

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***

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



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

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>



Tensions: Social & Solidarity Aspects

- 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>

Why do we need an umbrella framework?

- **Individually:**
 - SSE organizations can produce **good results** including innovative solutions for job creation & sustainability
 - But they can remain **marginalized** because of many **challenges**
- **An umbrella framework can:**
 - **strengthen** their ability to advocate and secure an enabling environment of policies and programmes
 - **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>

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:
 - **address the root causes** of development that excludes and is unsustainable so we can shape a different future
 - **rethink the way we do things** to ensure a “people and planet sensitive recovery”
 - 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>



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:

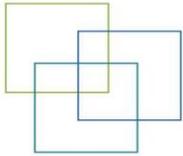
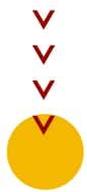
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b7d-VMscsSA&t=8s>

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>



International
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COOPERATION AMONG WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY:

A focus on home-based workers and waste pickers

A Joint ILO and WIEGO Initiative



The Study can be found at:

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/publication/wcms_567507.pdf

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:



Video 6:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SD38MXu8m54>

- **Agree a definition** of SSE, its principles & values
- **Asses** 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

How can HNI follow up?

- **Participate in the ILC discussions, with informed participants:**
 - Review the findings of the **ILO/WIEGO study**
 - Review **ILO materials** on SSE (links provided)
 - Participate virtually in the **SSE Academy** in November 2021
 - Engage with **unions** to get them on board
 - Prepare a **position paper** (with other Networks of IWs)
- **Next steps for HNI affiliates:**
 - Provide videos and information on **HNI web site**
 - Hold a **second webinar** to share SSE experiences & information



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