



Asia-Pacific Entrepreneur

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Message from the Chairman

It is encouraging to note that more and more young entrepreneurs and start-ups coming from the Asia Pacific region gather to merge resources and work collectively by investing their expertise and business management for the single purpose of addressing entrepreneurial challenges.

We are aware that the challenge is to find equally bigger opportunities for more entrepreneurs.

And Think Big we will.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the state of entrepreneurship has never been as vibrant as it is today. Through entrepreneurship, economic growth has elevated hundreds of millions of people out of subsistence agriculture into manufacturing and service employment, increasing wealth and reducing poverty. Entrepreneurs in the Asia-Pacific rim now have the vital role of further increasing regional business interaction, networking and developing regional economic growth.

The YEGAP plays a significant role in promoting a pro-enterprise spirit for young entrepreneurs among the Asia-Pacific country members of CACCI. In order to promote a pro-enterprise spirit, there must be collaboration between enterprises, universities, social corporations and foundations, and government. This collaboration shall serve as the anchor for start-up entrepreneurs and business innovation.

It is our plan of action then to strategize on cultivating from the young a culture of entrepreneurship; passing on of expertise from universities and large enterprises to budding entrepreneurs; providing internship through training opportunities to SMEs through interaction with CACCI member countries; and build networking by encouraging the private sector to assist young entrepreneurs in networking through trade directories, trade missions, business matching and sub-contracting businesses.

As we move on, we remain optimistic and confident that together we can really think big and move more boldly. From what we have seen so far, we can surmise that while each individual company member of CACCI and YEGAP have already made a huge difference in the economic climate of the Asia Pacific rim, the full potential of harnessing the collective power of the business sector in partnership with government and civil society to yield more substantial social development impact, has not yet been exhausted.

As the YEGAP progresses, we will share more of what we see in store for the future.



Periquet

ANNA MARIE PERIQUET
Chairman
Young Entrepreneurs Group of Asia Pacific

Nurturing Innovation in Japan

By Junko Horuichi

Tokyo aims to challenge conformism by becoming an innovation hub

Tokyo is vying to become an innovation hub for entrepreneurs and investors, challenging Japan's reputation as an environment that fails to nurture entrepreneurship, and a new nonprofit organization is hoping to play a leading role.

The recently launched Venture Café Tokyo aims to help innovators break away from a culture that stresses conformity and fears failure, by bringing them together with potential investors in the businesses district of Toranomon.

"Ideas, talent, money are a simple recipe for innovation. I want to organize programs and events so that those elements mix and circulate smoothly, like innovation dating," said Yasuhiro Yamakawa, representative director of Venture Café Tokyo and entrepreneurship associate professor at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts, speaking to over 300 attendees at an outdoor opening event at Toranomon Hills.

The Venture Café program was developed by Cambridge Innovation Center, a leading builder of innovation hubs that has set up networking "ecosystems" in five cities in the United States and Europe, with the first Asian office opening on March 22 in Toranomon.

Yamakawa said entrepreneurs and investors should look for a "serendipitous collision" of ideas.

The initiative hopes to boost innovation in a country known for having one of the lowest levels of entrepreneurship in the developed world. Its rate of early-stage entrepreneurial activity has remained at 5.4 percent or below for the last 14 years, according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), which analyses data on more than 100 economies.

GEM also said the nation's venture capital industry remains small, with investments making up a far smaller share of GDP than in other developed countries including Canada, the United States and Britain.

"To a large extent, low entrepreneurial rates can be attributed to a culture that stresses conformity and is highly critical of failure," GEM said in its report.

Many Japanese see not following the usual path of earning a salary at a company as too risky, according to Yoshiaki Ishii, director at the business policy office at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Ishii also said that in Japan families often discourage entrepreneurship. "There are obstacles from parents and spouses when one decides to work at a venture company or small company," Ishii said.

"From a young age, Japanese tend to see taking on a new challenge as something distant. So we need to get more people to



be familiar with entrepreneurship," he said.

Yamakawa said Venture Café Tokyo's weekly "Thursday Gathering" will be a place where anybody interested in starting a business can join in a casual atmosphere, to meet people or participate in seminars, coaching, workshops and themed events.

"We hope to attract hundreds of people every Thursday who are looking for partners or for ideas in a relaxed manner. Prior reservations are not needed," Yamakawa said.

Sachiko Wada, 42 CEO of the successful startup Taskaji Inc., a housekeeping sharing service, also hopes Venture Café will help drive change. "When it comes to entrepreneurship, I think many people don't know what to do. So Venture Café can be useful for getting tips and in sharing information, especially for big companies whose human networks tend to be limited," said Wada, who worked as a systems engineer for 14 years at Fujitsu Ltd. before launching Taskaji in 2013.

"A lot of people think launching a startup means taking tremendous risks and that those are for people with a strong mentality who can bear such pressure, but that is not the case," said Wada.

"I wasn't a great risk-taker, and invested no more than ¥2 million (\$18,700). I just wanted to solve an issue I faced; I was a full-time working mother and needed help with housekeeping," Wada said.

Her Taskaji service, offered mainly in Tokyo and Osaka, now has 28,000 registered users looking for help with housekeeping, while 900 are available as helpers.

Taro Kodama previously worked for Yahoo Japan Corp. and Facebook Inc. and now serves as CEO of Anchorstar Inc., which helps businesses expand in the market. He also hopes that Japanese will be more open about their ideas. "Often Japanese people are conscious of (perceptions of) 'Japan quality' and are reluctant about getting feedback on products that have (not) yet been completed. Whereas overseas, people are good at making improvements on products that have not yet been finished," Kodama said.

"I hope people will change their mindset and share their ideas, even if they are still at the stage of being just an idea or a prototype," he said, adding that Venture Café's casual atmosphere could be one way to help them.

Japan Times

The Young Mind Behind BookMeBus

By Srey Kummeth



Chea Langda launched his ticket booking startup, BookMeBus, to help travelers.



Chea Langda launched his ticket booking startup, BookMeBus, to help travelers.

We've always had problems on booking a bus or a ferry ride, especially during holidays and festivals where people go to their hometowns or visit tourist sites. The rides are fun, really, but the booking process is quite tedious. With this dilemma in mind, Chea Langda founded the BookMeBus. Since it first operated years ago, BookMeBus has grown to become the leading bus ticket booking system in the kingdom. With the e-tickets from the BookMeBus, you can be confident that you get the best seat and be on a ride favourable to your schedule. So, how did Mr. Langda turn his idea of providing a hassle-free booking system for locals and foreigners into a successful startup?

YT: Why have you thought of starting up a ticket booking business?

Mr Langda: Cambodia is a rapidly growing country, and therefore, lots of people need to travel every day around the country and outside the country. Yes, now travelers from Cambodia can book online to Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam. As we saw that the real challenge was that most of the bus operators managed their operation on a paper basis and offline, and travelers found it hard to access schedules and seat availabilities, and pay for their tickets, we decided that a real innovative tool is needed to be made to provide seamless travel experiences to both local and international travelers.

A hassle-free booking app, BookMeBus, was set up in 2015 to help travelers book a transportation such as bus, ferry, private taxi. We are currently the largest operator in Cambodia by far, and has worked with more than 40 transport operators.

YT: You were invited to join the International Visitor Leadership Programme in the US and visited several business establishments. How did you share your learning with others?

Mr Langda: I was very proud to be selected among the other six candidates from Cambodia to join the prestigious programme and visit amazing startups and incubation centres in several parts of the US. It has opened my eyes wider to a whole new level of possibilities that startups bring and to a more complete definition of what we call a tech startup or tech disruptor which can be a total game changer in one's society and country.

After coming back from the programme, all the candidates have worked together and we are at the beginning of launching an advisory panel to provide support to a lot of new startups in the country and around the region. We need to give some of our time to support our startup community that is very much at a nascent stage.

YT: As one of the two Cambodians chosen to be part of the Alibaba Academy, what was your most favourite experience in the programme?

Mr Langda: I had the proudest moment when I met Jack Ma face to face and asked him two specific questions. The key take-aways from the course were that I obtained meaningful lectures about the whole Alibaba ecosystem from all business executives at Alibaba Group such as Aliexpress, Tao Bao, Fliggy, Cai Niao the logistics, Ant Financial's Alipay, Lazada and PayTM to name a few. And, I got to meet and spend time working with the amazing group of young startup founders from all over Asia. It might be a cliché to

say that my dream to meet Jack Ma was achieved, because every single Asian startup founder does dream to meet Jack Ma in person and receive meaningful advice from him.

Also, the main purpose of this selected group which is initiated by Jack Ma himself is for participants from different businesses and backgrounds to go back and create an ecosystem in their own countries to empower small businesses and other young people. One of the questions that I asked Jack Ma was what it would be his advice to choose the right investors. The second was how he managed to balance between business and family at the early stage. And, the other Cambodian participant and I are preparing to do a sharing session of this amazing experience to other entrepreneurs this month.

YT: At the age of 28, what are the most challenging parts of the job as the CEO of a rapidly growing startup?

Mr Langda: It is only when you go through pain that you start to

grow. When we all accept that pain is part of growth, we can then grit our teeth and continue to work hard towards our goal. Young and old, we all want to be successful and use our success to make a positive impact in our society.

YT: You're such an inspiration to a lot of young Cambodians out there. What would be your most important piece of advice?

Mr Langda: My belief is that we all can take part in building our tomorrow by starting a single step. If we haven't even started or quit halfway, we will never see what is on the other side. For me, when I started BookMeBus, I heard a lot of naysayers and rejections, but we did it, and we're continuing to do our best every day. My advice to other young people and creators is, keep walking through the storm because the rainbow is waiting on the other side.

Khmer Times

Young Woman Pioneers Art and Design Entrepreneurship

By Uy Sovanlongdy



Heang Vatthey (center) attends the Dream Girls Design Contest

Through the Cambodia Luxury Arts project and many other achievements, Heang Vatthey has gained recognition as a successful woman entrepreneur in the arts and design sector. Her ambition is to empower gifted Cambodian people in this industry to improve their quality of life through art.

Ms Vatthey, CEO of Sourire Pro and Arts Company, and a founder of the Cambodia Luxury Arts project, has transformed herself from an introvert into a more social person in order to achieve her dream of launching a big art centre in Cambodia by 2020.

Heang Vatthey dreams of launching her own art centre.

To realise her dream, she learns constantly from her surrounding environment. She has won many competitions such as the Young Entrepreneur Award in 2012, Dream Girl 2013, the 2nd Regional Business Plan Contest 2017, and the Knowledge Co-Creation Program (Country Focus) 2018.

After setting up a small shop in 2016, she cooperated with her shareholders to establish a company providing four core services: graphic design for all kinds of products, advertising, event planning, and training services.

She said, "I am commonly involved in graphic design and recycling clothing, and also do modelling. I am good at designing Khmer patterns that are a bit complex, for use in fashion." She said her recycled clothes are made from plastic, plastic bags or old clothes. She normally draws patterns and then prints them on the clothes to make them more fashionable. Those recycled clothes are also bought for modelling or by some organisations for display purposes.

Unlike other general stores, which prefer to set up in good locations, her office is located on the



4th floor of the i-Lead International School Building on Tep-Phorn Street. Her business is conducted through networking and online contacts.

Ms Vatvey smiled when talking about her customers. “My company does not yet advertise publicly. My initial customers are friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. The majority of them advertise my services by word of mouth, and we earn customers through trust and good service,” she said. Her clients contact her via social media or her Facebook page, “Clas Pro”, and meet her at cafés to discuss business.

Before getting to this stage, she faced a lot of challenges, working all night when organising events, lacking human resources in this field, and having inadequate management skills to operate the company.



All these problems needed to be solved and sometimes she wanted to give up.

Putting her dreams before everything, she embraces the motto that,

“Today we cannot do it; tomorrow we will.” No obstacle can keep her from achieving her dream. She built her team based on their aptitudes and created a variety of services including not only design, but also Hanna drawing, painting on walls, or decorating stores to fulfil customers’ demands, while developing her own technical and business management skills.



She believes in learning from her customers, explaining that, “Experience comes from the people around us, so we should be open minded in order to learn, and be flexible as well. We constantly need innovative ideas.”

Her key message to youth is to determine what they really want, regardless of their degree, and find alternative ways of reaching their goals. Don’t give up, and always be open-minded, she advises.

Khmer Times

Tokyo-based Entrepreneurs Innovate to Curb Food Waste

By Sakura Murakami

Startups link shoppers with eateries to cut disposal of still-edible produce

In affluent Japan millions of tons of still-edible food waste are thrown away each year, evoking a sense of guilt for many. According to the agriculture ministry, 6.46 million tons of untouched food were discarded in 2015.

Entrepreneurs are now looking to use technology to tackle the issue, launching new online services that link restaurants with consumers wishing to buy food that would otherwise be discarded, for a much lower price.

Sosuke Uemura is president of Shiftt Inc., which launched the Reduce Go smartphone app service on April 5. He believes the business should be driven by economic benefits, not just by the goodwill of the parties involved.

“Some people may be particularly conscious (of food loss) issues, but I don’t think the majority of people would bother to pick up food from a nearby restaurant just because they want to reduce food loss,” said Uemura.

“I wanted to create a system where we can cater to other

motivations (such as seeking economic benefits) while also reducing food waste,” he said.

For that reason, the Reduce Go app is designed to offer registered users economic benefits, allowing them to pick up food directly up to two times a day from restaurants and food outlets for a monthly fee of ¥1,980.

Using a smartphone, users can check what food they can take on a given day. Take-away meals available may include pizza, ramen, bento, curry with rice, and various breads.

Approximately 25,000 users have already signed up for the free version of the app, and 32 restaurants, bars and shops in Tokyo and its nearby areas have signed on to the food giveaway.

CoCooking Inc., a Tokyo-based food service led by President Kazuma Kawagoe, is another firm that has recently launched an online marketplace that links food establishments and consumers.

At its Tabete website, consumers can buy meals and food products that would otherwise be thrown away.

The menu for the day may include chicken with rice, Thai-style fried rice, and Vietnamese fresh spring rolls, all sold at



Kazuma Kawagoe, president of CoCooking Co., is seen at his office in Tokyo. He founded Tabete, a food waste reduction system, in hopes of raising awareness of the issue of food loss in Japan. | YOSHIAKI MIURA

a heavily discounted price.

Users are asked to collect the food at restaurants or shops, all located in Tokyo.

Kawagoe once worked as a cook at a restaurant, so he has seen the vast amounts of food that are often thrown away. That’s why he felt obliged to launch a business to reduce food loss, he said in an interview with The Japan Times.

Kawagoe recalled that many customers — in some cases dozens — didn’t show up after making a reservation.

Sometimes, “everyone just exchanged business cards and went home without even touching the food we served. It happened all the time,” he said.

“Food loss is a necessary evil of capitalism ... I think the best solution is to create a social movement against food waste,” Kawagoe said.

Kawagoe hopes his platform will raise awareness of food waste and ignite the social momentum needed to instigate bigger changes to the food industry.

“I hope users will have a moment of reflection when they open their fridge after buying food about to go to waste on Tabete, a moment when they think — ‘I just saved some food from a restaurant, but have I been doing enough to reduce my own waste?’” he said.

Some restaurants and shops contacted by The Japan Times welcomed emerging services like Reduce Go and Tabete.

“Things beyond our control — such as changes in the weather or temperature — have a huge impact on the number of our customers, so it’s very hard to predict how much we should

bake on a given day,” said Koji Yokota, of Boulangerie a la Demande, a bakery in Tokyo that has signed up to Reduce Go.

“I always wanted to do something about excess bread at my bakery ... so there was no reason not to sign up to a program that was designed to solve that problem. We’re really happy that all of the perfectly edible food that we would discard, now won’t go to waste,” he added.

Such food loss initiatives are “a great way to acquire new customers too,” said Akio Ueda, manager of Tavola 310, an Italian bistro in Tokyo. He has registered with Tabete.

Both Reduce Go and Tabete launched last month, and the level of success they achieve as businesses remains to be seen.

But Rumi Ide, an expert on food waste, praised the initiatives and similar social businesses, saying they may create a sustainable system that counters food waste.

She pointed out that organizations based purely on donations often find themselves without the funds and resources needed to sustain their activities.

She also argued that a much more fundamental change is needed for restaurants and grocery stores.

“The restaurant industry has a belief that missing out on an opportunity to sell their products is bad for business. But that’s what creates food loss,” she said.

“To create more than we need has become the norm. ... We need to ask the question: do we really need to produce this much?”

Japan Times



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One-on-One Mentoring

Pilipinas Angat Lahat



Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion led the launch of the Mentor Me On Wheels last May 11, 2018 at the SM Mall of Asia Music Hall. He mentored JB Estrada who is a start-up entrepreneur who specializes in pastries and breads.

I cannot stress enough that mentorship is key in helping our micro and small entrepreneurs. In fact, when I was starting as an entrepreneur, I was mentored well by my father, that is why I strongly believe that bringing our mentors close to the people will help our budding business owners to embrace the entrepreneurial culture.

Last May 11, Go Negosyo launched the first leg of the Mentor Me on Wheels (MMOW) at the SM Mall of Asia Music Hall together with Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez, mentors Johnlu Koa, and Josiah Go, and other dedicated mentors from different areas of entrepreneurship expertise. It was a free one-on-one mentorship session from a pool of successful entrepreneur-mentors. This first and biggest mentoring session is just one of many MMOW launches we plan to hold in partnership with the different malls nationwide.

We shared our knowledge on entrepreneurial mind-setting and marketing to aspiring and start-up business owners from all over the country. JB Estrada was one of the mentees to whom I personally shared my experiences and business tips on becoming an entrepreneur. I learned that JB's mom really loves serving breakfast every morning for her family. She usually posts them online, so friends took notice of the bread she bakes. Because of the response, they decided to start the business at home.

He talked about how they struggled with running the business, especially his mom as she cooks everything from scratch. He also asked for help in developing the branding of his business

and attracting potential customers. He also mentioned about their closed trucking business previously operated by his father. I asked my assistant to link him with our company, RFM Corp., to explore breads and pastries development and the possibility of a business venture for their trucking.

I also asked him to meet with Johnlu Koa, who is behind the successful French Baker, to gain more knowledge about the baking industry. I am certain that he learned a lot from Johnlu as they both share the same passion for baking.

Lorenzo Llera, one of the attendees, was in luck as he was also able to gain new concepts from our experienced mentors. He also started a baking business to have an alternative source of income and be self-sufficient. He owns and bakes his own Filipino food products like monay, loaf bread, pandesal and ensaymada. Johnlu also gave him advice on how to market his own brand and make a name for it so more people would know about his business.

Sec. Lopez mentored Claverene Ramos on how to run her computer and gadgets shop. I am certain she gained new ideas because she is now conceptualizing her business plan. I hope Sec. Lopez's advice on being passionate in everything you do will eventually bear fruit as her business flourishes.

Ma. Anjellica San Miguel sought advice from Josiah Go on how to sustain her cafe. She learned how to be more disciplined in handling her employees and, at the same time, gained some helpful ideas on how to market her business.



Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez also joined the launch of the first and biggest one-on-one mentoring session. Claverene Ramos who travelled all the way from Lobo, Batangas was lucky to receive mentorship from Sec. Lopez.

Butz Bartolome, one of our pioneer mentors for the past 13 years, dedicated his time to mentor during this launch. He shared that gone are the days that we do not get to actually interact with our stakeholders. Seeing their smiling faces after our one-on-one mentorship sessions is really an indicator that we are really filling the gap between us and these budding entrepreneurs. Through MMOW, according to him, we walk the journey with them.



Around 500 pre-registered aspiring and start-up entrepreneurs signed up as mentees during the launch of the Mentor Me On Wheels.

I salute Toto Barcelona, one of our mentors in our Kapatid Agri Mentor ME Program, as he personally attended to the needs of our mentees in the agriculture sector. He said this opportunity was a great avenue in concretizing their business plans. One-on-one sessions help in making the approach more personal to our mentees.

Delby Bragais said that there is really more to mentoring than making money. She said that the business landscape is changing fast and we need to embrace the technologies available to help

experience for me and all the dedicated and patient mentors.

I wish success to everyone who attended the event. May you take the lessons with you as you plan your own enterprises. I hope the next MMOW launch will be welcomed by many aspiring entrepreneurs so we can help them scale up their lives.

Go Negosyo

micro and small enterprises scale up. I hope that the launch of our mobile application will further expand our reach to those who cannot go to the malls and other venues for Go Negosyo's programs like Kapatid Mentor Me and Kapatid Agri Mentor Me.

I agree with what Sec. Mon said that MMOW is really a testament to a stronger public-private partnership. I want to thank our mentors for sharing their time, effort and expertise on how to become successful entrepreneurs. Participating in one-on-one mentoring sessions is not only rewarding, but also a memorable

How KMME helps MSMEs

Pilipinas Angat Lahat

While I always stress the importance of money, market and mentorship, I personally believe that mentorship is the most vital. That is why, aside from the success of the Kapatid Mentor Me (KMME) and Kapatid Agri Mentor Me, we continue to develop mentoring programs for aspiring and start-up entrepreneurs such as the Mentor Me On Wheels.

After its successful launch last May 11, we are bringing it to Southern Luzon on June 2 at the SM City Calamba.

From the many successful batches of KMME, I will share with you some stories of micro and small entrepreneurs who were able to scale up their businesses and increase their sales after they attend-

ed KMME. Most of the KMME graduates were given loans and equipment from government offices such as DTI, DOST, DA, DOLE and banking institutions like BPI and Security Bank. I am thankful to these institutions as they were also able to see the potential of small businesses to prosper.

Fely Jean Pacris had a vision to start her own business. So in 2014, she started her own resort with only five rooms. After KMME, MASCOOP Training Center and Beach Resort has been able to introduce products made from banana and other tropical fruits and has been able to increase its sales by more than 10 percent. The resort plans to improve its services and establish market awareness. Pacris also received

a loan from DOLE and equipment from DTI.

With only a small starting capital, Alexander Parel and his family set Antigua de Madera Furniture in the 1990s. Attending KMME Parel equipped with the right skills to manage his business as he does not depend on others. His business is now more organized because it has a system. He also learned how to handle his employees through modules on human resource management. Additionally, he received a loan from DOST.

To satisfy his summer cravings, Xavier Mercado decided to start his own halo-halo store in April 2004. With a small starting capital, he started his business. He



Some of the mentees who scaled up after successfully joining Kapatid Mentor ME Program of Go Negosyo and DTI.

eventually ventured into Filipino cuisine fused with his Ilocano roots. He got a loan from Security Bank. Now, Halo Halo De Iloko is one of the most sought-after tourist destinations as it also features art pieces from local artists and has caught the interest of TV and magazine programs both locally and internationally. It is also setting up a new branch and intends to build another next year.

Virginia Piano's family originally wanted to create something special to give to her co-teacher. It also gave her family an opportunity to have an alternative source of income.

With only a meager capital, Virginia Piano started producing products made of muscovado, suka (vinegar), and tubo (sugarcane) in 2005. After KMME, the business improved its product and target market. The Ilocos Sur Cooperative also provided a loan for business development. For Virginia, KMME equipped her with the appropriate knowledge especially for small business owners like her.

Jesus Jose Jr.'s mom originally started the business by making leche flans for her co-workers. She eventually taught him how to do it with their secret ingredient. According to Jose, he had no luck being an employee that is why he tried being an entrepreneur and established Bakeology Sweets Factory. They used to sell their products in bazaars and other local events like the Panagbenga Festival. Just this year, they opened their first physical store in Paciano Terminal and were also able to penetrate 7-Eleven stores in Laguna where they provide two product cycles.

Zam's Delight Foods started out as a grocery store, but eventually ventured into calamansi drink products. Sheryl Jean Candido and her family developed the flavor according to their own tastes as they used to make calamansi juice to quench their own thirsts. For Sheryl, attending KMME boosted her self-confidence to pursue her business despite competition in the market.

The program also helped entrepreneurs to innovate and level up in life. She received financing from BPI and was provided with machineries by DOST.

Maria J's Coffee Shop and Kitchenette was able to increase its sales, production, and customers. KMME helped Maria Julieta Berces' business in handling the company's finances.

Judit Alday-Mangmang started Batangas Egg Producers Cooperative with only 10 employees. After KMME, she hired more than 40 employees due to the increase in the demand for her egg products. KMME helped her to handle her employees and establish a network to market her products. She then developed a framework for her pasteurized eggs which she calls the "Egg-o System." Additionally, DA also extended a loan for her business.

Leonie Reyes' Natures Dew Enterprises produces 500 bottles for each of their six variants which will soon be distributed through Rustan's Supermarkets. It is still seeking additional funding support. Leonie learned how to create and execute better business plans and was tapped to train other aspiring SMEs about financial modules.

Raymond and Lanie Fruits and Vegetables was able to set up four stalls in Robinsons malls and supply its products in Laoag and La Union. The success of Melanie Pinedo's business paved the way for a house, car, and farm investment and market expansion in Metro Manila.

Every time stories like these are reported to me, it reminds me that our programs are effective in empowering and guiding our MSMES. I hope that with these stories, we can continue to inspire everyone to embrace the entrepreneurial culture and start conceptualizing their own businesses.

Go Negosyo

Young Recruits Connect to Tackle Corporate Stagnation

By Mizuho Aoki / Staff Writer / Japan Times



Around 800 people gather to celebrate the anniversary of young businesspeoples' community One Japan, in Tokyo, led by co-founder Makoto Hamamatsu (front, center).

It's often difficult for people to maintain the enterprising spirit they had when they first entered the workplace, fresh out of university.

Especially in a large company it is difficult for people's voices are heard, and often they feel isolated as there are not many opportunities to get to know others who share their passions. Many eventually give up asking questions and coming up with new ideas, and start to just go with the flow.

In the hope of changing this sense of stagnation and lifting the spirits of young employees at major companies, Makoto Hamamatsu, 35, an employee at electronics giant Panasonic Corp., co-launched a group in September 2016 that would allow people in their 20s and 30s to connect, share ideas and create innovation.

Named One Japan, the community has grown in less than two years from some 120 members in 26 firms to roughly 1,200 people in 50 large companies, including Toyota Motor Corp., Canon Inc., NTT group, Japan Post Holdings Co. and Fuji Xerox Co.

"We call it a community where the wisdom and passion of young people

who work for major companies come together," said Hamamatsu, who currently works at Panasonic's consumer electronics business development section. By connecting people within and outside companies, he hopes to create innovation and revitalize the firms where they work, he said. "I don't want to see people giving up trying... Big companies tend to have rigid organization structures or monoculture, and that's not good for revitalizing the corporations," he said. "I want people to create an enterprising atmosphere, rather than sending the existing corporate culture and going along with it. I want to see more people take a step forward."

The idea for One Japan stemmed from a gathering Hamamatsu launched in 2012 with young employee at Panasonic Corp.

After he joined Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. (now Panasonic) in 2006, Hamamatsu began asking his colleagues to go for a drink after work or participate in study sessions about their career paths. After hosting similar events attended by hundreds of young employees for six years, Hamamatsu decided to create a group and called it One Panasonic. In a

giant organization like Panasonic that has more than 200,000 employees, it is hard to meet people from other departments who also have an enterprising spirit, and people tend to feel powerless to propose new business ideas alone, Hamamatsu said. But by creating One Panasonic, people started to connect with peers with whom they had never spoken before, and to exchange ideas, he said. "The biggest result we've achieved through the activities is elevating members' motivation, and more people have started to take initiative," he said. "And that is really huge. Some people told me that they were thinking about quitting the company, but decided to remain in the end because of One Panasonic."

Hoping to extend their network beyond the company, One Panasonic got together with similar groups of young workers at Fuji Xerox Co. and Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp. to launch One Japan. Members from different companies within the community hold small gatherings to discuss their shared interests such as health care, marketing or accounting. Just a little over a year since its launch the group is still in its early stages, but attempts to break down the walls between

the corporations are already starting to blossom into actual products and services.

One such product under development is an artificial intelligence robot that guides people in “mindfulness meditation,” a method considered to improve people’s concentration. The project was launched after Fuji Xerox asked One Japan to provide ideas for a new service using robots. There are several other services and products currently under development – some of which could be announced in a few months, he added.

The group also holds an all-member gathering about twice a year to discuss topics like open innovation or work style. They also invite management-level officials from their companies to exchange ideas, because it is crucial to gain their understanding and support if they want to change corporate culture or start new projects, Hamamatsu said.

Around 800 people attended last September’s gathering in Tokyo, including the vice president of Japan Tobacco Inc. and the senior managing director of Panasonic. At the venue, more than 40 companies also showcased products or services they are working on to get feedback from various people with different professional backgrounds.

In a bid to change working styles for the better, the group also conducted surveys on more than 1,000 members to find out their views on juggling work and child rearing or on having side jobs. Hamamatsu hopes to use the results as evidence to

show what young workers want to change their working environment.

It’s tough for Hamamatsu to continue juggling his time between work for Panasonic and efforts to foster his One Japan and One Panasonic initiatives. But, he said, a sense of mission has driven him to continue to lead the groups for year. “This kind of activity usually fades out after a few years. But I want to change such stereotypical things,” Hamamatsu said. “I eventually want to expand what we are doing to overseas.”



Makoto Hamamatsu is seen in Minato Ward, Tokyo in May. [Satoko Kawasaki]

Japan Times

Dentist Quits Samsung to Disrupt Payments System

Bloomberg

Lee Seung-gun’s parents told him to get his sanity checked when he quit his secure job as a dentist with the hospital arm of Samsung Group to found a mobile apps start-up.

Seven years and eight failed apps later, the funder of Viva Republica has a bona fide hit with payments service Toss and its 8 million registered users ringing up US\$1.4 billion of transactions a month.

Lee’s company said in a statement that it had won US\$40 million in funding from GIC Pte and Sequoia Capital China, brining the total raised by the Seoul-based start-up to US\$116 million.

Toss, which is similar to Venmo and lets users send each other as much as 2 million won (US\$1,822) a day, made a splash in South Korea by cutting the time needed for transfers to seconds.

It helped upturn a banking system clogged with security protocols and dominated by the nation’s banks.

The app’s success is a rarity in a nation where family-controlled chaebol such as Samsung and LG Group rule over

the economy.

“People fear failure in South Korea because failures are rarely forgiven,” 36-year-old Lee said. “I had security against failure, but I wasn’t happy.”

As most disrupters find, it has not been a smooth path for Lee.

He put 150 million won of savings from his dental career toward Viva Republica and watched as one app after another failed, including one that lets you file an online petition and another to help with selfies.

At one time he had just 20,000 won in the bank and had to plead with the spouses of unpaid employees to keep them working.

Toss emerged from a legal gray area where there were no clear regulations and did not really take off until 2015 when the nation’s financial watchdog ruled such person-to-person transfers were legal.

After that he formed partnerships with major financial institutions including Kookmin Bank and Samsung Card, an

affiliate of his former employer.

However, with its success has come competition as Naver Corp, operator of the biggest local portal, and Kakao Corp, which created the nation’s most popular messenger app, both moved into payments.

The market for online person-to-person payments grew 417 percent last year from 2016 according to Bank of Korea data.

Toss said it handled about 70 percent of the average 35 billion won transferred per day last year and the company has expanded into other financial services such as credit score management.

“We’re seeing more and more banks speeding up their online transactions after the emergence of pay apps like Toss,” said Kim Kyong-hwan, who researches start-ups at South Korea’s Sungkyunkwan University. “They are forcing the country’s existing financial players to change the way they do business and rightly so because too many regulations have long hamstrung their digital transformation.”

Toss, which has also gotten backing from PayPal Holdings Inc, Goodwater Capital and Altos Ventures has been such a success that last year Lee joined a delegation of chaebol executives accompanying South Korean President Moon Jae-in for his first summit with US President Donald Trump.

A graduate of prestigious Seoul National University, Lee came to reassess his career while treating people on a remote island as part of his mandatory military service.

It was then that he realized, iPhone in hand, that he



Viva Republica founder Lee Seung-gun speaks to his employees in Seoul, Korea on June 14, 2018

could reach far more people with an app than a hospital, but leaving one of the conglomerates is not easy as their financial strength and stability tend to absorb the brightest students, and offer a security that start-ups struggle to compete with.

That meant Lee had to find a niche that the chaebol were either too complacent to explore or too slow to capitalize on.

He found his specialty when he looked at the inefficiencies in South Korea’s payments systems.

“Sending money was such a pain in South Korea,” Lee said. “So I just wanted to get rid of my problem. Now I’m glad my app’s doing the same thing for other.”

Taipei Times

Men’s Clothing and Grooming



On July 4, 2018, Go Negosyo sa Radyo hosts Senator Bam Aquino and DJ Cheska San Diego-Bobadilla were joined by The Maverick Pomade PH founder and head brewer Brian Gabriel Corella and Masanting Sastreria owners Mark and Carin Aguas to talk about about the trends in men’s clothing and grooming.

Brian shared that The Maverick Pomade PH started when he had an interest in pomades in 2014. He wanted to find a healthier alternative to groom his hair but during that year, pomades were really hard to find. “I decided why not research and baka kaya namang gumawa,” he said. Brian underwent numerous trial and errors until he came up with a pomade that satisfied his standards. He started making two variants which are fresh bamboo and watermelon.

Meanwhile, Carin said Masanting Sastreria is a bespoke tailoring in which “everything is made for you.” It started as a hobby of Carin and her husband Mark when they were still in

a long distance relationship. The couple made it work by using video calls -- Mark will do the fitting in New York while Carin will make the suits in the Philippines.

“Actually, trendy ang millennials -- mahilig sa luma, kasabay po dun yung pagbalik ng mga hair products,” Brian stated. “Although mas mahal, you’ll get more out of it,” he added. Pomade is a healthier

alternative because it uses natural ingredients like beeswax, shea butter, virgin coconut oil, and castor oil.

“What we did is to make our brand different. We work with Filipino artists and then they create artworks that celebrate Filipino culture, so iba-iba ‘yan. We have carabaos, anahaw, and other animal and plant species. That’s what we present

to our clients,” Carin shared.

Both entrepreneurs wanted to bring the best in men in a way that it is healthier, trendy, and unique. Using natural ingredients and separating themselves from the usual kind of business in the men’s grooming industry led The Maverick Pomade PH and Masanting Sastreria to be known in other parts of the world.

Go Negosyo sa Radyo

Young Social Entrepreneurs Reach Out to Peers Across Japan

By Chisato Tanaka

Nonprofit’s contest gives passionate ‘change-makers’ an opportunity to connect

To get access to a network of young social entrepreneurs scattered across the country, four high school and university students fearlessly presented their projects during a youth social entrepreneurship contest held by the Japan office of Ashoka, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization that financially supports social entrepreneurs worldwide.

Among the four presenters who successfully passed the contest’s interview screening portion was Yoko Aoki, an 18-year-old high school student who earlier this year launched a cosmetic therapy and photography service for elderly women living in nursing homes.

She was eventually chosen as one of the three winners of the Ashoka Japan Youth Venture contest held in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo, in early June.

Aoki, who started her company Vivid Makeup in April, said her motivation behind joining the contest was to meet other young entrepreneurs – people she rarely encounters during the course of her daily life.

“At school, I seldom find anyone around my age who can share a vision with me, so this program provides a great opportunity for me to become inspired and strengthen my motivation,” she explained. “It’s been tough sometimes because I have to do everything alone.”

Under the slogan “Everyone a Change-maker,” those selected via Ashoka contests can receive annual stipends of up to



High school student Yoko Aoki pitches her business idea at a youth social entrepreneurship contest last month in Shibuya Ward, Tokyo. | CHISATO TANAKA

¥100,000 in financial support for their projects, and if they want to study at the College of the Atlantic in the United States they can also receive scholarship support up to \$10,000. They also have access to a worldwide network of around 3,500 social entrepreneurs called Ashoka Fellows in 93 countries.

Many contest applicants seeking the chance to become what Ashoka calls “youth venturers” echoed the same objective for their membership – the chance to become connected with peers in their age group whom

they can share strong passions for sustainable social change.

Another 18-year-old selected presenter, Tatsuwaki Nakagawa, cited the same reason, as well as gaining another connection to famous U.S.-based social entrepreneurs as he will enter a university in the U.S.

Nakagawa, who speaks both Japanese and English, developed with three classmates an app that awards point for not using a smartphone. The points can be exchanged for outside activity tickets.

Takumi Banjoya, a third-year Kobe University student, seemed quite relieved that he was chosen as an official youth venturer this time around. It was his second attempt following an unsuccessful presentation in a previous contest.

Banjoya, in his Kansai accent, presented an app he had invented in which user give “likes” to listed nonprofit organizations that contribute to society, which then receive cryptocurrency based on the number of likes they get.

“In the previous contest, I was more self-centered so the

examiners must have thought I was working on the app for my sake, rather than to be a genuine social entrepreneur,” he said. “However, this time I could present my objectives about this project more clearly, and express that I was truly motivated to do what I could to help others, not just for myself.”

Aiming to build a social system in which “heroes who make society a better place do not face money deficits,” Banjoya said that gaining a network of young social entrepreneurs was crucial to making his business successful.

“My app was created to support those social entrepreneurs as well as myself and others, but I need to be part of such a community first,” he said.

The project came to Japan in 2012 in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake. The idea was to support people between the ages of 12 and 20 who were taking action to bring about change in the disaster-affected areas through launching businesses that focus on solving social problems.

Since then, 34 such contests have been held, targeting youths and their businesses all over Japan with 92 selected teams scattered from Okinawa to Hokkaido.

Aoki, who became fascinated with cosmetics by watching her older sister put on makeup, came up with the idea of

launching cosmetics and photo services for elderly women during a visit to a nursing home where her mother volunteers from time to time. Her first startup attempt, involving three school friends, faltered as one by one they abandoned the project to prepare for their university entrance exams.

Despite that setback, Aoki kept firmly in mind the radiant smiles of the elderly women who had seen themselves transformed by her makeup skills and was determined to launch the business on her own.

“When there is an idea, and the conditions exist where I can make the idea happen, it would be rather weird no to do so. So I didn’t really have a choice,” Aoki said during a recent interview with *The Japan Times*.

Asked by one of the four contest examiners whether she wants to make her makeup business a full-time career, Aoki waffled a bit and said she was “not sure at this point.”

Nana Watanabe, founder and a chairperson of Ashoka Japan, did not see that uncertainty as a deal-killer.

“It’s OK to have bold ideas and rapidly changing interests in the early stages, but the underlying mind of goodwill should be sound,” Watanabe said. “I could tell that she (Aoki) has an immovable core of strong will, which is necessary to be a change-maker.”

Watanabe stressed that Ashoka is not looking solely for well-organized business plans in their selection of youth entrepreneurs. What matters most is whether people have earnest minds of goodwill and the strength to keep working for positive effects on society – even when stumbling blocks get in the way.

The Ashoka Japan examiners, who are selected from a wide range of different fields, such as education, finance and journalism, judge the presenters based on whether they felt the applicants have a strong foundation motivating them to tackle social issues, and only consider those applicants who are actually taking action.

To clarify its main objective, Watanabe added that the program is “not an educational training program for youth social entrepreneurs, but more of the forum where participants can conduct their experiments freely.”

Adults, therefore, refrain from giving feedback or advice to the youthful members, and ensure that they can develop themselves via intense discussions with each other, Watanabe said.

Aoki is now mulling how to expand her services to elderly men as well.

“I want cosmetics to be something enjoyable to everyone regardless of gender and age,” she said.

Japan Times

About CACCI

The Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) is a regional grouping of apex national chambers of commerce and industry, business associations and business enterprises in Asia and the Western Pacific.

It is a non-governmental organization serving as a forum for promoting the vital role of businessmen in the region, increasing regional business interaction, and enhancing regional economic growth. Since its establishment in 1996, CACCI has grown into a network of national chamber of commerce with a

total now of 29 Primary Members from 27 Asian countries and independent economies.

It cuts across national boundaries to link businessmen and promote economic growth throughout the Asia-Pacific region. CACCI is a non-governmental organization (NGO) granted consultative status, Roster category, under the United Nations.

It is a member of the Conference on NGOs (CoNGO), an association of NGOs with UN consultative status.

About YEGAP

Organized under the CACCI umbrella, the Young Entrepreneurs Group of Asia Pacific (YEGAP) aims to provide a platform for young en-

trepreneurs from the region to network with each other and explore areas of cooperation in suitable programs geared towards the development and promotion

of entrepreneurship among the youth. To contribute articles for the Entrepreneur newsletter, please email cacci@cacci.biz