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Plenary 2 Session report

Session title:	Civil and Public Initiatives to Consolidate SSE: Convergences among Actors and Sectors
Session type:	Plenary
Date:	October, 20 th 2020
Time:	8:30 a.m.
Language(s):	Spanish - English - French
Participants (number of people connected)	560 Zoom

Name of the moderator:

Simel Esim, Program Manager (Senior Technical Specialist) of the International Labor Organization, Switzerland.

Name of the panelists/commentators:

- Kyong Yong Songi**, Chairman of SVS Fund, Korea.
- Pauline Effa**, Managing Director of PFAC, Cameroon.
- Bernarda Sarué Pereira**, Executive Director of the Associations of Councilwomen and Mayors of Bolivia (ACOBOL), Bolivia.
- Nancy Neamtan**, Former Executive Director of the Chantier de l'économie sociale, Canada.
- Juan Antonio Pedreño**, President of Social Economy Europe, Spain

Introduction: **Berenice Alcalde Castro, INAES, Mexico**

More than 100 countries sharing good practices, successful experiences, innovative ideas and solutions to achieve sustainable and, above all, inclusive development for all.

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The SSE is for everyone and is in everything.

Moderator: Simel Esim

The session aims to analyze the convergences between sectors and actors in order to strengthen the SSE model through joint promotion and multi-stakeholder and multi-level networking that achieves synergies between sectors and actors.

"The creation of alliances is very important in these times in which we live the crisis caused by the COVID-19 that has made people more aware of the negative consequences of the hegemonic economic model focused on excessive accumulation at the expense of the environment and people".

"The SSE has demonstrated its advantages and its potential with local policies and there is still much to be done to promote, consolidate and scale up actions, initiatives and programs that strengthen the SSE".

Round 1

- How to effectively collaborate between actors and sectors to promote SSE?

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- What actions or strategies have you implemented to consolidate alliances with various actors? What strategies does your organization propose?

Round 2

- In times of crisis, how do we move forward and meet challenges through collaboration and cooperation?

• **Kyong Yong Song**

1st Round

- The current environment gives us the opportunity to redefine the economic and social system.
- It is time to rebuild our society to be more inclusive and have a more sustainable world, and this requires understanding the different sectors and actors and generating greater solidarity among them, as well as the collaboration of the government.
- The South Korean Solidarity Economy Foundation, which he chairs, has been the leading financial institution in Korea and is an example of a good partnership between the private sector, the public sector and the trade unions in promoting the Social Economy (SE).
- In 2020, it has more than 25 thousand SE initiatives, 60% of the employees are people from marginalized groups.
- The number of social enterprises has grown rapidly in the last 10 years and has become one of the main objectives of the government to promote this type of initiative and the dynamism of the sector.
- Despite their importance, more investment is needed to scale up these types of initiatives, which is why the government has worked with civil society experts to form a Committee for the Promotion of Social Finance.
- Since 2018, the government has worked with civil society on a plan to have a social finance fund that will allow the creation of an ecosystem to promote the participation of financial sector intermediaries.
- The Committee recognizes that the investment needed over the next five years will be \$250 million. In the first instance, the participation of the private sector is required through banks and financial sector companies, and subsequently with contributions from the government.
- The fund was created to support social impact projects with loans that have low

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interest rates. Among the initiatives to be financed are those related to renewable energies, employment and urban regeneration. To this effect, at the end of 2020, 14 million dollars have been committed in investment, in long term contracts to strengthen the SE and the financial ecosystem.

2nd Round

- Due to the impact of COVID-19 many people have been affected, so it is necessary to integrate the different sectors and actors of society in order to create social value.
- In Korea, 40% of people participate in different sectors of the social economy and more than 70% of social enterprises need financing in order to expand.
- Through 24 organizations, funds are mobilized to care, in times of crisis, for social enterprises that do not have access to government loans or cannot wait to receive them.
- They guarantee a lower interest rate by almost 50%; there is also a prepayment program for social economy enterprises that will promote citizen participation.
- **In times of crisis, the social economy can play a fundamental role since the organizations that make it up are based in the community and, with it, improve the type of initiatives to be developed.**

• Bernarda Sarué Pereira

1st Round

- The Association of Mayors and Councilwomen of Bolivia works to promote actions from the territories and municipalities, with the aim of reducing asymmetries and inequality gaps in society.
- Work is carried out at this local territorial base, as this is where articulation processes are generated; there is direct proximity between all the social actors, social groups, women's groups and, many SSE actions and undertakings are presented.
- **The Association has a principle that is "solidarity among all actors is to respect the territorial and cultural particularities".**
- The work of the Association begins with a participatory planning process with different actors in society, which is carried out from the base of the territories and, subsequently, a mapping of SE needs is made, giving priority to women in order to reduce the inequality gaps.

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- Currently, we are working on the identification of regulations and public policies aimed at reducing asymmetries, narrowing gaps between different actors and generating greater income for women and their families.
- At the municipal level, work is being done to identify policies and develop standards that require visible budgets, and then generate indicators to measure actions.
- An important element that has been identified in the potential of the SSE is to work with projects that prevent violence against women through the generation of income that provides equal conditions in relation to existing asymmetries. The potentialities and characteristics of the ecosystem are identified, as well as the sustainability of the actions.

2nd Round

- One of the great lessons derived from the pandemic is that it has shown us that **"everything invisible has become visible"** as is the case of violence against women and femicide and new forms of violence in the existing patriarchy.
- We have also noticed the existence and prevalence of organic producer organizations that work with eco-feminism, as well as the presence of large groups of women who have and promote a rural-urban relationship.
- Many municipalities have promoted fairs for the purchase and sale of products directly from local companies.
- We have learned that working on issues related to small enterprises in food sovereignty should be a priority for the Social Economy, which should be consolidated through the articulation of actions between different sectors, mainly by the State.
- There must be co-responsibility in the care economy, women have stopped working to engage in this work.
- Another important issue is the technological gap that exists in the country, so it is necessary to work on technological literacy programs to generate virtual platforms that promote SSE.

• Pauline Effa

1st Round

- The NGO that she represents works in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Economy of Cameroon; it accompanies communities so that they can structure

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themselves and create local SSE networks that are made up of cooperatives and Social Economy organizations.

- With these networks, an accompaniment framework was created that allowed a rapprochement with the Ministry and other actors such as local governments, whose convergence allows the evolution and development of the social economy.

- Thanks to the promotion work, in January 2020 a Law on Social Economy was approved in which this is recognized as a central element for the convergence between municipal governments and local agents for the generation of wealth.

- At the national level, there is a fund/bank of municipalities for the development of projects that make the territories more dynamic and enable their populations to create income-generating activities.

- Initiatives that operated separately in the beginning, now converge at the local and national level.

- The challenge is to make the different dynamics and actors converge and allow the municipalities to avoid exile.

- Consolidating the dynamic requires accompaniment.

- The youth have organized themselves into training cooperatives around the SSE to cover the different regions.

2nd Round

- The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of convergence between different organizations and sectors in the country.

- The focus was on small local businesses to produce the various inputs (masks, hand gels, etc.) that are required for the current health problem, rather than large organizations.

- **The challenge is to maintain these forms of organization, which requires the participation of different sectors and actors, including the government as one of the main axes for their consolidation.**

- There has been an exchange of experiences between young people at the level of African countries where the problems they currently face were raised..

• Nancy Neamtan

1st Round

- The Social Economy in Quebec is based on an alliance between social

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movements, social enterprises, territories and other actors..

- In the mid-1990s, in a context of ecosystems rather than hierarchies, a global approach to development was developed.
- It has a network of networks that brings together companies from all sectors, mutuals, social movements, trade unions, women's unions, rural and urban territories, researchers and the Quebec Assembly.
- The strategy employed is always to seek solutions and overcome social challenges.
- In 2009, they signed an agreement with the City of Montreal to support the SSE.
- In 2013, a law was published that created networks of municipalities in partnership with the SSE and the government.

2nd Round

- The current crisis has been important for building the SSE, the challenge is not only to develop it, but to maintain the work that is being done at the moment, that it becomes the new normality.
- The crisis presents opportunities at different levels, for example, at the political and ideological level as it is related to health, nature, etc.
- In Quebec, the response to the crisis was to adjust the activities of social enterprises, as in the case of a women's textile cooperative that shifted its production to masks, or the social finance actors who organized themselves to provide business survival schemes.
- **SSE companies can be flexible and respond to needs, take new directions, this proves their relevance.**
- They are currently working towards a future-oriented ecological and social transition through an inclusive form of development.
- "We have to be proactive in order to emerge from this crisis stronger than ever."

• Juan Antonio Pedreño

1st Round

- It is important to make the Social Economy visible in the society in general so that it knows the principles and values that represent it.
- One factor that has enabled the region to position itself in Spain as the main promoter and creator of social enterprises has been education on cooperativism and the principles and values of the Social Economy from childhood.

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- **In that region, almost 40 thousand children are part of school cooperatives learning the cooperative principles every day, so that in the future they will be able to easily insert themselves in organizations of the Social Economy.**

- In a second stage of collaboration is the work carried out with the Spanish State to create a Social Economy strategy, which is made up of more than 60 measures for the development of models in all regions.

- And there is another stage at the European level, where they have brought to the attention of the European Commission and the European Parliament knowledge about the Social Economy, which has enabled a European action plan in support of SE to be drawn up by 2021.

- It is important to disseminate among the different actors the principles and values of SE and how the Social Economy is a solution for the future of many of the countries.

2nd Round

- During the pandemic, the Social Economy has proved to be a key factor in the economic and social system, thanks to the numerous initiatives it has taken to mitigate its effects; it has highlighted its commitment to people and its role in key sectors that are essential to everyday life, among other examples are agricultural, fishing, health services and water distribution cooperatives, etc.

- **The current situation allows us to say that "times of crisis are also times of opportunity", so it is a good moment to show that the work of cooperatives and social enterprises has economic and social benefits thanks to their efficiency and resilience derived from their principles and values.**

- SE companies have proven to be the most resilient in the market, in SE "the business project becomes the life project of many people".

- "The social economy humanizes the economy by putting the individual at the center and can inspire other businesses to work differently".

- SE reconciles economic and social objectives, makes collective social innovation, writes a credible path based on values and principles for a transition towards inclusive and more sustainable systems: resilient systems.

- In Spain, in this difficult moment of the country's reconstruction, SE has been able to participate in the recovery funds that the European Commission has granted to the Spanish government.

- A pact and plan for the European Social Economy has also been achieved.

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- We work with commitment so that people do not abandon their territory, promote the generation of companies in their towns and there is an ecosystem of SE in the Spanish territory, but also in the European territory.

Conclusiones

The moderator posed the **GUIDING QUESTION** to the panelists as the third round, giving direction to their conclusions. How can we transform the present and build a better future from the SS

Simel Esim

- This is the time for the Social Economy, a time of great transformation for an economic model based on inclusion and sustainability.

- We need to capitalize on the benefits and recognition of SE to consolidate and build a larger SE, which can grow even more and thus have a better understanding and a better social contract.

- The following steps need to be proposed for programs and policies where SSE is the basis for building resilience and strengthening communities.

- The mobilization of citizens around the world is closely related to the SSE and therefore we must continue to strengthen this mobility.

- The SSE is transforming the present by demonstrating that there is a different way of doing business and this must continue to operate in the future.

- **"We need to keep growing, inspiring and energizing the cooperatives"**.

Kyong Yong Song

- We are at the center of the social transformation we need to have towards a more inclusive and sustainable society.

- **My three main words are: transformation, inclusion and sustainability.**

Pauline Effa

- We need to capitalize on what has been done during the crisis.

- The future can be summarized in several words: 1) consolidate the current organization, this can be seen through the work done in the construction of favorable ecosystems for the SSE, and 2) achieve a convergence to continue with these initiatives by working together with the government to consolidate social

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enterprises.

Bernarda Sarué Pereira

- It is necessary to abolish the administrative and political barriers that limit the SSE and to create new instruments and new regulations for its strengthening.
- Working towards a more inclusive society in which women, youth and families take a more prominent role with different elements contributing to the local economy, then the national and then the global.
- It is necessary to prevent violence against women through the generation of new regulations that allow the generation of employment and income for this sector of the population.

Nancy Neamtan

- "We have to be bold to include solidarity in the economy".

- In order to move forward, we need to build on each other's lessons about the best practices in the social economy.
- Knowledge transfer is essential to overcome challenges.
- We must rely on the mobilization of citizens, we have the opportunity to promote education and mobilize the civilian population.
- It is important to have a global vision and form alliances with different actors and sectors.

Juan Antonio Pedreño

- "Co-operatives help build a better world" (ICA phrase in 2012 to celebrate the international year of co-operatives).

- The Social Economy helps to build a better world because it provides values: democracy, different governance, solidarity, inclusion, equity, equality, sustainability, etc.
- The present is being transformed thanks to a different business model, a different economy that is committed to the Social Economy.
- Spain currently chairs a committee of 16 European countries that have made the Social Economy a priority.
- There are currently 3 million social enterprises in Europe, 14 million social workers and 232 million members.
- "The Social Economy is the only economy with a soul, the soul that other business

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models lack".

- "It is the time for the Social Economy and we must take advantage of it".

Answers to the GUIDING QUESTION:

How to transform the present and build a better future from the SSE?

There was no time to review the participation of the assistants.



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