



The Youth revive the society

INTERVIEW BOOK
FINAL REPORT



Sponsored by



Organized by



The Youth
revive the society

INTERVIEW BOOK

FINAL REPORT



| 2017 Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy |

The Youth revive the society

INTERVIEW BOOK

FINAL REPORT

This book is based on interviews with 14 participants of the first “Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy”, which was held in Seoul and Gurye in the Republic of Korea, August 22~25, 2017. One hundred young SSE practitioners from 25 countries participated in the first event of the Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) on Youth, and a part of their stories are included here, regarding their areas of interest and action, social issues in which they are seeking to effect change, their ideas and solutions to problems, and also achievements and challenges. We would like to thank the interviewees who generously agreed to the publication of their stories for the report.

Although the camp was only for four days, the stories, experiences, passion, and encouragement that the participants shared was incredible. The most significant outcome of the event was, we believe, the friendships between the young entrepreneurs through a variety of discussions and activities on site. We sincerely hope that these friendships and networks develop into lifelong partnerships and sources of support and inspiration.

GSEF is dedicated to build an enabling environment for youth to become the next generation of social and solidarity economy movements and to make the world a better place. For those who accompanied us on this first step of action, we would like to express our deepest gratitude and ask for their continuous support and solidarity in the future: Seoul Metropolitan Government, iCOOP, HBM Cooperative Management Institute, Mondragon Team Academy, Underdogs, CHNGR, Happy Coop Tour, and all of our GSEF members. We will never forget the passion and dedication of our staff and supporters.

GSEF co-chairpersons



Won Soon Park

Mayor of Seoul



Rev. Kyong Yong Song

Former Chair of the Seoul Social Economy Network



Contents

- 004 Preface
- 008 Interviews
- 072 Summary
2017 Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy
- 082 Declaration of the 1st Global Youth Camp for SSE





INTERVIEWS



Anais Amazit

Organization Barefoot College
City/Country Paris, France

Barefoot College www.barefootcollege.org

Established 1972 **Location** Tilonia, Rajasthan, India



barefoot college

Mission

Empowering poor rural communities by breaking down the barriers that impede economic uplift and igniting human potential to meet aspirations.

Main Projects

- The 'Barefoot solutions' can be broadly categorized into the delivery of Solar Electrification, Clean Water, Education and Livelihood Development. The college has been committed to empowering women as change agents, entrepreneurs and environmental stewards.
- In particular, Barefoot College (BC) trains illiterate rural mothers and grandmothers to become solar engineers in 6 months. After the training, these rural women solar electrify their villages. BC has trained over 700 women barefoot solar engineers in over 1000 villages in 35 countries mostly in the least developed countries. enabled the access to modern lighting and electricity to more than 550,000 households in over 1300 villages thanks to more than 750 women solar engineers.

My name is Anaïs Amazit. I am from Algeria but I was born and raised in France. I used to work for the SSE International Forum born from the Mont Blanc Meetings, which advocates social and solidarity economy with international organizations and member states. Every two years, an international forum is held and gathers social entrepreneurs from around the world to create projects together. I was part of the SSE International Forum for 3 years and this was how I learned of the GSEF and further explored social and solidarity economy.

Afterwards, I moved to an organization called Barefoot College, which came out of a rural Indian community back in the 1970s, and has since grown into a non-governmental, not-for-profit social enterprise. The organization has been expanding overseas to many other countries besides India. Our main mission is to train women from the poorest rural regions in the world, in solar panels fabrication, installation, maintenance and repair.

Our main targets are women between 35 and 55 years old, who, in rural communities, may already be grandmothers by this age and are more keen on staying in their village. We are also relying on these women

to remain in the community and disseminate their newly gained knowledge. Most of these women have never received formal education and are illiterate or semi-literate. But through our “learning-by-doing” methodology, they are able to learn how to fabricate solar panels from other rural women.

Barefoot College trains women from 80 countries, not only on solar energy but also on empowerment, enterprise and citizenship through the “Enriche” co-curriculum. After women came to India to receive education and training, we provide solar equipment (solar panels and spare parts) for two years. This is managed through a community approach: When a community decides to send their women to India for a training, we ask them to open a bank account and contribute to it monthly. This fund though is not used for our organization, it is entirely managed by the community itself through a “solar committee”. The contribution is based on what the poorest individuals in the community can pay, and the community decides on this amount by itself. The reason we operate in India is because all started from a small village in Rajasthan in the name of Tilonia. However, we have opened a regional East African training centre in

**“ Social and Solidarity Economy gives me a reason
to wake up in the morning. ”**

Zanzibar and six other regional training centers are to be set up in Africa, Central America and the Fiji, in order to expand the impact of our successful programs.

In Algeria, the challenges are of a different nature. The greatest social problem facing youth right now is unemployment with a rate of 30%. Most of the attractive jobs are filled by a specific elite that is well connected, which limits access to this market to others. Therefore educated people often have to accept jobs that don't necessarily suit their career plan or relate to what they studied.

Unemployment is also a major issue in France. There have been studies which suggest that social and solidarity economy (SSE) may be one of the key solutions to solve this issue. According to the findings, SSE represents more than 10% employment in France and will count about 600,000 retirements by 2020. Every year, it is estimated that 1 job out of 5 is created in SSE enterprises -so around 100,000 per year. Young people tend to seek meaningful jobs and SSE answers to this need. This is why the

number of young people working in SSE is growing, especially in the Paris region.

In India, the concept of “social and solidarity economy” hardly exists. Maybe a few organizations are aware of it, but they mainly talk about social businesses. In Asia, the term “social business” is mentioned mostly in India and Bangladesh, where the Grameen Bank established by Muhammad Yunus became widely known in the past years. In other areas, we barely hear about it. Grassroots movements, self-help groups and other community initiatives fulfill the concept of SSE even if the term is not used.

Social and Solidarity Economy or whatever we call it, gives me a reason to wake up in the morning. I don't want to work for something that doesn't impact the populations in a positive way. There are so many issues in this world that still need to be solved that I really want to do my part.

Of course, our organization needs improvement but change management is hard to achieve especially in such a long established structure. We strive to find the right

balance between our non negotiable values, our cultural differences and our local and global development strategy in order to keep on implementing innovative solutions for the rural poor.

One of the main reasons I came to this Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidar-

ity Economy is because I wanted to meet people from different cultures who run inspiring initiatives in various ways and in different sectors. The forum was well organized and I was able to connect with many interesting people. This has been the main benefit for me from this camp.





Mayuri Bhattacharjee

Organization Sikun Relief Foundation
City/Country Tezpur, India

Sikun Relief Foundation sikunrelief.org

Established 2016 **Location** Kolkata, India

Mission

Safeguard the rights to safe water, sanitation and hygiene for people living in natural disaster-prone, politically fragile and vulnerable areas, through inclusive and sustainable projects.

Main Projects

- Safeguarding the health of the local community through sanitation and hygiene management, and supplying safe water to natural disaster-prone, politically fragile and vulnerable areas.
- Supporting communities to maintain hygienic conditions through services such as garbage collection, management of hazardous industrial waste, and wastewater treatment and disposal.
- Red Dot Project (Current main project): A holistic menstrual hygiene management program which educates the community on menstrual health and creates opportunities through inclusive business.



Sikun Relief Foundation

The overarching goal of Sikun Relief Foundation – the organization I am with – is to provide humanitarian assistance centered on gender awareness. For this reason, our current programs include menstrual hygiene, and we are looking to go further and abolish taboos about menstruation. Menstruation is a very natural, biological process, but some girls find it to be a dirty experience. This interferes with the development of self-dignity about their own bodies. Another of our goals is to ensure that remote communities have access to basic sanitation, including safe water and hygiene. We want to make sure that geographical distance does not deprive anyone of such basic needs.

To achieve these social objectives, we follow a non-profit model. The best examples of that are overseas grants and government projects. We operate sanitation projects for the government, which is one source of our revenue.

Another focus of ours is the eco-friendly menstrual pads made by local self-help groups in Assam. Projects like these create economic opportunities for women, and also help those in areas without access to such products. We can't say that it generates a lot of revenue, but it is enough to

offset the capital costs of the project. Then because women's health has gained a lot of awareness recently, we are currently looking for corporate sponsorships and related CSR funding.

The biggest challenge faced by the youth of today in my hometown is a lack of information. Many regions still do not have access to the Internet, and that is a serious problem. Besides this issue, there is also the inequality of economic opportunity and racism. There isn't much of an industrial base in Assam or in the eastern regions of India, so many young people migrate to other cities. But there, they often become victims of racism, simply because they look different. In Delhi for example, there is a large population of youth from the rural regions and they are at risk of being victimized. They face discrimination, and so we have to admit: racism does exist in India. However, even if they were to return home because of this, there is not much work for them.

Another observation I came across was that many young people choose terrorism as a way of venting their anger against the government and various social problems. In rural areas, some boys even join terrorist squads. The lack of economic opportunity

and the government's lack of consideration for the youth is to blame here. This is all the more reason why people like us, those who have been through that phase, must do something.

I have heard the terms "solidarity" and "social economy," but this is the first time that I came to hear about social and solidarity economy (SSE). I am familiar with the concept of solidarity, but not quite so with social enterprises. But it turns out that the work I am envisioning is about SSE. Social change cannot be brought about by one

enterprises are active in the southern parts of the country - there are many organizations there - in the northeast, the idea has not quite gained a foothold. So we need to target the youth. For example, in this camp, I was very impressed by what Andrew is doing in Australia, working with the people of Vanuatu. We need to think about how we can involve youth like him to build projects - I believe this is the right approach. I don't believe that a top-down approach is effective; it needs to be bottom-up. The youth in our region have no opportunities:

“ I think it's good to be ambitious. ”

organization; you need multipliers. This is exactly what we are doing now, and all the work we are currently planning with self-help groups is part of that SSE process. In other words, we have been engaging in SSE, but just did not know what to call it until now.

These days, capitalistic influence - in other words, consumerism - is heavily affecting youth. What we need to do is teach them to work together to create change. I feel that the idea of "social enterprise" is neglected in the northeast parts of India. While social

so what can we do about it? In the end, we have to establish a system where the youth tackle and solve their own problems. Only then can the principles of solidarity economy operate.

Through our work, we have had some achievements. Before we started our project, there was nothing being done about menstrual hygiene, and there was even some kind of mental resistance. To address this, instead of strong advocacy, we chose soft advocacy. Then one day, the Minister for Sanitation signed a pledge in Assam to

become the menstrual hygiene management champion. Ever since this event, we have built a good relationship with the government, which is not so easy in India.

Then there is another story. We currently run workshops in five regions in different languages, because language is a sensitive issue in northeast India. There have been many conflicts over them, so we added different languages to our program. For example, we conducted a workshop in Tigar in their own language, because their language is completely different from the mainstream language spoken in Assam. That way, we can reach out to the marginalized. So far, we have reached out to over 2,000 schoolgirls in Tigar, and we plan to increase this number to 10,000 in 6 months. Our program starts with education, because women must first become aware that menstrual hygiene is an important issue. This has been one of our main achievements to date, and we hope to meet

with many more girls.

One of the current challenges we face is that we're having difficulties securing cloth pads, which are needed for making sanitation pads. It is very difficult to gain access to raw materials; we don't want raw materials through organizations or companies which exploit workers, so we try to source them through Fair Trade. However, Fair Trade is



extremely difficult in northeast India. This is something we cannot resolve on our own entirely, so we depend on our suppliers. We hope the government will do something about it, but so far we have had no support. Another is, of course, funding. The current laws for NGOs are very strict in India, and this is something that can only be changed by the government. Because of this, even if we know some people who would like to donate, we are not able to receive the donations. It is also extremely difficult to keep volunteers engaged. But still, we believe we can manage that on our own.

Through this Global Youth Camp for SSE, I have made some very good friends. I especially had a very enjoyable discussion with Andrew, whom I mentioned previously. He told me that once he returns, he will be operating a health project for Vanuatu, which is a very small developing nation. And because workers in that region also face specific problems, he may need external help.

Which means at one point, he said, he may need my input. Andrew also mentioned that he would like to work in India one day.

I think it's good to be ambitious, so I would like to think beyond India. Nepal and Bangladesh face flooding and political violence, and underdevelopment and inequality is rampant in regions all around the world. But if you look closely at these issues from a regional perspective, there are some connections. For example, I just talked to someone from Nepal and she gave me an idea of what her organization is doing in Nepal on menstrual hygiene. It was very interesting, and I want to stay closely connected to this network. It would be great if we could work together on a project. It could be anywhere, maybe remotely, and could even be a virtual campaign. But most of all, it excites me to think about working with people who are already SSE experts and who have seen results. I hope to stay connected with the people I met at this camp.

“ It would be great if we could work together on a project. ”



Alois Sajo

Organization AREDS, KANIMAR
City/Country Chennai, India

AREDS

Location Karur, Tamil Nadu, India

Mission and Main Projects

To bring food sovereignty to the people of Karur by uniting all the local farmers to achieve development that people matter.

KANIMAR

kanimar.com

Established 2005 **Location** Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu, India

Mission and Main Projects

To uplift the livelihood of the Irula Community by providing skill development to achieve financial independence of Irula women.

“ I hope that the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) will bring the change. ”

The organizations that I work with are AREDS, KANIMAR and also I initiated a social enterprise called Karteez.com which is in its developing stage.

Mission

The current mission of AREDS is to bring food sovereignty to the people of Karur by uniting all the local farmers to achieve development that people matter.

Our business model is as follows:

Business Model (AREDS):

1. Organize a club for farmers who wish to produce traditional crops using organic methods.
2. Supply local farmers with seeds for traditional crops.
3. Educate and train club members on organic fertilizer and insecticides.
4. Engage farmers in the distribution of harvested crops to consumers

Mission

KANIMAR'S current mission is to uplift the livelihood of the Irula Community by providing skill development to achieve financial independence of Irula women.

Our business model is as follows:

Business Model (KANIMAR):

1. Spread KANIMAR's mission through word-of-mouth.
2. Develop skills of Irula women.
3. Collaborate with marketing companies.
4. Run retail shops based in target communities.

Working in these two organizations, I have been able to achieve a lot. In AREDS for example, we set some milestones in order to meet goals like establishing a Women's Farmers Club, and a Producers Market. We believe that these will be a foundation for launching the Organic Food Producer Company. But our biggest sense of achievement comes when we see the Women's Farmers Club operating actively and independently without relying on us and when we see the people of Karur deeply engaged in this project. In KANIMAR, we are currently collaborating with a marketing company which greatly increased our sales figures. This has allowed us to set higher goals and the confidence we earned from this will be a great momentum forward. In the past, we had doubts about our work but now we are confident that this project can succeed. The biggest challenge is bringing the people to-

gether and making them believe that this model will make their lives better and also to make them lead the project independently. A systematic training institute for farmers where they learn and do it for free first and are able to see some profit will make them believe and motivate them to start the model independently. Such kind of institutes are required in our country. The youth in our region face so many challenges: high unemployment, loss of direction, lack of motivation, lack of skills and adequate training. I hope that the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) will bring the change. The youth are losing faith in the government and corporations. SSE will bring them employment through a sustainable economic model. And it will suggest an alternative future where we don't have to rely on the government or corporations. I learnt many things at the Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy. It was an eye-opening experience meeting so many passionate young people engaged in this field. It was also very interesting to see how their activities were cre-



ating change in different countries which have different understandings about SSE. Many stories that we shared at this camp were new things for me, and with some people I was able to relate myself. They have been a great source of motivation. It has been wonderful to see the future of SSE.



Meiqi Guo

Organization

NTUC First Campus Co-operative

City/Country

Singapore

NTUC First Campus Co-operative

www.ntucfirstcampus.com



an NTUC Social Enterprise

 **Established** 1977  **Location** Singapore

Mission

We partner families to fulfil the promise of each child, by enabling every child to have a good start in life. We give working families peace of mind, by making quality child development and care services accessible.

Main Projects

- My First Skool (MFS): The pre-school arm of NTUC First Campus providing quality and affordable childcare service that is accessible to parents. MFS has reached out to over 14,000 in more than 130 of its childcare centres.
 - Little Skool-House International Pte Ltd (LSH): A subsidiary organisation of NTUC First Campus set up to meet the growing demand of quality premium pre-school education. The organisation now operates 17 centres offering more than 2,200 childcare places, located in choice locations across Singapore such as in community clubs, shopping malls, residential districts, and worksites.
 - The Caterpillar's Cove: A child development and study centre that provides a pre-school setting where parents, teachers, researchers and student-teachers strive to discover and
-

advocate best practices in early childhood education to promote children's optimal learning and development

- afterschool by NTUC First Campus: School-based student care providing a continuum of care for children after their school hours. It develops children holistically, balancing between academic and co-academic within a home-like environment.
- SEED Institute: The pioneer in early childhood education training in Singapore since 1989, providing early childhood professionals with quality training for them to excel in practice and achieve their best for each child.

I am a scholar with the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF). SNCF is the apex body of the co-operative movement in Singapore. It also administrates the Central Co-operative Fund (CCF) grants including scholarship. The scholarship is used to support students with an interest in the local co-operative scene through their tertiary education ; we usually run 2-5 scholarship programmes a year, and I myself have been a recipient in the past.

Singapore co-operative movement is more than 90 years old and has grown to such a large extent. It now has more than 1.4 million members and is the largest grassroots movement in Singapore. SNCF seeks to promote and develop co-operatives as sustainable enterprises to address social and economic needs. And as a scholar with SNCF, one of my duties is to promote the co-oper-

ative movement to the youth. We make visits to junior high schools and even universities in Singapore to allow more students to learn about co-operatives.

I am currently working with NTUC First Campus Co-operative (NFC), which is a co-operative under the labour union of Singapore, and also provides early childhood education to Singaporean families. Private early childhood education is really expensive in Singapore, so NFC provides quality and affordable early childhood education and care to children from as young as two months to six years old. To meet increasing childcare demands, NFC runs an extensive network of centres with touchpoints across Singapore.

One of our more recent projects is to support parents who aspire for continual progress in strengthening relationships with

their child throughout the parenting journey. Through parenting workshops, parent-child engagement activities and online resources, we support and equip parents with the skills to create positive experiences through meaningful interactions with their children. This venture into the parenting space is a new intrapreneur initiative from NFC, and we are fortunate to receive mentorship and support from other social actors in Singapore in this incubation process.

In Singapore, co-operatives are regulated form of social enterprises formed by members for members. Social enterprises, in most cases, are set up to serve a social mission. The reason we classify co-operatives as social enterprises because they work on the principle of self-sustenance and mutual help to address the social and economic needs. Co-operatives do not profiteer but instead, share surpluses with members and further help communities.

In Singapore, co-operatives are regulated by the Registry of Co-operative Societies under the Co-operative Societies Act (Chapter 62) and Co-operative Societies Rules 2009, so as to protect members' interests. The Registry falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth. On the other hand, social enterpris-

“

Sometimes you might feel that there is nothing you can do, But here you are, witnessing the international effort to promote different types of movements!

”

es are privately-owned businesses with a social mission. They are not legally required to sustain the social impact, and may deviate from its social mission if the owners choose to do so.

I personally don't see co-operatives as being mutually exclusive from social enterprises. Both types of organisations exist to fulfil social needs and the only difference lies in our governance and mode of business operation. Together, we help to build a better society.

When we set up a co-operative, we were able to receive seed funding from SNCF. In terms of finance sourcing, Singapore gives support generously to social entrepreneurs. In Singapore, co-operatives don't pay taxes. Instead, members contribute part of their profits to the CCF to promote the movement and help more co-operatives get started. We have bylaws regarding this.

Due to the connection with labour unions, we have many small co-operatives. The general public may not recognise them as co-operatives, but they may have used their services for a long time. One example is NTUC Fair Price, which is one of the much bigger co-operatives in Singapore. NTUC Fair Price is a supermarket which provides daily necessities at very low prices. Many Singaporeans buy groceries from NTUC Fair Price, without realising that it is a co-op. Hence, it is important to raise awareness on co-operatives and to correct the perception that a co-operative can take on a small or big scale of business.

The real issue is that there is a lack of promotion efforts on the part of co-operatives as advertising would incur huge amounts of spending and co-operatives cannot afford this. One thing that the government can do to help here is to provide funding for co-operatives to have the opportunities to advocate what they do.

In Singapore, there isn't much discussion on social and solidarity economy (SSE). Even if there is some discussion, we talk about it very vaguely, like we do for social enterprises. In most cases, as social enterprises still make up a very small portion of the economy, the public perception of so-



cial enterprises is that they are one isolated company. It is very difficult to let them know that that there is a new economic system that can radically change the current one. This is where awareness needs to come in. The government or NGOs (Non-Government Organisations) need to actively come in and establish an SSE ecosystem, so that the public can see the whole picture of the economy instead of just a few details. I believe Singapore and Korea - as neighbours in Asia sharing common values like Confucianism and facing issues like those related to the generation gap - share similar challenges in this respect.

I want to encourage you to be a part of SSE too, and continue this journey with your friends. It's very heartwarming to be here at GSEF because in terms of effectiveness, if we were to all individually go out into the world tomorrow and do something, then we definitely wouldn't be able to achieve it - it would take too much time. But what the GSEF has done is bring together people who are interested in SSE. Back in Singapore, I often felt lonely because there are only a few people interested in social economy. Maybe you're like me. Sometimes you might feel that there is nothing you can do, and that capitalism is so huge that you can't fight against it. But here you are, witnessing

the international effort to promote different types of movements! And we all share the same vision, so that's where I think the GSEF is very effective, in building a community. We may have different backgrounds or have different focuses, but on the whole, we share the same position. At the camp, we watched a video of a man dancing madly. When he was dancing alone, he looked crazy. When another person joined him, he still looked like he was insane. But what if everyone were to join in? Then he would no longer appear insane. Perhaps this is what social economy is, too. When we were apart, I felt like one of those few people dancing alone. But when we are together, we feel empowered and motivated.

I am very honoured for the rare opportunity to be here at the camp. For those who were not able to make it this year, I think it is very important to send them the message that we are the people who support them - so that they don't give up. Because that is what happens to a lot of social entrepreneurs. But social and solidarity economy has power, and there will be rewards for their efforts as more and more people get to know about SSE. This is a very important message that I hope will reach as many people as possible.



Kishan Gurung

Organization Beautiful Coffee
City/Country Kathmandu, Nepal

Beautiful Coffee www.beautifulcoffee.org



🕒 History

📍 Location Korea & Nepal

- 2003: Korea's first Fair Trade project is established under the Beautiful Store
- 2009: The Fair Trade brand, 'Beautiful Coffee,' is launched
- 2014: 'Beautiful Coffee' becomes an independent not-for-profit Fair Trade foundation.

👤 Mission

To resolve the challenges in the current trade system which drives poverty and inequality, and to exalt human dignity through Fair Trade.

🌀 Main Projects

- Support the independence of marginalized producers through partnerships founded on mutual respect
- Provide opportunities for a life of value through ethical consumption
- Listen to various groups of people and organizations, and address the issues in the unfair trading structure and social practices

I have been working as a barista at Beautiful Coffee in Nepal since December 2015. Beautiful Coffee is a Fair Trade organization, and before I started working here I was at a commercial café where many advised me to go to China or India to look for a better job.

In fact, going abroad for work is nothing new to the youth in Nepal. At least one in every family works abroad, in most cases in the Middle East. This is a very important and a very serious problem in Nepal. Working at dangerous jobs in foreign countries, and in a completely different climate and in poor working conditions, too – you are always at the risk of hurting yourself. According to data from 2008, of the 2,500 Nepalese who went abroad to work, 500 died due to accidents and illnesses. Are the Nepalese oblivious of the dangers of going abroad? Actually, that's not what's important to them. They have no other choice, because there is no work in Nepal. Every year, the number of youth wishing to go abroad for their families and for their future doubles. And the families too, consider it natural to send their sons and daughters abroad.

In that respect, I was quite lucky. I am

a coffee expert, so I was able to work under good conditions even abroad. I was even offered positions that would guarantee a high income, but I wanted to work in Nepal, in my village, for my people, and in my field of expertise – coffee.

Then one day, I met a man who worked in the coffee industry. We talked about coffee cultures in different countries, and about foreigners who help poor farmers. He also told me about a cooperative for coffee producers. I was deeply inspired by him and got a lot of ideas. After that, I came to work for Beautiful Coffee, and there I learned about social and solidarity economy (SSE).

Everything started from the question : Must all the youth in Nepal go abroad to create opportunities? How can SSE contribute to bringing change?

I want to speak through my experience. I work in the coffee industry, and I have worked at coffee farms, so I know a lot about coffee, and about growing coffee beans. God presented us with the best soil and climate for cultivating coffee. Yet, there is no coffee culture in Nepal. Even the coffee farmers are not so knowledgeable about

“ Must all the youth in Nepal go abroad to create opportunities?

How can SSE contribute to bringing change?

”



coffee. Then is finding work in a country where a coffee culture does exist, really the right answer as everyone says? I believe my country has great potential to accomplish many things. Of course, working abroad would guarantee a higher income, but I want to be a role model for the youth seeking to realize their own dreams in our own country.*

Then what can I do? I am not a celebrity in Nepal, but some have come to me and said that they were inspired by me, and that we must do something on our own, for our country. The biggest role I can play then

is to talk about my experiences and the knowledge I gained from abroad, on Fair Trade and SSE.

The mission of Beautiful Coffee is to improve the social and economic conditions of small-scale coffee farms through Fair Trade. The coffee cooperatives of Sindhupalchok and Gulmi are our producer partners, who share our vision for community development.

Through solidarity with both domestic and international organizations like Beautiful Coffee, I believe that the many coffee cooperatives in Nepal can create new opportu-

* Kishan, who grew up on a coffee farm, is a first-generation barista in Nepal who won the Nepal Barista Championship in 2014.

nities and drive social innovation. This will not only lead to development in communities, but also personal development.

At first, I doubted that a small place like a coffee farm could bring about social change. But after I started working for Beautiful Coffee, I learnt that there are many ways to contribute to the local community with my knowledge and skills in coffee. For example, helping to improve the lives of small coffee farmers is one effort to improve the economic system from the very bottom. And as we start to change things and gradually move upwards, one day a coffee culture will come to be established in Nepal, too. Then the Nepalese youth will be able to dream about becoming coffee experts in their own country, and the lives of the poor farmers will be improved. I don't want to establish a coffee culture here just for the money. I dream of it, because Fair Trade alone can't be a solution to everything.

Before working here at Beautiful Coffee, I myself was oblivious about social and solidarity economy, like most Nepalese. But now I know how to work for those who are poor and without work, and for the first time I wanted to and believed I could do something for others. My biggest asset from working in the field of SSE is that I am now able to do

something for the youth, and for the poor. I am proud to be able to help others, and I am also truly grateful to the farmers and the poor that I have come to support.

So many people in this world are doing things for others. And here at the Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy, I will learn many more ways to help more people. Once I return to Nepal, I will share these ideas. To the youth who still remain doubtful about whether they can realize their dreams in their own country, I will tell them about my experiences here. I will tell them that they don't have to go abroad, and that they can lead a life like me.

Nepal is a poor country, and we do not have policies to boost employment like in India or Korea. In this regard, I have been truly lucky. I know what SSE is and how the system of solidarity operates at Beautiful Coffee. And also because I will learn many more ways to help the youth at home through this camp. Even after I return to Nepal, instead of waiting for the government to do something, I am planning to take the initiative myself, because changing the world starts with changing yourself. If you want to change the world, you need to change yourself first.



Mayank Jain

Organization

MicroX Foundation

City/Country

Delhi, India

MicroX Foundation

www.microxfoundation.com



 **Established** 2014  **Location** Gaya, Bihar, India

Mission

Poverty alleviation of agrarian communities by ensuring sustainable recurring income by facilitating access to farm inputs, extensions services & markets and engaging them in enterprise-led development (farming cooperatives)

Main Projects

1. Frugal innovations in agriculture extension system - here we bring low cost innovations in agriculture training and capacity building of farmers and impart this to farmers that could help them in reducing their input cost, increase yield as well as could fetch better returns for them. We have created our training modules and empower people with it. Conducted more than 250 'Kisan Chaupals' (farmer's meetings) & facilitated more than 75 trainings to more than 500 farmers
2. Innovations in post-harvest management - food loss is a very big issue facing the world and challenges like poor shelf life, supply chain logistics, pricing, etc. add to the woes of farmers. We work on having innovations in prolonging shelf life, or grading of harvest for better price. In it we are focusing on value-added agriculture. Processing of primary harvest to a secondary product that could solve issues of farmers.

3. Holistic Demonstration Model - Seeing is believing! We give practical demonstrations to farmers by how integrating agriculture and allied activities and use of precision agriculture & hyper-local weather systems could ensure sustainable recurring income for them. We want to create rural entrepreneurs. These agricultural centres could reduce costs, enhance and foster new partnerships, and improve agricultural practices for millions of smallholder farmers.
4. Desh ka Culture, Agriculture (meaning Country's culture is Agriculture) - Envisioned to change/reshape the negative attitude of youths towards agriculture by providing hands-on farming experience to children in schools through a learning model. Every one should grow their own food. www.foodparity.org
5. Farming as a Service: Foundation's equipment bank is equipped with the entire range of machines, tools and technology needed for precision farm operations for crops in this part of the region and fresh horticulture crops. Right from soil preparation to harvesting, we do everything on pay-for-use.
6. Worms at Work - Project Vermi - Working with cattle-breeders to look for ways of building a comprehensive business model. We installed vermi-beds (which have the capacity to process animal waste in the cattle sheds) for high-quality vermicompost, which can be applied in agricultural fields for excellent yield

Projects catering to different horticulture crops like onion, papaya, etc. have been carried out. We have worked with more than 3500 stakeholders including 250 enterprising women farmers till now and have been able to generate 5000 man days of labour for agrarian labours along with productivity, yield and economic rewards.

MicroX Foundation's mission is to alleviate poverty in farming communities through value-added agriculture for better economic reward. Our current aim is to devise a model that will ensure sustainable and recurring income, through activities like apiculture, vermiculture and pisciculture. In other words, we want to generate

a sustainable source of income for farming communities.

At every step of our quest, we try to ensure that farmers are earning profits, and in return we recover some of our operating costs. We don't envision ourselves as a grant-driven organization. Presently, we re-

“ My governing principles in life are to be empathetic and cherish human connections. Financial reward is important, yes. But it is secondary. ”

cover 30% of our program costs through activities like rooftop farming, sales of quality products, retail marketing of farm produce, and more. And as we gradually move toward value-added agriculture, we intend to establish a profit-sharing model for stakeholders – that is, the producers, extension service providers, and market intelligence folks.

I have been quite fortunate in that I have experienced both rural and urban India (I was born in an urban region and spent the first 25 years of my life there before relocating to a completely unfamiliar place 1,000 km away, a small rural village in Bihar). The youth of both rural and urban regions face many challenges, but I feel the most common challenge is the high rate of unemployment. Mental health and well-being issues have surfaced as serious topics as well.

Agriculture makes up 76% of the economy of Bihar, which is where I work. But there is no longer hope in agriculture – it has turned into a career of despair. Those working in this industry are not guaranteed a fair standard of living; even their basic needs are not

met. The average monthly income for farmers in India is less than USD 100.

For me personally, the concept of social and solidarity economy (SSE) is quite new. Yes, the concept of social enterprise does exist in India, and it forms an important part of the SSE ecosystem. But SSE is much broader. Anyway, through reading, observing and interacting, I tried my best to know more about SSE and now I believe it will play a key role in tackling the many problems facing us today.

If we support each other and help each other grow and share, we can also address the problem of disconnection and poor mental health in the community. And it can come back as a social reward, too. So SSE would be very relevant here.

Since starting work, my health hasn't been what it was before, and from this I learnt that your health is like a glass ball: once it is gone it never returns. As a kind of preventative healthcare, I started focusing on food. But while researching about the food system, I came to realize that our food and



agriculture system has already been destroyed. The conclusion I arrived at, was that the problems of high healthcare costs, the degrading environment and social disparity can only be solved by fixing this broken system.

Through this work, I have been able to impact more than 1,000 lives, and that has been my greatest reward. My governing principles in life are to be empathetic and cherish human connections. Financial reward is important, yes. But it is secondary (though it doesn't mean that I necessarily ignore it). But if I can make someone smile, then I am more than content. Looking back,

it has been a rewarding journey, both personally and professionally. Giving up your privileges is the first step to a new journey, and I am proud of myself for that. Overall, it has been a journey of introspection, development as a human being, crisis management, and what not. And there has been acknowledgement and appreciation from different corners professionally as well. We have been identified as one of the 20 fastest growing not-for-profits by the Nudge Foundation, and as one of the 21 Nation Builders of the Year 2016-2017 by the Vision India Foundation. I have also been invited by various organizations to speak. Some of our

achievements include:

- Winner of the 2016-2017 India Youth Fund (supported by UN-Habitat)
- Selected as one of the 20 Not-for-Profit Enterprises as part of the N/Core accelerator program N/Core-alpha, April 2017
- Invited to speak at Jagriti Yatra, Nalanda phase, January 2017
- Partnership with ATMA Gaya, NHM (Government body)

Personally, I still have many challenges

ahead of me as well as expectations arising from them. But the most important thing is smooth management. This starts by prioritizing. When I chose to move to a place that was completely unfamiliar, things didn't go so well between me and my family. But while they worried about my financial security, they have been my greatest support and source of strength. Looking back, the journey has been filled with peer pressure, of uncertainty and dynamism like a roller-coaster ride. No one talks about the



emotional cost of being an entrepreneur, or the challenges and setbacks that come with it. The journey of mental agony is even less talked about. Sometimes it is even difficult to keep yourself motivated.

While building the DNA of your organization, there are many added responsibilities that cannot be overlooked. To establish yourself, you need to create trust among the stakeholders, and handle the promises and expectations of team members. The development sector inherently has an illusion: if you make mistakes, then you may end up roaming around in a kurta with a bag on your shoulder, with no income.

Legal compliance is also very important in building trust with your donors and other institutions. Then due to the current lack of understanding about the ecosystem of development space, government support is

also needed. After all, the government has the ultimate authority when it comes to agriculture. Finally, we always need financial support to address our financial needs, as we are still setting up our system.

During this Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy, I came to experience a lot and felt many emotions. What I realized was that everyone everywhere is facing similar problems. Personally as well, I interacted with a lot of participants and got to learn from their perspectives, too. For example, prior to this event I had never given thought to housing and decent jobs. Bringing diverse people together on a single platform under limited time is a chaotic process, but the result is beautiful. And that was exactly what I experienced at this camp.



Archana Chhetri

Organization

Empowering Women of Nepal (EWN)

City/Country

Pokhara, Nepal

Empowering Women of Nepal (EWN)

empoweringwomenofnepal.wordpress.com



 **Established** 1999

 **Location** Pokhara, Nepal

Mission

Empowering girls, especially women from rural regions of Nepal, through education and employment opportunities. These girls and women have often been exposed to violence and have been discriminated against due to a patriarchal culture and lack of knowledge, skills, mental support, and economic opportunities.

Main Projects

- **Female Trekking Guide Training Program:** This is an intensive 4-week program that trains female trekking guides, and is held twice a year. To attain the best results, we limit the number of participants to 40 at a time, and the average age of our participants is 20. Since 1999, we have trained over 1,500 women from 52 districts in Nepal.
 - **Girls Leadership Training (GOAL Programme):** This is a 9-month program for girls between the age of 12 and 17, and has been in place since June 2013. In this program, we provide youth (especially girls) who are at risk of abuse by family members, acquaintances and traditional cultures, with essential life skills that will help address complex problems.
-

My name is Archana, and I am from Nepal. Today I have brought with me two hats, one representing the Three Sisters Adventure Trekking and another, Empowering Women of Nepal (EWN). Both are social enterprises. Even at the start of the organization, we weren't aware of such a concept, so we did not know that these organizations were social enterprises. But as we came to work on them, we began to realize that that's what these organizations were called.

The programs we run mainly focus on young girls from disadvantaged families, immigrants, and farming communities. Our programs directly support our beneficiaries.

What we do is we run a travel and trekking company in Nepal. This company is owned by women and is for women. Because Nepal is a mountainous country, we see many female travelers. If you look at the data, the number has only been increasing. And these women want not only to see the mountains, but to experience Nepalese culture as well.

Part of the profits from our business goes toward the support programs of EWN. EWN runs many programs: one of them is the 9-month GOAL program, which offers life skills. Over the course of 9 months, girls are educated through different modules. The

first module is called "Be Yourself." In this, they learn what communication is, how to communicate, and what it means to be a girl or a boy. They also learn gender roles, leadership, and conflict management. Because many girls and women in local communities are exposed to violence, people talk about children's rights, violence and trafficking. But at the end of the day, they don't know how to address it. So we also make sure they learn how to recognize violence, how to respond when exposed to it, and how to remain safe.

Other modules include health. In this session, we talk about our bodies. It's probably the same for the girls in Korea, but girls in Nepal do not feel comfortable with their bodies, and their self-esteem is very low. We teach girls from disadvantaged families how to save money, how to budget, and how to set goals. We also teach sports; this is because girls from poorer families don't have much exposure to physical education. So in all, this 9-month GOAL program is a combination of life skills and physical education.

EWN's mission is to empower, educate, and create employment opportunities for disadvantaged girls and women. When the girls first join our program, they have no self-confidence, low self-esteem, and be-

“ We want them to know that they have someone to hear their stories and support them in their journey. ”

lieve that no one is there to reach out to them. So first, we want them to be strong. We want them to know that they have someone to hear their stories and support them in their journey.

The GOAL program started in 2013, and has been running for 4 years now. It is a 6-day intensive program, and the number of participants at one time depends on the amount of funding available. There is no fee for the participants, of course. Instead, we receive donations, mostly from Europe. For example, there is an organization in Switzerland that has been supporting our GOAL program for the past 4 years. So the GOAL program is for girls, and so far we have had 103 students from local schools in Pokhara participate. But while working in the field, we realized that boys too, need a program like this. The Nepalese culture is very conservative, so if there is a lot of interaction between boys and girls, it can lead to a lot of conflict. What's more, because these children go to public schools, they are from poorer families and have witnessed a lot of domestic violence growing up. That's why it is important to include boys in our program

also, but without forgetting that our primary goal and focus are young girls.

We also run a program called STEM which teaches girls skills. Science is a part of the Nepalese school curriculum, but girls' interest in the subject drops tremendously from middle school and high school. So you might be deceived into thinking that the girls are not very smart, but this is not the case. That's why we've developed this STEM program, and thanks to its curriculum we have been able to educate 140 girls in 3 public schools, in science, math and computers.

We also work with mountain women. This is more for economic aspects, to support them in finding employment. Women from rural regions face many challenges. They are uneducated, lack skills, lack knowledge, and have very low self-esteem because of the discrimination they receive from their families. Girls are sent to school, but the schools in the villages don't provide quality education. As a result, the girls end up feeling that they don't have anything to contribute - that they are worthless. That's

why we teach these girls to become trekking guides to take people up to the mountains, through our one-month training. We teach them English so that they can manage basic conversations.

In Nepal, social and solidarity economy is not a widely-recognized concept. As for cooperatives, it depends on the region. Many communities are able to collect money through cooperative activities, but this money is mostly used to purchase food and basic necessities. In short, they're not coop-

eratives like those in developed nations. So overall, awareness has begun of the concept of "social enterprise", but this is happening at a slow pace.

The social issues that Nepalese youth face today are very complex, but the root cause is poverty. These days, you can get so much information through the Internet, mobile phones and TV. But this doesn't really help the youth. They are from poor families, and are struggling to set a direction in life. So they are swayed easily, and engage in harm-



ful practices - vulnerable to peer pressure, alcohol addiction, drug use, teenage pregnancy, the temptation to run away from home, and unemployment.

While primary and secondary education is compulsory in Nepal, not all children go to school. You're in a better position if your family is even aware that they need to send you to school - many families are too busy with their work that they don't have much time for their children. And because the parents themselves have never been to school, they don't realize the importance of education. What I want to do is raise the quality of education. Let's say you went to school for 10-20 years of your life, but you still didn't have a job after that. What should you do then? I believe the government should focus more on vocational education. Not everyone is going to be a scientist or a doctor. Some want to be carpenters, others chefs. Not everyone needs to be academic.

My work is very satisfying, but it is true that there are many challenges. It is indeed quite difficult to work with groups that you want to see grow. But when I see even just one person in the group motivated to change and take the lead to move themselves forward - that's when I feel happi-

ness. For example, like when I see young girls being empowered, laughing, playing, and feeling that they're a part of the team.

At times, we need support from the government. We are a very active organization in the local community, so the local governments are ready to support us. But while we have received a lot of moral support, unfortunately we have yet to receive financial support from them. Still, they appreciate the work we are doing.

Our organization belongs to a network. When the government runs awareness campaigns, they invite like-minded organizations and plan events together through this network. For example, there is a global campaign called 1 Billion Rising. This event is held on Valentine's Day (in February), and on this day we go out onto the streets and sing and dance. This is part of our method: by singing and dancing, we send out messages on ending violence against girls and women. So the government organizes the campaigns, and we get involved as part of the team. While our sphere may be small, once we collaborate with other organizations and the government, the impact we make can grow.

I am already involved in social and solidarity economy, and here at the camp I have met with many others who are doing the same. I have also gotten so many ideas from them and I have my own dreams and passions. Someday, I would like to work with girls at dance bars, or who are incarcerated. I am always thinking about how to set up this project, but making that first step is always a challenge. But after coming here and listening to the others, I learnt that they too have had this fear, yet they took that first step. Yesterday at the Cultural Night event, we were all reminded that we are in this together. We all want to do something for the community, and that community is the global community. And we all want each other to be happy. This camp has brought together students and activists creating social change, and by exchanging and sharing our experiences, I was very much inspired and motivated.

“
*I am always thinking about
how to set up this project,
but making that first
step is always a challenge.*
”





Younggi Kwon

Organization

CoopY

City/Country

Seoul, Korea

CoopY

facebook.com/coopycooperative



 **Established** 2013

 **Location** Seoul, Korea

Mission

- To be a cooperative that is shared and managed by knowledge producers who study co-operatives
- To contribute to social and solidarity economy through autonomous, independent and self-reliant co-op activities
- Carry out research and provide education to encourage cooperation between cooperatives.

Main Projects

- Conduct research and provide education and consulting services on cooperatives and social enterprises.
- Organize conferences and other activities related to cooperatives.

I am currently enrolled in a Master's program at the Department of Management of Cooperatives in Sungkonghoe University. I am also the Secretary-General of the CoopY Cooperative. CoopY is a cooperative for knowledge producers, and was established by the faculty and students in my department. We started out as a youth conference, and have organized six sessions to date.

Our members consist of Master's and PhD students, who also conduct research and carry out education activities in the organization. Depending on their preferences, some choose to focus only on academic research, while others parallel their research with cooperative-related activities and incorporate them into their studies. Then there are also students like me, who wish to conduct research in one field, while being active in another. So our organization helps its diverse groups of members to build their research capacity and practical experience. The members produce results by publishing their studies in international journals, while CoopY flourishes as a global cooperative for researchers.

Because CoopY is a university cooperative, we also focus on youth cooperatives. In fact, "youth" are my prime interest in my co-op activities. Co-ops are about connecting with people who are facing the same challenges, and addressing them together; in that sense, the problems harbored by youth are also my own.

Then can we solve the challenges facing Korean youth today through social and solidarity economy (SSE)? Under current circumstances, this might be difficult. According to a study published last year, entrepreneurs are on the rise but the number of new co-ops and social enterprises are actually declining.

Despite this, the reason why I am engaged in co-ops is because I believe that SSE can be the key to issues faced by youth in education, employment, and housing. To address these issues, the younger generation needs to speak out more. At the same time, there must be more opportunities for them to be heard so that they themselves can tackle the challenges in their daily lives. And through SSE, the youth can engage in economic

“ I believe that SSE can be the key to issues faced by youth in education, employment, and housing. ”

activities while communicating with each other and raising their voices in solidarity. What becomes important here is networking, because their activities shouldn't just end with one-off campaigns. The youth co-op network, established within the framework of SSE, will surely help them immensely in discovering their own life path and happiness in their independent activities.

But there are still challenges. The pay is low, and there are uncertainties about the future. However, I'm sure that many others who are trying a variety of things within the SSE framework in Korea share the same dilemma. For example, it isn't easy to build a network for cooperatives. Not only do we

lack experience in establishing solidarity, but each organization faces a more urgent task of survival.

While learning about and engaging in cooperatives, I was able to meet with people who share the same ideas and visions with me. This has been the greatest benefit for me, because before this, I hadn't had the chance to meet such people. Here at the Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy, I have made many friends who engage in diverse activities in different corners around the world, but who share the same visions as me. They have inspired me greatly, and this will always give me great strength.





Sungkyo Lee

Organization

Dreamtree Village

City/Country

Seoul, Korea

Dreamtree Village

www.dream-tree.or.kr



 **Established** 2014  **Location** Seoul, Korea

Mission

To build a warmer, friendlier world through arts and culture.

Main Projects

- Educating and sharing culture and art with disadvantaged youth, the homeless, and the elderly.
 - Supporting and engaging citizens in daily cultural activities at work and in their personal lives, through art and cultural community groups.
 - Co-operation and management of community culture facilities.
 - Supporting and fostering young artists as professionals and educators.
-

“
***It was the first time that
someone believed in me,
supported me,
and cheered me on.
That was when
I started to change.***
”

Dreamtree Village is a social enterprise with a vision to build a warmer, friendlier world through art and culture. Currently we run musical talent-sharing programs with about 20 young musicians, to inspire youth with dreams but who are finding it difficult to reach those dreams due to their backgrounds.

I grew up in a poor family, and had difficulty adjusting to school; my grades were always at the bottom of the class. To sum it up, I was a kid who had no friends and no dreams. I wanted to become a vocalist and do music, but I didn't have the talent. So instead I chose to major in a more unpopular instrument - the bass. At the university, I was given the chance to go up on stage, to fill in for the older students who had taken leave from their studies to do their compulsory military service.

The other musicians welcomed and supported me with the words, 'You are more talented than me.' And they even introduced me to some very talented musicians which opened up opportunities for me to play alongside them. It was the first time that someone believed in me, supported me, and cheered me on. That was when I started to change, little by little. I now had meaning in life, and I even came to enjoy my studies.

If my university friends hadn't raised me up, then what would've become of me? Thanks to their encouragement and support, many amazing things have happened in my life. Ever since then, I became interested in helping others up who had fallen for various reasons. Because if I helped someone to get back on their feet, then surely that person would do the same for many others. And if that was to continue, then we would be able to raise up so many people in this world.

That's why I started to share my talent in music. The reason was because music was where my talents were strongest, and it was something that could help everyone. I was introduced to disadvantaged youth by a community center, and start-

ed teaching them music. Afterward, fellow students from my school joined in the initiative. Right now, our talent-sharing programs are run in the form of a band called the “Dreamtree Term.” Each term is about a year long: we recruit youth and provide them with 1:1 private lessons for 9 months. The Dreamtree project is now celebrating its fourth term.

While getting started on this talent-sharing program for youth, I came to hear about the homeless who were interested in starting a band. So I decided to support them. I taught them music or introduced them to other teachers, and they came to form the Bomnal Band (literally ‘Spring Day’ in Korean). Bomnal Band has held street performances, as part of a campaign to change the prejudice surrounding the homeless. They have also played at schools. Students have said that they were deeply touched and moved by Bomnal Band, who played music to the lyrics, ‘I may be homeless, but I’m happy.’ Despite facing a harsher environment than the students, Bomnal Band showed the students courage, and this was what created such great inspiration. The members of Bomnal Band are great artists, and they are

also great teachers and healers. They have built stage experience through collaboration with young musicians at Dreamtree Village, and even won grand prize at the Citizens’ Band Festival held by the Seoul Metropolitan Government. They will soon release an album as well.

This year we started a new project called the Meotjaengi Senior Choir (literally meaning the “Dandy” Senior Choir). Problems harbored by the elderly include loneliness, doubts about their self-worth, and despair about their purpose in life. Through music, we want people to know that the elderly have dreams too, and that they’re not only people who “need to be helped.” We have a concert coming up very soon, showcasing these four groups I spoke about just now, each representing disadvantaged youth, young artists, the homeless, and senior citizens.

I started this work because I wanted to do something meaningful. But there have been many difficulties, especially because I have had to transition from being a musician to running an organization. I even had trouble drafting up the organization articles at first. But at a consulting session for social enterprises, I met a professor



who threw this question to us:

‘Which would be faster - for an entrepreneur to learn the values of social enterprise, or for someone who already identifies with these values to become an entrepreneur? I say the latter.’

His words have become a great source of strength. I want to create a business model where the organization can be sustained even just by sharing social values. While innovation and sustainability are important elements in running a social organization - to me, it is the people who are most important. As I take each step learn-

ing new things, I want to move toward establishing a business model centered on people.

Last April, we travelled with Bomnal Band and visited Montalban in the Philippines, also known as the “waste town.” There we provided music lessons to 50 children, all of whom are now able to play an instrument. When we first started, 80% of the children had never even laid hands on an instrument - but now, they have even formed a band! It was a truly enjoyable experience for both me and the children. And I strongly believe that after taking up

**“ One reason we need social economy is because
we all need to grow together. ”**

music, the children found change in their lives also.

While preparing for the Montalban visit, one of our members went all out to secure office space, and another member travelled back and forth to the Philippines eight times to transport musical instruments. Some might say that we are crazy. But I think it is these crazy people that we need the most in social economy. Social economy isn't actually something new. If a doctor, let's say, had a calling and tended to every patient in his local community - then he has delivered social value. In that sense, the concept of social economy has been there since ancient times.

One reason we need social economy is because we all need to grow together. But those who have hit barriers find it hard

to keep up with others in an average organization. To help them get back on their feet and bring them out into society again, we need to first understand them, and adjust our pace to theirs. If no "average" organization can do this, then I believe this is where social enterprises can fill in. Through social enterprises, people will find themselves treated as equals, find meaning and value, and become artists.

The Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy was a great opportunity to talk to many people from different backgrounds. One slight disappointment was that there weren't many arts or culture teams. If I should have this chance again, I would love to meet with more young people who dream of "social" arts and cultures.



Sora Lim

Organization

Minsnail Housing Co-op

City/Country

Seoul, Korea

Minsnail Housing Co-op

minsnailunion.tistory.com



 **Established** 2014  **Location** Seoul, Korea

Mission

- To realize a not-for-profit housing model in solidarity with youth, which is a group that has been newly identified as being “housing-poor” due to socioeconomic disparity.
- To ensure housing rights and reduce housing inequality for youth by improving the current system.

Main Projects

- Supply not-for-profit social housing
 - Support tenant meet-ups, build community networks
 - Consultation services for tenants
 - Conduct research on the current housing situations of youth
 - Research ways to alleviate the situations of house-poor youth
 - Foster consultants to advise youth on housing
-

Housing is one of the biggest challenges faced by the youth of Korea today. Huge amounts of capital continue to flow in and out of the housing market, and against this background, there is nothing that young people can do. It's not even that they are looking to own a place right now all they want is a guarantee of at least their minimum housing rights and security. And if that can be secured, there is so much potential for the youth as members of our society.

In 2011, a group of youth in Korea established the Minsnail Union to tackle the issue of housing together rather than individually. In 2014, we then established the Minsnail Housing Co-op, to experiment with our social housing model.

Minsnail Housing Co-op runs three main projects: the first is to supply and manage not-for-profit housing. We provide social housing for the youth, and all of our net revenue that is, excluding operational and management costs is used for society. Usually it goes toward building more social housing, or supporting projects related to housing and youth. There are two ways through which we provide social housing: directly, through housing we call a "Snail

House," and running social housing supplied by the public sector and making policy suggestions. We have supplied 7 houses so far (projects for Houses 1 and 6 ended in 2017), and run two more houses supplied by the government. There are a total of 120 tenants in this housing.

We also build tenant networks. Tenants, especially the young ones, are powerless as individuals. We have been reaching out to them since 2016 and have held regular information sessions as well as networking events. Through these sessions, our tenants share their dilemmas about their current housing situations, and together we draft solutions.

Finally, we build the capacity of tenants. When young people first become independent, they often find themselves not knowing what to do. It's not that they are unable, but rather that they have never been put in such a situation before. So we identify various situations that anyone living on their own might find themselves in, and regularly organize activities about them. Then the tenants who have been troubled by these same issues come to us, speak to our advisors and seek the most reasonable way forward. Because it



is hard tackling these problems on your own, we want to be there to help them. I believe building the capacity of tenants is an important element of housing management in the long term.

The biggest challenge we've found in our work is sourcing funding. After all, housing is a costly business. But if you view it from another perspective, housing is the safest investment. With our Snail Houses, all our loans are met through tenant deposits. Still, despite the fact that social housing is the safest, lowest-risk social

investment project, it hasn't been easy sourcing funds. I blame this on the paradigm in our society that houses are there to make money for the owners. Even if there is absolutely no possibility that our current housing will ever be privatized, there still exists prejudice that nonprofit housing organizations are in this to make money.

Can we truly solve the issue of house-poor youth through SSE? Our Minsnail Housing Co-op didn't start out as an enterprise, but as a movement. We want to

“ Through SSE, we wanted to try a new model that is sustainable, and which can lead to a realization of our initial goals of securing housing rights for young people. ”

try tackling our own issues by establishing a base in civil society and working with the public, while sourcing funds from the market to empower the people. Through SSE, we wanted to try a new model that is sustainable, and which can lead to a realization of our initial goals of securing housing rights for young people by expanding our base, not in the public sector or in the market, but in civil society. We're still experimenting, but we're going to keep challenging ourselves.

In Korea, housing remains a complex topic. Perhaps our activities are like beating our heads against a wall. But after coming here to the Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy, I have been able to see that youth everywhere share housing dilemmas, even if our circumstances

are a little different. It gave me a sense of comfort that I wasn't the only one with this problem, and that I wasn't the only one fighting it. There were a lot of stories shared by others which greatly helped.

Due to low growth and low employment, it has become hard for the youth to enter the existing economy. If our Minsnail Housing Co-op had entered the market not as a movement but as an enterprise, there is a great chance that we might have simply failed. In this respect, I think SSE provides great opportunities for the youth to become the main agents in the economy. This camp has brought together youth from different countries to share their experiences and thoughts, and through this I hope to discover many more opportunities in SSE.



Andrew Mellody

Organization

Co-Ground

City/Country

Melbourne, Australia

Co-Ground

co-ground.org



 **Established** 2015

 **Location** Docklands, Melbourne, Australia

Mission

- To end poverty by 2030, through working “yumi olgeta” (all together)

Main Projects

- **Running projects in Australia and Vanuatu**

Australia: Establishing funds and education programs through active social enterprise activities and other events

Vanuatu: Conducting research with the Ministry of Education and Training, Offices of Education of local governments, local corporations, our advisors, and the original community

- 100% of the profits generated are used to support education and life skills programs in the Asia-Pacific region
 - Co-Ground Coffee (a mobile café) business
 - Operating capacity-building projects in global leadership and skills for youth
 - Pen pal programs between students in Vanuatu and Australia
 - Upgrading solar power facilities at schools, installing lights at schools, constructing libraries and classrooms
-

I am the co-founder and managing director of Co-Ground. We are a community organization and a registered charity. Our funds are generated through Co-Ground events, which is one social enterprise, and also Co-Ground Coffee, our second social enterprise. All the profits from our activities go toward supporting the community health, education and livelihood programs in Vanuatu and the Philippines.

How we came to work in Vanuatu and Australia is as follows. There was a natural disaster in Vanuatu. But after the cyclone swept the area, a community was formed based on the resilience of the eight affected villages that made up the 'Vanuatu Team.' This old community is now very strong and empowered in Vanuatu. Teachers, students, community leaders and builders from the eight villages work together in the fields of health education and livelihoods. Meanwhile in Australia, the pre-existing community wasn't quite connected so we formed a new one around it. We had about 45 members, volunteers, social entrepreneurs, lawyers, journalists, students with different skill-sets, young professionals and others who want to learn new skills. We thought that by connecting these two groups together, we could

support young Australians from a diverse range of backgrounds to gain confidence, skills, and meaningful jobs.

Recently, the number of people who are aware of social and solidarity economy (SSE) have surely been growing in Australia. It is inspiring to see how fast-moving it is in the Melbourne suburbs, where we also run a café. We also run the 1FCA, a social enterprise that provides walking tours for high school students. In this tour, you don't have to travel far, but just walk for an hour or more and find yourself connected with so many social enterprises in your area.

SSE is truly gaining momentum all across Australia. In the Australian context, our team believes and wants to share the belief that social enterprise is the key part of the solution to making a quality real. There is something I came to realize after working with non-profit organizations that are little giants: when donations dry up or when the government changes its position, great programs may be forced to come to an end, which ultimately affects people. So, if you can make a social enterprise work and you have access to sustainable funds over which you have control, then you no longer have a need

“ Social and solidarity economy isn’t simply about complementing the mainstream economy. This is a transformative movement, ”

to rely on unpredictable sources of funds. Our social enterprises are sustainable, but our organization is only two years old. So our goal is to be completely run and funded independently through our social enterprises. But of course this will take some time.

The biggest social problem facing young people today is that life will change depending on where in the world you were born and the life lottery that you were born with. But I think problems that the youth face nowadays are often the same as the ones that the older generation faces. After all, everyone is affected by global challenges like climate change, the refugee crisis, and the growing world population.

From the perspective of the young however, issues of employment and freedom over livelihood have probably surfaced as bigger issues. Australia isn’t an exception, and it’s the same for the highly educated as well. But the concept of social and solidarity economy (SSE), a term which I had not encountered before coming to

this camp, may provide a huge part of the answer to these issues. From how I see it, right now people have been putting others and even planet Earth below their feet for profit. In the current economy, people are at the bottom, and money at the top. But if we change this order of priority, we can address any social issue.

Social and solidarity economy isn’t simply about complementing the mainstream economy. This is a transformative movement, but it is not entirely new and you’re already making use of the existing system. And I think this is what gives it more potential to become powerful, because you’re already using the system that is in place in many countries. Redistributing wealth and focusing on your work needs to be about more than making profit. I feel that no matter what the issue is, the different, diverse, and colorful range of social enterprises and other new models will automatically be a part of SSE.

There are two reasons why I care so much about SSE and social issues. I have dedicated my life towards making the world an

equal place. I think it's human nature to seek equality. Another is for purely selfish reasons: I have gotten many things back for what I believe in. Although we started small, we have been growing continuously. When I was younger, we started out by supporting the youth, and from there we grew to a global scale. This is why I work in SSE. As for you, you already have a social base. You just need to build on your foundation to seek profit and make adjustments.

We have already witnessed great opportunities in Australia, which could be the seeds of change. Our organization has small social enterprises, and we are al-

ready exerting an influence in this field. For example, the café that we run has been our first business model. We worked with a property developer who had no previous interest in SSE. But after they realized what we were doing and how they could support us, they underwent a great transformation. And they actually changed their whole marketing strategy, because as a property developer they are more socially connected and the demand from their customers grew.

And this is just in the bubble of Melbourne in Australia. We may be influencing a certain limited sector, but the social enterprises that exist now will be the





beacons and examples of what is to come. Not only do we create new businesses, we also influence existing ones. My dream is for all businesses to address the problems in this world, provide support, and also have a social impact. And that's what's expected of them by the people, whether they want this or not.

Coming to this Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy, I learned that there are many opportunities for young change-makers. I think camps like this are a great way to connect with people, and I think there needs to be more

ways for us to stay connected. We also need to keep sharing opportunities, lessons, modules, training programs, and other assets. For this, we will continue to work together. I believe that empowered local communities are an important answer, but working together across the world with other organizations makes me feel that we're much stronger. I truly think we can start something. Through this camp, I got to learn more about some of the similar situations that other countries were facing, and this has been a great help in understanding the challenges we face together.



Amaia Olega

Organization

Talaios Cooperative

City/Country

Basque Country, Spain

Talaios Cooperative talaios.net

 **Established** 2012

 **Location** Errenteria, Basque Country, Spain

Mission

Encourage social and economic innovation by creating, supplying and disseminating a new entrepreneurship and business model within the frame of the social economy

Main Projects

- Research, design and develop digital tools based on free technologies
- Provide education on networking strategies, communication and using free technologies
- Analyze the current state, structure and themes of social enterprises through networks and communication



Olatukoop

olatukoop.net

 **Established** 2014

 **Location** Basque Country, Spain

Mission

- Establish networks for SSE organizations in the Basque Country
- As of 2017, 25 SSE organizations have joined the network

Main Projects

- Conduct project businesses to reinforce member solidarity and for the innovative economic activities in local communities



I currently work for the Talaios Cooperative, which provides technology and management consulting services to social enterprises. Talaios started out as a labor union five years ago, and we currently have 7 members on board.

Our work involves developing technology and management-related software and providing them at no cost to co-ops and social enterprises. This is because we believe knowledge is about sharing. Some feel that using free software is like stealing technologies; however this isn't an act of theft, it's an act of sharing. For instance, let's say someone invented the wheel. Does it truly make sense for only the inventor to have access to it? The power of the wheel lies in

its ability to move many people at a time. If you monopolize the wheel, its potential will never be realized. We think technology is just like this wheel: through sharing, we believe we can realize greater innovation. However, there are still not many who understand this concept.

The public policy sector puts emphasis on innovation, but even so we have no access to their funds. This is because we create free software. What the public sector wants is creative software with copyright. While we have many creative projects, they are run in a different way to programs that have copyrights, which means we are never targets of their support. But even challenges like these become the foundation of our op-

erating principle, which is to be independent, to avoid becoming reliant on others. We believe that social and solidarity economy needs to be independent financially. If you rely on external funding, then you can't help but be swayed by the political environment and changes. We wanted to be an autonomous economic model, and in order to do so, we needed to survive on our own.

To survive on our own, establishing solidarity with other like-minded people became very important. That's why we established and now operate Olatukoop, a network for SSE organizations. Olatukoop now has 25 members who are SSE organizations active in the Basque Country, including Talaios ourselves. Through this network we run a diverse range of project businesses, with the goal of reinforcing solidarity, social welfare and shared assets between the members and contributing to economic activities.

The reason we wanted to establish a network purely for SSE organizations is because we believe that establishing solidarity with co-ops was the only way to help us reach

our goals. Our goal is to realize the values of co-ops, by engaging ourselves in the local community to contribute to economic development. (However, that doesn't necessarily mean that Olatukoop is only open to co-ops; we also work with social enterprises who identify themselves with the values of co-ops and have accepted our operating principle.)

Let's think of the Mondragon Corporation, the world's biggest federation of worker cooperatives based in the Basque region. The members of Mondragon are large cooperatives, and they have very strong solidarity. But most of the cooperatives in the Basque region are very small in size, and their goals are slightly different from Mondragon's, which also puts focus on economic conditions. Considering the long history of cooperatives in the Basque region, Mondragon is an interesting example that exerts a lot of influence; however, it does not reflect the reality of every co-op in the Basque region. Therefore, the smaller SSE organizations that are not associated with Mondragon must set their own philosophies and establish their own models that are right for

“ We believe that establishing solidarity with co-ops was the only way to help us reach our goals. ”

them, through solidarity.

The biggest challenge facing the youth in the Basque Country is the lack of jobs. Despite all their education, the younger generations have difficulty finding employment. As for entrepreneurial endeavors, many end in failure. Yet, many put all the blame on themselves and others also blame their youthfulness. So the youth end up feeling like they're not so bright.

To solve such problems, we established a cooperative. We wanted to support social enterprises started by youth, and we wanted to work together with them through a network to build a better society. The cooperatives union will be a great tool for this. But in order to do this, we need to practice our management skills by applying our own philosophies, and reflect the current political situations to keep developing those tools. Because compared to mainstream organizations with well-established systems, we are sure to face many more challenges ahead.

Personally, I feel that capitalism is an inhumane model that excludes others. Under this model, if you own land, you will fence it and you will allow only certain people to work on it and earn money. But doesn't

that mean that when someone is given the chance to work, others lose that opportunity? Resources on Earth are limited, so taking ownership of something means others will lose the opportunity for ownership. And that's depriving someone of opportunities, without realizing it. My definition of prosperity isn't about enjoying affluence at others' expense. It is about sharing and enjoying it together. The more we work together, the more we can share, and that I believe, will bring true prosperity. In that sense, social and solidarity economy is a very logical way for humanity to co-exist.

I believe this Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Network will go on to become a global network for SSE organizations, and go beyond the Basque region. I want to connect with more people here, and discuss ideas on innovative socioeconomic models that will allow us to lead more humane lives.

“

Resources on Earth are limited, so taking ownership of something means others will lose the opportunity for ownership.

”



Ieva Padagaite

Organization Blake House Filmmakers Cooperative
City/Country London, United Kingdom

Blake House Filmmakers Cooperative blake.house

 **Established** 2016

 **Location** London, United Kingdom



 **Mission**

Using storytelling and films to raise awareness and bring alternative solutions and changes to social, economic and environmental issues, by working together with NGOs, social enterprises, co-ops, charity organizations, academics and artists, whilst providing meaningful and dignified jobs for the filmmakers.

 **Main Projects**

- Creating effective online videos for charity and other third-sector organizations to deliver the core of the campaign through storytelling
 - Main types of videos typically supplied: campaigning, educational, fundraising and promotional videos
-

My name is Ieva Padagaite, and I work with the Blake House Filmmakers Cooperative based in London, United Kingdom. We are a creative agency making films and online video content for not-for-profit organizations. We work with NGOs, social enterprises, cooperatives and charities, as well as academics and artists to raise awareness about social, economic and environmental issues, and promote alternatives and changes to public perceptions.

The way we operate is as a workers' cooperative. It's like having democracy at work, where everyone working in the cooperative owns the business equally and has an equal say in how business is run. We also get paid

the same salary, no matter the role or job description because everyone is valued the same. We operate based on the global cooperative principles and values, and we are very passionate about working in a collaborative, safe and inspiring environment. We concentrate on work that is meaningful to us, and establish collaborations with people and organisations that share our values, work culture and respect.

Our organization is quite new, and we have been operating for less than two years. I started the organization together with Simon Ball, but we don't call ourselves co-founders because our coop is not found, it's a constantly evolving place and everyone that joins



in the future will have a role in co-creating it; we all call ourselves members. One of the purposes of the cooperative is to provide meaningful work, and work that is dignified as well as secure. Another purpose is to allow members to practice their creativity. That's why we invest the majority of our surplus back into our members' creative projects. These projects can be anything from short films, web series, and documentaries to projects helping good organisations or community groups. For example, members might produce a free video for a passionate charity working with refugees. So we earn profit from film-making, but we re-invest most of it into new projects.

If I was to talk about an issue that many young Londoners are facing, I would have to mention mental health, which is related to our current economic situation. It's a consequence of rising inequality, extractive economy and very poor-quality jobs, especially the many low-pay or no-pay jobs in the creative industry. High rent is also an issue. It swallows the majority of what we earn, in my case it used to be 80% or more, and as a result, not many young people are able to live in decent conditions, have a normal social life or look after their health and hobbies. In other cases they are unable to find meaningful or valuable work, which drowns the passion for

what they do and makes them disillusioned. Before working for a cooperative, I worked in cafes and restaurants. And the majority of the people who worked there had PhD's! We are the most educated generation in history, yet we are completely exploited and under-appreciated, forced to use our skills and time doing work that has no benefit for the society. Democratising work and equalising the ownership of organisations among those most affected by them is our utmost priority and if we can do so, then many other problems will be resolved too. We wouldn't allow dictators or unknown shareholders to run our countries, but we accept them in our work places. Why?

I am still questioning the role of SSE in terms of resolving unemployment issues. We are facing enormous challenges and crises all over the world, and we need a movement that is transformative: something that will go beyond sustaining the current capitalist systems which created those problems in the first place, to end that crisis by transforming how our economy is run. If the actors in SSE are brave enough to play the role, then I will willingly be a part of it. If SSE can serve as a social movement using economic tools, I believe we can transform the way in how we sustain ourselves and nature.

“ ***We need to change the mainstream narrative of glorifying the superhero social entrepreneurs, and instead talk more about equality, especially about economic equality.*** ”

The reason I came to be involved in SSE comes from my personal experience. As I mentioned before, many people around me were experiencing exactly the same problems. I've come to realize that it's not my fault that in this system, it's impossible for everyone to find equally decent work and lead decent lives. I started questioning what makes us human, and if in our society it's possible to live without compromising our humanitarian values and further contributing to the rising inequality and environmental destruction. I hope that SSE can be a transformative movement that can replace the mainstream economy. But if it ends at just sustaining the current system, then I would not believe in it.

We were quite lucky to have a solidarity movement and the cooperative movement that helped us to get started, even with no capital and without taking on shareholders. We didn't have much in the way of resources or knowledge about running a business, but we had the support of mentors and allies in the wider social economy. However, not everyone is so lucky or privileged and we need

governments to play a role creating springboards and safety nets – we need a cultural shift. We need to change the mainstream narrative of glorifying the superhero social entrepreneurs, and instead talk more about equality, especially about economic equality. We need to move from cultural individualism to collaboration, and from competing against each other in the world for better resources to working together to sustain the planet we're living on. And that needs to be done more actively, and in a more collaborative way. And of course, we need to be more humane.

My expectations of the Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Camp were quite high from the first day. And that is because Mr. Park Won-soon, Mayor of Seoul City, told us to use our passion and our anger to transform society. This is something you rarely get from a politician, so I was very inspired.

Then, one of the speakers threw this question at the audience: 'Is this movement to transform our current economy? Or are we only sustaining what we have now?' For me,

the discussions sparked from this question was quite impressive, people were brave and daring to say that it's not good enough what we have now, we have to evolve and reimagine it instead of trying to fix it. And inspiration didn't end with just that day, I came to witness more on the following days.

In one session, we were talking about “decent work” which led to a debate surrounding the very place at where we are now, the iCOOP Gurye Natural Dream Park. From the perspective of “decent work,” can we view this place as being transformative, which is

a consumers' cooperative and not a workers' cooperative? In this debate we saw some major inconsistencies that we had overlooked. But after the discussion, I am sure the participants will go on to speak about their views with more confidence, complexity and change their lives in a more passionate way. I also hope the participating organizations will come to better understand the problems and the attitudes of the youth back home – because the youth know how these problems can be solved.



Paola ROBAYO

Organization La Cooperativa Alianza Solidaria
City/Country Quito, Ecuador

La Cooperativa Alianza Solidaria

Established 1992 **Location** Quito, Ecuador

Mission

To build a local cooperative that will foster creativity and productivity in the community

Main Projects

- Building public space and public housing aimed at establishing a sustainable community
- Supporting the activities of local communities in art, culture and urban agriculture through civil participation



I work with La Cooperativa Alianza Solidaria in Quito, Ecuador, and our mission is to establish a social and solidarity economy (SSE) model. Our goal is to build a healthy community of more than houses, but is interconnected and is in harmony with nature.

The greatest challenges facing the youth of Ecuador today are the lack of jobs and housing. Faced with these difficulties, many young people find it hard to become independent when they need to. However, I believe SSE can be a solution to their problems, because it provides many alternatives for re-

solving the housing and employment issues as well as addressing their various other needs. But of course, to address the needs of the youth and to build their capacities, we need the backing of government policy.

One of the many projects we are currently engaged in is providing a healthy space where children and young people can pass their free time. Through this, we prevent them from stumbling into the harmful path of alcohol, drugs and other social problems.

We also provide various tools so that our children and youth can develop in a better way within the domains of daily life. This project helps young people in capacity-building, so that they may reflect on their lives more wisely, and learn to appropriately judge and take action to tackle their problems and the issues in their communities.

The biggest challenge we face in our work is securing funding. Our aim is to establish an independent business model and we do run most of our projects on our own. But many of these projects have difficulties with sustainability in the long-term, for financial reasons.

What's more, because our project is about providing space for the healthy development

“ Through this process of connecting, I was able to take up many tools that will help my organization, and which will also steer my community onto a better path. ”

of our community, external support is a must. However, government support is very limited and so under these circumstances, many of our projects are at risk of being halted. And this could have a serious impact on the many children, youth, and even the adults in the community.

The Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy was a platform of ideas that pointed at solutions to some of the ongoing problems in our communities. During these past few days, I connected with people who are working to make a difference in society,

and we cheered each other on. I also came to realize that many of the problems facing our youth back home are also social problems seen everywhere. So through this process of connecting, I was able to take up many tools that will help my organization, and which will also steer my community onto a better path.

For the youth to be heard and recognized as the leaders of change that our society needs, they need to raise their voices. They also need opportunities to be heard. In that sense, this camp was a very special experience for me.







SUMMARY

Summary 2017 Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy

"Reviva! Youth Reviving Society"

Sponsored by the City of Seoul and jointly organized with GSEF, iCOOP, HBM, MTA, Underdogs, CHNGR and Happy Coop Tour, the 1st edition of GSEF Global Youth Camp for SSE successfully took place from the 22nd to the 25th of August in Seoul and Gurye, South Korea. For four days, over 100 young social economy actors from 25 different countries identified current social challenges and discussed ways of resolving the problems through seminars, on-site workshops and working group discussions facilitated by the co-organizers of the camp. The camp was a follow up effort of the GSEF 2016 Montreal Declaration (Resolution No. 6: Recognize and support youth as important actors for the future of the SSE movement).

On the first day of the camp, in Plenary Session I, youth representative panelists from various sectors ranging from social enterprises (Korea), cooperative networks (South Africa), and student networks (Canada) explored the potential of the SSE in generating positive impacts on our communities. Participants also engaged in on-site workshops in the field of social innovation, social financing, housing cooperatives and urban regeneration. Throughout the first day of the camp, participants were able to get to know other participants from a variety of backgrounds and working in various spectrums of social economy initiatives.



Plenary Session I

Action of Youth:
Changing Society
through the SSE,
22 August,
Seoul City Hall

From the second day of the camp, all programs were offered in Gurye Natural Dream Park of iCOOP, which is the one of the largest consumer cooperatives in Korea. In Plenary Session II, young social entrepreneurs shared their experiences of leveraging social entrepreneurship. Four panelists from the UK, Australia, India and Korea shared their stories of empowering local communities and engaging with social movements through various initiatives.

After the plenary session, the participants were divided into 5 thematic working groups according to their topics of interest: decent work (I and II), housing, social finance and local community. Throughout the facilitated working group discussions, participants were able to better understand their topic and share their experiences with other participants of the working group who are working in or planning to engage in the sectors.

Plenary Session II

Case Studies:
Young Social
Entrepreneurs,
23 August,
GuryeHall





Elective Session I
Working Group Discussion,
23 August,
Gurye Natural Dream Park
of iCOOP

Hwaeomsa Temple visit:
23 August, Gurye



Culture Night opening
by Phare,
the Cambodian Circus,
23 August,
Gurye Natural Dream
Park of iCOOP



On the second day of the camp, the youth participants visited 'Hwaeomsa,' a Korean temple, and then got to know more about the other participants through a 'Culture Night' event.

On the third day of the camp, whole camp programs were offered by different groups to deepen understanding of topics as well as about each group. There was also a chance for all to explore the production facilities of iCOOP, one of the largest consumer cooperatives in Korea, to learn about how consumer cooperatives can produce and distribute organic food while supporting local farmers and benefiting consumers. In the evening, participants teamed up with others outside of their working group to engage in 'Birthgiving' groups to come up with innovative projects to change society.



Global Culture Night,
23 August,
Gurye Natural Dream Park
of iCOOP

On the last day, the first three days of discussions were wrapped up and the participants worked together on writing up a Global Youth Declaration which identifies current challenges for youth and ways to promote the SSE as a means to overcome hurdles and make positive changes in our society. You can read the full youth declaration on the GSEF website (www.gsef-net.org).

Birthgiving Activities,
24 August,
Gurye Natural Dream
Park of iCOOP









DECLARATION

Declaration of the 1st Global Youth Camp for Social & Solidarity Economy

We, the 100 participants of the Global Youth Camp for Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) from 25 countries, gathered in Seoul and Gurye, Korea from August 22 to 25, 2017, express our commitment to be changemakers in our local and international communities for a more equal and sustainable future. We come from different places and have different backgrounds and experiences; we are aware of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and are able to achieve them through SSE approaches. We are here to explore, learn, share and discover how we can transform our economies and build better and more equal societies but also to discover ourselves and what role we play in this movement. We are no longer followers of the generation, but leaders and creators. We see the potential of the SSE to be a source of imagination for alternative or transformative action. We also realize that the values of the SSE - cooperation, people-centeredness and democratic governance - are important for us to live in a more ethical, fairer society. This document is the outcome of our active and thorough discussions throughout the camp and also our promise to take the next step together.

Economic Transformation through Decent Work

We believe that decent work is a powerful tool to transition from the extractive and exploitative realities of today's work, in result influencing multiple crises we are facing. We are citizens, students, community builders, curious explorers, parents, activists, cooperators, change makers, entrepreneurs - you name it! But we come together around values and principles of equality; meaningful and impactful work; being appreciated and having economic security; equal pay; being able to express ourselves and use our skills for the benefit of society; collaboration rather than competition; equal ownership, democratic rights and a culture of participation to influence our work conditions - all practiced through quality teams and inspiring work environments. The current structures have failed us but we have each other and the wider solidarity movement to together explore, reimagine and build a meaningful, inclusive and critical movement to demand change and create visions of the future together. We need to tap into the power of solidarity to have a real systemic impact. We want to use social ventures as a vehicle for social impact and to sustain and care for our environment, not to destroy it. We need opportunities to self-empower; share our stories, knowledge and resources; and to build an online platform. We need spaces to come together and ensure the continuation of this movement to dig deeper and aim higher.

Local Communities: Think Glocal, Act Local

We are sharing a common vision about the need to work together and be more inclusive. We create a space to understand the reality of each other through discussions, fun and cooperation. We are confident to work in teams and happy to share together to find social harmony, because together we can gain more insight and mobilize more youth. We learn about ways to improve our communities by caring about others' projects in other countries. We believe local communities should become «glocal» and social communities for a bigger impact. We propose to see the world not as I or as You but more as «WE» because together we can grow a collective leadership to be more and more helpful to change the world and awaken others with consciousness. We, as changemakers, will plant seeds of knowledge, because once you get a tree, then you have a whole forest, and local communities start by a simple common target, shared values and small and meaningful actions.

Housing: A Dream for Every Youth

Every human being has a fundamental right to have minimal facilities like housing. Youth, the pillar of every nation, should have the chance to enhance and build up their inner and outer capacities to motivate them to lead the nation and be able to deal with social and economic problems. As the outcome of the housing team and their wishes to have how we can make 'homing' instead than 'housing', some crucial ideas and points are made. Housing should be safe and secure. Rights to housing include entitlement and protection from forced eviction. As changemakers, our action plan is to put pressure on government to access on youths role in policy making, to utilize locally-available resources while making homing, to discourage dependency on donor agencies and create some innovative work within the community, and to spread good examples and success stories among the youth network whose members supports each other to work collaboratively in the coming days.

Social Finance: Investing in Core Values

We have gathered here because we share the same ideals and visions. Passionate youth from different sectors and countries around the world synergize our experiences to move the sector forward, increasing the quantity and quality of social finance. We believe the financial sector itself must change, but along with it, the borrowers and contributors must share the burden of change. Raising critical issues of financial sustainability, the lack of financial education for individuals in the social sectors, and the problems of market and government failures, we believe cooperatively seeking the answers will improve our countries and the world. Social finance should be driven by empathy, honesty and solidarity in a system where money should never be an end in itself but rather a means to achieve social justice.

It's up to us now!

We have to be the changemakers, put our energy together and repeat «Just do it and smile». Start with your neighbor and have a global mindset to inspire and change the world.

Reviva! The Youth Revive the Society
Interview Book

Issued by the Global Social Economy Forum

Designed and Written by Blue Bird Co.,Ltd

Published in Seoul, Korea, October 2017

Email: gsef@gsef-net.org

Website: www.gsef-net.org

