

SUMMARIZING REPORT

Axis: 1**Activity Type:** panel**Activity Title:** A Solidary Economy as a Strategy for Development**Report written by:** Ademar Bertucci, João Roberto Lopes, and Ruth Espínola**Facilitator:** Ademar Bertucci**Organization/Country:** Cáritas / Brazil

Summary of the Activity:

Issues Presented:

The reasonable growth of the associative economic practices represents a response to the social crises produced by the selective and excluding globalization of neoliberalism. The great emergency in the field of solidary economy makes evident why the populations affected by this process resist. However, the sustainability of these practices, which is vital in order to catch a glimpse of horizons that are in fact alternative, is associated with the construction of processes that overcome the original significance of resistance. In this way, some paths show particularly fertile:

- Advance farther in the joining of forces and international convergence of the organizations and of the populations involved in solidary economy practices.
- Make the State permeable to the making of public policies that are in conformity to the potentiation of solidary economic practices.
- Combine the local dynamic of these practices to the national and international macro-economic context, especially in relation to international trade.
- Integrate the North and South agendas as a way of developing solidary political alliances so as to strengthen the social battles in each one of the parts of the hemisphere.

Points in Agreement (indicate the origin of the points - facilitator, expositor from the table, or audience):

Some points in common among the expositors from the table:

- The building of a work agenda among the networks and organizations from the field of solidary economy in the international scenario to favor reciprocal knowledge and identify the existing converging opinions.
- The singularity of the role of the women in the development of a solidary economy.
- The need to combine the local dynamic of these practices with the national and international macro-economic context, especially in relation to international trade.

Points with Divergence (indicate the origin of the points - facilitator, expositor from the table, or audience):

On the one side, a majority opinion among the expositors is that solidary economy should be presented as an alternative of development, which advances in relation to a capitalist

economy. On the other side is the idea that a solidary economy should act as a complement to the formal economy.

Emerging or New Points - questions, paradigms, proposals, strategies, etc. (indicate the origin of the points - facilitator, expositor from the table, or audience):

Strategies that deserve to be highlighted:

- To map out the organizations and networks that work in the area of solidary economy in order to promote knowledge and the exchange of information among them.
- The building of an international articulation based on the different processes, realities, networks, practices and existent concepts.
- Production of socioeconomic indicators adequate to the reality of the practices of a solidary economy.

Observations and comments:

Expositor: Lorette Picciano
Organization/Country: Mexico/USA Rural Coalition
Previous Text*: yes

Keywords:

Solidary economy, regional integration, sustainable rural development, commerce, and fair trade.

Perspectives, paradigms, starting points:

The Coalition defends solidary economy and cooperation, the approximation of people for trade, the fair trade agreements that serve the communities and not the corporations, equity for the farmers and rural workers, and a just and sustainable development for lower-class people, populations of different ethnic groups, and rural communities.

Subjects and topics focused:

The large agribusiness corporations of the US have a strong impact upon the life of the farmers and rural workers both in the United States as well as in Mexico, causing this segment of the population to become poorer and even sometimes provoking their expulsion from the land. This reality presents a counter-view to the perceptions and analyses that suppose there is a political-social dichotomy between the US and Mexico. In reality, the policies for the market of agricultural products in the US have hemispheric implications and despite this, they are far from being open to a larger public debate.

Despite some small gains, the activists who are committed to a solidary economy are incapable of changing the injustice of the mass adoption of the US Farm Bill of 2002, which is a law that favors the corporations in detriment of the local workers.

Proposals (Objectives):

The efforts of solidary economy can be strengthened by those that represent "the South in the North" by building a common agenda and sharing policies with their brothers and sisters around the world. These groups should continue working hard toward the building of economic cooperation, as well as the sharing of strategies and information as an alternative to the domination of the corporations. Also included in this should be a more direct involvement in the economic collaboration and trade of products generated by a solidary economy.

Strategies (means):

There is the need to advance in the building of an alternative that is largely shared, and focused on issues such as price, supply, trade, dumping, and food safety.

The Coalition has been developing a large coop for consumer products called Supermarketcoop, located in Mexico. The products of the local production are sold and a lot of work goes into educating the consumers about the quality and origin of the products and about questions related to solidary economy. In this way, it tries to aggregate the civism of an ethical purchase to the broadening of the support and strength of the base economy.

Political activism to guarantee human and civil rights. The Coalition supports the movement "The rural land cannot take it any more!" led by Mexican farmers against the American agricultural policies.

The Coalition movement has the role of sharing information and strategies of its anti-corporation fight with their counterparts in order to strengthen these analyses and put together a common agenda.

Emerging Points (new aspects):

The sharing of strategies and information among producers and rural workers of the US and Mexico within the context of growing economic integration in the region.

The solidary economy as being the alternative proposed to these segments against the actions of large corporations. The cooperative element emerging from the encounter of distinct realities that, however, shares the state of resistance against the dominance of the market logic.

Actors identified (to implement the proposals of strategies):

Mexico/USA Rural Coalition

Rural workers and farmers

Civil organizations that work promote solidary economy.

Observation and comments:

Expositor: Rabia Abdelkrin-Chikh

Organization/Country: Forum of African Women for a Solidary Economy - FAMES/Senegal

Previous Text*: yes

Keywords:

Solidary economy and gender; popular economy.

Perspectives, paradigms, starting points:

In Africa, around 80% of the population live from the popular and solidary economy. Of these, 90% are practices conducted by women.

Poverty should not only be seen as simply lack of money, but the lack of social ties that provide support and conditions to build collective solutions.

Subjects and topics focused:

It is not enough to recognize and register the concrete practices carried out by the women. It is more important to identify new parameters of measuring the situation of poverty and wealth. Specific elements of the reality faced by women must be incorporated.

Proposals (Objectives):

Bring into the solidary economy movement the issues of the relations between men and women. There is a need for a greater presence of the discussion about the role that the women have been exercising, in particular the African women, in the development of the solidary economy.

Document the experiences based on the new indicators about the socioeconomic reality of the populations.

Strategies (means):

Emerging Points (new aspects):

The weight and significant importance of the popular and solidary economy in Africa.

Actors identified (to implement the proposals of strategies):

Forum of African Women for a Solidary Economy - FAMES

Observation and comments:

Expositor: Niceta Lucero

Organization/Country: Fraternity of the Asiatic Workers - CMT / Philippines

Previous Text*: yes

Keywords:

Social economy; public policies of solidary economy; development.

Perspectives, paradigms, starting points:

The solidary economy is associated to rules, networks, and informal instruments that are in juxtaposition to the formal facilities of corporations and governments in the process of mobilizing capital, generating production, goods to be traded, and services--all with the purpose of promoting development. Its rules are tied to the group's culture, which do not compartmentalize the financial aspect, separating it from the social life.

Solidary economy is developed in the Asiatic context of advancement in the market relations that penetrate the field and make it impossible for family units focused on subsistence living to survive. Added to this is the resulting erratic process of urbanization. Furthermore, the governmental and private agencies are incapable of recognizing the poor people as the main capital of their own development.

Subjects and topics focused:

The solidary economy does not compete with the formal economy, but is a complement to it. In these terms, there is the need therefore to build a "synergy between state and society" in order to promote the advantages contained in the solidary economy.

These are some of its main advantages:

- Favors a better accountability, since it increases the demand for services and increases the supervising of services offered.
- Allows an important diffusion of information due to the strong interpersonal communication that is characteristic of these enterprises.
- Reduces the costs of providing the services since it brings a more direct relation between the service provider and the user.
- Functions as social insurance, especially among the immigrants that normally do not have a social coverage.

Proposals (Objectives):

The building of this synergy presupposes the need to reform the institutions in order to establish more opportunities for associative groups, establishing incentives to discourage discrimination in financial institutions and offering service that make the access more equal. Reduce the persistent disparities in the control over the financial and political resources related to the sector of the corporations.

Strategies (means):

Emerging Points (new aspects):

The emergency of the social economy in the Asiatic context.

Actors identified (to implement the proposals of strategies):

Fraternity of the Asiatic Workers - CMT

Observation and comments:

Expositor: Madeleine Hersent.

Organization/Country: Workgroup on a Solidary Socioeconomy of the Alliance for a Just, Plural, and Solidary World / France

Previous Text*: yes

Keywords: Solidary Socioeconomy, Development, Women and Solidary Socioeconomy, Government, State, Alliances, Autonomy, Citizenship, Unions, Trade, Integration, Capitalism, Alternatives, Self-Management, etc.

Perspectives, paradigms, starting points: The Solidary Socioeconomy strengthens the ties and the local actors, making each one to be the subject of their own history. This is an economic initiative of integral development done by all and for all. Though the experiences shared are fragile, these movements have had local, regional, global, and international representation, and today there are more than 22 national plural networks that have been growing in their relationship with each other.

Subjects and topics focused: 1. The centrality of the woman in Solidary Socioeconomy. 2. Bring to debate and call the State and Society to an interaction, but not bypassing the macro-economic themes such as foreign debt, international trade, etc.

Proposals (Objectives): 1. Work toward making people aware that Solidary Socioeconomy is a political project of economic democracy and of social transformation, and the women's contribution should be equally identified as relevant. 2. Build Indicators of wealth and of exclusion to show the need of a new model of development. 3. Promote changes and strengthen the socioeconomic projects in an integrated way.

Strategies (means):

1. Show the transversal nature of the movements and seek to integrate horizontally the different forms and actors of solidary economy, making sure to involve the direct agents, workers of Solidary Economy, and inhibiting the control and direction of the academic channels and the furtherance agencies.
2. Build a true interaction with the exchange of goods and services between North-South, North-North, and South-South. It must be a truly international, local, regional, and global movement.
3. Identify and get to know the existing networks of Solidary Economy.
4. Bring the unions, the State, the academic world, and the anti-globalization movements into the debate and action.
5. Make it so that changes become an everyday process.

Emerging Points (new aspects):

Actors identified (to implement the proposals and strategies): People, especially experiences with women in the area of self-management and the social inclusion for the strengthening of citizenship, democracy and autonomy of each actor. Search for new actors and alliances with power, unions, and movements

Observation and comments: Presented the experience of families of immigrants that come from the South and from various neighboring locations. It shows the protagonism of local women who, in turn, do not necessarily speak French. This is a project that can be considered *suis genesis* since it arose from a citizen initiative of neighborhoods that have a very strong

sense of collective community. The actors have had a learning experience that has given room to its own type of self-management

Expositor: Juan Carlos Vargas

Organization/Country: Programa Laboral de Desarrollo Red Global /Global Network Plades / Peru.

Previous Text*: yes

Keywords: Solidary Economy, Efficacy, Competency, Sustainability, etc.

Perspectives, paradigms, starting points: The world seeks to highlight the importance of competing. Efficacy of the business undertakings and their proposals.

Subjects and topics focused: How to ensure sustainability, not economic or financial? Why is it that during the life of the popular initiatives that they lose touch with grassroots movements?

Proposals (Objectives): Importance of regaining the autonomy of the associative practices.

Strategies (means): A way must be found to measure our projects.

Emerging Points (new aspects):

Actors identified (to implement the proposals and strategies):

Observation and comments:

Expositor: Abdu Salam Fall

Organization/Country: International Network of Social and Solidary Economy/Senegal, Africa.

Previous Text*: No

Keywords: Solidary Economy, Capitalism, Domestic Economy, Survival, Public Policies, Neoliberalism, Feminine Movement, Popular Economy, Local Development, etc.

Perspectives, paradigms, starting points: The Continent is passing through a contradiction. On the one side, it adopts the system and the neoliberal practices and, on the other, harbors masses of people that seek to survive through popular economy.

Subjects and topics focused: In Africa, there is a great diversity of actors in the area of solidary economy that are not recognized by the public policies of the African countries. I will list three: 1. The domestic economy puts the role of the woman as predominant since it is she that generates the domestic/private resources and that mobilizes other resources so that the entire family can survive. From this come the innovations to gain new resources with the limitation of a low level of schooling. 2. An array of initiatives that also bring a diversity of resistance to poverty, which is worsening. 3. Private and collective business owners in various commercial areas, of service, in the segment of agriculture, etc.

Proposals (Objectives): The International Network is an effective instrument for strengthening and centralizing strategies toward a project of society and of an alternative globalization.

Strategies (means): Internationalize the strategies of resistance, of coalition, and of building so that the Solidary Economy grows in the direction of a popular economy and of the popular movements. In this way, seek to strengthen the international ties created in Lima (1997), Quebec (2001) and Dakar (2002), and toward the consolidation of the International Network in Dakar 2005.

Emerging Points (new aspects): The transition of a popular economy to a solidary economy presents risks caused by neoliberalism. It brings a dense fog over the solidary economy. On the one hand, the question of the mimicry of competition. Nebulosity of values: mimicry of competition, savage competition in the process of popular economy. The Popular Economy is presented only as functional. It is not expressed as a movement in favor of the local development.

Actors identified (to implement the proposals and strategies):

Observation and comments: