



Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF)
3RD EUROPE POLICY DIALOGUE
HIGHLIGHTS

*Building diversity and inclusion through
the Social and Solidarity Economy*

18-19 November 2019

The Women's Organisation, Liverpool, UK

INTRODUCTION

On 17th-18th November 2019, GSEF held the 3rd GSEF Europe Policy Dialogue at the Women's Association in Liverpool, in partnership with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the University of Liverpool. The Dialogue gathered over 40 policymakers, representatives of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) organisations and enterprises, and academics.

This year's focus on diversity and inclusion takes on added importance as the rise in wealth inequalities within nations has intensified. Many existing problems, such as economic insecurity, homelessness, care for the elderly and general wellbeing have a common cause. We see also a huge rise in population shifts as war, hunger and drought have led to people losing their home with some estimates suggesting more than 1% of the total global population has been forced to move out of their home country. As a result of such global problems diversity and inclusion have become more important to local economies.

Many SSE organisations are better placed to challenge these problems. They are to be found in those communities where the market has failed or where the state has been cut back, working with local people who are often on the margins of society, or who have been openly discriminated against through structures of inequality. However, SSE organisations across Europe face many similar challenges. For example, where will the new leaders come from? How can they access resources and become more sustainable? How do they bring into the whole economy social justice, diversity and democracy? Can they influence policy change?

The 3rd GSEF Europe Policy Dialogue sought to:

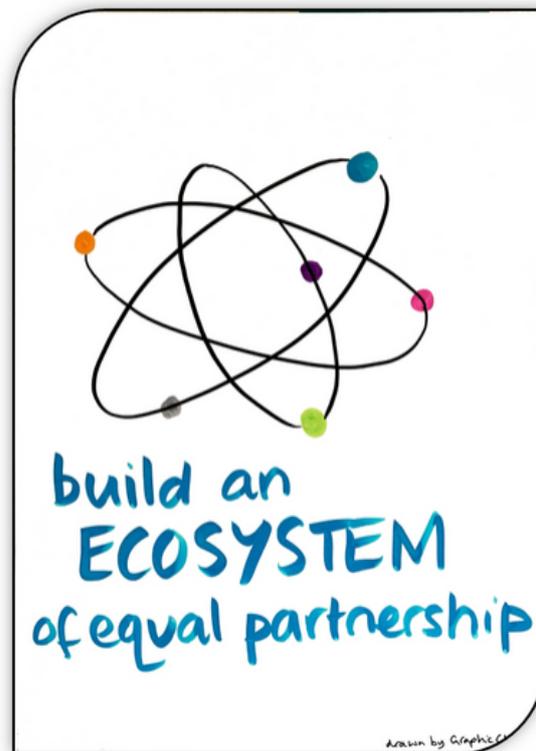
- Advocate for the inclusion of diversity and inclusion into all local development plans;
- Stimulate new SSE leaders among marginalised groups, especially among young people and migrant communities;
- Highlight the values of the SSE as part of the whole economy;
- Deepen the discussion on international cooperation initiatives, and possible projects by transferring best practices and know-how across European countries;
- Act as a channel for the GSEF to connect with local practitioners and local government across Europe;
- Share the outcomes with supporting organisations, such as the Liverpool City Region and GSEF, to shape their own plans and policies.

Europe Policy Dialogue meetings are part of a long-running [regional dialogue series](#), which aims to identify ways forward for developing inter-regional partnerships and cooperation based on an international, innovative and supportive approach. Past meetings took place in Asia (Seoul in 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2018; Hong Kong in 2016), Europe (Archamps in 2017; Madrid in 2018) and Africa (Bilbao in 2018; Bamako in 2019).

EUROPE POLICY DIALOGUE

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Connecting different levels** - bringing together actors in the SSE ecosystem is important for it to thrive and be impactful.
- **Voices unite** - Join together the ideas of different social economy actors in order to have a more meaningful impact on policy.
- To gain a better understanding of the current situation and appropriately inform public policy, we urgently need to **increase and improve data collection on social economy metrics**.
- **Attitude check** - Change the mindset on multiple levels, from business leaders understanding that social economy is both the right thing and an economically viable thing to do, to the positive societal impact that integrating migrants into the economy can have.
- **Working the system** - We, as SSE actors, must think about whether working within the system to make it better, or fully revamping it will be most beneficial to the people.



- **Prepare and provoke for the future** - When it comes to youth, current actors must give them the tools needed to not only be able to continue to make the social economy a priority, but also have the desire to do so.
- **Pushing the boundaries** - Although significantly ahead of their counterparts in the traditional private sector, social enterprises and organisations must continue to strive to continuously improve on employment and diversity practices.
- **Crucial complements** - In a case for social enterprises and organisations, they are deemed necessary parts to go along with technological advancements in order to solve societal problems that we presently face, and that will arise in the future.
- **Purchasing power** - Public procurement is an area in which social organisations and entrepreneurs can play a large role, but the 'social value test' must be more effective.
- Assuring **bottom-up representative participation** in policy and decision making is crucial to getting the SSE going in the direction that is best for all.



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OPENING SESSION

Mr. Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor, Liverpool City Region (United Kingdom) opened the conference and welcomed the participants to the 3rd GSEF Europe Policy Dialogue. He reminded the gathering of Liverpool's long history of social economy policymaking. The Mayor shared his vision of a different economic model, where conditions for an ecosystem favouring social innovation for community businesses are created, and where inclusive economic growth puts *our people* at the heart of policymaking.



"Everybody working in harmony with one aim: try and improve and better the place that they live in, and try and change the lives of the people that live there."

Concretely, Mayor Rotheram spoke about a £5M 'local transformation fund', which is testament to how much the Liverpool City Region is committed to building a sustainable living space for all. In order to distribute this fund, he stressed the need to revisit the 'social value test', and find recipients that will leave a positive, lasting legacy that places importance on people above profit.

Furthermore, Mayor Rotheram expressed desire for local citizens to be involved in shaping policy from the start, and not simply as an inclusion formality. Already, their voices are being heard in matters of transport, culture, and the environment, to name a few.

Ms. Laurence Kwark, Secretary General, Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) pointed out that Liverpool was the perfect venue because of the city's extensive SSE track record, which gives the members of its SSE ecosystem the unique ability to both share good practices, as well as challenges and obstacles.

After introducing GSEF to the audience, Secretary General Kwark highlighted how much GSEF has brought local governments closer to SSE actors in order for them to work hand-in-hand.



"If we want to respond to financial and economic inclusion, if we want to work for social inclusion, but also increasingly if we would like to work for ecological inclusion in all our economic and social activities, we cannot ignore the public policies of the social and solidarity economy."

In a positive look to the future, she mentioned how much she is encouraged by where the world's social economy movement is going because of the strength of the horizontal relationships that are being created, specifically mentioning burgeoning SSE hubs in Africa

Prof. Mark Boyle, Director of the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place, University of Liverpool started off by giving the audience a profile of the city, and praising the regeneration that has occurred in the past few decades. However, he did acknowledge that some were excluded from this recovery, and as a result Liverpool

currently still ranks as one of the most deprived cities in the UK on many aspects. For this reason, his institute is there to provide academic leadership for evidence-based public policymaking.



"We need economic development, but that growth has to be inclusive, and has to be green, it has to be clean."

Of the city's gross value added £31B economy, Professor Boyle informed the audience that the social economy is measured at £3B, and employs approximately 40,000 people.

Dr. Ulla Engelmann, Head of Unit for Advanced Technologies, Clusters and Social economy, European Commission highlighted how the social economy is a priority for the EC, and outlined how their 2011 Social Business Initiative has assisted social enterprises. It has done so on three levels: by increasing access to funding, by expanding access to markets, and by promoting the visibility of social enterprises at the EU, regional and local levels.



"Reaching out to and engaging with people with diverse backgrounds or marginalised people lies at the heart of the mission of many social economy enterprises."

In its access to funding, the social economy has become an investment priority, particularly in the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund. Moreover, fighting social inequality is high on the EC's list of priorities, and one of the fundamental ways they are doing so is through the European Pillar of Social Rights, which consists of 20 concrete principles combating poverty and social exclusion.



SESSION I

Local Governments Advancing Approaches for Genuine Inclusion

Ms. Laurence Kwark, Secretary General, Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) thanked Mr. Rotheram, Mr. Boyle, and Ms. Engelmann for setting the stage through their interventions and presented the session on the role of local governments in advancing inclusion through supporting SSE.

Ms. Lynn Collins, Strategic Relations and Engagement Advisor, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (United Kingdom) recognised that Liverpool is lagging behind the rest of England according to many metrics. Although other regions across England are also taking some steps, she outlined some of the actions taken to promote inclusion and fight inequality in the LCR. Firstly, the Fairness and Social Justice Advisory Board has been set up since 2017 and includes all six boroughs. Secondly, a City Region Fair Employment Charter will be established, recognising businesses that promote 'social value'. Fairness, inclusiveness, and justice are three essential values that enterprises must possess.

Ms. Anna Fedas, Social Development Coordinator, Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot Metropolitan Area (Poland) was proud to inform the audience that her city has the only Social Economy Support Centre in Poland, but acknowledged that the SSE is only slightly integrated in policymaking. This support centre serves three key functions, which are to intervene in lobbying and policymaking, offer financial support and provide professional services. With regards to social inclusion, Gdańsk adopted the Metropolitan Immigrant Integration & Equal Treatment Model, consisting of four steps that cover the needs of all people and all types of municipalities.

Ms. Christiane Ram, Head of the Office of Economic Development, City of Mannheim (Germany) started off her presentation by giving an overview of the city of Mannheim, and her Office. Ms. Ram also emphasised that our solutions to complex problems cannot stem from technological advancements alone, but should also include social innovations.



"We have to deal with the fact that the cities will give us the solutions for the future, not the national governments."

She continued by talking about the importance of the participation of civil society actors, sustainable networks, and urban society in policymaking, and her office's role in assessing the current status of, and future need for, support systems in order for the multiple stakeholders to thrive. A warm invitation was then extended to the audience to join her in Mannheim for the European Social Economy Summit, in November 2020.

Ms. Maryse Foligné, Regional Cooperative for Collective Entrepreneurship Education (CRIC), Brittany region (France) introduced the audience to Brittany region's CRIC. There

are three types: youth, young adult, and territorial cooperatives. However, there is a special focus on youth cooperatives, where the objective is for youth to feel more connected to their localities, and to train them to eventually become ambassadors of local social economies in the future. Looking ahead to 2020, Ms. Foligné has her sights set on developing new cooperatives that better respond to the needs of the citizens by strengthening the links with local authorities.

Ms. Sue Cooper, Head of Credit, Bristol & Bath Regional Capital CIC (United Kingdom) highlighted [BBRC's One City Plan](#), which brings partners across the city together, and allows equal chances for everyone to realise their full potential by providing not only funding, but also skills and knowledge-based training. It has two main focal points: grants and promotion activities of the *One City* approach, and being an advisor to an investment fund of £10M. This fund is one of the first in England that specifically targets an area, and provides to organisations of various sizes for initiatives related to the environment, community, economic inclusion, and fighting children hunger.



"Part of the *One City* approach is about making the city fairer, more sustainable, and more equal for everybody that lives in the city."

Discussion and reactions

Participants of the Dialogue participated in the discussion:

- When asked about potential advice for other city regions looking to set up funding arrangements similar to *One City Plan*, Ms. Cooper stressed the importance of not underestimating the amount of time and efforts necessary to create the partnership framework and ensure that everyone is on the same page.
- Sara Lawton, Managing Director, Construction Impact Framework, pointed out that government procurement is the key to unlocking fairness, equality and the full potential of the solidarity economy, because of its immense purchasing power.
- Laurence Kwark: An area where improvement is necessary is in SSE data and information collection, not only in developing countries, where organisations and enterprises often operate in the informal sector, but also in places like the E.U., in order to identify who they are and what they contribute to economic, social and environmental inclusion. Increasingly, universities and think tanks are being called upon to provide that information.



"International cooperation between cities or metropolitan areas is important to encourage our mayors to be more courageous and to give strong voices to say yes to equal treatment, and to say yes to the social economy."

- In response to a question on how to get current business leaders to modify their practices in order to more aptly integrate social economy, Lynn Collins had four changes: 1) To change through legislation; 2) To change through business leadership organisations; 3) To change through the ways in which we collaborate; 4) Bring the social economy sector voices and elements together as one. Christine Ram added a fifth interesting point: that employees also need to ask questions to their business leaders about what they are doing to contribute positively.



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SESSION II

Moving Beyond Inclusion through Innovative Work- Integration Practices and Policies

Ms. Helen Heap, Visiting Fellow, Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place, University of Liverpool, Founder and CEO of Seebom Hill Ltd (United Kingdom), as moderator, introduced the next section and speakers with great enthusiasm, highlighting the importance of sharing best practices with people who are working at the ground level.

Ms. Michelle Charters, Chief Executive Officer, Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre, (United Kingdom) began her speech by providing the audience with some important highlights, focusing on minority presence in the city of Liverpool. In fact, Liverpool is host to Europe's oldest continuous established African, Caribbean, and Chinese communities, since the 1700s.

By profiling an important activist group in the region, Ms. Charters informed the audience that not only is working together through involvement and inclusion for everyone the right thing to do, it is also good business sense. Actually, recent studies revealed that in the UK, if all black people were involved in the economy, the potential benefit would be to the tune of £24B, or 1.3% of the GDP.



"Determination and fight for equality and justice to ensure the involvement and empowerment of the many diverse communities, especially as this is crucial in these critical times."

Using this example further, Ms. Charters communicated to the audience that even though a movement starts off small, it can balloon and develop into a reality. Looking to the future, she also stressed the importance of passing on opportunities to the young people of today, so that they can then become the activists of tomorrow.

Mr. Apostolos Ioakimidis, Social cooperative Wind of Renewal (Greece) kicked off his presentation by revealing three current issues that Greece faces, namely the environment, unemployment, and migrants & refugees. In order to remedy these crucial concerns, he detailed his organisation's initiatives. Some of these include welcoming female refugees with children, who are stranded on the Greek islands, to the mainland to participate in integration programs, organising cultural events for youth, and promoting efforts for the installation of windmill energy cooperatives, among others.

Mr. Derek Walker, Chief Executive, Wales Co-operative Centre (United Kingdom) outlined his view, in three points, of how the social economy can be improved, learned through his many years of experience working in this sector. The first aspect is to push the social economy sector to continuously improve on employment and diversity practices, even though it is considered a leader in this regard. Secondly, when it comes to public procurement, Mr. Walker sees this as an opportunity to put social enterprises at the forefront, by making the 'community benefits statement' a more robust priority for governments. His third point was about social care being in the hands of the people receiving it, in terms of where that care is being directed and the resources spent.



"My organisation believes that the social economy, the social enterprise and cooperative model, is key to achieving a much fairer economy within Wales."

Mr. Dražen Šimleša, Research Associate, Institute for Social Science Ivo Pilar (Croatia) informed us about his institute, which helps social enterprises become more visible, resilient and sustainable in the market, achieve better organisational capacity, all the while not jeopardizing enterprises' social mission and democratic values of participatory approach. Furthermore, he described how the needs and situation of Central Europe were mapped, then personalized trainings for each sub-region, as well as a more generalized training for the region as a whole, were created. It is also with enthusiasm that Mr. Šimleša provided an update of the jewel project of his organisation: an online educational platform for acquiring information, skills, know-how, and training.

Ms. Aziza Yussupova, Project Officer, European Network of Social Integration Enterprises (ENSIE) outlined the network's two main priorities, the first of which is lobbying at the European level. This is done by bringing information in a bottoms-up approach to the European Union; support from the EU comes in the form of policy guidance, funding and taking advantage of EU-level networks and best practices. The organisation's second strategy is in support of its members, by helping them become autonomous in their activities. According to a recent impact study done of work integration social enterprises (WISE) in this network, almost $\frac{2}{3}$ of the participants had positive employment outcomes, showcasing their important contribution to the social economy.



SESSION III

Social and Solidarity Economy: A Driving Force in Enabling Diverse Future Leaders

Rev Canon Dr. Ellen Loudon, Advisor for Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Board (United Kingdom), as moderator, introduced the speakers, and brought up thought-provoking questions and issues.

Dr. Alan Southern, Principal Investigator for the Social Economy, Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place, University of Liverpool (United Kingdom) and Ms. Lily Spendlove, Chair, Lee Cooper Foundation described how the Foundation was created from the need for a safe space in the LCR for young people to talk about their mental health. Through the variety of initiatives that the young people running this foundation have undertaken, they have been able to reach other young people in the community and provide them with opportunities that they may not otherwise have gotten.



"Communication is key; whether it's to communicate together to provide and raise awareness of the services or just to simply listen to the people who you're putting help out there for."

Mr. Abdoulaye Fall, Project Manager, Winkomun (Spain) presented a central theme that revolved around how the social economy can be a unique opportunity for living in an inclusive society. After providing the audience with an overview of his organisation, which has been operating for 16 years and now reaches 6 European countries, he went on to explain how poverty is closely linked with being a migrant as a result of the current dominant economic model. Mr. Fall wrapped up by offering three recommendations. Firstly, we must rethink the model of integration, so that migrants can become fully dependent on themselves. The second one is to have representatives of the migrant communities involved in the decision-making sphere, and thirdly, to increase the collaboration between local governments.



"For us, the economy is social by definition and I think that it is important, when we try to boost and promote the social economy, to not put aside the migrants because we have good practical experience when it comes to building a more inclusive and sustainable society."

Mr. Kenny Clewett, Executive Director, Ashoka Hello Europe informed his listeners that his organisation was set up in order to respond to the opportunities that presented themselves with the increased flow of migrants to Europe.



"We would like to see migration turn from a divisive issue to a system of solutions and changemakers."

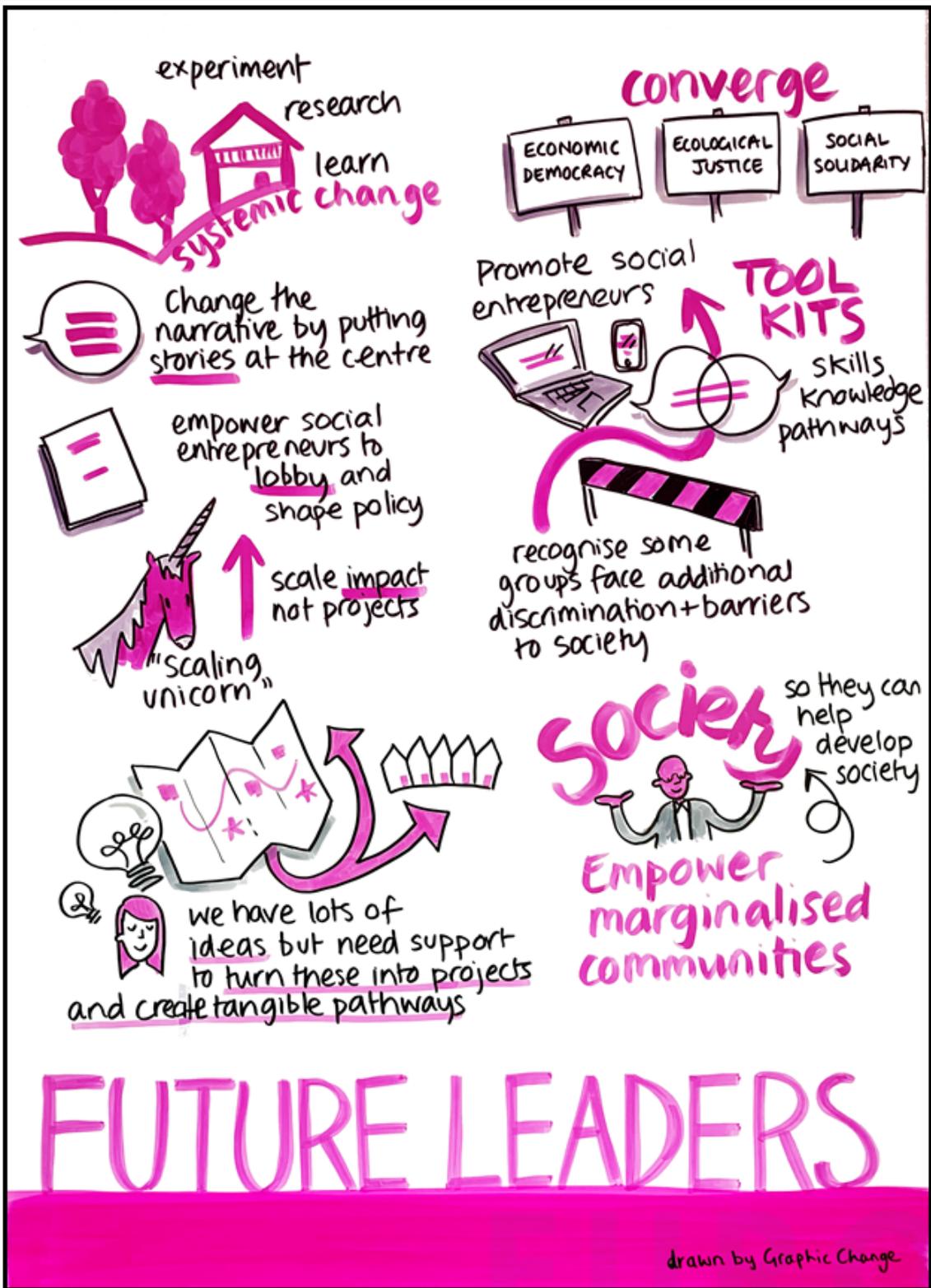
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Stemming from this, three challenges were identified and are being tackled. The first comes from scaling, where the accelerator process was established, identifying impactful social entrepreneurs and linking them with companies, local governments, or other actors in order to scale the effect of their initiatives. The second challenge comes from connecting social entrepreneurs with those who are drawing up the policies, particularly at the EU level, by training both sides on working together. Lastly, growing the migrants' narrative, together with finding migrant leaders, to be a part of choosing where funds go and what is being done to their communities is crucial.

Ms. Filareti Paka, European Projects' Communication Manager, Institute of Entrepreneurship Development (iED) (Greece) began by giving us a brief overview of her organisation, which promotes innovation and entrepreneurial spirit, and which has supported 150+ projects and 2000+ companies since 2005. Following the economic hardships faced by Greece, many of the most vulnerable groups (i.e. immigrants, women, youth, minorities, and people with disabilities) in society were especially hit hard. For this reason, iED focuses on initiatives that include these groups. For example, one of their latest social inclusion projects, running until the end of April 2020, is called RAYSE, or Raising Awareness of Youth Europeans of Second Generation with a migration background.

Mr. Dražen Šimleša, Green Network of Activist Groups/ZMAG (Croatia), General Coordinator of the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESSE) explained to his audience how ZMAG emphasises the practical aspect of sustainable development through education, experience, and research. On the RIPESSE side of things, which has presence in 19 EU member countries, Mr. Šimleša presented their strategic orientation, focusing on searching for the social transformative aspect of SSE. In any capacity, he maintained the focus on young people getting involved now in SSE as vital to the future. He closed his remarks by warmly inviting everyone in attendance to the World Social Forum of Transformative Economies in Barcelona, which will have as its main themes digital commons, ecofeminism, food sovereignty, and SSE.





Discussion and reactions

Participants of the Dialogue highlighted the following:

- Rev Canon Dr. Ellen Loudon: Instead of seeking to change systems entirely, we need to look for ways to transform it, the people required to do so and to make these transformations meaningful, and at the same time acknowledge the areas in which we are falling short.
- Emma Stewart from Social Value UK emphasized the need for SSE actors to recognize that they are stakeholders, i.e. people put stakes in their enterprises, organisations, and ideas, and so they must pay attention to the diverse voices, in order to be able to deliver to them.
- Kenny Clewett: When thinking about scaling, it is important to focus on what an organisation is truly skilled at doing, instead of scaling the entire organisation.

Discussion in groups

What are the driving forces that enable this movement to have real and systemic and sustainable change?

Group 1

Rather than talking about who is helping or being helped, it is crucial to discuss our ability to cooperate. With regards to young people, the current “instils fear in young people, rather than confidence and opportunity.” For this reason, it is important to work on the narrative that we project, in order for young people to think of the economy as social by definition, which happens to be closer to ‘rest of the world’ thinking, rather than a western outlook.

Group 2

It would be worth contemplating to have a new form of state that, instead of taking sides on and choosing private enterprise, entrepreneurship over trade unions and state intervention, looks for cooperation between the government and the different actors in society. In fact, it is more about a *cooperative* form of entrepreneurship, rather than the model that is currently pervasive throughout.

Group 3

A big debate is going on about whether a transformation of the current system, or a total change of system is what is needed for the future, but also about at what time should people start acting positively, instead of looking to swap out the system.

RESPONSIBLE COMMISSIONING

is **KEY**



SOCIAL ECONOMY is a significant economic sector



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SOCIAL ORG. SITE VISIT

On the second day, participants had the opportunity to visit three SSE organisations and enterprises.



KUUMBA IMANI MILLENIUM CENTRE

Founded in 2004 by the Liverpool Black Sisters, the **Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre** is a multi-cultural, multi-purpose centre located in the Liverpool 8 neighbourhood to support the community's health and well-being. Under the L8 A Better Place initiative, the centre accompanies community leaders, activists, and social entrepreneurs through, among others, mentoring programme and the Active Citizens programme. Learn more about their inspiring work on Twitter @L8abetterplace!

HOMEBAKED

Homebaked is a community land trust (CLT) and co-operative bakery, café and pie shop located opposite the Liverpool Football Club. Their goal is for everyone in the community to live well, and they believe that this can be done with good jobs and secure homes, as well as delicious food and places that people can share. The CLT makes sure that homes in the neighbourhood will remain affordable, and the bakery employs and trains people from that same neighbourhood, pays them a living wage, and re-invests surplus in ways that benefit the community. Homebaked estimates that, for each pound patrons invest in the bakery, a value of £21 is generated in the community!



BALTIC CREATIVE CIC

The **Baltic Creative CIC** was established in 2009 with the goal to contribute to the regeneration of the Baltic Triangle. It now owns 118,000 ft² of space tailored to growing Liverpool's digital and creative businesses. Since Baltic Creative re-invests all of its profits into its buildings, tenants, and the overall sector, it can remain flexible and grow the spaces hand-in-hand with the tenants.



For more on the Dialogue, go to: www.bit.ly/2U0NaVC

