



The Weight of the Social Economy
An International Perspective
Project 2012-2014

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4th CIRIEC International Research
Conference on the Social Economy
Antwerp October 2013

How well do we know...

How many organizations pursue social goals through their economic activities?

What is the scope of the field?

What is its weight in the economy?

If economic valuation sufficient to portray the contribution of Social Economy?

Working Group: Issues on the production of statistics for the social economy

Goal

- Take stock of knowledge and research results
- Underline the importance of rigorous statistics about the SE
- Explore contributions (and limitations) of statistical methods and indicators in different national contexts
- Produce a reference for government, public statistical agencies and SE actors

Publication to come

- *The Weight of the Social Economy, An International Perspective on the Production of Statistics for the SE*

Context

Measuring and evaluating SE is complex

Identity of SE

- Multiform: Coop, Mutual societies, NPO, Foundations
- Permeable: new hybrid forms (work insertion, social benefit corporations, etc.)
- Defined by values: democratic governance, independence and autonomy, distribution of benefits to people and communities, etc.

Operating mode of SEO

- Combining social mission with economic activities
- Mixing monetary and non monetary resources
- Producing externalities (indirect impacts) as well as direct results
- Territorial solidarities (e.g. buy locally; cooperation vs. competition)

Standard statistical classifications and indicators

- Distribution of SEOs in various sectors of national accounts
- Economic indicators show only part of their production
- Non-market (public) goods and externalities
- Employment is often atypical (partly not salaried)

Increased importance of measurement

- Social finance and public funds (eg. European Commission)
- Legislation on Social Economy (Spain, Québec, France,...)

Framework

Operational and inclusive definition of the SE

- Various definitions in different national contexts
- Correspondence to key features of the SE

SE as a specific sector

- Organizational form: association + business enterprise
- Institutional form: social values in decision making process, limited profit distribution rules, etc.
- Relationship to Market (buying, producing, selling), to State (voluntarily producing public value) and to Civil Society (promoting participation)

Not everything that counts can be counted

- How well do monetary indicators reflect the effective value of non-monetary or collective goods (e.g. social cohesion) ?

What can't be counted... doesn't count!

Existing approaches

- **Satellite accounts manuals**
 - NPO – Johns Hopkins, United Nations
 - Coop and mutual societies – CIRIEC, European Commission
- **European Surveys**
 - CIRIEC
 - Social business, social enterprise
- **National observatories**
 - France – Observatoire national de l'économie sociale et solidaire
 - Brazil – Mapping of solidarity-based enterprises
- **Data analysis of national surveys**
 - Employment or volunteering
 - Demography
- **Sector or subsector survey**
 - Cooperatives
 - Emerging social enterprises

Working Group Methodology

- Discuss a range of statistical studies
- Analyse not so much their technical aspects but rather their contributions and limitations to knowledge on the SE
- Example of issues:
 - Qualification of entities
 - Classification
 - Indicators
 - Social impacts
 - Evolution of the field (hybrids)

Why do we need to do statistics on the SE?

- What are the major goals and stakes?
- How can statistics contribute to produce better knowledge about the SE?
- How can it support the recognition of the realities it represents?
- What are the risks to avert?
- What strategies and concepts underlie the metrics and analysis of the SE?
- Etc.

Qualification of SE entities:

- How do we define the entities (institutional sectors, legal status, fields of activity, organizational features, promoted values, etc.)?
- What is the magnitude of the field? How do we deal with the permeable boundaries of the field? With hybrid forms of organizations?

- Classification of SE entities:
 - How do standard classifications and nomenclatures (activities, products, production processes) fit the reality of the SE, which combines social and economic objectives?
 - How do we integrate the formal and informal sector? The small and the large organizations?
 - What other classifications are relevant (social mission, social utility, etc.)?
 - What would we gain from better harmonization? What would we lose?

What are the good data sources?

- What do we learn from satellite accounts, fiscal declarations, surveys, etc.? What are their respective advantages and limitations?
- What is the relevant data? Is the SE calling for atypical categories (such as volunteer workers, non monetary values, public contracts, etc.)?

What are the appropriate measurement tools?

- What type of measurement (participation to GNP, added value, blended value, etc.)?
- How can indicators show for the particular mode of production of the SE (strong relational component, internalization of social costs, coproduction with users, etc.)? Etc.

- Information systems:
 - How do we insure in the long term the production of scalable, reliable and consistent information about the SE?
 - What do we learn from longitudinal studies?
 - Do we need national and international observatories?
 - What should be the role of public authorities, national statistical agencies, social economy networks, and researchers?
 - Etc.

Work in progress...

Participants of the WG

- 21 contributors
- 8 countries involved: Belgium, Brazil, Canada, France, Japan, United Kingdom, United States of America, Spain

Publication to come

- *The Weight of the Social Economy, An International Perspective on the Production of Statistics for the SE*
 - 5 theoretical chapters; 7 national contributions; comprehensive conclusion

Merci! Thank you! Gracias! Bedankt!