

CHARTER OF RIPESS

Preamble

We hold that the social solidarity economy is based on human values and principles of solidarity that advocate the recognition of others as the foundation of human action and the source of the renovation of politics, economy and society. The social solidarity economy includes activities and organizations of associative, cooperative, and mutual nature created to respond to the need for jobs and the well-being of people, as well as those citizen movements geared toward democratizing and transforming the economy;

We affirm our commitment to work together for the realization of the objectives of RIPESS in line with its mission;

We adopt the current charter as the expression of a social and ethical covenant that binds the various members of RIPESS on all continents;

We, the organizations gathered under the Intercontinental Network of the Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS), declare:

Our convictions

RIPESS believes that economy must allow men and women to satisfy their needs and ambitions, while providing for future generations to satisfy their own needs.

RIPESS is convinced that the development of human capacities is fundamental to the transformation of the world, and that this is possible through the creation of solidarity networks on different scales that contribute to the production and exchange of resources and knowledge, as well as the coordination of collective actions within the framework of a common project.

Our values

- *Humanism*

We put human beings, and their dignity, culture and full development at the center of our efforts. We are committed to the construction and promotion of projects aimed at building capacities for the individual and the collective development and well-being of people. For this reason, we promote the unrestricted respect, full exercise and interrelatedness of the civic, political, economic,



social, cultural and environmental rights recognized by the various charters and international human rights instruments.

- *Democracy*

We believe that the world, with its diverse societies, work and living environments, and organizations, should be built in a participatory manner, based on the respect for the right of individuals and peoples to decide on their own development. We understand politics as a framework for horizontal relations between persons and social collectives in their quest to satisfy their common needs. We promote participatory democracy based on the participation of citizens in political decision-making at all levels of the public space. We also advocate an economic democracy based on the capacity of people to make decisions about subjects which concern them as workers, consumers, producers and reproducers, as well as on the public character of decisions relating to what it is produced, how it is produced, why it is produced, and how profits are redistributed or invested.

- *Solidarity*

We emphasize solidarity as an element that allows us to recognize ourselves in relation to others and to be concern about their well-being. This implies mobilizing resources and establishing relations with other social collectives and movements in an effort to form an extensive network of people and organizations geared toward building a fairer, more democratic and equalitarian world.

- *Inclusiveness*

We are a network open to the range of practices of solidarity in the economy, which emerge from different realities and sectors. In this perspective, we aim at establishing dialogue based on the respect for ideological differences and the quest for consensus.

- *Subsidiarity*

We recognize and value the capacities and knowledge of individuals and groups to solve their problems and decide on their own projects. In our intervention, we seek to assert the grass-roots development, promoting organizations and associations to overcome common problems and openness to ever greater endeavors.

- *Diversity*

We promote respect for ethnical and cultural diversity, and sexual identity. We also promote and respect the diverse expressions of entrepreneurship in responding as best as possible to existing reality. We encourage the diversity of social solidarity economy players of all sectors of society to



be represented and able to defend their interests, particularly women and the social groups marginalized by the current system.

- *Creativity*

We promote innovation and the originality of concepts and discourses with an eye to encouraging the construction of innovative and critical practices and experiences that contribute best to social change. We also promote the adoption of appropriate technologies that respond to the particularity of problems, with the resources available in different cultures and contexts.

- *Sustainable development*

We affirm our will to promote sustainable development, while protecting the environment and biodiversity, and favoring more harmonious man-nature and spirit-body relations, in which the resources offered us by nature are rationally used to satisfy the needs of people, while respecting the balance of ecosystems. We therefore question the current neoliberal model of economic growth that threatens life on the planet.

- *Equality, equity and justice for all*

We take our stand as part of the fight against all forms of discrimination and domination. Especially, discrimination and oppression against women, children, young people, elderly people, indigenous peoples, the poor and the disabled, must be eradicated.

- *Respecting the integration of countries and people*

We oppose any type of economic, political and cultural domination of the North over countries of the South. We push for the alternative proposal of integration based on cooperation and complementarity among Northern and Southern countries, with an eye to the globalization of solidarity.

- *A plural and solidarity-based economy*

Faced with a neoliberal economic model that excludes persons and peoples, and reduces the motivations of economic activity to the quest for profit and self-interest, and so postulates the uncontrolled market economy as the only creator of wealth and employment, we propose the validity and action in favor of a plural and solidarity-based economy. We propose and work for an economy that combines and balances logics of accumulation, redistribution and reciprocity, expressed in a democratically regulated market, the equitable reassignment of resources by a participating State, and the affirmation of practices of mutual benefit in the framework of a society and a culture of solidarity.



Our mission

The mission of RIPESS is to build and promote social solidarity economy, taking into account the social and ethical dimension in all economic activities. This consists of producing, exchanging and consuming goods and services that correspond to the economic and social needs of the local and international community, and the establishment of harmonious relations between competitors in economic sphere.

This social, solidarity-based, economy values the priority of work over capital. It is aimed at satisfying the needs of individuals and communities rather than the quest for profit or financial gains. Solidarity-based economy units rest upon a model of democratic decision-making and a participatory and transparent management system, which aims at ensuring the collective ownership and responsibility for the outcomes of economic activities, as well as an ongoing motivation and contribution to their success.

The contribution of this economy is appraised by its incidence on local, national and international development, mainly, through the creation of permanent jobs, the development of new services, the enhancement of living standards, the contribution to gender equity, the protection of the environment and the creation of wealth under ethical conditions.

Our vision

RIPESS pursues a way of economic organization that determines what is productive from the standpoint of the human person and the respect for ecological limits. This implies an economy that makes it possible that all the people have access to the material, intellectual and spiritual resources that guarantee their dignity; that promotes the respect for individual, social and economic rights; that stimulates democratic participation in economic decision making and citizen control of the operation of the markets and the intervention of the State; that push for the adoption of environmental and social responsibility criteria in production, distribution and consumption; and finally, that strives for social and gender equity in wealth distribution.

Our approaches

- We promote the principles, values and practices, and networking of social, solidarity economy actors in local, national, regional and global frameworks.
- We strive to strengthen the dynamics of exchange and dialogue between the various ways of thinking and practicing social solidarity economy.



- We push for innovative economic initiatives for the autonomous development of our societies, while criticizing the neoliberal model and its colonial domination system.
- We advocate multiculturalism, democracy and grassroots' participation in the integral development of communities.
- We encourage the formation and development of enterprises with a social aim.
- We work to change public policies in favor of the grassroots' and social sectors, within countries as well as with multilateral organizations and international institutions for a fairer distribution of resources and opportunities.

These statements orient the action of RIPESS and its relation with other social agents on all continents, in our efforts with others to oppose the neoliberal globalization of markets and violence, the absolute rule of commodities over human life. We oppose the world control of capital, and propose the globalization of solidarity and the right to life, liberty, and democracy, in alliance with other social actors and movements that share our criteria and commitments and the aspiration for another possible world.

We, the members of RIPESS, are a part of the growing consciousness that respect for individual and people's rights, for the environment and for democracy must prevail in the economic organization of the world.

Approved by the Board of Directors of RIPESS in Montevideo, October 20, 2008.