

WORKSHOP
GLOBAL VISION OF
A SOLIDARITY SOCIOECONOMY

Opening page

Is the vision of a solidarity socioeconomy best expressed as a way to mitigate the social problems generated by neoliberal globalization? Or does it have the potential and vocation to build the foundation of a humanitarian globalization, of an equitable, participatory and sustainable form of development, geared towards the rational satisfaction of the needs of each and every citizen on Earth in a way that is intergenerationally responsible? What particular mode of education is capable to develop in human beings the knowledge and capabilities related to the “management of their own houses” (eco, Greek = house; nomy, Greek = management, care)?

The WSES workshop on the vision of a solidarity socioeconomy is concerned with the fact that current globalization works in such way as to cut job opportunities and dramatically increase the unemployment and subemployment rates, excluding workers from the management of the means and resources to produce wealth and from the capitalist market. Competition is the rule in this market, throwing worker against worker, enterprise against enterprise, country against country in a war without borders wherein everyone is everyone’s enemy and the strongest, richest, and often most corrupt or corruptor wins. History shows that the number of those who are able to share only poverty and hopelessness is rapidly increasing. In a world that produces enough food to feed twice the number of the Earth’s inhabitants, 840 million people suffer from malnutrition and hunger. The concept of wealth, on the other hand, and economic performance indicators seem to be confined to the trade value of objects and people, leaving out other values such as the social and environmental outputs of economic activity.

How to make the economy more democratic and in solidarity?

In this context, a variety of practices of socioeconomic relations is blooming, under a variety of titles – solidarity economy, social economy, solidarity socio-economy, human economy, popular economy, proximity economy, etc. In the short run, they seek to insure the survival and improvement of the quality of life of millions of people around the world. But they also introduce the practice of values and relationships which are generally banned from the dominant economy, such as cooperation in solidarity, co-responsibility, reciprocity, sharing of material and non-material goods, all of which bring the human being and its needs to the center of economic exchanges. They announce that another economy is possible, in which the dwellers of the house become once again the ultimate goal of the building of the house and its management is shared among all dwellers.

This implies a new economic paradigm to be built through developing a multicultural dialogue towards a common vision and a shared project that will guide the action of millions who are engaged in building a humanized economy. A paradigm that acknowledges a variety of ways of organizing property, management, and modes of appropriation of the fruits of human work, as long as they are means to empower all workers and do not incorporate exploitation of someone else’s work, knowledge and creativity and the destruction of nature. This workshop intends to bring together persons

and institutions willing to share their thoughts, experiences and innovations, in a dialogue that envisages the creation of a common ground for direct collaboration and exchange. Action in solidarity, however, is the realm of economy of solidarity networks.

The solidarity socio-economy, a contribution to another development model

Side-by-side with action to ameliorate the lives of the needy, the solidarity socio-economy is a project of another economy and another globalization. It is concerned not only with strictly economic transactions, but also with the whole of socioeconomic, political, cultural and environmental exchanges among human beings and with nature, and the means – technology and finance – to facilitate those exchanges. SES refuses the practice of turning human being and nature into commodities. It promotes the development, from the local to the global level, of whole productive chains and a whole socioeconomic system that enlarges work and exchange opportunities and the possibilities of sustainable and equitable well-being for all without deviating from the main purpose of economic activity, i.e., responding to the material and immaterial demands of society and of economic agents.

The workshop aims to elaborate on concepts such as the *respect for the integrity of each and every subject, respect for diversity, social responsibility, cooperative advantages and socioeconomic, systemic efficiency* to replace the old practices of competition, uniformization and maximization of individual profitability. Conscious of being a part of a comprehensive, organic system, each SES agent seeks to contribute to one's own progress and that of the whole. The end result is better quality of life and work for each and every agent at the same time. The sharing of decisions with representatives of the community about the social efficiency and the use of the surpluses leads to investment for the improvement of life conditions of all and the creation of other cooperative enterprises, thus expanding the realm of social reproduction in solidarity.

The workshop is concerned with the concrete paths to emancipate human work, knowledge and creativity, thus converting them into a central value of a humanized economy. It is also concerned with developing a concept of solidarity socioeconomy that, by welcoming and integrating at the same time each person and the whole collective in the context of complex ecosystems, overcomes the dominant *egological* masculine approach and rescues the *ecological* feminine dimension that is absent in an economy led by capital and the State.

The workshop aims to explore how the SES, by focusing each citizen and the whole of society also conceived as subjects of rights and duties, demands a plural and systemic valuation of productive activities that cannot be restricted to the material benefits of an enterprise but needs also to be defined as social efficiency, expressing the connection between economic development and the well-being and happiness of all its members and of the ecosystem as a whole.

Finally, the workshop will focus on the role and responsibility of national States and global institutions with respect to the guarantee of the universal rights of working people that neoliberal policies are trying to eliminate; the distribution of productivity gains in the form of less working hours for the same wage levels; the adoption of policies that promote the fulfillment of socioeconomic, political, cultural and environmental rights of each and every citizen, the nation and the collective of nations.

You are invited to become an active participant in this stimulating WSES workshop.