

Training contents SSOLEIL Project. SECTION 2

Local and Solidarity Economy Tools for the Local Level



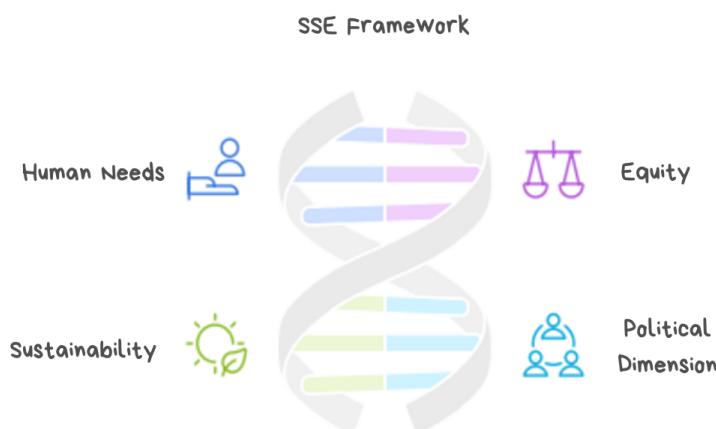
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Section 2: Definition of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)

2.1 What is the SSE: Differences with the Social Economy

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) is an economic model that places people, collective well-being and ecological balance at the centre of its activity, prioritising these principles over maximising economic profit. Its purpose is to generate a positive impact on society through organizational structures based on cooperation, equity and democracy.

While SSE and the Social Economy share fundamental values, SSE extends the reach of the traditional model by incorporating a more transformative and participatory approach. The social economy focuses on entities such as cooperatives, mutual societies, associations and foundations which, although operating for social purposes, do not necessarily challenge the logic of the prevailing economic system. In contrast, the SSE is committed to a more equitable redistribution of resources, the promotion of solidarity and self-management of common goods, strengthening community networks and promoting alternative economic models such as social markets, local currencies and digital cooperatives.



2.2 Main Principles of the SSE

The SSE is based on a number of principles that define its operation and differentiate it from conventional economic models:

Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)

- Primacy of social welfare over capital
- Democracy and participation
- Equity and inclusion
- Environmental sustainability
- Cooperation and solidarity

SSE entities prioritize social impact and equity over economic profitability

Decision-making in SSE organisations is based on the active involvement of their members, ensuring transparency and a horizontal governance model.

The reduction of inequalities and the integration of vulnerable groups is encouraged, guaranteeing economic opportunities accessible to all.

SSE adopts production models aligned with environmental protection, promoting the circular economy, responsible consumption and sustainable energy production.

SSE entities are actively collaborating with each other to maximize their social impact and strengthen the solidarity economic fabric.

2.3 Practical Application of the SSE

2.3.1 Sustainable and Collaborative Production

One of the sectors where SSE has the greatest impact is sustainable production. Many cooperatives and producer networks have adopted principles of agroecology, local production and collaborative distribution to ensure healthy and sustainable products. Examples are agro-ecological cooperatives and circular economy initiatives, which reuse materials and minimize waste.

2.3.2 Responsible Consumption Networks

The SSE promotes the creation of responsible consumption networks that allow people to access ethical, sustainable and local goods and services. These networks strengthen local economies and reduce dependence on large corporations. Social markets and consumer cooperatives are successful examples of this model.

2.3.3 Ethical Funding

The financial sector has also been impacted by SSE through ethical banking and social investment funds. These entities channel resources to projects with positive social and environmental impact, moving away from financial speculation and promoting accessible and supportive credit models.

2.4 Examples of Success and Innovative Models

At the global level, SSE has been able to consolidate itself in various sectors with initiatives that have demonstrated its viability and transformative capacity. Some examples include:

Institution	Example
<u>Som Energia</u> (Spain)	Renewable energy cooperative with a democratic management model, which has promoted the decentralization of the electricity market and citizen self-management.
<u>Enercoop</u> (France)	Participatory renewable electricity cooperative, where consumers become co-producers of clean energy, reducing their dependence on traditional companies.
<u>Cooperative Longo Maï</u> (Europe)	Network of self-managed agricultural and community cooperatives that combine agro-ecological production with a community life model based on self-sufficiency and sustainability.
<u>La Louve</u> (France)	Self-managed cooperative supermarket, where consumers are both owners and workers, guaranteeing fair prices and quality products.
<u>Banco Palmas</u> (Brasil)	Community bank that has developed its own social currency to strengthen the local economy and facilitate access to credit for small entrepreneurs.

These examples reflect the diversity and adaptability of SSE, demonstrating its ability to generate positive change in different sectors and territorial contexts. With an approach based on cooperation, sustainability and democratic participation, SSE is emerging as a key economic model for building more equitable and resilient societies.