

# DESTINATION: GOOD



The AirAsia Foundation ([airasiafoundation.com](http://airasiafoundation.com)) team talks shop about the people they meet and the ideas they come across as they travel the Asean region on their unique mission: to meet social entrepreneurs and explore ways to support their growth.

## WHAT'S A GOOD SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?

As a grant-making foundation, we receive numerous requests from people from all walks of life and it has not been easy to decide which appeal should be accepted. Here, in this newly introduced column, we explain our selection criteria.

To be eligible, a social enterprise has to be registered in any one of the 10 Asean countries. Typically, we fund organisations that have been in operation for at least two years but need support to reach the next level. We look into: impact on beneficiaries, innovativeness, sustainability and ability to tap on AirAsia's strengths.

What do we mean by these criteria? A GOOD project is one that seeks new investment to strengthen or expand the original business. For example, we provided Thai social enterprise Muser Coffee Hill with a new

roaster to raise their roasted bean supply as the latter fetches higher market value than raw beans.

Innovation is often taken to mean application of new technology but it can also be about doing things differently. Our grantee Indonesian community architects group Arkomjogia approaches conservation as a community-building initiative. To them, conservation is not just about fixing buildings but about involving local youths so that they value their cultural heritage and carry on the traditions.

To be sustainable, a model must be replicable to benefit new communities while generating income to fund the organisation's work. We believe social enterprises can be profit making but not profit maximising. From our grantees, we do not seek repayment but we request

that they reinvest returns to benefit their communities.

Finally, what is AirAsia's role in all this? AirAsia Foundation is part of the AirAsia network that spans the region and many industries. AirAsia has a work force of over 20,000 Allstars globally, and in 2016, carried over 60 million guests. A smart social entrepreneur looks at tapping on these strengths. Tonibung, our grantee in Sabah, Malaysia, came up with the idea of having AirAsia engineers train indigenous youths in technical skills while another grantee, APE Malaysia, asked for old aircraft materials to create tools for animal welfare. The possibilities are endless.

So, if you are a social entrepreneur with a business that describes the above and can do with our help, get in touch via [airasiafoundation.com](http://airasiafoundation.com)

## Word Up!



**Yap Mun Ching**, Executive Director of AirAsia Foundation, is always on the lookout for exciting new social enterprises. Write in at [foundation@airasia.com](mailto:foundation@airasia.com)



One of the more memorable dinners I've had lately involved sitting cross-legged on the floor with 17 strangers enjoying a mouth-watering array of Mediterranean dishes. The meal was excellent – and all the more special because it was prepared by Syrian refugees Rania and Zaza.

The encounter was made possible by The Picha Project [pichaproject.com](http://pichaproject.com), a social enterprise that helps refugees earn an income while creating a bridge between them and locals. Co-founder Suzanne Ling and her partners were volunteer teachers at a refugee learning centre in Malaysia when they noticed students dropping out due to financial difficulties. This prompted the trio to start a catering business supplying food made by refugee families.

The dinner held at Rania and Zaza's home offered an opportunity to better understand the conditions that force people to flee their homelands. "Bombs were dropping every day so I had to get him to safety," explained Rania. Her husband Zaza had worked as a chef in Saudi Arabia, so signing up as a Picha family was an easy decision. Throughout the evening, their gracious hospitality was heart-warming and humbling.

Social enterprises like Picha are amazing in that they address a social need in a way that fits perfectly with our culture of getting to know each other over a meal. Bored of routine? Sign up and meet new people. Organising a party? Surprise your guests with Syrian dishes. You will be helping a family make a new home away from home.

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE UPDATES

Meet three new grantees that AirAsia Foundation will be working closely with this year.



**TRAVEL FOLKCHARM** Folkcharm is a Bangkok-based social enterprise aiming to grow the slow fashion movement by collaborating with rural Thai artisans to create minimalist apparel and accessories (think Muji!). As seeing is believing, Folkcharm is using our grant to develop special tours and workshops that connect shoppers directly with artisans – to learn, experience and enjoy rural lifestyles. [folkcharm.com](http://folkcharm.com)



**SHOP HLA DAY** We dare you to step into Hla Day's Yangon treasure trove and not emerge with bagsful of gorgeous craft. What makes Hla Day different from ubiquitous craft shops in the city is the dynamic relationship between German architect Ulla Kroeber and the 50 artisan groups that she works with to update, upgrade and innovate. Our grant will enable Ulla and her team to reach 100 new artisans in Yangon and surrounding villages. [hladaymyanmar.org](http://hladaymyanmar.org)



**LEARN THE BASIKAL** Planning a cycle around the Asean region and don't know where to start? Kuala Lumpur's The Basikal is a one-stop bike centre that can fix glitches and help you plan your route. Founder Akmal Abd Mutalib is applying our grant monies to introduce regular bike maintenance classes so that every paying student will fund a complimentary class for a single mother or refugee youth. [thebasikal.com](http://thebasikal.com)

**WHAT'S A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE?** A business that tackles social challenges and improves communities or the environment using profits from the sale of goods and services.