

Solidarity-based and Co-operative Economy and Ethical Business

Trends, Innovations and Experiences in Europe

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"This research on an alternative economy, based on co-operatives and solidarity, and on ethical business, points out opportunities for social transformation at a time of deep economic recession, financial instability, and loss of trust in the dominant capitalist economic model. It is particularly relevant as it aims at finding new ways to build common ground for a political alliance with a new left in Europe in these fields.



The first chapter of the research analyses how to build on this new social and economic context to create new opportunities for transforming society towards more economic democracy, more collective ownership, and more citizen participation as a precondition for more social justice and fairer wealth distribution.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of recent alternative economic theories and other relevant recent researches, such as deglobalization theory, Paul Hawken and the theory of ecology in business, of Serge Latouche, Harry Shutt and Anielski, and the respective theories of décroissance, overaccumulation and sustainable well-being, which are all influencing recent evolutions in the Social and Solidarity-based Economy sector (SSE). The works of Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz and Elinor Ostrom, all recent winners of Nobel prices in economics, and of Noam Chomsky, that consider co-operative models as alternative forms of economic and social organization in a new pluralistic economic order following the actual crisis, are also cited in this research.

References to these research fields, to recent trends, to relevant evolutions, and some remarkable innovations particularly in the SSE, are given in the third chapter, which has a main focus on research of co-operative and social and solidarity-based economy, such as Jean-Louis Laville's work on the third sector and Carlo Borzaga's study on social enterprises. The chapter also examines case studies and models of good practices in the areas of alternative finance, of innovative responses to unemployment and restructuring, of social enterprises of general interest and of local development and democracy.

Based on the outcomes of the European seminar in Palermo on alternative economy, the conclusions outline proposals on how these new trends and experiences can build the ground for political action of a new left at European and global level..."

Content:

Chapter 1:
Social and Economic Context

Chapter 2:
The Path to Sustainable Development: Alternative Economic Models

- A multidisciplinary approach for a more effective economic theory
- A review of alternative economic theories
- The economics of happiness: well-being
- The Genuine Wealth model
- The deglobalization model
- Serge Latouche and the theory of décroissance
- Harry Shutt and the crisis of overaccumulation

- The ecological model
- Paul Hawken and the ecological model
- Elinor Ostrom and the theory of common good

Chapter 3:

Trends, Relevant Evolutions and Innovations in the Alternative Economy in Europe

- In the field of social and solidarity economy
- Qualitative evolutions and trends of the Social and Solidarity-based Economy in the last decades
- Jean-Louis Laville: Alternative economic models in Europe and the third sector as part of the social and solidarity-based economy in Europe
- Social enterprises as a response to the reduction of public welfare systems: the Italian example
- Ethical criteria in business: new forms of solidarity
- Solidarity tourism: respecting the “others” and the environment
- Sustainable development, SSE and local public-private partnership
- Virtual economy
- SSE responses to the recent economic downturn

Conclusion:

Social economy, role and perspective

- The public debate
- Alternative economy: experiences, challenges and future opportunities
- Perspectives

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