

Investing in the future through Social Solidarity Economy

POLICY BRIEF • APRIL 2018

People, in Europe and around the world, are living through an era of multiple crisis where education and employment are challenged by greater social inequalities, unsustainable technological developments and a dysfunctional economic and financial system, leading to exploitation, precarious employment and worsening living conditions due to climate change, pollution and depletion of natural resources.

About the project

SSE.IVET is a project, funded by Erasmus+ Programme, based on the assumptions that the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) is an alternative to the current socio-economic model and that Initial Vocational Educational Training (IVET) is a tool to achieve social change. A group of civil society organizations and social enterprises originating from 7 European countries¹ involving in the field of the SSE, training agencies and the European SSE network (RIPESS) - worked, during two years, to include SSE in IVET curricula to spread collaboration and solidarity principles starting from training, to inspire youngsters to become active promoters of a fairer and more liveable future.

SSE.IVET is willing to call the attention of politics and decision-makers on the package of tested training modules meant to innovate IVET curricula, pedagogical approach and training practices.

¹ Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Romania.

Why SEE and what is it?

Social Solidarity Economy is increasingly offering a promising socio-economic model worldwide. It is a transformative, critical, concrete and plural approach towards all socio-economic activities, which promotes democracy at work and in the community, emancipatory relations, cultural diversity, social justice, environmentally safe and local/decentralized development as envisaged by the Agenda 2030 vision and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Why should SSE be included in IVET trainees' curricula?

A change in paradigm requires a change in consciousness, a new work mindset and skills development. This is why education and training are a fundamental part of this process, especially those, such as IVET, aimed at young people in the most delicate phase of their formation.

IVET is indeed aimed at providing young people with professional qualifications to take an active role in the redefinition of the labour market, create equal opportunities and encourage cooperation.

Although SSE is nowadays hardly mentioned in training curricula, SSE and IVET have a common ground: development of key citizenship competences, attention to soft skills development, such as social and civic competences, initiative and entrepreneurship, awareness and cultural expression, and attention to peer to peer methodologies.

Conclusions

Social Solidarity Economy can play a crucial role in the realization of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs through concrete social, institutional and technological innovations and practices.

Therefore, SSE.IVET supports the United Nations Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (TFSSE) in recognizing the need to mobilise and bring together States, SSE organisations, networks and civil society into a worldwide movement meant to reassert social control by prioritizing social objectives over profit maximization through SSE as a fundamental form of economy that is centred on social protection and equality. Political representatives sharing these goals can help achieve them by welcoming the following recommendations.

Recommendations

At the European level

» Translate Article 1 of the newly approved “European Pillar of Social Rights” promoted by the main EU institutions¹ into concrete policies to introduce SSE as part of the implementation of the right to “quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning” and in particular to substantiate article 4b.

» Address SSE as an innovative and concrete perspective to be added to national educational programmes, harmonized at the European level by also providing adequate resources to map existing experiences, test programmes and train teachers and trainers in collaboration with SSE organisations and IVET providers, through the European Parliament Intergroup on “Social Economy, Social Economy Enterprises, Social Entrepreneurship and Third Sector”².

» Ensure coordination among the European Parliament Intergroup, GECES and CEDEFOP, in close collaboration with SSE organizations and networks and others civil society actors.³

» Include SSE in the newly proposed Council “Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning”⁴ to encourage addressing SSE in IVET schools through a large partnership between SSE organizations and schools at local, national and European level.

At the national level

» Build a cooperative coordination among institutional and SSE actors to recognize SSE skills, capacities and abilities as part of National Qualification Systems and promote their integration in EQF.

² Social Economy. Available online: <http://www.socialeconomy.eu.org/social-economy-intergroup>

³ European Commission. Available online: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy/enterprises/expert-groups_it
https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/agencies/cedefop_en

⁴ European Commission (2018). Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/recommendation-key-competences-lifelong-learning.pdf>

- » Take into account the European tendency to develop work-based learning with part-time schooling, add SSE in secondary schools and IVET curricula including traineeships opportunities in SSE organisations.
- » Recognize SSE in IVET curricula as a vector of skills to let young people find their vocational area, collaborative forms of work, relocalise sustainable production-distribution chains and improve local communities thus contrasting NEETs and the increase of unemployment and underemployment rates.

Within the national and local education systems

- » Inform young people of the existence of SSE and make them aware of the possibility of becoming actors and promoters -through self-managed entrepreneurial and professional experiences- of work opportunities to benefit the community and the environment in which they live.
- » Develop training for trainers on SSE principles, values and methodologies and coherent pedagogical approaches moving away from frontal approach and involving trainees in educational relationship with the teachers and peer group dynamics.
- » Promote SSE values and principles in mainstreaming IVET curricula through the recognition of credits for trainers who participate in training courses in SSE, educational events organised in partnership with SSE actors.

Towards the national and local SSE actors

- » Promote SSE career guidance courses for young people as an opportunity to get to know SSE values and experiences as an alternative social, economic and cultural model including a series of activities (visits to social enterprises, volunteer programs, mentoring programs in SSE organisations)



With the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union