“Gongs!n and Maha Mentor: A Solution to Education Inequality in Indonesia”

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Gongs!n and Maha Mentor: A Solution to Education Inequality in Indonesia

Social mobility allows individuals to move upward within a social hierarchy with positive changes in education and income, but students’ educational opportunities tend to be affected by their families’ socioeconomic status. Educational inequality, which is likely to persist in the twenty-first century, can be particularly problematic in developing countries, where there are limited opportunities for the less fortunate to receive quality education.

The mission of Gongs!n, a Seoul-based social enterprise founded in 2006, is to provide “one Gongs!n mentor for every student in South Korea.” Gongs!n provides young, underprivileged students with the information they need to achieve academic success and youth mentoring programs that help underprivileged children to build and achieve their dreams. In pursuing this mission, Gongs!n helps to reduce educational inequality in South Korea.

The founders of Gongs!n went to Indonesia in 2011 to spread the Gongs!n business model with the help of graduate students at GadjahMada University, who shared their interest in fostering education among young Indonesians. Indonesia has been experiencing the inequality issues in terms of education, poverty, and regional division that are typical in the early phase of economic progress.

Maha Mentor, an Indonesian social enterprise of Gongs!n started off with a mentoring program at public schools in 2011 and in 2013 established its own Gongs!n center with the support of a corporate partner, Korea Telecom (KT), where it provided private education services that generated revenue. The social enterprise then invested the revenue generated in the private education services into designing a low-cost, portable education device with Wi-Fi capability that can help overcome the problem of low internet availability in Indonesia. Maha Mentor devised an information-and-communication technologies-based e-learning business solution to reach a large number of underprivileged students in various regions and to expand high-quality educational and mentoring services using information technologies.

Gongs!n and Maha Mentor share the belief that education is the bridge by which motivated people can move beyond the inequality that exists in traditional social structures. Maha Mentor helps Indonesians pursue their dreams for a better future by helping to improve underprivileged students’ academic performance using advanced information technologies, thereby reducing regional gaps in educational equality. The Gongs!n business model and its considerable achievements indicate that social entrepreneurship can drive innovation by ensuring that knowledge is shared equally in order to alleviate social inequality and foster hope that not only those from the elite class, but anyone who is willing can create a better future.

Keywords: Gongs!n, Maha Mentor, social enterprise, education, inequality, ICT, e-learning, mentoring, social innovation

Leaders in the World clearly express that inequality is the toughest challenge defining our time (Obama 2013). The hope of moving upward within a social hierarchy with positive changes in income and education is now breaking down. Before, education was the single most important factor leading to a fair and equal society. Motivated people from low-income class moved upward and got ahead, if they work hard. But now, there is growing inequality and a narrowing window of opportunities for upward social mobility. The underlying problem is that educational opportunities of the young generation also tend to be affected by the socioeconomic status of their parents. Furthermore, educational inequality, which is likely to persist in the twenty-first century, can be particularly problematic in developing countries, where there are limited opportunities for the less fortunate to receive quality education.

Social enterprise, an entrepreneurial entity that focuses on social purposes, has been popularized in recent years, but the notion of social enterprise, in fact, has a long history. The first social enterprise was the Rochdale Pioneers, a consumers’ cooperative established in 1844 to overcome the injustice experienced by laborers in the United Kingdom (Shin, Kim, and Jang 2009; Lee, Yang and Hwang 2012). During the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century, laborers formed social cooperatives to address so-
cial injustices and poverty. The Rochdale Pioneers was formed by twenty-eight laborers but later developed into a full-blown cooperative, the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers (Lee, Yang and Hwang 2012).

Institutional social enterprises in Western Europe and the United States have developed since the mid-1990s. In 1991, the Italian Parliament adopted a law creating a specific legal form for these “social solidarity co-operatives” (Defourny and Nyssens 2008) which became the foundation of the social cooperative as a type of enterprise (Lee, Yang and Hwang 2012). The British government defined social enterprises as “businesses with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community, rather than being driven by the need to maximize profit for shareholders and owners” (Defourny and Nyssens 2008). The European Social Enterprise Research Network (EMES) identified social enterprises on the basis of four economic criteria and five social criteria that rooted social enterprises in the third sector, the social economy. The third sector contains not-for-profit socio-economic initiatives that belong neither to the private, for-profit sector nor to the public sector (Defourny 2001). Therefore, the third sector takes responsibility for public interests that market and government sectors cannot address and is the practical foundation for the development of social enterprises (Jo 2008; Oh 2007; Yang 2006; Lee, Yang and Hwang 2012).

In the United States, the social enterprise literature developed around business schools’ and foundations’ strategies to support social change. Harvard University introduced social enterprise to academic study in 1993. The United States’ Ashoka Foundation (www.ashoka.org) was first to use the term “social enterprise” in a practical venture. The major difference between how social enterprise developed in the US and how it developed in Europe is related to who led the development: In the US, individuals and the free market led the development of social enterprises with the appearance of non-profit organizations, while state governments played the central role in the development of social enterprises in Europe (Heyneman and Stern 2014; Jang 2010; Yang 2006; Lee, Yang and Hwang 2012). The US has had a tendency to define social enterprises only as non-profit organizations that are oriented toward the market and toward developing “earned income strategies” as a response to decreasing public subsidies and limited private grants from foundations (Defourny and Nyssens 2008). In Europe and other western countries, social enterprises have created job opportunities for the vulnerable and solved diverse social issues.

The European Social Enterprise Research Network (EMES) summarizes the definition of social enterprises in Europe as “not-for-profit private organizations providing goods or services directly related to their explicit aim to benefit the community. They rely on collective dynamics involving various types of stakeholders in their governing bodies, they place a high value on their autonomy and they bear economic risks linked to their activity.” (Defourny and Nyssens 2008). This definition generally describes social enterprise, but the concept of and criteria for a social enterprise differ from country to country, so its definition is not clearly uniform. The differences arise from the differing roots of social enterprise and its development among countries (Research Institute for Social Enterprise 2010).

Social Enterprise Domestic Market Study

The Rise of Social Enterprise in South Korea

Although social enterprise has attracted increasing interest in South Korea, the country has a relatively short history with social enterprise. In the early 1990s, social enterprises appeared in slum areas through community production movements and laborers’ production co-operatives (Lee, Yang and Hwang 2012), but the concept of social enterprise became influential only in the late 1990s, during the massive unemployment that resulted from the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

Social enterprises developed in full scale along with the Ministry of Health and Welfare’s “Self-Support Program” that began in 1996. After the Asian Financial Crisis, South Korea’s government supported social enterprises in the form of “Projects for Public Labor” to help resolve the problem of soaring unemployment and the widening gap between rich and poor. In early 2000, social enterprises gradually expanded their areas of activity in providing social services for vulnerable groups and low-income families based on the National Basic Living Security Act. In 2005, the government’s Ministry of Labor initiated a “corporate associated social enterprise” to create jobs, while other types of social enterprises led by non-profit organizations also emerged (Lee, Yang and Hwang 2012).

The enactment of the Social Enterprise Promotion Act in July 2007 enabled social enterprises in South Korea to be officially certified, and social enterprise began to develop systematically. The Social Enterprise Promotion Act also provided certified social enterprises with financial support for management and facilities expenses, preferential purchases from public institutions and agencies, tax reduction, social insurance, and other social services (MOEL 2007b). The Enforcement Ordinance of Social Enterprise Promotion Act defined a social enterprise as “an enterprise that engages in operations of production and sales of goods and services for the purpose of pursuing social goals such as enhancing the quality of life of residents by providing jobs and social services for the vulnerable groups” (MOEL 2007a). Thus, social enterprises in South Korea have been influenced by governmental policies, and government has played a leading role in planning and supporting social enterprise.

Support for and development of social enterprises strengthened with the launch of the Lee, MyungBak administration, which stated the goal of establishing a thousand certified social enterprises by 2012. By December 2013, 970 certified social enterprises are in operation, with 17 percent involved in arts and tourism. 16 percent in envi-
A Korean Social Enterprise Dedicated to Enhancing Education Equality

In the summer of 2006, two brothers and a friend at Seoul National University, the top university in South Korea, made public the methods of study they had acquired through trial and error as examinees for the university entrance exams. With the hope that students could “enjoy study” and that every student could be a “God of Study,” they built a website at www.gongsin.com (Kang 2010c).

Education exerts the greatest influence on an individual’s intelligence and emotion development during his or her growth. Education is also a deciding factor in determining an individual’s income and socio-economic status in later life. Polarization in the economic power of one’s parents’ generation perpetuates the cycle of economic polarization in the children’s generation through inheritance of poverty and the educational polarization that leads to educational inequality. In any society education is a bridge to social mobility.

The educational gap in higher education reduces the opportunity for social mobility. The problem of this educational gap has become a worldwide issue in developing countries as well as advanced ones. Dissemination of a pessimistic outlook on social mobility by highlighting disparity and the resulting feeling of abandonment can readily develop into conflicts between classes, which leads to significant social costs. Therefore, Korean society urgently needs meaningful activities that will build the educational bridge of hope for lower-income families.

Gongsin: “The God of Study”

Gongsin in Korean literally means the God of Study, who is a genius student excels at academic performance and enters the best universities. Gongsin refers to a Seoul-based social enterprise founded in 2006. The mission of Gongsin is to provide “one Gongsin mentor for every student in South Korea.”(Kang 2007) Gongsin provides young, underprivileged students with the information they need to achieve academic success and youth mentoring programs that help underprivileged children to build and achieve their dreams.

Gongsin.com

Gongsin.com, a free online video class site, was established by Kang, Sung Tae of Seoul National University’s Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, Kang, Sung Young of the Department of Electrical Engineering, and Yuk, JiHoo of the College of Medicine. Understanding that high school students who were preparing for the 2008 university entrance exam were also loaded with class work and preparations for the SAT and college entrance essays, they decided to hand down the methods they had used in gaining entrance to the most prestigious university in South Korea without the help of expensive private education. They hoped to provide reliable guidance and easy and efficient methods of study for students across the country.

Gongsin, the method of study itself, began as an intramural club that used Gongsin mentors and videotaped lectures. Gradually, Gongsin mentors from Seoul National University, Yonsei University, and MIT in the United States also began lecturing on these methods of study, taking advantage of their own experiences and strengths. The Kang brothers believed that, “although there is no royal road to study, there are still knobs and savvy that can enhance the efficiency of study.” They established the Gongsin principles of (1) being honest to students no matter what; (2) never allowing the interference of publishers, private institutions, or other entities; (3) thinking from the students’ perspective; and (4) teaching whatever will help without holding back secrets, expediencies, or other methods(Sung 2006).

Having recognized the limitations of online activities, the Gongsin club began Gongsin mentoring, a mentoring program for students in public education. The Gongsin mentoring program was offered after school at youth institutions and public schools. Through face-to-face conversations with students, Gongsin mentors focused on encouraging and giving hope to students in lower-income families and those who had difficulty studying. The Gongsin mentoring program prioritized helping students identify and pursue their dreams first, rather than starting with teaching practical subjects.

Once the mentors have helped students to find their dreams, they proceed to teach study methods according to the students’ levels and to enhance individual capabilities for self-directed learning (Gongsin 2014b). As a result, students gain confidence in their studies, improve their grades, and change their lives. In the process, a virtuous cycle of past mentees who enter universities and become mentors themselves has also been created(Oh 2013).

The Gongsin club became a social enterprise in November 2008 in order to accomplish its mission of “one Gongsin mentor for every student in South Korea.” This choice enabled the club to recruit talented mentors who wanted to pursue mentorship as a profession and to create educational content that would have otherwise been beyond the capabilities of just one university club. Becoming a social enterprise also gave the club the ability to invite educational professionals to form an advisory committee and to develop as a professional organization (Lee 2013).

Reborn as a social enterprise, Gongsin Corp. has led innovations in the private education market in the cause of bridging the educational gap that class work often leaves for low-income students. Gongsin Corp. has three major sources of revenue: selling content to paid members, providing offline programs for after-school activities, and public lectures by Gongsin members at various institutions(Lee 2013). Although Gongsin Corp. doesn’t look much different from any other private education company in terms of sources of revenue, its study method and men-
Gongs!n’s Business Model

Starting with video lectures about methods of study by President Kang, Sung Tae and his brother Kang, Sung Young in 2006, Gongs!n soon became well-known through media like MBC’s “Emperor of Study” and KBS’s drama, “God of Study.” Gongs!n Corp. came to prominence soon after becoming a social enterprise in November 2008, as it was awarded the Minister of Labor Prize as the runner-up (out of six hundred teams) in South Korea’s Social Venture Competition in 2008 and the Grand Prize in 2009 (Gongs!n 2010).

With 300,000 members, Gongs!n (www.Gongsin.com) provides its content free of charge to more than 10,000 students in low-income families and has begun mentoring programs in seven places (Lee 2013; Oh 2013), including youth support centers and the Korea Association for Children with Leukemia and Cancer (Gongs!n 2014b). As a result, Gongs!n was nominated as a Leading Educational Volunteer Organization of Korea in 2009 and was invited to a Sharing and Volunteering Luncheon Event held at Blue House, South Korea’s presidential office in 2010 (Gongs!n 2010; Kang 2010a, 2010b).

In addition, Gongs!n developed a study-secret application for smartphone users called Joyful Study, which recorded 200,000 downloads, and provided paid content on the website free to 10,000 children from low-income families (Lee 2013). Gongs!n was certified by the City of Seoul as an Excellent Social Enterprise and is expanding its areas of operations (Gongs!n 2010).

Besides the video lectures and the study-secret smartphone application, Gongs!n holds the Gongs!n Mentoring Tour and Gongs!n Seminar, jointly operated by public offices and the private company, where experts in self-directed learning methods and students from prestigious universities participate as mentors. The mentoring tour and seminar are well-known for improving students’ learning and earn a high degree of satisfaction from parents. Participating students and parents in the event have voiced their thoughts and impression about the mentoring in positive ways (Gongs!n 2012, 2014):

"My class teacher recommended me to take Gongs!n Mentoring. I studied hard but I often have trouble focusing in classes, resulting less satisfactory grades. I also like to have fun time with friends. But, during the Gongs!n Mentoring Tour, I had a chance to experience mock interviews and learn about study attitudes and methods. In addition, I was able to establish self-identity. I appreciate my mentors, Min Kyung Choi at Yonsei University and Dong Min Shin at Seoul National University for teaching me!"

-A Gongs!n Mentoring Tour participant-

"Hi, I have two children attending high schools. Thanks to the advice and counseling of the mentor, Sang GeunYoo on study, I had the chance to find solutions on private academy issues for them. I wish I had the seminar with my children. So that my children came to be more interested in study. Thanks again for the powerful speech."

-A parent participant in Gongs!n Seminar-

Gongs!n has also embraced the ideas of university students teaching their fresh study expertise and tips to the junior students and of extending mentoring for life, not just for students who have lost their motivation to study. In so doing, Gongs!n has helped low-income parents and their children to be independent of expensive private education and consulting for university entrance exams. Gongs!n has become a recommended site for students and is recognized as having essential educational content.

While CEO Kang, Sung Tae has been offered proposals like handing over the rights to the website for USD 1 million (Kang 2007) and a seat as a proportional representative in the National Assembly, he has declined it all. “I just do my best to make my dream come true, together with the people who share it,” he says. “I hope students will not make the same mistakes I made during my school days, and it will be the day my goal is accomplished when we can assign one mentor for every student (Kang 2007).”

Gongs!n, used by 300,000 middle school and high school students in South Korea, has become an icon in the field of education as a social venture that has reduced the educational gap and led educational innovation through mentoring programs in South Korea. It has not just succeeded as a business in South Korea but has also provided significant social benefit.

Expanding Social Enterprise Abroad

The Dream for Global Educational Equality: Maha Mentor

The biggest potential for competitive edge that a country can possess lies in its human resources, which can be enhanced through education. Even so, the educational environment that some take for granted is far away for some people. Gongs!n CEO Kang, Sung Young had this in mind from the start: “Someday I will help out those children in developing countries who cannot afford the benefits of education.” Now CEO Kang is finding that opportunity in founding Maha Mentor, the Indonesian version of Gongs!n.

Heading for Indonesia

In the book, God of Study: Becoming a Foolish CEO, Kang, Sung Tae, observed (Kang 2012, p. 245-246):

“...1953, after the Korean War, the United Nations Commander-in-Chief, Douglas McArthur, said that it would take “at least 100 years to reconstruct this country.” But only thirty-five years later Korea successfully hosted the Seoul Olympics, and it became a G20 co-chair country in 2010. Korea did not have resources, money, or even
technology. The only thing Korea had was people; people were its only resources. Education to raise people up made Korea what it is today. Indonesia has even more than what Korea had; it has more natural resources and more human resources….”

South Korea is the only country that has moved from being a country that received aid to one that gives aid. CEO Kang, Sung Young thinks that this achievement was possible only because of education. He believes that other developing countries in the same situation as Korea was in after the war will be able to grow as countries and will be able to give individuals growth and hope through education, just as Korea did. In order to achieve his dream, Kang volunteered to perform his compulsory military service with Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), an establishment that extends aid to developing countries. He was dispatched to Indonesia, the first country on the way to accomplishing his dream.

Establishing Maha Mentor
Gongs!n took its first step toward global educational equality in 2011 when CEO Kang, Sung Young was dispatched to Indonesia with KOICA(Kang 2013; Lee 2014). Although the average level of education for Indonesian people is not high, it has several world-class universities, including GadjahMada University, which is internationally renowned for high-quality academic research. As the saying goes, there was a will, so there surely was a way, and Maha Mentor started from there.

CEO Kang taught students in a public school about computers in Bahasa Indonesia, an Indonesian language, and audited an MBA course in order to learn about Indonesian students’ thoughts and expectations regarding education. Kang determined that Indonesian children do not tend to have high hopes primarily because of the habitual acquiescence to reality from long colonial subjugation, not because of Southeast Asians’ laid-back lifestyle or attitude. Children in the slums of Indonesia wanted only to be farmers or store owners based on their parents’ teachings and wishes and their environment, and they dismissed bigger dreams and the larger world as something that belonged to other people. They did not have dreams. For that reason, Kang felt that they needed Gongs!n and that there was much that he could and would have to do in Indonesia (Lee 2014).

Through the MBA course he took, Kang met four local graduate students who were interested in educating the students of Indonesia, with whom he established an Indonesian version of Gongs!n, Maha Mentor(Kang 2011). Maha means “great” in Sanskrit and “mentor” refers to the English word. Maha Mentor is located in JiGowonganKidul, Yogyakarta City, Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. Yogyakarta is an educational city with about twenty universities, most of which are the most prestigious universities in Indonesia. Therefore, the city has more human resources for mentors than other regions in Indonesia do.

The founders of Maha Mentor swung into action to plant dreams in the minds of the students who will be the future leaders of Indonesia. The founders initiated mentoring activities in the public primary schools, middle schools, and high schools, helping the students think specifically about their future careers. Introducing various jobs and helping students decide on their future jobs and materialize ten-year plans, they tried to give students high aims and positive expectations for their futures (Kang 2013). Still, Indonesia is a country with high socioeconomic barriers that often prevent students from achieving their hopes and realizing their dreams, so the Maha Mentor mentors knew that just motivating students to set goals and mentoring them to study to make their dreams come true was not enough to solve the problem of the educational gap in Indonesia (Lee 2014). The conviction that education is the only solution to end the inheritance of poverty that results from the gap between rich and poor grew.

Maha Mentor’s Business Model

Beyond Mentoring: A Project for the Low-Income Class
Apart from the mentoring project, Maha Mentors started a private institution to teach middle school and high school subjects and foreign languages. Like private institutions in advanced countries, students from middle-income class register by paying tuition for the courses they need. Mentors are selected and employed through strict screening processes, such as educational background, essay tests, and interviews, to verify that they are suitable to work as mentors (Lee 2014). Currently, there are about fifty mentors, most of whom are university students who attend one of the top three universities in the region, and two hundred mentees. The acceptance rate for mentors is around 10 percent. About half of the students are high school students, 30 percent are middle school students, 10 percent are primary school students, and the remaining 10 percent are other students. Courses are mainly on mathematics, science, and foreign languages (Lee 2014).

Maha Mentor faced the problem of how to provide the students from lower-income families with an equal opportunity to participate. It was illogical for a proclaimed social enterprise like Maha Mentor to operate like other for-profit private institutions and allow only those who could pay to participate. Therefore, reflecting its mission statement, Maha Mentor decided to provide free classes for low-income students, and in a cooperative relationship with the public schools of Indonesia provides supplementary classes for students from low-income families (Lee 2014). In 2013 Maha Mentor signed a cooperative agreement with a corporate partner, Korea Telecom (KT), which wanted to start Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in Indonesia. KT paid half of the cost of opening Maha Mentor and agreed to support the tuition for two low-income students for each paid student (Kang 2013). With this partnership, Maha Mentor creates stable income and self-sufficiency.
and eliminates the pressure to garner tuition from low-income students.

It has been three years since Gongs!n, the icon in the education sector among social enterprises in South Korea, started operations in Indonesia under the name Maha Mentor. With its partnership agreement with KT in 2013, it laid a firm foundation for growth, which resulted in more than doubling the numbers of mentors and mentees. At the same time, its revenue has more than tripled and it no longer requires financial support from Gongs!n in Korea (Lee 2014). Local media has also paid considerable attention to the operations of Maha Mentor, and Maha Mentor is active in promoting its contribution to equal education in Indonesia via media and other social channels, such as Facebook and YouTube (Han 2013).

Maha Mentor’s Indonesian mentors are well aware of the poor educational conditions in their homeland. They voice in unison that they participate in mentor activities in the belief that they can contribute to the growth of both individuals and their country. They are happy to share their experiences and knowledge with junior students and are rewarded by seeing their students grow day by day. The mentees, too, feel grateful to Maha Mentor for helping to develop their dreams through thoughtful leadership (Lee 2014).

A Leap to Educational Innovation Using Technology

Maha Mentor wanted to help more Indonesian students realize that hard work and effort could bring them better life. With the fourth-largest number of students in the world, Indonesia has a serious gap in educational opportunity because of income disparity (Bank 2013). Private schools can be found throughout Indonesia, with those that serve low-income populations often established in remote areas in order to meet demand (Heyneman and Stern 2014), but Maha Mentor decided use the internet to solve the educational problem for more students from low-income families by recording and providing all tutoring classes conducted in the Maha Mentor Center as online classes (Lee 2014). With this decision, all students in public school in rural areas who have access to the internet can use the tutoring service. According to Yoon (2013), there is considerable educational inequality between urban and rural areas in Indonesia, with 37 percent of primary schools in rural areas and half those in urban areas experiencing a teacher shortage. With relatively low access to the internet in Indonesia, Maha Mentor decided that online classes for students would not be sufficient to bring about educational innovation nationwide and formed an IT task force to draw out innovative ideas for dissemination of online classes (Lee 2014).

Thus, the innovative machine called the Edubox was developed and is now in trials (Lee 2014). Edubox is a palm-sized Wi-Fi gadget that, with AP and SD cards inserted, can open Maha Mentor’s web pages on any nearby electronic device. The innovative nature of Edubox comes not only from the ease with which students can access the Maha Mentor website but also from the low cost of manufacturing the gadget: 50,000 Korean won. CEO Kang plans to provide Eduboxes to public schools in rural areas at cost, and teachers will extend their support through supplementary lessons, study methods, and mentoring to help students find their dreams. Kang expects that Edubox will be an innovation that will contribute to reducing the educational gaps in Indonesia (Lee 2014).

Maha Mentor created Edubox by looking for innovative methods to solve the educational problems that Indonesia faces. This innovative solution came from the passion and determination of mentors to ease the difficulty of Indonesian students, rather than from the desire to develop another source of revenue. Of course, Edubox will also provide a new source of income for Maha Mentor, but its primary value is the social contribution and innovation that it will create for Indonesia by providing students with opportunities for higher education, social mobility, and leadership positions.

Discussion

Under the wave of neo-liberalism, many countries have experienced widening disparity in income. The resulting fall of the middle class and economic polarization of society has led to a widening gap in educational opportunity, followed by inequality of opportunity, which has made social mobility more difficult and increased social unrest and instability. In this worldwide phenomenon, Gongs!n’s introduction of an online study method in Indonesia demonstrates a new educational paradigm that provides equality in educational opportunity to low-income students. This new educational model eases the educational gap that arises out of differences in economic power and makes social mobility possible.

Gongs!n’s and Maha Mentor’s pursuit of equality in educational opportunity in Korea and Indonesia is characterized by three primary success factors. The first of these success factors is the successful establishment of mentors who advance Gongs!n’s and Maha Mentor’s mission by sharing their experiences and methods of study with mentees. Although Gongs!n and Maha Mentor pursue an educational enterprise, they differentiate themselves from other for-profit educational academies by engaging university students through social issues in education sector, provide valuable experiences for both mentors and mentees, and contribute to increasing the country’s most important resource: human talent.

The second success factor relates to the innovations developed to solve the individual countries’ problems so students can benefit in their particular educational environments. Gongs!n in Korea, where the internet distribution rate is one of the highest and the best in the world, operates Gongs!n Mentoring Tour and Seminars at schools and public institutions and concentrates on strengthening not only the mentor-mentee relationship but also the parent-children that cannot be replaced with internet classes alone. In Indonesia, where internet access is not so widespread, they are preparing for a leap forward with the development of
Edubox, an innovative product that will increase the internet accessibility that is required in order to eliminate the regional educational gaps.

The third success factor is in the area of performance and publicity. Gongs!n has received many awards in contests for innovative social enterprises, and Maha Mentor has been consistent in communicating about their activities and those enterprises’ social meaning through Indonesian mass media as well as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These promotional activities not only raise the public’s level of recognition of their performance but also inform citizens that social enterprises contribute to solving social problems, that the issue of educational inequality is important, and that citizens’ participation through mentoring can help solve the problem.

It is essential to imbue into low-income students the hope that a poor educational environment can be overcome and to provide equal opportunity for them. Gongs!n and Maha Mentor emphasize the importance of education for low-income students and presents an alternative for providing effective educational support by disseminating an innovative model that expands educational opportunity.

Social enterprises work in areas where the influence of government cannot or does not reach. Gongs!n and Maha Mentor have created social value in such areas by connecting the passion and talents of university mentors with students who lack educational opportunity. Their activities have particular meaning in developing countries, where there are large differences in educational opportunity that arise from differences in economic status. These two social enterprises have shown that social enterprises can succeed with a voluntary educational model and have reaffirmed that education is the most effective way to establish social stability and provide individual and national development opportunity. Their model suggests a new approach to social enterprises, for-profit businesses, and governments seeking a civilian cooperative model that can reach people who lack educational opportunity and give them hope for a better future.

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