

Editorial

The intelligence of the people

From Nairobi to Luxembourg, INEES has been extremely active over the last few months. First of all, we are happy to be able to announce that we will be organising the Fourth RIPESS International Meeting on "The Globalization of Solidarity" (cf. *interview opposite with the President of RIPESS, Abdou Salam Fall and www.inees.org, page: read in the press*).

Having attended the World Social Forum in Nairobi in January, we returned home full of hope, having seen first hand that civil society in the countries of the South, which thus far had only ever been given recognition for their capacity to organise humanitarian and solidarity programmes, is now mobilising all of its efforts to become a political actor that demands development. A different world really is possible, free from the shackles imposed on it by the so-called developed countries. (Please take a look at our press articles, published in French, in the Luxembourg daily newspaper, Tageblatt, on our website: www.inees.org, page: read in the press).

The social solidarity economy organisations in the southern countries have adopted a global action plan for 2008, in the framework of the dynamics of the WSF (further details of this plan are provided elsewhere in this Newsletter). The intention is to use the Davos Economic Forum in January 2008 as an opportunity to remind everyone that we will not leave the world's future in the hands of those who only have a single vision and that our views must be taken into account. We will also use this opportunity to focus on the issue of responsible consumerism and food sovereignty, which are important for all of us. We are faced with a real challenge to show that we are the proponents of credible alternatives.

We must now try to win over more people, by taking our message beyond the circles of our supporters. To this end, we are organising a reflection seminar on 23 March in Remich (Lux) (www.inees.org, page: events), to coincide with the publication of a series of texts that are the first part of a collection called "ECOSOL REVIEW." There is a lot of sense in our actions, and that is a real understatement!

We need to make the effort to explain our arguments to people and to win them over. The peoples of the world have the capacity to implement systems that have been adapted to meet their needs. We have decided to invest in this intelligence, since we feel that it is full of hope for the future.

Eric Lavillunière

Launch of the European Network of Third Sector Leaders, Paris - 16 March 2007

Acevo, alongside partners in France and Sweden, and with the support of leaders in another 9 European countries, will launch the European Network of Third Sector leaders on 16 March 2007. The Network will develop, connect and support third sector leaders from across Europe, and represents a uniquely ambitious project to bring together leaders from across the continent.

While the EU has brought great integration to European politics and economics, the various third sectors across Europe remain largely confined to national borders. This Network will bring together leaders across borders to exchange ideas and share best practice, and will be run through a range of events, meetings, and an online virtual community.

Cf. www.3rdsectorleaders.org

Interview of the month

Interview with Abdou Salam Fall, Dakar

President of the International Network for the Promotion of the Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS)

Could you briefly present RIPESS?

It is a forum for meetings, exchanges, dialogue and the convergence of national and continental actors, as well as sectoral federations from the social and solidarity economy (SSE) for the capitalisation of experiences, to make the most of our actions and to create an overall vision of alternative practices. It acts as a framework for networking and the political affirmation of a differential paradigm that is the SSE, as one of the alternatives to neo-liberalism. This dynamic approach was launched in 1997, with the 1st international Forum on the "Globalization of Solidarity", which was held in Lima, Peru. Since then, we have organised the Forum every four years, with the 2001 event taking place in Quebec, Canada and the 2005 event being held in Dakar in Senegal.

What are the aims of these Forums?

First of all, the aim is to give a higher degree of legitimacy to the SSE by taking it to an international level and providing the scope for the construction of strategies in order to gain better recognition for our actions in the eyes of the public authorities, as well as public opinion.

Who takes part in these meetings?

First and foremost, all of the SSE actors who are mobilised by networks that are RIPESS stakeholders, starting with the South American SSE Platform, which is very dynamic and which has benefited, in recent times, from precious support that is due to the election, in several countries, of leaderships that are keen to help socio-economic initiatives that are led by the citizens. We have a particularly interesting example of this in Brazil, where President Lula has appointed a Minister for the solidarity-based economy, Mr Paul Singer, who has established a policy to provide real support for the SSE that has produced probing results, as well as the Brazilian Forum for the solidarity-based economy, which is an autonomous body that brings together the relevant actors and stimulates a good dynamic of development that is recognised by everyone. Whilst it is not our intention to substitute public policy, we do direct our interventions towards areas in which we are the most effective and the closest to the needs of the people.

Does the SSE require the support of the public authorities?

It is a fact that the SSE is most successful in areas in which public/private partnerships do exist.

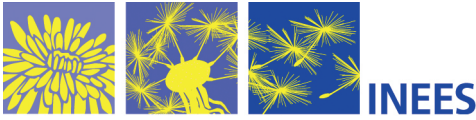
What are the main strengths of the SSE?

The SSE has an enormous capacity to mobilise communities in order to promote entrepreneurial dynamics that have a social purpose, irrespective of their status, whether they be cooperatives, mutuals or associations. These are the best placed actors to respond to social and employment needs at a territorial level. They also organise solidarity in industrial sectors when this is necessary.

How does one become a member of RIPESS?

We have written a charter of principles and this represents a reference point for us (cf. www.ripest.net). However, we accord priority to the membership of national or international inter-sectoral platforms. Unfortunately, structured networks do not exist everywhere and this is particularly the case in Europe, even though there are lots of expressions of these practices at a local level. There are a lot of things going on in the French regions, for example, with local authorities who are beginning to listen more carefully to the needs of the community. There is recognition of the fact that there are several ways of doing things and that we have a plural economy.

(continues overleaf)



LINE 21 - Economic Alternatives

We, **Solidarity Economy** networks present at the Nairobi 2007 World Social Forum have gathered to exchange experiences and practices. We have sought convergence and promoted the wealth of economy as based on values of equity, cooperation and solidarity and to promote the initiatives of economic, social and cultural alternatives representing the initiatives of solidarity economy, fair trade, ethical funding, environmental sustainability, solidarity-based services, swapping initiatives, cultural diversity and grassroots education, women entrepreneurship and all the forms of local and solidarity-based economy.

Similarly, we have exchanged through debates and have built consensus in a bid to move forward on our way to get collectively articulated beyond the WSF, and have committed ourselves to an **Action Plan for Economic Alternatives and Solidarity Economy**. We wish to share our proposal with all movements and seek synergies with the proposals for action that emerged from other discussions within the forum, and the fights of all the movements around the planet.

Our networks have expressed their desire to support a **Global Mobilization Day** for the 2008 Social Forum on behalf of human dignity and peoples' rights. We suggest that this Mobilization Day should coincide with the 2008 Davos meeting.

We further expressed our firm commitment to celebrate a **Week for food security and sovereignty and responsible consumption**, that we suggested should take place during the Davos meeting week.

Along that week, we have identified as objective to give more visibility to initiatives, actors, products and services as well as campaigns.

That week will be aimed at linking the wealth of solidarity economy and citizenship and suggest changing responsible consumption into a political action, as well as allow for strengthening production, marketing, funding and responsible consumption models.

Our shared vision is to go far beyond capitalism toward a more and more solidarity-based world. Not only do we have the steadfast hope that another world is possible, but another model of economy, society, cooperation and consumption is of vital necessity for the planet.

Through the social solidarity economy, we are expressing and experiencing not only one, but thousands of direct and concrete alternatives for the **construction of this possible world**.

If you want to support this action plan please send an e-mail to: rgomes@fase.org.br or creintjes@ideas.coop

Interview with Abdou Salam Fall *(continued)*

In your opinion, what are the main challenges for the SSE?

First of all, we must continue to try to be better organised and to function as networks, since this is important, both as a model of governance and as a model that guarantees a good economic performance. But cooperation only works when the parties have a mutual interest in ensuring that it does work. In this way, each continent has its own dynamics. In South America, people rally around the issue of fair trade. In Africa we have just launched the Cap Ecosol programme to help reinforce the actors' capacities. We hope that this will act as a driver to make the African networks more dynamic. In the south, SSE is a way of life, or even a way of surviving, in certain cases, whilst in the north it is considered rather to be a different model of production or a model for the social distribution of the misdeeds of capitalism.

So does that mean that the issues are fairly different?

No, since it is our ambition to provide alternatives to the neo-liberal model that is focussed solely on the values of individual and egotistical success. Our political message is being heard increasingly at the local level and at national level, particularly in South America. We also need to work very hard to make headway within the major international institutions. The European Union pays precious little attention to us. Only the Council of Europe, in its Directorate for Social Cohesion¹, promotes this type of initiative. However, it is equally important to establish and to maintain a close relationship with the trade union movements, women's education bodies, alternative media organisations, environmental movements and the social movement.

This explains why RIPESS was present at the Nairobi Social Forum last month...

Exactly. We organised several workshops and meetings between networks in order to establish several joint priorities for the coming months. We wish to show that our actions are not limited to protests and being reactive, but rather that we are proactive and capable of putting forward our own proposals. Indeed, it is through this ability to forge alliances with the movements I have previously mentioned, that we will be able to truly influence the establishment of a fairer world, based on solidarity.

INEES is going to organise the next Globalization of Solidarity Forum in Luxembourg. What expectations do you have of this event?

Quite apart from the fact that I really like this country that I have already had the opportunity to work with, I believe that you have many strengths. The Grand Duchy, which is relatively wealthy, can give us the impetus to rethink and to redefine the models of wealth generation of the future. Since it is a multicultural country, it also has the potential to be a country that can teach us the value of sharing. Without trying to tell you what you should be doing, I feel that it will be very important to focus on our capacity to build an intersectoral approach between networks that promote fair trade, local development, solidarity-based finance, responsible consumerism and social entrepreneurship, as a basis upon which to construct alliances with other movements and to intensify our reflections and the exchange of our experiences regarding the joint production of public policies. In this way, we will be able to make progress in terms of both quality and quantity.

You can be sure that we will do our utmost to live up to your expectations!

¹ Cf. interview with Gilda Farrell and Samuel Thirion in Newsletter n° 2

The Robin Cosgrove Prize for ethics in finance

The Robin Cosgrove Prize is worth \$20,000 and will be awarded for previously unpublished papers that set out innovative ways to promote ethics in finance. The prize will be awarded to young people aged 35 years or under. The Robin Cosgrove Prize has been set up in honour of Robin Cosgrove, a bright young investment banker who died at the age of 31. He passionately believed that a major barrier to economic development is the lack of integrity and ethical practice in the banking and financial systems.

The prize is managed under the supervision of the Observatoire de la Finance, a non-profit making organisation (www.obsfin.ch), and by Dr Carol Cosgrove-Sacks, Robin's mother and former director at the United Nations.

www.robincosgroveprize.org The final deadline for the receipt of papers is 28 February 2007 (00h00 - CET).