



Presentation Paper
**HOW SOCIAL ENTERPRISES CONTRIBUTE TO
ALTERNATIVE FOOD SYSTEMS**

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**7th CIRIEC International Research Conference on
Social and Solidarity Economy**

***Social and Solidarity Economy: Moving Towards a New Economic
System***

Bucharest, Romania, 6th – 9th June 2019

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Questions

The Europe 2020 strategy highlights to “find new ways to reduce inputs, minimise waste, improve management of resource stocks, change consumption patterns, optimise production processes, management and business methods, and improve logistics.”



- **What does it mean for a Social Enterprise to take into account food?**
- **How Social Economy Enterprises can contribute to Sustainable Food System?**

Structure of the paper

This paper explores the experiences of European social enterprises across Europe () involved in sustainable food systems development.

- 1) Firstly, a review of the relevant literature with the aim of identifying the possible relationship between social economy enterprises and sustainable food systems
- 2) Analysis of 20 Good Practices
- 3) Some observations

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

Ecologically
Sustainable
Proximate
Participatory
Just/Ethical
Sustainably Regulated
Respectful
Healthful /Cultural Nourishing
Diverse
Relational
Value-Oriented (associative) – Economics



Summer, 2000

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

“an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities.” (SBI, October 2011).

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

With the term of Social Business the Commission intends to cover:

- those for which the social or societal objective of the common good is the reason for the commercial activity, often in the form of a high level of social innovation,
- those where profits are mainly reinvested with a view to achieving this social objective,
- and where the method of organisation or ownership system reflects their mission. (SBI, October 2011).

“These structures and processes interact dynamically to create, support and spread the civil commons. The wider and deeper the civil commons – socially, economically and environmentally – the higher the level of sustainability. The more the civil commons is enclosed, the lower the level of sustainability” (Sumner, 2011).

According to Sumner, if the concept of sustainability involves building the civil commons, then the sustainable food system would consist of a variety of collectivises that preserve and enable access to the food that humans need.

Therefore, the social economy, which we consider to be part of the civil commons as a cooperative human construct, can be involved in the process of building alternative food systems, in order to become more sustainable.

Alternative food systems

Green Social Entrepreneurs

Green Social Entrepreneurs

As stated by Zahedi and Otterpohl (2016) green social entrepreneur could play two important roles in sustainable development: first as an innovative community to change the structure of the economy through sustainability and second as a community which creates and changes the norms in a society so as to maintain sustainable development

Figure 7: Table - Characterisation of different kinds of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.

TYPE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP	CORE MOTIVATION
Eco-entrepreneurship	Contribute to solving environmental problems and create economic value
Social entrepreneurship	Contribute to solving societal problems and create value for society
Sustainable entrepreneurship	Contribute to solving societal and environmental problems through the creation of a successful business
Institutional entrepreneurship	Contribute to changing regulatory, societal and market institutions

Alternative food systems and SE

Selection of good practices

Interviews with experts:

The experts were identified mainly through the network of DIESIS, one of the widest at EU level, bringing together national networks and support structures of social economy enterprises, incubators etc. The experts have a policy background in social economy and specific knowledge in promoting sustainable food and social enterprises.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by telephone, e-mail or physical meeting. We asked them to identify good practices of social enterprises involved in sustainable food system in their country.

Alternative food systems and SE

Collection of data on good practices:

So far we have collected **more than 50 examples of social economy enterprises** involved in supporting the transition towards sustainable food systems in Europe.

The examples come from the main national federations and European networks (many of which are part of the DIESIS network), European mappings and surveys on social enterprises and direct interviews with experts and practitioners.

From these **we selected 20 cases** to be analysed through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. A presentation of each social enterprise involved in the research is available.

Alternative food systems and SE

Criteria of selection:

- Started at least 3 years
- With Employees (at least 3)
- Covering the different stages of the food system from production to waste,
- Enterprises with different social aims and with different ways of pursuing them

Alternative food systems and SE



Мрежа Хлебни Къш
Obshtestven Klub Furna
Community Bakery Club Gabrovo

 **BULGARIA**
GABROVO

START DATE: 2009

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: Yes

EMPLOYEES: Young group of volunteers and caters



biovilla
sustentabilidade à mão de semear

Cooperative for the Sustainable Development
C.R.L.

 **PORTUGAL**
PALMELA

START DATE: 2010

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: Yes

N° EMPLOYEES: 5
+ 10 active cooperative members, many temporary volunteers and visitors coming and going



MARAMAO
Società Cooperativa Agricola Sociale Onlus, Cannelli, Italia

 **ITALY**
CALAMANDRANA - CANNELLI

START DATE: 2016

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: YES

EMPLOYEES: 9



Graefewirtschaft

 **GERMANY**
BERLIN

START DATE: 2009

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: Setup without / Now partially (n)

N° EMPLOYEES: 45
+ 5 Trainees vocational training



Barikama'

 **ITALY**
ROMA

START DATE: 2014

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: NO

EMPLOYEES: 8
+ 4 trainers



Isabel
Chocolates Artesanos

 **SPAIN**
ALCORISA

START DATE: 1997

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: NO

EMPLOYEES: 12



lavka
tagurpidi

 **ESTONIA**
TALLIN

START DATE: 2009

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: NO

EMPLOYEES: 10



BEES COOP
SUPERMARKET

 **BELGIUM**
BRUXELLES

START DATE: 2017

FINANCIAL SUPPORT: NO public financial support for cheese
Only for research and education

EMPLOYEES: 4
+ 1200 members that contribute with their work / monthly

Alternative food systems and SE

20 Good Practices

MAIN SOCIAL AIMS

Counteracting the desertification of rural area.

Women employment.

Migrants.

Decent job conditions.

Work integration of disadvantaged workers.

Raising awareness of communities on the importance of adopting more sustainable eating habits.

Barikama' 



START DATE:
2014



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO



EMPLOYEES: 8
+ 4 trainers

Barikamà was born as a microcredit project: from exploitation in the farm, toward self-entrepreneurship and social inclusion. In 2011, Barikamà started to produce organic yogurt (from 15 litres of milk) at Casale di martignano

In 2014 **Barikamà** became a social co-operative and started to produce organic vegetables. With the growth of the cooperative, we have decided to include Mauro, who has Asperger's syndrome.

Barikamà produces and delivers organic yoghurt and vegetables to local markets, buying groups (Gas), restaurants and bars.

Barikamà is respectful of the environment and makes its deliveries by bike.

Barikamà contributes to reducing waste by using returnable bottles. It is an example of the circular economy.



START DATE:
2014



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO



EMPLOYEES: 8
+ 4 trainers

Main Goals

Promotion of work and social integration for migrants.

Production of organic food products.

Promotion of social integration for people with difficulties.

Protection of the environment.

Reduction of wastage and promotion of up cycling.

AWARDS

Results

From 15 to 200 litres of milk a week.

Present in 16 local markets.

More than 30 GAS – Gruppi di acquisto solidale (solidary buying groups).

3 sales points.

Integration and support of people who are trying to escape labour exploitation, learn Italian and have decent work.

Social integration of young people with Asperger's syndrome.



PORTUGAL
MARVÃO - ALENTEJO



START DATE:
2011



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
Yes



EMPLOYEES: 3

Terrius is the result of the desire of a group of “young people” linked to agricultural activity to “get their hands in the soil”. The idea emerged at the beginning of 2011, driven by the desire to build a distinctive and innovative project in the agri-food sector, based on the establishment of local partnerships of trust and fair trade with small producers and industries in the region.

Activities:

purchase and negotiation with small producers.

Transformation and development of local products into new products of high added value.

agricultural consultancy and training for small and young farmers.

valorization of local products, in particular through certifications.

involvement with the community through workshops, guided tours for schools and groups, and promotion of regional products



PORTUGAL
MARVÃO - ALENTEJO



START DATE:
2011



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
Yes



EMPLOYEES: 3

Main Goals

The main objective is the sustainable production, preservation and marketing of wild products, fruit and vegetables of excellence from the region.

Economic development and attraction.

Retention of young people in rural areas.

Support in developing the autonomy of local food producers.

Dynamism and local development, based on local potential

Recovery of PDO and PGI certifications.

Preservation of the natural heritage and recognition of the region.

Results

We keep about 30 farmers working with us.

We recovered 2 old products that nobody was producing (chestnut and acorn flour), and now lots of other producers have appeared in the country.

AWARDS





ESTONIA
TALLIN



START DATE:
2009



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO



EMPLOYEES: 10

Tagurpidi Lavka buys food products, especially organic products, from small farmers in rural areas of Estonia and sells them in and around Tallinn. It sells the products on markets and via an e-shop, where clients can order products in advance and have them delivered to their front door.

Tagurpidi Lavka informs its clients and the wider public about the advantages of buying and eating local food.

Tagurpidi Lavka reuses most of its packaging and uses as much biodegradable packaging as possible. It pays local farmers and producers a fair price for their products.



ESTONIA
TALLIN



START DATE:
2009



FINANCIAL SUPPORT:
NO



EMPLOYEES: 10

Main Goals

Raising consciousness about healthy local food.

Reducing the environmental impact of food.

Supporting rural local areas, to prevent their desertification.

Results

79 Farmers and small producers.

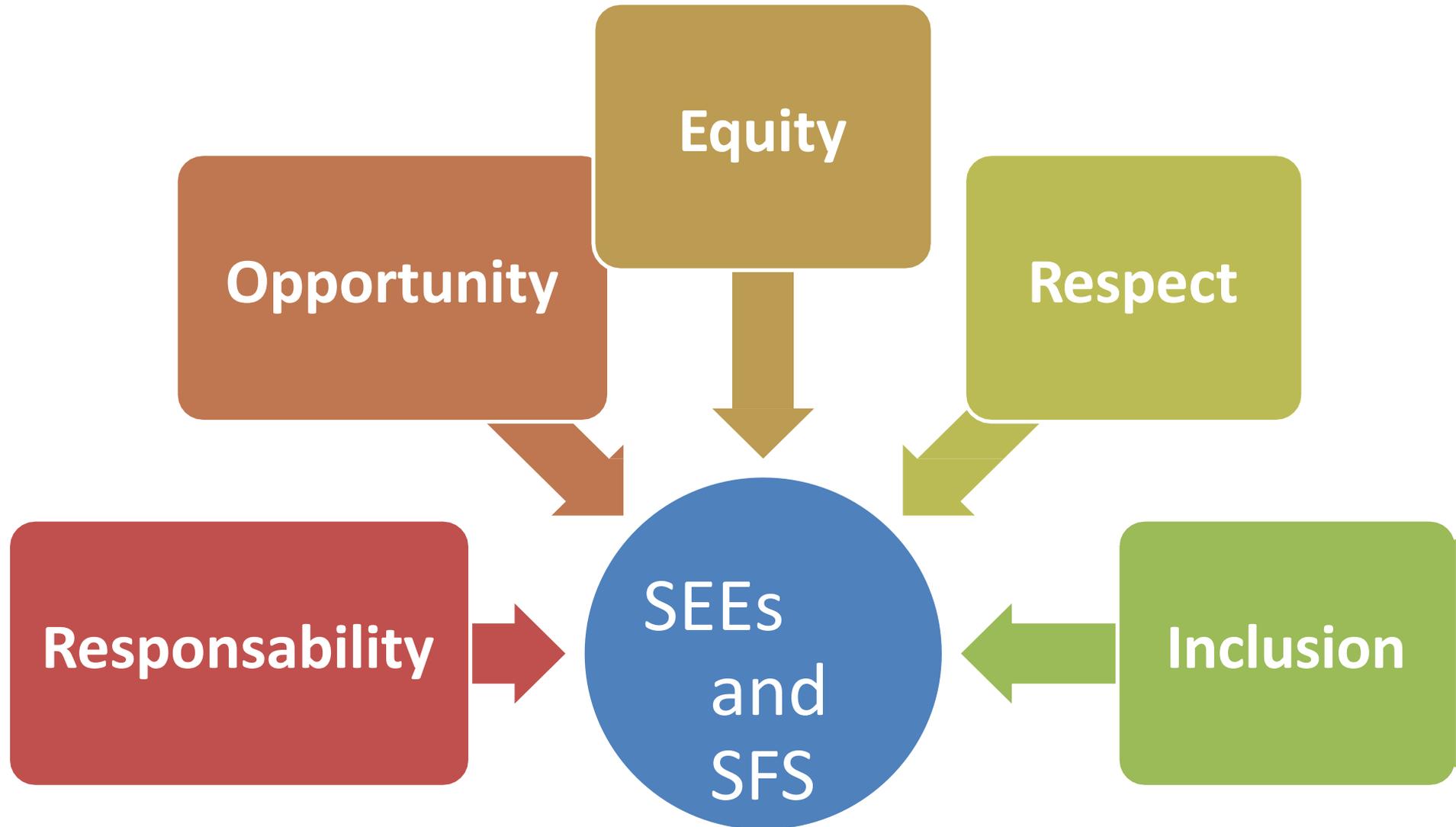
4681 internet orders.

More than 210 clients (every month).

Average additional income of €110 per month for their local farmers.

2 individuals started farming activities.

Key Elements



Key Elements

Inclusion: Social enterprises play a major role in promoting integration among the community. While we are building sustainable food systems we can contribute to develop a community which is more inclusive and integrated. There are a lot of initiatives that use food as a tool of integration for creating double value – for the environment and the society.

Equity is an important aspect of a sustainable economy. We should learn to share, given that resources are limited while population keeps increasing. The co-operative model has always been about sharing the value of production. From these cases experiences emerged where producers and consumers want to cooperate together.

Key Elements

Respect is important for sustainable development. All the practices base their business on respect for the environment and the community. But they are also respectful of tradition and territory in order to preserve the special characteristics of their land. All of them aim to support local farmers and small producers, through action to promote decent working conditions.

Responsibility. Making our food system more sustainable requires responsibility. All the social entrepreneurs who created these good practices have taken the responsibility to do more for their community. The point is neither profit nor organic food itself: they are a means for greater community involvement and relational empowerment.

Opportunity. The good practices selected are great examples of the opportunity we have to create decent and equitable employment conditions. These social enterprises turn out to be a solution for creating new jobs, both for young people and for people who need to come back to work.

Main Observations

- Social economy are a point of reference of the territory which, with the involvement of the community, are making people aware of a more sustainable approach to food.

SEEs should not be considered as a niche sector of food production but they have the potential to be scaled up to increase their impact.



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Thank you

