Rethinking Development

The role of Social and Solidarity Economy

Meeting of the Social Economy Category
1 October 2014, EESC
The 21\textsuperscript{st} century development problem

- \textbf{Underemployment}, indecent work & informal economy
- Growing \textbf{inequalities}: income, gender, regional
- Environmental costs of industrialization, high-input agriculture & consumption patterns; \textbf{climate change}
- Recurring \textbf{crises} (finance, food, fuel)
- \textbf{Women’s} empowerment and the care burden
- \textbf{Food} and rural livelihood insecurity
The need to rethink development & liberalization

➢ International policy:
  • Rio+20 call for integrated approaches
  • Post-2015 process to integrate poverty reduction and sustainability agendas

➢ At the grassroots:
  • Workers, producers & communities are responding in their own ways, individually and collectively
The need for another approach

➢ Beyond fragmentation:
  • Simultaneously addressing economic, social and environmental objectives

➢ Beyond trickle down:
  • Needs provisioning, economic & political empowerment & comprehensive social policy

➢ Beyond the individual:
  • Cooperation & Solidarity
Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)

- Forms of production, exchange and consumption with...
  1) explicit social (and often environmental) objectives (e.g. basic needs provisioning; care services, employing the unemployed, food security)
  2) values and practices of cooperation and solidarity
  3) democratic self-management and decision-making process
Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE)  
An expanding field

- Cooperatives, mutual associations, foundations and associations
- But also,
  - rise of social enterprise in Europe and Asia
  - 2.5 million women self-help groups in India
  - rapid growth of fair trade markets
  - unionization of urban own account workers
  - multiplication of solidarity finance schemes
  - globally networked: e.g. RIPESS, Via Campesina, Global Alliance Wastepickers, Homenet, Streetnet
Can SSE consolidate and expand?

Tensions

- Weak initial conditions
- Commodity sectors with low added-value
- Finance (access, instability)
- Commercialization
- Elite capture
- Regulatory mechanisms
- Enabling policies and co-construction
- Dependency and top down policies
- Women’s participation
Enabling SSE
What should governments do?

• **Rethink development**: enable communities vs conventional enterprises and individual entrepreneurship
• Recognize the **potential** of SSE
• Tackle the **disabling policy and legal environment**
• Safeguard the **autonomy** of SSE from the State
• Favour **co-construction** of policies
• Match SSE support with **redistribution** through the state via social, fiscal, credit, investment, procurement, industrial, training policies
• Adopt **multi-scalar** policy support: local, state, national and international
• Favour inter-governmental and multi-stakeholders **dialogue**
• Generate and disseminate **knowledge** about SSE
Enabling SSE at the UN

• UNRISD enquiry:
  ➢ Can SSE be scaled-up?
  ➢ Overcome romanticization
  ➢ Invisibility of debates about SSE in the UN system and post-2015 agenda

• Publications: Briefs, Occasional paper series, Think pieces & forthcoming Book: “Social & Solidarity economy: Beyond the Fringe?” edited by Peter Utting

• UN Inter-agency Task Force on SSE (TFSSE)
UN Task Force on SSE (TFSSE)

- Founding meeting on 30 September 2013 convened by ILO, UN-NGLS, UNDP and UNRISD
- Observers (4): RIPESS, Mont-Blanc Meetings (MBM), International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) and MedESS.
Roles of TFSSE

• Enhance the recognition of the role of SSE enterprises and organizations in sustainable development;
• Promote knowledge of SSE and consolidate SSE networks;
• Support the establishment of an enabling institutional and policy environment for SSE;
• Ensure coordination of international efforts, and create and strengthen partnerships.
Selected activities and publications

• Side-event at the 8th Open Working Group on the SDGs (February 2014)
• Side-event at the 41st Committee on Food Security of the FAO (October 2014)
• Position paper: «SSE and the challenge of Sustainable Development»
• www.unsse.org (repository of UN publications related to SSE)