Social Business courses offered to the students; Social Business (I) and Social Business (II) with the application of experiential learning method. The differences between these two courses are the depth of the experiential learning and the social business level covered. The Social Business (I) course is offered to the first-year students; meanwhile, the Social Business (II) course is to the final-year students.

Prof. Muhammad Yunus first popularised the concept of social business in 2007. Bill Drayton, the founder of Ashoka, introduced social entrepreneurship in the 1980s (Sen, 2007). In terms of teaching social entrepreneurship at higher education levels, Harvard, Stanford, and Berkeley universities were the first to offer courses in social entrepreneurship in the 1990s through experiential learning (Brock & Stenier, 2009). Similar to social business, which aims to maximise social impact and make a profit, the prominent differences between social entrepreneurship and social business are in terms of profit-making intention and dividends paid up.

As stated in the social business principle number 3 (see Table 1.1), *"Investors receive only the investment amount in return, for no dividend is given beyond the investment money"* social business discourages dividend payment to the investors. Instead, the surplus revenue created will be re-invested in the business. Thus, the business will grow, and more impact can be made.

2.1 SOCIAL BUSINESS CREATION PHASES

There are three phases in which a social business can be established. First among them is identifying the existence of social issues. Next, finding social solutions to solve the social issues and then, these solutions need to be turned into a social business. This process can also be called the Social Business Creation phase.

The AIU approach to educate the students to create a social business is explained in the Figure 2.1 below:

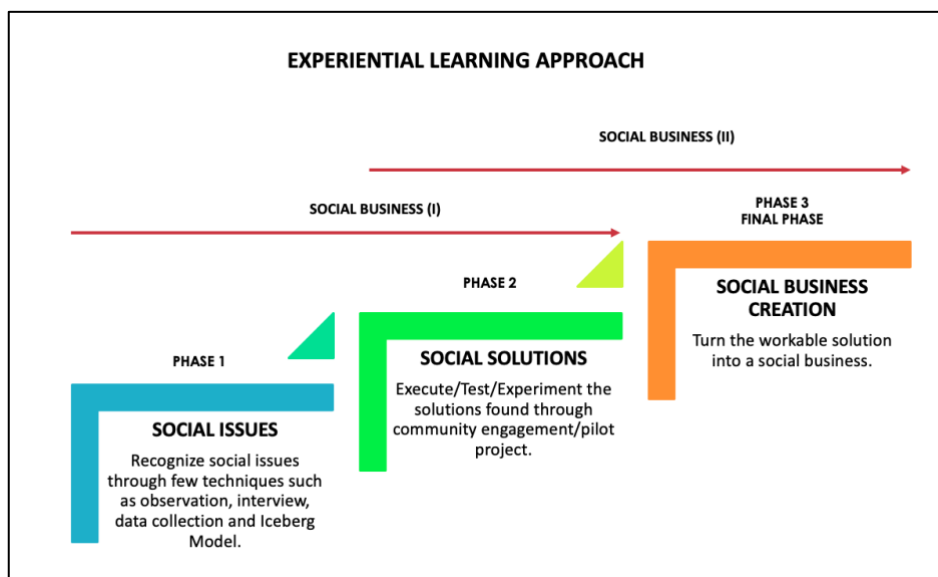


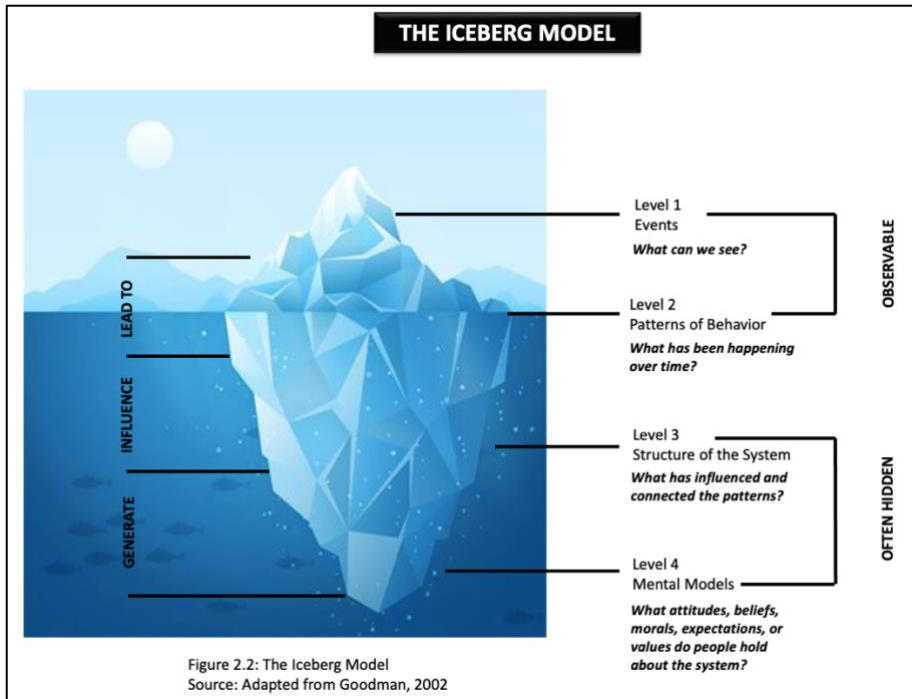
Figure 2.1: Social business creation phase

As social business aims to solve social issues, the first step is to identify the social issues or problems in the community. There are few techniques to identify social issues. The methods are observation, interview, data collection, or the Iceberg Model of System Thinking. The root cause of any particular social issue can be found at this phase. The social issues could revolve around poverty, unemployment or the environment. In his social business agenda, Prof. Muhammad Yunus urges us to create a world of three zeros: Zero Wealth Concentration to end poverty, Zero Unemployment and Zero Net Carbon Emissions. It is the mission of each social business created.

2.2 THE ICEBERG MODEL OF SYSTEM THINKING

It is crucial to identify the root of the problem of one particular social issue instead of just the symptoms. To master this skill, apart of observation and survey methods, AIU also introduces the Iceberg Model by Goodman 2002 in teaching the systematic thinking method in finding the layers of the social issue. There are four layers of issues proposed in the Iceberg Model, the first being “Events”, which one can see and feel. The second is "Patterns of Behaviour”, and the third is "Structure of the System”, which influences and connects the patterns. The final layer is the “Mental Model”, which are the attitudes, beliefs, morals, expectations or values that people hold that lead to the layer of issues no 3, 2 and 1. The "Mental Model" layer is the deep root of the issue. The solution execution will be effective by recognising each layer of these issues.

These four layers of issues can be categorised as “Observable” and “Often Hidden” issues. The issues under the "Often Hidden" category are the ones which generate or cause the problem. It then influences and leads to the creation of the symptoms or destruction. The illustration of the Iceberg Model of System Thinking in finding the root of social issues is shown in Figure 2.2.



Once the root issue is found and potential solutions identified, all the solutions need to be materialised into actions. But first, one needs to test the feasibility of those solution ideas. Then, the experiment with the beneficiaries or community through community engagement programmes is conducted by conducting a pilot project. At a point during the process, the best sustainable solution that can be implemented through a social business platform will be found.

In the practice at AIU, the depth of social business experiential learning practice will differentiate between Social Business (I) and Social Business (II) courses. As the course is offered to the first-year students, the Social Business (I) course focuses more on the social business ideation practice. In this course, students will be exposed to the technique of identifying social issues. They also need to propose solutions and materialise them into action. The experiential learning experience for the Social Business (I) course focuses on the ideation and a pilot project.

Meanwhile, Social Business (II) will guide students to set up their social business enterprise, up to Phase 3, as in Figure 2.1. In this course, the best sustainable and workable solution found will be turned into a business model. Innovation is encouraged at this stage. In other words, with the fundamental knowledge learned during Social Business (I) (Phase 1 and 2), the student is now able to set up a social business enterprise. In this course, we will teach the aspects of business management such as marketing strategy and financial management. At the end of the course, students will establish a social business enterprise that adheres to all seven (7) social business principles. Interestingly, both the Social Business (I) and Social Business (II) courses have given the idea to the students to create employment or become job creators. The examples of the social business model and its description are explained in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: The social business model

| No | Social Business Model | How It work |
|-----|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Direct Employment | Hires beneficiaries who are traditionally underemployed. |
| 2. | Cross-Subsidisation | Offers free/low-cost product services to beneficiaries and pay for it by charging other customers a high price. |
| 3. | Design for Extreme Affordability | Creates a low-cost product/service that solves a specific problem for low-income populations. |
| 4. | Ethical Supply Chain | Provides services to clients in helping them access the market. |
| 5. | Micro Franchising | Small franchise businesses that entrepreneurs can start-up without a significant upfront investment. |
| 6. | Inclusive Business | Business solutions that include the poor or underprivileged in the production or delivery process. |
| 7. | Environmental Sustainability | Sells product or services that improve environment/energy efficiency and sustainability. |
| 8. | Buy One Free One | Charges customers a market rate that allows donation to beneficiary. |
| 9. | Market Connector | Facilitates trade relationships between beneficiaries and new markets. |
| 10. | Market Intermediary | Acts as an intermediary, or distributor of beneficiary's product/service to an expanded market. |

WASTE IS NOT A WASTE UNTIL YOU WASTE IT



3.0 CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

Ahmed Taha Ramadan Elmekawy, Tauseef Ahmad, Antaru Yahaya, Amir Nurhussen Abrar and Sarimawar (see Figure 3.1) are among the final year students of AIU under the Bachelor of Business Administration programme in the School of Business and Social Sciences (SBSS). They are originally from Egypt, India, Ghana, Ethiopia and Indonesia respectively. They have been good friends since their first year at AIU. During their final year of study, they decided to work together in a group to conduct their social business project.

They have noted that there is very little awareness on the importance of recycling among the locals. While spending time at the nearby food court, they witnessed the vast amount of plastic bags used among food vendors and consumers in that area. All the plastic bags will then end up in the dustbin or landfill. This everyday scenario has created the awareness among the five of them to do something about it, and they decided to make this plastic issue as their social business project under the Zero Net Carbon Emissions category.

As of today, the global plastic waste pollution problem is growing at an unprecedented rate. Plastic waste is one of the world's most pressing human health and environmental concerns. It is also very concerning to know that many plastic wastes are never recycled. Millions of tonnes of discarded plastic waste can physically harm wildlife, either because plastic waste is potentially toxic or because it can absorb other pollutants. Mismanagement of plastic waste has resulted in a significant amount of marine plastic debris, such as straws, food wrappers, single-use plastic bags and many more that have fuelled global carbon dioxide (CO₂) pollution.

Malaysia, like the majority of developing countries in Southeast Asia, has insufficient waste management systems to deal with the amount of plastic waste produced. The country's primary methods of dealing with plastic waste are landfill disposal and domestic burning (Chen, 2021). Malaysian household waste generation varies by region and economic status, ranging from 0.85 kg to 1.5 kg per person daily (Chen, 2021). In addition, according to Chen (2021), Malaysia generates more household waste than other developing countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines, with 0.22 kg and 0.40 kg generated per person each day, respectively.



Figure 3.1: The Plastigo.000 Team

From the left: Tauseef Ahmad, Ahmed Taha Ramadan Elmekawy, Sarimawar, Amir Nurhussen Abrar and Antaru Yahaya.

3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL ISSUE

Plastics are lightweight, long-lasting materials that are easily manufactured into items for various uses. Plastics have become a common material in today's economy, supporting key sectors such as engineering and manufacturing. Unfortunately, the vast majority of plastics manufactured each year are utilized to manufacture throwaway packaging or other short-term items. Moreover, due to the polymers' wear resistance, large volumes of plastic waste gather in landfills and natural environments worldwide, including Malaysia. These plastics have diverse chemical components. They are very durable and less susceptible to degradation. Polymer degradation takes a long time due to the salty environment and the cooling influence of the water.

In some locations, the human population also plays a significant influence. Plastic is commonly found in confined spaces such as city nooks and crannies, where it pollutes the environment. Moreover, plastic pollution has many negative consequences on the ecosystem, including groundwater pollution, food chain disruption, animal extinction, land pollution, toxic ability and air pollution.

During extreme weather, plastic trash is swept into rivers and oceans. When rivers and oceans become polluted with plastic, fish and other sea life suffer. Thousands of animals are harmed or killed yearly due to being entangled in plastic bags and choking while attempting to consume them. Toxins accumulate in the bodies of fish that consume small plastic particles, which animals or humans eventually consume. The less plastic thrown into rivers and oceans or dumped in landfills, the less fish and other sea animals will suffer, and less plastic consumed will be passed on to us.

Furthermore, 7.4 cubic yards of landfill space is saved for every tonne of plastic recycled (Sigler, 2014). Making sure we recycle as much plastic as possible would help to extend the life of our landfills and put a stop to many people's practise of burning plastics to save space, as this emits hazardous irritants and pollutants into the sky. Recycling plastic minimizes the amount of non-renewable energy needed in the plastic-making process since it takes significantly less energy to create new goods from existing plastic than it does to create plastics from raw materials.

The unrecycled plastic used issue can be explained through the Iceberg Model method by Goodman (2002) (see Figure 2.2):

Level 1 - Events

What can you see?

High usage of plastic bags among Malaysians, and they are not recycled.

Level 2 - Patterns of Behaviour

What is happening over time?

Most of the plastic bags end up in landfills and domestic burning.

Level 3 - Structure of the System

What has influenced and connected the pattern?

The poor waste management in the communities and the continuous usage of plastic among the communities.

Level 4 - Mental Models

What attributes, beliefs, morals, expectations, or values do people hold about the system?

Plastics are like any other waste, and they need to be dumped.

Lack of understanding of the threat of plastic waste to the environment.

3.2 SOCIAL SOLUTIONS OFFERED

Having understood with the issue revolving the unrecycled plastic bag and the urge to provide solution well, Ahmed Taha Ramadan Elmekawy, Tauseef Ahmad, Antara Yahaya, Amir Nurhussen Abrar and Sarimawar set up their social business named Plastigo.000. The Plastigo.000 is an integrated plastic recycling business that produces useable products from recycled plastic bags. The business applies the “Environmental Sustainability” social business model.

The business aims to solve the unrecycled plastic bag problem related to the net carbon emission issue. At the same time, by doing this business, the group is also able to solve the unemployment and poverty issues among the group members. Through this business, the group created jobs and provided income for themselves. It is explained at the back of the company name "000", which means the business is solving the three zero issues (zero net carbon emissions, zero poverty and zero unemployment).

There are four stages involved in the making of useable products from the used plastic bag, as explained below:

- (i) Collecting the plastic bags: The group collected the used plastic bag from AIU students and food sellers nearby the university (see Figure 3.2). There are more than 50 food sellers around the campus.



Figure 3.2: Collection process

- (ii) Cleaning and segregating the plastic bags: In the second stage, the used plastic bags collected were cleaned and separated according to colours and sizes (see Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3: Cleaning and segregation process

- (iii) Transforming the plastic bags into products: In the third stage, the used plastic bags were transformed into a few designs of useable products, such as handbags, bottle holders, coasters and small containers (see Figure 3.4).

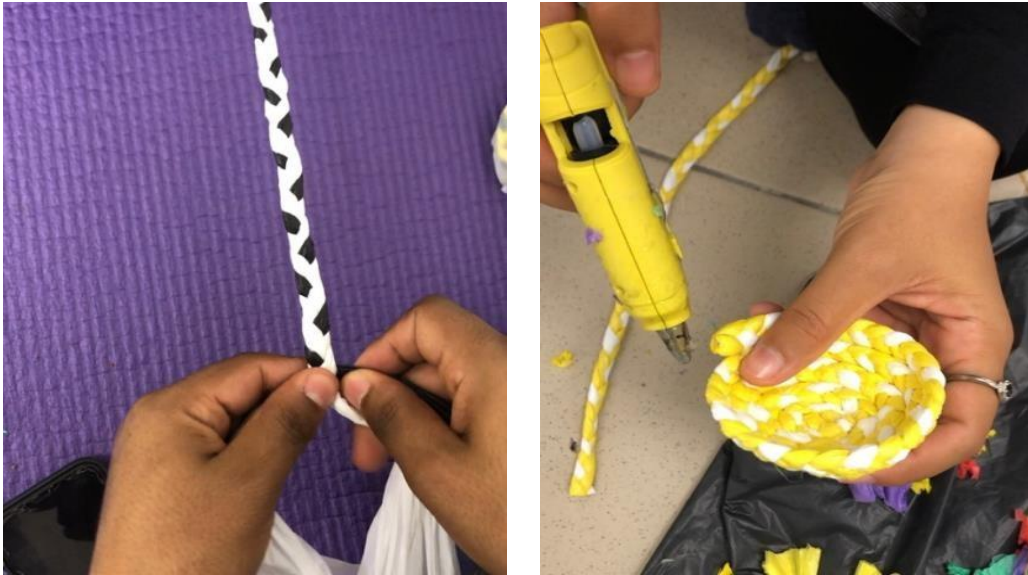


Figure 3.4: Product making process

- (iv) Market and sell the products: The useable products produced from these recycled plastic bags (see Figure 3.5) were then marketed and sold.



Figure 3.5: The end products

3.3 THE IMPACT CREATED

The business that started in March 2022 has created several impacts through its intervention in tackling the issues. Details of the positive impact created are as below:

A. Collected 22 kg of used plastic bags:

In 3 months of operation, Plastigo.000 collected around 22kg of used plastic bags.

B. Created 5 designs and 112 quantity of production:

The used plastic bags collected were transformed into five useable product designs: handbag, container, bottle holder, coaster and shopping bag. The group also accept special design requests from the customers. Customers can propose their designs and pick their preferred colour and size. In total, the group produced around 112 quantities in 3 months of operation.

C. Collected RM826.00 total profit.

Plastigo.000 allocated RM300.00 for business capital. The capital is used to buy a mini sewing machine, glue gun and some tools. More than RM1,000.00 sales was collected and in total a profit of RM826.00 was made. The marketing and selling activities only began in the second month of operation; the profit was earned within three months (April – June 2022).

D. Recycling and social business awareness through social media.

Awareness of recycling in society is very crucial. Thus, Plastigo.000 set up its social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok as the platform to educate the community on recycling and as their marketing channels.

3.4 CONCLUSION

Plastigo.000 is an example of how a sustainable solution to certain social issues can be solved by doing a business as a social business. The group is optimistic that the useable products from the plastic waste business can reach more customers soon based on the positive feedbacks they received. Plastigo.000 also has become an example to university students who can create jobs while studying. To date at AIU, there is another group of junior students has joined Plastigo.000 and continued making an impact in achieving the 3 Zeros mission.

RUMAH JAHIT BALING EMPOWERING WOMEN TAILOR



4.0 CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

The "*Rumah Jahit Baling*" in Malay means "Baling's Sewing House" in English. This is a social business project under the "Direct Employment" and "Market Intermediary" models established by Hilwa Yusof, Aneeq, Nugie Jailani dan Sardor Toshmatov (see Figure 4.1). They are Bachelor of Business Administration programme students who are from Thailand, India, Indonesia and Uzbekistan, respectively. In this social business project, they chose to help one single mother in Baling, Kedah, enhance her sewing skills and business marketing.

Faridatul Akma, who prefers to be called "Akma", is a single mother and the sole breadwinner of the family. She lives with her mother and four children. She has been surrounded by unemployment and poverty due to a lack of employment opportunities in the village. Akma has been living in poverty since the demise of her husband (see Figure 4.2). Her only source of income is a small pension from her late husband and some money her mother makes from rubber tapping. The amount received is insufficient to pay the expenses of her children and household expenditures. Akma and her family need the chance of a decent and secure life as they are struggling to meet their basic needs and, most importantly, in earning money to support her children's education in the future.



Figure 4.1: The team



Figure 4.2: Akma's house condition

4.1 UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL ISSUES

As mentioned earlier, the primary beneficiary of the project is Faridatul Akma. Living in Baling with her children and mother, Akma is doing a small tailoring business in the village. She operates the business in her own house (see Figure 4.3). The business was just part-time but it became the primary source of family income after the husband's demise due to the road accident. Before marriage, Akma attended a few formal sewing training programmes held by government agencies and had learned how to sew many Malay traditional clothes. With her passion for sewing, Akma also learned how to make modern clothes through informal learning platforms such as the internet. The quality of her end product is also impeccable, and according to her regular customers, clothes sewn by her are comfortable to wear, and they are very satisfied with her work.

Her world changed when her husband died; raising four children alone limited the time she had for her sewing business activity. Sewing could now only take place after 11.00 pm. It is evident that, "Time" is the main issue of Akma. How can Akma resume her sewing business with this limitation? In this project, Hilwa, Aneeq, Nugie and Sardor, together with advisors worked to solve Akma's problem.



Figure 4.3: Akma's workstation

Akma's problem can also describe in detail through the Iceberg Model method by Goodman (2002) (see Figure 2.2):

Level 1 - Events

What can we see?

Many unemployed single mothers in the village.

Level 2 - Patterns of Behaviour

What is happening over time?

Many single mothers in the village are poor.

Level 3 - Structure of the System

What has influenced and connected the pattern?

A lack of economic activity and work opportunities in the village.

Work opportunities can be offered to the single mothers with accommodations to their time based on family commitments.

Level 4 - Mental Models

What attributes, beliefs, morals, expectations, or values do people hold about the system?

The single mother can rely on government aid for living expenses.

4.2 SOCIAL SOLUTION OFFERED

Previously, in Akma's sewing business model, Akma took only orders from walk-in customers. In addition, all the orders are custom made, based on requests according to customer's size and preferred design style. To finish the end product, Akma needs to create a different sewing plan or structure for each order before she can start cutting the fabric. This process requires time, and with Akma's current situation, she is unable to accept many walk-in customers anymore. Akma now only has around 3-5 hours a day to commit to her tailoring business.

After a few discussions with Akma and an expert in the tailoring business (see Figure 4.4), the team came to an agreeable solution. Akma was asked to change her business model. What if she only made ready-made clothes with one design, in standard sizes, as well as selected fabric material and predetermined colours. Akma would then need to prepare the sewing structure or plan only once. It would save a lot of her time. The next question is, what kind of clothes is she able to make and sell?

Despite a strong track record in previous productions, Akma had little confidence in the clothes she was creating. This endeavour aided her by motivating her to try new things and break out of her comfort zone. The team gave her a new cloth design so she could learn how to sew and increase her ability. The team have designed a variety of clothes, including modern Malay's woman traditional dress or "*baju kurung moden*", women's blouses and men's shirt. These designs enabled Akma to get an understanding of current fashion trends, as well as to break out of her sewing style tradition. Coincidentally, this project started about one month before Eid Fitr, so the team decided to sell "*Baju Kurung Moden*" for a start.



Figure 4.4: Discussion with the team

After brainstorming on the design theme, the team decided to launch the “*Baju Kurung Modern*” collection as the Sweet Spring Collection (see Figure 4.5). The collection comes in three colours and four sizes. The team also created a business brand for Akma, known now as “*Rumah Jahit Baling*” (see Figure 4.6).



* * * * *

Size Chart

| Size | Shoulder | Chest | Hand | Shirt Front Length | Shirt Back Length | Hip | Waist | Skirt Length |
|------|----------|-------|------|--------------------|-------------------|-----|-------|--------------|
| S | 14 | 36 | 21 | 27 | 31 | 42 | 28 | 39 |
| M | 15 | 40 | 22 | 28 | 32 | 46 | 34 | 40 |
| L | 16 | 44 | 22.5 | 29 | 33 | 50 | 38 | 40 |
| XL | 16.5 | 46 | 22.5 | 30 | 34 | 52 | 40 | 40 |

Figure 4.6: Sweet Spring Collection



Figure 4.6: Rumah Jahit Baling Logo

Once the collection was released, the team started their marketing efforts. They created an Instagram account as the official social media account for their marketing efforts. They aimed to penetrate the market outside Baling district and gain as many followers and new customers as possible. The team very much wanted to fully utilise the social media platform and e-commerce for marketing and selling activities as it would reduce the cost of business operations. The “*Rumah Jahit Baling*” marketing and selling activities were conducted online. This was the team's skill and advantage, which was a skill that Akma did not possess. Akma was so overwhelmed with the team's social media design content, as it looked very professional. Based on the design of the Instagram design no one would suspect that the business was located in a remote village in Baling, Kedah.

4.3 THE IMPACT CREATED

The project was considered a pilot project for the team. At this stage, the team wanted to know whether the new business model would be successful. In the end, yes, it showed positive outcomes. The new business model, selling ready-made clothes with modern and trendy designs, a good business brand, and aggressive marketing efforts through the online platform had a significant impact on Akma’s business.

The team only took one week to promote the Sweet Spring Collection. Eid Fitr was just around the corner so there was high market competition during this festive season. In that short period, they have received ten secured orders. There were no customers from Baling, as they were all are from Alor Setar, Kuala Lumpur and other states of Malaysia. Once the order came in, Akma started making the clothes according to the size and colour chosen by the customers. Since Akma had already prepared the sewing plan earlier, and as the design size and colour were already fixed, it saved much of her time. In one week, all the orders were successfully delivered to the customers (see Figure 4.7).

In total, “*Rumah Jahit Baling*” gained RM890.00 total sales in 2 weeks, which was equivalent to 4-5 months of Akma’s sewing income before this. The cost of production, such as fabric and some sewing tools, was around 40% of the total sales. Thus, the net profit was approximately RM534.00 for “*Rumah Jahit Baling*” in just 2 weeks. As the project is still at the pilot stage, the team did not charge any consultancy and marketing services, so all the profit went to Akma.

Regarding social media marketing performance, the indicators are the account growth, which shows how many accounts have reached “*Rumah Jahit Baling*” Instagram account.. It also shows how many followers the account has gained and interactions with the posted content. The details of the metrics are in the Figure 4.8.

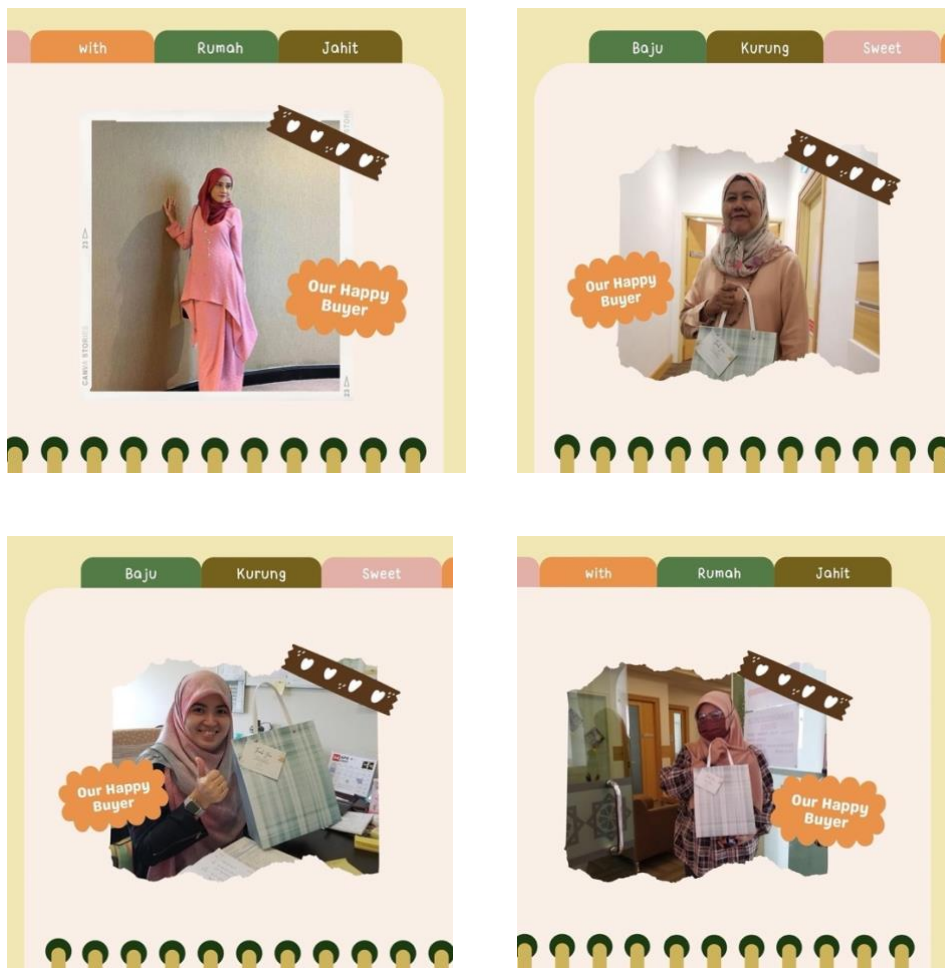


Figure 4.7: Satisfied costumers

Insights Overview

You reached **+803%** more accounts compared to Dec 7 - Mar 6

| | | |
|------------------|--------------|---|
| Accounts reached | 4,120 | > |
| | +803% | |
| Accounts engaged | 139 | > |
| | +348% | |
| Total followers | 187 | > |
| | +14% | |

Impressions

vs Dec 7 - Mar 6

13,132

+434%

Top Locations

of your followers

Cities Countries

Profile Activity

651

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----|--------------|
| Profile Visits | 635 | +269% |
| Website Taps | 9 | -25% |
| Email Button Taps | 3 | -- |
| Business Address Taps | 4 | +100% |



Figure 4.8: Social media performance metrics

Overall, the intervention of the AIU students in this project under the Social Business (II) course has given a new lease of life to Akma's business. Akma is an example of many single mothers in the village who have skills in one area, for example, sewing, but lack knowledge and exposure on how to grow the business. They are not digital savvy, which is vital in today's world. This social business project by the AIU students will soon to be established as a social business enterprise. Applying specific social business models, such as "Direct Employment" and "Market Intermediary", it can solve poverty and employment issues among single mothers. For example in this case, Akma can concentrate on sewing, which she is very good at, while the social business enterprise will assist her in marketing.

4.4. CONCLUSION

Starting with Akma, this social business project plans to add more single mothers or women tailors who are in the B40 category under the umbrella of "*Rumah Jahit Baling*". It is said that there are some other women who are also in the sewing business in some of the villages in Baling. It is hoped that soon, "*Rumah Jahit Baling*" will become the tailor's consortium for this group of people. It also needs to diversify the marketing strategy by looking for contract sewing business from any agency. It will give a fixed income to the tailors as well. "*Rumah Jahit Baling*" has provided valuable business knowledge and experience to Hilwa, Aneeq, Nugie and Sardor. They have applied all the knowledge and skills learned in their three years of study in the Bachelor of Business Administration programme to this project. As they come from different countries, the experience gained in Malaysia through this social business project will provide them with the skills and knowledge to do a similar project in their countries in the future.

SAWADEE ENGLISH



The poster features a light blue background with a white cloud and a rainbow in the upper right. At the top center is the Al-Bukhary International University logo, which consists of Arabic calligraphy in green and blue. Below the logo, the text 'ALBUKHARY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY' is written in a small, black, sans-serif font. The main title 'Sawadee English' is displayed in a large, white, rounded font with a black outline. A yellow banner with a white border contains the text 'Let's learn!' followed by a small icon of a person with a lightbulb. Below this, the text 'Special English Course' is written in a bold, black font. Underneath, 'English literacy for Underprivileged children in Yala, Pattani, & Narathiwat (Thailand)' is written in a smaller, black font. The text 'Via: Google Meet' is followed by the URL 'https://meet.google.com/nfs-jfmr-kte'. A circular yellow badge with the word 'FREE' in bold, black letters is positioned on the left. To the right, a photograph shows a group of children sitting at desks in a classroom, with a teacher standing at the front. The text 'Join us!!' is written in a bold, black font. At the bottom, a dark blue banner contains the text 'This programme is organized by Social Business (I) Course BBU 1102 2021/2022' and the phrase 'inspiring minds' in a white, cursive font. Below this, the university's name is written in five columns: AQIDAH, AKHLAQ, ADAB, AMANAH, and AMALAN. At the very bottom, social media icons and links are provided: Facebook (facebook.com/AIUedu), Instagram (instagram.com/AIUedu), a globe icon (www.aiu.edu.my), and Twitter (twitter.com/AIU_edu).

ALBUKHARY INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Sawadee English

Let's learn!

Special English Course

English literacy for Underprivileged children in Yala, Pattani, & Narathiwat (Thailand)

Via: Google Meet
<https://meet.google.com/nfs-jfmr-kte>

FREE Join us!!

This programme is organized by Social Business (I) Course BBU 1102 2021/2022

inspiring minds

AQIDAH AKHLAQ ADAB AMANAH AMALAN

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5.0 CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

The word "Sawadee" in Thai means "Welcome" in English. The "Sawadee English" project has been conducted by a group of students in the Social Business (I) course, semester 1, 2021/2022. In this project, a group of students conducted an online English class for underprivileged children aged 7 to 12 in the three provinces of Southern Thailand, namely Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat. The project chosen was the outcome of the social issues and solutions they discovered in the Social Business (I) course.

Among the group members in the group are Supeeyah Sohsata and Masra Waekaji. Both of them are from Pattani, Thailand. Understanding the educational gap among the poor children in Southern Thailand as compared to other parts of Thailand, Supeeyah and Masra and the other 3 group members proposed their project focusing on the educational programme in Southern Thailand. Supeeyah is studying in the Bachelor of Early Childhood programme, while Masra Waekaji is in the Bachelor of Elementary Education programme. Meanwhile, the remaining three group members are in the Bachelor of Early Childhood programme. The other two group members are from Malaysia while one is from Indonesia. All of them are students of the School of Education and Human Sciences (SEHS), Albukhary International University (see Figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1: The team

5.1 UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL ISSUE

There are three social issues that the group identified concerning the educational gap issues in the Southern provinces of Thailand. The first issue is education inequality, mainly because of political reasons. According to Supeeyah and Masra, there is a lack of conducive facilities and instructional materials in public schools. Those provinces are located in rural areas, and little attention is given to the English language. The second social issue is the lack of awareness of the importance of the English language. There is a lack of support from the authority and community in encouraging the school children to understand the language. Learning and practising English only happened during the English class at school.

The third issue is insufficient competent and proficient English teachers. As a result, learning the English language is less effective in school. Some parents who can afford to pay extra for education send their children for English tuition classes, but this is not possible for those from low-income families. Reminiscing on the experience of learning English at the primary and secondary levels, Supeeyah and Masra admitted that learning and practising the English language only happened during the English classes in school. There is little opportunity to practice the language, especially communication skills, outside the classroom. There is a perception among the locals that the English language is only for foreigners.

They thanked Albukhary International University, which allowed them to improve their English before starting their undergraduate study. They enrolled in Language Centre, Albukhary International University, for one year. Supeeyah and Masra had the best time learning English with all the teachers in the Language Centre of Albukhary International University.

The mentioned social issue above can be explained through the Iceberg Model method by Goodman (2002) (see Figure 2.2).

Level 1 - Events

What can we see?

Many students of the rural parts of Southern Thailand cannot converse well in English.

Level 2 - Patterns of Behaviour

What is happening over time?

A lower level of English proficiency among the students in the rural parts of Southern Thailand.

Level 3 - Structure of the System

What has influenced and connected the pattern?

Lack of conducive facilities and instructional materials.

Insufficient competent and proficient English teachers.

Level 4 - Mental Models

What attributes, beliefs, morals, expectations, or values do people hold about the system?

The English language is only for foreigners.

5.2 SOCIAL SOLUTIONS OFFERED

As they come from low-income families, Supeeyah and Masra never had the opportunity to attend English tuition classes to improve their command of the language. With the understanding that good English skills will open the door to the world and access to knowledge worldwide, this group under the leadership of Supeeyah proposed and materialised the solutions to solve those social issues. The "Sawadee English" programme is open to all underprivileged children from the age of 7 until 12 years old. Through social media influence, they received participants from the three provinces in Southern Thailand: Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat (see Figure 5.2). There were also some participants who come from Pattalung and Songkhla, Thailand.



Figure 5.2: Program poster

The program was held every Saturday for three months, for just one session a week. The time allocated was 45 minutes to an hour per lesson.

The styles of the teaching and learning activities conducted are as below:

- The class was divided into three activities which are the warm-up activity, presentation activity, and practice activity.
- The purpose of the warm-up activity is to engage students before the lesson begins. The audio and video animations were provided during this activity.
- In the presentation activity, the group members would explain the topics through teaching aids such as music, video animations, pictures, slides presentations, etc. The visual materials provided engaged the students and maintained their learning enthusiasm.
- During the practical activity, students would be asked to go deeper into their topic being studied. The simple games method was incorporated during the session to make learning enjoyable and effective.

- The members of the group/teachers had to ensure that the students were engaged in all their sessions.
- After the session ended, the teachers would review the students' and teachers' performances. The corrective actions and improvements would then be made in the next class.

As Supeeyah and friends' programme of study is in the field of education, they were able to apply all the pedagogical knowledge that they had received to this project. They were able to ensure that the online classes were fun and interactive while also achieving the objectives. The group fully utilised the visual and audio teaching methods in engaging the students and sustaining their learning enthusiasm (see Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3: Learning style

5.3 THE IMPACT CREATED

Around 15-20 students joined the class every Saturday. The "Sawadee English" project has yet to implement the complete cycle of social business since there is no tuition fee charged to the children. Supeeyah and friends are also in their learning stage in conducting this project. They want to gain as much experience as they can.

These are among the feedback they received from the children and parents:

- Their English vocabulary has increased.
- They can construct sentences from the new vocabulary they learned.
- They can communicate basic conversations in English.
- They can identify the use of nouns and verbs in sentences.
- They had much fun learning English with the "Sawadee English" teachers.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The "Sawadee English" has provided the group members with a platform to apply their own knowledge and gain experience in teaching. This project has given a lot of advantages to the group. They do not have to wait until finishing their studies to apply and practice their pedagogical knowledge. Imagine the teaching experiences they will have gained before they graduate. It will give them a competitive advantage as they seek employment. In other words, they have prepared for their employment ahead of time. With the positive response received, they are optimistic that the project will benefit many underprivileged children in Southern Thailand. Supeeyah and Masra aim to set up their tuition centre or a school in the future. Ultimately, the "Sawadee English" project can create employment opportunities, especially for graduates of educational backgrounds. The project has also inspired the other group members to help underprivileged children in Malaysia and Indonesia. The "Sawadee English" project has inspired Supeeyah and friends to become job creators in the education industry.

ALBUKHARY PHOTOGRAPHY



6.0 CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

Betul Dag, a student of the Bachelor of Business Administration programme from Turkey, is passionate about photography (see Figure 6.1). During her free time, she always carries a camera and takes nice pictures everywhere she goes. For Betul, photography is more than the mere act of shooting and making shuttering sounds with the camera. It is about the details, and the story that one picture depicts. So, it is beyond mere passion. While deciding on the social business project that she needs to do for Social Business (II) course this semester, Betul chose the area of Zero Unemployment. She was thinking of how a specific hobby such as photography can become an income-generating activity, especially for a student.

Betul partnered with Omar Bah in this project, a Bachelor of Business Administration student majoring in Marketing. Omar is a student from Gambia. After the incubation phase of the business, it was finally decided what it would address and how it could be achieved. The structure of the business would set off. The duo formed a team of two and started a photography business named Albukhary Photography (see Figure 6.2), with the guidance of their lecturer. Betul Dag worked as the photographer, while Omar Bah was the marketing manager.

Before its establishment, the business had to receive approval from the Puncak Perkhidmatan Kompleks (PPK). This department of the university is responsible for the management of facilities and the security of the campus. After several meetings and exploring the various options, the group was permitted to start operating. The business is designed to have outsiders come on campus, which is technically strictly restricted to outsiders. After receiving the approval, there were nonetheless certain conditions attached by the PPK. This consisted of an entrance fee of RM50.00 and that rule that there would be no loitering during the photo sessions.



Figure 6.1: Betul in action



Figure 6.2: Business name and logo

6.1 SOCIAL ISSUES INVOLVED

As an international student, it is not easy to get a part-time job outside the campus. The challenge is related to the language barrier with the locals. Many international students want to find a part-time job, especially during the long semester break. Still, it is not easy to get one. Alor Setar, for instance, is less metropolitan than cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang and Johor Bahru. The population size is not large, and the students have minimal opportunities to get employment. Apart from that, most people in Alor Setar do not speak much English, thus creating a further barrier for students to have employment opportunities.

Many students in the millennial age are technology savvy and creative in taking pictures. But most of the time, this ends up as a mere hobby rather than a form of income generation. Betul and Omar wanted to prove that students can create employment, perhaps from their pursuits. They want to start with their hobby of photography.

The unemployment issue among the international students can be explained through the Iceberg Model method by Goodman (2002) (see Figure 2.2).

Level 1 - Events

What can you see?

Students are generally unemployed.

Level 2 - Patterns of Behaviour

What is happening over time?

It is difficult for international students to get a part-time job while studying.

Level 3 - Structure of the System

What has influenced and connected the pattern?

Limited working hours and economic sectors allowed for international students in Malaysia to work part-time.

English language barrier constraints in the circuit cities, such as Alor Setar.

Level 4 - Mental Models

What attributes, beliefs, morals, expectations, or values do people hold about the system?

Students need to focus on study only.

Get the job after graduating only.

When students already have an income, they will forget about their studies.

6.2 SOCIAL SOLUTIONS OFFERED

Once they knew that they wanted to address the unemployment problem among students on campus; they decided to use their skill sets to create employment avenues for themselves and fellow students. Albukhary International University could be termed an entrepreneurial incubation hub for students. Through its staff and management, the university creates a supportive and enabling environment for students who want to start businesses to succeed. It is mainly geared towards creating graduates who would become job creators instead of job seekers. From the onset of the business, outsiders or locals were their target audience in the marketing strategy.

They divided the marketing segment into sub-segments such as couples, weddings and family photo sessions. The photography services also included lifestyle photography, personal and couple's portraits (see Figure 6.3a and 6.3b). The marketing strategy needed to be radically shifted to ensure that the business generated sales. Hence, a new market segment was targeted instead of focusing on only locals. AIU students are from different countries; therefore, these people were approached to take pictures with their countrymates. They also promoted the school's student associations and hosted events. It would work out fine, and some of the photos were posted on Instagram, a social media platform that boosted the online portfolio and attracted outsiders.

In the beginning, it took quite a lot of work to start bringing in clients. The language barrier was a key factor. The locals, the primary target market segment's medium of communication, communicated primarily in Bahasa Malaysia, while the studentpreneurs were relatively poor at Bahasa. The business's online presence was significant, but this did not translate to sales. Other factors, such as equipment and unpredictable weather conditions, hindered the business. However, the resilience and determination of the duo would help see them through.



Figure 6.3a: Photos taken



Figure 6.3b: Photos taken

6.3 THE IMPACT CREATED

The Social Business (II) course is an experiential learning approach. The students have around four months in this course to conduct the project. They concentrate on designing and planning the project execution for the first two months. In general, the execution process will take around two months. For example, the duration of marketing activities for the Albukhary Photography group is one month.

Meanwhile, they focus on sales-generating action for the remaining month: taking clients' pictures. The range of customers is from individual students, groups of students as well as outsiders. The price package ranged between RM50-RM100 per session. The charge includes the photos either in soft copy or printed format.

The business has successfully been able to make a good number of sales. The aggregate sales of the business are about RM1,300, which was earned in one month. The group also has successfully employed two other AIU students in this business. On top of that, they also have given additional business to the students who provided printing services on campus. Betul and Omar are optimistic that more students can be employed in the future once the business has become more established.

The business's existence is linked to the university's durability. Thus, the Albukhary Photography business is a sustainable one. The business also has exposed Albukhary International University to a broader audience. The business, because of its online presence, has gained traction quickly. The Instagram account's insights reveal more than 3000 content interactions. The post interactions are more than 900 and demonstrate more than 735% growth. The university is strictly restricted to outsiders. The people who have lived their entire life in Alor Setar have mostly not had the opportunity to enter the campus. Therefore, the business allowed others to see the beautiful campus and its century-inspired buildings. This indirectly can attract more local students to study here.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Through guidance, Betul and Omar established Albukhary Photography, arguably a sustainable and replicable social business potentially in other higher academic institutions worldwide. The Albukhary Photography project has helped Betul and Omar gain new skills and sharpen their photography and marketing skills. Overall, Albukhary Photography, established to address zero unemployment and poverty among students, has achieved its objective within a short time frame. The duo have equally established a sustainable social business with positive impacts.

MAK LANG'S KEREPEK BUSINESS EMPOWERING RURAL MICRO ENTREPRENEUR



7.0 CASE STUDY BACKGROUND

Noorzarila Hassan who prefers to be called Mak Lang (see Figure 7.1), 49 years old, is a mother of 10 children. Together with her 59 year old husband, Pak Lang, Mak Lang lives in Kampung Tembak A Ulu, Kuala Ketil, in the district of Baling, Kedah. Mak Lang and her husband run a cottage business producing and selling traditional bananas and tapioca chips or “*kerepek pisang dan ubi kayu*” in Malay. The business, established in 2000, has supported the family ever since. However, the business journey for Mak Lang was not straightforward, and she faced many challenges. Raising ten children while managing the business is not easy for Mak Lang. Her husband is the main pillar of Mak Lang, but sadly in 2016, he had a heart attack and then a stroke in 2020. This has made it impossible for him to help in business like he used to. Nevertheless, Mak Lang must continue the business to survive. But the business income became reduced significantly at this point. There were times it was not enough to feed the family.

The situation worsened when the pandemic Covid-19 hit Malaysia in 2020. The movement control order (MCO) imposed by the government really hit small businesses such as Mak Lang Kerepek’s business badly. The cycle of raw material distribution and product channels to the customer were affected during this time. An unexpected scenario happened when Mak Lang had to discard all her products because they had reached the expiration date. Mak Lang was terribly devastated. The products could not reach customers because of all this while, Mak Lang went about doing business the traditional way. She had never used a digital marketing platform for the company before. Promoting and selling the chips online was completely alien to Mak Lang. She never knew it was possible for her to market her products online when she lived in the village.

Understanding her mother's struggle, Mak Lang's daughter named, Saidah (see Figure 7.2), 26 years old, decided to help the business. Saidah has a Bachelor's degree in arts from one of the public universities in Malaysia. She is the only Mak Lang child who has been to university. Three of Mak Lang's children (no 4, 5, and 6) dropped out due to family financial constraints. Saidah attempted to find a job in the beginning but ultimately decided to help her mother. Saidah understood the importance of digital marketing but lacked knowledge and skills in this area.



Figure 7.1: Mak Lang in front of her house



Figure 7.2: Saidah and her brother

7.1 SOCIAL ISSUES INVOLVED

The Albukhary International University (AIU) team first met Mak Lang in late November 2021. The head of the village introduced Mak Lang to the AIU-Social Business Design Lab (SBDL) under Zero Poverty Cluster. The team was asked to help solve Mak Lang's issues. At this time, Mak Lang's Kerepek business has a few business issues, among them are:

- a) Business sales are badly affected due to the pandemic.
- b) The number of customers has been reduced.
- c) Limited marketing channel.
- d) Low business motivation.

Mak Lang needed to revitalize the business quickly before it led to more damage. Mak Lang's Kerepek business needed a new business strategy, and the existing business needed an overhaul. Product marketing, branding, and cost management are important aspects that require high attention. Mak Lang and her daughter, Saidah, were far from knowledgeable in these areas and were looking for assistance.

It might have been possible for Mak Lang to contact the government agencies related to entrepreneurship to seek help. However, they can only provide knowledge applicable to ordinary circumstances, and no coaching services are provided. Mak Lang could also have reached out to any private consulting company to assist, but she would not have been able afford to bear the costs involved.

Mak Lang's Kerepek Business issue can also be described in detail through the Iceberg Model method by Goodman (2002) (see Figure 2.2):

Level 1 - Events

What can we see?

Low business income among the rural micro entrepreneurs.

Lack of business strategy creativity among the rural micro entrepreneurs.

Level 2 - Patterns of Behaviour

What is happening over time?

Stagnant growth among micro and small businesses in the rural areas.

The business remains small over the generations.

Level 3 - Structure of the System

What has influenced and connected the pattern?

Lack of exposure to the current business approach, especially on digitalisation.

The training on online business does not reach most rural entrepreneurs.

Level 4 - Mental Models

What attributes, beliefs, morals, expectations, or values do people hold about the system?

To do online business is challenging.

Going digital requires a higher level of educational background.

Rural cottage businesses only exist to support daily family expenditures, and sufficient income is deemed good enough.

7.2. SOCIAL SOLUTIONS OFFERED

Due to an established relationship from previous projects to boost villagers' income, the village chief contacted AIU-Social Business Design Lab (Zero Poverty Cluster). The AIU-SBSL is a brainstorming platform for AIU students and staff to cultivate their creative minds to find social solutions and social innovation ideas. Among the first actions taken by the SBDL team is to find sales and a new market for Mak Lang. Since the sales have plummeted during the MCO, there was an urgency to boost the sales. In penetrating the new market, it was necessary to create a business brand for Mak Lang's Kerepek. A group of students under a Social Business (I) course guided by the SBDL advisors has created a product brand and logo for Mak Lang (see Figure 7.3). By doing so, many people would be able to know about Mak Lang's Kerepek. Before this, there was no business logo sticker on the packaging.



Figure 7.3: Product branding

For a small business-like Mak Lang, a quick cash turnover is vital. This is because most of their raw material purchases involve cash payment. The AIU students helped in finding many customers outside the village. They created social media accounts and actively promoted Mak Lang's Kerepek through those platforms. They also become agents for Mak Lang's Kerepek in Alor Setar (see Figure 7.4). There are more customers from this part of the state. In addition, with the influence of social media, Mak Lang's kerepek started getting attention from customers outside Alor Setar. From December 2021 until January 2022 (2 months), the students managed to get RM3034.00 sales for Mak Lang's Kerepek. The business working capital has almost drained out since the pandemic crisis. Thus, the income received has given a new lease of life to Mak Lang's business, and now Mak Lang has sufficient cash to resume her business as usual.



Figure 7.4: Product sold in Alor Setar

The SBDL team is also looking for sales contracts for Mak Lang. The team managed to secure a sales contract from *Pertubuhan Peladang's* Mart (Farmers' Mart) for Mak Lang. It is a contract worth RM3000.00 of sales, and Mak Lang will receive payment when the products have been sold. The faster the product is sold; the faster Mak Lang will receive payment. In 3 months, Mak Lang had already received her first payment, and now she has sent the second batch of products to Farmer's Mart. The SBDL team also advised Mak Lang and Saidah on the way to keep proper cash records and cost-income management. Saidah is so grateful for the support she received from the AIU team; with the continuous consultation received in the past 6 months, she now has more confidence in navigating the business.

In addition, in Semester II, 2021/2022, another group of students under a Social Business (II) course assisted Saidah, specifically on the e-commerce marketing channel. The biggest lesson learned from the pandemic crisis is that a business needs to utilise digital marketing platforms in making sales. With the help of students in the Social Business (I) course previously, Mak Lang's Kerepek already has its social media platforms. The new students will set up a Shopee account for the business e-commerce platform. The group has conducted an extensive market research on traditional chips products sold in the shoppe. As many sellers are selling similar products, so the competition is stiff. Thus, the group must have the right product positioning strategy for Mak Lang's Kerepek on Shopee. Among the approaches taken such as:

- a) Renamed Mak Lang's Kerepek as "Homemade Kerepek" on Shopee (see Figure 7.5). The chips are not from factory made but rather cottage or homemade products. The group also highlighted "*resepi ibunda*" or "Mother's recipe" on the product descriptions. Thus, it will give extra value to customers. It also can justify the price charge for the product.
- b) Created a professional product image on Shopee (see Figure 7.6). So, it will give a good impression to the business.

- c) Aligned with the cost management strategy; the team only sold the three best-seller products of Mak Lang's Kerepek in three sizes (0.3kg, 0.5kg and 1.0kg).
- d) Ran campaigns on Shopee to increase the products' views and sales.

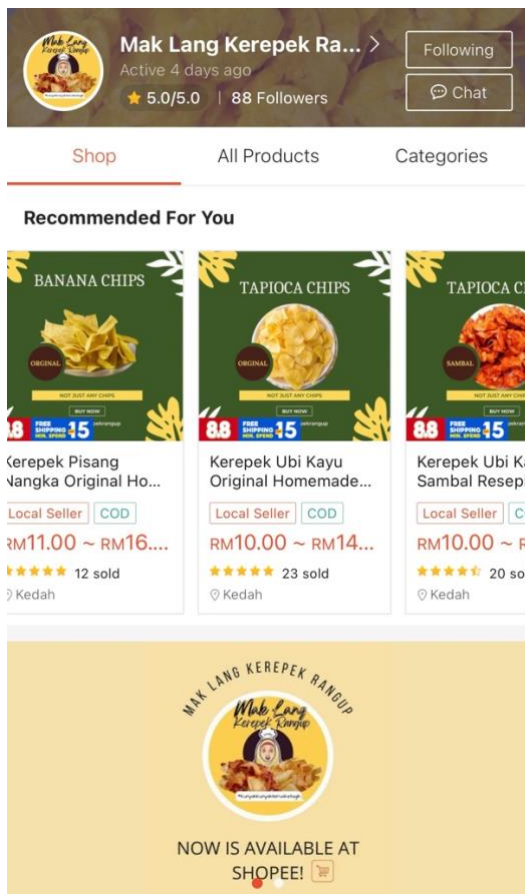


Figure 7.5: Mak Lang's kerepek on Shopee



Figure 7.6: New product image

7.3. THE IMPACT CREATED

The impact can be divided into sales achievements, social media and e-commerce performances. The impact of AIU interventions can also be seen in Mak Lang and her family's self-esteem. The assistance from the AIU-SBDL team and AIU students through projects under Social Business (I) and Social Business (II) courses have made Mak Lang and her family optimistic about the future as well as increase their self-esteem. In terms of sales performance in the early period of intervention (Dec 2021-Jan 2022) by a group of students from the Social Business (I) course, Mak Lang received a total of RM3034.00 in sales. Later, from May-June 2022 by a group of students under the Social Business (II) course, Mak Lang received RM601.70 sales through the Shopee e-commerce platform and RM350.00 in offline sales. The sales breakdown is shown in Table 7.1 below:

Table 7.1: Total Sales Contribution by AIU Students.

| No | Periods | Sales Contribution (RM) |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | Dec 2021 – Jan 2022 | 3034.00 |
| 2. | May – June 2022 | 951.70 |
| Total Sales (RM) | | 3985.70 |

In total, sales contributions by the AIU team to Mak Lang's Kerepek business amounted to RM3985.70. On top of that, Mak Lang also received a RM3000.00 value contract from Farmer's Mart. In addition, Mak Lang's Kerepek business is now available online at Shopee. Thus, Mak Lang's chips can reach many people throughout Malaysia. It is a milestone achievement for a rural cottage business such as Mak Lang's.

While assisting Mak Lang's business, we can see their enthusiasm to help grow the business. Saidah, for example, actively hired local agents to sell the chips. The business, which was earning less than RM1000.00 net income, has since doubled. The latest financial report in June 2022 recorded RM3138.00 net income. Their surplus enables them to put aside some savings and add to their working capital fund, which is impossible for them to do before. Mak Lang is also able to keep four of her children (no 7, 8, 9, and 10) aged 15, 12, 10 and 7 years in school.

Since the beginning of the business in 2000, only in 2022, Mak Lang's Kerepek company was able to open a business's current account with the bank. It is indeed an excellent achievement for the business. With this positive development, AIU Management agreed to pump in RM15100.00 to Mak Lang's Kerepek company. The purpose of this fund is to buy new machinery and tools for production. With the increase in orders, Mak Lang needs to convert some manual jobs to automated jobs through the use of these machineries and tools.

7.4. CONCLUSION

Mak Lang's story is an example of a real-life struggle encountered by many rural micro entrepreneurs. Lack of knowledge and limited access to experts hinder the growth of small businesses. The interventions from AIU-SBDL and the initiative by adopting Mak Lang's business as the students' real case study projects in the Social Business courses have significantly provided a positive impact. Apart from helping others in need, the students also gained valuable experience in solving a real-life rural entrepreneurs' problem. In this case, AIU students acted like business and marketing consultants with their targeted customers who are rural entrepreneurs. Many business consulting agencies are only focusing on corporate or big-size companies. Not many focus on consulting micro and small businesses in rural areas. There is a gap that can be filled by a social business company that these students will establish one day. The action-based learning method applied by AIU has benefitted students in preparing them for the future.

On the other hand, we also can see Saidah as the example of a young lady who applied the 3 Zero concepts in her life. Choosing to become an entrepreneur led her to create a job not only for herself but for the people in the surrounding neighbourhood. Saidah hired a few single mothers who live in poverty in that village to work for her. Saidah has solved the unemployment and poverty issues in the surrounding area. It is hoped that many micro entrepreneurs will get help through the social business intervention model as conducted by AIU.

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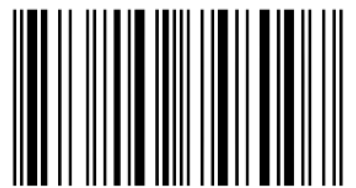
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