

Summary | 29 Sept 2020

4th cycle of GSEF2021 preparatory series of webinars on 'The Evolving SSE Ecosystem in the post COVID-19 Era'

The speakers included:

- Mr. Carlos Zarco, Director-General of Espriu Foundation, Spain
- Ms. Rebecca Choy Yung, Chair of Hong Kong Social Enterprise Summit, Hong Kong
- Mr. Derek Walker, CEO, the Wales Co-operative Centre, Wales
- Mr. Ali Ercan Özgür, Co-founder, "İhtiyaç Haritası" (Needs Map), Turkey
- Mr. Chris Dobrzanski, Board Chair, Community Forward Fund, Canada
- Ms. Youngmi Choi, CEO, Korean Association of Domestic Workers, South Korea

The moderator of the session was Ms. Laurence KWARK, Secretary-General of Global Social Economy Forum.

Mr. Carlos Zarco explained the situation of COVID-19 in Spain and gave an overview of the Espriu Foundation, which is a network of health cooperatives currently caring for 2.6 million people and more than 45,000 health professionals in partnership. He demonstrated the services and supports provided during the health crisis which treated more than 12,000 COVID-19 patients. He also shared about the contribution of health cooperatives in the post-Covid era, for example, efficient combination of economic resources, healthcare workers skills, and public-private partnerships.

Ms. Rebecca Choy Yung discussed the current social business empowerment activities in Hong Kong and how the city can create a new-normal through digital innovation, social enterprises innovation and education innovation in the post COVID-19 period. Also, she made recommendations on developing SSE activities during the era of new normal. Some possible ways are the enhancing role of platform organizations and movement building, development of social finance and promotion of cross-sector collaboration between civic, business, government and education sectors.

Mr. Derek Walker gave examples of initiatives undertaken by the UK and Welsh Governments and social enterprises in the time of pandemic. (<https://wales.coop/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/SE-COVID-19-ENGLISH-REPORT-1.pdf>). Besides, he shared the new vision and action plan named "Transforming Wales Through Social Enterprise" that would be led by social enterprises. Its emphasis on a green recovery and the opportunities that the transition could bring under SSE was proved to be successful with an impressive number of new start social enterprises in last six months. Nevertheless, there are some challenges to the development of a new ecosystem such as readiness of social enterprises, limited source of funding, job creation through traditional approaches, low level of digital skills etc.



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Mr. Ali Ercan Özgür introduced Needs Map, an online social platform cooperative, where people in need of something can connect with those who can help them around the country. At this moment, more than 100k members participated and 1.4 million matching goods took place in Needs Map. He shared about its collaboration with Mastercard in a local business support program that will cover 20 provinces in Turkey and help at least 7,200 families and 300 local SMEs. Apart from that, he also explained the application of Needs Map in response to Covid-19, disaster coordination and education support.

Mr. Chris Dobrzanski presented the idea of affordable housing, and he expected that awareness of affordable housing would be both core and central to sustainable society in the post-pandemic. Examples of South Korea and Canada illustrated some positive outcomes of cooperative housing such as job creation and integration of community. On the other hand, he suggested that social finance could be a source of sustainable SSE. It could help build a deeper network, provide flexible and affordable loan, and promote sustainability which prioritize program and mission with immediate response etc.

Ms. Youngmi Choi described the status of informal domestic workers in Korea and the effect of and response to COVID-19. Currently, around 200,000 to 400,000 women in their middle-to-old age are working as housekeepers and babysitters etc. She viewed that the pandemic clearly showed that the situations of traditional atypical workers become much worse. The social welfare system therefore needs to be fundamentally changed. She concluded by pointing out what needs to be done to build a new ecosystem, which institutionalization of workers' cooperative, expansion of care service and cooperative sharing platform, and accessibility to digital technology were recommended.

For more information about the series of webinars and the GSEF Forum in Mexico City in 2021, please visit our website: <https://www.gsef-net.org/>