



## Working Group on Emerging experiences of the Social Economy in Iberoamerica

### Coordination

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### Introduction

The experiences of social economy present in the Ibero-American context show a plurality of territorial expressions based on common needs. However, it is possible to find categories for a shared analysis related to the motivations for the creation of enterprises. The justification for defining an Ibero-American space for social and solidarity economy studies is based on the tradition of cooperation between Iberic European and Latin American countries, established by entities such as OIBESCOOP, RIPESS, cooperation agencies and university centres, for the development of social and solidarity economy initiatives within the framework of political, economic, cultural and social transformations. This relationship has been built on mutual learning. Despite the multifaceted role of the multiple actors within these geographical spaces, there is a common concern for the development of a decolonial vision of the solidarity economy, and in parallel a critical vision of the Eurocentric view of the social economy. The mutual learning generated from the experiences in both latitudes serves as a reference for the development of some emerging expressions of the social and solidarity economy.

An example of the referential relationship between Ibero-American approaches and their impact on the reinforcement of the approaches practiced in Spain and Portugal is pointed out by some Latin-American authors such as José Luis Coraggio (2015) when he states: "...democratically guaranteed human rights and the responsibilities demanded by life in community, the values of social justice and a restorative relationship with nature as a condition of life, take their maximum discursive expression in the metaphor of Good Living...." (Coraggio, 2015), a metaphor that has been referred to by multiple networks in Spain and Portugal such as OIBESCOOP, RULESCOOP, RIPESS and entities such as the Ibero-American Foundation for the Social Economy, the School of Social Economy, and that has marked the development of social market practices, agri-food experiences, permaculture and family agriculture.

An example of the referential relationship between the experiences of Spain and Portugal in the design of public policies is present in the initiatives of the international cooperation organisations, universities and groups that have promoted the study of Latin American solidarity economy practices providing environments to accompany the establishment of

public policies that are alternative to the neoliberal model. According to Wanderley (2015), in Europe, the reflection on social and solidarity economy takes place in the context of crisis of the social welfare state model established in the post-war period, while in Ibero-America, such reflection is mediated by the experiences of cooperativism along with the expansion of the "popular and informal economy" strengthened thanks to the efforts of the Catholic Church, NGOs and international cooperation. As a consequence of the Iberian contribution, public policy approaches in some countries (such as Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Chile, Honduras, Mexico and Puerto Rico) take inspiration from the experience of Portugal and Spain and learn on how to guarantee institutional spaces to promote reciprocity, development of initiatives for subsistence, barter, cooperative networks and social currencies, among others, in traditional markets (FUNDIBES (2010, 2011), OIBESCOOP (2019).

The construction of the Ibero-American space of knowledge in social and solidarity economy favours the construction of glocal socio-economic actors with an identity based on mutual learning and efforts to build on the differences in the approaches to local development (Díaz, 2015). This implies the attempts to create influence on the actors and processes related to generation, dissemination, transfer and use of knowledge as a key aspect.

The process of globalization has entailed a weakening of confidence among the main institutions and in addition has generated an emergency that serves as a booster for emerging collective entrepreneurship (Castells, 2017). The latter follow paths of adaptation, resistance or dispute facing the external challenges of the political, economic, cultural and environmental circumstances of globalization, while at the same time they are in line with the co-construction of a sustainable economy embracing differentiated forms of production and consumption.

Besides the imminent emergency to look for sustainable social and business approaches, it is necessary to study the strategies of the new social and collective entrepreneurship, "that can breath life" into the management of the social economy enterprises which have already been consolidated.

## **Iberoamerican Context**

In the Ibero-American context we have to highlight several factors that are deeply affecting society, economy, politics and culture. First, the various crises affecting some of the countries in Ibero-America are not only economic, but also multidimensional in nature (CEPAL, 2019). These crises are in turn triggering citizen responses that range from social and civic outbursts to pressure from different power groups. Secondly, Castells (2019) indicates that these crises have become systemic and are accompanied by a rupture between those who govern and those who are governed. Likewise, there is a perception on the part of citizens that democracies do not represent them (Edelman, 2018), but neither do emblematic institutions such as corporations, the church, universities... In third place, there is an increase in dissatisfaction among people who have been better educated and who, at the same time, have to face pension and labour crises in a context where corruption persists and corporate power co-opts the political world generating a crisis of legitimacy.

In this context, the social economy that is emerging in Ibero-America seeks to provide answers to these factors through different mechanisms. First, the emergency of the situation forces the

search for civic responses. On the other hand, traditional social economy enterprises are combined with hybrid market-based and non-market-based organizations. In other words, traditional social enterprises insist on dialogue with governments. And these governments are not able to articulate policies that really support the development of the organizations. Second, a variety of organizations seek autonomy and can establish relationships of dispute, resistance and adaptation in order to participate in power relationships. Third, many of the organizations emerge from and in disputes: environmental, social, cultural, economic and political. Fourth, they are organized in networks and around projects that attempt to generate integral transformations.

As a result, the social and solidarity economy in Ibero-America is a complex institutionality that is built on situational realities and mostly refers to economic, political, social, cultural and environmental factors.

Table 1 shows a classification of the solidarity economy by country according to the models that are promoted, together with the main organizations that have been developed and including the emerging actors. Thus in Colombia, Peru, Chile, Brazil and Panama we find that the model of social economy that is promoted has an instrumental role. That is, the role of the social economy is to mitigate the failures of the market and the failures of the state, its role is rather complementary, but in a marginal way. The main organisations are savings and credit cooperatives, transport, employee funds, industrial cooperatives. In case of Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Costa Rica, the social economy is part of the plurality of economic options, both for production and for consumption that collective entrepreneurs and consumers have. The main organizations are credit unions, transport and housing cooperatives, mining cooperatives, mutual public service cooperatives, worker-owned enterprises and rural savings banks.

Finally, in the overall set of countries we can observe how a group of economic actors are born as a vernacular heritage that attends to old traditions rooted in the territory and in order to protect life enters in dispute with the models linked to globalization. We thus find, farmers' associations, rural aqueducts, family agriculture, indigenous mingas, cooperatives of ex-combatants, recyclers, community workers, fair trade organizations, associations for good living, organizations for the defense of water and mingas.

**Table 1: Classification of social economy actors in Ibero-America**

	Colombia, Perú, Chile, Brasil, Panamá	Ecuador, Bolivia, México, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Costa Rica, Spain, Portugal
Promotion	Toolkit: SE mitigates market and state failures, but complements them marginally	Institutional support: SE part of the economic plurality (other forms of production and consumption)
Main organizations	Cooperatives (savings and credit, transportation), employee funds, agro-industrial cooperatives	Cooperatives (savings and credit, transport and housing), mining cooperatives, mutual public utilities, companies recovered by workers, rural banks
Actors from another economy	Farmers' associations, rural aqueducts, family agriculture, indigenous mingas, ex-combatants' cooperatives, recyclers, community workers, fair trade organizations, associations for good living, water defense organizations and mingas, social markets, consumer cooperatives, public procurement, municipal construction	

Source: Own elaboration

## Objective

The objective of this working group is to prepare a document that identifies the experiences of social and collective entrepreneurship in Ibero-America and can be classified among those that have been born from strategies of adaptation, resistance or dispute in the face of the pressure of external factors caused by the political, economic, cultural and environmental factors inherent in globalization, while at the same time being in tune with the co-construction of a sustainable economy with differentiated forms of production and consumption.

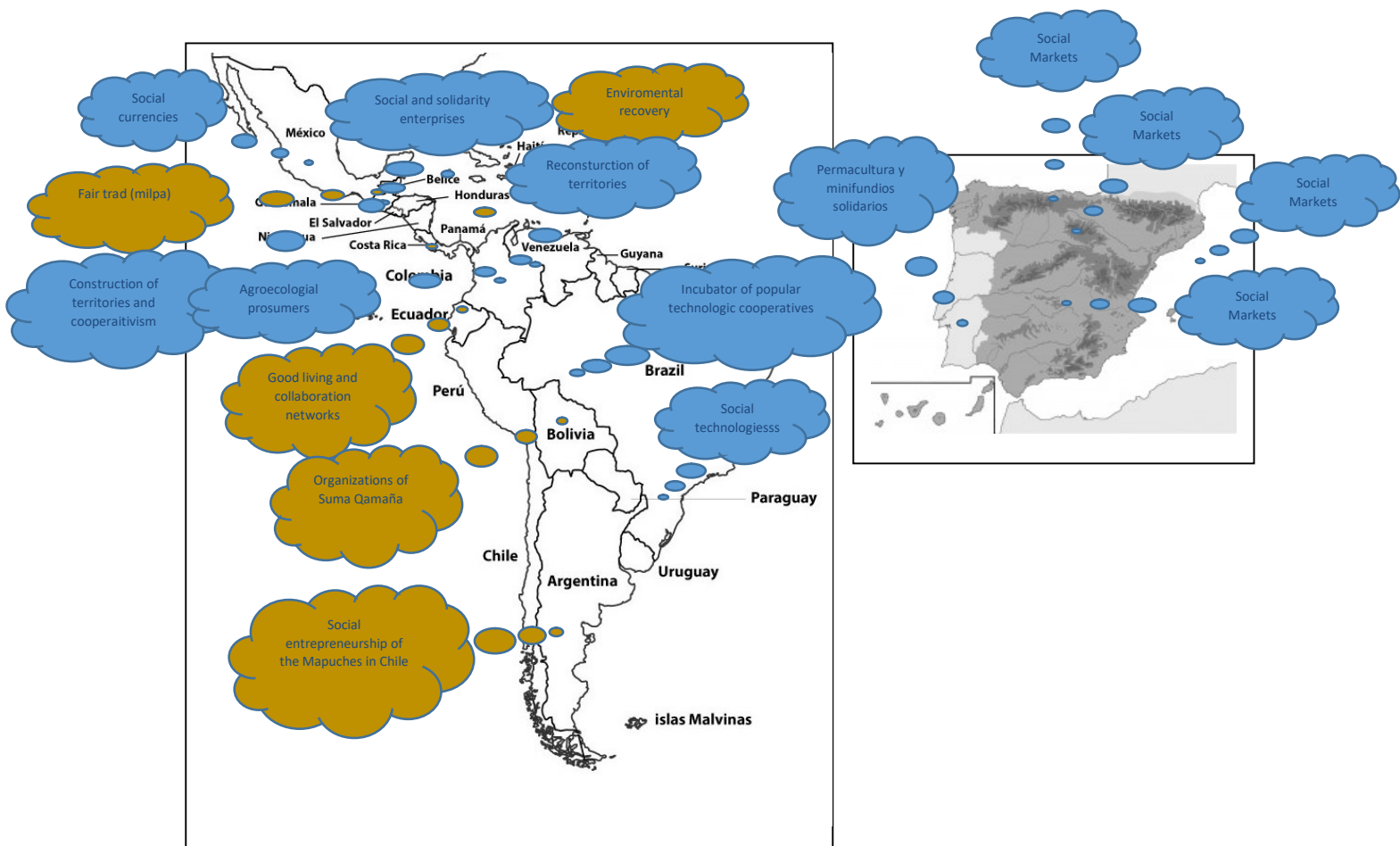
## Contributions

The main contributions of scholars in the Ibero-American region on the reviewed experiences have been previously traced. The following is a list of the main referents who are invited to participate in the study, unless this affects the participation of other scholars in the region:

1. Permaculture and solidarity smallholdings: Portugal: Manuel Belo Moreira
2. Alternative and solidarity economy network social balance: Carmen Marcuello (coordinator)
3. Reconstruction of territories in Mexico: (Antonia Mondragón)
4. Fair Trade and milpas in Mexico: (Boris Marañón or Laura Collin)

5. Social currencies in Central America: Karol Gil Vásquez (United States)
6. Asadas and environmental recovery in Costa Rica (Federico Li or Paula Arazadún)
7. Construction of territories and cooperativism in Nicaragua: René Mendoza
8. Endogenous development and solidarity circuits for peaceful coexistence in Colombia: (Hernando Zabala and Marietta Bucheli)
9. South-South cooperation and agro-ecological prosumers in the Andean area: (Juan Fernando Álvarez)
10. Good living management and cooperation networks in Ecuador: Elisa Lanas
11. Suma Qamaña Organizations in Bolivia: Isabelle Hillenkamp
12. Social Technologies and Sustainability (Leandro Morais and Daniel Nagao)
13. Technological incubator of Popular Cooperatives in Brazil (Alessandra de Azevedo and Antônio Cruz)
14. Companies recovered by workers in Uruguay and Argentina (María Eugenia Castela)
15. Collective undertakings of the Mapuche in Chile: Paula Miranda Sánchez and Ismael Romero Mancheño

**Graph 1 Themes and territorial presence in Ibero-America.**



Source: Own elaboration

### Timetable

June 2019	Creation of the steering team and draft of the call for contributions
September 2019	Tracking and contacting potential contributors, identification of formats for dissemination, virtual meeting of the steering team.
February-March 2020	Announcement and publication of the call for contributions
February-March 2020	Diffusion of a call for expression of interest.
15 April 2020	Reception of abstracts of the contributions projects, virtual meeting of the steering committee.
15 May 2020	Feedback to authors
4-6 June	GW meeting in 33rd CIRIEC International Congress, Thessaloniki, Greece,
17—18 September	XVIII Congreso internacional de investigación en economía social y cooperativa : “La Economía Social: herramienta para el fomento del desarrollo sostenible y la reducción de las desigualdades”, CIRIEC-España, seminar
17-19 September 2020	CIRIEC World Conference in Latin America, CIRIEC-Brazil, CIRIEC International Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, seminar
15 October 2020	Reception of the final contributions projects.
December 2020	Production of publication (book in collaboration with OIBESCOOP)

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