

Eau et Vie (E&V)



eauetvie.fr



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.

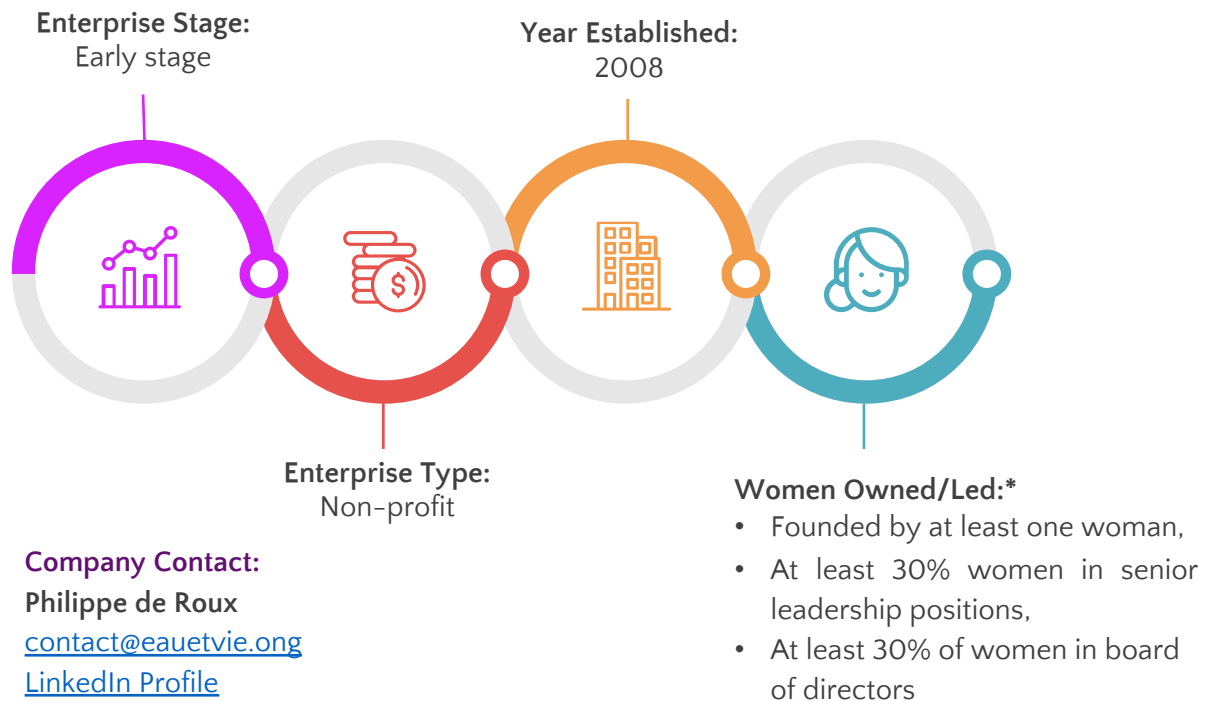
The Care Economy Knowledge Hub aims to address the knowledge gap around care businesses by showcasing various business models and creating a resource base for relevant stakeholders. It also aims to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the state of impact-driven care economy business models and attract 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

Reduce

Eau et Vie (E&V) is an NGO that develops water supply networks in urban low-income communities to provide a consistent supply of affordable and clean drinking water in these communities. The enterprise operates in Bangladesh and the Philippines, while its headquarters and support functions are located in France. It uses a hybrid model that consists of a local social enterprise and a local NGO to provide services in informal low-income urban communities. The locally created social enterprise provides drinking water in locations where the local water operator (public or private) cannot provide water services. Easier access to drinking water saves time for women and reduces drudgery in accessing water from far and difficult-to-reach locations and purifying it. Furthermore, the enterprise conducts awareness sessions and training for people from low-income urban settlements on topics such as hygiene (personal and menstrual), fire-fighting, evacuation in the event of a natural disaster, waste management and sanitation. The enterprise has served nearly 50,000 people across 26 low-income, urban communities so far. E&V has 152 employees and its revenue was US\$ 1,359,091 in 2021.



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

1. About The Enterprise

1.1 Problem

Urbanisation has been a rapidly accelerating phenomenon across the world.¹ The percentage of the urban population in 2020 is estimated at 55% of the global population and growing. The United Nations reports that migration into urban areas has outpaced housing, infrastructure and amenities development. It is projected that nearly 1 in 3 people will live in low-income urban settlements by 2050.² Urban migration has led to an increase in demand for public services and amenities in cities, which local governments are unable to manage for a number of reasons, including limited fiscal space.³ In Bangladesh and the Philippines, the population residing in urban areas is increasing. In Bangladesh, it is estimated that 39% of the population resides in urban areas and 52% of the urban population resides in informal settlements.⁴ In the Philippines, it is estimated that 48% of the population resides in urban areas and 37% of the urban population resides in informal settlements.⁵ This represents a total of 9.8 million people (Bangladesh with 5.3 million⁶ and the Philippines with 4.5 million⁷) across both countries. Consequently, these countries face significant challenges in meeting the demand for clean water, sanitation and safe housing for residents of urban informal settlements.

In the Philippines, the World Health Organization reports that 1 in 10 individuals lack access to clean water.⁸ It is estimated that 3 million people rely on unsafe sources of drinking and cleaning water, and 7 million individuals lack access to clean sanitation services.⁹ While water

¹ World Health Organization. (2017). *2.1 billion people lack safe drinking water at home, more than twice as many lack safe sanitation*.

<https://www.who.int/news/item/12-07-2017-2-1-billion-people-lack-safe-drinking-water-at-home-more-than-twice-as-many-lack-safe-sanitation>

² Sanchez. (n.d.). *Rapid urbanization has led to growing informal settlements in many cities across the emerging markets*. KPMG.

<https://home.kpmg/xx/en/home/insights/2019/10/argentina-barrio-31.html>

³ UN Habitat. (2015). *Challenges of Local Government Financing in Developing Countries*.

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1732The%20Challenge%20of%20Local%20Government%20Financing%20in%20Developing%20Countries%20_3.pdf

⁴ World Bank Group. (2020). *Population living in slums (% of urban population) - Bangladesh*.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS?locations=BD>

⁵ World Bank Group. (2020). *Population living in slums (% of urban population) - Philippines*.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS?locations=PH>

⁶ Rahman, M.L. (2022). *Success Story from the Informal Settlements of Bangladesh*. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/tribune-climate/2022/05/18/success-story-from-the-informal-settlements-of-bangladesh#:~:text=Bangladesh%20has%20roughly%205.3%20million%20informal%20settlers%20and%20have%20poor%20environmental%20conditions%2C%20and%20have%20poor%20housing>

⁷ Chandran, Rina. (2018). *Slum dwellers in the Philippines build homes through community programs*. <https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2018/0607/Slum-dwellers-in-the-Philippines-build-homes-through-community-programs#:~:text=About%204.5%20million%20people%20are%20homeless%20or%20living.any%20urban%20area%20in%20the%20world%2C%20charities%20estimate>

⁸ World Health Organisation. (2019). *Water shortage in the Philippines threatens sustainable development and health*.

<https://www.who.int/philippines/news/feature-stories/detail/water-shortage-in-the-philippines-threatens-sustainable-development-and-health>

⁹ Water.org. (n.d). *Philippines' water and sanitation crisis*. <https://water.org/our-impact/where-we-work/philippines/>

access in urban low-income settlements is as high as 80%, only about 43% of people who live in these settlements are able to access it on their premises. In other cases, nearly 34% of the poorest residents don't have access to water¹⁰ and low-income residents have to pay fees to access water from unofficial sources, which can be four times more expensive than official channels.¹¹ If they do not buy water from private vendors at exorbitant prices, they are at threat of being exposed to contaminated water; nearly half (45%) of the people in the poorest quintile are exposed to contaminated water.¹² The rising frequency of cyclones (around 22 each year) is also a critical challenge for the Philippines, resulting in frequent disruptions in water and sanitation services.

In Bangladesh, it is estimated that 1.8 million individuals in Bangladesh lack access to clean water, while 36 million individuals lack access to better sanitation services.¹³ Across Bangladesh, nearly 39% of households have only limited water access, meaning they have water access near their household, but not in the premises of the house.¹⁴ In most informal settlements, the lack of essential services and high population density result in poor sanitary conditions, environmental degradation (surface water pollution) and economic inequalities. People living in such areas are forced to source unsafe water from illegal dealers. It is estimated that in low-income urban settlements across Bangladesh, 50 million people use shared toilets and only 28% have soap and water.¹⁵ Nearly 41% of the water samples analyzed from Bangladesh's informal settlements contain coliform bacteria and arsenic, which is a significant health hazard.¹⁶ It is estimated that 36,000 individuals die annually due to health complications arising from consuming unsafe water.¹⁷ It is also observed that women and older girls in the household are tasked with the duties of fetching water and caring for ill family members. Hence, they bear the time and labour burden associated with the challenges of lack of clean water.¹⁸ In a study conducted across informal settlements in Dhaka, even when water was available near the household women usually had to spend a long time to obtain it. This is because there are multiple women that queue up to obtain water from a single pipe that has a narrow flow of water.¹⁹

¹⁰ Alfonso, S. M., Kazama, S., & Takizawa, S. (2022). Inequalities in access to and consumption of safely managed water due to socio-economic factors: Evidence from Quezon City, Philippines. *Current Research in Environmental Sustainability*, 4, 100117.

¹¹ Mason, L. R. (2014, November 15). Beyond Improved Access: Seasonal and Multidimensional Water Security in Urban Philippines. *Global Social Welfare*, 2(3), 119–128. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40609-014-0024-7>

¹² Alfonso, S. M., Kazama, S., & Takizawa, S. (2022). Inequalities in access to and consumption of safely managed water due to socio-economic factors: Evidence from Quezon City, Philippines. *Current Research in Environmental Sustainability*, 4, 100117.

¹³ Water.org. (n.d). Bangladesh's water and sanitation Crisis. <https://water.org/our-impact/where-we-work/bangladesh/>

¹⁴ UNICEF. (2019). *UNICEF Data Warehouse*. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/data-explorer/unicef/>

¹⁵ World Bank. (2018). *Bangladesh: Access to Clean Water Will Reduce Poverty Faster*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/10/11/bangladesh-access-to-clean-water-will-reduce-poverty-faster>

¹⁶ World Bank. (2018). *Bangladesh: Access to Clean Water Will Reduce Poverty Faster*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/10/11/bangladesh-access-to-clean-water-will-reduce-poverty-faster>

¹⁷ World Health Organisation. (2020). *Top 10 causes of death in Bangladesh for both sexes all ages 2020*.

<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/themes/mortality-and-global-health-estimates/ghle-leading-causes-of-death>

¹⁸ Livani, T., Ahmed, R., Ahmed, S. O., (2021). *Enhancing women's access to water, sanitation, and hygiene in Bangladesh*. World Bank Blogs. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/enhancing-womens-access-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-bangladesh>

¹⁹ Haq. (2014). Water Crisis and Urban Poor: The Case of Poor Communities in Dhaka City, Bangladesh. *Developing Country Studies*, 4(16), 126–137. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234681884.pdf>

1.2 Solution

E&V provides integrated services to low-income urban communities in both Bangladesh and the Philippines, including drinking water through household connections, awareness and training sessions, fire prevention planning and waste and sanitation services. They provide the following services:

- **Access to potable water:** E&V functions as an intermediary between the local water operator and low-income customers. Through the local social enterprise, it provides access to drinking water to households directly in their homes and, by doing that, it reduces the burden of fetching and/or purifying water, which is typically borne by women and girls of the household.
- **Solid waste management diagnostic services:** E&V carries out sanitation and waste management diagnostics in all the areas of operations. Based on the diagnostics report, the NGO, together with the community, decide whether it is appropriate to intervene.
- **Solid waste management services:** E&V provides latrine services to low-income households in Bangladesh.
- **Awareness and training sessions:** The enterprise conducts a range of water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) training sessions to inform and equip low-income urban communities.
 - **Hygiene awareness:** E&V organizes several WASH awareness and training sessions such as hand washing awareness, water storage, and latrine management training sessions. It also organizes sessions on menstrual hygiene for women and girls.
 - **Awareness of the need for solid waste management:** These activities include awareness sessions on waste management, the environment and the installation of public bins.
- **Fire prevention and emergency planning:** E&V's program includes training fire-fighting volunteers and organizing them in brigades to manage fires in high-risk areas such as crowded informal settlements. In recent years, E&V has also added a training component on evacuation plans during natural disasters.

To provide these services, E&V's model consists of a social enterprise and an NGO. The social enterprise provides access to water at home. It manages payment collection, billing, management and maintenance of the water network. The social enterprise provides access to water and other billed services such as solid waste management. The NGO provides awareness and training sessions and fire prevention and emergency planning services for low-income communities. E&V is currently working across 26 informal settlements in Bangladesh (Dhaka and Chattogram) and the Philippines (Cavite, Tanauan, Mandaue and Cebu).

1.3 Customer Segment

| Customer Segment | Product / Service Provided | Paid / Unpaid |
|--|--|--|
| Households in low-income urban communities | Network of potable running water: Households are connected to permanent tapped clean and metered water. E&V provides servicing for the water network systems and meter systems. | Paid Households pay installation and water consumption costs. The monthly water bill also covers other operational expenses. The water network infrastructure costs are covered by the company's grants and other funding sources. |
| Households in low-income urban communities | Solid waste management diagnostic services: E&V conducts diagnostic services to assess whether it can intervene and provide a service in all its areas of operation. | Unpaid This is an unpaid service. |
| Households in low-income urban communities | Solid waste management services: E&V provides latrine services to low-income households in Bangladesh. | Paid Households pay for this service. |
| Individuals living in low-income urban communities | Firefighter training: E&V trains volunteer firefighters within the informal settlements where it operates, equipping them with necessary fire-fighting knowledge and skills. | Unpaid Costs for running this service are subsidized. It is covered through E&V paid services and grants. |
| Individuals living in low-income urban communities | Hygiene Awareness Program: E&V runs hand washing, hygiene and menstrual hygiene awareness programs for individuals that live in low-income communities. | Unpaid Costs for running this service are subsidized. It is covered through E&V paid services and grants. |
| Schools | Hygiene Awareness Program: E&V runs programs that provide hand washing services and handwash hygiene programs to schools in low-income communities. | Unpaid Costs for running this service are subsidized. It is covered through E&V paid services and grants. |

1.4 Team And Governance Structure

E&V has 152 full-time staff, 88% of which are from local informal settlements. The enterprise has 12 employees in management roles (Co-founder, finance, HR, operations, advisors, partnership and project), 66% of whom are women. Each country has a country management team: the Philippines has a country management team of 7 members and a board made up of 7 members and the Bangladesh team comprises 7 management staff and 3 board members. The NGO has a board that directs the vision and strategy implementation consisting of 8 board members, 30% 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

The company's mission is to:

- **Ensure permanent access** to reliable domestic water sources,
- **Provide** fire-fighting and hygiene training, and support community engagement through the development of essential community-based services as per the communities' needs and capacities.
- **Carry out systemic diagnostics on waste management and sanitation.** Develop initiatives according to the context and the resources available, preferably with the support of communities and local authorities.
- **Mobilize and involve all partners (NGOs, CBOs, donors)** to implement projects with a high social impact, which are economically viable and self-sufficient over time.

2.2 Intended Impact

E&V **reduces** the time women and girls spend accessing clean water from distant water sources. It consequently **reduces** the time caregivers have to spend taking care of household members who fall ill due to the consumption of unclean, toxic water.

2.3 Monitoring And Measurement

To assess its impact, the company measures a number of indicators such as:

- The number of individuals with access to clean tapped water
- The number of hand washing stations in use
- Waste collected (in kgs)
- Number of local volunteers trained to respond to fires and disasters
- Number of individuals trained on sanitation, emergency response, etc
- Gender disaggregated data on participation in programs
- Reduction in waiting time for women to obtain water from shared sources

Measurement is carried out at different intervals based on the indicator being measured, utilizing internally developed assessment frameworks. For example, the enterprise conducts a baseline survey to capture how much time women spend obtaining water and after 3–6 months of implementing the intervention (provision of water supply within the households), the enterprise asks women again for information on their access to water.

2.4 Results To Date

Since its inception, the enterprise has been monitoring its results achieved: As of December 2021, the enterprise's results are:

- Number of individuals with water access at home: 48,516
- Total number of participants in hygiene awareness sessions (hand and personal, wash awareness and water hygiene awareness): 51,545 per year
 - Gender disaggregated data for participants in hygiene awareness sessions:
 - Number of female participants (includes women and girls): 32,275
 - Number of male participants (includes men and boys): 19,270
- Number of participants in menstrual hygiene awareness sessions: 7,398
- Number of fire-fighting and first-aid training held: 91
- Number of clean-up days organized: 39
- Number of committee meetings organized: 205
- Number of individuals volunteered in fire-fighting: 601
- Waste collected (in kgs): 85,736
- The enterprise has created 75 hand washing stations that serve 15 neighborhoods

E&V's work is aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



3. Financials

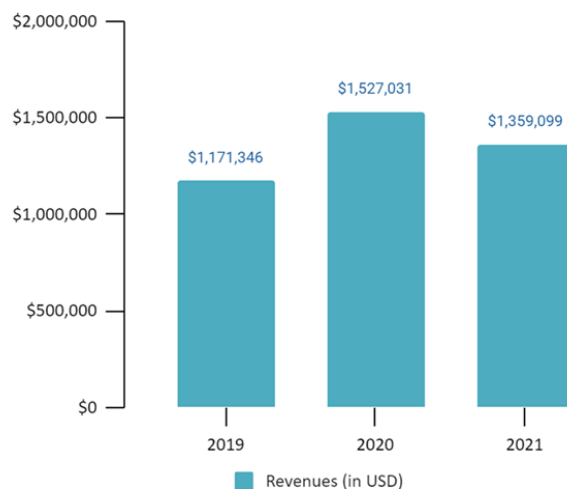
3.1 Financial Status

The following table provides an overview of the financial status of the social enterprise in the Philippines during the period 2019–2021. The enterprise is financially sustainable.

| <i>Particular (Amounts in USD)</i> | FY2019 | FY2020 | FY2021 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Total Revenue ²⁰ | \$1,171,346 | \$1,527,031 | \$1,359,099 |
| Total Expenses | \$855,571 | \$996,113 | \$1,292,036 |
| EBITDA OR Profit/ Loss | \$315,775 | \$530,918 | \$67,063 |
| EBITDA Margin | 27% | 35% | 5% |

3.1.1 Revenue Streams

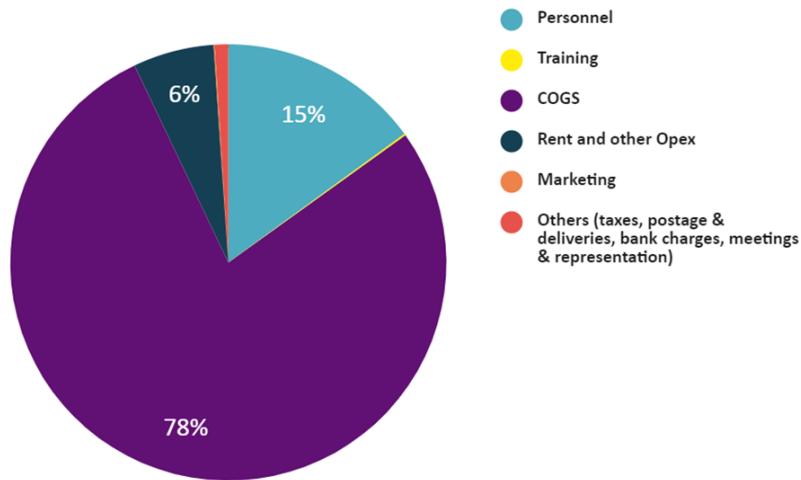
E&V obtains revenue from the sale of services, grants and donations. For its Philippines operations, 32% of its 2021 revenues came from the sale of services and 68% was from donations and grants. In Bangladesh, 13% of 2021 revenues came from sales, while 87% was from grants. The following graph displays E&V’s revenue from social enterprise operations in the Philippines.



²⁰ Please note that revenue includes revenues from grants.

3.1.2 Expenses

The following pie-chart provides details of the key areas of expenditure in 2021.



3.2 External Funding Sources (Past and Current)

The enterprise has received external funding from multiple sources, as outlined below:

- For the period 2015–2022, the enterprise received approximately US\$ 300,000 as outcome-based financing from Vitens Evides International. This funding enabled the enterprise to provide water connections to 2,800 households.
- In 2021, E&V received US\$ 300,000 from patient investors to sustain its growth globally.
- In 2021, E&V raised US\$ 1,842,689 from public and private partners to develop programs in the Philippines.

3.3 Challenges Faced In Accessing Capital

The company has experienced multiple challenges in accessing capital for its growth. These challenges include:

- **Awareness of business model:** The enterprise operates as an intermediary between the municipal water network and low-income customers. This type of business model is uncommon. It is observed that most institutional funders are keen to fund water businesses related to utility companies or water infrastructure projects rather than intermediary business models. This results in limited availability of funding to E&V.
- **Funding required for model:** The minimum funding required to start operations (provision of water services and other training and awareness sessions) in a new location is US\$ 97,500. The enterprise observes that this funding amount sometimes dissuades investors from investing as some investors may be interested in only funding

specific aspects of E&V's program such as WASH training or water pipe infrastructure and not the full program cost for a new area.

- **Need for multiple funders:** The enterprise has observed funders are often interested in funding only some of the activities in the new location. For instance, some investors are keen to support water connection activities whereas others are only keen to support activities such as training and awareness sessions. Consequently, the enterprise sometimes needs to obtain funding from multiple funders to commence operations in a new location.

4. Path To Scalability

4.1 Potential Avenues For Growth

- **Increase the number of households connected to potable water in existing communities:** The local social enterprises aim to increase the number of households with water connections in existing communities of operations, to increase profitability at the community level.
- **Increase the number of low-income urban communities covered in existing geographies:** The NGO aims to increase the number of low-income communities it is covering in Bangladesh (Dhaka and Chattogram) and the Philippines (Manila, Cebu, Tacloban and Mandaue). By 2025, it aims to provide 80,000 people with water connections and access to other complimentary services.
- **Expand to new geographies:** The NGO aims to provide its services to informal settlements in Khulna, Bangladesh. It also aims to expand operations to Uganda or Kenya in Africa.
- **Expand services provided to communities:** The enterprise aims to provide sanitation services (collection of solid waste and establishing sanitation systems) for low-income informal settlements. It intends to pilot sanitation services in the Philippines by 2025.

4.2 Risks And Challenges

- **Financing challenge:** The NGO faces challenges in acquiring sufficient funding from large investors that are keen to support all its activities. Consequently, for now, local social enterprises have to rely on grants and donations to expand their water networks.
- **Operations (partnerships):** The local social enterprises face challenges in partnering with local water authorities to provide services to low-income communities. As the municipal water rates are high where E&V sources its water, the company cannot mark up or subsidize its offering to low-income communities.

- **Operations:** E&V's regions of operations (Philippines and Bangladesh) are susceptible to natural calamities such as typhoons and floods and after such natural calamities the ability of customers to pay for the water service is often curtailed.
- **Technology:** E&V needs to enhance the functionality of its water app to enable better tracking of customers and usage so that services can be better managed. Enhancing the app will facilitate more real-time updates of customer accounts and consequently improve account management.

4.3 COVID-19 Impact On The Enterprise

As a result of COVID-19 lockdowns, the enterprise's customers faced extreme economic hardship and were unable to complete payment for the water connection services. The NGO gave subsidies to these households and continued providing water connection services. The NGO was able to provide these subsidies as it established a COVID-19 relief fund and received grants to continue providing water connection services for free for a 3-month period. E&V also used this period to streamline its operations and internal processes. This involved enhancing the operations manual and improving the reporting and coordination processes across departments.

4.4 Support Received To Date

The NGO has received support from Ashoka. E&V's association with Ashoka commenced in 2015. Ashoka provided E&V with mentorship, training and capacity strengthening support. It has also received some donations from a consortium of industries led by the French Chamber of Commerce to support its response to typhoons and other natural catastrophes.

4.5 Inputs Required For Growth

Financial:

- The NGO seeks US\$ 1 million in grants and output-based funding to support its growth. In the Philippines, the enterprise aims to expand its services in up to 10 new communities (500 households) by 2025. The funding needed to commence operations in any new community is US\$ 97,000.

Non-financial:

- **Partnership development:** The NGO is seeking support to deepen its relationship with international funding agencies so that it can secure multi-year funding for its operations or obtain funding to support all its operations in one low-income community.
- **Technological support:** E&V seeks support to improve its water management app that is used for billing and consumption tracking.

- **Technical assistance:** E&V seeks personnel/consultants with expertise in developing sanitation systems for low-income communities. These personnel/consultants will help the enterprise build its capabilities in designing and piloting sanitation services for low-income communities.