

Happy Helpers



happyhelpers.ph



The Care Economy
Knowledge Hub

the-care-economy-knowledge-hub.org

Profiling Businesses in the Care Economy

The care economy consists of paid and unpaid labor and services that support caregiving in all its forms. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, women spend between three to five times as many hours on unpaid care and domestic work as men. This represents 80 percent of a household's total hours devoted to unpaid care work.

Care economy businesses can help recognize, redistribute, reduce and reward – also known as the 4 Rs – unpaid and paid care and domestic work in the following ways:



Recognize: Initiatives that increase visibility and recognition of paid and unpaid care and domestic activity as "productive" work that creates real value and contributes to economies and societies.



Redistribute: Services and initiatives that redistribute care work from individuals to public and private sector entities, and redistribute care and domestic work within the household.



Reduce: Products and initiatives that reduce the time spent on and burden of unpaid care and domestic work.

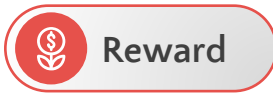


Reward: Products, services and initiatives that ensure that care and domestic workers are paid fairly and have professional growth potential. This provides them with financial reward and security.

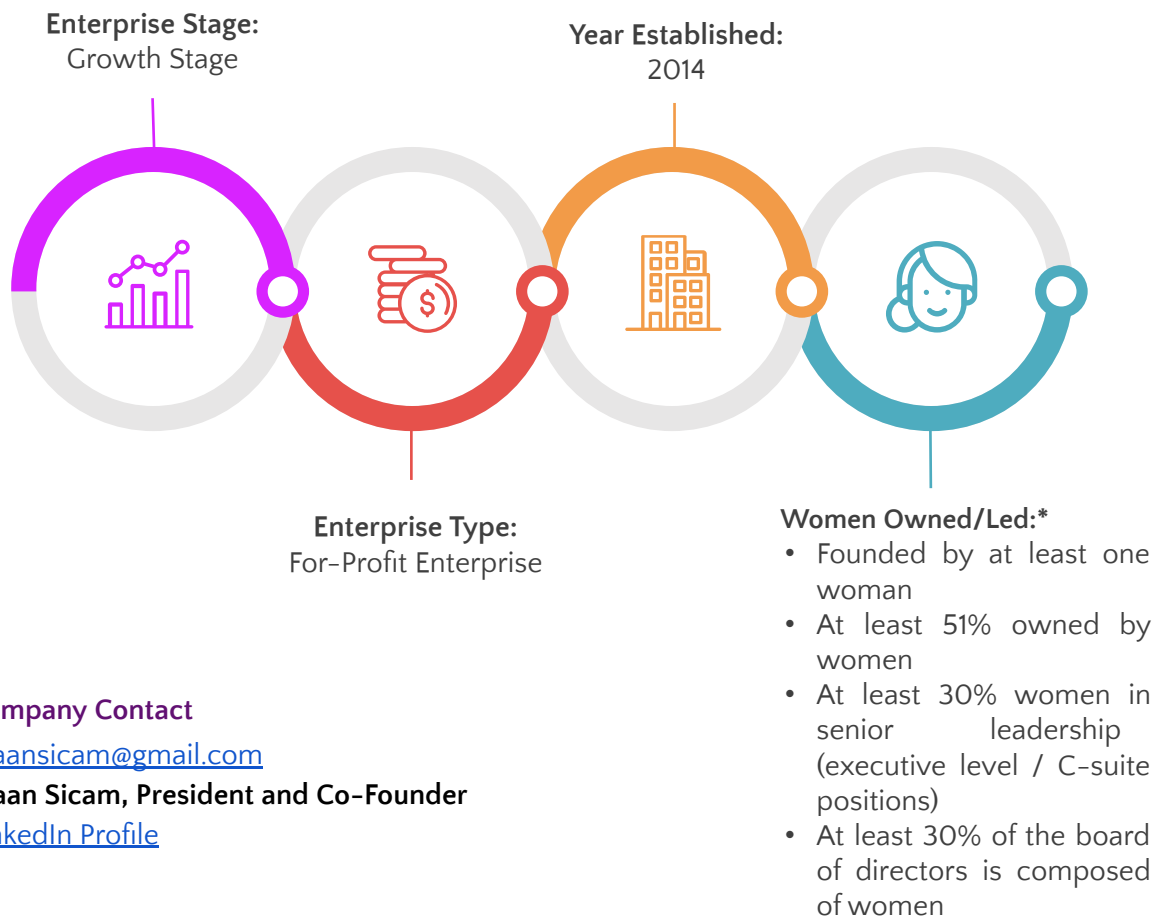
The Care Economy Knowledge Hub aims to address the knowledge gap around care businesses by showcasing various business models and creating a resource base for relevant stakeholders. It also aims to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the state of impact-driven care economy business models and attract a broad range of funders to invest in care economy solutions by showcasing opportunities. These business profiles are intended to showcase said potential investment opportunities. They have been created from information and data provided by the business itself.

This project is supported by Canada's International Development Research Center, in partnership with the Soros Economic Development Fund at the Open Society Foundations. Building on their track record and commitment to transforming the care economy and mobilizing finance for gender equality, they have jointly launched this action research program to help transform the care economy through impact business and investment.

Executive Summary



Happy Helpers is a for-profit enterprise that provides cleaning services to households and businesses in Manila, the capital of the Philippines. Happy Helpers aims to enhance domestic work as dignified and formal labor by professionalizing the cleaning sector. Happy Helpers does this by providing quality and reliable cleaning services to households. It also aims to enhance domestic workers' skills and working conditions through training and employment generation. It has served 4,200 customers and trained over 250 women. In 2021, Happy Helpers earned a revenue of US\$ 161,373. It has 17 full-time and 54 part-time employees.



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*According to 2X "women entrepreneurship" and "women leadership" criteria; [2X Challenge Criteria](#)

1. About The Enterprise

1.1 Problem

The Philippines has the lowest female labor force participation rate in Southeast Asia (39.3%, compared to 68% for men).¹ While there are several factors that negatively impact women's participation in the workforce, the impact of unpaid care work is particularly significant. A survey in the Philippines indicated that women spent 13 hours a day on unpaid care work, compared to only 8 hours for men.² Marriage and childbearing have a significant impact on women's participation in the economy. It is reported that having a child aged 3 years and below reduces the probability of female employment by 16 percentage points for all women and 44 percentage points for married women.³ Further, in highly urbanized (Metro) Manila, heavy traffic during commuting results in large time deficits and increases the opportunity cost for women who undertake unpaid housework and childcare at home.⁴

Domestic help reduces women's time poverty from care responsibilities,⁵ and there is a high demand for domestic workers in the Philippines, especially the capital city of Manila. Studies show that domestic workers are frequently employed by higher-income households, households with young children, or by elderly female-headed households.⁶ In the Philippines, there are over 1.4 million women domestic workers,⁷ of which 20% are in the Metro Manila region.⁸

The Philippines is among the few countries that have ratified the Domestic Workers Convention (2011) and have passed a comprehensive Domestic Workers Act. However, the working conditions of domestic workers are yet to be sufficiently improved. The Department of Labor and Employment data shows that only 2.5% (35,000) of domestic workers have written employment contracts, and 83% of the 1.4 million workers are not covered by any social security scheme.⁹

¹ The World Bank (2021). *World Bank Open Data*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLFC.ACT.MA.ZS?locations=PH>

² ESCAP, U. (2022). Valuing and investing in unpaid care and domestic work-country case study: Philippines. <https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/valuing-and-investing-unpaid-care-and-domestic-work-country-case-study-philippines>

³ Cabegin, E. C. A., & Gaddi, R. S. (2019). Determinants of Female Labor Force Participation in the Philippines. <https://neda.gov.ph/determinants-of-female-labor-force-participation-in-the-philippines/>

⁴ Cabegin, E. C. A., & Gaddi, R. S. (2019). Determinants of Female Labor Force Participation in the Philippines. <https://neda.gov.ph/determinants-of-female-labor-force-participation-in-the-philippines/>

⁵ World Bank (2022). *Overcoming barriers to women's work in the Philippines*. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/eastasiapacific/overcoming-barriers-womens-work-philippines>

⁶ ILO. (n.d.). Domestic workers in Philippines: Profile and working conditions. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@travail/documents/publication/wcms_167021.pdf

⁷ Department of Labor and Employment-*Domestic workers statistics*. (2020, December 2). [https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/dole-psa-1-4m-hsws-72-on-live-out/#:-:text=Of%20about%201.4%20million%20Filipinos,Statistics%20Authority%20\(PSA\)%20showed](https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/dole-psa-1-4m-hsws-72-on-live-out/#:-:text=Of%20about%201.4%20million%20Filipinos,Statistics%20Authority%20(PSA)%20showed)

⁸ ILO. Domestic workers in Philippines: Profile and working conditions. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_protect/@protrav/@travail/documents/publication/wcms_167021.pdf

⁹ Department of Labor and Employment-*Domestic workers statistics*. (2020, December 2). [https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/dole-psa-1-4m-hsws-72-on-live-out/#:-:text=Of%20about%201.4%20million%20Filipinos,Statistics%20Authority%20\(PSA\)%20showed](https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/dole-psa-1-4m-hsws-72-on-live-out/#:-:text=Of%20about%201.4%20million%20Filipinos,Statistics%20Authority%20(PSA)%20showed)

Furthermore, 36% of domestic workers are live-in workers, who are expected to work 7 days a week. The currently recommended minimum wage for domestic workers in Metro Manila is 5,000 pesos (US\$ 90) a month, however, workers earn an average of 4,141 pesos (US\$ 75) a month.¹⁰

Studies have explored the stigma associated with domestic work. As cleaning places workers in close proximity to garbage, dirt, and waste (then, in close proximity to clients and employers),¹¹ employers often feel that it is acceptable to be disrespectful towards domestic workers.¹² This affects domestic workers' sense of self-worth.¹³

1.2 Solution

Happy Helpers seeks to professionalize the cleaning sector through domestic services and employment generation for domestic workers, a majority of whom are women.

- **Cleaning services for households and businesses:** Households and businesses that are looking for part-time (professional) cleaning services can place an on-demand request to Happy Helpers through text, email, or Facebook Messenger. The cleaners, called Happy Helpers, are then sent to the customers' homes and picked up after the job ends. Happy Helpers operates a community-based hub model through which mobile offices are set up in areas that are in close proximity to where the majority of cleaners live. This allows them to walk to the office and save on transportation costs. Happy Helpers currently has 2 hubs in Metro Manila.
- **Recruitment, training, and employment for domestic workers:** Happy Helpers works with women who have low educational attainment and little prior work experience: 80% of cleaners associated with Happy Helpers did not have a job prior to working with the company. Happy Helpers conducts recruitment through an 8-step process that ensures only high-quality and committed workers are hired (this is a key factor in Happy Helpers' high retention of cleaners and customers). The process involves verification of documents, home visits (to observe how cleaners maintain their own homes) and interviews. Once the cleaners are hired, Happy Helpers offers additional training for all workers. The training covers topics such as communication, hygiene, behavior inside the home, time management and discipline. Happy Helpers also conducts extensive training on financial management for workers, so that they learn to save money. Post training, workers conduct

¹⁰ Himaya, M. Verna, D. (2017, July 21). The Filipino Kasambahay's long Struggles against Invisibility

<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/filipino-kasambahay-s-long-struggle-against-inv/>

¹¹ Bosmans, K., Mousaid, S., De Cuyper, N., Hardonk, S., Louckx, F., & Vanroelen, C. (2016). Dirty work, dirty worker? Stigmatisation and coping strategies among domestic workers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 92, 54–67.

¹² Bosmans, K., Mousaid, S., De Cuyper, N., Hardonk, S., Louckx, F., & Vanroelen, C. (2016). Dirty work, dirty worker? Stigmatisation and coping strategies among domestic workers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 92, 54–67.

¹³ Bosmans, K., Mousaid, S., De Cuyper, N., Hardonk, S., Louckx, F., & Vanroelen, C. (2016). Dirty work, dirty worker? Stigmatisation and coping strategies among domestic workers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 92, 54–67.

cleaning services as assigned by the company. Happy Helpers offers women part-time work (5 hours a day) so that they can also manage their care work at home. It aims to improve the remuneration of domestic workers by ensuring a standard pay of US\$ 90 per month (for part-time work). This remuneration is based on a work schedule of 4-5 hours a day, 5 times a week. The Happy Helpers are paid immediately upon completing the job. All workers are covered under accidental insurance, whether they are on or off the job. The enterprise provides cleaners with all tools, cleaning solutions, and uniforms.

- Happy Helpers also offers an independent training service for house help or cleaners already employed by households. These households may approach Happy Helpers in order to organize workshops or training programs to enhance specific skills.

1.3 Customer Segment

Customer Segment	Product / Service Provided	Paid / Unpaid
Middle and high-income households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning services: Households can seek cleaning services from Happy Helpers either on-demand or through regular subscriptions. Cleaners come with their own tools and cleaning solutions. On-demand requests constitute the bulk of Happy Helpers' orders. • Cleaning products: Happy Helpers also sells cleaning products directly to customers, or through an online store. Customers buy the products to give as gifts or to use when they undertake cleaning themselves. • Training of domestic workers: Happy Helpers also conducts training programs for cleaners that are already working with customers. 	<p>Paid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy Helpers charges an hourly rate for on-demand cleaning services, or a fixed fee for subscriptions. • 80% of services are paid immediately after job completion, thus allowing Happy Helpers to make the payments to the cleaners on the day of the service. • Households pay a one-time training fee for customized training programs.
Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office cleaning: Happy Helpers also serves offices, warehouses, and retail stores as their secondary customers. 	<p>Paid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses pay a service fee to Happy Helpers.

Customer Segment	Product / Service Provided	Paid / Unpaid
Domestic workers	<p>Domestic workers' training and employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training: Happy Helpers conducts monthly training on housekeeping and cleaning. It also teaches soft skills, such as customer management, security, and communication. It offers public and customized training services for those willing to improve their cleaning efficiency. • Employment: The trained workers are provided job opportunities through Happy Helpers. The workers receive minimum wage and insurance through Happy Helpers. 	<p>Unpaid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy Helpers does not charge any fees for its employees' training.

1.4 Team And Governance Structure

Happy Helpers has 17 full-time employees, 47% of whom are women. Full-time workers are in operations, coaching (human resources), and client management roles. Happy Helpers provides cleaning services through 54 contractual workers, who work part-time. All contractual workers are women. Happy Helpers' board is made up of 5 members, 3 of whom are women.

1.5 Enterprise Policies

Policy	Yes / No
Overall HR Policy	Yes
Equal pay for equivalent work policy	Yes
Non-discrimination / Equal employment opportunity / Diversity and inclusion policy (gender, LGBTQ, PWD, etc.)	Yes
Anti bullying and sexual harassment policy / Respectful workplaces	Yes
Whistleblower policy / Employee grievance mechanism	Yes
Maternity / Paternity leave policy	Yes
Safeguarding policies for vulnerable groups (children, elderly, PWDs)	Yes
Safeguarding policies for the environment or to reduce detrimental impact on the environment (covers reducing carbon footprint, reduced water consumption etc.)	Yes

2. Impact

2.1 Mission Statement

Happy Helpers' mission is to professionalize and dignify domestic service work for women, specifically those who come from marginalized communities. In doing so, Happy Helpers hopes to ensure workers are valued and paid adequately.

2.2 Intended Impact

Happy Helpers' intended impact is aligned to one of the four Rs.

- Happy Helpers work has **rewarded** domestic workers with increased income, flexible working hours, and social protection benefits.

2.3 Monitoring And Measurement

Happy Helpers monitors the following indicators:

- Number of new cleaning jobs undertaken: monthly
- Number of customers served/added: monthly
- Number of customer complaints received and addressed: weekly and monthly
- Happy Helpers monitors impact by measuring the average monthly income of its cleaners.

2.4 Results To Date

- Number of customers served: 4,200
- Number of domestic workers trained: 250
- Increase in income of workers associated with Happy Helpers: Initially, workers would earn US\$ 100 per month (working 8-12 hours a day, 30 days per month). With Happy Helpers, workers earn US\$ 90 (working 5 hours a day, 4-5 days a week).

Happy Helpers' work is aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



3. Financials

3.1 Financial Status

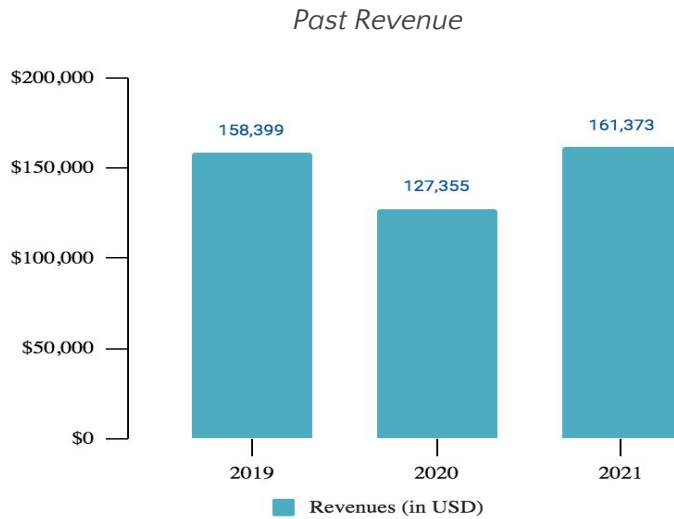
Happy Helpers is currently profitable.

(Amounts in US\$)	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021
Total Revenue	158,399	127,355	161,373
Total Expenses	151,966	119,702	158,452
EBITDA OR Profit/Loss	6,434	7,653	2,921
EBITDA Margin	4%	6%	2%

US\$ to Philippine Peso (PHP) at 1 US\$ to PHP 56 (as on 14th December 2022)

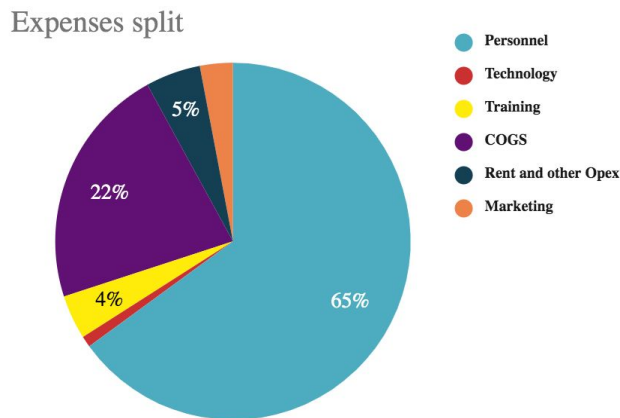
3.1.1 Revenue Streams

100% of Happy Helpers income is through sales



3.1.2 Expenses

The following pie-chart displays Happy Helpers’ main expenses in 2021:



Note: Personnel expenses are payments made to contractors.

3.2 External Funding Sources (Past and Current)

Happy Helpers founders have bootstrapped funds from family and friends. The enterprise has taken one loan from a microfinance institution, in order to make down payments for vehicles. In 2021, Happy Helpers received a grant from the founder’s alumni association for US\$ 25,000, in order to open a new hub.

3.3 Challenges Faced In Accessing Capital

Happy Helpers has not raised external equity capital. Grants and loans were difficult to acquire in the initial years of its founding, as the model wasn't fully established yet. Happy Helpers faced challenges in securing loans from financial institutions, as it did not have high-end collateral. As a result, Happy Helpers took a loan from a microfinance institution.

4. Path To Scalability

4.1 Potential Avenues For Growth

Happy Helpers has identified the following avenues for growth:

- **Geographic expansion:** Happy Helpers will expand services to other areas of Metro Manila. The enterprise's target is to open three new hubs within Metro Manila.¹⁴
- **Provision of other care services:** Happy Helpers intends to extend its services and offer other care, such as childcare and elderly care.

4.2 Risks And Challenges

- **Operational challenge:** In an average month, Happy Helpers deals with over 300 clients. Most of the interactions are done directly with customers, through one-on-one conversations. As Happy Helpers' operations expand, it becomes more difficult to interact with all customers directly due to a lack of human resources.
- **Human resources challenge:** Happy Helpers has faced a challenge in the recruitment process, as many cleaners have no work experience, low levels of education, and come from marginalized communities. As a result, Happy Helpers has to focus on providing training and skill development.
- **Competition:** In the last 3-4 years, Happy Helpers' competition has increased dramatically, with over 50 new enterprises offering the same solutions. This is because it is a low-capital business, and the market is growing. Happy Helpers differentiates itself through its guaranteed quality of service, ensured by its rigorous training and recruitment processes.
- **Technology:** Happy Helpers wishes to go digital, but does not yet possess the capital to invest in a digital platform. Though this is a challenge, Happy Helpers is not currently prioritizing it, as its business model still requires physical interaction with its clients.

¹⁴ Metro Manila has 9 cities.

4.3 COVID-19 Impact On The Enterprise

COVID-19 had a mixed impact on Happy Helpers. During COVID-19, the demand for cleaning services increased in most households, in order to reduce new infection cases. As a result, Happy Helpers introduced a disinfection service. However, the impact of COVID-19 on workers was adverse, as workers and their families lost income due to the lockdown. The CEO of Happy Helpers organized a fundraising campaign and collected funds to create work opportunities for domestic workers. Happy Helpers increased the minimum wage of its employees (per the national government directive) in order to help them recover from post-COVID-19 economic strains.

4.4 Support Received To Date

- Happy Helpers participated in the 2020 first cohort of We Rise: a venture competition, mentorship opportunity, and Pre-Acceleration Program specifically for women-led, early-stage, social impact, startups in the Philippines.
- Happy Helpers participated in the 2020 Ashoka and S&P Foundation program 'Women Together for a Better Normal.' This 3-month program was designed to aid social enterprises in recovering from COVID-19 pandemic losses.
- Happy Helpers is the 2017 winner and Philippine representative for NextGen. NextGen is a year-long campaign of more than 400 young entrepreneurs, who submitted their franchise business plans to Las Vegas, USA for the global competition.
- Happy Helpers is among the awardees of the 2017 Happy BPI Sinag Accelerator competition and therefore received business-incubation training.

4.5 Inputs Required For Growth

Financial:

- Happy Helpers is seeking US\$ 90,000 (5 million Pesos) to open 3 hubs in 3 different cities within Metro Manila. The fund will be used to set up offices, make down payments on vehicles, buy supplies and equipment, and conduct training of cleaners.

Non-financial:

- Happy Helpers needs support to develop digital marketing strategies, in order to reach out to more customers and increase its sales. Happy Helpers also needs guidance on how to showcase its model to investors.