

PRESS RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE**

PR 2012 0618 008

MEDIA CONTACT**Debasmita Dasgupta**

Asia-Europe Foundation

debasmita.dasgupta@asef.org

H: +65 85115208

T: +65 6874 9739

F: +65 6872 1135

p. 1/3

Social Enterprise Day in Vietnam

HANOI – Aiming at empowering social entrepreneurs across East Asia and Europe through capacity building and networking activities, the British Council partners with the Asia-Europe Foundation and Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry to organise a 3-day event called 'Skills for Social Entrepreneurs' in Hanoi (18-20 June).

This event is followed by the first ever Asia-Europe Social Enterprise Day in Vietnam (20 June), showcasing 30 innovative and inspiring social enterprises from Asia and Europe. The Social Enterprise Day is co-hosted by the British Council, Centre for Social Initiatives Promotion (CSIP) and the Spark Centre for Social Entrepreneurship Development and funded by the British and Japanese governments.

CEO of the Social Return on Investment (SROI) Network Jeremy Nicholls was invited to deliver training on tools applicable to evaluating social enterprises over the organisational life cycle, especially the method of measuring the social impact. More importantly, the event involves field study to selected local social enterprises, namely Tô he company which produces fabric accessories printed with drawings made by disadvantaged children, Sao Mai centre which provides early protection service, care and parental counselling for mentally challenged children and Linktam company which provides psychological counselling.

Jeremy Nicholls CEO of SROI Network said: 'Social enterprises are different to other forms of enterprise because their starting point is the desire to create social value; however, one of the main barriers to investment is a shared language for what we mean by this.'

'SROI Network is an international membership organisation for anyone that is interested in accounting for social value. We work to encourage national networks and I hope there will soon be an SROI Network in Vietnam.'

The Hanoi event is the third and final event in a series of capacity building and networking events organised by the British Council. The first two events in Bangkok and Yangon have served to start developing the collaboration both within and between social entrepreneurs across Asia and Europe.

Among participants in the Hanoi event is Orapin Sinamonvech, founder of Kokoboard, a Thai company that produces furniture, stationary from coconut/peanut shells and Mariel Vincent Rapisura from the Philippines, President and CEO of SEDPI Group of Social Enterprises who is well-known for reviving many ailing micro finance institutions and social enterprises.

Other inspiring participants include Thuta Auning from Myanmar, who founded Hatchlon Consulting, a cooperative start-up specialising in assisting new venture creation, business incubation and organisational development, Kathrine O.Rasmussen (Denmark), co-founder and CEO of ACTIONTANK, a consultancy company that develops new products, services and strategies with customers including ISS, the biggest facility company in Demark and Shivang Patel (UK) who is the director of i-genius Academy and Events, the education arm of i-genius dedicated to offering easily accessible social enterprise training for all.

ASEF Director for Public Affairs Paul Koh commented: 'Social entrepreneurs are benefiting the society through a for-profit business model. Inter-regional and multi-sectoral networks help in strengthening the capacities of such social entrepreneurs. And this is exactly why and how the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) is supporting the 'Skills for Social Entrepreneurs' initiative.'

Happening back-to-back after the 'Skills for Social Entrepreneurs' event, the Asia-Europe Social Enterprise Day celebrates the diversified efforts and initiatives of inspiring social enterprises in dealing with social and environmental issues. The landscape of the social enterprise sector is drawn up via the local and international social enterprises on exhibition; among the local enterprises are ECOLIFE – a Vietnam's enterprise that aims at establishing community-based co-tourism model, Solar Serve, a local enterprise that promotes the effective use of natural resources in people's lives through research, production and distribution of solar-powered equipments or 'Hold the Future' centre which provides training and job service for people with disabilities to enable them to be trained to make handicraft products.

Director of British Council Vietnam Robin Rickard said: 'The Asia-Europe Social Enterprise Day marks the first time this kind of event has ever been held in Vietnam. More importantly, it creates an exchange platform among the social enterprises and between them and other stakeholders for learning, sharing experience, promoting the collaboration and the development of domestic, regional and global social entrepreneurship.'

ABOUT THE ORGANISERS



Asia-Europe Foundation

The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) promotes greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Through ASEF, civil society concerns are included as a vital component of deliberations of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), which currently comprises of 46 member states plus the European Commission and the ASEAN Secretariat (www.aseminfoboard.org) ASEF was established in February 1997 by the participating governments of ASEM and has since engaged over 17,000 direct participants through more than 550 projects in the realms of economy and society, environment, education, public health, arts and culture, human rights and governance, and inter-communal dialogue. www.asef.org

In 2012, ASEF is commemorating its 15th Anniversary and invites everyone to take part in celebrating **Connected Histories, Shared Future**.



British Council is the UK's international cultural relations body, working in over 100 countries worldwide. We build engagement and trust for the UK by exchanging knowledge and ideas between people worldwide. One of the main working areas is supporting the social and economic development of Vietnam by connecting Vietnamese individuals, communities, business and government with UK expertise in relevant areas such as social enterprise and media.



Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) is an independent, non-governmental organization representing the Vietnamese business community, business associations and employers for the promotion and protection of their interests in domestic and international relations as well as promoting and assisting trade, investment and other business activities in Vietnam and abroad. The Office for Business Sustainable Development (SDforB) is a departmental unit of VCCI with the mandate of promoting corporate sustainable development, particularly through the Vietnam Business Council for Sustainable Development (VBCSD).

This initiative is sponsored by the Government of Japan and the United Kingdom.