



**LUX'09** RIPESS INEES

**22-25 avril 2009**

## **Workshop 0 - Education, citizenship education and SSE**

The workshop was structured as follows: description of the different experiences over the course of the 3 days and a working session held in language based sub-groups to allow for discussions for some 20 minutes.

Several common features were highlighted in the presentations and discussions: considering human beings in their context, learning by doing, the development of people's skills, the development of autonomy and of resource sharing, the creation of networks, accessibility to tools, systematisation. Several challenges emerged:

- to strengthen the links between citizens' education and the social solidarity economy
- to jointly construct public training policies in the area of the social solidarity economy
- to invest in the various training and education facilities.

### **The workshop put forward the following proposals:**

- to create a contact list of the people who attended the workshop so that they will be able to continue their exchanges.
- to map the training initiatives and other related experiences, using the form made available on the IT system, as discussed in workshop 10. This would permit exchanges of experiences between the trainers and the training of trainers and would also multiply the number of exchanges between young people.
- to establish a strategy and action plans between now and the next RIPESS meetings:
  - to work on the creation of national platforms next year
  - to then group them together into continental platforms the following year
  - experimentation can then take place over the course of the following two years
- to establish an international training centre on the social solidarity economy, as well as a documentation centre
- to carry out work in order to raise society's awareness of the solidarity economy, notably with the existing training and education bodies.

All training bodies are urged to integrate the international perspective.

One transversal issue is that of the approach to be adopted to the question of the financing required in order to successfully implement the proposals made by the various groups.

## **Workshop 1 - Social and Solidarity Economy and co-construction of public policies**

Co-construction means participation in a whole process encompassing co-elaboration, co-production and co-evaluation of public policies.

It is built on two pre-conditions: a) the existence of co-operation and confidence-based relationships between different stakeholders, among which figure primarily civil society, local authorities, but also international institutions (UNO, ITO, IMF, Worldbank...) and b) the principle of respect of the general interest.

The common challenge of social and solidarity based economy and local authorities is the objective to jointly develop territories. The point of departure lies in a territorial approach which will then influence sectoral policies, policies targeting different groups of the population and generic policies (finances etc.).

In this regard, we need to take into account that we deal with a diversity regarding a) the notion «territory», b) types of territories and c) ways of administrative and political organisation of local territories in different parts of the world.

Commitment to:

1. Foster a greater transparency and knowledge regarding a) both the existence of places (formal and informal) where decisions are taken and b) the 'rules of the game' and applied methods on the basis of which decisions are taken.
2. Develop capacities and qualifications of all actors involved in the process. This also necessitates mutual recognition between politicians and civil society, based on a clear definition and the respect of the functions and roles of each actor. Moreover, (new) places of debate have to be created or further developed (in order to adapt them for a

democratic use). These places of debate have to serve a cooperation generated by a (constructive) confrontation of different actors rather than an empty consensus.

3. Elaborate diagnostics to identify the existing resources of territories rather than lack of resources, by using the dynamics of the social and solidarity based economy.
4. Change our perception regarding wealth by creating new indicators that would improve the access of all to common goods (water, hygiene, education, food, housing...) as well as to sustainable welfare.

### **Proposals:**

- Conceive a compendium of practices of co-construction between local authorities and civil society in the field of social and solidarity-based economy
- Promote the implication of local authorities in the preparation and organisation of the next forum «Globalisation of Solidarity» by RIPESS

## **Workshop 2 - SSE, social services of general interest and common goods**

### **Illustration – First phase**

The main points to arise from the presentations made on the first day were as follows:

- in areas such as Latin America or Africa, the SSE covers primary needs, such as healthcare, that are not covered by the public authorities or that have been placed in the hands of the private market,
- in the northern hemisphere, as is the case in Canada with regard to child care services, the SSE is investing in areas that are not covered by the public authorities, although it is able to include them in an approach based on the co-construction of public policies.

### **Discussions – second phase**

The debates focussed on three questions:

- 1) A response to emergencies or the construction of alternatives? Even when they are called upon to respond to an emergency or a situation that requires urgent attention, the actors of the SSE, irrespective of where they are located, propose alternatives with the objective of developing a “third way”. By acting in this way, they are affirming a political stance.
- 2) What is the right place for the SSE? The actors of the SSE feel that it is essential to:
  - guarantee their independence and their autonomy so as to be able to take their place within a partnership of equals around the co-construction of public policies, whilst at the same time maintaining their creativity, which underpins their capacity for social innovation,
  - base their action and the way in which they operate upon the participation of civil society, of citizens and users, so that they are able to take their needs and requirements as their starting point in order to collectively formulate local responses.
- 3) What sort of synergies should be developed? The principles of solidarity and reciprocity are at the very heart of the SSE and must be developed at all levels: the local level (solidarity both upstream and downstream around the issue of water, for example), from one territory to another, at the transnational level, not just North-South, but also South-North, South-South, etc.

### **Proposals – third phase**

- 1) Proposals to the SSE
  - Development of the autonomy and of the independence of the SSE: hybridisation of resources, financial tools, etc.
  - Hybridisation of participation: workers- users – financiers, professionals - activists
  - Mainstreaming of expertise, starting at the lowest level: social expertise/social engineering, the logics of citizens' education...
  - Structuring of a system of innovation, research and development, notably through the provision of instruments: groups of associated researchers, training, employers' bodies, purchasing cooperatives, financial instruments...

- Around research and development: bringing researchers together, notably around a transversal approach to goods and services (the creation of a register of goods and services and of what should be done at each level for each one of them)
- Articulation with the social movements
- Maintenance and development of solidarity with the SSE (the role of RIPESS in terms of North-South solidarity): sharing of know-how, capacity building between peers, financial solidarity, etc.
- Importance of local level action, notably with a view to basing this action on a truly participative process that is able to take locally identified needs as its starting point and to co-construct local responses
- Importance of the elements that underpin the network approach: solidarity, the capacity to innovate, pooling, efficiency
- Reinforcement and development of the participative process as the basis of the SSE (and also of its survival): taking the needs of civil society as the starting point so as to jointly formulate a response (a specificity of the SSE in the framework of the plural economy), to propose spaces and times that are favourable to long-term exchanges, including within the SSE, to develop tools and methods
- Development of methods and tools to further develop the positive externalities of the SSE

## 2) Proposals directed at the world beyond the SSE

- Proposal for a «new ecological deal» (to define new modes for the redistribution of wealth and of the common good)
- Co-construction of public policies within the framework of a partnership between equals: clarification of the role and responsibilities of each partner, autonomy and independence of the SSE, tools and methods, wealth evaluation criteria,
- Establishment of an effective and appropriate international framework around social services and common goods, methods to be used to distribute wealth and, in the meantime, the conservation of the resources that are currently subject to the law according to which the strongest always dominate, through the introduction of rules and standards, regulations and monitoring procedures
- Creation of progressive fiscal systems as the first expression of solidarity, integrating a North-South approach based on solidarity
- Promotion and development of a plural economy in which the States play their complete role in terms of assuming responsibility for essential needs and in which the SSE has its place
- Importance of communication, information and education around the SSE and the network-based approach: recognition, credibility, etc.

## **Workshop 3 - Solidarity-based entrepreneurship**

### **Illustration – first phase**

Workshop 3 brought together speakers who illustrated a range of relevant practices being undertaken by social and solidarity actors who are spreading and promoting new initiatives:

- The Berlin Agency for the development of social enterprises, which supports the creation of social enterprises in the Berlin region through the provision of structured technical assistance;
- The experience of the Baobab NGO in Burkina Faso, which uses the revenue generated through its awareness-raising performing-arts activities, organised in both the North and the South, to finance local economic activities that create jobs for young people in rural areas, as well as training sessions and literacy programmes for women;
- The Objectif Plein Emploi network in Luxembourg, which creates jobs for the unemployed in order to further their professional and personal development through continuous training, thanks to local, long-term collective interest development projects in the area of environmental accountability;
- FAEDEI, the Spanish Federation of integration enterprises, which supports the creation and promotion of this type of activity, with the support of the new Spanish law on integration enterprises.

### **Discussion - second phase**

The presentations in the second phase fuelled the debate on solidarity entrepreneurship, the different economic crises and the impact upon employment. In fact, the present economic and financial crisis is having an effect on the countries in Europe and North America, whereas the people in Asia, Africa and South America are used to being faced with crisis and this forces them into a position in which they must permanently demand their fundamental rights. The key words used in these discussions were the fight for rights and dignity, education, solidarity and cooperation, territorial anchoring and the local level.

## Proposals – third phase

The speakers set out specific proposals in order to contribute to the development of entrepreneurship and of solidarity-based initiatives:

- to establish systems based on participative democracy that require a permanent focus on empowerment, which is the solution to which priority must be given in order to ensure that we are in the best possible conditions to resist and to innovate;
- to place the person at the centre of our concerns, by raising people's awareness of solidarity and of the general interest;
- to create strategic links with all of the stakeholders in order to improve the visibility of the sector;
- to place the actors of the social solidarity economy together within a network in order to create a shared market;
- to favour the elaboration of social and solidarity criteria to be taken into account in the awarding of public procurement contracts;
- to organise specific training modules (in universities, enterprises, schools...);
- to promote endogenous South-South development;
- to create tools to evaluate the social and environmental utility of projects;
- to further develop local initiatives in order to assist efforts to reproduce good practices;
- to trust in «bottom up» proposals;
- to dare to make proposals to the public authorities at all levels, since they often benefit from a constructive hearing.

## Workshop 4 - SSE and environment

### Illustration – first phase

There is a dual reality both in the north and the south: the SSE is a precursor of a central position at the heart of sustainable development. Human consumption and the impact of our societies on the environment, both today and tomorrow, are amongst the main concerns of many enterprises and associations. Over the course of a number of years, concerns related to waste management, which is a society problem that has an effect on the lives of inhabitants in all countries (health, pollution, water and air contamination, hygiene, living conditions, human exploitation...), have become a vector of development for actors in the social solidarity economy. Many associations are working hard to raise awareness of the need to reduce waste, as well as being involved in waste collection, the creation of citizens' associations for public health in neighbourhoods in the south, and the launching of recycling projects (laptops, textiles,).

However, certain observations were made several times during this workshop:

- the frequent absence of political support in areas in which the SSE has replaced services that had previously been provided to the local community as public services;
- the emergence of increasing competition (from capitalist enterprises) as soon as the SSE services demonstrate a level of economic profitability or present a risk for these enterprises.

### Discussions – second phase

What will the SSE working models be to integrate the environmental challenges?

In order to stay at the heart of sustainable development and to ensure that the many initiatives have a multiplier effect, networking is both present and necessary at all levels: sectoral (sustainable production, fair trade, collection, sorting, re-use and recycling of waste), local, national or international. Sustainable development is subject to the impact of a whole chain and each positive action on a single link in the chain must be analysed in terms of its overall impact on the chain in question.

We cannot export computers to the south without being concerned about how they are disposed of at the end of their life cycle. We cannot increase waste collection and recycling in the north if this is to the detriment of living conditions in India or Asia where this waste is sent to be processed. We cannot produce organic or fair trade sourced food without being concerned about the changes this type of production leads to for populations and their environments.

### Proposals – third phase

We would first like to draw attention to the paradoxes of today's world: we consume things that are thrown away in the North, whilst in the South we manage by re-using things. Through cooperation, we can see the waste generated

in the north as a resource and see the way of life in the south in terms of skills and know-how that could benefit our consumer society. Innovation consists in creating a common area of development through partnership-based projects. It is important to create the right conditions for success, so that social entrepreneurship is able to fulfil its aspirations with regard to sustainable development.

Societal effectiveness must be capable of becoming more important than economic profitability. The world is living on credit and the system is organised in such a way that this will only increase in the future. From this point of view, the current crisis represents an opportunity to review the paradigm of the way in which economies operate. The money supply is becoming increasingly virtual. We must be capable of tying money to real activity (production-consumption), of avoiding an accumulation on the one hand and a shortage on the other. In other words, wealth must be redistributed on the basis of fair usage. Sustainable development is a strong notion that must be allowed to develop. The SSE is perhaps the only movement that can specifically address this challenge. Its social purpose proves that its initiatives place the person at the heart of its concerns. Ultimately, it is a question of considering one's environment from a global perspective. Further proof of this is to be found in the multitude of cooperatives present in the local renewable energy generation sector. However, for this approach to be truly successful, the market conditions must change in order to give the SSE its rightful place. The underlying principle of political action in this area must be to promote the sector, whilst at the same time respecting all of its dimensions (equity, training, environmental protection, democracy, local cultures,). It is our task to prove that we are deserving of this trust by continuing to develop innovating and meaningful projects. The environment is both an enormous field of investigation and a way of continuing to develop existing SSE projects. Energy practices clearly require reform; however, the challenge is a wider one, since it is our very way of life that must change. We must get back to reality by promoting specific forms of sustainable development both in the north (through the revision of the economic model) and the south (through the development of its potential). The Kyoto agreement shows that the north is living beyond its means and the south can benefit from the financial resources that are due as a result of quotas being exceeded. Is this really sustainable? The answer is no, since we are relinquishing our real societal responsibilities. Environmental policies and initiatives to change people's behaviour must be carried out in parallel. Only the SSE can effectively take up this dual challenge so that each country can develop on a sustainable basis. The SSE is not a luxury and it must make its strength known as it addresses this challenge.

## **Workshop 5 - SSE and food sovereignty**

### **Illustration – first phase**

Agriculture is becoming increasingly industrial and dominated by multinationals, to the extent that small farms are disappearing and we are seeing a mass migration of peasants to towns and cities and even to countries outside their country of origin. Food sovereignty is under serious threat for many people across all of the continents. But food sovereignty is not just a matter of concern for the peasants/producers, since it is everyone's concern, both producers and consumers. The workshop illustrated the deterioration of the situation for farmers and people living in the rural areas and explained that this was due to a series of factors:

- A poor distribution of the available resources, rather than a lack of the resources themselves
- Policies that are designed to develop industrial agriculture, leading, as a consequence, to the deterioration of the environment and the loss of biodiversity,
- The use of GMOs to guarantee an increasingly bigger harvest and the loss of the peasants' sovereignty over their food crops
- Increased productivity for the production of biofuel
- Climate change

### **Discussion**

Agriculture has been diverted away from its prime function to satisfy the needs of the people. The largest number of people suffering from starvation is to be found in the rural areas, even though it is the peasants who are the producers. The policies of the international bodies, the IMF, the World Bank, WTO and the current regional markets and bilateral agreements, are only serving to exacerbate all of the phenomena that are ruining the lives of the people living in rural areas.

As well as its prime function of producing foodstuffs, agriculture also plays an important social role, since it provides many jobs, both for men and for women, who are producers, processors and traders. We should also add the equally important role played by agriculture in maintaining, safeguarding and conserving the environment. There is a great deal of incoherence in the agricultural policies in the various countries, between the North and the South, since these policies now tend to respond to market needs, rather than to the main functions of agriculture, to maintain jobs...

## Proposals – third phase

All of the local, national and regional initiatives should be further developed in order to achieve food sovereignty that is integrated within the framework of solidarity-based economies. There is a need to create a new ideology along the lines of a development project that meets with the needs and desires of the local populations, wherever they are located.

- the creation of a standing group on food sovereignty, which would become a resource and support group for all of the network of organisations that are striving to implement this concept in the framework of the Solidarity Economy

This resource group would make it possible to formalise the agenda of demands to defend the rights of peasants in terms of access to land, to water, to natural resources and also to introduce a genuine agrarian reform.

- the use of legal instruments, including two proposals for conventions: a convention on the rights of peasants, which is currently being presented to the Human Rights Council and an International Convention for the respect of the diversity of Agricultural Food Products.

All of these proposals are rooted in the concern for a living rural world, a good quality of life for everyone, those who live in rural and urban areas, producers and consumers. All of the other instruments of the solidarity economy (alternative currencies, solidarity financing...) should be further developed as part of this Food Sovereignty project.

## Workshop 6 - Responsible production and consumption

Given that the world is able to feed everyone, it is the whole system of production, distribution and consumption that needs to change, because the current situation is not acceptable. The current pattern of consumption has contributed to the current crisis. Responsible production and consumption needs to take account equally to social, economical and environmental issues

### Illustrations

- Andrea Calori: [andrea.calori@polimi.it](mailto:andrea.calori@polimi.it) Urgenci and GAS-RES  
Groups to buy ethical/sustainable products and services: local level and fair trade [www.retegas.org](http://www.retegas.org)
- Belanger Charles-Etienne: [charlesbelanger02@yahoo.fr](mailto:charlesbelanger02@yahoo.fr) International Bureau of Social Tourism  
Tourism involving local people through the whole process <http://www.bits-int.org/en/index.php>
- Shirley Harvey: [sh.harvey@wanadoo.fr](mailto:sh.harvey@wanadoo.fr) Union fédérale d'intervention des structures culturelles  
An online distribution method of music that gives fairer contribution to the artists <http://www.ufisc.org/>
- Christine Gent: [ext.affairs@wfto.com](mailto:ext.affairs@wfto.com) WFTO  
New method of measuring fair trade developed by WFTO for Fair Trade Organisations [www.wfto.com/sftms](http://www.wfto.com/sftms)
- Marvin Lopez Garcia: [marvin@apodip.org](mailto:marvin@apodip.org) CLAC-Pequeños  
Fairtrade producers together in Latin America can bring about change <http://www.pequeñosproductores.org/>
- Obrecht Joel: [joel.obrecht@gmail.com](mailto:joel.obrecht@gmail.com) / URGENCI and IRIS  
Collaboration of both CSA and Fair Trade towards local development <http://www.iris-network.eu/>
- Sunil Mahaguthi: [sguthi@mos.com.np](mailto:sguthi@mos.com.np) Fair Trade Group Nepal /Maguthi  
Fair Trade Lokta producers in the Nepal for traditional culture and livelihood <http://www.mahaguthi.org/>
- Vuillon Daniel: [daniel.vuillon@wanadoo.fr](mailto:daniel.vuillon@wanadoo.fr) / URGENCI and IRIS  
CSA: the distribution of land for the use of food for the local community <http://www.urgenci.net/>
- Yuko Wada: [civil@prics.net](mailto:civil@prics.net) Seikatsu Club Consumers Coop  
The enormous growth of consumer clubs in Japan <http://www.seikatsuclub.coop/english/>
- Transition towns, [www.transitionnetwork.org](http://www.transitionnetwork.org)  
The new citizen movement to transform local communities in response to peak oil

### Discussions

Focused on the role of networks for trust, services and political objectives. There were some common themes throughout the good practices demonstrated: local trade, fair price, retaining resources and finance in the community, equal distribution of benefits in all the chain - these principles can be applied both geographically proximate and distant, the cultural identity of the participants has to be retained, true dialogue between producer and consumer, pre-financing by the consumer, transparency. Despite the common themes there are areas of differences: as yet we have no definition of responsible consumption. Certification has a role but we need to examine the models. .



## Propositions

- To change the economy of production and consumption, other parts of the SSE have to be linked. The informal networks groups and individuals who are active, but not yet included also need to be linked in.
- Resilience is the capacity of the community or group to maintain its own balance and equilibrium in the face of external change and shocks. The SEE to adopt the concept of resilience starting from the criteria of food sovereignty as an objective of all its activities.
- The SEE has to identify, support and build alternative distribution systems from production to the consumer, using our own criteria.
- The SEE to work together to map, exchange information and develop participative guarantee systems.
- The organisation of any event with the SEE must embrace the use of Fair Trade and local farmer food and drink only, use of plastic, recycling, transport, even looking at alternatives of accommodation.
- Re-examine all use of money from personal, to institutional level to invest within a 'local' perspective.
- Research on the successful models illustrated, GAS, Seikatsu, CSA, Fair Trade etc to identify the cultural specificity and extract the common aspects for replication, diffusion. To reach youth the excluded and the dis-enfranchised to go expand beyond the current audience.
- To ensure the empowerment of the growing production and consumption networks maintains a participative approach and control, at community, national and regional levels
- Institutions and legislation need to change at different level from the country council to the WTO, and FAO
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## Workshop 7 - Democratic participation and anchoring the SSE at a territorial level

### Illustration – first phase

This phase has been prepared over the course of 18 months through experimentation with a learning, accumulative and ultimately very enriching approach, namely that of "learning journeys". It is not the culmination of this approach; rather it represents a new starting point.

### Discussion – second phase

The debate was built around the exchange of views and perspectives from the North and the South. The first day was dedicated to the North, the second to the South and the third day was dedicated to the formulation of proposals on the basis of these North/South exchanges.

The subject: the gravity of the current crisis is an opportunity to revise the fundamental elements of the economy by connecting them to the other dimensions (social, environment, etc.) at the most relevant level, which is the territorial level, making the person the central starting point for both analysis and action. It is possible to adopt a holistic vision at this level.

### Proposals – third phase

Workshop 7 considers the notion of territorial anchoring to be of central importance. It must become a pillar of the SSE and must also constitute the heart of the 5th RIPESS in Asia.

Territorial anchorage makes it possible to adopt a transversal approach (environment, social, culture, finance, governance etc.) and also allows for the involvement of all components of the population, especially those who are excluded, all of whom must be included in all SSE policies.

In order for this notion to be understood and disseminated:

- The learning approach of the Pactes Locaux is an appropriate tool, although it does need to be further improved. It is a concrete expression of the saying that "experience shapes and takes shape." The learning approach (also known as "learning journey") contributes to the co-construction of a shared vision of the territory and about the territory.
- Capacity building and training are indispensable: the target groups for this are: the elected representatives, municipal staff and the administration in general.
- Although it is clear that participation must be regulated, it must also be facilitated: efforts must be made to reach out to the most excluded and the most needy. It is also necessary to adopt an approach based on listening and dialogue. This is essential. The existence of facilitators, story tellers and moderators of local life is important. The same applies to effective tools such a word trees. Together, all of these elements help to establish the link between representative democracy and active democracy.

- The networking and exchange of North-South experiences is also important. There is a need to strike a new balance between the exchanges of experience and know-how.
- The use of regulations, in other words of policies, is inevitable in order to establish an articulation between the local, the regional, the national, the continental and the world wide level.

### **Specific proposals:**

- Workshop 7 and the Pactes Locaux are a major pillar in the co-construction of the Asian international forum with two approaches: the territorial approach as a transversal element of all of the themes and methods of elaboration of globalised projects.
- Actions: lobby the EU, produce documents that illustrate case studies and experiences, document the approach adopted for the preparation of the Asian forum, create an internet portal in order to engage in dialogue with Asia.
- Develop methods: appropriate indicators to take into account and to integrate the territorial, participative and multi-actor approach within international regulations.
- Develop adapted tools, such as audio-visual tools and, of course, the internet.

## **Workshop 8 - Research and conceptualization of SSE**

### **Illustration – first phase**

- A plurality of concepts – social economy, solidarity economy, people’s economy, self-help economy, third sector, social enterprises – all of which are anchored in some way in history, the territories and the institutions.
- These concepts are often the result of methods of research/action that establish interactions between researchers and actors, theories and practices, in order to produce knowledge and to give a meaning to action.
- Origins of the practices: a pragmatic response to the problems and needs of everyday life, an organised and voluntary expression of primary solidarity networks, citizens’ resistance against the crises of capitalism, challenging the development model.
- The SSE as a collective movement and public action that is related to a movement for the democratization of society and of the economy. SSE is at the heart of the tension between democracy and capitalism.
- The relations of the SSE with the public powers vary according to the degree of democratic legitimacy, the economic power and the centrality of the State.
- The dominant economic theory both renders invisible, and discriminates against, the decisive role of the SSE. It is difficult to quantify this economy, since it stands at the crossroads between the formal and the informal, the public and the private, the monetary and the non-monetary, etc.
- Links between feminism and the SSE: a majority of women work in the SSE, the values are similar (care for others, reciprocity, solidarity, cooperation), a transversal and inter-sectoral approach to problems, there many women’s initiatives related to the creation of care services.

### **Discussion – second phase**

- A conceptual plurality as a resource that is useful in helping to understand the different dimensions of the SSE: entrepreneurial (social economy), political (solidarity economy), voluntary (not-for profit).
- Today, there is no integrating theory or ready-made utopian theory that could unite all researchers and actors at the global level.
- Others believe that a unifying concept is necessary for public action: in order to change mindsets and the representation of the economy that people have, to be visible in the eyes of the institutions, to construct programmes and to obtain funding.
- The plurality of concepts does not prevent exchanges and mobilisation between actors and researchers at the international level (e.g. LUX09, WSF, EMES, etc). As such, does it enable us to construct a global and collective solution to the crisis? The concepts are not sufficiently equivalent to think about a social change and another model of development.
- The crisis is a challenge for the SSE: there is tension between the need to address the pressing issue of poverty at the local level and the need to build alternatives at the global level. Can the crisis be an opportunity to create an SSE-based coalition between the poor and the middle classes?
- Moral capitalism or instrumentalization of the SSE in order to insert the poor on the market, which appears to be the unavoidable horizon of the economy.



- We should not limit ourselves to the organisational dimension, rather we should change the institutional framework. Articulate the micro/meso/macro level. Movement from the solidarity initiative or social enterprise to «value supply chains», internal markets within the SSE, territorial SSE networks to articulate production, consumption, financing, social currencies, etc.
- Institutional innovations: Secretary of State for the SSE and participative budget (Brazil), social economy projects (Quebec), constitutional recognition of the SSE (Bolivia), local SSE policies (France, Brazil), etc.
- Conditions for institutionalisation: recognition as a partner in economic and social development, adoption of network structure, support instruments (financing, training, research...), taxation, public action, etc.
- Women continue to be not well represented within the SSE decision-making bodies.
- Integrate young people and immigrants within the research fields and processes.

### **Proposals – third phase**

To address the crisis:

- Reconstruct the local economy on the basis of new practices of mutual economic aid and new coalitions of territorial actors.
- Rethink the economy, looking beyond the market towards a plural economy: social framework for the market, invent and articulate new forms of redistribution and of reciprocity.
- Rethink policy beyond the State level. Articulate representative and participative democracy and the co-construction of public policies.
- Rethink social change beyond the alternative represented by reform or revolution.
- Institutionalize provisions aimed at research-action and the co-construction of know-how between researchers and actors (along the lines of the incubators in Brazil or the ARUC in Quebec)
- Map and create an international alliance of the research-action provisions regarding the SSE in order to promote and to disseminate them.
- Create a space for collaborative exchanges (along the lines of the initiatives to promote interaction between actors and researchers)
- Further develop dialogue between the women’s movement and the SSE movement in order to avoid the reproduction of the patriarchal model within the SSE.

## **Workshop 9 - Les réseaux dans l'économie sociale et solidaire**

### **Illustration – first phase**

During this workshop, a variety of challenges related to the creation and the functioning of SSE networks were raised, discussed and debated:

- In terms of the way in which they function, a major challenge for networks is non-substitution and complementarity between the levels of the networks or between the networks and the actors.
- At the political level, the challenge is to show that the SSE responds to the challenges faced by society and that it represents a credible economic alternative.
- However, the networks must remain connected to the objectives, together with the challenge of only changing society through a bottom-up approach. The integration of the different actors within the structure can help to achieve this aim.
- A difficulty permanently faced by networks (particularly at the time of their creation) is that of helping grass-roots actors to look beyond their immediate and everyday challenges in order to organise and to mobilise their efforts in a different way.

### **Discussion – second phase**

Five major issues were addressed: the launching of networks, the mobilisation of the members, decision-making within networks, the difficulties encountered and financing.

The launching of networks requires the establishment of a well defined common objective, a vision that is shared by the members.

Patrice Lovesse explained, for example, that this “shared vision” is often something that is missing when networks are created in Benin. As well as having a shared vision, it is also crucial that the members have a precise idea of their expectations of the network and of how they are going to contribute to the dynamics of the network.

This, in turn, makes a significant contribution to the mobilisation of the members. It would also appear to be crucial to maintain regular contacts with the members. Once again, difficulties are encountered in the countries in which means of communication are not well developed.

Decision-making is a delicate aspect within networks. Do they function in a central way with certain small groups that exercise control over the information and the decisions, or do they work in a truly participative and horizontal way? What can be done to ensure that certain people do not play a more important role than others? Perhaps this may be achieved through the creation of larger structures, for example. One of the major difficulties raised by several speakers is the competition that takes place between the different networks.

In certain sectors and countries, the multiplication of the number of networks prevents the adequate financing of the networks themselves. The workshop highlighted language difficulties and the wide heterogeneity of the members in terms of income, as two of the major issues faced by international networks. What can be done to stop the tendency amongst international networks to focus their attention on the countries that are the most easy to mobilise (in terms of communication, for example) or which are the nearest?

Finally, the workshop addressed the financing of networks and focussed on two issues: on the one hand membership fees (e.g., how is possible to operate a network in cases in which the members are not able pay their fees because they are so poor?) and, on the other hand, the fact that a network's resources are not only financial but are also human and therefore this raises the question as to what can be done to mobilise the members' existing expertise?

### **Proposals – third phase**

Proposals: to use new technologies to improve the way in which networks function (this is a problem for the countries in which access to the internet is non-existent), to maximise the articulation of the various levels of the networks, to draw support from the local networks so as to ensure that information is then channelled up to the national and international networks.

ISSUES for the RIPESS network:

- it is of vital importance to ask ourselves what we want for Ripess and the international meetings. If we wish to jointly construct solutions, then there is an absolute need to devise alternative methods for debates and meetings, since the way in which the workshops have been organised has not only practically failed to allow for discussions, but it has also, to an even bigger degree, not allowed for the collective construction of responses.
- one of the outcomes of the meetings should be the drafting of a very short and pithy document that everyone can take ownership of, which affirms the core values of the social economy and which shows that the SSE can be a response in these times of crisis. Everyone could then use this document at the local level to demonstrate the added value of their activities.

## **Workshop 10 - Communication and information management systems of SSE**

### **Objectives**

- To participate in the construction and the development of the political project of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE).
- To foster a greater visibility and understanding of the SSE.
- To share and to exchange practices and experiences in their diversity, to favour cooperation between the actors.
- To strengthen the local spaces for communication and culture.
- To integrate the various themes addressed by RIPESS within the same framework of communication.
- For the general public: Access to what is currently happening within the SSE, to its agenda, products/services and their traceability, to training initiatives regarding the SSE, to the supply and demand for jobs and to the multimedia materials generated by the networks.
- For the solidarity enterprises (production, services, consumption, marketing enterprises): Disseminate their activities (what they have to offer, their history, form of management...); strengthen networking, exchanges and economic, social and political links between the enterprises (also see workshop 6)
- For the SSE movement and network: Reinforce the movement, networking and cooperation: strengthen the identity of RIPESS; Disseminate, affirm and share the economic and political platform and identity of the SSE; further promote shared culture.
- For the media: "Flood" the media with information about the SSE from the movement and the RIPESS member networks; contribute to the multiplication of information and communication; reposition the debate on the economy that exists within the media.
- For formal and informal education: make educational materials available for the training process (also see workshop 0).

- For the local and public decision-makers: make support materials available to the public decision-makers for the construction of public authorities (also see workshop 1); reposition the debate on the presuppositions of development actions undertaken by the public authorities.

## Principles

- Ensure that we respect diversity as we go about our work
- Start from what already exists, respect the initiatives undertaken by the networks and enable them to communicate with one another.
- Favour direct exchanges through meetings
- Adopt a participation-based approach to our work, in all stages, actions and methodologies Work in articulation with other RIPESS projects
- Never consider the tools to be an end in themselves; priority must always be given to local considerations and human relations
- Work within the spirit of an Open source approach
- Accord priority to the community and alternative media when disseminating information.

## Challenges

- The different concepts, visions and perspectives of the SSE
- The different languages
- The typologies and vocabulary that is specific to each country
- The lack of continuity and the danger of running out of steam
- The difficulty of accessing the internet encountered by SSE actors in the poorest countries

## Avenues for future action

We recommend the creation of working group(s) in order to:

- Make progress in our conceptual reflections on the values, the stakeholders and the participative process in the construction of mapping exercises, the vocabulary used and the non-IT based exchanges.
- Construct a common core of information for the different mapping exercises.
- Identify the existing mapping methodologies and make them available: notably those related to solidarity enterprises, SSE training initiatives and public policies to promote the SSE.
- Draw inspiration from the communication initiatives of other movements and networks (e.g. the free media).
- Develop standards
- Produce a classification of SSE services and products (so as to foster economic relations between different systems)
- Typology of the different ideological, cultural and managerial aspects of the SSE (for presentation)
- Typology of the main themes and issues (for articles and the establishment of an agenda)
- Create a tool that groups together the information from the member networks, with a view to its dissemination.
- For Workshop 0 (training), we propose to promote the insertion of the SSE within education programmes.

## Workshop 11 - SSE and trade union action

### Illustration – first phase

1. Dr Rene Ofreneo - Director of the Center for Labor Justice - Philippines; 2. Carlos Amarin - Coordinator of REL-UITA - Uruguay; 3. Denise Boucher - vice-president of CSN - Canada; 4. Eduard Lucas - officer at the IAC - Catalonia
- Globalisation and capitalism have had dramatic consequences on employment and working conditions in the Asia Pacific region. Although they only have limited room for manoeuvre, the trade unions have still managed to extend their activities to all workers, within both formal and informal networks. They have also promoted the creation of collective and social enterprises. Singapore and Japan already have a great deal of expertise regarding these alternative structures.
  - In Latin America, the International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers has developed several local strategies to improve the workers' living conditions. In Colombia, clean housing has been created, schools have been rehabilitated and health funds have been set up. A health fund has been established in Argentina with each member making a contribution that is proportional to their income.

- In Canada, the CSN has been developing social and solidarity economy actions for many years. Social economy cooperative associations have made it possible to help families to manage their household budget, whilst the aim of food cooperatives or citizens' medical centres is to improve the consumption and living conditions of workers. Financial institutions have been created to support the social economy projects, to protect people in retirement and to support collective entrepreneurship.
- Finally, in Catalonia, the IAC wishes to strengthen participative democracy in order to help people to emerge from a certain inertia, the foundations of which are to be found in the tendency to adopt a single vision or way of thinking.

### **Discussion – second phase**

Although a historical relationship exists between trade union movements and the social and solidarity economy, two observations were made on this point: there is a tendency to adopt a solely national approach and there is unequal progress being made across the continents. It is therefore difficult to establish common guidelines. The social and solidarity economy is not the only concern of the trade union movements. Greater investment from the public actors is indispensable and it is equally necessary to clarify the roles with other actors, such as NGOs, so as to promote complementarity. Regarding the beneficiaries, it was pointed out that the groups who are the most vulnerable to a dominant form of capitalism are rural and informal workers, since they are always forgotten by social inclusion programmes. The trade union movements also have a role to play in order to ensure that the enterprises that establish themselves in their country do not merely have a capitalist approach, but also have a social responsibility and conscience.

Finally, we should remember that the social and solidarity economy has a bottom-up approach and that its aim is not solely to be an alternative to the shareholder value vision, but also to promote the social inclusion of the workers.

The trade union movements must interact amongst themselves (and with others through international channels) and with the structures of the social economy. Whilst an international platform would be a good structure for interaction, the development of partnerships between countries would also seem to be an initial approach to sharing that would be highly beneficial.

### **Proposals – third phase**

It is a recognised fact that trade union organisations are partners of the social economy. The trade union movements in the workshop were of the opinion that there is a need to develop a plural economy with a plural strategy. They agreed on the following principles of the SSE, which could stem from action:

1. to steer the economy towards social objectives and purposes and to respond to social needs;
2. to challenge the function of the State in terms of regulation and redistribution;
3. to democratise choices with regard to development and investment and to democratise the management of enterprises;
4. to defend and to develop employment and to fight against exclusion;
5. to defend the mission of the public services;
6. to strengthen the forms of solidarity within communities and to produce social cohesion;
7. to make enterprises socially responsible.

We suggest that the trade union organisations and the social economy representatives participate together at the next workshop session organised by RIPESS. From a wider point of view, we would also like the trade union organisations to be systematically integrated within the discussions of the social economy as a key actor.

## **Workshop 12 - Social and Solidarity Economy and Social finance**

### **Illustration:**

Two working lines for the presentations:

One analyzed the banking crisis and showed that governments in bailing-out the banks had created perverse incentives. This cannot happen again. There was a call for a radical reform of banking regulation and also practices that avoid perverse incentives. One big problem is a banking system that is globalized and integrated, which has no resilience. The solution to this problem is obviously smaller, local and regional bank with social and ecological practices.

Local currency:

- a) Salvador de Bahia's University experience in Brazil CURRENCY AS A TRAINING TOOL

b) Complementary currencies design manual AND A STRONG RECOMENDATION TO LINK COMPLEMENTARY CURRENCIES WITH MICROFINANCES ORGANIZATIONS

**Debate:**

1. How to integrate micro finances with local currency and there are good examples in Argentina and Brazil (44 social banks providing micro credits and social currencies)
2. We need to rethink almost everything about money and currency and the relationship between money and growth (substitute fees for interest)
3. What is capital? It's clear that capital starts with an idea for making something. It's a process of creating housing, food, music...CAPITAL IS A CULTURAL ISSUE
4. How to develop social finances solutions at the local level? Good examples includes the social finances systems in Quebec, which includes credit unions, venture finances, solidarity funds supported by the trade unions. Also in USA the community developments credit unions and community development banks are working together in a national coalition, that president Obama is supporting from now.

**Proposals:**

1. The next step is to link microcredit, local currencies and participating budgeting.
2. Bank system reform and creation of a bigger space for Social Banks (Ethical Bank, etc). ITS URGENT TO CONTINUING WORKING IN GROUP (working committee) TO SEND A MESSAGE TO DECISION MAKERS BY THE WAY OF A LIST OF POINT TO BE REFORMED, AND THE OTHER HAND INVITE THE ENTIRE SOCIETY TO JOIN, SUPPORT, REINFORCE A BIGGER ESPACE FOR THE SOCIAL FINANCES TO EXPAND AND DEVELOP.
3. Simultaneously with fighting for a big reform of the mainstream finances and creating a bigger network for social financing we need to work on COMMUNICATIONS AND TRAINING to help changes occurs in people's minds and social concepts about money and finance.
4. At the regional level, we need to focus on specific needs such as food, energy services, housing and local producers. Let's see money (and financial services) as a TOOL and let's seek solutions by experimenting how solutions can be built from this focus to answer the very basic people's needs.