

Concept Note for UNTFSSE International Conference in Geneva, 25-26 June 2019: Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: What Role for Social and Solidarity Economy?



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# Summary

In recent years attention has increasingly been turned towards the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and its approaches to sustainable development that incorporate social, economic and at times environmental objectives in an integrated and balanced manner. SSE has the capacity to address some of the structural underpinnings of vulnerability, exclusion and unsustainable development. Its integrated nature means it could potentially contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs with their overarching principle, “leave no one behind”.

This potential relationship between SSE and the SDGs has yet to be thoroughly explored. The available knowledge is largely based on either heuristic exercises matching areas of SSE intervention with specific SDGs, or conjecture about SSE's potential in particular cases. Often ignoring the underlying political economy, institutional and cultural factors—or, indeed, the enabling environment for SSE—such matching exercises and conjecture are less useful for policy makers and practitioners interested in how and to what extent SSE can contribute to the SDGs.

To deepen the knowledge and accumulate the empirical evidence for enabling environment for the SSE and the contribution of SSE to achieving the SDGs in different contexts, the SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs, which is a part of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (UNTFSSE)[[1]](#footnote-1) launched a Call for Papers in June 2018. Receiving more than 320 abstracts from different parts of the world, The SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs which United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is serving as the implementation organization selected and invited 180 abstracts to submit a draft paper by January 2019. Out of 180 abstracts, the SSE Knowledge Hub received the 144 papers. UNTFSSE created three key international fora where around 70 papers will be presented. They are 1) UNTFSSE Special Sessions of International Conference on the Localization of the SDGs and the Co-Construction of the Means of Implementation, Yeonsei University, Wonju, Republic of Korea, 23-24 February 2019; 2) the UNTFSEE International Conference: Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: What Role for Social and Solidarity Economy?, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland; 3) the UNTFSSE Special Sessions of Korea-Africa Forum, Seoul, South Korea, December, 2019. In addition, more than 100 papers including those presented at the three international fora will be archived in the SSE Knowledge Hub for SDGs housed in the UNTFSSE website and disseminated through portals of members and observers of UNTFSSE such as socioeco.org.

Now that the two Special Sessions which will be held in South Korea have been funded by Yonsei University and Korea-Africa Foundation, UNTFSSE seeks a funding for the UNTFSEE International Conference: Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: What Role for Social and Solidarity Economy?, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland in which around 48 papers will be presented.

# Background

## SSE and the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the need to “achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions—economic, social and environmental—in a balanced and integrated manner” (UNGA, 2015, para 2). This implies that business-as-usual approaches are no longer an option if the “transformative vision” of the Agenda is to be realized and the interconnected challenges facing humanity are to be addressed. A more transformative, innovative and inclusive approach to development needs to be pursued instead.

In recent years attention has increasingly been turned towards the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and its approaches to sustainable development that incorporate social, economic and at times environmental objectives in an integrated and balanced manner. SSE has the capacity to address some of the structural underpinnings of vulnerability, exclusion and unsustainable development. Its integrated nature means it could potentially contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs with their overarching principle, “leave no one behind”.

This potential relationship between SSE and the SDGs has yet to be thoroughly explored. The available knowledge is largely based on either heuristic exercises matching areas of SSE intervention with specific SDGs, or conjecture about SSE's potential in particular cases. Often ignoring the underlying political economy, institutional and cultural factors—or, indeed, the enabling environment for SSE—such matching exercises and conjecture are less useful for policy makers and practitioners interested in how and to what extent SSE can contribute to the SDGs.

## Establishment of UNTFSSE

Responding to the increasing policy attention to “alternative” production, finance and consumption of social and solidarity economy as a means to address multiple global crises and heightened concerns about the social and environmental consequences of market- and corporate-led development, on 6–8 May 2013, UNRISD convened [a conference on the Potential and Limits of Social and Solidarity Economy](http://www.unrisd.org/sseconf), co-hosted with the International Labour Office (ILO). Over 50 speakers presented papers during 11 conference sessions and side events. The conference drew in a large and varied audience of about 300 participants, including senior staff members from United Nations agencies such as the ILO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Women and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Other international organizations and networks represented included the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social and Solidarity Economy(RIPESS), The Mont-Blanc Meetings, and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). SSE practitioners and PhD candidates also presented their work at two side events: the Practitioners’ Forum and the PhD Poster Session. Back to back with the conference, the United Nations Non-Governmental Liason Service (UN-NGLS) organized a special session on Alternative Finance and Complementary Currencies, while the ILO held a meeting on trade union–cooperative relations.

As a follow-up action based on the discussions at the Conference, [the founding meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (UNTFSSE)](http://unsse.org/?page_id=5) took place on 30 September 2013 in Geneva. The meeting was convened by ILO, UNDP, UN-NGLS and UNRISD, and attended by 14 agencies. The participants of the meeting decided to create the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (UNTFSSE) which aims to raise the visibility of debates about Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) within the UN system and beyond. The members and observers of the Task Force are to undertake collaborative activities to: 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.

The work of the UNTFSSE takes the form of joint initiatives among members: producing reports and briefs, organizing events related to SSE in connection with relevant UN processes and conferences, and creating partnerships and dialogues with governmental and civil society entities.

The current members and observers of the UNTFSSE are as follows:

Members: ECLAC, ESCWA, FAO, ILO, OECD, TDR, UNAIDS, UNDESA, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIDO, UN-NGLS, UNRISD, UN Women, WHO and WPF.

Observers : [CITIES](http://cities-ess.org/about/?lang=en), [CSEND](http://www.csend.org/home), [EESC](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/), [EMES](https://emes.net/), [FMDV](https://www.uclg.org/en/node/2107), [GSEF](http://www.gsef-net.org/), [ICA](https://www.ica.coop/en), [MedESS](http://iesmed.eu/en/projectes/medess/), [SSE International Forum](http://www.essfi.coop/en/), [Social Economy Europe](http://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/), [RIPESS](http://www.ripess.org/?lang=en) and [CIRIEC](http://www.ciriec.uliege.be/en/).

## The launch of SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs

At its third meeting in February 2014 the members and observers of the UNTFSSE agreed to establish a UNTFSSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs and commissioning a preparation work to UNRISD. After a series of consultation with members and observers of the UNTFSSE, UNRISD established a proposal for the SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs which was officially launched in 2018. The purpose of the SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs is to enhance awareness of and contribute to the body of knowledge on social and solidarity economy (SSE) as a means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It aims to synthesize existing knowledge, evidence and information; supplement these with value-added research and analysis; and foster innovative approaches and inclusive dialogue among policy makers and practitioners of SSE in both developed and developing countries. UNRISD serves as the implementation organization for the SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs.

[The SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BB128/%28httpProjects%29/51FF4ADFC37CEE3DC125829500498071?OpenDocument) is particularly paying attention to fill the research gaps on the contribution of SSE to achieving the SDGs by synthesizing existing knowledge, evidence and information; supplementing these with value-added research and analysis; and fostering innovative approaches and inclusive dialogue among policy makers and practitioners of SSE in both developed and developing countries. Key insights, lessons and recommendations will be published and disseminated in a range of formats. Knowledge Hub resources will be of use to practitioners and policy makers working towards the implementation of the SDGs, and will also inform the UNTFSSE’s communications, advocacy, research and programmatic agenda on SSE and the SDGs.

## UNTFSSE Call for Papers

In addition to producing research papers on various issues of SSE, in June 2018 the Knowledge Hub launched a Call for Papers to assess the contribution of SSE to inclusive and sustainable development, with a particular emphasis on local contexts: **“Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: What Role for Social and Solidarity Economy?”**.

Organized by UNRISD, in its role as the implementing organization of the Knowledge Hub, the Call for Papers aimed to identify and mobilize research from different regions and territories so as to critically examine the role of SSE as a means of implementation for the SDGs.

Specifically, the Call invited researchers and practitioners to submit proposals for papers related to two main issue areas:

i. SSE as a means of implementation for the SDGs. Of interest are the ways in which SSE actors and institutions can facilitate the implementation of goals and targets associated with the SDGs, particularly in local settings. What works and why? What is the comparative advantage of SSE in relation to other forms of economy, in terms of minimizing trade-offs between different dimensions of development and promoting a more integrated approach? What actors and institutions are key for creating an enabling environment for SDG implementation through SSE? What is the scope for replicating positive initiatives in other local settings? Please note that papers examining local experiences related to a specific organization or grassroots initiative should attempt to go beyond a focus on micro dynamics or the micro level and also consider interactions with national and regional actors and institutions, as well as the mechanisms and scope for scaling up and replicating small scale local initiatives.

ii. Measuring SSE, its scale and impact. In a context where systematic data on SSE are still scarce, where definitions and indicators vary, and where statistics often fail to capture the diversity of SSE actors and impacts, the Call aims to identify robust methodologies and innovative solutions for measuring SSE and its impacts.

In order to make the Call open to much wider communities of SSE, the Call allowed the submission of abstracts in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

The response to the Call was extremely positive: 320 abstracts were received of which 180 were deemed to respond particularly well to the Call. In response to the Call for submission of papers, out of 180, 144 papers have been submitted.

***Profile of submitted papers and authors***

|  |
| --- |
| Languages |
| English | French | Portuguese | Spanish  | Total |
| 101 | 14 | 9 | 20 | 144 |
| Lead author's gender |
| Female | Male  | Others | Total |
| 69 | 75 | 0 | 144 |
| Lead author's profile by Global South and North |
| North | South | Total |
| 66 | 78 | 144 |
| Nature of papers |
| Theory-oriented | Theory and case study oriented | Empirical case study oriented | Total |
| 19 | 19 | 106 | 144 |
| Empirical cases by regions (Both Theory and case study oriented and Empirical case study oriented)  |
| Africa | Asia | Europe | Latin America | North America | Total |
| 20 | 33 | 42 | 22 | 8 | 125 |

Reviewing committee, composed of UNRISD staffs and volunteers from the other members and observers of the UNTFSSE, started reviewing process to select:

1. 11 papers which will be presented at the UNTFSSE Asian Edition in Wonju Campus, Yonsei University, the Republic of Korea on 24 February 2019 ([Special Session at the International Conference on the Localization of the SDGs and the Co-Construction of the Means of Implementation](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BD6AB/%28httpEvents%29/E605D173595CB015C1258384002E80CF?OpenDocument));
2. 48 papers which will be presented at the UNTFSSE Conference in Geneva, 25-26 June 2019 (see *the Draft agenda of the UNTFSSE Conference in Geneva* below);
3. 8-9 papers which will be presented at the UNTFSSE African Edition in December 2019 (date and location TBD); and
4. papers which will be archived in the database of the SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs which will be established in the first half of 2019.

Around 70 papers will be presented in the international fora organized by UNTFSSE and more than 100 papers are expected to be archived in the SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs webpage. Financial support for the UNTFSSE Asian and African Editions has been already pledged by Yonsei University and the Korea-Africa Foundation. The UNTFSSE currently seeks financial support for the UNTFSSE Conference in Geneva, 25-26 June 2019.

# The UNTFSSE Conference “Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: What Role for Social and Solidarity Economy?” in Geneva

The 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agreed by all United Nations member states in 2015, provides a framework for tracking progress in relation to specific development goals, and in relation to more holistic and integrated patterns of development that avoid the trade-offs and contradictions associated with the development strategies often pursued in the past. Furthermore, the emphasis within the 2030 Agenda on national goals and targets leaves open the question of how the SDGs will be implemented at the local level and grounded in local realities.

While there is a growing body of research and knowledge on SSE, there has been little attempt to systematically analyze the contribution of SSE achieving SDGs in a local context. Much information and analysis remain dispersed and anecdotal. It can also be prone to romanticizing the role of SSE, lacking critical analysis of constraints and challenges. And there is a need for knowledge to be synthesized and presented in ways that can usefully inform policy making and advocacy on inclusive and sustainable development.

The main objectives of the UNTFSSE International Conference are to:

* examine how SSE can be a means of fostering the integrated and holistic nature of sustainable development in order to avoid the trade-offs and contradictions of mainstream development approaches
* deepen the understanding about how the economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects of development are intertwined in SSE, as well as the role of democratic politics and governance in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
* contribute to enhancing the visibility of SSE as a means of implementation of the SDGs and the level of recognition of UNTFSSE within and beyond the UN system

The conference will provide a space where both researchers and practitioners in SSE share and exchange ideas and experience in achieving the SDGs in a local context. They include but are not limited to: the speakers identified through a Call for Papers that generated proposals from more than 320 researchers from 60 countries; staffs of UN Agencies, particularly the members of the UNTFSSE; civil society organizations, particularly the members of the UNTFSSE and those SSE organizations and enterprises based in Geneva; researchers, academics and students.

Demonstrating the concrete ways in which SSE supports the implementation of the SDGs and identifying and assessing robust methodologies and innovative approaches to the measurement of the SSE impact, in relation to the SDGs, the Conference will update and elaborate the strategies of UNTFSSE based on [the 2013 UNRISD Conference on the Potential and Limits of Social and Solidarity Economy](http://www.unrisd.org/sseconf) and contribute to enhancing the visibility of SSE as a means of implementation and the level of recognition of UNTFSSE within and beyond the UN system.

## Draft agenda of the conference

**UNTFSSE International Conference: Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: What Role for Social and Solidarity Economy?**

*February 12th 2019 Version*

Room II at R3 South, ILO, Geneva, Switzerland

25-26, June 2019

**Conference languages (E: English, S: Spanish, F: French)**

**Day 0 (June 24, 2019)**

**17:30 – 19:00 Pre-Conference Public Seminar: Leaving no one behind: What role for Social and Solidarity Economy?** *(Venue: University of Geneva. Themes, format and participants will be further discussed at the UNTFSSE meeting on 26 Feb 2019).*

**Day 1 (June 25, 2019)**

**8:15 – 9:00 Registration**

**9:00 – 10:00 Opening Session (E, S, F)**

Moderator: Paul Ladd (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)/ SSE Knowledge Hub for the SDGs)

* Guy Rider, Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO) (TBC)
* Pierre-Louis LORENZ, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva (TBC)
* Ji-ah PAIK, Permanent Representative, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations and the other International Organizations in Geneva (TBC)
* Vic Van Vuuren, Director, Enterprise Department, ILO / Chair of the Working Committee of UNTFSSE
* A representative of UNTFSSE Advisory Group (potentially GSEF) (TBD)

**10:00 – 10:30 Keynote speeches (E, S, F)**

TBD

**10:30 – 10:45 Coffee break**

**10:45 – 12:00 Parallel Sessions** (Session I-A, Session I-B, Session I-C) (12 papers in total)

*Each parallel session could be moderated by a delegate of the UNTFSSE members and observers*

* Session I-A (4 papers, 15 min for each paper): SSE and People (1) (provisional title) **(E, S, F)**
* Session I-B (4 papers, 15 min for each paper): SSE and Prosperity (1) (provisional title) **(E)**
* Session I-C (4 papers, 15 min for each paper): SSE and Planet (1) (provisional title) **(E)**

**12:00– 14:00 Lunch Break**

**14:00 – 15:15 Parallel Sessions** (Session II-A, Session II-B, Session II-C) (12 papers in total)

* Session II-A (4 papers, 15 min for each paper): SSE and People (2) (provisional title) (E)
* Session II-B (4 papers, 15 min for each paper): SSE and Prosperity (2) (provisional title) **(E, S, F)**
* Session II-C (4 papers, 15 min for each paper): SSE and Planet (2) (provisional title) **(E)**

**15:15-15:30 Coffee Break**

**15:30 – 17:00 Special Session organized by member and observers (E, S, F) \***

**18:00 – 21:00 Reception \*\***

**Day 2 (June 26, 2019)**

**8:15 – 9:00 Registration**

**9:00 – 10:15 Parallel Sessions** (Session III-A, Session III-B, Session III-C) (12 papers in total)

* Session III-A (4 papers, 15 min for each paper) Development of SSE at the local level (1) (Provisional title) **(E,S)**
* Session III-B (4 papers, 15 min for each paper) SSE Impact Measurement (Provisional title) **(E)**
* Session III-C (4 papers, 15 min for each paper) Governance and Finance of SSE (1) (Provisional title) **(E, F)**

**10:15 – 10:30 Coffee Break**

**10:30 – 12:00 Special Session organized by member and observers (E, S, F) \***

**12:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break**

**14:00 – 15:15 Parallel Sessions** (Session IV-A, Session IV-B, Session IV-C) (12 papers in total)

* Session IV-A (4 papers, 15 min for each paper) Development of SSE at the local level (2) (Provisional title) **(E)**
* Session IV-B (4 papers, 15 min for each paper) Theories and concepts of SSE (provisional title) (Provisional title) **(E, F)**
* Session IV-C (4 papers, 15 min for each paper) Governance and Finance of SSE of SSE (2) (Provisional title) **(E, S)**

**15:15 – 15:30 Coffee Break**

**15:30 – 17:00 Closing Plenary Session** **(E, S, F)**

*Part A 15:30 – 16:15*

*Reporting key findings and lessons drawn from parallel sessions:*

* *Development of SSE at the local level (1)(2): 5 min*
* *SSE and Planet (1)(2): 5 min*
* *SSE Impact Measurement: 5 min*
* *Theories and concepts of SSE: 5 min*
* *SSE and People (1)(2): 5 min*
* *SSE and Prosperity (1)(2): 5 min*
* *Finance and Governance of SSE (1)(2): 5m.*

*Part B 16:15-17:00*

*Plenary discussion. Participants are asked to provide inputs a new position paper of UNTFSSE: SSE’s contribution to the SDGs. UNTFSSE 2014 position paper provided as context.*

**Note**

\* Currently we have four confirmation and proposals from the member and observers to organize a special session. The decision will be made at the next UNTFSSE meeting.

1. GSEF: Round Table of Local Governments, City Counselors & Members of National and European Parliaments who would share their best practices & public policies on how the SSE can be a strategy to implement SDGs, especially SDG 8, 10, 16 & 17. Travel costs of panelists will be covered by GSEF.

2. ICA / CIRIEC / SSE Forum International special session: The session is co-organized by ICA, CIRIEC and SSE Forum International. It will concern three social economy initiatives/projects/enterprises having a large approach/effect as well as direct + indirect positive impacts concerning several SDGs. CIRIEC, ICA and SSE International will jointly cover the travel and accommodation expenses of the six persons intervening in the proposed joint plenary session.

3. RIPESS: RIPESS wants to organize the session with one of the themes of public policy for SSE; a possible UN Resolution of SSE, the work of UN Agencies and bodies, the work of UNTFSSE, the task of the Knowledge Hub, how to promote SSE in the context of the SDGs etc. The funding issue has not been discussed yet.

4. OECD: OECD wants to organize a special session on the social impact measurement. They don’t have funding for this session.

\*\* Le Centre d'Accueil de la Genève Internationale (CAGI) will provide a venue for the reception (La Pastorale "La Maion de Maître" 106, Route de Ferney, 1202 Genève).

1. Currently, UNTFSSE is composed of 18 UN Agencies as members and 12 international and regional civil society groups working on SSE and its related issues. The members are: ECLAC, ESCWA, FAO, ILO, OECD, TDR, UNAIDS, UNDESA, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIDO, UN-NGLS, UNRISD, UN Women, WHO and WPF. The observers are: [CITIES](http://cities-ess.org/about/?lang=en), [CSEND](http://www.csend.org/home), [EESC](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/), [EMES](https://emes.net/), [FMDV](https://www.uclg.org/en/node/2107), [GSEF](http://www.gsef-net.org/), [ICA](https://www.ica.coop/en), [MedESS](http://iesmed.eu/en/projectes/medess/), [SSE International Forum](http://www.essfi.coop/en/), [Social Economy Europe](http://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/), [RIPESS](http://www.ripess.org/?lang=en) and [CIRIEC](http://www.ciriec.uliege.be/en/). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)