

Establishing a Global Economy & Culture of Peace

By Jim Tarbell

An economy and culture of peace must be built on cooperation, mutual respect, and mutual aid. It needs solidarity support for a sustainable political/economic system respecting diversity, and promoting social and economic equity. The Global Network of Continental Networks Committed to the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) is establishing this economy around the world.

Social solidarity economy (SSE) participants from Latin America, the Caribbean, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania shocked me at the Atlanta World Social Forum in 2007. They laid out a fully-formed and functioning alternative economy I had never heard of, even though I had been writing about economics and politics for forty years. They told tales of worker-owned businesses and co-op networks that utilize innovative and highly successful financial systems to support a world where the power of money nurtures healthy and sustainable socio-economic and environmental communities, instead of corporate profits and a bulging military-industrial colossus.

Paraphrasing their website: The Global SSE movement is emerging as a rapidly growing, transformative, citizen-led alternative to market-driven capitalism. It is aimed at systemic change, building an economy and society serving people and the planet. SSE is grounded in locally rooted initiatives that are increasingly globally networked, with a broad political (but not ideological) framework.

RIPESS members address the enormous, unaddressed, social and environmental costs generated by a capitalist, neoliberal economy based on extractivism and unlimited growth of consumption and production. Today, more people are

becoming aware that capitalism has turned our lives and planet into an environmentally unsustainable and socially unjust system, unable to guarantee happiness and dignified life conditions to all persons on the planet.

In SSE, ordinary people play an active role in shaping the social, cultural, political, and environmental dimensions of life. SSE exists in production, finance, distribution, retail, consumption and governance. It transforms the social and economic system to overcome all inequalities. SSE takes the best practices of our present system (such as efficiency, use of technology and knowledge) and transforms them to serve the welfare of the community.

SSE places people, communities and the environment above capital and its accumulation. It holds a world-wide vision with shared values and principles based on reciprocity, solidarity, equity, self-determination, mutuality, cooperation; and human and Earth rights.

SSE's combined local and global scope gives RIPESS legitimacy to promote SSE, foster inter-continental cooperation, and advocate at different levels. RIPESS members believe in the importance of the globalization of solidarity, and the ability to build and strengthen an economy that places people and planet at the center of its activities.

It is the perfect model for moving from our war economy to a peace economy, where cooperation replaces competition, and solidarity replaces militarism. Check them out at www.ripest.org/ and join the effort.



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graphic: RIPESS