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LOCAL SSE POLICIES ENABLING THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL TRANSITION

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WORKING PAPER

Local Policies for the Popular Solidarity Economy in the
Municipality of Malvinas Argentinas
(Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina)

Gabriela CHAMORRO, Mercedes GARCÍA (Argentina)

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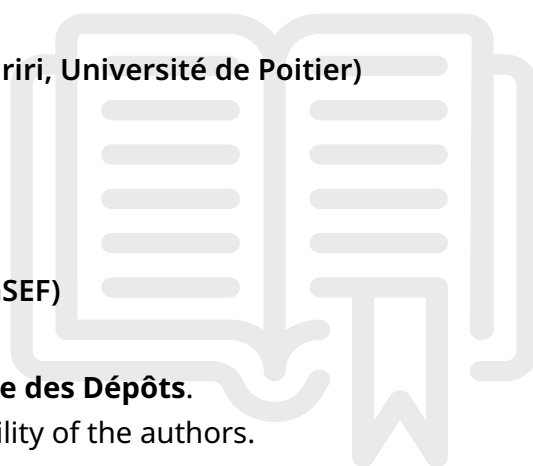
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Local Policies for the Popular Solidarity Economy in the Municipality of Malvinas Argentinas (Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina)¹

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Introduction

This paper aims to describe the design, implementation and evaluation of public policies for the popular solidarity economy (PSE) in the municipality of Malvinas Argentinas, located in the province of Buenos Aires, 38 kilometers from the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The municipality of Malvinas Argentinas, although considered a municipality “in transition” toward the popular solidarity economy (Muñoz, 2021), has implemented many policies in recent years aimed at promoting, strengthening and consolidating “Other Economies.”²

The fieldwork explored the role of social organizations in the field of PSE and the different interconnections that have emerged between municipal managers, the social organizations that have driven and occupied institutional spaces, and the subjects targeted by current policies.

To this end, we structured the paper as follows. We begin with a brief conceptualization of the key terms, using the approach of substantivist economics (Polanyi, 1944), the proposal of the popular solidarity economy (Coraggio, 2018), and local public policies (Subirats, 2008). We

¹ Translated from Spanish: CHAMORRO, G., GARCÍA, M., “Políticas locales de economía popular solidaria en la ciudad de Malvinas Argentinas (Buenos Aires, Argentina)”, *Políticas locales de ESS al servicio de la transición socio-ecológica*, GSEF, 2025.

² The term “Other Economies” is used broadly to encompass the various ways of naming alternative economies, which can include popular, social, solidarity, feminist, community, circular, indigenous, green, etc.

then contextualized the public policies of the popular solidarity economy in Greater Buenos Aires and its 24 municipalities based on Muñoz's doctoral research (2021). Finally, we briefly described the connection between the Popular Economy Movement in Argentina and its impact on the state public economics of the territories.

Secondly, the paper focuses on analyzing the institutional structure of public policies for the popular solidarity economy in the Malvinas Argentinas district and reviews the core programs of each department.

Finally, the conclusions raise five features that run through the entire analysis and some necessary actions to strengthen the sector.

1. Theoretical Framework

The scope of the research comprises local public policies related to the popular solidarity economy. Thus, economy is understood based on the substantivist approach theorized by Karl Polanyi (1944), who defined it as an “instituted process of interaction between man and his environment, which results in a continuous supply of want-satisfying material means.” For his part, Coraggio (2018) suggested that the popular solidarity economy³ be understood as “a proposal for complex action with a systemic, cultural and political scope, which seeks to open other forms of social relations,” in which the value of the democratic collective and the community is emphasized.

Finally, Subirats (2008) argued that public policies go through different stages from their inception, generating a circular dynamic of constant feedback that allows for adjustments at each stage. With a comprehensive view of the different conceptions, public policies play a key role in the realization of the popular solidarity economy, as both public managers and social subjects collectively build and/or produce institutional structures and build bridges between the State, society and the environment with concrete possibilities for lasting sustainability.

Regarding Sustainable Development, Resolution A/RES/79/213, adopted by the United Nations in November 2024, is considered a further step in the UN's commitment to formalize and promote the SSE as a crucial tool for achieving the global development goals. The most meaningful sentence in the report states: “The social and solidarity economy drives all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” The report elaborates on each of the SDGs, explaining them and providing examples based on empirical cases from different parts of the world. Another earlier significant event for the PSE took place in April 2023 when the international organization adopted the resolution “Promoting the Social and Solidarity Economy for Sustainable Development” (A/RES/77/281), which provides a definition of the

³ Although the terminologies used to refer to the field vary (popular economy, social and solidarity economy, circular economy), we have decided to use the term popular solidarity economy proposed by Coraggio (2018) to unify and make reading more understandable and friendly.

Social and Solidarity Economy and recognizes that it can contribute to the achievement and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In her doctoral thesis, Muñoz (2022) states that in 14 municipalities of the 24 districts of the Greater Buenos Aires area, there were 121 social and solidarity economy policies adopted in 2016-2018, implemented by 12 specific organizations with a more diverse profile than the supra-local organizations. Regarding municipal interventions in this area, Muñoz (2022) notes an average of almost 9 interventions per municipality, although with different degrees of engagement: “Moreno, with the highest number of interventions (21), closely followed by San Martín (19) and, at the other extreme, Quilmes, as the district with the fewest interventions (3).”

Regarding interventions, in Malvinas Argentinas, Muñoz (2022) identified the *ProHuerta* Program, implemented in conjunction with the municipalities and the National Institute of Agricultural Technology (INTA), and the *El Mercado en tu Barrio* Program, part of the Social and Solidarity Economy Policies (SSEPs). The author states that the municipal government is responsible for contacting and connecting local producers locally so that they can sell at the fairs promoted by the program and that “there was room for local food producers to enter the program as suppliers of their products” (Muñoz, 2022, p. 219).

Muñoz (2022) concludes by identifying three categories of municipalities relative to the policy-based majority view of the SSE. The three categories are: the mercantilist popular economy (PE) (characteristic of the first movement of SSE promotion identified by Coraggio), the social and solidarity economy, characteristic of the second movement, and the third, “in transition” (similar to PE with traces of PSE). The author describes Malvinas Argentinas as a municipality “in transition” from a popular economy to a popular solidarity economy. Thus, Muñoz (2021) concludes that in the district of Malvinas Argentinas, “it is likely that with the transformations resulting from the pandemic context and the new SSEs that have emerged specifically at all State levels since the beginning of 2020, there will be even better conditions for problem identification and interventions that contribute to this regard.”

Another aspect worth mentioning is the debate and tension in Argentina between the SSE and the PE. On the one hand, the SSE, as defined by Coraggio and Loritz (2022), can have two meanings: (1) as a social and solidarity-based economic system whose functioning ensures a structured foundation for the integration of all people into a just and balanced society; (2) as a collective action project aimed at countering the socially negative tendencies of the existing system, with the (current or potential) prospect of building at least one alternative economic subsystem to counteract the force of the logic of capital. In the last decade (2010-2020), the popular economy has emerged and gained visibility on the public agenda, as a topic for academic conceptual development and is gaining interest in the Argentine political sector (García, 2022). Regarding a divergence of meanings,

it can be claimed that forty years of academic debate on the popular economy (interest in its academic study dates back to the 1980s⁴) did not achieve the recognition of the category that the Popular Economy Movement in Argentina (made up of social/popular organizations involved in CTEP-UTEP⁵ and others outside the union) established on a massive level in just eight years, since its foundation in 2011 and mainly during the period 2016-2019 (García, 2022).

“*Los Cayetanos*⁶ has managed to position leaders of popular organizations as relevant interlocutors, alongside traditional union organizations” (García, 2022).

The strengthening of the Popular Economy Movement in Argentina impacts the territorial development of organizations that become stakeholders in the sector. The growth of organizations linked to the popular solidarity economy often impacts on and is reflected in the public economy sector at the local level. In the case study, these organizations played a leading role in the creation of government institutions.

2. Methodology

The methodology used is qualitative, analyzing primary and secondary sources with a matrix for systematizing⁷ municipal interventions.

A flexible qualitative methodology was chosen to provide an account on the design and implementation of public policies for the popular solidarity economy in Malvinas Argentinas. Based on a thematic guide with different guidelines, five semi-structured interviews were conducted with municipal managers in charge of programs and/or instruments related to popular solidarity economy policies (Directorates for Social Economy, Popular Economy, or cooperativism). In the case of the Undersecretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development, although the department perceives itself as being close to the proposals of the circular economy and the sustainable economy, without any explicit link to the popular solidarity economy, the decision was made to conduct the interview because it was seen to have a close relationship with the sector, as it maintains sustained links with cooperatives,

⁴ Starting with various pioneering academics such as José Luis Coraggio, César Barrantes and Luis Razeto Migliaro, who wrote on popular economy since the late 1980s and developed their theories in subsequent decades.

⁵ Although the union has been positioning itself as a public sector player since 2011, it devoted its first few years to consolidating its internal identity and training its leaders, representatives and members. It was at the beginning of the Macri administration that the CTEP gained greater visibility, playing a key role in reorganizing the agenda of social movements linked to advancing the achievement of rights for the popular economy sector.

⁶ *Los Cayetanos* is an alliance made up mainly of *Barrios de Pie*, *La Corriente Clasista y Combativa* and CTEP (which became UTEP in 2019).

⁷ The research framework was developed by the “Entramar” research team, established in 2023 with funding from PICT-CONICET. This team is led by Ruth Muñoz, PhD in Social Sciences, and includes more than ten researchers, CONICET fellows, and graduate and student associates. The team's purpose is to build bridges between the various agents, actors and stakeholders of the political project of Other Economies.

associations, social and/or grassroots organizations, schools, and civil society organizations. The interviewees' testimonies were cross-referenced with secondary sources consisting of various documents and media sources analyzed. The research corpus therefore consists of interviews with managers conducted during 2022 and 2023, municipal decrees, resolutions, and ordinances creating departments or policies, the 2022 municipal organizational chart, and social media monitoring of the various municipal areas.

Within this framework, the object of analysis is the municipal agencies and the local public policies (LPPs) of Malvinas Argentinas. To operationalize the LPPs, they have been defined as municipal interventions, understood as

projects, programs or other instruments currently under development in the municipality and that have a certain minimum level of development, that is, some form of institutionalization—through an ordinance, decree or resolution, or others—and are at least one year old. These include all initiatives managed by the municipal State, regardless of the level of government at which they originate, are designed, or are financed (Muñoz, 2021).

We also explored the ways in which the processes of creation and implementation of institutional structures in the municipality of Malvinas Argentinas developed as public policies linked to the popular solidarity economy, and the way in which institutions and programs operate daily from the perspective of public administrators.

3. Analysis of the Institutional Structure of Public Policies for the Popular and Solidarity Economy in Malvinas Argentinas

To put the popular solidarity economy sector in Malvinas Argentinas into context, we reconstructed some data⁸ that represent the sector's scope and magnitude. Regarding the presence of social and solidarity economy actors in 2018, there were 127 cooperatives in the district (representing 3.9 % of the total population), 3 recovered companies, and 1 public university (National University of General Sarmiento) working in the popular, social and solidarity economy (EPSS) sector. Muñoz (2021) states that in Malvinas Argentinas, there were State agents with decision-making power and commitment to these economies. In this regard, Muñoz (2021, p. 199) identified three cases that did not have social and solidarity economy policies or specific organizations during the 2012-2015 administrations and that, with changes in local government, included the popular economy and/or the social and

⁸ The data provided were systematized by Ruth Muñoz in her doctoral thesis, *La promoción estatal de la economía social y solidaria desde lo local. Aprendizajes y desafíos en los municipios del Conurbano Bonaerense en perspectiva comparada* (State Promotion of the Social and Solidarity Economy from the Local Level: Lessons and Challenges in the Municipalities of Greater Buenos Aires from a Comparative Perspective), defended in 2022.

solidarity economy in their agendas: Almirante Brown, Hurlingham and Malvinas Argentinas. These governments changed from *Frente Renovador* to *Frente Para la Victoria*.

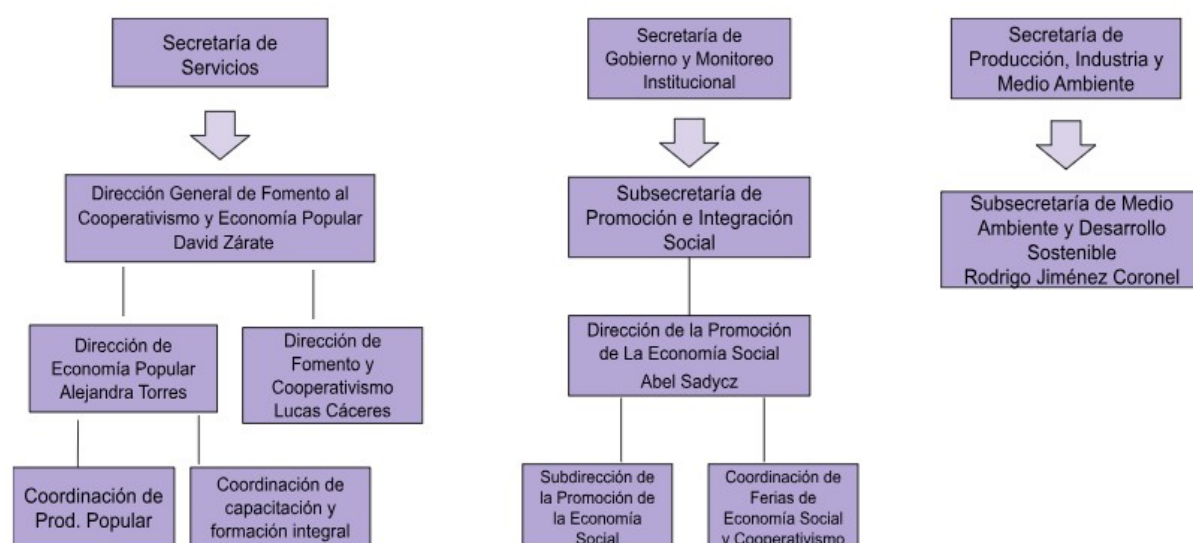
By 2024, Malvinas Argentinas⁹ had more than twenty municipal agencies and departments that implement policies related to the areas and programs of the popular, social, solidarity and community economy, under the umbrella of three secretariats. The first is the Services Secretariat, the second is the Secretariat of Government and Institutional Monitoring, and the third is the Secretariat of Production, Industry and Environment. These secretariats have undersecretariats, directorates (general, directorates and sub-directorates), and coordination offices related to the field. In addition, more than 20 programs related to the sector have been identified.

The first agency created was the Directorate for the Development of the Social Economy in 2015, following the change of government that same year. It is currently under the Secretariat of Government and Institutional Monitoring, which comprises the Undersecretariat for Promotion and Social Integration, the Directorate for the Development of the Social Economy, the Subdirectorate for the Promotion of the Social Economy, and two coordination offices: the Coordination Office for Social Economy and Cooperativism Fairs and the Office for Urban Family Agriculture and Program Implementation.

The Services Secretariat includes the General Directorate for the Development of Cooperativism and the Popular Economy, with two directorates and two coordination offices related to the sector. The Undersecretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development reports to the Secretariat of Production, Industry, and Sustainable Development. The following figure illustrates this:

⁹ The municipality of Malvinas Argentinas has a population of 351,788 (source: 2022 Census). The current mayor, Leonardo Nardini, is serving his third term. His administration ran from 2015 to 2019, and he was reelected that year until September 2021, when Buenos Aires Province Governor Axel Kicillof appointed him to join the provincial government cabinet. He served as head of the Buenos Aires Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Services. Upon confirmation of his municipal leave, he was replaced on an interim basis by Noelia Correa, with whom he shared an electoral ticket in 2023.

Figure 1: Organization chart of the municipal structure related to the SPSE.



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from the official website of the municipality of Malvinas Argentinas.

Another premise for the recognition of the existing popular economy in the district was in 2017 when a fair for families and producers of the popular, social and solidarity economy at the Crucero Ara General Belgrano Square was declared of social interest.

3.1 Design, Implementation and Evaluation – Period 2015-2023

The following is a description of these municipal departments analyzing three key aspects: the time of their creation, their main objectives, and the policies they implemented during the 2015-2023 period. This analysis is then summarized in a table according to each stage of the policy cycle: design, implementation and evaluation.

As discussed in the interviews with the municipal managers, some departments were created based upon specific demands from social/grassroots organizations.

3.1.1 Directorate for the Promotion of the Social Economy

The Directorate for the Promotion of the Social Economy was created in 2015 and is headed by Abel Zadycs. The Directorate's main functions are:

- Promote, foster and strengthen the work of small and medium-sized producers, entrepreneurs, and artisans.
- Coordinate with other municipal departments to promote and disseminate the work of social economy stakeholders with the Malvinas Argentinas community.

- Manage agreements and resources with national and provincial organizations related to the area.

It also has a Subdirectorate for the Promotion of the Social Economy.

In the interview held in August 2023, the Director said that they had developed regulations and promoted participation in fairs. The Directorate has two main policy instruments: the Artisan Fair, which takes place weekly on the municipal square, and the Traveling Artisan Fair, which also takes place weekly and rotates through different squares in the municipality. This fair also includes a cultural event. Regarding other initiatives carried out in the municipality by the General Directorate for the Popular Economy, Abel Zadyces states that the Popular Economy fair “does not develop the economy because there is a lot of resale.”

The “Artisan and Microentrepreneur Fair” program has offered training sessions on hygiene, appearance, health cards and marketing since 2016. The fair takes place every weekend, generally within the vicinity of the Municipal Palace (known as the municipal plaza), and resale is not permitted.

Regarding the running of the fairs, we gathered the following information in the interview:

Stalls for various sales categories are set up, aimed at promoting the social economy, accompanied by cultural and artistic shows and complementary activities. The fairs take place in various public spaces in the district over three consecutive days, from approximately 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. The operation of the two main programs promoted by the Directorate is regulated. The following procedure for selecting stallholders was established:

- Categories cannot be repeated (a maximum of three producers per category is accepted).
- The fair is held every weekend (with a set limit on absences; if the entrepreneur reaches a certain number of absences, he/she is removed, and other entrepreneurs are invited).
- The fair works with the producer directly, who must be present at the stall. This is intended to prevent the same producer from having multiple sales outlets in the municipality. If a producer has the production capacity to do so, he/she will be considered a merchant, and different production and sales regulations will apply.

According to Zadyces, the main objectives of the programs are:

They aim to promote and foster the marketing conditions of workers in the social economy, while providing both productive and service experiences to the Malvinas Argentinas community, thus encouraging responsible consumption.

The program recipients are small-scale producers within the municipality.

In the interview, Abel Zadycs described the main instruments of the programs implemented in the municipality:

1. Inspection through a visit to the production site or video recording to discourage the resale of products.
2. Material resources (stalls, gazebos, lighting) are provided for a period of three months.
3. Evaluation of the capabilities developed by the producer: after the three-month period, the producer must be able to self-provide the necessary material resources to participate in the fair. If this is not achieved, the producer will be removed from the program, and another exhibitor will be included.

The participation of the NGO *Construyendo Futuro Malvinas* was also noted. Through the Directorate, it provides advisory services to stallholders and micro-entrepreneurs. This is done through a package that includes:

1. Profit margins
2. Prices/costs
3. Social media
4. Sales mentoring. Individual microcredits are granted (no regulations specified).

Regarding this point, it is important to note that the Director said that “there is no microcredit from the municipality and [that] we are seeking to reach an agreement with the provincial level.”

In 2022, the *MA Emprende* program was created, with the general purpose of promoting projects through academic training, support, mentoring, and fostering a broad network of contacts, thereby driving social and economic development. The specific objectives proposed are:

- Create the Malvinas Argentinas entrepreneurial community with a sense of local belonging, contributing to development and job creation;
- Multiply the impact of entrepreneurs through motivating experiences to inspire new ones;
- Identify, support and promote sustainable projects with social impact, innovation, creativity, and a focus on environmental care;
- Hold the first Malvinas Argentinas entrepreneurs' meeting;
- Create the entrepreneurs' registry.

3.1.2 General Directorate for the Development of Cooperativism and the Popular Economy

Director David Zárate was interviewed in July 2023 to reconstruct the process of creation of the General Directorate and the role played by social organizations. The Directorate has two sub-departments: the Directorate for the Popular Economy and the Directorate for the Development of Cooperativism.

In his account, Zárate explained that “a roundtable was set up with social organizations without much institutional support, and the discussion took place with the municipality.” The organizations that participated in that roundtable were those that make up *Los Cayetanos: Corriente Clasista y Combativa* (CCC), *Barrios de Pie* and the Evita Movement. The General Directorate was created in 2022 by decree No. 3752. The assigned functions were:

- Promote an active employment policy for small and medium-sized producers who implement financial self-management mechanisms.
- Promote support and advice for small and medium-sized producers, providing them with the necessary tools to carry out their economic and productive activities to guarantee improved sustainability and quality of life for the municipality's residents.
- Create training programs for individuals included in national, provincial and municipal programs.
- Coordinate registration and relevant monitoring for the development of self-management activities for sectors in situations of social, economic and cultural vulnerability.

These policies would prevent financial deficits restricting productive development, training and access to employment.

The interviewee argued that the lack of training in legislation, regulations and programs was a challenge for the Directorate to advance the functions assigned to it in the founding decree. He also brought up the discussion about the popular economy and the tensions that exist between the conceptions of the latter and “undeclared work”:

We've been insisting on this for six years, since the emergence of this concept of the popular economy. We're talking about people who have a job, not informal work. The popular economy is the people's ability to reinvent themselves and work.

Regarding this matter, the department is researching legislation to draft and introduce a municipal ordinance on the popular economy.

In the municipality, there are experiences in other areas with fairs that have a certain degree of institutionalization and frequency. The General Directorate conducted a pilot test in Tierras

Altas of a community-based fair for entrepreneurs in the popular economy. The fair had 16 stalls and is currently working to formalize and introduce it to the municipality.

Regarding cooperatives, Director Zárate said that the lack of training is an impediment to achieving formalization, or how to make them more efficient not only in terms of production (acquiring financing from the State through loans or microcredits, tools, machinery, etc.), but also in terms of how to sell what they produce.

Regarding its objectives, the interview revealed that the main goal is to strengthen management channels with working-class neighborhoods through service-related cooperatives. They have already identified 54 such cooperatives. In the medium term, he stated, “Take a neighborhood and develop it.”

3.1.3 Directorate for Development and Cooperativism

The Directorate for Development and Cooperativism was created in 2017, and Lucas Cáceres led it from that year until 2024. In June 2022, the Directorate moved from the Services Secretariat to the Secretariat of the General Directorate for the Development of Cooperativism and the Popular Economy (created that same year). The Directorate also has a sub-department, the Logistics Department, whose function is to coordinate with various political actors in the field to reach the various neighborhoods and communities in the district.

Cáceres's career began with his time at the Youth Directorate of the Province of Buenos Aires (during Felipe Solá's administration), then at the Youth Directorate of the Ministry of Social Development (during Alicia Kirchner's administration), and in recent years he served under the administrations of Leonardo Nardini and Noelia Correa (mayors of the Justicialist Party in Malvinas Argentinas). His activism includes active participation in the district's Evita Movement. Currently, in addition to his role as Director for Development and Cooperativism, he is working on a productive project called *Nuestro Campo*.

The most important functions of the Directorate for Development and Cooperativism are:

1. Strengthen cooperativism and development;
2. Develop and consolidate cooperative integration;
3. Accept applications for municipal recognition from entities, associations, development societies and foundations;
4. Assist in the technical and legal training of entities;
5. Advise and provide materials to associations for holding meetings;
6. Organize courses and conferences;
7. Ensure cooperative principles and compliance with the legal framework for cooperative societies;
8. Keep a registry of social entities.

Regarding the main municipal programs and interventions, Cáceres mentioned:

1. Courses and training with INAES materials;
2. The program *Primeros pasos cooperativos* in conjunction with the Buenos Aires provincial government;
3. The *Producir* program;
4. More work, less recidivism (ecological bricks);
5. Joining the program *Mi Provincia Recicla*;
6. RENATEP.

In the interview, Lucas Cáceres stated that his role is to generate recognition for communities that are producing various services. One way is through the granting of licenses. He argued that it is necessary to reach out to the various service providers, value them, and recruit them. He added that the local government aims to create the conditions for producers, artisans and entrepreneurs to sell, develop local markets, and have their own marketing spaces to compete in the marketplace.

3.1.4 Directorate for the Popular Economy

The Directorate for the Popular Economy was created in June 2022 and is headed by Alejandra Torres. It has two subunits: the Coordination Office for Comprehensive Training and Education and the Coordination Office for Popular Production.

The specific functions of the Directorate are:

- Coordinate the design, coordination and evaluation of policies for the promotion of the popular economy.
- Advise the General Directorate on public policy matters, with the aim of facilitating access to microcredit and disseminating, promoting and reporting on provincial and national microcredit programs.
- Select, evaluate, present and monitor popular economy programs and projects implemented at the municipal level.
- Promote and plan the creation and supervision of a system for promoting employment and developing the popular economy that will encourage, streamline and facilitate the contracting of associative groups, cooperatives and recovered businesses that comprise the popular economy as suppliers to the municipal administration.

In the interview conducted in August 2023, Director Alejandra Torres referred to three lines of work that her Directorate had been able to specifically develop in coordination with the General Directorate: training in “food handling, water heater assembly and environmental issues.” A WhatsApp group, which includes various *orgas* (social organizations such as La Cámpora, 22 de Agosto, Anibal Verón, *Barrios de Pie* and CCC), is used as a training

invitation channel. This process is in its early stages, and therefore the general objectives of the training sessions and their territorial scope could not be specified. Alejandra Torres also stated that “we are learning along the way what types of proposals we can bring,” and noted that the Municipality “does not listen to social movements.” She also referred to the Directorate's intention to start a fair in Malvinas Argentinas, but that they “lack the knowledge of how to do it.” She added that there is no connection with the permanent fair held on the municipal plaza, nor is there any rotation between the artisans of the social economy belonging to that other area of the Municipality and the producers of the social economy who are under her Directorate.

3.1.5 Undersecretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development

The Undersecretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development was created in January 2022. Previously, this was called Undersecretariat of the Environment. New departments were created that are interesting in terms of their interrelation with the field: the Directorate for Agroecology; the Directorate for Family Farming, formerly under the Directorate for the Social Economy; the General Directorate for Ecological Sustainability, under the Undersecretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development; the Directorate for Citizen Integration and Sustainable Development; and the General Directorate for Ecological Sustainability, with two departments: Promotion of Green Jobs and Sustainable Market. Following the restructuring of the area, professionals related to environmental issues were hired.

From the functions of the Undersecretariat, we have found that the first is closely related to the SDGs, and the following two are related to environmental protection and sustainable development:

1. Promote, supervise, plan and manage actions that contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the international commitments made by the Province of Buenos Aires and the National State.
2. Coordinate environmental protection actions with national and provincial government agencies.
3. Propose and plan cross-cutting projects, reforms and policies aimed at achieving strong sustainable development.

The Undersecretariat's municipal interventions encompass a variety of programs and campaigns. We decided to focus on the *Malvinas Sostenible* brand and three programs: the *Eco Puntos* Program, the *Huertas Malvinenses* Program and the *Tierra Activa* Program.

Malvinas Sostenible “is not a program, it's a registered trademark that represents the municipality's environmental policy,” explained Rodrigo Jiménez Coronel (Undersecretary at the time of the interview in 2023). The brand's communication campaign is one of the pillars of the government's management. The following programs are part of *Malvinas Sostenible*:

1. *Eco Puntos* is an environmental promotion program that offers families in Malvinas Argentinas the opportunity to have nearby places where they can take their recyclable materials. The *Eco Puntos* sites operate in community centers, community leaders' homes, soup kitchens, schools, clubs and vocational training centers. They are provided with a container, green bags and training, and the *Eco Puntos* site is established. They coordinate with the Undersecretariat of Recycling and Alternative Energy, which is responsible for waste collection separation, delivering bags, and collecting materials from the *Eco Puntos* site. At the time of the interview (November 2023), there were 15 active *Eco Puntos* sites distributed across localities. The Subdirectorate for Environmental Education organizes training sessions with those in charge of the *Eco Puntos* sites, as well as workshops for the community at large. In the interview, this activity was mentioned as part of the “circular economy.”
2. The implementation of the *Huertas Malvinenses* Program began in June 2018, following Decree 4349/18, *CREA Programa Huertas Malvinenses*. A precursor to this policy was the *Huertas Familiares* Program, created in 2016. This program consisted of garden training courses with the provision of seeds and seedlings and follow-up visits to families or institutions that continued to operate their gardens. The program is carried out by the Family Agriculture Department and the Directorate for Agroecology, and it promotes the creation of demonstration gardens and vegetable gardens in various community spaces. Participants are provided with supplies for self-consumption, and an emphasis is placed on healthy eating. A key social actor in the program's co-production was the Malvinas Argentinas Producers Organization¹⁰. In addition, workshops are held in community centers such as soup kitchens, neighborhood clubs and educational institutions, and seedlings are distributed in neighborhoods. Both the harvested produce and the seedlings are typically distributed through nonprofit organizations. In the interview, she also mentioned the *Potenciar inclusión joven* program¹¹ which organizes workshops exclusively for young people who can become entrepreneurs in areas related to the environment, mentioning related professions and trades such as agronomy, ecology and gardening.

The rule makes express reference to said SDGs and their relationship to the popular solidarity economy. Among these, some of the considerations and content of the training should be noted:

¹⁰ Muñoz (2021) defines the Malvinas Argentinas Producers Organization as a group of producers originally gathered from ProHuerta that organizes different activities to promote urban agriculture, highlighting the Seed and Plant Exchange Fair (which has been held for 17 consecutive years) and the agroecological product fairs at Los Polvorines Station.

¹¹ The purpose of the *Potenciar inclusión joven* program is to promote the inclusion and social integration of young people aged 18 to 29 in vulnerable situations through access to resources and actions that guarantee their basic economic, social and cultural rights and their inclusion in support strategies that foster their participation in the development of life projects.

- Family needs can be met in gardens, which include everything from basic food products, fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants, to condiments and spices;
- It is essential to create multiplier actors in the territory, related to health and to healthy, quality food. The proposal could then be coordinated with the Health Care System and provide patients undergoing treatment for various eating disorders with a healthy alternative by adding seasonal vegetables to their diet.

The way in which the development of the gardens is planned in three stages is interesting. The first stage consists of the creation of the gardens through training. The second involves holding *mingas*¹² to establish and implement the gardens that will be created. Regarding the third stage, the intention is for the gardens that reach this stage to become true productive poles (without further specifics on their development).

3. The *Tierra Activa* Program was implemented in August 2022 with Decree No. 5182/22, *CREA Programa Feria Tierra Activa*. The Program aims to promote responsible consumption practices in the community by engaging local entrepreneurs who produce and/or market sustainably sourced products. It also seeks to attract entrepreneurs involved in the circular economy who utilize natural resources and/or revalue unused materials through reuse and/or recycling. The Program is implemented monthly. It takes place near the Municipal Palace and consists of fairs and activities such as recycling and gardening workshops, raffles and live bands. It is targeted at the Malvinas Argentinas community in general. It was born from the search for local entrepreneurs who make their products with reusable materials that ordinary people would discard, including local producers. There are 24 stalls, 20 of which are permanent and four that rotate. The stalls range from natural cosmetics to wooden toys, the production of oyster mushrooms, the production of vegan products, weaving with plastic bags, clothing with scraps of recycled clothing, and entrepreneurs working with glass. Most of the entrepreneurs choose the fair for its sustainable approach. The Undersecretariat has a stall at the *Tierra Activa* fair to promote the agency's programs and activities. "We're not competition," said Rodrigo, comparing it to the Social Economy fair. They also hold an Environmental Forum to debate and hold discussions about what the Undersecretariat does and the community's demands.

Other programs operating within the Undersecretariat are: the Environmental Education Program (which includes courses and educational visits, such as to the biodiesel plant, the demonstration garden, the plant nursery and the natural reserves); the Master Plan for Trees, which, according to Undersecretary Coronel, has two branches: one focused on urban forestry and the other on environmental education (the Public Trees Department has the greatest demand because that is where tree pruning and felling are requested); and the SUTE Program

¹² The word *minga* comes from Quechua, which was the term used by certain Andean communities for collective agricultural work for the general benefit of the tribe. "The *minga* meetings will be days of community participation, where gardeners will collaborate with each other in the development of individual gardens," the decree states.

for the Replacement of Horse Traction (from 2022): “it is the horse that is at risk, but also the person who uses the animal,” as explained by a director of the Undersecretariat. Article 1 of the regulations aims to: a) regulate the situation of urban solid waste collectors who use horse-drawn vehicles as a means of transportation; b) promote the replacement and subsequent elimination of horse-drawn vehicles; and c) guarantee animal welfare.

4. Summary Table: PSE Institutionalization in Malvinas Argentinas

Table 1: Summary of the Public Policy Cycle of Local SSE Areas

Municipal Area	Year of Creation	Design	Implementation	Evaluation
Directorate for the Promotion of the Social Economy	2015	In the creation of the department as a local public policy, three main objectives were established as actions necessary for sustainable development, within the framework of the international commitments made by the province of Buenos Aires and the National Government. The municipality's official website states that the local government was responsible for making the Social Economy visible and institutionalized; however, we did not find information on which actors other than the government participated in the design of the policy or in other stages of the cycle.	The policy is implemented through instruments developed by the department. Initially, there was only a permanent artisan fair; later, as the municipality renovated the squares, traveling fairs became available. Finally, <i>MA Emprende</i> is another program linked to the local development of entrepreneurs.	We do not know if the Directorate has its own institutionalized evaluation mechanisms. However, in the interview, we noted that the Director conducts ongoing informal evaluations of the programs' performance. This has allowed him to adjust the implementation process. However, regarding the Directorate's performance as policy crystallization, we were unable to obtain information on whether there is any external evaluation.

General Directorate for the Development of Cooperativism and the Popular Economy	2022	According to its Director, in addition to the Mayor's political will, social movements also played a key role in the creation design of the General Directorate: "The organizations that participated in this roundtable were those that make up <i>Los Cayetanos: Corriente Clasista y Combativa (CCC)</i> , <i>Barrios de Pie</i> and the <i>Evita Movement</i> ." The main objectives are political actions to strengthen small and medium-sized producers, both in the production and sales processes, as well as in the associative processes.	During implementation, there were many challenges related to material resources, physical operating spaces, human resources, and training for managers.	We found no information on whether there are institutionalized evaluation mechanisms for the functioning of the Directorate, policies or recipients. However, in interviews with other managers, they themselves conduct ongoing evaluations informally and based on daily experience. In this case, David Zarate referred to all the difficulties encountered during implementation.
Directorate for Development and Cooperativism	2017	In the creation of the department as a public policy, the main objectives were to promote cooperativism and support the development and consolidation of local cooperatives through advisory services, training and technical assistance. Lucas Cáceres stated that in addition to Mayor Nardini's political will, social	At this stage, the program was implemented through various instruments: - Courses and training using INAES materials. - <i>Primeros pasos cooperativos</i> program in conjunction with the Buenos Aires provincial government. - <i>Producir</i> program. - More work, less	Lucas Cáceres said they conduct daily evaluations but don't have institutionalized mechanisms. He told us that this daily evaluation is not systematized anywhere and that this information would be very useful.

		movements such as the Evita Movement, <i>Corriente Nuestra Patria</i> , <i>Barrios de Pie</i> , CCC, and the entire spectrum of movements also participated in the creation of the department.	recidivism (ecological bricks). - Joining the <i>Mi provincial recicla</i> program. - RENATEP.	
Directorate for the Popular Economy	2022	The Directorate was created with objectives aimed at strengthening workers in the popular economy, providing advice on microcredits and other provincial or national policies that could be capitalized on. In the field survey of secondary sources, we found no information on the actors involved in its design.	Implementation challenges inherent to the General Directorate, from which it is independent, are replicated. It is important to note that, unlike other municipal departments, this one was recently created, and at the time of the Director's interview, it was in the process of being strengthened.	Regarding the evaluation process, we found no information on the existence of institutionalized mechanisms, nor did the interview with the Director provide any information that could shed light on this point.
Undersecretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development	2022	The creation of the Undersecretariat established key lines related to the Sustainable Development Goals and the international commitments made by the province of Buenos Aires and the nation.	Several programs related to the circular economy and the environment are being implemented, with broad reach in the municipality.	

Source: Prepared by the authors based on sources from this research.

Table 2: Decrees of Malvinas Argentinas related to the SPSE

Decree	Year	Title	Still current
8488	2023	Regulations of the Street Vendors' Fair.	Yes Amended 290-24
5612	2023	Creation of the <i>Mercado Malvinas</i> Program.	Yes
5182	2022	Creation of the <i>Feria Activa</i> Program.	Yes
0025-22	2022	Declaration of municipal interest in Traveling Food Fairs.	Yes
3752	2022	Creation of the General Directorate for the Development of Cooperativism and the Popular Economy, the Directorate for the Popular Economy, and the Departments for the Coordination of Popular Production and the Coordination of Comprehensive Training and Education (organizational chart).	Yes
4491-22	2022	<i>MA Emprende</i> Program.	Yes
0028/20	2020	Declaration of municipal interest of the Fairs of Artisans and Microentrepreneurs.	Yes
4349	2018	Creation of the <i>Huertas Malvinenses</i> Program.	Yes
581	2017	Declaration of municipal interest of the Fairs of Artisans and Microentrepreneurs.	Yes

Source: Prepared by the authors based on sources from this research.

Conclusions

Five features are identified describing the relationship between the local government and the popular solidarity economy. The first is the recognition of PSE actors by the local government. The municipality of Malvinas Argentinas has demonstrated political will and has responded by recognizing the subjects of the popular solidarity economy, and based on this decision, has created a municipal structure. Furthermore, grassroots movements, centered at the federal level in *Los Cayetanos*, have been the ones pushing the local government to create these agencies. It should be noted that most of the promoters themselves are leaders of grassroots or social organizations. Based on interviews and a review of various secondary sources (social media, official municipal websites, etc.), it was also found that these institutional structures are recent and in the process of development and strengthening.

A second feature is the institutionalization of the PSE in the municipality. Malvinas Argentinas has a widely deployed municipal structure linked to the sector, which was recently

created in the district (in 2015, 2017, and 2022), with a limited budget¹³ and a strong fragmentation between the “social economy”¹⁴ and “popular economy” areas. The issue of a scarce budget¹⁵ is repeated in most local policies in the districts of Greater Buenos Aires, even in those municipalities where the popular solidarity economy or the social economy is upheld as a primary and cross-cutting line of their management. Regarding the budgetary issue for the various areas, the search for strategies to obtain resources at the provincial and national levels was mentioned. While these are recent initiatives that are in the stage of exploring programs that could be implemented in the municipality, they could be strengthened through coordination between the different Directorates.

Furthermore, there is a clear gap between the social economy and the popular economy sectors. The debates between the popular economy and the social economy are extrapolated into “rewards and punishments,” both in terms of management and administration, as well as the subjects of policies and actors who benefit or are punished. While the social economy sector has a physical space for both its public managers and some of its stakeholders (organized and deployed around the municipal palace), the popular economy sector lacks a physical space within the municipality. Likewise, it lacks institutionalized spaces for organizing popular economy fairs. Such decisions weaken the organizational potential of the popular solidarity economy sector. These “discrepancies” or different ways of conceptualizing and understanding the subjects of “other economies” are expressed in the ordinances and decrees. In the decrees relating to popular economy entities, they are referred to as “popular economy workers,” and in the decrees of the Directorate for the Social Economy, they are referred to as artisans, micro-entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs, social economy workers, local producers, manufacturers, etc.

The third feature is the limited or nonexistent coordination between the various municipal areas of the PSE. There is a clear fragmentation in the internal management of the General Directorate for the Development of Cooperativism and the Popular Economy, which hinders coordination and dialogue between the sub-departments. Fragmentation is also observed between this Directorate and the Directorate for the Promotion of the Social Economy, which

¹³ The statement about the low budget is a comment shared by most of those managing local public policy, primarily in the areas created in recent years linked to the popular economy, as they have headless departments and areas lacking physical space. The budget allocated to the various departments was not available during the research. However, we observed that some departments had a higher operating budget than others (their own office, material, human, and transportation resources), while the departments created in 2022 did not have a physical office space in the municipality at the time of the interview.

¹⁴ The Directorate for the Social Economy was the first to be created in 2015 and has a wide variety of policies, mainly the organization of artisan and micro-entrepreneur fairs in the surroundings of the municipal palace, traveling fairs that rotate through the squares, and in 2023 the *Mercado Malvinas* program was added, which is a marketing channel for the sale of fresh foods (dairy products, meats, eggs, fruits and vegetables) directly from producers.

¹⁵ The statement about the low budget is a comment shared by most of those managing local public policy, primarily in the areas created in recent years linked to the popular economy, as they have headless departments and areas lacking physical space. The budget allocated to the various departments was not available during the research. However, we observed that some departments had a higher operating budget than others (their own office, material, human, and transportation resources), while the departments created in 2022 did not have a physical office space in the municipality at the time of the interview.

seems to be due to the different theoretical conceptions of the social and popular economies held by those who manage them. This symbolic distance results in the weakening of the programs carried out primarily by the General Directorate for Cooperativism and the Popular Economy, as they lack the necessary conditions to support the development of the target population. There is also a strong fragmentation between municipal programs and departments, stemming from the design and creation of public policy. The lack of coordination between Directorates that report to different Secretariats was mentioned in the interviews. The disjointed collective work between different departments is an aspect worth noting as, if improved, it could mean the proper channeling of efforts that might lead to the strengthening of the district's popular solidarity economy sector, since, in some cases, the policy subjects overlap. Such coordination between Directorates that report to different Secretariats can be found in the Undersecretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development. In the interviews, the political will and willingness of the General Directorate for the Popular Economy to coordinate with other areas of the municipality's PSE was evident, as well as to seek training and information that would contribute to the development and consolidation of the Directorate. The coordination achieved between the different local departments and state agencies of the province of Buenos Aires and national agencies is interesting.

A fourth feature is the relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the popular solidarity economy policies of Malvinas Argentinas. A close relationship can be established between certain SDGs and the popular solidarity economy policies of Malvinas Argentinas, aligned with the UN 2030 Agenda. These are primarily Goal 8, Decent Work and Economic Growth, which seeks to achieve full and productive employment and decent work. It addresses all policies for the development, promotion, recognition, and creation of cooperatives in line with provincial and national organizations. Another one is SDG 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities, which encompasses a large part of municipal interventions. SDG 12, Sustainable Production and Consumption, is also addressed, primarily at the *Tierra Activa* Fair, which brings together producers who reduce their ecological footprint through changes in production methods. There are also several policies aligned with SDG 13 for climate action, mostly those created by the Undersecretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development, which are closer to the Circular Economy and the Sustainable Economy. The implemented programs are a clear example of the connection with the field of SSE: *Malvinas Sostenible*, *Eco Puntos* Program, *Huertas Malvinenses* Program, among others.

The fifth feature is to highlight the importance of local policies for strengthening the PSE. Since the current government of Javier Milei took office in December 2023, and after one year in office, we have seen an adverse context of withdrawal of the national State, ignoring its role as a key player in the development, support and strengthening of the popular solidarity economy. The government of the province of Buenos Aires shows political will and strongly resists the institutional and public policy dismantling initiated by the national government. Therefore, the resilience of local public policies, in coordination with the province of Buenos Aires, is essential to sustain and continue developing the PSE sector in the municipalities. Malvinas Argentinas is a municipality in the process of developing and strengthening the

popular solidarity economy, which enjoys broad legitimacy among its residents and the institutional and political capacity to sustain it over time.

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ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

Founded in 2013 in Seoul, the GSEF – Global Forum for Social and Solidarity Economy – is a global organization of local governments and civil society actors committed to promoting and developing the social and solidarity economy. Its 90 members, present in 35 countries, represent the diversity of SSE stakeholders: local governments, networks of actors, associations, cooperatives, mutual societies, foundations, social enterprises, universities, etc. The GSEF supports the development of the SSE around the world by promoting dialogue between public authorities and SSE actors in order to jointly develop local public policies that contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the emergence of ecosystems conducive to the SSE.

The GSEF thematic working groups (WGs) were voted on at the General Assembly on May 5, 2023. The WG on “The Impact of SSE Public Policies on the Achievement of the SDGs” brings together some fifteen researchers from all continents. It is led by Marguerite Mendell (Karl Polanyi Institute) and Timothée Duverger (Chair Terr’ESS, Sciences Po Bordeaux) and supported by the GSEF General Secretariat employee working on his CIFRE thesis.

Following on from research already conducted by the GSEF in partnership with UNRISD, which led to the production of guidelines for local SSE policies, in January 2024 the Research WG launched a call for contributions to gather proposals for working papers focusing on three recurring processes in public action: development, implementation, and evaluation. Through the analysis of these processes of SSE public policy development, the authors of the papers (both researchers and SSE actors) were asked to examine two fundamental dimensions: the contribution of these local policies to the achievement of sustainable development goals, and the paradoxes associated with the institutionalization of the SSE.

A reading committee composed of GT members evaluated more than forty proposals, including the seventeen working papers now published under the title *Local SSE Policies enabling the Socio-Ecological Transition*. Each paper is available on the GSEF website, free of charge, in its original language (English, French, or Spanish) and in English. This publication and the English translations were made possible thanks to financial support from Caisse des Dépôts.

The concrete examples provided by these working papers will feed into programs to strengthen the capacities of local authorities and support the development of public policies favorable to the SSE.



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