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Our 30-year journey

Origins - 1997

In the two decades after 1975, **neoliberal globalization** affected communities all over the world. Resistance grew, but also people-centered alternatives that gradually developed as a movement.

This led different organizations and social movements to hold a first **Globalization of Solidarity meeting** in July 1997 in Lima.

In the following years, four more such meetings were held on the other continents: Quebec City in 2001, Dakar in 2005, Luxemburg in 2009 and Manila in 2013.

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RIPESS as a network - 2002

At a preparatory meeting for the third global meeting held in Dakar in December 2002, the participants from Latin America, Europe, North America and Africa (Asia was not yet involved) decided to create the ***Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS).***

It was a deliberate decision to call it **intercontinental** and not international. The intent was to create a decentralized network where all would be equals between the «North» and the «South», «East» and «West».

A second important difference is that **there is no AND** between the words social and solidarity. This means that the economy we promote needs to include both principles.

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RIPESS - Defining characteristics

- SSE is a means for transformative and systemic change to the current socio-economic model dominated by capital. Our Global Vision, adopted in 2014, details all aspects of our vision and values.

- Our approach is based on achieving fundamental human rights as described in article 25 of the Universal Charter on Human Rights:

  Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

- Our aim is to assemble grassroots organisations in regional and national organisations in continental organisations to promote SSE at all levels, including the global level. This allows RIPESS to speak for the grassroots

- The members of our members are present in over 75 countries.

- We work in three languages, English, French and Spanish.

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Our governance

At the Dakar 2005 global meeting, the members adopted a governance model we still use today.

A-Six continental members that are all represented on the Board:

- ASEC (Asia Solidarity Economy Council)
- RAÉSS (Africa SSE network)
- RIPESS Latin America and Caribbean
- RIPESS Europe
- RIPESS North America
- RIPESS Oceania

B-International organizations (active in at least three continents)
Urgenci

We have two seats on the Board of directors for international organisations. Presently only one seat is occupied (Urgenci)

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Administration

- We have **two legal entities**.
- One in **Quebec** province in Canada since 2004. This was the legal entity we used to obtain acCreditation as an NGO at UNCTAD in 2014 and at ECOSOC in 2016.
- The second entity was is registered in **Spain** in 2020. This was decided to be an employer in Spain since we decided to move the staff from freelance contracts to employees.
- From 2012 to 2013, we had regular (declining) funding from the Foundation for the Progress of Humankind (FPH) and since 2020, we have projects funded by the Catalan International Development Agency (ACCD).
- After creating the legal entity, we have had, on average, 3 part-time staff or 2 full-time staff.
- WE NEED MORE !

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Promotion of SSE in international institutions

- Participation in the ILO Africa region conference held in Johannesburg in November 2009
- Involvement in the International Labor Organization (ILO), 12 SSE Academies held between October 2010 and December 2021.
- Organization of the FIESS conference held in October 2011 in Montreal. Over 1 400 participants, including UN Agencies and Development banks, attended this international event on public policies
- Participation in the May 2013 UNRISD conference on SSE in Geneva.
- Participation with observer status in the United Nations Interagency Taskforce on SSE (UNTFSSE) since its creation September 2013
- The decision was made at the RIO+20 in June 2012 Board meeting to prioritize involvement in the SDG’s process.
- Active participation in the HLPF annual events from 2013 to 2022, including virtual side-events in 2021 and 2022 in collaboration with the UNTFSSE.
- At the 2013 and 2014 UNGA meetings, a speaking role in front of States and CSOs.

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More……

- In **2015 (UNGA adoption of Agenda 2030)**, a RIPESS spokesperson was chosen as one of 20 CSOs to speak in official interactive dialogues with States.
- The **Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF)** events from 2014 to 2025.
- Participation in the **2022 International Labor Conference** as observer and working with members of the drafting committee. Since then, RIPESS participates each year.
- Other international events such as the **2015 Addis Ababa** and the **Sevilla 2025** financing for development conferences, the **Habitat III conference** in Quito in October 2016 and the **4th World and 6th LED (Local Economic Development)** and **forums in Cabo Verde** in October 2017 and in Sevilla in 2025. The inclusion of SSE in the Sevilla Commitment adopted by the United resolution was the result of our work.
- Involved in promoting and preparing a **UN Resolution on SSE** (September 2016 to 2023). Participation in the drafting committee of the Resolution and other preparatory documents. Without our very active, over a six-year period, we probably would not have resolution 77/281.
- The RIPESS proposal for an **Intermediary Financial Mechanism for SSE** finance is well received, and we expect that pilot projects could be in place in the next years. The African Union was positive about out proposal.
- In the last two years, participation in **Cop16** (biodiversity), the **UN Social Summit** in Doha in 2025, etc.
- In 2026, two important achievements are to be noted. Twenty-three countries launched in June a **Group of Friends on SSE**. The UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights produced a **Roadmap to eradicate poverty beyond growth**. SSE is presented as the was to transition to such and an economy. The UN Human Rights Council adopted the report.

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Our priorities for the coming period

Now that the international recognition of SSE has made very important progress to realize its full potential, our approach is to **create enabling environments at all levels**, with the focus on countries, regions and continents.

Our experience demonstrates that the best public policies result from a **strong collaboration** such as co-construction of legislation, programmes, and different support mechanisms.

To achieve these results, our experience has shown that **large multisectoral networks**, representing large sectors of society, are indispensable.

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Evaluating what we have achieved

- Over the last 25-30 years, we have built the **ONLY worldwide global SSE network !** There are others that say they are international, the purpose of the work is international, but not in the membership. Or are truly international like the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), since they promote cooperatives and not SSE. It was only in 2017 that they formally endorsed SSE.

- We were **at the core of most achievements** such as the recognition of SSE by the ILO, the UNTFSSE, the UN Resolution on SSE, the African Union Ten-year strategy on SSE, etc. No other SSE organisation made any significant work towards those results (even if they pretend they did the work !)

- The **Roadmap to eradicate poverty beyond growt**h is probably what we can be moist proud of. The vision of SSE is very similar to our vision. We both say that all the economy must be a human rights-based economy.

- Our members in different countries have promoted and helped in **legislations and public policies on SSE.**

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Opportunities and Challenges

- The next steps will be a continuation of our previous path. Now that we have achieved recognition at all levels, in the last 4-5 years, we need to continue in **other international institutions** that have not yet recognized such as most UN and regional Agencies (such as ESCAP). We can support our members in different counties to adoption legislations and policies.
- There is still huge work to i**mplement the paragraph of the UN resolution requesting that multilateral development banks adopt an approach for SSE finance**. We have the tools and knowhow. However. The challenges are huge since those institutions are managed by countries, and some, like the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are not democratic. The rich countries (OECD) have the vas majority of votes.
- Our world is living **multiple crises** of all kinds, including climate warming, all caused by the powerful that control the economy and most institutions. And they are worsening things !
- However, like in all previous crisis situations, **populations resist** and are eager to improve their lives.
- **Solidarity in the economy**, and other spheres of life, is gaining strength, slowly, but surely.
- We need to have and active role in proposing solutions, with a human rights economy approach.
- Not enough people know that we can **organise a different economy**. The other economy, the other approach, already exists, but in a minority in all countries.
- We have no choice but to continue, relentlessly. We don’t accept that billions of people either live extreme inequality and extreme poverty, hunger, wars, climate disasters, etc.

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