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Decoding the difference between SSE and other initiatives

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Origins of Social Solidarity Economy (SSE)

- A renewed response to inequality and exclusion
- Effects of globalisation of the economy
- Resist and Build
- A first international meeting in 1997



Some history

- Social Economy – 150 years old
- Solidarity economy – appeared in the mid-eighties
- Coined as an expression by Jean-Louis Laville in France and Luis Razzeto in Chili in 1984/1985
- Social and Solidarity Economy (1989-1990) in France
- When RIPESS was formally created in December 2002, the expression «social solidarity economy» was adopted



The international recognition of SSE

- Five Globalisation of Solidarity meetings, Lima (Peru) in 1997, Quebec (Canada) in 2001, Dakar (Senegal) in 2005, Luxemburg in 2009 and Manila (Philippines) in 2013
- Relationships with International institutions, the International Labor Organisation (2009) and creation of the United Nations Interagency Taskforce on SSE (UNTFSSSE) in 2013
- The RIPESS decisions at RIO+20 held in June 2012 prioritize the inclusion of SSE in the SDGs
- The ILC resolution *Decent work and the Social and Solidarity Economy* adopted in June 2022
- The UN Resolution A/RES/77/281 adopted on April 18, 2023, called «Promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development»



The definition of SSE adopted at the ILO in 2022 and included in the UN Resolution.

- The SSE encompasses enterprises, organizations and other entities that are engaged in economic, social, and environmental activities to **serve the collective and/or general interest, which are based on the principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, democratic and/or participatory governance, autonomy and independence, and the primacy of people and social purpose over capital** in the distribution and use of surpluses and/or profits as well as assets. SSE entities aspire to long-term viability and sustainability, and to the transition from the informal to the formal economy and operate in all sectors of the economy. They put into practice a set of values which are intrinsic to their functioning and consistent with care for people and planet, equality and fairness, interdependence, self-governance, transparency and accountability, and the attainment of decent work and livelihoods. According to national circumstances, the SSE includes cooperatives, associations, mutual societies, foundations, social enterprises, self-help groups and other entities operating in accordance with the values and principles of the SSE



Other approaches

From 2019 to today, there is a growing initiative promoting *Social entrepreneurship* as a fundamental solution to solve the problems people are living. Some in this movement say that **social entrepreneurship is SSE.**

Examining the history of the organisations involved

- Ashoka (1980)
- Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship (1998)
- The Skoll Foundation (1999)
- Catalyst 2030 (January 2020)
- Global Alliance for Social Entrepreneurship (April 2020)

The Global Alliance includes as partner/members the other organisations and is publicly announced as a partner of the World Economic Forum (WEF)



OTHER INITIATIVES PROMOTED BY THE CORPORATE SECTOR

- Corporate social responsibility (CSR)
- Inclusive business
- Social Business
- Impact investing



A critical analysis of the alternatives

There are common features.

- All talk of problems people are facing, such as poverty and exclusion, lack of jobs, decent income, etc.
- Even if the problems are identified, there is no explanation of the root causes of the social and economic problems people are living
- For example, by promoting social entrepreneurship as a core approach to solve problems, this implies that the problems are caused by a lack of social entrepreneurship !
- In reality, these approaches are, as they say, instrumental in alleviating poverty, providing jobs for youth and women, etc. This «do good» economic approach helps society
- However, this is not enough since this does not tackle the fundamental causes of the problems



What does this mean for SSE ?

- Even if not SSE, in light of the definition in the ILO and UN resolutions, all those approaches, do create businesses that do good in the communities. We could add that this is new type of SME, more dedicated to an opportunity provided by social problems resulting from the way our current global economy exists.
- At the local and country level, depending on circumstances, SSE entities can collaborate with such initiatives as with local SMEs.
- Many young people are attracted to these new approaches since they are not attracted to the values of the corporate sector.



Final thoughts

We need to distinguish between the leadership of the the social entrepreneur and related initiatives that are now under the fold of the World Economic Forum (WEF) and the thousands of social entrepreneurs at the grassroots level that are committed to create locally more socially minded businesses.

Many are certainly open to collaborate with our SSE organisations, who often do the same thing

But also, to work with us for more fundamental changes on our societies, to build together an economy based on the needs expressed in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights such as food, housing, medical care, social services, etc.

A core value of SSE is the **primacy of people and social purpose over capital**. We could add « and the planet over capital ».

This is our fundamental mission.