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Gender equality and SSE

Summary of the thematic guide

"The health crisis (linked to Covid 19) has demonstrated the fragility of women: they have been particularly affected by an increase in domestic violence as well as the loss of their economic activity (...) The question raised by this guide is that of the inclusion of gender perspectives in the social and solidarity economy in order to play an exemplary role in terms of gender equality and to act as a driving force for other sectors of the economy."

Pauline Effa, NGO PFAC, sponsor of the Women and Youth for Social and Solidarity Economy initiative

Despite increasing political mobilisation and progress in recent decades, gender equality is far from being achieved

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Growing mobilization of the international community on the goal of gender equality



Recognition of a specific SDG on gender equality (2015)



World Conference on Women in Beijing, 15 September 1995

Other examples of regional initiatives: Maputo Protocol (2003), Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (2011)

Recent but insufficient progress towards gender equality

Economic inequalities :

- Women **still** earn on average **24% less than** men worldwide.
- Women account for **70% of** those **earning less than \$1 a day**.

Gender-based and sexual violence:

- **30% of women** worldwide have been physically or sexually abused.
- **One in five girls** has been sexually abused **before the age of 15**.

But also inequalities in access to health, to decision-making bodies, to private organisations, inequalities in the face of climate change...

Achieving the goal of gender equality is more relevant than ever and requires the mobilization of all actors in society and the economy

SSE aims to bring about an ethical approach to economic development that prioritises the well-being of people and the planet. The values on which it is based - humanism, solidarity, respect and equality, democratic governance among others - are particularly aligned with the objective of gender equality, but there are still challenges to systematically integrate a gender perspective in the functioning and modalities of intervention

Values aligned with the goal of gender equality

Women represent **70-80%** of SSE jobs worldwide, including 66% in Europe, 70% in Canada and 80% in Africa.*

RIPESS, Report of the International Seminar on the Social and Solidarity Economy with a Gender Perspective - Women of the World - 2012

The SSE, with the objective of promoting equality and sustainable development, has assets to reduce gender inequalities (democratic structures, social change, primacy of individuals over capital etc.).

The SSEOs promote **good practices and initiatives in favour of gender equality at work** (better access to management positions for women, legal framework for parental leave, etc.).

But challenges persist within the sector

- **Integration of women in governance:** women face gender issues in governance bodies, lack of access and control in decision-making processes both in the SSE sector and in public-SSE consultation processes.
- **Valuation of women's jobs in the SSE which are often too precarious:** SSE generates jobs that are sometimes precarious, part-time and low-paid. Women who are mostly employed in these jobs are therefore more often exposed to situations of underemployment.
- **Mixed gender within a sector largely occupied by women.** The sector is struggling to attract and recruit more men.
- **Barriers to women's social entrepreneurship remain:** legal obstacles (creation of a current account, entrepreneurial status), difficulty in accessing funding, lack of adequate training, cultural and social obstacles, etc.
- **Marked absence of a cross-cutting approach to gender equality and of gender-specific data** (participation, distribution of benefits, income generated, etc.) within government, SSE and the research sector.



What are the levers, tools and good practices to promote a better consideration of the gender perspective within the sector?

Aware of these challenges, the SSE sector is mobilizing to improve the place of women within organizations and thus move towards the goal of gender equality.

Recognition of the gender perspective in SSE

In November 2013, at the **RIPESS Global Meeting** in Manila, a group of women elaborated and presented in plenary a [Declaration for a Gender Perspective in the Social and Solidarity Economy](#), highlighting the importance for the SSE movement to develop by integrating in its processes a **gender perspective** and a greater attention to issues related to equality between women and men

Examples of levers

- Awareness raising and training on gender perspectives
- Adjustment of working conditions
- Development of an inclusive recruitment policy
- Systematic evaluation of wage differences
- Establishment of a charter and mechanism for the prevention of violence and harassment
- Creation of referents of gender perspectives
- Integration of a gender perspective in programme budgets
- Inclusive internal/external communication

Key success factors

Organizations that have implemented ambitious gender equality approaches emphasize two prerequisites in particular:

- Strong management support to identify gender equality as an issue in its own right and to integrate it into the organisation's strategic thinking.
- An inventory of the existing situation should make it possible to identify the priority projects to be carried out in order to improve the gender issue within the organisation.

Levers of action to enable public authorities to act in favour of gender equality by supporting the SSE

SSE organisations, through their local presence and their intervention in different key sectors of the economy, are well positioned to advance gender equality in financial inclusion, economic insertion, education, health or in the fight against climate change.

Promoting SSE as a strategy for improving the socio-economic situation of women

Among the world's poorest people, 70% are women. They are less well integrated into the labour market (55% compared to 78% of men), more affected by underemployment, overrepresented in low-paid jobs and facing wage and income inequalities. The SSE contributes to the economic and financial empowerment of women by enabling them to develop paid activities, to pool resources or to have easier access to funding.

The public authorities can support this dynamic, in particular:

- **initiating processes for the recognition of women's cooperatives as a mode of economic organization;**
- **developing support programmes for women's social entrepreneurship;**
- **strengthening women's access to bank loans (100% women's funds) and microcredit;**
- **recognizing the place and work of women in the informal economy and document its practices.**

Strengthening women's access to health care and preventing violence

The WHO estimates that 30% of women worldwide have been victims of physical or sexual violence and that one girl in five has been sexually abused before the age of 15. SSEOs can contribute to raising awareness of these issues among women and men, and to developing local spaces to support women. For example,

- *The NGO **Afghanistan Libre** sets up physical, sexual and mental health education centres for women and men.*
- *In Mexico, the **DIARQ Foundation** is a private assistance institution that works in three lines of action: prevention, detection and care of domestic and gender violence.*

Governments can support SSEOs that work on access to health, maternal, reproductive and sexual rights, for example by:

- **developing citizen advocacy platforms with SSEOs to change attitudes;**
- **implementing awareness and education programs;**
- **supporting the creation of places of safety by SSEOs to limit violence against women.**

Levers of action to enable public authorities to act in favour of gender equality by supporting the SSE

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Integrating gender perspectives into the fight against climate change consequences

Women are particularly affected by the consequences of climate change. Their access to land, already restricted, is being undermined by environmental degradation and land grabbing. Displacement and mass migration affect women more than men, making them more vulnerable to violence and abuse.

SSE organisations active in the agriculture and sustainable development sectors are participating, through their territorial and community anchoring, in a better consideration of gender perspectives in environmental policies. For example, *the NGO Climate Watch Thailand has formed a local women's movement for climate justice, the Deep South Pattani Women Watching Climate, to resist a proposed coal-fired power plant.*

Several avenues can be explored to strengthen the integration of gender issues in

- **documenting the impact of environmental programmes carried out by SSEOs in relation to an impact on gender equality;**
- **building new mechanisms for consultation and monitoring of environmental policies/programmes involving women.**

Putting new technologies and research at the service of social innovation for gender equality

Women represent only 30% of researchers in the world. They have less access to technological and innovation training, less access to funding and even to the Internet. It is necessary to strengthen the place of women in research and innovation to support economic and social development:

- **deconstructing stereotypes by highlighting female role models of innovation.** For example, *the NGO Technovation in partnership with UN Women in Kyrgyzstan launched a coding caravan to foster leadership and entrepreneurship among girls in rural areas;*
- **supporting social technological innovations for gender equality.** SSE and Inclusive Economy organisations are in direct contact with communities and women in vulnerable situations and develop innovative, inclusive and sustainable technologies. For example, *the association Resonantes fights against violence against girls and women, thanks to the App-Elles application, a tool for prevention, assistance and support for victims of violence against women. My Agro has developed an innovative savings program in Senegal thanks to a "Mobile Layaway" application, which allows women farmers to buy small quantities together to reduce their purchase price.*



Useful resources



Reports and documentation

- NGO PFAC, sponsor of the Women and Youth for Social and Solidarity Economy initiative
- Observatory of Gender Equality in the Social and Solidarity Economy. CNCRESS. (2019). *The study State of play of gender equality in the social and solidarity economy in March 2019*. Study-equality-interactive-1.pdf (cress-pdl.org)
- ILO (2019). *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical overview Third edition*. Geneva, International Labour Office.
- WECF (2016). *Women Gender Constituency. Gender and Climate Solutions. Edition No. 4*. <https://wecf-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2018-Gender-Just-Climate-Solutions-French18-12.pdf>
- Pour la Solidarité, *Towards gender equality in the SSE*, European Think Tank Pour la Solidarité (2014)
- *Solidarity economy and gender inequalities: an approach in terms of social justice*, RECMA - international review of the social economy (article)



Examples of tools

- FEMMES DU MONDE, Un réseau d'entrepreneures solidaires. QUARTIERS DU MONDE. (2018). Guide d'orientations pédagogiques. Accompagnement à l'entrepreneuriat social et solidaire avec perspective de genre ; Entreprendre Autrement pour une autonomie socio-économique des femmes.



Examples of initiatives

Would you like to share with us an innovative initiative on one of the four action levers identified in this summary?

Send us a description of your initiative by e-mail to contact@pact-for-impact.org or register on our registration form: <https://forms.office.com/r/TRJcqHaD8c>

Contact :

contact@pact-for-impact.org

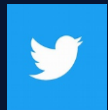
Website :

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