



# Social & Solidarity Economy (SSE) and Eco- Social Transformation

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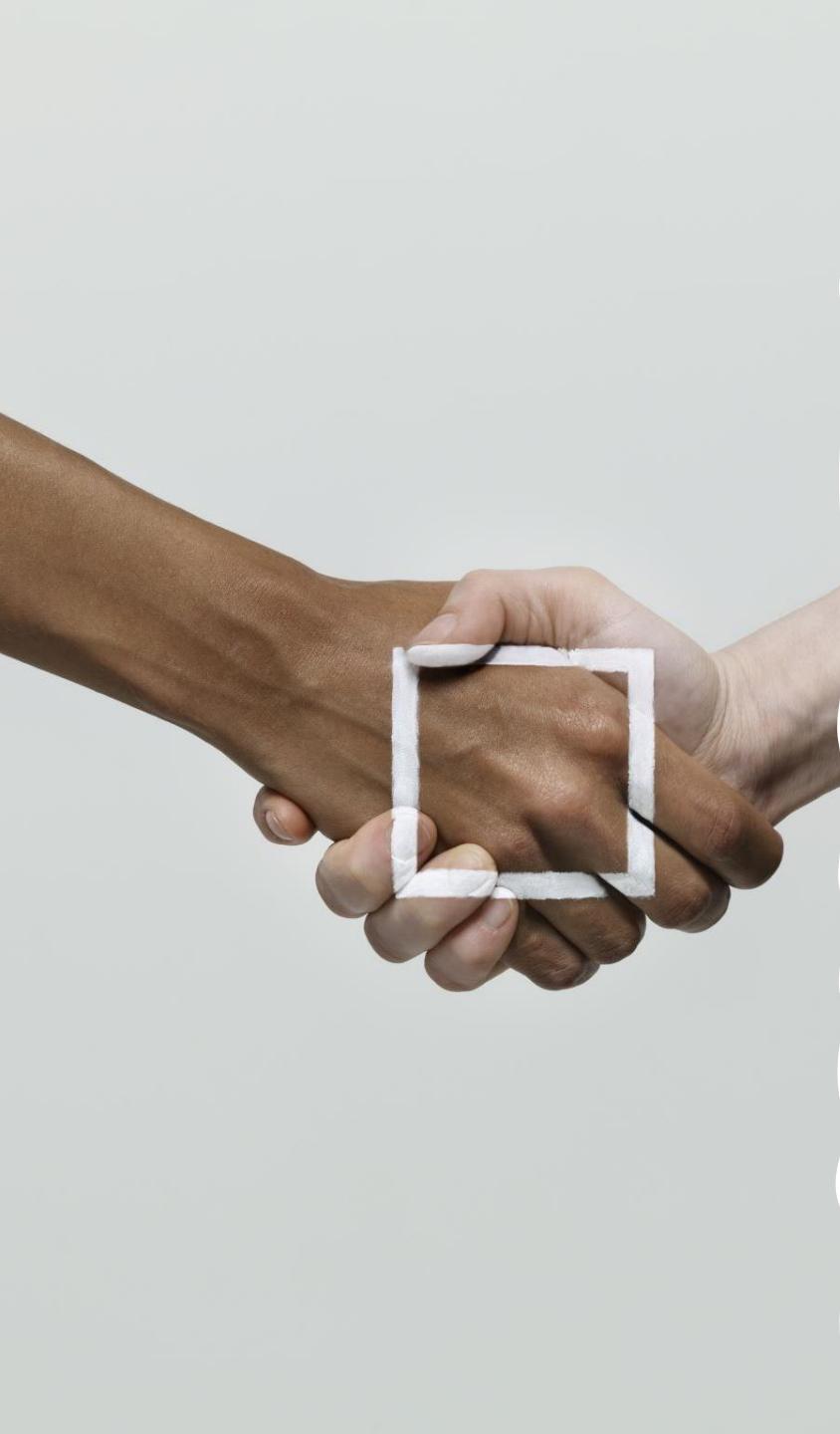
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# Structure of this contribution

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- What is Social and Solidarity economy
- Contextualizing Social and Solidarity Economy in the economic field
- The contribution of SSE to the global development goals (GDGs)
- Core elements of Social and Solidarity Economy
- The context: paradigms, trends and discourses
- Transformative potential of SSE
- Recent examples and their value added



# What is Social and Solidarity Economy?

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**SSE encompasses a broad variety of institutional arrangements driven by its members such as associations, cooperatives, solidarity groups, self-organized economic networks, solidarity purchase-groups, social entrepreneurs, solidarity-based financial systems, complementary currency or local saving groups**

(Utting 2015).



# The whole Economy

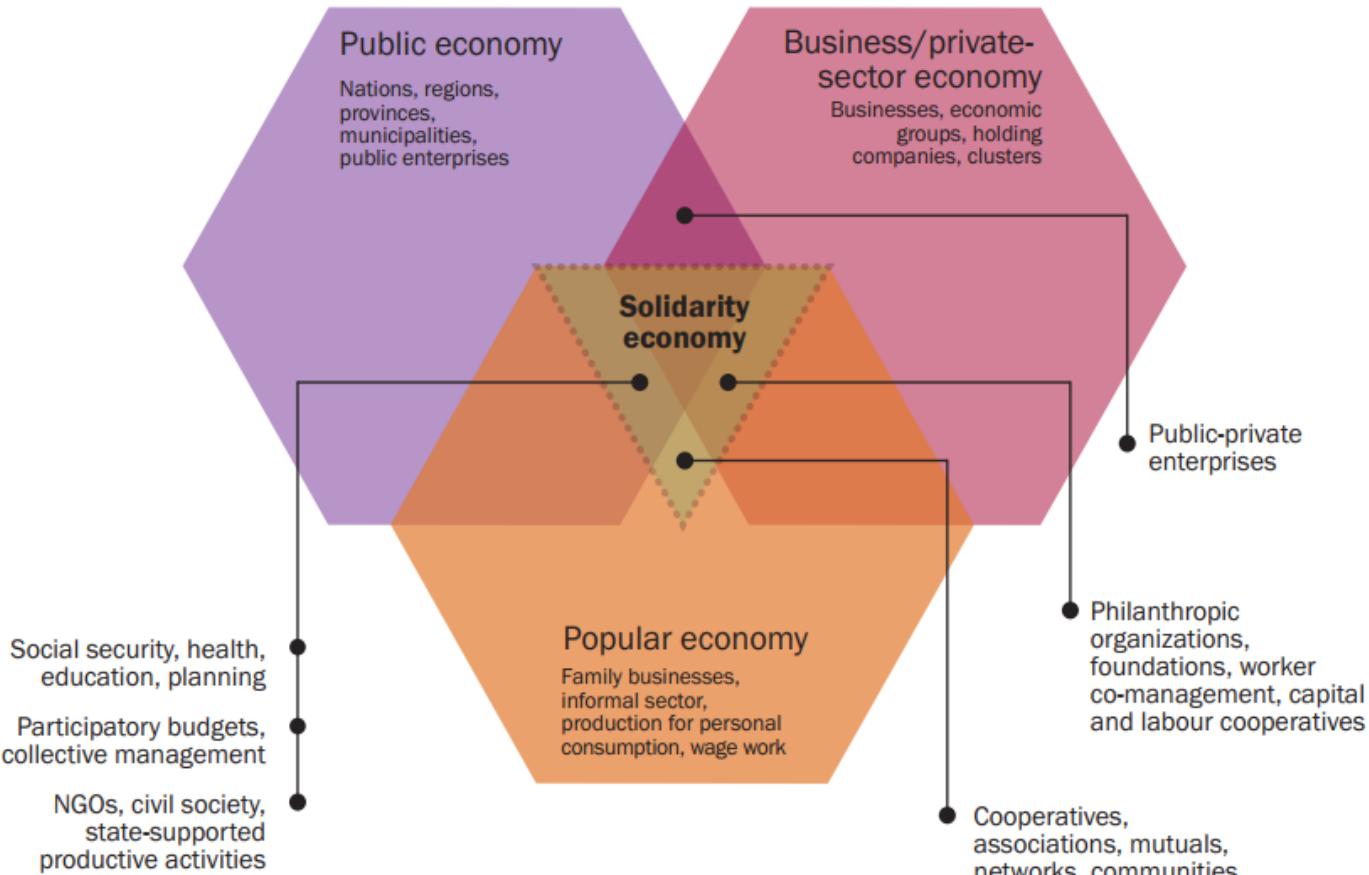
**The economic field is broad and diverse and goes far beyond the capitalist economy**

**Commodity markets and capitalist enterprises are only the visible part**

Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006; Gibson-Graham et al., 2013

## SSE in the plural economic field

Figure 0.7. Situating SSE in the broader economy



Note: The term solidarity economy, used in this figure, is often used in Latin America and is synonymous with social and solidarity economy. Source: Coraggio, José Luis. 2015. "Institutionalizing the Social and Solidarity Economy in Latin America." In *Social and Solidarity Economy: Beyond the Fringe*, edited by Peter Utting, 130–149. London: Zed Books/UNRISD.

# What makes the difference between solidarity-based and capital-based economy?

## All central criteria of economy :

Rationality, Objectives, Actors, Motivations, Coordination, Institutional Arrangements, Embeddedness in Community, Understanding of Property

SSE breaks the capitalist logic of separation between economy and life-world, integrating economy into life-context.

It encompasses the **whole economy** and the **whole labor**, not only gainful employment in market context.

Polanyi 1944, Elsen 1997, 2007, 2019, Biesecker, 2003; Gibson-Graham 2010, Utting 2015

# Core elements of SSE



# SSE and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

SSE can contribute to 11 of 17 SDGs, f. i. fighting poverty, reduction of inequalities, decent work, responsible consumption and production or gender equality.

It can foster autonomy und resilience of disadvantaged groups.

(UNRISD Flagship-Bericht 2016)

The United Nations have created the UN Task-Force Social & Solidarity Economy 2021 (UNTSSE)

The European Commission has created a European Action-Plan for SSE in 2021





# Societal Context of SSE: Recent Paradigms, Discourses and Trends

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289.33

# Reflexive Modernization

(Beck, Giddens)

Social and Solidarity Economy is one of the consequences of reflexive modernity.

It pays account to the errors and damages caused by industrial modernization, globalization, commodification and growth fixation and the ecological and socio-cultural destruction.

The consequence of this awareness, is the renunciation from the this destructive development model and the search for responsible and reflexive ways to cope with recent and future challenges



# Growth-Turn and SSE

**Social and Solidarity Economy is a core part of diverse economies which plays a central role in post-growth society and economy.**

**Economy in the post-growth-society is based on cooperative, and localized entities, answering to basic needs of the community.**

*Selection of promoters:*

Catherine Gibson and Julie Graham

Nico Paech

Tim Jackson

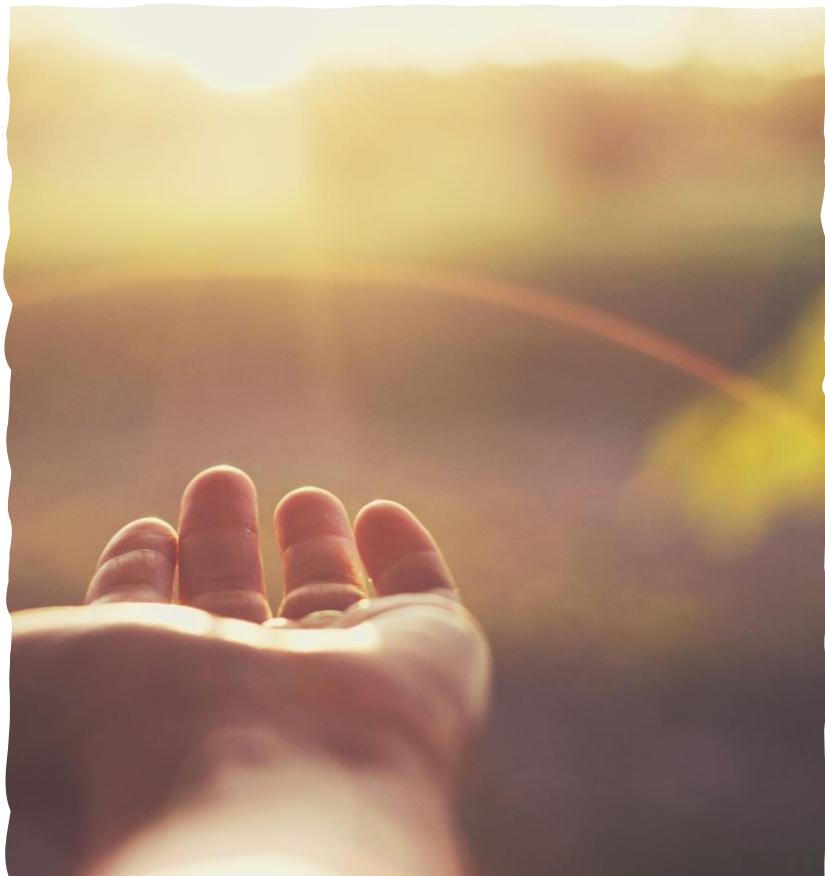
Jean Laville

UNTSSE



# Reflexive return to the common-good perspective: Conviviality

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- Envisioning common good today, requires for a new relational and pluriversal culture of co-habitation of humans and of their relation to nature.
- The concept of conviviality refers to the growth-turn and to alternative imaginations of welfare, a good life for all (Acosta) and the maintainance of livelyhood.
- Convivialism breakes with the dominance of capital- and growth-oriented economy and places pluriversal common good into the center

*Convivialists international 2019*

## Economy for the Common Good as a post-growth approach

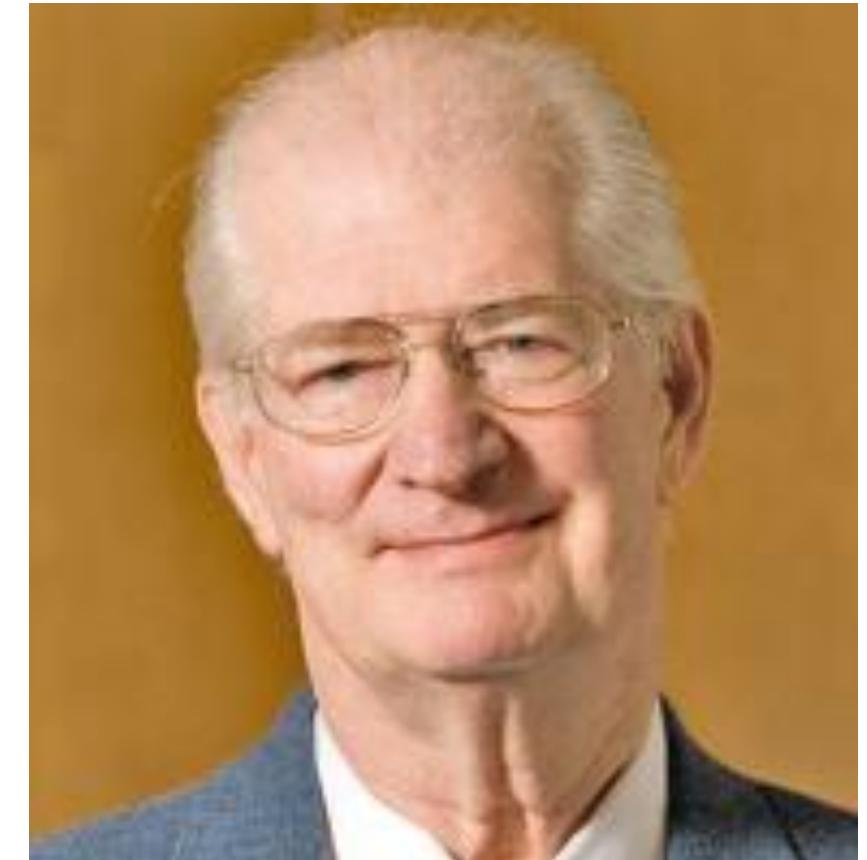
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**Herman Daly**, economist of the worldbank mentioned in 1996 besides the ecological, the socio-ethical limits of growth.

The dominant system has no future because:

- It is based on the permanent destruction of geological capital on the costs of upcomming generations and on the takeover of the livelihood of non-human beings;
- The welfare-effects of growth are highly limited;
- It is connected with socially destructive moral standards standards, like the glorification of self-interest.

*Daly, 1996, Economy for the Common Good.*



# „Cinderella Economy“ and eco-social transformation

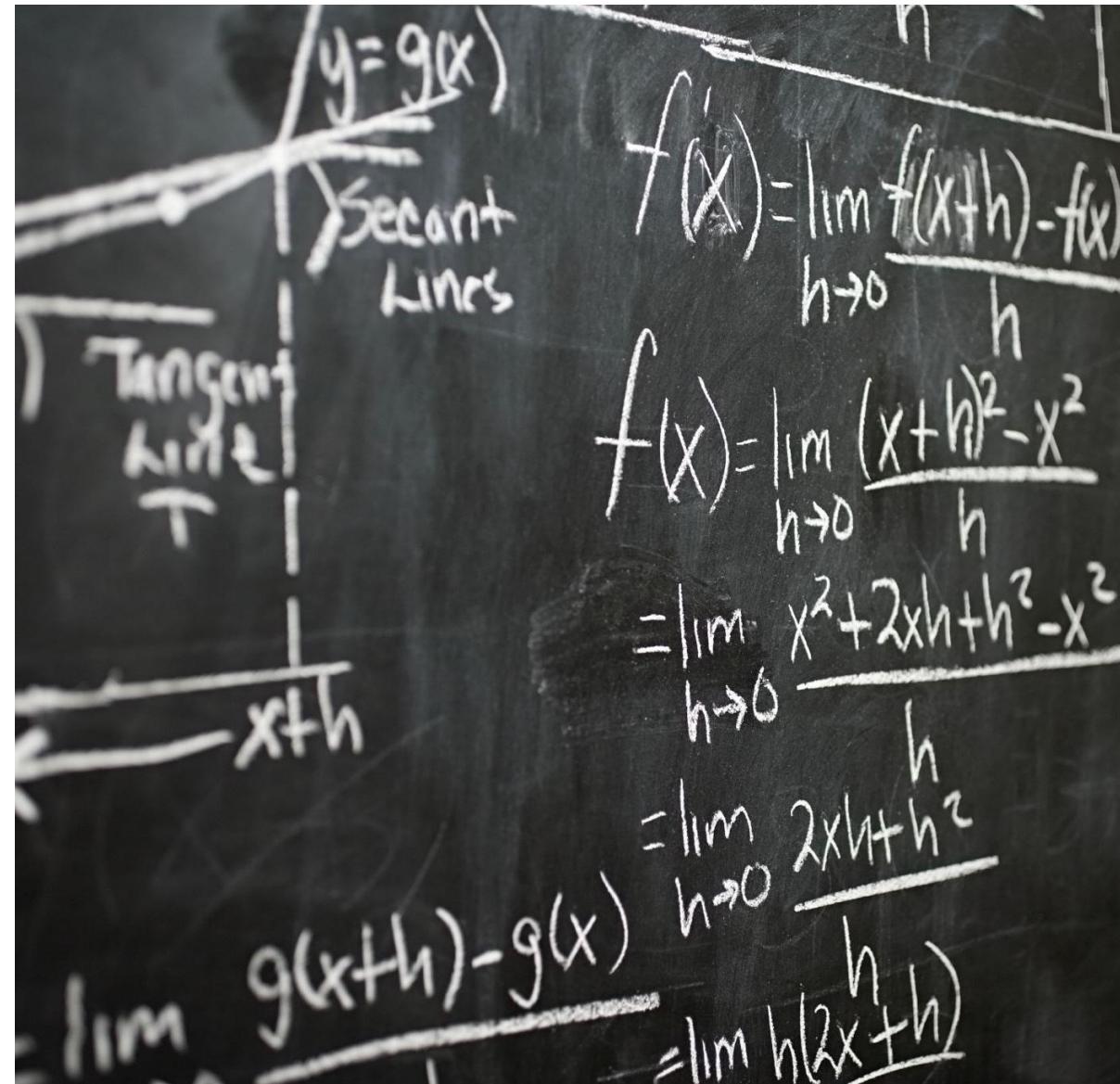


The plurality of existing non-market economies, generated by civil society from below, implies core aspects of a post-growth society and economy.

*Tim Jackson, 2009*

# Transformative Potential of SSE

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$$y = g(x)$$

Secant Lines

Tangent Line T

$x+h$

$$f'(x) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h) - f(x)}{h}$$
$$f'(x) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{(x+h)^2 - x^2}{h}$$
$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{x^2 + 2xh + h^2 - x^2}{h}$$
$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{2xh + h^2}{h}$$
$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{h(2x + h)}{h}$$
$$= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} h(2x + h)$$

# Why can SSE foster eco-social transformation?

- It inserts the rationality of civil society into economy
- It answers to vital needs
- It is not primarily profit oriented, not serving shareholder but stakeholder-interests
- It acts in direct relationship between producers and consumers and avoids mediators
- It can detract from inherent constraints of world-market
- It works in multi-finance mix of own income, subject aid, project aid, donations etc.
- It creates solidarity = social capital, provides internal cohesion
- It effects a decommodification

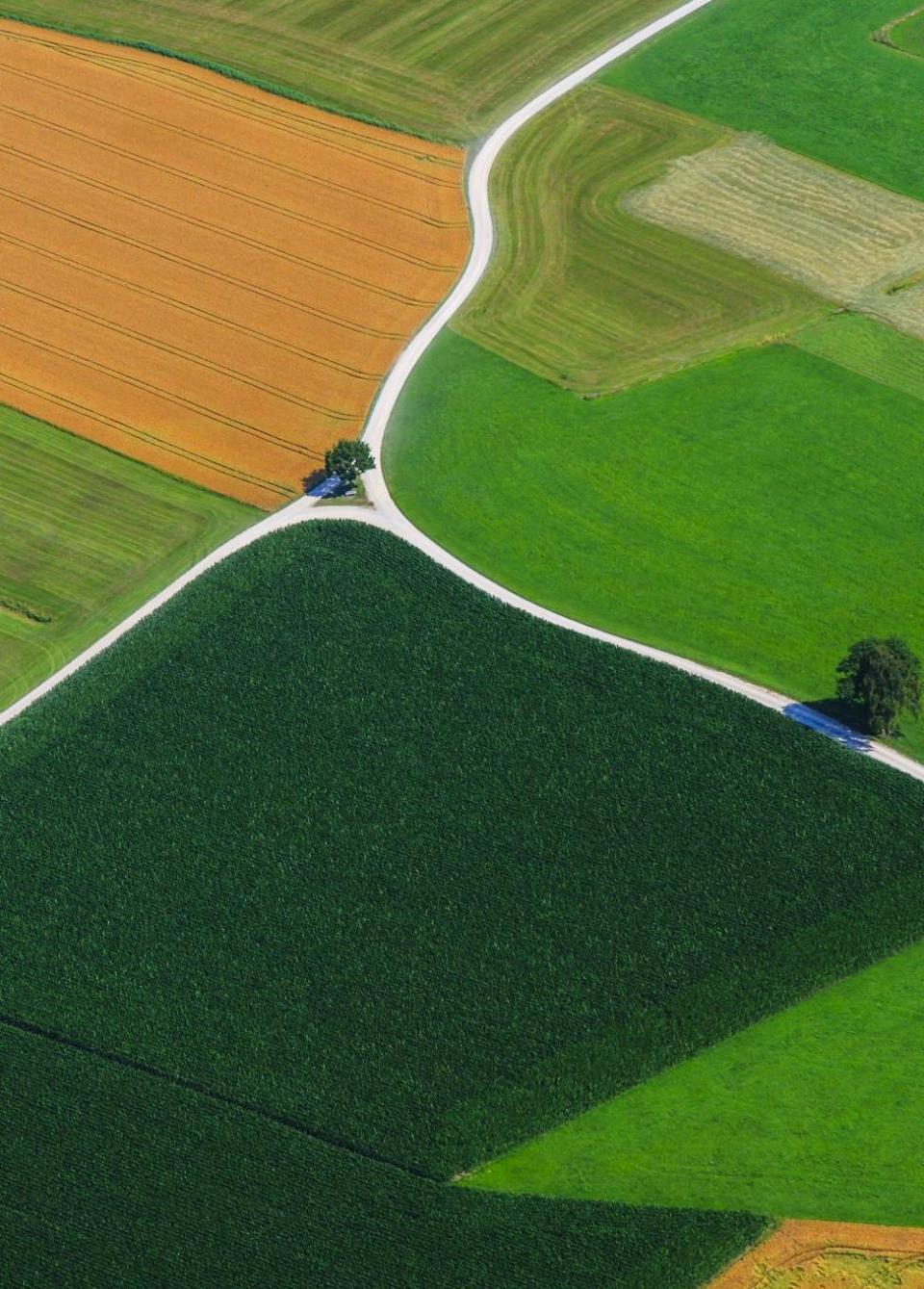


# The integrative potential of „AS-WELL-AS“

SSE as an integrative area approach:

- Integrates diverse actors and objectives in favor of social, cultural, economic, political or ecological objectives;
- Generates sector-transgressing solutions, fitting to specific local needs and options;
- Reduces dependencies from market supply on local level;
- Bases on democratic decision-making, independent from investors, hierarchical positions and monetary considerations;
- Allows for self-governance and self-determination of the involved actors;

And by this generates new institutional arrangements and innovative solutions



**SSE integrates diverse actors, sectors and rationalities and generates new solutions by new combinations**

**Examples:**

- **Social agriculture** combines social-, educational and healthcare services with (bio-) agriculture and generates new local welfare solutions
- **Community supported agriculture (CSA)** supports small local (bio)farms and supplies healthy food to local people. It creates short circuits, fosters social capital and serves to maintain rural areas.
- **Urban approaches connected with housing** can be the starting point for upcycling workshops, elderly-care cooperatives, mobility-share-systems or Food Coops, and can be actors of sustainable urban development.

A photograph of a swimming pool with clear blue water. On the left side, a metal ladder is partially submerged in the water. The pool's edge is visible on the left, showing a white tiled deck and a blue and white patterned tile border.

common pool resources and  
inclusive ownership multiplying  
opportunities

# **Key-Categories: Private Property/ Common ownership**

**The dominant economic system is based on private property and deleted the societal memory of the variety of inclusive forms of common ownership.**

**This is a core aspect for the development of a sustainable future.**



# Varieties of inclusive ownership

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- Public ownership
- Cooperative utilization property
- Commons
- Shared ownership
- Long-term lease
- Intitlements to access

Inclusive ownership multiplies opportunities, divides responsibility, gives access to citizens, reduces resource input, prevents speculation, fosters long-term perspectives and supports sustainable development



# Selection of current examples of SSE and their added social value

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## Civil-society driven Cooperatives:

A young and  
innovative  
movement rooted  
in history of SSE

2,6 Million cooperatives globally with 1 Billion members demonstrate the strength of the economic and social culture of cooperatives as models of sustainable development.

We mention associations, driven by local people, answering to specific needs of the community.

Their special value:

- Democratic self-organization: one person, one vote
- Independent from external Investors
- Avoiding mediators
- Not primarily capital driven



## New Community Cooperatives

- An effective approach to democratic learning and organizing community-needs from below
- Practicing a new interplay between state, market and civil society
- Inserting civilsociety-rationality and concrete vital needs as forming forces into local solutions
- Bundling power for maintaining and developing structures of conviviality and sustainable development
- Construction of creative and unconventional combinations for needs and resources on site



## New cooperatives and networks linking organic agricultural producers with consumers (food-coops)

- **Localization and independence from world-market supply**
- **Avoiding mediators**
- **Maintainance of local-regional food-souvereignty**
- **Sharing the risks of small bio-agricultural producers, securing their survival**
- **Local supply of healthy food**
- **Versorgung mit gesunden Lebensmitteln**
- **Being actors of maintainance and sustainable development of rural area**

Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA): Consumers support and finance local bio-farmers



# Added Value of Housing-Cooperatives

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**Affordable housing is the most important aspect of social security!**

- **The absorption of yield return is dispendet**
- **Housing cooperatives are neutralized against speculation**
- **They are important actors in non-speculative and sustainable urban development**
- **They offer common infrastructure for their members and the community (urban gardens, workshops, share-resources etc.)**
- **They facilitate lively communities and the are actors of integrative social policy (f.i. creating an elderly care mutual cooperative)**



# Cooperatives for mutual elderly care

Effective approach to foster self-determined aging in the own living environment

Avoiding residential care in nursing homes

Creating a new culture of family-transgressing intergenerative living and learning

Generating a new mutuality between the 3rd and the 4th age

Offering new community infrastructure also for the benefit of other groups

They are models of market-independent supporting-structures

# Italian Social Cooperatives (LAW 381/91):

- Productive cooperatives working with disadvantaged people,
- Acting in innovative fields (agriculture, arts & crafts etc.)
- Offering decent work and democratic participation also in the governance of the cooperative
- Enabling emancipatory social work





The social cooperative BARIKAMÀ, from exploited refugees to successful entrepreneurs and  
ambassadors for human rights



## **Social Agriculture, a broad labor-intensive field for integration, health-care and landscape ecology**

**Italian Law since 2015**

**New forms of connecting agricultural, landscape ecology, social-, elderly and healthcare services, education, resocialization, social and labor-integration**

**Recently: ca. 1.700 enterprises, 70% as social cooperatives**

Read more: Elsen S, Angeli S et.al. Perspektiven der Sozialen Landwirtschaft. Bozen 2020



Labour Integration

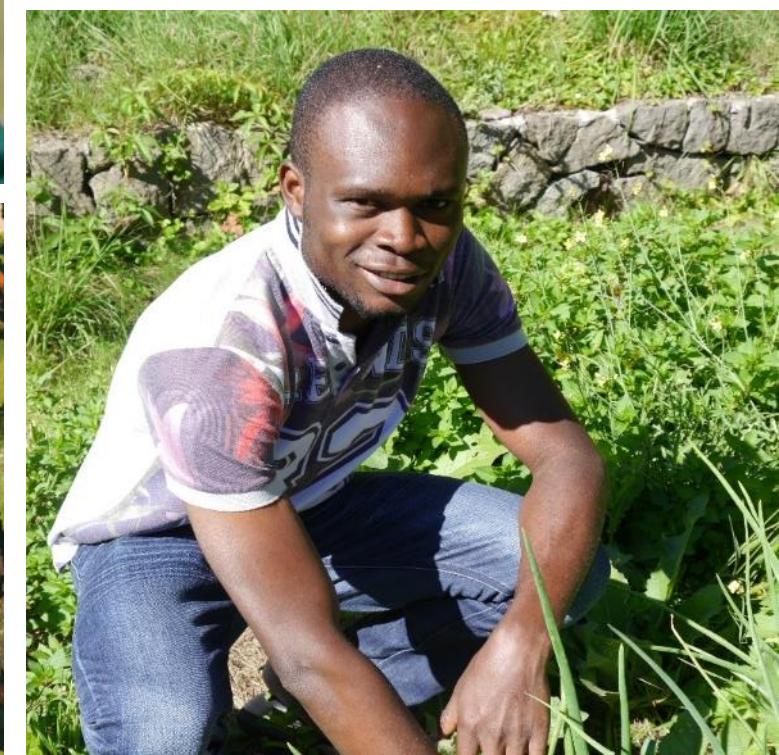
School at a farm

Integration of people with special needs

Qualification in prisons

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Acting-fields of social agriculture



A symbolic and multifaceted social movement, generating self-reliance, collaborative subsistence and a do-it-yourself-culture, is emerging in European cities.

Citizens try to maintain, repair, share, re-use, upcycle or recycle objects commonly, aiming to reclaim knowledge and skills to countervail consumerism and win more self-determination.

The broader frame of these activities is the idea of Open-Source-Circular-Economy (OSCE).

Baier, Hansing, Müller, Werner: Die Welt  
reparieren. 2016

# Repair Cafes



# Time Banks: Banks for Social Capital

**Functions of Time** are identical with those of money: medium of change, measurement of value, conservation of value. **Special benefit:** stability of value

Time banks are promoted in many countries as a medium of over-familiar mutuality

**They enable new communities of solidarity, participation and reciprocity**

The most famous promoter: Bernard Lietaer, ex chief economist of the Belge national bank.

## Alternative and Complementary Currency

To understand money as a social medium, to strengthen local cycles, resilience and social capital



Famous Promoter: Bernard Lietaer, ex chief-economist of the Belge national bank

# Read more:

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- UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. 2022. Crises of Inequality. Shifting Power for a New Eco-Social Contract. Geneva: United Nations
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Thanks for your  
Attention!  
Questions and  
comments?

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