Home-based Workers and the Social and Solidarity Economy

Key points from the HNI Webinar, 11 August 2021
Presented by Simel Esim, ILO

For webinar videos: https://www.homenetinternational.org/social-solidarity-economy/
What is the SSE?

• **An umbrella framework** covering different types of economic units, with the following common features.

They:

- produce goods, services and knowledge
- pursue both **economic and social** aims and foster **solidarity**
- have **democratic ownership** and control

*The concept is still developing*

*There is not yet a final definition*

Video 1: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E&t=35s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E&t=35s)
What are the principles and values of the SSE?

- People and work over capital & pursuit of profit!
  - Created for and by those with **common needs**
  - **Accountable** to those they are meant to serve
  - **Voluntary** participation, membership and commitment
  - Emphasis on **self-help, self-reliance** and local identity

Video 1:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E&t=35s
What are the different forms of SSE organizations?

**Cooperatives**: established & most common form of SSE organization in many countries. Others include:

- Self-help groups
- Mutual benefit societies
- Social enterprises
- Associations of Informal Workers
- Fair trade organizations
- Community groups
- Worker owned producer companies
- Foundations

Video 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E)
More on Cooperatives

There are many different types of cooperatives, small and large. Examples:

- **Producer cooperatives**: processing and marketing products
- **Worker cooperatives**: enterprise owned by its workers
- **Consumer cooperatives**: housing, financial services
- **Social cooperatives**: child and elder care
- **Multi-purpose cooperatives**: bring different types together

*Home-based workers could form or use any of the above*

Video 2:  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E)
Country & Regional Differences

• **SSE knowledge & scope**
  - **Strong** in Europe, Francophone countries, Latin America
  - **Early stages** of development in Asia-Pacific countries

• **SSE nature & forms**
  - Mutual societies (providing social insurance) common in **West Africa** & social enterprises in **Anglophone countries**
  - **South & SE Asia**, many traditional/ emerging/local SSE organizations
  - Solidarity aspect of SSE is most important in **Latin America**

Video 2: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E)
SSE organizations have both social & solidarity characteristics. **Solidarity is critical** for organizations to be included in the SSE. Tension examples:

- **Large cooperatives**: risk losing touch with members and no longer fulfilling their solidarity function. Can this be overcome by them supporting the formation of new cooperatives?
- **Social Enterprises**: commercial activity has a social/common good purpose. But, not all are democratically owned and controlled (solidarity aspect), and will therefore not be included in the SSE. **Foundations** are similar.

Video 2:  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGC3mTTuE1E)
Why do we need an umbrella framework?

• Individually:
  o SSE organizations can produce **good results** including innovative solutions for job creation & sustainability
  o But they can remain **marginalized** because of many challenges

• An umbrella framework can:
  o **strengthen** their ability to advocate and secure an enabling environment of policies and programmes
  o **help build** an eco-system to connect, cooperate, pool resources & knowledge, overcome challenges and reach scale

---

Video 3: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBKYf4qt1vw&t=19s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBKYf4qt1vw&t=19s)
Why are we talking about the SSE now? Why is it important?

• The pandemic has exposed how fragile our societies and economies are, and deepened inequalities. We need to:
  o address the root causes of development that excludes and is unsustainable so we can shape a different future
  o rethink the way we do things to ensure a “people and planet sensitive recovery”
  o create a critical mass and momentum around alternative organizing strategies and business models.

Video 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBKYf4qt1vw&t=19s
What policies are needed for the SSE?

- **An SSE umbrella policy** covering the different types of organizations under it. Laws and policies should:
  - **Recognize** SSE as being composed of many economic units sharing the same values and principles
  - **Support** network consolidation and encourage an SSE “boom”
  - **Give power** to act to producers and workers
  - **Strengthen** sustainable local development

*Policies & laws (umbrella or for separate organizations) should be accessible & easy to use*

*Video 4: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7d-VMscsSA&t=8s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7d-VMscsSA&t=8s)*
What are the elements of a supportive eco-system for the SSE?

- A network of support institutions (eco-system) including:
  - Government entities responsible for promoting & implementing policies supporting SSE
  - Those providing legal services
  - Training and mentorship support organizations
  - Financial support

Video 4: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7d-VMscsSA&t=8s

ILO has produced training tools for cooperatives & organizes SSE Academies
What do we know about SSE organizations of home-based workers?

- An ILO/WIEGO study found (amongst others) that HBW’s SSE organizations (coops, SHG, CBOs, producer companies):
  - followed **democratic principles**
  - struggled financially
  - **facilitated earnings** of members through market access, training & skills upgrading, sharing space & equipment, pooling resources
  - **empowered** and helped provide a social & worker identity towards recognition as HBWs
  - were mostly **small**, with **weak bargaining power** and had limited negotiations with employers

Video 5: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U46ML7cAYKA&t=24s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U46ML7cAYKA&t=24s)
The Study can be found at:

What is the ILC discussion on the SSE going to be about?

The ILC will hold a general discussion in June 2022 on the SSE for a human-centered future of work. We hope it will:

- Agree a definition of SSE, its principles & values
- Assess how it can help people manage transitions in their working lives e.g. informal to formal economy
- Provide SSE policy guidelines for governments
- Give guidance to the ILO on how to promote SSE & encourage partnerships with SSE organizations

Video 6: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD38MXu8m54
How can HNI follow up?

• Participate in the ILC discussions, with informed participants:
  o Review the findings of the ILO/WIEGO study
  o Review ILO materials on SSE (links provided)
  o Participate virtually in the SSE Academy in November 2021
  o Engage with unions to get them on board
  o Prepare a position paper (with other Networks of IWs)

• Next steps for HNI affiliates:
  o Provide videos and information on HNI web site
  o Hold a second webinar to share SSE experiences & information

Video 6: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD38MXu8m54
Home-based Workers and the Social and Solidarity Economy

Key points from the HNI Webinar, 11 August 2021
Presented by Simel Esim, ILO

For webinar videos: https://www.homenetinternational.org/social-solidarity-economy/