

Great Challenges, Greater Solidarity
Power of Community and SSE as a Path for Transformation

GSEF Global Virtual Forum
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Report format

Prepared by:

Title of the session:	Sustainable Development Performance Indicators for the SSE: How to measure progress towards the SDGs
Type of session	Special session, organized by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)
Language:	English
Date:	20 October 2020
Time:	5.30 PM CEST
Participants	70-100 at all times

Name of moderator

Ilcheong Yi

Speakers

- Ilcheong Yi, UNRISD
- Peter Utting, UNRISD
- Margie Mendell, Concordia University
- Sonja Novkovic, Saint Mary's University
- Samuel Brülisauer, UNRISD

Screenshot of the zoom session

Take a screenshot as photo-memory of the session. Insert the image here.



Summary of presentations:

1. Ilcheong Yi, UNRISD

The introduction from Senior Research Coordinator, Ilcheong Yi, gave an overview on past research conducted by UNRISD as well as context on how the Sustainable Development Performance Indicators project was taken up. His opening remarks explained the aims for the project on [Sustainable Development Performance Indicators](#) and also drew on the importance of corporate social responsibility and the particularities of the social and solidarity economy.

2. Peter Utting, UNRISD

Presentation of research findings as documented in the upcoming UNRISD report on [Corporate Sustainability Accounting: What Can and Should Corporations Be Doing? \(already available Overview\)](#). He explained the major gaps in sustainability measurement, and how reporting often lacks context. As such, the findings show how these will be addressed through time series data and setting thresholds as well as tackling issues that have thus far been neglected.

3. Margie Mendell, Concordia University

This presentation discussed research findings as documented in the UNRISD working paper [Sustainable Development Impact Indicators for Social and Solidarity Economy: State of the Art](#). She explored a variety of approaches that capture the social impact and sustainable orientation more or less accurately, and

explained how all of them face a challenge not to distort SSEOs' inherent mission for sustainable outcomes by imposing indicators. Therefore, the presentation stressed the need for different indicators to measure the contribution of SSEOs and the importance of avoiding homogeneity and uniformity which is often applied to SSEOs in reporting.

4. Sonja Novkovic, Saint Mary's University

This presentation discussed what sustainability indicators for SSE should measure and what they should reveal given that SSEOs are typically created to overcome structural causes of inequality. Additionally, SSEOs often tackle issues related to a lack of access to goods and services and fulfil those needs within local communities, thus contributing to sustainable development. She then presented the three-tiered SDPI indicator system as well as the more specific indicators in the measurement system that are designed to address SSE particularities.

5. Samuel Brülisauer, UNRISD

Presentation of pilot testing of the SDPI three-tiered indicator system and accompanying materials which are core components of the next big step of the project. SSEOs were invited to participate in this pilot testing phase and should reach out to the session organizers in case of interest.

Answers to the GUIDING QUESTION:

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

The world in 2020 is suffering from multiple simultaneous crises, and one of them could be considered a striking "accounting emergency": though approaches to measure and report on a myriad of environmental, social and other dimensions of organizational practices, many of them have serious blind spots and do not actually measure the ability to sustain vital social and ecological systems at all. Developing and promoting indicators that deliver on such crucial issues is key to transform the present and build a better future. Learning from the SSE and improving sustainability indicators for SSEOs is an important part of that work.

Relevant Questions and Answers from Audience:

Valérie Bizier, FAO

How do the UNRISD SDPI indicators relate to the UNCTAD Core Indicators and in what ways do they complement each other?

Answer *The UNCTAD Core indicators form the first tier of the three-tiered system and therefore lay the basis of Tier 2 which contextualize the UNCTAD indicators. The Tier 3 indicators then address neglected issues and go beyond some of the proposed metrics and thresholds to establish indicators for transformative change.*

What are the areas not covered by the UNCTAD indicators and how does SDPI system deal with it? (In relation to FAO indicators to complement the UNCTAD indicators)?

Answer *UNCTAD core indicators are designed for all economic entities regardless of their specific characteristics of sectors or industries. However, there is a need to develop sector specific indicators which must be done in a manner which harmonizes different indicator systems.*

Marta Benavides, Mexico

Decolonisation in the SSE movement needs to be examined to prevent the paradigm currently imposed on people in the global south. How does the project address this?

Answer *The cooperative movement has been calling for decolonisation in its principles however, there remains a need to broaden the movement to reflect this. The project addresses this directly in its assessment of skewed power relations and distributional injustice not only within SSEOs and for-profit enterprises, but also between the global north and the global south.*

Nazik Bershenaly, Researcher at KU Leuven University and Research Advisor at the ICA

Do the indicators for the SSE take into account differences between SSEOs in developed and developing countries which can vary in size and can also be of an informal nature meaning that they often face difficulties in data collection?

Answer *We have tried to pay attention to, and will continue to pay attention to the role of the informal economy which makes up a significant part of the SSE, and we recognise that data gathering is complex for small, informal and poorly-resourced SSEOs. The variation between different SSEOs will not matter as the indicators are designed for all types of SSEOs as well as for-profit enterprises. However, the pilot testing phase will help us to identify and reassess the needs of SSEOs in reporting in order to adapt the indicators accordingly.*

Add **summary or conclusion of the moderator** at the end of the session in case there was no closing remarks per presenter/speaker

- We need indicators which not only interpret the world but aim to change the world. This has been the ambition of the SDPI project since we have incorporated transformative and aspirational indicators to encourage companies to change the way they produce and exchange goods and services. We need support from all SSE actors to realize this transformative vision.
- SSEOE representatives should reach out to session organizers to participate in the pilot-testing phase of this project.