

Latin America

The national and regional organizations and networks gathered under the Intercontinental Network of the Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) for Latin America, following a collective debate in a workshop on the institutional development held in Lima, Peru, in November 2007 have adopted the current Charter.

CHARTER (Extracts)

PREAMBLE

Considering that the social solidarity economy rests upon human values and principles of solidarity that advocate the recognition of other people as the foundation of human action and the backdrop for the renewal of policies, economy and communities; and that it includes the set of activities and organizations that have a community, associative, cooperative, and mutualist nature, and other collective forms, which are created to satisfy the needs for employment and the well-being of people, as well as citizen movements geared toward the democratization and transformation of the economy; Affirming our commitment to work together for the realization of the objectives of RIPESS Latin America in line with its mission; Defining the current charter as the expression of a social and ethical covenant that binds the various members of RIPESS in Latin America;

OUR CONVICTIONS

RIPESS Latin America is convinced that the development of human capacities is fundamental to the transformation of the world, and that this is only possible through collective actions structured through networks of solidarity, by way of producing and exchanging knowledge and resources. RIPESS Latin America believes that economy must allow men and women to satisfy their needs and ambitions, while pro-

viding for future generations to satisfy their own needs.

OUR VALUES

Humanism, democracy, solidarity, inclusiveness, subsidiarity, diversity, creativity, sustainable development, equality, equity and justice for all, respect and integration of countries and people, in the promotion of a plural and solidarity-based economy.

OUR MISSION

The mission of RIPESS is to build and promote social solidarity economy, taking into account the social and ethical dimension in economic activities. This consists of producing, exchanging and consuming goods and services that correspond to the economic and social needs of local and international communities and the establishment of harmonious relations between competitors in economic activities. This social, solidarity-based economy values the role of work over capital. It is aimed at satisfying the needs of individuals and communities rather than profit or financial gains. Solidarity-based economy units rest upon a model of democratic decision-making and a participatory and transparent management system, which allows for ensuring a collective ownership of the outcomes of activities and a sustainable motivation and contribution to their success. The contribution of these entities is appraised through their incidence on local, national and international development,

mainly, through the creation of permanent jobs, the development of the offer of new services, the enhancement of living standards, the contribution to gender equity, the protection of the environment and the creation of wealth under ethical conditions.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- Promoting the principles, values and practices, as well as networking of social, solidarity economy players in local, national, regional and global frameworks.
- Strengthening dynamics of exchange and dialogue between the various ways of thinking about social solidarity economy
- Promoting innovating economic initiative in the perspective of the internal and self-centered development of our societies, while criticizing the neoliberal model and its colonial domination system.
- Advocating intercultural diversity, democracy and grassroots' participation in the integral development of communities.
- Promoting the formation and development of enterprises with a social aim.
- Impacting positively on the change of public policies in favor of grassroots' and social sectors, within countries as well as multilateral cooperation organisms and international institutions for a fairer distribution of resources and opportunities.

LUX'09 Workshop n°7 "Democratic participation and territorial anchoring"

plans have already been made for the next 2 regional events:

- Together with its representative Alain Laurent, the "Scaling up from the local to the European level" platform is organising its **2nd regional event on "Responsible tourism, a laboratory for a more cooperative, cultural and solidarity-based territorial economy"**. The event, which will be held on **27 and 28 May in Lempdes, near Clermont-Ferrand (Fr)**, will be attended by the main families of responsible tourism practitioners, partners in decentralised regional cooperation from Auvergne, Madagascar, Bosnia and Mali, territorial authorities, distribution companies, resource centres and academics. The aim of this event is to help the various groups to get to know one another, to recognise one another, to assess the scope for progress available to each group, as well as the difficulties and the constraints. How do we consider the territorial level when activities are world wide, volatile, seasonal and highly competitive? How can we hope to exert some form of control over supply, demand, the flow of goods and services to the benefit of the inhabitants, the territories and our heritage? How can we establish the new partnerships that are required if we are to progress in terms of global quality in the sector? Many of these challenges are overlapping and all of them are based on the invention of an economy that is able to create greater social, cultural and environmental added value. The fact that 1 billion people will be travelling the globe by 2010 requires us to at least reflect on the changes that have to be made to the present model that is untenable in the long term, unfair by its very nature and disruptive under all circumstances.
- The **3rd stage or event** on our itinerary will take us to the **Grand Duchy of Luxembourg on 18 and 19 June 2008**, where we will tackle the issue of **"Local development and the solidarity economy: the case of the OPE"**. This solidarity economy network was created ten years ago to address the problem of the employment of many young people and adults looking for a response in the organisation of local development. Civil society has been able to mobilise the national and municipal public authorities (52 out of the 116 municipalities in the country) and the network is organised into 30 local management centres (CIGL), at both a regional and sectoral level, that manage more than 750 jobs with the support of a resource centre. OPE is currently working on the definition of its conception of the solidarity economy company in Luxembourg. "Societal, economic and environmental values, principles of local and sustainable development, of social cohesion, of governance, well-being at work, life long learning, equal opportunities..." From one-off experiences that may serve as an example, to experiences that may be replicated more widely, a draft statute for a general interest association is currently being prepared and will shortly be submitted to the Luxembourg authorities.

URGENCI

is a partner in the 6th workshop of Lux'09.

The context

From January 26th -29th URGENCI, the International Network of Community Supported Agriculture held their 3rd international symposium of local and solidarity based partnerships between producers and consumers. The meeting was held in Aubagne, in the hinterland of Marseilles, in the Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur Region of South East France. This town, with a population of 95,000, is the headquarters of URGENCI. Community Supported Agriculture was founded forty years ago in Japan, based on the logic of providing local support to help establish young farmers. The movement is still a vibrant and flourishing mainstream source of agricultural produce in Japan today, with many families preferring the notion of direct contact and short circuits as well as a traditional appreciation of the importance of fresh organic fruit and vegetables to a more impersonal method of buying their food. The opening speeches reminded the audience of some of the harsh realities of the global situation of agriculture today. There are over 1.3 billion farmers in the world, most of whom suffer from hunger. This is the ultimate irony, for it is they who produce the food! Food and water are key issues in today's society all over the world, and their increasing scarcity is a source of conflict. Agriculture is one aspect of production that can not be produced off-shore or easily relocated. The risk of global famine is real, sooner or later, as the food market is controlled by interests that are in contradiction with those of the citizens themselves. People are all too often no longer in control of what they want to farm or eat. This is the basic issue of food security and food sovereignty.

No single recipe: Inventiveness as a universal lever

The participants from 15 different countries across the world (with the exception of Latin America and Australia) then provided testimonies of their various experiences. The overriding impression was that there is no single recipe or approach. The common denominators are those of direct circuits, and up-front buying into the scheme to avoid the hardship of cash flow for the farmers. The key characteristic is one of inventiveness, of

May, a month with many stories to tell...

The two and a half years since we started to publish this newsletter have flown by. INEES has grown. It will soon let go of the hand of the Réseau Objectif Plein Emploi which has helped and supported it with the aim of creating a genuine Research-Action Institute that will be capable of fuelling reflection on the promotion and recognition of a third economic pillar that lies between the public and private economy and which has been our credo since the very beginning. The two organisations will, however, maintain a very close relationship.

We are also engaged in the organisation of the 4th international meeting on "Globalising Solidarity", which is due to be held for the first time in Europe in May 2009. We are extremely proud of the fact that the international social and solidarity economy community has placed its trust in us. Indeed, the forum will soon begin and our website - www.lux09.lu - that is dedicated to Lux'09, is due to go live on **14 May at 10.00 am**. A series of on-line, interactive forums will be made available on the website and they will be moderated by the European organisations that are collectively engaged in the planning of the programmes and leadership of the workshops. It will be possible to access the site in four languages. INEES has increased its staff numbers through the recruitment of Catherine Van Ouytsel, who will be working full time on the organisation and follow-up of the event. The international level will also contribute to these efforts (cf. minutes of the RIPESS Board meeting below).

Once the website has gone live, you will be able to access information regarding the progress being made in terms of the organisation of the event, as well as news from the networks. This will all mean that this newsletter will evolve into a more academic publication, although it will continue to strive to propose exchanges between researchers, actors, public authority representatives, trade unions...

We have many projects and plans in this area and we will be able to return to them in these columns.

Eric Lavillunière - INEES

the weaving of local relationships and finding solutions that correspond to local culture in a mutual realisation that self-help and local development are inextricably interwoven. This can best be summed up in the slogan « Grow to feed and know the farmer ». One of the significant linguistic indicators in the testimonies by farmers and consumers alike was the high use of the possessive pronoun: people frequently referred to «my farmer» and «my consumers», irrespective of country.

The methodology involved shows significant variations and degrees of commitment by consumers. This goes from the consumers participating in the work in the fields, to self-harvesting, to boxes being picked up at the farm, to bulk being dropped off at a central point where the boxes are then prepared, to boxes being dropped off and a central point and picked up or even delivered to the individual consumers. In Africa, where personal relationships are of great importance, families still traditionally buy from farmers they know if at all possible. The dumping of imported cheaper imported products is the main difficulty that needs to be confronted. The threatened stranglehold that would result from the signature of the EPAs (WTO-imposed economic partnership agreements) is something that must at all costs be fought if peasant agriculture is to survive.

Cultural differences and paradigm shift

In Europe and North America, a significant percentage of young farmers are not of farming stock. This corresponds to a general

neo-rural movement, and a desire to return to or discover a more authentic sense of values and life. Their interest in organic farming, networking and involvement in sustainable local development is mainly hampered by their difficulty to gain access to small parcels of land. In many countries, there is also a phenomenon of an increasing percentage of market gardeners who are moving from the use of pesticides and turning to organic gardening as they become aware of the health hazards involved in certain agricultural practices. The question remaining to be resolved is frequently one of production costs versus the possibility to sell at a fair price that allows a win-win situation for both producer and consumer.

At consumer level, there are many cultural differences that need to be confronted. People need to eat, may be aware of the need to eat healthily, but the pressures of modern city life have contributed to most people eating convenience foods, and tinned or mass produced products are generally cheaper.

Yet there is an increasing awareness of the fact that healthily produced food leads to greater health in those who eat it. In Italy, the « slow food » movement has gained significant ground. In many cities in the more developed countries, yuppies and many others are moving towards the CSA system. It is slowly becoming mainstream and more socially acceptable. People are returning to their roots, learning to enjoy cooking and discovering « new » food and vegetables.

Many CSA groups provide seasonal recipes

RIPESS - Board of Directors meeting

Montreal - February 28th, 29th and March 1st 2008.

Main Decisions:

1) Concerning the Lux'09 meeting:

Adopt the presentation by INEES of the 4th Globalisation of Solidarity Meeting in May 2009 on behalf of the European Steering committee.

- Create a Commission for the Declaration of the meeting.
- Include persons from other continents to jointly prepare the thematic workshops.
- Create more occasions for continental meetings and to discuss the RIPESS governance in these spaces.
- Propose specific themes for plenary sessions with elected persons, international institutions and civil society movements, in line with strategic alliances that RIPESS wants to build.
- As foreseen in the programme, any organisation may propose to take charge of organising activities relating to suggested preoccupations such as youth, women, and aboriginal peoples. These activities will be held during thematic forums.
- To participate in Lux'09 the Northern organizations will be self-financed and the Southern organizations will seek financing with the support of the Northern organizations.
- Participation goals for the 4th Meeting by continent are as follows (1000 people expected) North America: 150 to 200, Africa: 100 to 150, Asia: 50, Australia: 100, Europe: 400, Luxembourg: 200, Latin America: 35 to 50 and NGO from the North: (approximately 150 people taken in charge).

2) RIPESS Governance:

- Accept the resignation of Abdou Salam Fall as President and extend to him our thanks for all the work accomplished.
- Replacing the Presidency by a collegial steering body. The coordination of the steering body will be exercised temporarily by Nedda Angulo, with a vice-coordinator from Europe for a 14 month period, until Luxembourg 2009. The name of the European Vice-Coordinator delegate will be confirmed soon by the Lux'09 European Steering Committee.
- A three-person commission with Nedda Angulo (Peru), David Thompson (Australia) and Ethel Coté (Canada) has to prepare a paper on the restructuring of RIPESS. The proposal will be debated and approved at Lux'09.

3) RIPESS Action Plan until April 2009

Axes of Action for the next 14 months:

- Broader participation in the 4th Meeting Lux'09
- Networking operations in Europe
- Develop contacts and links with large civil society organisations.
- Organise RIPESS representation with large international organisations (UNDP, etc.)
- Support networking in Africa and Asia.
- Institutional development: Communication (Web Site and Electronic newsletter), Fund-raising, Governance, Patrimony (archives, databases, management, administration).

Others decisions:

- The RIPESS Intercontinental Technical Secretariat in Dakar will be closed. Intercontinental responsibilities will be assumed by the three technical secretariats or their equivalent in the following continents: in Latin America the intercontinental coordination and relations with international institutions, in Africa the web site and the Newsletter, and in North America the fundraising. The general coordination of Lux'09 is assumed by INEES and the European Steering Committee.
- Examine the feasibility and the finding of resources to hold a RIPESS Board meeting in Montevideo, October 22nd - 24th, 2008, at the occasion of the 3rd RIPESS-AL Continental meeting.

The USSEN (USA), CCEDNET (Canada), GESQ (Quebec) networks, all of which are members of the North American Network of Solidarity Economy (NANSE), have decided to join forces to create RIPESS North America.

Furthermore, a publication on the solidarity economy has just been produced. It sets out issues that were discussed at the last US Social Forum that was held in June 2007 in Atlanta. You may order a copy of this newsletter from the following address:

<http://books.lulu.com/content/2102869>

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with the boxes, to help people discover what to do with vegetables they may not have previously come across.

The importance of the support for schemes by Local Authorities

Two of the key characteristics common to CSA around the world are the determination expressed by citizens to change the poor quality food available to them and their family, combined with the inadequate possibility to gain access to land to feed themselves and their families. This has generated a huge bottom-up determination to act and influence that is gaining ground. The role of networks at global level is contributing widely to the development of an expression of citizenship.

The local authorities of Aubagne have set many important examples. Agricultural land has been saved from the threat of real estate development. Green belt agriculture has become a significant part of the landscape, as in Milan in Italy and an increasing number of other cities. In Aubagne, young farmers have been helped to gain access to small farms, and CSA is alive and well. The importance of this support can not be underestimated, because it is only through a joint and broader stake-holder approach where all parties assume responsibility for their respective roles - authorities, farmers, consumers - that the CSA system can become one of true governance and citizenship.

Judith Hitchman

The Mont Blanc Declaration

So far, over a hundred leaders and players of social-economy organizations, representatives of international organizations, academics and citizens have signed the Mont Blanc Declaration in support of a strong, active, international social economy.

This international declaration, which was launched during the third edition of the Mont Blanc Meetings in November 2007 by leaders from 25 countries, is aimed at encouraging collective actions by the social economy that put people at the centre of globalization!

In the face of growing inequality, the social economy offers an international response to those who would be inclined to believe that it is no longer possible to do things differently.

In this Declaration, the leaders and players of the social economy invite us to organize ourselves collectively to discover the ways and means necessary for a successful future.

Moved by this strong conviction, the players of the social economy, representing organizations of every size and from around the world, commit themselves to investing in the following sectors as a priority: public transportation, food, sustainable tourism, arts and culture, training and education, personal services, social housing, socially responsible financial services, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The signatories of the Mont Blanc Declaration thus affirm their belief that "through collective and courageous action a new way of organizing the economy can make a powerful contribution to the development of a better, fairer world in which human beings and nature live together in harmony and respect."

The Mont Blanc Declaration can be viewed and signed online at:

<http://www.rencontres-montblanc.coop>

Anyone can sign !

Brief overview of the PERSE project

The main objective of the present project was to further develop this theory of social enterprise through a comparative analysis of 160 social enterprises in Europe. In order to do so, we chose an empirical field which is emblematic of the dynamics of social enterprises, namely 'work integration social enterprises' (WISEs), as it is a major sphere of activity of social enterprises in Europe. The main goal of work integration social enterprises is to help poorly qualified unemployed people who are at risk of permanent exclusion from the labour market. These enterprises integrate them back into work and society in general through productive activity. Beside work integration, social enterprises are also active in the spheres of the rapidly developing sector of personal and social services; these two areas sometimes overlap since, in some cases, work integration social enterprises produce this latter type of services.

Forty-four different types of WISEs have been identified (between 2002 and 2004). They address, through various modes of integration, the problems of long-term unemployment and occupational inactivity of disadvantaged people.

http://www.emes.net/fileadmin/emes/PDF_files/PERSE_Executive_Summary.pdf

Announcing Canada's premier annual community economic development event !

May 21-24, 2008, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Every year, the Canadian CED Network holds a national conference to bring together those who support community-based efforts to improve social conditions and create economic opportunities in Canada and beyond.

As the premier CED event in Canada, the conference aims to:

- Strengthen CED practitioners and organizations
- Advance a pan-Canadian policy agenda for CED
- Contribute to skills development and capacity building
- Increase the profile of CED as a viable approach to the economic revitalization of Canadian communities.

The conference attracts over 400 CED practitioners, civil society representatives, civil servants, business and co-operative developers, and academics for dozens of learning and information sharing sessions, inspirational keynote speakers, networking opportunities, and local site visits.

The annual conference provides an opportunity for participants to pause and reflect on our grassroots beginnings, while coming together to develop a vision for what we wish to achieve.

VIIIth international meeting of the Inter-University Network of the social and solidarity economy (RIUESS)

The social and solidarity economy, development, mobility and relocations.

At the Universitat Abat Oliba CEU Barcelona, on 8 and 9 May 2008

Through understanding and critical analysis, the meeting will examine how social and solidarity actors and researchers consolidate, restore and invent systems to produce and to exchange goods and services that respect ecosystems and social solidarity and that are better adapted to the preservation of fundamental equilibriums. The meeting will also look at how social and environmental vigilance, involvement in the decision-making process, community-based cooperation between producers and consumers and international solidarity can all be integrated within these processes.

The modalities that underlie research and projects related to these dimensions will be used to analyse, amongst other things, the challenges of the relocation of the economy and co-operation of the territories, local development, company democratisation, the redirecting of financing, the restructuring of trade between the North and the South and the promotion of an enhanced social and cultural mix.

Information in French and Spanish - For further information in French, see the INEES website at www.inees.org and for information in Spanish, see www.oesolidaria.org