

► **Social innovation approaches to tackle labour exploitation and promote decent work in agriculture**

Preliminary analysis conducted for the ILO by the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises (EURICSE)

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► Table of contents

Introduction	1
► 1 Defining social innovation	5
1.1 Partnerships and collaborative approaches	8
1.2 The debate on social innovation	11
1.3 Design and delivery of SI programmes and services	13
► 2 Social innovation approaches to address labour exploitation and promote decent work in agriculture	15
2.1 Public-private partnerships and the engagement of SSEs	15
2.2 Cooperation between SSEs and mainstream enterprises	19
2.3 Promoting decent work and social inclusion	19
► 3 Case studies	29
► 4 Conclusions	41
References	43
Annex — List of social innovation definitions from the literature review	49

► Introduction

The objective of this paper is to identify, systematise and document innovative modalities for the development, implementation and funding of services and programmes to protect and foster the labour inclusion of victims of labour exploitation.

The work is contextualised and benchmarked against existing international and national practices, particularly in the area of agricultural work, as well as in relation to the recently adopted International Labour Organization (ILO) resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy (SSE) (2022)¹ and its follow-up.²

In a number of countries, the industrialisation and concentration of agri-food production processes in a few, large farms have been accompanied by the development of food supply chains. On-farm labour-intensive processes require a large number of temporary workers. The hard-working conditions and low wages in production processes and agriculture make the sector less attractive compared to work in other sectors, discouraging native-born workers from engaging in it, especially in industrial countries. The share of migrant workers employed in the agri-food system is large in most high-income countries.³ For example, at the European level, agriculture has a higher share of migrant workers than all other sectors combined in Spain, Italy and Denmark. However, it is worth emphasising that official statistics often underestimate the proportion of migrants employed in the agri-food system, as knowing how many informal and undocumented workers are actually involved is difficult.⁴

Agricultural opportunities are often seasonal, so many workers in the agri-food sector migrate to follow them. However, in many contexts, farming restructuring has changed employment, contributing to an increase in fixed-term contracts in agriculture.⁵ Migrant workers often suffer from exploitation and a lack of decent working conditions related to wages, working hours, occupational safety and health, social protection, contracts, representation and collective action.⁶

A range of intersecting issues, including lack of education and documentation, isolation, poor housing conditions, restrictive migration policies and lack of coherence among employment, migration and rural and agriculture policies, contribute to triggering these vulnerabilities. In some cases, migrant workers in agriculture are also victims of irregular forms of intermediation at work and trafficking.⁷ Temporary labour migration programmes (TLMPs) are used to recruit migrant workers in high-income countries. Recourse to TLMPs is justified on the grounds that it produces a triple win for host countries, migrants and their countries of origin.⁸ However, TLMPs provide migrant workers with limited rights and protection (compared with the rights of citizens and long-term residents in the host country), particularly with regard to free choice of employment, access to the welfare state, opportunities for

¹ ILO. 2022. Resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy, ILC.110/Resolution II

² ILO. 2022. Matters arising out of the work of the 110th Session (2022) of the International Labour Conference Follow-up to the resolution concerning decent work and the social and solidarity economy, GB.346/INS/3/2

³ Martin, P. L. 2016. Migrant workers in commercial agriculture. International Labour Office, Sectoral Policies Department, Conditions of Work and Equality Department; Martin, P. 2020. The prosperity paradox: Fewer and more vulnerable farm workers. Oxford University Press; Popova, N., Özel, M. H. 2018. ILO global estimates on international migrant workers: results and methodology. International Labour Office. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-dgreports/-dcomm/-publ/documents/publication/wcms_652001.pdf

⁴ Natale, F., Kalantaryan, S., Scipioni, M., Alessandrini, A. & Pasa, A. 2019. Migration in EU Rural Areas, EUR 29779 EN, Publications Office of the European Union

⁵ Three-year Plan to tackle labour exploitation and unlawful recruitment in agriculture 2020–2022

⁶ ILO. 2021. ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers – Results and Methodology, https://www.astrid-online.it/static/upload/wcms/wcms_808935.pdf

⁷ Augre-Granier, M-L. 2021. Migrant seasonal workers in the European agricultural sector. migrant agricultural workers European Parliamentary Research Service. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/689347/EPRS_BRI\(2021\)689347_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/689347/EPRS_BRI(2021)689347_EN.pdf) ILO. 2019. Promoting fair and effective labour migration policies in agriculture and rural Areas. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-ed_dialogue/-sector/documents/publication/wcms_729409.pdf

⁸ United Nations General Assembly. 2018. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, A/CONF.231/3

family reunification and upgrading to a permanent residence status, and security of residence in the host country.⁹ With regard to the agri-food sector, well-known examples are those of the US, New Zealand, Canada and Spain, where TLMPs are recognised as fostering workers' dependence on employers, consequently compressing their rights and wages and increasing labour market segmentation.¹⁰

Over the past 20 years, the European Union (EU) has been consolidating its legal and policy framework concerning trafficking and severe exploitation through the adoption of several legal and policy instruments in line with the main relevant international instruments, such as the fundamental ILO Convention on Forced Labour n. 39 (1930) and the Convention on the Abolition of Forced Labour n. 105 (1957), the 2000 United Nations Protocol on Trafficking and the 2005 Council of Europe Anti-Trafficking Convention. In addition, following the mobilisation of civil society and increasing public awareness of the issue of labour exploitation in agriculture, the adoption of a social conditionality mechanism in the last common agricultural policy (CAP) reform made CAP payments conditional on compliance with labour standards. The new social conditionality mechanism implies the adoption of directives on transparent and predictable employment conditions (place and type of work, beginning and, where relevant, end of employment, information on the probation period, paid leave, notice periods, remuneration, work pattern/schedule, social security information) and on-farm safety and health protection of farm workers with regard to farm machinery and equipment, protective clothing and equipment or dangerous substances.¹¹ A corporate sustainability due diligence directive with a strong focus on human rights, including labour, is under negotiation.

However, the challenges to address exploitation in agriculture concern, on the one hand, the imbalance of power along agri-business chains and, on the other hand, the inadequacy of transport, social, housing and labour policies; this includes the lack of effective socio-economic inclusion pathways for migrants and labour brokerage mechanisms.

This paper is organised into four parts. The first part focuses on the definition and key features of social innovation (SI), with special attention given to its design and implementation for programmes and services to fulfil unmet social needs more effectively. The authors shed light on networking and collaboration among public and private institutions, particularly social and solidarity economy entities (SSEs), which have proved to be especially prone to experiment with innovative models of services and inclusion pathways for persons at risk of labour exploitation.

The second section focuses on SI approaches and interventions (programmes and services) for the protection and assistance, as well as the labour market inclusion, of victims of labour exploitation in agriculture or of subjects vulnerable to trafficking and labour exploitation (i.e. migrants, asylum seekers and refugees). This part explores the ways through which SI (including in the delivery and funding of

⁹ Bauböck R. & Martin Ruhs. 2021. The Elusive Triple Win: Can temporary labour migration dilemmas be settled through fair representation?, RSC Working Paper 2021/60, European University Institute Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies Migration Policy Centre

¹⁰ Hennebry, J., & Preibisch, K. 2012. A Model for Managed Migration? Re-Examining Best Practices in Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. *International Migration*, 50(1), 19-40. Lenard, P. T., and Straehle, C. (2012). *Legislated inequality: temporary labour migration in Canada*. Toronto and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press; Preibisch, K. 2012. "Migrant Workers and Changing Work-place Regimes in Contemporary Agricultural Production in Canada ", *The International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*. Paris, France, 19(1), pp. 62-82; Strauss, K., & McGrath, S. 2017. Temporary migration, precarious employment and unfree labour relations: exploring the 'continuum of exploitation' in Canada's temporary foreign worker program. *Geoforum*, 78, 199-208; Weiler A. M., McLaughlin J., C. Cole D. 2017. Food Security at Whose Expense? A Critique of the Canadian Temporary Farm Labour Migration Regime and Proposals for Change, *International Migration Review*, 55, 4, 48-63; Weiler, A. M., Sexsmith, K., & Minkoff-Zern, L. A. 2020. Parallel Precarity: A Comparison of US and Canadian Agricultural Guestworker Programs. *The International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, 26(2); Consterdine E. & Samuk S. 2018. Temporary Migration Programmes: the Cause or Antidote of Migrant Worker Exploitation in UK Agriculture, *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 19, pp. 1005-1020; López-Sala, A., 2016a. Producing Temporariness, (Re)producing Precariousness: Regulation, Rights and Non-Citizenship Status of Temporary Immigrant Workers. *Arbor*, 192 (777), pp. 1-4; López-Sala, A., 2016b. Induced Circularity for Selective Workers. The Case of Seasonal Labor Mobility Schemes in the Spanish Agriculture. *Arbor*, 192 (777), pp. 315-3.

¹¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013; European Commission, Key reforms in the new CAP, https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/new-cap-2023-27/key-reforms-new-cap_en

measures, programmes and/or services through public–private partnerships [PPPs] involving SSEs) can contribute to the provision of more relevant, impactful and cost-effective services of protection and labour market inclusion. It also investigates how partnerships can be shaped based on the mandate and comparative advantage of each partner. This chapter dwells on various SI initiatives that have proved to be effective in dealing with labour exploitation and in promoting decent work and social inclusion, especially in agriculture and in rural areas.

The third part presents four Italian case studies on SI, aiming to address labour exploitation and promote decent work through the experimentation of innovative work integration pathways. The interest in the Italian case stems from a number of key factors, such as the importance in terms of production and value of the Italian agri-food industry, the relevance of migrant workers over the total number of people employed in the sector (recording the highest rate of irregularity of employment, which was 24.2% of the agricultural workforce in 2018, as per the Italian National Statistical Institute), and the severe labour exploitation and dire working and living conditions that these workers often suffer, as also denounced by the United Nations.¹²

Social innovation case studies are analyzed through an explanatory analysis and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) methodology, which identifies the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by each selected initiative. The case studies are analysed in accordance with the framework proposed by the Open Book of Social Innovation,¹³ which is based on both desk research and four in-depth interviews. The rationale for selecting the four case studies is that they have managed to experiment with innovative modalities for creating referral and protection mechanisms and/or for both employing and empowering workers who are at risk of labour market exclusion and/or are victims of or vulnerable to labour exploitation. The selected initiatives, which are promoted by SSEs, occurred in contexts characterised by conditions of serious exploitation, severe socio-habitational marginality of migrant workers and agricultural specialisation. The case studies are localised in the least developed regions of Southern Italy (Calabria, Basilicata, Sicily and Apulia) and in one case in the urban context of Rome.

The fourth and concluding section pulls the main learning stemming from the analysis conducted in the previous chapters. It proposes a set of policy recommendations for the development of SI programmes that combine action by and partnerships between public institutions and non-state actors in the design and delivery of SI initiatives aiming to address labour exploitation and promote decent work. These recommendations are meant to be used by policymakers for the definition of the intervention models of programmes directed to non-state actors and funded by public authorities, with a view to better harnessing the potential of SSEs to address exploitation and support innovative integration pathways for vulnerable workers.

¹² UN Human Rights Council. 2019. Visit to Italy. Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences (A/HRC/42/44/ADD.1) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ahrc4244add1-visit-italy-report-special-rapporteur-contemporary-forms>: Statement by Ms. Hilal Elver, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to food, on her visit to Italy, 20-31 January 2020: Statement at the end of visit to Italy by the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights. 06 October 2021.

¹³ Murray, R., Caulier-Grice, J., & Mulgan, G. 2010. The open book of social innovation (Vol. 24). London: Nesta.

► 1 Defining social innovation

Over the past few years, there has been an increasing interest in SI within the scientific community and among policymakers. However, the concept of SI is far from clear. Very broad definitions of SI include any type of project or idea that contributes to social welfare, while narrow definitions can hardly include any sort of innovative idea.¹⁴ While many authors recognise the potential of SI,¹⁵ other authors criticise the concept for its vagueness and blurred boundaries.¹⁶

The term is applied to an extremely heterogeneous set of initiatives and organisations, which range from the interventions of organised civil society to public policy initiatives and the actions of for-profit organisations that have a marginal social impact. In addition, while significant effort is expended in defining what SI is, relatively little attention is given to the actors and mechanisms that bring it about, which, in turn, makes it very difficult to understand the kinds of policies that could be most beneficial.¹⁷ A brief review of the most widespread definitions of SI can help shed light on their most recurring dimensions. A list of SI definitions is available in Annex 1.

A set of 18 definitions proposed between 2005 and 2021 were retrieved from peer-reviewed publications, institutional reports and grey literature sources.¹⁸ An exploratory qualitative analysis using a word cloud on word choice (Figure 1) highlights the following recurring themes across definitions: social, society, new (novelty itself of the product, service or idea, which must be more efficient than previous solutions), and process and relationships (e.g. the creation of partnerships). What these recurring dimensions (see also Figure 2) suggest is the relevance of interactions with different actors and the creation of something new that is expected to benefit society as a whole (i.e., satisfaction of social needs). In fact, it is generally accepted that SI differs from other types of innovations because of the much wider range of beneficiaries involved.¹⁹ However, these dimensions are inadequate to distinguish SI from other types of innovations.²⁰

Two aspects considered by several SI definitions are particularly noteworthy for the purpose of this paper: the process of empowering vulnerable recipients and the creation of partnerships. Empowerment is the process through which beneficiaries become more confident and capable of controlling their own lives. Considering emerging needs and growing problems of inequalities and poverty, on the one hand, and passive and opportunistic behaviours on the part of recipients, on the other hand, alternative approaches have come to the fore with a view to inducing recipients to help themselves.

Unlike standard social services, in which users receive the services passively, SI presupposes the active participation of users, who are empowered by the process of service delivery (Galera et al. 2022). For example, catering services become socially innovative when vulnerable people are not simply employed in food preparation but are actively involved in designing food.

¹⁴ Borzaga, C., & Bodini, R. 2014. What to make of social innovation? Towards a framework for policy development. *Social Policy and Society*, 13(3), 411-421.

¹⁵ Roberts, Y. 2008. New ways of doing. Social innovation is a new global obsession. It might be a nebulous idea but it has huge potential. *The Guardian*, 4.

¹⁶ Bock, B. B. 2012. Social innovation and sustainability; how to disentangle the buzzword and its application in the field of agriculture and rural development. *Studies in agricultural economics*, 114(2), 57-63.

¹⁷ Borzaga & Bodini. 2014. *op. cit.*

¹⁸ The number of definitions proposed in peer-reviewed journals was 9, 4 were taken from reports of international institutions, and the 5 remaining definitions from online sources, conference proceedings, working papers, and other reports.

¹⁹ Murray et al. 2010. *op. cit.*

²⁰ For example, Borzaga and Bodini (2014) identify 3 types of innovations: 1) pure business innovations, 2) bi-focal innovations (i.e. innovations that may be considered both business and social innovation), and 3) 'pure' SI.

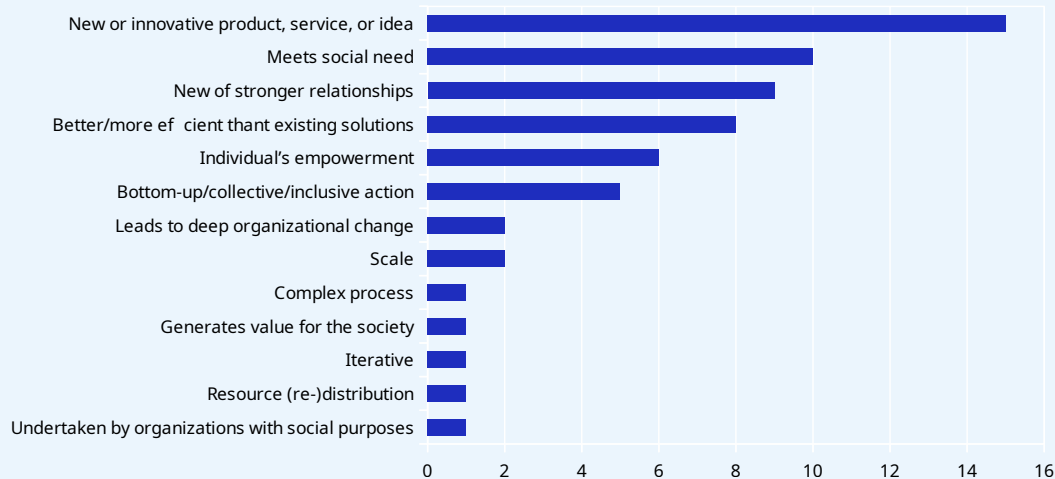
The other important element in SI is the creation of partnerships among collaborating organisations and the distribution of power across the actors involved, with a view to jointly addressing crucial concerns. There is strong evidence that interactions with public authorities, when based on collaborative logic, improve the quality of public services, increase process efficiency and contribute to local development.²¹

► Figure 1 — Word cloud for SI definitions



Source: Elaboration by the authors.

► Figure 2 — Recurring concepts in SI definitions



Source: Elaboration by the authors.

Extensive reforms, especially by European welfare states, have been adopted over the past few decades to cope with unmet social needs and the increase in social exclusion. These reforms include the adoption by public institutions of private managerial models, the implementation of decentralisation policies and the privatisation of service provision. Nevertheless, reforms have largely failed to achieve satisfactory outcomes. The wave of privatisations that took place in the 1990s, when many welfare functions were transferred to the private sector, did not solve the problems it was meant to address and, in some ways, even made them worse. At the same time, it has become clear that solutions are not envisageable solely by engaging public bodies. The latter are normally cursed by heavy bureaucratic procedures and structural flaws,²² which make them unlikely to be innovative. Therefore, a system based on the provision of social services by the exclusive power of a central government is likely to cause ineffective and inefficient use of available resources. The recent literature on social welfare policy suggests that services of general interest should be provided by a large variety of public and not-for-profit organisations that possess the appropriate competencies and are aware of local needs in order to rationalise public spending and deliver efficient services. This vision suggests that cooperative partnerships aimed at meeting general interest goals be established between not-for-profit organisations and public administrations. Not-for-profit organisations pursue social benefits and possess competencies that complement those of public bodies. Therefore, collaborations between these two sectors can generate value for society and improve the quality of welfare services. An additional benefit of public-private collaborations is the sharing of power, responsibilities and financial risks. It is noteworthy that the participation of not-for-profit organisations in service design and delivery may stimulate the active involvement of the concerned stakeholders in public choices and contribute to fostering democratisation.²³

²² Sacchetti, S., & Salvatori, G. 2022. "Shared administration" as a new relationship between the public sector and the social economy., 33mo Congreso Internacional del CIRIEC, Valencia 13-15 June 2022

²³ Borzaga, C. & Sacchetti, S. 2021. "Inclusive Organizations as Agents of Democracy". In *Social Justice in a Global Society: Toward New Forms of Economic Democracy for a Sustainable Development*, edited by Enrica Chiappero-Martinetti. Milano: Feltrinelli <https://www.lafeltrinelli.it/social-justice-in-a-global-libro-vari/e/9788807990762>

1.1 Partnerships and collaborative approaches

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) are relevant patterns for delivering SI. They often emerge following the transformation of traditional welfare systems thanks to the reaction of civil society from below, which self-organises to respond to unmet needs by experimenting with new solutions, including the development of new organisations.²⁴ Nevertheless, there is no universal consensus on what PPPs are. Existing definitions of PPPs often include some distinctive features, such as the presence of both public and private bodies, outcomes that generate positive returns for each participant of the partnership, common strategies across partners and sharing of costs, risks and resources.^{25, 26, 27} At a practical level, PPPs in essence combine the resources of public administrations with those of private agents to deliver social goals.²⁸

Empirically, PPPs are contracts that may assume many different forms on the basis of a number of characteristics: contract length, risk sharing, management of responsibilities and remuneration.²⁹ In a review of PPP typologies, Rossi (2019) identified six PPP models, which range from strict surveillance of the public body to complete private ownership: 1) management contracts (which regulate the relationship between a public subject and a private contractor, which is entitled to manage certain activities over a short time frame, normally from two to five years), 2) turnkeys (which refer to the traditional public procurement model), 3) lease, 4) concession, 5) private finance initiatives and 6) private ownership. The categories differ on the basis of the investment burden, the level of risk and obligations for the private subject and the duration of the contract (see Figure 3).

While their characteristics vary, all the cited PPPs assume that a public body undertakes the design and programming of public services and a private contractor manages (and sometimes bears the investment cost for) the service. These agreements imply the design of local social services in a traditional top-down centralist way. As decision power is not evenly shared between the parties, these forms of relationships facilitate limited collaboration. Moreover, the quality of services and work is jeopardised by the tendency of many public agencies to procure welfare services via competitive tenders based solely on the lowest price criterion. This pattern often favours less locally rooted providers, which are normally the least socially innovative entities because of their lack of knowledge of the local territory.

Recent policy changes prompted by the European Commission, such as the Green Paper on the Modernisation of EU Public Procurement Policy and European Directives 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU to align the national legislations of Member States on public contracting, create opportunities for developing new approaches to public service delivery. They encourage the evaluation of bids on the basis of the best price/quality ratio. Nevertheless, these opportunities have yet to be seized. In some Member States,³⁰ public authorities continue to prefer to deliver welfare services themselves, often because of the lack of skills. In countries where welfare services are commonly contracted out to private providers, the predominant tendency is to make recourse to the lowest price criterion in most tenders, despite being hampered by the EU Directive. This is simply because price is the easiest aspect to assess. In social welfare policy, PPPs are conversely socially innovative only when the concerned

²⁴ Borzaga C. & Galera, G. 2014. "The potential of the social economy for local development in Africa: an exploratory report", European Parliament, Directorate General for External Policies of the Union; Petrella and Richez-Battesti, Lambro, Patterns of Evolutions of Social Enterprises in France: A Focus on Work Integration Social Enterprises, International Review of Sociology. *Revue Internationale de Sociologie* vol. 26 nr 1;

²⁵ Harding, A. 1998. Public-private partnerships in the UK. In *Partnerships in Urban Governance* (pp. 71-92). Palgrave Macmillan. p.110)

²⁶ Bailey, N. 1994. Towards a research agenda for public-private partnerships in the 1990s. *Local economy*, 8(4), 292-306. p. 293)

²⁷ (Van Ham and Koppenjan, 2001. p598)

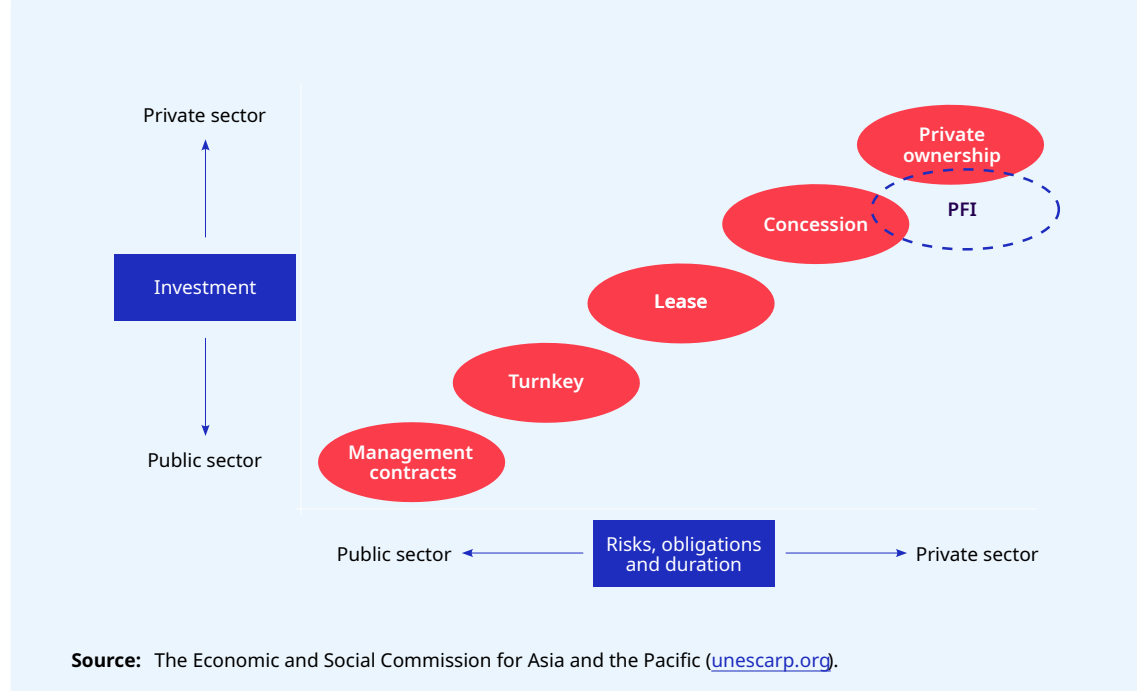
²⁸ Skelcher, C., Mathur, N., & Smith, M. 2005. The public governance of collaborative spaces: Discourse, design and democracy. *Public administration*, 83(3), 573-596.

²⁹ Rossi, M. 2019. The evolution of public-private partnerships in a comparison between Europe and Italy: Some perspectives for the energy sector. 670216917

³⁰ Countries where public authorities deliver the majority of welfare services themselves include Bulgaria, Slovenia and Lithuania. Cfr. European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. 2020. *Social Enterprises and their eco-systems in Europe*. Authors: C. Borzaga, Galera, G. Franchini, B. Chiomento, S. Nogales, R. Carini.

subjects, regardless of the public or private legal form involved, participate in decision making in a collaborative way and co-programme and co-design the process. This presupposes a move from a competitive paradigm, which notably distinguishes competitive public tenders, towards a cooperative paradigm.

► **Figure 3 — PPP classification based on private investments, risks, obligations and contract duration**



In a cooperative paradigm, private and public subjects are all part of the projects and have an equal say in decision-making processes. While maintaining their autonomy, the partners join the efforts, contribute their resources and undertake common actions to deliver the service and improve performance. These approaches are defined as co-programming and co-design and presuppose adherence to a collaborative model based on shared objectives and co-determination.³¹ Co-programming refers to the strategic planning of the set of social services within regions or cities, their integration and the identification of needs and priorities. Co-design defines activities that aim to produce and deliver a single social intervention that answers a contingent social need. In both cases, decision making is not centralised but democratic. Participants in co-programming and co-design have equal rights to propose solutions, goals and outcomes. In this way, the responsibility to produce and deliver goods and services of public utility is not the exclusive competence of the public administration but of the multiple subjects involved.

From this perspective, new schemes for the financial retribution of the private actors involved in the process need to be established. While the public administration traditionally outsources activities to the private sector via public procurement and calls for tenders, the co-programming approach seeks for co-funding. In particular, the Third Sector (TS) reform (Delegation Law 106/2016), which entered

³¹ Borzaga, C. & Tortia, E. 2017. Co-operation as Co-ordination Mechanism: A New Approach to the economics of Co-operative Enterprises, in J. Michie, J. Blasi, C. Borzaga (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Mutual, Co-operative, and Co-owned Business*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 55-75.

into force in Italy in 2017, revolutionises the relations between public actors and private providers, specifically TS entities, in addition to giving a unitary identity to these entities that pursue explicit social aims; the TS is the concept adopted by the Italian Legislator to recognise, regulate and support the vast array of non-profit entities that pursue general interest aims.³²

By providing for the active engagement of TS entities in the co-programming, co-design and organisation of the provision of general interest services, the TS reform (Delegation Law 106/2016, Article 55) suggests that the competitive paradigm that has so far predominated in the interactions between public and TS actors be replaced by a collaborative paradigm whenever possible. Against the backdrop of paving the way for innovative solutions aimed at tackling unmet challenges arising in local communities, this model of interaction is based on both the convergence of general interest objectives pursued by public and TS entities alike and the aggregation of public and private resources. Interestingly, the reform envisages the active engagement of all concerned civil society organisations, including informal groups, which may be involved via TS entities in co-programming and co-design processes.³³

► Public-private partnerships

One of the main benefits of PPPs is the possibility of accessing complementary competencies to improve service delivery for the beneficiaries. Partnerships are crucial to tackling complex problems requiring multiple skills, which a single organisation does not possess.³⁴ However, the importance of partnerships is not limited to competence sharing. Partnerships are useful to stimulate collaborative thinking, brainstorming and participatory approaches and to handle new services whose required competencies are not clear or not exclusive to a single organisation. The private sector provides managerial skills, innovation, capital and competencies and obtains economic returns. The public sector can gain efficiency, increase the range of public services provided, improve the provision of services and shift the financial risks to its private counterparts.³⁵

In Italy, projects for migrants are partially organised by the System for Hospitality and Inclusion (Sistema Accoglienza Integrazione [SAI]), which provides housing and integration services to migrants through partnerships established with TS entities. In 2020, the SAI undertook projects in 1614 Italian municipalities and provided services to more than 37,000 migrants and asylum seekers. Interactions with TS entities allowed the SAI to involve more than 14,000 professionals.³⁶ For example, in the Marche region, the SAI established a partnership with the health department to provide mental health services to migrants. The synergy between public and private bodies allowed not only taking charge of migrants in need of mental health care but also providing other types of services for people within the SAI. The partnership enabled the SAI to access the medical competencies of hospital staff for the benefit of migrants outside the programme.³⁷

³² Galera, G. & Chiomento, S. 2022. L'impresa sociale: dai concetti teorici all'applicazione a livello di policy, in *Impresa Sociale*, N.1/22.

³³ In response to the negative opinion expressed by the Council of State that questioned the validity of art. 55 of the Delegation Law 106/2016, the Italian Constitutional Court has recently recognised its full legitimacy. As expressed by the Constitutional Court, art. 55 enables to accomplish the principle of horizontal subsidiarity introduced by art. 118 of the Italian Constitution, which demands all levels of governments to find ways to share their powers and cooperate with individual or associated citizens willing to exercise their right to carry out activities of general interest.

³⁷ Cau and Maino. 2017. op. cit.

³⁷ Linder, S. H. 1999. Coming to terms with the public-private partnership: A grammar of multiple meanings. *American behavioural scientist*, 43(1): 35–51.

³⁷ Grigion, N. 2021. Coprogettazione e contesti accoglienti. *L'impresa sociale*, 3: 39–48.

³⁷ Galera, G., Giannetto L. & A. Noya. 2018. The Role of Non-state Actors in the Integration of Refugees and Asylum Seekers, OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) Working Papers, No. 2018/02, OECD.

Among funding options, pay-by-result schemes are alternatives that are progressively gaining momentum. Pay by result is an impact investing scheme in which private bodies that deliver public services are compensated based on the results obtained. This means that financial remuneration is pegged to the performance of the private actor. Services of higher quality or services that reach a larger number of beneficiaries are compensated for with larger amounts of money. This scheme is opposed to the traditional pay-by-refund scheme, through which the public compensates the private actor for the services provided independently of their quality.

A popular example of the pay-by-result mechanism is the social impact bond (SIB), sometimes called pay-for-success bond. In the SIB, the private actor undertakes the investment and provides the upfront money needed to deploy a social programme. Subsequently, the private actor receives compensation with profit only if the outcomes decided before the programme are achieved. One of the first empirical implementations of the SIB dates back to 2010 in England, which launched an SIB project for the social reintegration of ex-cons from Peterborough jail. The private investors were compensated based on the recidivism rate so that remuneration was higher when recidivism was lower.

Social impact bonds are relatively new, and there is a dearth of case studies on welfare services for refugees. However, recently, the Dutch Council for Refugees funded a project called Re Impact, in partnership with Programma Integra, which aims to find impact investing solutions for the social integration of refugees.

1.2 The debate on social innovation

The debate on SI is often connected with current transformations of the welfare system, changing working conditions and pressing challenges faced by contemporary societies, such as the ageing society and immigration, as well as climate change and digitalisation. Similarly, key SI areas include urban decay and regeneration, and rural development.

While most analysts focus on what SI is, little attention is paid to who is more inclined to generate SI. As a collective initiative and community action for positive social change, SI is, however, often grounded in the active engagement of the concerned stakeholders, who tend to spontaneously self-organise in order to respond to a number of unmet social and economic concerns.³⁸ Against the background of a better understanding of how SI is generated and how it can be scaled up, we suggest concentrating on the subjects resulting from the ongoing process of self-organisation and the self-reliance of local communities.

Different conceptual approaches have been adopted to describe the outcomes of citizens' mobilisation. In Europe, there has been a recent revival of the social economy as a concept, which stresses the mission of an organisation, the primacy of workers over capital and the implementation of democratic management models. The social economy includes organisations that aim to benefit either their members or the community in which they operate. As such, it typically comprises cooperatives, mutuals, associations, foundations and, more recently, social enterprises.

³⁸ Daniel, L. J., & Jenner, P. 2022. Another look at social innovation: From community-For community. *International Journal of Innovation Studies*, 6(2), 92-101.

One of the broadest approaches gaining great momentum in the international arena to describe the vast array of organisations that are neither public nor profit oriented is the concept of SSE, which was developed to bring together the social economy and the solidarity economy. This latter concept is used especially in Latin America to capture informal initiatives and shed light on the transformative power of its components.³⁹

The ILO⁴⁰ defines the SSE as an ensemble of enterprises, organisations and other entities that are engaged in economic, social and environmental activities to serve the collective and/or general interest. They do so based on the principles of voluntary cooperation and mutual aid, democratic and/or participatory governance, autonomy and independence, and the primacy of people and social purpose over capital in the distribution and use of surpluses and/or profit and assets. Operating in all sectors of the economy, SSEs aspire to long-term viability and sustainability and to the transition from the informal to the formal economy, and they operate in all sectors of the economy. They put into practice a set of values which are intrinsic to their functioning and consistent with caring for the people and the planet, equality and fairness, interdependence, self-governance, transparency and accountability, and the attainment of decent work and livelihoods. According to national circumstances, the SSE includes cooperatives, associations, mutual societies, foundations, social enterprises, self-help groups and other entities operating in accordance with the values and principles of the SSE.

By recognising the leading role of the social economy in developing and implementing SI in its recently released Social Economy Action Plan, the European Commission⁴¹ implicitly urges national policymakers to align the social economy and SI more closely in future policy initiatives. The Plan considers the social economy as an autonomous and distinct pillar, in addition to state actors and for-profit entities, and recognises its presence and real and potential relevance in all economic sectors, not just in niche domains (e.g. the welfare sector).

Similarly, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development describes SI as an ensemble of entrepreneurial activities conducted by organisations that have their roots in civil society. The relationship between citizens and public bodies is often problematic. Public agencies are blamed for inefficiency and seen as sources of privileges for elites.⁴² Conversely, SSEs sometimes enjoy a better reputation because they stimulate the active engagement of civil society in public life, e.g. through volunteering. For this reason, collaborations between public bodies and SSEs tend to facilitate public acceptance and democracy of choices of general interest and may stimulate community activation.⁴³ At the same time, in the search for innovative paths of economic development that can support social and labour inclusion, the SSE is often regarded as an extremely compelling paradigm. Social and solidarity economy organisations show key features that make them naturally prone to triggering social and societal changes that benefit the most fragile groups or society as a whole. Historical analysis provides evidence of the crucial role played by these organisations in supporting development and, especially, in empowering vulnerable people, often with limited resources at their disposal. The inclination of the SSE to support SI can be seen from various perspectives: it supports inclusive and sustainable growth, contributes to reducing poverty, generates new employment, often in innovative sectors, facilitates a more balanced use and allocation of resources and plays a role in institutionalising informal organisations.⁴⁴

³⁹ Laville, J. L. 2010. The solidarity economy: an international movement. *RCCS Annual Review*. A selection from the Portuguese journal *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, (2); Saguier, M., & Brent, Z. 2014. Regional policy frameworks of social solidarity economy in South America (No. 6). *UNRISD Occasional Paper: Potential and Limits of Social and Solidarity Economy*; Saguier, M., & Brent, Z. 2017. Social and solidarity economy in South American regional governance. *Global Social Policy*, 17(3), 259-278.

⁴⁰ ILC.110/Resolution II, International Labour Conference, 2022

⁴¹ European Commission - Social Economy Action Plan, 2022

⁴² Canel, M. J., & Luoma-aho, V. 2018. Public sector communication: Closing gaps between citizens and public organizations. John Wiley & Sons.

⁴³ Kwon, H. K. 2022. Collaborative governance for community activation, KDI School, Master of Development Policy, Seoul (South Korea), pp: 67.

⁴⁴ Borzaga, C. & Galera, G. 2016. Innovating the provision of welfare services through collective action: the case of Italian social cooperatives, *International Review of Sociology*, 26(1): 31-47.

Social and solidarity economy organisations' added value stems from their ownership structures and governance models, which are designed to enable the active participation of a multiplicity of stakeholders representing different components of society. Their peculiar institutional models have a role in strengthening connections with the local community, of which they are expressions; they also enable the detection of new needs and challenges that may arise in society, and redistribute unexploited resources, both monetary and non-monetary, for welfare and development goals.

In essence, SSEs are best positioned to both empower vulnerable recipients and communities and trigger social transformations, and they do so, given their capacity to partner with different entities, including public authorities, for-profit enterprises and informal groups. Innovative examples are provided by the recent experimentation of the Territoire Zéro Chômage in France⁴⁵, which sees SSEs, together with public actors, at the forefront of experimenting with innovative integration pathways for long-unemployed persons. The starting assumption of this pilot project is the full recognition of the right to work for anyone by taking stock of their unexploited skills and talents. In addition to ethical considerations, this pilot project takes action from a basic consideration: supporting employment through proper public measures is more convenient than covering the costs of social and labour market exclusion of unemployed people who are able to work.

1.3 Design and delivery of SI programmes and services

Innovation can happen in several ways. The Open Book of Social Innovation⁴⁶ describes a six-stage process to design and deliver SI programmes and services: 1) prompts, 2) proposals, 3) prototyping, 4) sustaining, 5) scaling and 6) systemic change. Each stage of the SI delivery process is undertaken using participatory tools to facilitate co-programming and co-designing. The latter is both very demanding and time consuming, and failure to overcome the pilot stage may prevent the scaling of the innovative initiative.

1. **The prompt.** The prompt stage involves asking the right questions. The social problem and the set of factors that indicate the need for socially innovative solutions are identified in the prompting stage. Sometimes, the problem is clear (e.g. hunger and homelessness), whereas in some situations, it is not, and its identification is challenging (e.g. racism and domestic violence). The triggers of social problems are also manifold: crisis or necessity, the need to cut public expenditures, the need to improve performance, and new technologies and new discoveries. In some cases, the trigger is one need that is not adequately met by the market or public administrations.⁴⁷ Because of their large number of sources, social problems may be uncovered by several groups of individuals or stakeholders (e.g. single individuals, campaigns, political movements, religious movements and voluntary organisations).
2. **Proposals.** The second stage relates to actions aimed at finding solutions to the problem previously identified. Several methods have been developed for this purpose, all with the common feature of bringing together people from different groups and backgrounds to develop a shared solution (e.g. creative thinking methods, forum theatre and ex-user engagement). This process is referred to as the co-design of the SI programme or service.
3. **Prototyping and pilots** are useful for testing the proposed solution, normally on a relatively small scale. The testing phase occurs via trial and error, with regular refinements at each iteration. This stage is sometimes called public policy experimentation, as it involves small-scale projects that must be assessed before considering a wider application. Not all innovative ideas pass the testing phase because of their infeasibility at a practical level, inefficacy to meet the need or unaffordable cost. Therefore, some of the SI solutions that were identified in the previous stages are discarded.

⁴⁵ See <https://www.tzcld.fr>

⁴⁶ Murray, et al. 2010, op. cit.

⁴⁷ Mulgan, G. 2006. The process of social innovation. *Innovations*, 1(2), 145-162.

4. **Sustaining.** The prototyping phase likely tests several options for undertaking an SI programme. The success of these alternatives is often different, and only the most promising options will be maintained and become dominant. For this reason, the ability to judge innovation is very important to avoid adopting the least efficient alternatives. Alternative selection may originate from public feedback; however, this stage is mostly undertaken using evaluation methods, such as cost-benefit analysis, social return on investment estimation, counterfactual analysis, and performance assessment using indicators.
5. **Scaling.** Social innovation scale-up is the process of diffusing the innovation for wider adoption. The collaborative networking underlying the co-design of SI programmes is advantageous for this purpose. The success of SI diffusion depends on a number of factors, including supply and demand. The SI supply indicates increasing evidence that SI works and that users are willing to receive the services. Growing the supply side of SI can be effectively undertaken via research and development investments and research data analysis or distribution via public policy. Demand indicates the willingness of the wider society to maintain SI in place. The typical strategies to maintain SI and raise awareness include advocacy, championing the cause and campaigning for change.
6. **Systemic change.** Systemic change indicates a radical transformation of the system on which users depend. Typically, systemic changes build up on a number of complementary innovations combined that relate to different sectors. Crisis and disruptive technologies facilitate systemic changes; however, in most cases, systemic changes happen gradually through slow processes of cumulative innovations.

The considerations developed around SI in Part I provide the background for the analysis in part II, whereas the explanatory case study analysis conducted in Part III draws on the six-stage process framework presented here. It focuses on the innovative methodologies, models and work integration pathways experimented with by the selected SSEs operating in four distinct Italian territories.

► 2 Social innovation approaches to address labour exploitation and promote decent work in agriculture

Several SI approaches and interventions (programmes and services) have been encouraged and promoted for both the protection and assistance of victims of labour exploitation and labour market inclusion. Social innovation initiatives contribute to the provision of more relevant, impactful and cost-effective services of protection, assistance and labour market inclusion, especially in rural and specialised agricultural areas. For these purposes, PPPs that involve SSEs are often shaped based on the mandate and comparative advantage of each partner.

2.1 Public-private partnerships and the engagement of SSEs

The forms of forced or compulsory labour have changed over time, and trafficking in persons for the purposes of forced or compulsory labour, which may involve sexual exploitation, is the subject of growing international concern. The ILO envisages active contributions from civil society to prevent forced labour (see ILO Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention). United Nations General Assembly Resolution 71/1 acknowledges that refugees and migrants who are part of large movements are at risk of being trafficked and subjected to forced labour and that women and children are particularly vulnerable.⁴⁸

In 2003, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings was adopted. Participating states explicitly acknowledge that while the primary responsibility for combating and preventing trafficking in human beings rests with the participating states, the link of this phenomenon to transnational organised crime requires cooperation at the international and regional levels involving the private sector and non-government organisations (NGOs).⁴⁹

The OSCE Ministerial Council Decision taken in 2007 in Madrid on combating trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation called on participating states to support and promote partnerships between civil society, including NGOs, and state agencies with a labour protection mandate to monitor working conditions, to provide, among others, assistance to victims and prevent trafficking for labour exploitation and violation of labour laws, including through targeted awareness-raising programmes or voluntary codes of conduct.⁵⁰

However, the inclusion of civil society into an overall anti-trafficking response as reflected in the clusters of the four Ps (prevention, protection, prosecution and partnership) is not always an easy endeavour. Civil society stakeholders challenge their role as mere technical providers without being included in political decision-making processes. In addition, civil society is sometimes regarded as too critical of governmental policies. This is due to civil society's mission, activities in the anti-trafficking sphere and responses to state activities relating to combating trafficking and protecting and assisting victims and those at risk of being trafficked.

⁴⁸ UNGA Resolution 71/1, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, 2016

⁴⁹ This statement was again unanimously reaffirmed ten years later in the Addendum to the OSCE Action Plan adopted in 2013.

⁵⁰ OSCE, Ministerial Council Decision on Combating trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation, MC/ DEC8/07, Madrid, 30 November 2007, para. 5.

► Cooperation frameworks to protect and assist the victims of exploitation

In Austria, UNDOK, a drop-in and counselling centre for undocumented workers, developed from a multistakeholder partnership. It is run by trade unions, the Chamber of Labour, the National Student Union and anti-trafficking NGOs, such as the NGO LEFÖ-IB and the Men's Health Centre, as well as other self-organised migrant organisations. The centre, which is funded by public institutions (the Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection and the Vienna Employment Promotion Fund), is a one-stop shop offering counselling and support to undocumented migrant workers about their rights, labour law issues, claims for unpaid wages and compensation, and issues of social security.⁵¹

In the Netherlands, CoMensha, a national, independent expertise and coordination centre against human trafficking, aims to promote the interests and rights of victims and possible victims of human trafficking in all its guises, including sexual exploitation, general labour exploitation, criminal exploitation, forced begging and forced organ removal. The organisation works closely with the National Police, the Royal Dutch Marechaussee, the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the National Rapporteur on Human Trafficking and Sexual Violence against Children, various ministries and municipalities, reception centres, care institutions, the legal profession and various other national and international NGOs, among others.⁵² It chairs the Strategic Platform on Human Trafficking, which consists of representatives of the Centre against Child and Human Trafficking, Defence for Children/EC-PAT, FairWork, Fier (a national expertise and treatment centre in the field of violence in dependency relationships), HVO-Querido (an organisation that supports people with psychiatric disabilities or socio-economic problems), the Salvation Army, MJD Groningen (offers care coordination and support services to victims of human trafficking), Moviera, PMW Humanitas, Jade and SHOP The Hague. Various stakeholders (including CoMensha, trade unions, FairWork, the Public Prosecution Service, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and the temporary employment sector) shall meet to make agreements on how victims of labour exploitation or serious disadvantage can be quickly helped to find new and fair work.⁵³

In Czechia, the identification of victims of labour exploitation is carried out by law enforcement authorities in collaboration with specialised non-profit organisations, such as La Strada and the Czech Catholic Charity Association. Potential victims are encouraged to join the Victim Support Programme managed by the Crime Prevention Department of the Ministry of the Interior. If the potential victim is accepted into the programme, they are legally considered a victim of trafficking and therefore entitled to all the protection services available.⁵⁴

In Denmark, the Centre against Human Trafficking, which is part of the National Board of Social Services, manages the national referral system, which includes the police, the Danish Immigration Service and civil society organisations.⁵⁵

In some cases, i.e. Spain, there is no such cooperation and action coordination in the phases of victim identification and intervention. Non-profit organisations act almost alone during the phase of intervention and lack resources dedicated to forms of exploitation other than sexual exploitation and to victims who are not women.⁵⁶

Belgium, France and Germany have cooperation agreements with social partners, labour inspection services and other public authorities in high-risk sectors. For example, the Belgian Labour Inspectorate of the Federal Public Service Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue receives complaints about undeclared work and labour exploitation (i.e. non-payment of wages) of third-country nationals, also irregularly staying, which are often channelled by FairWork Foundation (an NGO) and the Federal Centre for Migration (Myria). The labour inspectorate has concluded a special agreement with FairWork, allowing it to handle the complaints of third-country nationals.⁵⁷

The range of civil society engagement is wide, diverse and interconnected. It ranges from the protection of human rights and ensuring the effective recognition of trafficked persons' rights, to prevention, education and awareness raising to advocacy and regulator's activities to promote transparency and accountability. A widespread network of self-organised and activist groups contributes to preventing the abuse and exploitation of vulnerable and marginalised persons and ensures that more victims of trafficking are identified and have access to services without discrimination. These include groups advocating for the rights of refugees, migrant workers, women victims of violence and children. Given their first-hand contact with marginalised groups that are vulnerable to being trafficked, many SSEs give voice to their concerns and ensure their participation in informing policies and actions affecting them. Social and solidarity economy organisations also possess invaluable sources of data and information that may shed light on violations of the rights of trafficked persons and other groups that would otherwise remain undetected.⁵⁸

Several promising practices, especially in the areas of prevention, protection and assistance of victims of trafficking and exploitation, or well-established national referral mechanisms can be identified at the European level. These mechanisms are cooperation frameworks through which government agencies fulfil their obligations to protect and promote the human rights of victims of exploitation, coordinating their efforts in partnership with non-profit organisations. Social and solidarity economy organisations perform different tasks (e.g. advocacy or service delivery); they cover diverse legal frameworks and provide various types of services, including housing, legal protection and work integration.

In numerous OSCE participating states, SSEs manage helplines to inform and counsel people about safe migration, human trafficking risks and possibilities to receive assistance for victims and presumed victims of trafficking. Helplines are often established in partnership with public institutions and may have national or regional coverage. They play a crucial role in both prevention and assistance efforts.

⁵⁷ GRETA. 2016. Compendium of Good Practices on the Implementation of the Council Of Europe, Convention on Action Against Trafficking In Human Beings, p. 9; GRETA. 2019. Human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation.

⁵⁷ Mazzini, M. 2022. FEMM mission to The Hague, Netherlands, European Parliament; FRA. 2017. Protecting migrant workers from exploitation in the EU: workers' perspectives Country report Netherlands,

⁵⁷ GRETA. 2020. Report Concerning the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against trafficking in Human Beings by the Czech Republic. First Evaluation Round; Corbanese V., Rosas G. 2020. Protection and assistance of victims of labour exploitation, ILO.

⁵⁷ GRETA. 2016. Report Concerning the Implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by Denmark. Second Evaluation Round.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Miranda-Ruche, X. y Villacampa Estiarte, C. 2021. La atención a las víctimas de trata de seres humanos. Un análisis crítico del protocolo marco español desde una perspectiva comparada Alternativas. Cuadernos de Trabajo Social, (2021) 28(2), 141-166.

⁵⁷ van Nierop P. et al. 2021. Counteracting undeclared work and labour exploitation of third country national workers, European Platform tackling undeclared work, European Union.

⁵⁸ OSCE. 2018. The Critical Role of Civil Society in Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Occasional Paper No. 8, Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings,

► **Cinformi – Centro informativo per l’immigrazione**

In Italy, a case in point of co-design and co-programming of service delivery by public agencies and SSEs, which has a role in preventing work exploitation, is the Trentino provincial system for welcoming asylum seekers and refugees. In a national panorama characterised by a patchy quality of reception services and the prevalence of an emergency logic,⁵⁹ Trentino Province provided a unique response to the migration and refugee challenge. In 2001, it created a dedicated operative body called Cinformi, in charge of supporting the police headquarters in administrative procedures relating to immigration and coordinating reception at the provincial level through close collaboration with diverse SSEs. This collaborative framework was consolidated over the years because of the increase in the number of refugees and following the specialisation of SSEs in specific dimensions/reception stages: work integration, legal support, housing and others. This collaborative framework did not only achieve remarkable results in terms of the quality of reception services supplied, the number of internships that turned into employment contracts, and SI initiatives experimented at the local level and then replicated on a wider scale. The partnership also allowed for the generation of significant economic benefits for the host community despite the lower public expenditure allocated to reception compared to other Italian territories.⁶⁰

Recent research assessing the economic impact of reception indicated that every euro spent on welcoming migrants generated almost two euros in production value in the Trentino economy.⁶¹ The conclusions obtained through the quantitative analysis were corroborated by the findings of the qualitative analysis.

The main lesson learned from this experience is that the collaboration between Trentino and the SSE facilitated beneficial impacts for the economic system of the entire province. This was significantly due to the ability of the reception system—put in place in the frame of a public policy—to take stock and valorise the know-how accumulated by supporters in helping recipients integrate and in assisting hosting communities to welcome the newcomers by preventing and managing conflicts generated by fear and poor knowledge of each other. Thanks to the solid collaboration with local SSEs, the framework developed has demonstrated that the refugee challenge can be addressed by actively engaging the hosting community. Moreover, when well managed, this challenge can enable the fulfilment of other needs in hosting communities. In Trentino, the system implemented facilitated the matching of the supply of work of recipients with the unmet work demand of local enterprises, especially in the agriculture and tourism sectors, thus positively impacting local economic development.⁶²

Unfortunately, this well-designed system, which is an excellent example of how SI can be generated, thanks to the fruitful collaboration of public and private partners, was partially dismantled for political reasons following a change in provincial leadership in 2018.

⁶² Boccagni, P., Galera, G., Giannetto, L. & Piovesan, S. 2020. Il tramonto dell'accoglienza. La gestione delle dinamiche di accoglienza della Provincia Autonoma di Trento prima e dopo il Decreto Sicurezza e Immigrazione, Fondazione Migrantes. Ibid.

⁶² The research consisted of a quanti-qualitative study based on data provided by the provincial agency Cinformi and the Trento provincial statistical office (ISPAT), two focus groups and a number of interviews to experts in the field.

⁶² Boccagni et al. 2020, op.cit.

2.2 Cooperation between SSEs and mainstream enterprises

Another growing trend in expanding the scope and reach of labour exploitation prevention is cooperation between SSEs and the traditional private sector, including global corporations. For example, SSEs often provide for-profit enterprises with specific expertise to improve products, services and their overall business strategy, with the aim of preventing exploitative labour and trafficking. Social and solidarity economy organisations, on their side, create opportunities for raising funds from non-governmental sources through such cooperation, which may increase their independence and capability to scrutinise governmental activities critically.

For example, thanks to the support of the Prevention of and Fight Against Crime Programme of the European Union, La Strada International and its partners implemented the two-year project NGOs & Co: NGO-Business Engagement in Addressing Human Trafficking, which aimed to strengthen the cooperation between grassroots organisations and the business sector in effectively preventing and addressing human trafficking.⁶³

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe participating states may also support NGOs and civil society organisations that compile disclosure statements by companies complying with transparency laws. For example, the Modern Slavery Registry, maintained by the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, is a website of company reports filed under the UK Modern Slavery Act. A central registry also facilitates further analysis and monitoring of corporate conduct by sector and industry. This task is accomplished, for instance, by the NGO Know the Chain, which benchmarks company performance based on disclosure statements. Its analysis is useful for investors, consumers and governments to better understand industrywide approaches to anti-human trafficking efforts.⁶⁴

National action plans (NAPs) are used in the prevention of human trafficking and in the areas of business and human rights. These plans define goals and measures to be implemented by public authorities in cooperation with other relevant actors, such as SSEs. The UK, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, the US, Germany and Finland have included public procurement-related measures in their NAPs on business and human rights.

2.3 Promoting decent work and social inclusion

Social innovation initiatives that have proven effective in dealing with labour exploitation in agriculture and in promoting decent work and social inclusion, especially in rural areas, can be found in various countries. As observed in Part I, SI examples in rural areas are manifold and are often driven by SSEs, which have a role in supporting more sustainable and inclusive local development and in promoting decent work for all. Rural SI is distinctive for its dependence on civic self-reliance and self-organisation and for its cross-sectoral and translocal collaborations, which play a key role in addressing major rural development problems. These include ageing populations, a demographic decline, severe gaps in general interest services provision, low income, lack of employment, emigration, social disruption, low quality of life and a feeling of abandonment. In addition, austerity measures and state withdrawal have generated especially dramatic effects in rural areas. The key principle of rural SI is that collective citizen action can succeed in reconnecting marginal areas with social and economic dynamics. Innovative dynamic forces are normally prompted by a wide range of local actors, including non-profit organisations, cooperatives, enterprises and local institutions. Novel elements of innovative

⁶³ OSCE. 2018. Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Compendium of relevant reference materials and resources on ethical sourcing and prevention of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation in supply chains.

⁶⁴ OSCE. 2018. Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Model Guidelines on Government Measures to Prevent Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in Supply Chains.

rural initiatives include new business models that use information and communications technology for self-organisation purposes to collaborate with large and distant partners and to achieve a positive re-labelling of the rural. These initiatives, which are fuelled by citizens' actions, often contribute to the delivery of innovative products and practices, replacing gaps in public services and facilitating the social inclusion of vulnerable groups.⁶⁵

Innovative initiatives have managed to address key problems, such as limited access to finance for SSEs in the agricultural value chain and high unemployment rates among women and young generations.⁶⁶ Many SSE initiatives across the world aim to reclaim control over the local agri-food sector or reduce decent work deficits. Innovative cases have emerged in developing countries, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia.⁶⁷ However, the last 15 years have also seen a significant growth in innovative experiences in advanced countries, often emerging from below, animated by SSEs which are able to link up with local and rural development dynamics because of their capacity to design inclusive governance and policy tools.

Specific SI solutions in agriculture are called community-supported agriculture or alternative food networks (in Italy, they are called solidarity purchasing groups). They are socially innovative initiatives aimed at guaranteeing food security, access to the market and fair prices to producers, environmentally sustainable production and just employment conditions.⁶⁸ These innovative solutions have, at their foundation, the social aim of promoting inclusion and social justice.

Some innovative initiatives have been specifically promoted to address labour exploitation in agriculture, especially among migrants and refugees, in new immigration destinations in developed countries.⁶⁹

These alternative food networks, not only involve critical consumers and human rights activists, thoughtful producers, migrants and indigenous workers. In the first phase, these initiatives often emerge spontaneously from below, are driven by the voluntary action of the concerned stakeholders and have an informal organisation. Subsequently, they may come to be structured like SSEs. They normally perform various activities, such as facilitating market placement, building direct relationships between consumers and producers, guaranteeing ethical and sustainable production and organising logistics without third-party intermediaries. At the same time, these entities often carry out awareness-raising actions aimed at consumers, the private sector and the public at large to promote sustainable production and consumption models, solidarity and respect for human rights, lobbying institutions to improve workers' living and employment conditions and promoting dedicated services. Legal, trade union and service access assistance activities are often carried out on a voluntary basis, through the diversification of activities or in collaboration with other organisations.

⁶⁵ Bock, B. B. 2016. Rural marginalisation and the role of social innovation; a turn towards neo-exogenous development and rural reconnection. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 56(4), 552-573.

⁶⁶ Baseliçe, A., Prosperi, M., Marini Govigli, V., & Lopolito, A. 2021. Application of a Comprehensive Methodology for the Evaluation of Social Innovations in Rural Communities. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1807.

⁶⁷ ILO. 2022. Social and solidarity economy: Social innovation catalyst in Africa?, Kumbamu, A. 2018. Building sustainable social and solidarity economies: place-based and network-based strategies of alternative development organizations in India. *Community Development*, 49(1), 18-33.

⁶⁸ Mert-Cakal, T., & Miele, M. 2020. 'Workable utopias' for social change through inclusion and empowerment? Community supported agriculture (CSA) in Wales as social innovation. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 37(4), 1241-1260; Fonte, M., & Cucco, I. 2017. Cooperatives and alternative food networks in Italy. The long road towards a social economy in agriculture. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 53, 291-302.

⁶⁹ Corrado, A., Iocco, G., & Cascio, M. L. 2020. Respatialization of migrations and differentiated ruralities in times of crisis in Southern Italy. In *Crisis and Post-Crisis in Rural Territories* (pp. 73-95). Springer, Cham; Iocco, G., & Siegmman, K. A. 2017. A worker-driven way out of the crisis in Mediterranean agriculture. *Global Labour Column (GLU)*, 2017(289); Iocco, G., Cascio, M. L., & Perrotta, D. 2019. Lavoro migrante, mercati nidificati e sviluppo rurale nelle aree ad agricoltura intensiva del Sud Italia: due esperienze in Calabria e Sicilia. *Mondi Migranti*, (2019/1).

► The Fair Food Program of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers

A well-known example is the Fair Food Programme (FFP), promoted since 2011 by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, a human rights organisation composed mainly of (migrant) agricultural workers who are active in the tomato industry and berries production in the US (Bennett 2015). Campaigns for fair food and boycotts against the fast-food chain Taco Bell to demand payment of an extra penny to producers for every pound of tomatoes in order to increase workers' wages, the adoption of a code of conduct based on human rights and the purchase of tomatoes in Florida only from suppliers who respect this code prompted Taco Bell to sign the first Fair Food Agreement in 2005; other food corporations (including McDonald's, Burger King, Subway and Whole Foods) had to do the same in the following years. The FFP, praised by the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights, has built mechanisms for effective social change—binding legal agreements with participating buyers, a code of conduct drafted with direct input from workers, extensive worker-to-worker training, a dispute resolution mechanism to protect workers, and field and payment audits conducted by a dedicated body, the Fair Food Standards Council—which empowered the suspension of suppliers who contravened the code. The model promoted is worker-driven social responsibility (Wsr). The Wsr model has three characteristics: it is worker driven, i.e. it envisages an active role of workers in monitoring their rights and defining tools and programmes to improve them; it is enforcement focused, i.e. the enforcement of companies' obligations must be provided for in specific contracts of a private nature (which also refer to national and international standards for the protection of workers' rights but contain specific conditions); and responsibility is assumed as a principle by the company at the top of the chain.⁷⁰

Recent policy frameworks, such as the Global Compact for Refugees⁷¹ and the ILO's guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market,⁷² emphasise that development assistance must complement humanitarian assistance in increasingly protracted situations of displacement. Similar to the case of other vulnerable workers, access to formal labour markets and labour rights are fundamental prerequisites for reducing the vulnerability of refugees, promoting social inclusion and ensuring dignity, both during and after displacement. For host communities, employment promotion and local economic development interventions that benefit both hosts and refugees can convert displacement from a challenge into an opportunity. This is why the promotion of employment and decent work should be part of a comprehensive response for displaced persons and host communities.⁷³

During the COVID-19 emergency, migrant workers were recognised as essential for the functioning of the agri-food system in Europe and other contexts.⁷⁴ However, the pandemic also made evident the conditions of vulnerability suffered by these workers.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Worker-driven social responsibility network, <https://wsr-network.org/>.

⁷¹ United Nations. 2018. Global compact on refugees.

⁷² ILO. 2016. Guiding principles Access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market

⁷³ The ILO defines “decent work” as work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men. Decent work for refugees is fundamental to their resilience and self-reliance, benefiting both refugees and host economies and societies. ILO, Decent Work Agenda. <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/decent-work/lang-en/index.htm>.

⁷⁴ Anderson, B., Poeschel, F. & Ruhs, M. 2021. Rethinking labour migration: Covid-19, essential work, and systemic resilience. *Comparative migration studies*, 9(1), pp. 1–19.

⁷⁵ K. Jones, S. Mudaliar and N. Piper. 2021. Locked down and in limbo: The global impact of COVID-19 on migrant worker rights and recruitment, ILO; ILO. 2022. Social protection for migrant workers: A necessary response to the COVID-19 crisis, fact sheet, 2020; ILO brief. Seasonal Migrant Workers' Schemes: Rethinking Fundamental Principles and Mechanisms in light of COVID-19, 2020; United Nations Network on Migration, Tackling the Socio-Economic Consequences of COVID-19 on Migrants and their Communities: Why Integration Matters; IOM. 2020. COVID-19: policies and impact on seasonal agricultural workers; Palumbo L., Corrado A. & Triandafyllidou A. 2022. Special Issue: Migrant Labour in the Agri-food System in Europe: Unpacking the Social and Legal Factors of Exploitation, *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 24 : 2

As a result of the refugee movements following the 2010 crisis, rural areas have progressively offered incorporation opportunities to asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants. Nevertheless, the work opportunities available were often distinguished by low wages and informal or precarious agricultural jobs with limited workplace protection. Cases of labour exploitation or non-standard employment conditions of migrant and refugee workers in agriculture have been widely reported in Southern and Northern European countries.⁷⁶ Vulnerability conditions may be even more complex in the case of female migrant workers.⁷⁷

► Inclusion of migrants and rural development

In Finland, the municipality of Punkalaidun (Southwest Finland) promoted the Immigrant Villages Project (2011–2015) with the support of a local action group (LAG),⁷⁸ private funding and voluntary work. Its aim was to facilitate the integration of migrants into the local community by boosting work opportunities in farms, in small enterprises and in the TS. This project has had a positive impact on the municipality and migrants. Migrants' arrival has revitalised the decreasing and ageing population and revived the local economy because of the reactivation of agricultural businesses and increasing sales in local shops. The local LAG then started a new project aimed at disseminating the practices of the Immigrant Villages Project in Punkalaidun to other municipalities.

In Italy, a social enterprise and a LAG founded by the Rural Development Programme combined the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Social Fund to support a project (Terre & comuni) for integrating immigrants hosted in local reception centres through work training in a rural disadvantaged area at risk of abandonment, Comino Valley, in the province of Frosinone in central Italy. After the project ended, a new cultural association (Rise Hub) was set up in the area, involving both unemployed locals and migrants (with the majority of them coming from the previous training). This association, jointly with the LAG, successfully promoted a wide variety of small- and medium-scale projects, building on its members' knowledge, linking to other ongoing projects concerning migrants and/or testing original SI paths.⁷⁹

Nuevos Senderos⁸⁰ is a project implemented by the Consorcio de Entidades para la Acción Integral con Migrantes (CEPAIM) Foundation in 11 low-density and ageing provinces in Spain to fight against depopulation and achieve the mutual benefit of increased employment opportunities and a higher quality of life brought about by an increased presence of newcomers in these territories. The project involves local municipalities, migrants who are identified by CEPAIM's international protection team and are willing to relocate, local employers and social actors. It is also financed by the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration through the Directorate General for Inclusion and Humanitarian Aid.

⁷⁶ Corrado, A., & Caruso, F. S. 2022. Essential but Exploitable: Migrant Agri-Food Workers in Italy and Spain. *European Journal of Migration and Law*, 24(2), 193-216; Corrado A, D'Agostino M. 2018. Migrations in multiple crisis. New development patterns for rural and inner areas in Calabria (Italy)?, in S. Kordel, I. Jelen, T. Weidinger (eds), *Current immigration processes to European peripheries: status quo, implications and development strategies*, Cambridge Scholars publishing house; Dines, N, & Rigo, R. 2015. Postcolonial Citizenship Between Representation, Borders and the 'Refugeeization' of the Workforce: Migrant Agricultural Labour in the Italian Mezzogiorno, in: *Postcolonial Transition in Europe: Contexts, Practices and Politics*. S. Ponzani and G. Colpani, (Eds.), pp. 151–173, Rowman and Littlefield, London.

⁷⁷ Garofalo Geymonat G., Marchetti S. & Palumbo L. 2022. Sfruttamento e riproduzione sociale: donne migranti nel settore agricolo, del lavoro di cura e del lavoro sessuale, IDOS (in corso di pubblicazione); Giammarinaro M.G. 2021. Analisi di genere delle politiche di prevenzione e contrasto dello sfruttamento lavorativo in agricoltura, OIL; Giammarinaro M.G., Palumbo, L. 2020. Le donne migranti in agricoltura: sfruttamento, vulnerabilità, dignità e autonomia, in Osservatorio Placido Rizzotto Cgil-Flai, *V Rapporto Agromafie e Caporalato*; Palumbo, L., & Sciarba, A. 2018. The vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in agriculture in the EU: The need for a human rights and gender based approach. European Parliament.

⁸⁰ A Local Action Group (LAG) is a non-profit made up of public and private organisations from rural villages having a broad representation from different socio-economic sectors. Through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), LAGs can apply for financial assistance in the form of grants to implement the Local Development Strategy of their respective territory. The main objective of the local development strategies is to deliver support to their respective rural areas especially through the implementation of small-scale projects. Through this approach, LAGs can better target the particular needs and priorities of their territory since they are part of the territory itself.

⁸⁰ Terre & comuni https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/project/attachments/gp_it_terre_e_comuni_web.pdf

⁸⁰ CEPAIM (Consorcio de Entidades para la Acción Integral con Migrantes) <https://www.cepaim.org/areas-actuacion/desarrollo-rural/nuevos-senderos-insercion-sociolaboral-nuevos-pobladores-medio-rural-madrid/>

Social innovation initiatives have been developed to offer housing solutions, create human-centred integration services and promote social and economic inclusion for migrants and refugees in rural areas (as in Spain, Norway, Sweden and Italy). These initiatives are mostly promoted by SSEs, sometimes in collaboration with mainstream enterprises and public institutions. Innovative and actionable means for housing refugees and asylum seekers are sometimes activated by reusing and restoring abandoned real estate assets. Some of these are short-term solutions (in the framework of national reception programmes), while others are permanent and linked to social housing services. In addition, new economic activities have been initiated to create employment opportunities for inhabitants, returnees and permanent residents. Through the valorisation of agricultural products and local knowledge, new business models feed alternative economic and tourist circuits. Several initiatives have been launched to maintain natural resources and the territory, combat hydrogeological instability and improve the attractiveness and enjoyment of places. As a result, essential general interest services for the population have been reactivated (e.g., nursery schools, other schools, health centres and transport), thereby contributing to filling severe gaps in welfare service delivery. These initiatives are often founded by national and European asylum and immigration programmes and social inclusion and rural development policies.

► PIAM Onlus

Established in Asti in 1999 to support migrant women victims of trafficking and exploitation, PIAM Onlus (Migrants Reception Integration Project) has promoted the SPRAR project for refugees and asylum seekers since 2011, through which it has experimented with innovative forms of widespread reception. PIAM has promoted several projects for social inclusion, converting migrants' reception into a resource for territories in marginal areas suffering from degradation and depopulation. In 2014, PIAM and the Consortium set up a project for the restoration and conservation of Piedmontese agri-food production. An ancient building granted on free loan for use by the oblates of San Giuseppe, Villa Quagliana, was recovered and converted into a refugee reception centre. Through the involvement of the hosted migrants, six hectares of abandoned land were recovered and cultivated again. The activation of training courses and job placement programmes provided skills to the migrants, who were employed, in collaboration with a local farm, in the production of octophilic maize, a local high-quality variety. In 2016, a project was launched to recover an ancient vineyard for the production of Modibò wine, and, in February 2019, the migrants hosted at Villa Quagliana were involved in viticulture training courses through collaboration with the Agricultural Institute of Asti. Since 2016, PIAM has also been the managing body of the SPRAR Agape project, involving six municipalities and coordinated by the municipality of Chiusano d'Asti. The project permitted the employment of several migrants hosted, who were previously selected and trained, in safety and maintenance interventions in the local territory. In 2017, the Terre di Monale project was started. It involved African women victims of trafficking, who participated in theoretical and practical training courses on manual modelling and artisan techniques for working with ceramics, aimed at creating high-quality crockery of the local tradition. In 2019, PIAM, in collaboration with various associations and local administrations, initiated the 8 Basso Monferrato project for the recovery and enhancement of rural trails for the valorisation of the local natural and cultural heritage. The migrant beneficiaries of the SPRAR project were involved and employed in maintenance and cleaning activities. Finally, PIAM set up socialisation workshops that involved migrants and patients with Alzheimer's. A body percussion workshop was held in Villa Quagliana and created opportunities for meeting, knowing and breaking down stereotypes and prejudices.

Deterrents to labour exploitation, particularly in agriculture, include training and regular job placement, together with education on labour rights, as well as access to housing and transport services and social inclusion. Social and solidarity economy organisations in charge of managing reception projects often promote these activities, sometimes in collaboration with other local partners, such as

local businesses. It is well documented that the lack of a social safety net and the brevity of socio-economic insertion paths, at the end of which economic support and hospitality are lacking, can both cause a slide into the irregular labour market and contribute to situations of economic and social marginality.⁸¹

Social innovation approaches to address labour exploitation and promote decent work in agriculture are often prompted by SSEs autonomously or in partnership with public actors. As emphasised earlier, SSEs are well suited to design innovative services and work integration pathways because of their structural characteristics that are based on proximity to both the territory and its inhabitants, natives and newcomers. Proximity enables SSEs to both detect the unmet needs of newcomers and the community and determine unexploited resources, including human resources, abandoned lands and spaces, which are harnessed to start new initiatives aimed at increasing the well-being of all members of the community.

Compared with conventional companies, SSEs are structured to generate value and distribute it to the community. They do so by providing local communities with the institutional tools required to harness their assets and deploy them for their own socially sustainable economic development.

Strongly anchored to local contexts, SSEs are nevertheless often little visible, are sometimes isolated and cannot be easily transplanted from one context to another. What can be extracted and replicated elsewhere are, however, the models of service, working tools and strategies experimented with and the *modus operandi* that SSEs put into practice. Social and solidarity economy organisations are very often owned by different stakeholders and have participatory ownership and governance structures that ensure the full engagement of the community or the concerned persons in the governing bodies of the enterprise, thus enabling them to generate a radical change in terms of value capture.

Co-design initiatives supporting decent work in agriculture can be promoted by taking advantage of SSEs' experiences, specific know-how, proximity to the territories and ability to involve local actors. At the same time, public institutions may benefit from SSE legitimacy, decision making and operational power, control of resources (real estate, financial, etc.) and multilevel relations.

► Co-designed projects to combat the exploitation of foreign workers

The foundation *Fondazione con il Sud*,⁸² whose objective is to develop Southern Italy, opened a call for funding co-design projects: two in Basilicata, one in Calabria, one in Campania, one in Sicily and one cross regional. The projects, targeting €2 million and aiming to involve 6,000 foreign workers suffering from labour exploitation and irregular intermediation in agriculture in southern regions, will be creating partnerships between social cooperatives, associations, universities, public bodies and foundations to benefit from complementary skills and provide efficient services to migrants who are being exploited for agricultural work. The objectives of these projects are to reach out to exploited workers using both teams of volunteers in the field and online platforms and to offer healthcare services and legal protection. The exploited workers will also be enrolled in educational training to improve their work skills (e.g. in grape, wine and oil production) and will be guided to find regular jobs. The projects also provide services to the families of exploited workers, including educational and recreational activities for children, activities to facilitate social inclusion and outreach campaigns on labour exploitation. In this case, the synergy created by the partnership among different actors allows a combination of digital technologies to develop online platforms, social and educational skills, and community activation through the participation of volunteers, which would not be possible if the projects were developed exclusively by the public sector.

⁸¹ Corrado, A., D'Agostino, M. 2019. Migranti, mercati nidiificati e sostenibilità in territori fragili: i casi di Riace e Camini (Calabria). *Migranti, mercati nidiificati e sostenibilità in territori fragili: i casi di Riace e Camini* (Calabria), 85-99; Patuzzi et al. 2019. *Social Innovation for Refugee Inclusion From bright spots to system change*, Migration Policy Institute Europe; Ana Martínez, J. 2017. *EU rural development policy and the integration of migrants*, European Parliamentary Research Service [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599266/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)599266_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599266/EPRS_BRI(2017)599266_EN.pdf).

⁸² <https://www.fondazioneconilsud.it/news/6-nuovi-progetti-contro-caporalato-e-sfruttamento-dei-lavoratori-stranieri-al-sud/>

Member States, inspired by the European Commission's Common Agenda for Integration (COM 2005: 389), have defined concrete integration programmes for immigrants that can be seen as one-stop-shop (OSS) services.⁸³ Different Member States share several common difficulties that often compromise the consistent integration of immigrants. Among the problems most often cited are the range of institutions involved in the integration process, the lack of cooperation between government services and their dispersed locations, the diversity of procedures, complex bureaucracy, communication difficulties as a result of cultural and linguistic diversity and difficulties in achieving immigrant participation in decision making. The European Commission stressed the necessity of developing modes of cooperation between stakeholders, enabling officials to exchange information and pool resources (Common Basic Principle 6).

The OSS service is essentially based on the provision of both government and non-government services to immigrants and people interested in immigration issues under one roof. It is a holistic approach based on a broader mainstreamed service provision of immigration services involving government partners, in which effective responses are provided, procedures are concluded and results are achieved. Through the consolidation of the OSS service, links between the SSE—including immigrant associations—and public authorities and central governments are strengthened.

As the lack of or the weak integration of migrants is assessed as an important cause of labour exploitation in agriculture, the OSS model of services is being promoted in territories severely affected by this problem. The creation of such a service results from the general recognition that service dispersion is one of the reasons why immigrants lack information concerning their rights, duties and necessary procedures.⁸⁴

However, considering the conditions of isolation suffered by migrant farm workers in rural areas and the problems of spatial segregation and their difficulties in moving around, combining this type of structure with other outreach services is important.

► The Centro Polifunzionale Immigrazione di Ragusa as a One-Stop-Shop Model

Il Centro Polifunzionale Immigrazione di Ragusa is considered the only truly effective implementation of the OSS model at the national level in Italy. The centre was supported by the national Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) project Building Together (2014–2020) and promoted by the Prefecture of Syracuse in partnership with the Prefecture of Ragusa, the International Organisation for Migration, the associations I Tetti colorati, Father Maria Massimiliano Kolbe, and We care, the cooperative Proxima, and the CGIL of Ragusa and of Syracuse. It aims to guarantee a presence on the territory that can strengthen the institutional intervention of migration governance by training public operators and supporting the integration of migrants into the social context.

Through its counters, important services are provided to both migrants and employers, supporting integration and social inclusion processes. In addition to institutional services of an administrative nature (work authorisation, family reunification, citizenship, municipal social assistance services and health services), welfare services are provided (listening services, orientation and accompaniment, cultural mediation, legal advice and workshops to carry out training activities and to reach out to different stakeholders, such as migrants, patronage operators, TS organisations, reception managers, employers, counsellors and public administration staff).

Although visited daily by many migrants, the intervention is criticised because of difficulty of access; it is located in Ragusa, far from isolated rural areas, greenhouses and the living places of migrant workers employed in agriculture, thus resulting in these workers' difficulties in travelling and in their spatial segregation.⁸⁵

⁸³ One-Stop-Shop project - country reports, https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/one-stop-shop-project-country-reports_en Penninx, R., Evaluation of the One-Stop-Shop Project, published at http://www.oss.inti.aci-di.gov.pt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=131&Itemid=77&lang=en. Executive Summary

⁸⁴ Reis Oliveira C. et al. 2009. Handbook on how to implement a One-Stop-Shop, European Commission INTI

The fight against exploitation in agriculture must be framed within the definition of a regulatory framework that can protect and assist workers, including migrant workers, who are victims of exploitation, overcome the structural and political conditions that cause their exploitation, and promote and support SI initiatives. In the Italian case, this regulatory framework consists of a set of policy tools, including specific legislation (Law No. 199/2016 on combating undeclared work and labour exploitation in agriculture), a multistakeholder governance mechanism (Tavolo caporalato), a dedicated policy framework (the Three-Year Plan to combat labour exploitation in agriculture and illegal gang mastering, 2020–2022, and National Guidelines on identification, protection and assistance to victims of labour exploitation in agriculture in Italy [National Referral Mechanism]) and specific emergency intervention programmes (Su.Pr.Eme.—South Protagonist in Overcoming Emergencies in the Area of Severe Exploitation and Severe Marginalisation of Foreigners Regularly Present in the 5 Less Developed Regions in Southern Italy; P.I.U.Su.Pr.Eme.—Individualised Pathways out of Exploitation). It is a very interesting experience involving receiving input and relying on SSEs, which can provide important elements for reflection that will remedy limitations and strengthen innovations.

► **The Tavolo caporalato and the Three-Year Plan to combat labour exploitation in agriculture and illegal gang mastering in Italy**

In Italy, following the approval of Law No. 199/2016 on combating undeclared work and labour exploitation in agriculture, an operating team for the definition of a new strategy to fight against illegal gang mastering (caporalato) and labour exploitation in agriculture, named Tavolo caporalato, was established in 2009. It is chaired by the Minister of Labour, in cooperation with other ministries (Interior, Justice, Agriculture and Transport), regions, municipalities, the National Labour Inspectorate and the National Institute of Social Security[200B?]. In 2020, it released the Three-Year Plan to combat labour exploitation in agriculture and illegal gang mastering (2020–2022) and the National Guidelines on identification, protection and assistance to victims of labour exploitation in agriculture in Italy (National Referral Mechanism). The plan includes, among its priority actions, the planning and implementation of a referral system of integrated services for the protection and initial assistance of victims of labour exploitation in agriculture and the strengthening of interventions for their socio-labour reintegration through decent work opportunities, as well as transparent recruitment in agriculture, and [200B?][200B?]joint actions against labour exploitation, working side by side with NGOs and social partners. The approach of policymakers is to combine public policy and funding with the delivery of support services by a wide array of actors, particularly non-profit organisations.

One of the most innovative aspects of the Three-Year Plan is the prospect of undertaking a rationalisation of investments destined for actions against labour exploitation by pooling financial resources, which, in various ways and in different programme instruments, are directed towards interventions in the field of services for vulnerable workers.

Interesting initiatives that receive support from these programmes are ethical supply chains, created also as a result of the contributions of SSEs (i.e., Casa Sankara – Ghetto Out), and a national multilingual and multichannel help desk service under the responsibility of public institutions (Bari Municipality, Apulia Region). A key role was played by SSEs in both SI initiatives, which contributed to the development of new business and service delivery models. In the long term, evaluating the effectiveness, sustainability and replicability of these initiatives will be possible.

⁸⁵ Caruso, F. Corrado A.; Iocco, G. Macciani, C. 2021. Sicilia. I lavoratori migranti in agricoltura, le politiche abitative e per il contrasto allo sfruttamento, in Caruso F.S., Corrado A. (eds), *Essenziali ma invisibili. Analisi delle politiche e delle iniziative di contrasto allo sfruttamento e per l'inclusione dei lavoratori migranti in agricoltura nel sud Italia*, Rosenberg & Sellier, Torino, <http://www.rosenbergesellier.it/ita/scheda-libro?aaref=1507>

► Casa Sankara – Ghetto Out

Casa Sankara – Ghetto Out, a voluntary organisation created in 2016 but informally operated since 2012 by a group of African migrants, commits to the creation of an alternative to the rural ghettos in the province of Foggia, where it can support legal and dignified pathways of economic and social integration for migrants employed irregularly in agriculture. Since 2019, Casa Sankara – Ghetto Out has been managing the guesthouse created at the regionally owned farm Fortore, financed by the Apulia region for the reception of foreign workers. The guesthouse is organised into 100 containers, with a total of 400 places. The region and then employers' organisations financed the transport service for workers from the guesthouse to the farms.

Casa Sankara functions as a community centre, providing legal and trade union assistance, brokering labour relations with companies and supporting workers' housing placement.

► 3 Case studies

Against the background of understanding why and how innovation is boosted, we focus on four Italian SSEs. The four selected practices all managed to address labour exclusion and exploitation and promote decent work in agriculture through both the experimentation of innovative work integration pathways and the provision of different types of support services. These are SOS Rosarno and the cooperative Mani e Terra, Cooperative Barikamà (henceforth Barikamà), NO CAP Association (henceforth NO CAP) and Proxima Social Cooperative (henceforth Proxima).

No systematic research was carried out to select the four case studies, as the conduct of an in-depth analysis was beyond the scope of this paper. The four practices were chosen as illustrative examples of SI based on the authors' observatories and a number of criteria taken into consideration. These include the spontaneous, bottom-up emergence of each practice as a result of the self-organisation of the concerned stakeholders, community recognition of the beneficial contribution generated by each initiative, the targeting of different vulnerable groups and the diverse relations established with public bodies. The latter range from very intense interactions in one case to refusal to interact with public authorities altogether in another instance.

The red thread binding the four practices is that they have managed to experiment with innovative modalities for both employing and empowering workers who are at risk of labour market exclusion and/or are victims of labour exploitation. Therefore, they have provided them with proper services to address labour exploitation and promote decent work in agriculture.

Research confirms that innovative practices are often difficult to unearth because of their bottom-up nature.⁸⁶ As a result, the most innovative initiatives are, in many instances, the least known and visible. This situation was experienced by all of the selected case studies, albeit with some distinctions in terms of visibility. NO CAP has a rather significant visibility among critical consumers. Similarly, SOS Rosarno enjoys good visibility among anti-racist activists and activists opposing the dominant economic system. Conversely, Barikamà and Proxima have little or no visibility.

Attention was therefore given to initiatives that, despite being little visible, have managed to generate a beneficial impact at the local level, which is well recognised by both the recipients and the local community. All the case studies selected generate tangible value in the context in which they are embedded or in the multiple territories in which they work, as in the case of NO CAP and Proxima, which have expanded their activities over the years.

The initiatives were also selected on the grounds of the significant involvement of the recipients in key decision-making processes. SOS Rosarno, NO CAP and Barikamà involve victims or potential victims of labour exploitation as members or funders. Conversely, the involvement of recipients by Proxima is limited to specific initiatives (Orti Sociali).

In choosing the case studies, there was a focus on the diverse target groups addressed. NO CAP deals mainly with migrants and refugee workers, victims or potential victims of exploitation; SOS Rosarno does the same, in addition to addressing the needs of Italian producers and workers. Proxima focuses on the victims or potential victims of trafficking and sexual and/or labour exploitation and women workers, and Barikamà facilitates the work integration of persons affected by Asperger's syndrome. The four practices were chosen because of their very diverse modalities of interaction with public actors, which resulted in diverse degrees of autonomy.

⁸⁶ European Commission. 2020. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Social Enterprises and their eco-systems in Europe. Authors: C. Borzaga, Galera, G. Franchini, B. Chiomento, S. Nogales, R. Carini, C.

Initially having no relations with public actors, the selected organisations all emerged on the initiative of independent groups. Interactions with public entities have nevertheless changed over time following the formalisation of the four initiatives. While in one case (Proxima), collaborations are now rather pronounced because of regular access to public markets through tenders for the procurement of services, in the case of NO CAP, collaborations are rather marginal and linked to short-term projects that are publicly funded. In the case of Barikamà, despite its interest in collaborating, no interaction is currently taking place with public authorities, whereas SOS Rosarno excludes, at least for the moment, any type of collaboration with public entities. This rather radical position is explained by the organisations' willingness to avoid bureaucratic complications resulting from accessing public funds and their desire to collaborate only with organisations that fully share their values and principles, including the fight against the mainstream economic system. In essence, SOS Rosarno's reluctance to collaborate with public entities reflects its firm intention to safeguard its integration of values.

The case studies were examined through an explanatory case study analysis aimed at shedding light on the innovative strategies. Information was collected through desk research and interviews with key persons from each organisation and were focused on: (i) the genesis of the selected SSEs (the drivers that contributed to the creation of the selected organisation and its development strategies); (ii) the main features of the selected SSEs (the target group, including the typology and number of workers at risk of and/or victims of exploitation, legal forms and models of governance, typology of stakeholders engaged, recruitment, modalities and degrees of engagement of workers at risk of or victims of exploitation, relations with public authorities, traditional companies and the community); (iii) the model of business and sustainability (sources of funding and share of repayable, non-repayable and income-generating income and main challenges); (iv) the impact on employment, welfare and capacity to promote an alternative model of production/consumption/development; (v) the innovation delivered (analysis of the innovative element identified: how innovation was boosted, critical aspects, challenges and development prospects of the selected organisation and its innovative practices); and (vi) the key lessons learned (replicability of the innovative practices delivered).

The SWOT methodology was applied to identify the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by each selected SSE. The case studies were further analysed in accordance with the framework proposed by the Open Book of Social Innovation (Murray et al. 2010). The authors followed the six-stage process to design and deliver SI programmes and services: 1) prompts, 2) proposals, 3) prototyping, 4) sustaining, 5) scaling and 6) systemic change. The purpose was to explore the selected case studies. This enabled a better understanding of where and how public policies could step in to support the scaling and consolidation of SI in order to increase social impact.

SOS Rosarno

- **The prompt and the proposal.** Before being formally established as an association in October 2012, SOS Rosarno developed as a solidarity campaign in 2011 in connection with migrants' tumult, which exploded in Rosarno on January 7, 2010. It was launched by a group of small farmers, migrant workers and anti-racist and environmental activists based in the Gioia Tauro area, Calabria (Italy). This area is notably characterised by the extensive cultivation of citrus fruits, which requires resorting to seasonal workers during the harvest period. Because of the presence of organised crime and the low prices imposed by large retailers, seasonal workers—many of whom are migrants—often end up working irregularly (i.e. without a formal contract and with unpaid and/or extended working hours), and most of them live precariously in informal camps. The goal of SOS Rosarno was to raise awareness of the labour exploitation and precarious living conditions of migrants and of the difficulties faced by producers and local farms because of the supply chain's role in exploiting human and land resources. The campaign helped re-frame the previously unrelated or artificially opposing needs of small farmers, migrant workers and consumers. It shed light on the converging needs of the diverse concerned stakeholders, with the aim of promoting new alliances among weaker social groups against mainstream production and distribution models. In addition to reporting situations of exploitation, SOS Rosarno supported the creation of a new initiative committed to selling citrus fruits and other local products through short, self-organised supply chains, essentially based on

Solidarity Purchase Groups (SPGs). According to the founders, this system was meant to address the difficulties faced by all the concerned actors, e.g. workers, producers, consumers and the territory as a whole. It was designed to enable the hiring of workers and to pay local farm workers fair remuneration in order to guarantee healthy and affordable food to consumers and protect the land and the territory. It was further decided that a share of the undistributed profit would be reinvested to support local solidarity initiatives. For five years, the association traded fruits and other products all over the country. Nevertheless, being an association implies severe limitations in terms of business development; this is why a cooperative called Mani e Terra was established in 2017. The two distinct entities now work next to each other. While SOS Rosarno promotes advocacy and cultural initiatives, Mani e Terra takes care of agricultural activities and trades food products throughout Italy.

- Prototyping and pilot.** Since its inception in 2016, Mani e Terra has developed as an inclusive enterprise that actively engages two different types of owners who have different relations with enterprises: workers (at risk of labour exploitation) and producers (small farmers, who are strongly threatened by the large Italian distribution system). The embedded rationale driving the upsurge of this cooperative is to gather workers at risk of or victims of exploitation and producers; both actors now play a key role in strategic decision making. On top of this, members entertain close relationships with consumers, whose needs are at the core of Mani e Terra's mission. The aim is to deliver healthy products at affordable and fair prices. The cooperative has 10 members, of which six are migrant workers. The first workers employed were informally contacted by the promoters of the cooperative directly on site, where they were exploited; today, workers are still mainly recruited through personal connections. The number of workers employed varies throughout the year according to the seasonal needs of the enterprise. At the beginning of each season, Mani e Terra selects a number of local producers. They must meet clear criteria in terms of human rights protection and sustainability. Currently, there are 20 producers who confer their products to Mani e Terra. The lack of proper machinery has pushed the cooperative to partner with another cooperative, Frutti del sole, which shares similar values. Over the years, Mani e Terra has expanded its activities to lengthen the duration of work contracts beyond the seasonal period. New activities include the growing of vegetables, the trading of products other than citrus, tourism and art. However, these have been temporarily suspended because of the lack of human and financial resources and the difficulties generated by the recent pandemic. Consistent with the solidarity values that inspire its action, the cooperative supports other similar initiatives; for instance, 5% of the income of Mani e Terra is transferred to a solidarity fund, which supports social projects (i.e. Hospitality School⁸⁷).
- Sustaining.** Mani e Terra relies on a mix of resources, including income generated from the trading of agricultural products, mainly through the network of SPGs, which represents the main source of income. Additionally, the cooperative relies on non-monetary resources, such as voluntary work and donations, mainly through crowdfunding. Occasionally, it applies for grants (regional or national calls), with the aim of meeting the specific needs of its workers or of the local community (e.g. collecting light bulbs and faceplates to obviate the problem of workers cycling back in the dark and fundraising for the repatriation of the body of deceased farm workers). The cooperative joins several regional and national projects with the aim of financing interventions for sensitisation and increasing the active participation of migrants. In general terms, Mani e Terra is not interested in participating in calls for projects run by public authorities, especially at the central level, because of the complex mechanisms that govern these calls.
- Scaling.** At this stage, Mani e Terra is struggling to move beyond the experimental phase. Scarce and fragmented resources, including technical skills (e.g. planning skills), coupled with the unwillingness to interact with large retailers, are the main factors explaining the slow process of scaling. Its only experience of network contract joined so far failed because of excessive bureaucratic requirements that the cooperative failed to comply with. Mani e Terra has nevertheless inspired and supported other similar initiatives in their endeavours to start new economic activities through the engagement of migrant workers, thus contributing to transferring their working models to other

87

<https://manifestblog.it/2018/04/a-san-ferdinando-nasce-hospitality-school-primo-progetto-di-architettura-meticcia-per-bisogni-primari-dei-migranti/>

contexts. Overall, the main barrier preventing the further development of the cooperative is the prices that large retailers impose. Ethical purchasing groups and fair-trade shops absorb part of the production of the cooperative, thus ensuring the survival of the enterprise and the granting of a decent income to both farmers and workers. Moreover, the cooperative is part of the Fuorimercato network, which spreads knowledge about labour exploitation and increases the chances of selling its products. However, even if the share of products traded increases, the production potential is still far from being fully exploited.

- **Systemic change.** The main transformations prompted by Mani e Terra are, on the one hand, the empowerment of workers at risk of labour exclusion, who are encouraged to participate in public life and, on the other hand, the gathering of sometimes conflicting stakeholders whose goals now converge because of the mediation of the cooperative. Through this collective endeavour, Mani e Terra aims to promote an ethical production and consumption model that relies on fair prices and transparent information on the products traded. The model of enterprise developed is thus extremely innovative, given its goal of overturning the mainstream production model through the proposition of an alternative pattern of production that prioritises the creation of decent jobs and is consistent with the available human and natural resources.

► SOS Rosarno SWOT analysis



Barikamà

- The prompt and the proposal.** In 2010, six African migrants left Rosarno and Foggia, escaping exploitation and racism, and arrived in Rome. Willing to find a way to increase their income that could guarantee their dignity and rights, they decided to develop a small-scale business aimed at producing and selling yogurt. They funded the association Barikamà, which was then transformed into a B-type social cooperative in 2014. Over the years, the drivers that triggered the upsurge of Barikamà have expanded. In addition to creating new job opportunities for migrant workers, Barikamà now integrates persons affected by Asperger's syndrome and other people at risk of exclusion and exploitation. They enable these through the transformation and trading of dairy products and vegetables via a network of SPGs while paying attention to environmental sustainability and well-being.
- Prototyping and pilot.** The cooperative accounts for seven members (six of African origin and one Italian). All of them cooperate in the production and sale of products, with little differentiation of roles. All workers are members; accordingly, they are very committed and tend to attract other potentially interested members. The cooperative entertains solid relations with various local networks, both formal and informal. The key interlocutors, customers and supporters of Barikamà are social centres, activist networks, SPGs and local and street markets. Barkimà developed spontaneously from below in an informal way. This aspect continues to influence some of its characteristics. In fact, the cooperative is struggling to enter the supermarket distribution chain because of the lack of required certifications on the products sold, skills gaps and gaps in knowledge and experience on how to operate in the large retail sector.
- Sustaining.** Barikamà benefited initially from a public grant awarded by the region Lazio. It now relies on a combinations of resources. At the moment, the main source of income of Barikamà is the trading of dairy products. It also depends on voluntary work, donations and crowdfunding.
- Scaling.** For the time being, Barikamà is neither in the condition to scale up nor to support the growth of other similar initiatives that asked for Barikamà's help in some other areas, in which small groups self-organised to initiate small enterprises. Requests for using the Barikamà label had to be rejected because of the inability to provide adequate support and supervision. Two barriers currently prevent Barikamà's scaling: the lack of financial resources needed to make new investments in technical machineries and the lack of specialised human resources for the development of a centralised production control system that is required to meet the quality control criteria for entering large distribution chains.
- Systemic change.** Through its activities, the cooperative has managed to empower workers who would have otherwise been at risk of labour exploitation and/or exclusion not only from the labour market but also from public life. Becoming entrepreneurs of a collective enterprise allows for a radical change in roles, from being fragile workers seeking work opportunities to promoters of new enterprises that struggle to create new jobs for other vulnerable workers. Barikamà has proven its ability to place vulnerable workers in the most suitable placements according to their talents and sometimes unexpressed skills. A case in point is provided by a person affected by Asperger's syndrome, who was hired as an intern and is now a working member of the cooperative. His digital and graphic skills are valued and have allowed him to fill a skills gap that hampered Barikamà's development. Indeed, the cooperative was not in the condition to deal with online orders, which caused significant losses. Thanks to this successful work integration pathway, the integrated disadvantaged worker now participates actively in the cooperative's decision-making processes. The experience of Barikamà proves that workers discriminated against by conventional enterprises because of their disadvantages can be fully integrated into work when their skills are fully recognised and valued. Nevertheless, the number of disadvantaged persons integrated is extremely low, given the lack of proper policies aimed at taking stock of the skills of workers who are at severe risk of social exclusion.

► Barikamà SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Active engagement of members and workers: sharing of the mission, strong ownership of the initiative
 - Overturning of mainstream paradigm: vulnerable workers turn into promoters of an inclusion initiative
 - Strong ability to read the needs of migrant workers thanks to the personal experience of its members
 - Thanks to personal contacts relies on a strong network with potential victims of exploitation and disadvantaged people
 - Strongly motivated members and workers who learn by doing
- Ability to recognise the talents and skills of recipients integrated, mission pursued, not on the leader

Weaknesses

- Poor access to support services for small enterprises: spontaneous support helped to start up
- Lack of basic technological skills (digital skills, social media management, marketing) and of specific skills,
- No access to training and capacity building
- Poor communication abilities - Lack of time and tools for managing communication Rare or absent narrative on the value of this kind of initiative, that break the mainstream paradigm "recipient=passive subject"
- Poor knowledge of regulations on cooperatives and on how to apply to public grants
- Lack of resources to hire staff with specific skills - scarce knowledge on HR activities
- Lack of certifications on products traded prevents access to large distribution
- Poor capacity to plan incomes and sales: supermarkets ensure continuity whereas the network of informal shops is unable to guarantee adequate sales during the summer season when most customers are on vacation. There is hence a seasonal profit gap that weighs on the organisation.
- Low propensity to scale due to limited capacities

Opportunities

- Ability to further increase the well-being of the community and the territory due to a holistic approach that takes care of different dimensions: protection of workers, environment and animals raised, which allow for the production of raw products
- Cooperative willing to invest in the development of its member-workers
- Workers face several skills gaps, but are willing to learn
- Attraction of customers sensitive to sustainability issues
- Possibility to increase visibility through social media, participation in events, and in the frame of various EU project that considered Barikamà an inspiring case study

Threats

- Strong differences between the labour market of the country of origin and migration country strongly influence planning
- Inclusion of disadvantaged people does not start through formal channels with social services or institutions
- High share of informality jeopardises the development of the cooperative
- "informality trap" can turn into a barrier to scaling
- Prices of traded products are higher than that of equivalent industrial products: High cost of professional machinery
- High investment needed (in terms of time and capacity) in promoting Barikamà story through a narrative that is consistent with its inspiring values
- Availability of skills free of charge made available by close Barikamà sympathisers played a key role at the beginning of its development but risk to lock further development
- Disillusionment and frustration generated by the failure of attempts to join supermarket networks

NO CAP

- **The prompt and the proposal.** NO CAP was born in 2011 as a bottom-up movement aimed at opposing exploitation in agriculture and promoting human, social and environmental rights. It was initiated by a migrant activist, who has been denouncing cases of exploitation in agriculture for years. In 2017, NO CAP registered as an association. The purpose of the association is to go beyond protests and formulate concrete proposals for contrasting the master gang system and the irregular work system in the agricultural sector, guaranteeing producers the right prices for their products and workers full respect for their rights in compliance with the law, starting with the application of the national labour contract. NO CAP endeavours to involve workers, employers and consumers in the construction of common initiatives. After taking voice and drawing public attention to the issue of labour exploitation, the funders decided to start from the analysis of the top of the pyramid of exploitation. This includes farms and companies, and the goal of the association was not to attack or denounce them but to understand the mechanisms that push farms and companies to reduce costs and, in turn, harm the weakest link in the production chain—human resources. The association works at different levels, as it:
 - provides support to farms and companies to find sales channels and places that guarantee sustainable prices for their goods;
 - provides legal assistance to enterprises for workers' compliance and verification of national collective agreements for agricultural workers;
 - collaborates with employment centres for the selection of workers and the verification of employment on the basis of national collective agreements;
 - puts companies in touch with exploited workers who are offered opportunities to get out of the ghettos and obtain contracts with such companies;
 - provides services to workers, such as free and adequate transportation to the workplace, safety devices, accompaniment to access health services, or finding adequate houses; and
 - monitors and controls working conditions in agriculture.

The association involves many extra-EU farmhands, which are taken away from irregular labour gang mastering and selected among those living in the ghettos and slums of specialised agricultural production areas in Sicily, Basilicata, Calabria and Puglia. These services are provided thanks to a wide network of actors (volunteers, supporters, members and SSEs) collaborating and supporting the initiative.

- **Prototyping and pilot.** The association helps farms and companies that apply sustainable prices (i.e. a price that guarantees adequate coverage of all production costs) to enter into agreements with supermarkets (i.e. Coop Nord-Est and Megamark) for selling their commodities at predetermined prices. One of the most significant achievements of the association is the creation of the ethical brand NO CAP, which certifies compliance with given protocols and ethical standards of fair treatment of workers and respect for the environment. Through brand recognition, virtuous enterprises, which share NO CAP principles and values, are thus rewarded. Moreover, the NO CAP brand aims at raising consumers' awareness and pushing them towards ethical choices so that they are not unwittingly co-responsible for a system of worker exploitation. A certificate of merit is issued to a product (and not to the company) when a multicriteria matrix is fulfilled based on six criteria: work ethics, energy renewable, zero waste, sustainable supply chain, added value and animal welfare. In addition to verifying that workers receive fair wages and are guaranteed safe, healthy working environments and adequate health services, the multicriteria matrix presupposes that other aspects are checked. These include the use of materials derived from sustainable sources and technologies that respect the environment, minimise energy consumption from fossil fuels, reduce waste and encourage the use of packaging derived from recyclable or readily biodegradable materials. The brand is issued to agricultural enterprises regulated by Article 2135 of the Civil Code. The logo of the vignette is represented by six raised hands, each hand representing a criterion and each finger of the hand representing an indicator. The choice of the logo also visually conveys the strength of NO CAP's message—the raised hands symbolise both the labour of workers and the call

for help to get out of exploitation. The certificate is awarded after a period of collaboration of at least two years, during which the company is monitored. Advocacy, awareness-raising campaigns and information remain fundamental and complementary activities to this action, as the NO CAP proposal is feasible only in the presence of an aware and sensitised consumer audience.

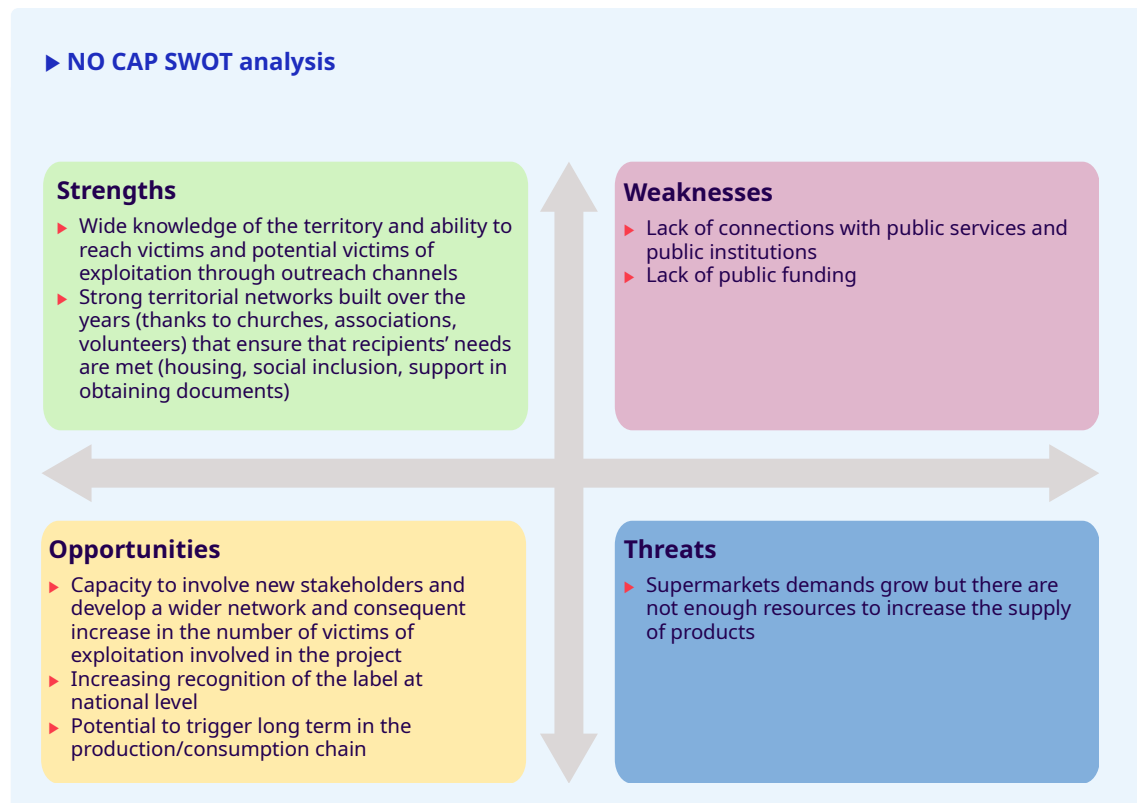
- **Sustaining.** NO CAP is not supported by systematic and stable public funding, which applies only to specific and time-defined regional and local funding. It draws mainly on income from trading activities, which ensures its sustainability also thanks to an effective communication campaign which succeeds in attracting a growing number of aware customers. The cost paid by consumers guarantees, in turn, the sustainability of the initiative. Supermarkets buy NO CAP goods at predetermined costs. The price paid by the supermarket is then divided between the producer (who holds almost all of the profit) and the association, which is thus able to cover its monitoring activity. NO CAP also relies on private donations and occasional fundraising campaigns, as well as on voluntary work thanks to the high number of volunteers involved, who put their skills or time at the disposal of the association. Some of the services provided therefore cost less; volunteers help solve bureaucratic problems, accompany migrants to public offices and support outreach activities.
- **Scaling.** The success of the association is strongly anchored in its ability to do the following:
 - dialogue with victims of exploitation through safe and credible channels
 - understand the mechanisms of exploitation in each territory
 - read the problem of exploitation from the top, seek dialogue with companies and not engage in confrontation, and break the paradigm that sees the employer as complicit in exploitation
 - provide complementary basic services (housing, health) thanks to its strong network.

These capabilities could, in principle, be replicated elsewhere, provided adequate support measures are implemented. It is therefore not surprising that the association's initiatives are increasing but are being closely tied to individual personalities. This factor represents a strong risk to future development and an inherent limitation to replicability. Moreover, all the issues mentioned take time to develop. The association is willing to expand its work, but it recognises that this requires the following:

- developing a proper mechanism for engaging companies and certifying them extensively
- increasing the number of sensitive consumers
- engaging more supermarkets and markets that are willing to put NO CAP products on sale

These intensive activities, most of them linked to networking, require extensive resources in terms of time and personnel, which are currently limited.

- **Systematic change.** Despite the number of critical consumers growing year by year, the small size of NO CAP does not allow for systemic change for the time being. More structured actions are needed to scale up the impact of this innovative initiative. The potential worsening of the living conditions of the population may further challenge the implementation of the project, as the number of potential victims of exploitation is likely to grow in the near future because of the current economic crisis.



Proxima

- **The prompt and the proposal.** Proxima is a cooperative established in 1999 to manage a centre for minors (Kosovari refugees) in Comiso (Ragusa). Soon after, the cooperative expanded its activities to support the victims of sexual and labour exploitation and trafficking in the same area; it was accredited by public institutions to implement integration and social protection programmes and accordingly funded to run such activities. Proxima currently has two distinct areas of focus: protection and social and labour inclusion. The two areas are kept separate to ensure operators' greater professionalisation and clarity to the beneficiaries of the interventions. Starting in April 2003, Proxima has carried out projects aimed at protecting and informing victims of trafficking pursuant to Article 18 of the T.U. on Immigration and Article 13 of Law 228/2003 through funding provided by the Department for Equal Opportunities and the co-financing of local authorities. The identification, protection and support of victims of labour exploitation are implemented through targeted interventions in the territory and direct referral from the competent authorities (police headquarters and law enforcement). Proxima has equipped itself with street units, which are services that, with the help of a mediator, facilitate direct entry to places of exploitation, supporting the victims of exploitation and providing them with the possibility to apply for protection. The cooperative supports social and labour inclusion pathways, which guarantee the beneficiaries (vulnerable people and victims of exploitation) a minimum income (thanks to specific national funds) through internships in nearby companies and skills development. Moreover, the cooperative settled two internal laboratories in Ragusa: a social tailoring centre and a social garden called Orti Sociali. Both support the inclusion of people previously involved in protection projects. The cooperative also conducts community outreach activities (i.e. through peer-to-peer projects in schools) and sensitises the community in the fight against exploitative companies through the introduction of a quality label issued by the cooperative itself, which certifies compliance with the norms of respect and dignity of the individual. Currently, Proxima accounts for 4 members and 30 employees, and interventions take place in different areas of Sicily. The services of the cooperative are designed for various kinds of beneficiaries, but the experience gained over time and the specific needs of

the area have led to the implementation of specific, structured and quality interventions, especially for women. The capacity to recognise the existence of specific problems for women, as well as the overlapping of intersectional discrimination, has allowed for the definition of specific interventions to contrast diverse forms of labour and sexual exploitation. Moreover, Proxima's actions consider care from a broad perspective, which also takes the presence of children and the specific needs of women into account. The presence of the cooperative is a great resource for the local territory; in turn, its work is made possible and constantly improved because of collaboration with other key local actors, which play a key role in the delivery of complementary services. Among its negative aspects, Proxima depends significantly on public funding.

- Prototyping and pilot.** In 2017, the cooperative inaugurated in Ragusa a garden called Orti Sociali for the production of vegetables in a sustainable manner using modern production techniques while also guaranteeing compliance with the basic labour and human rights of all workers. The workers involved are former victims of labour exploitation; notably, shortly after the implementation of the project, some of them decided to establish a new cooperative named Terre Sicure, which involved both Italian and foreign members. This new project is a great achievement, as it conjugates the success of the two key areas of interest to the cooperative. Through this initiative, the recipients have become masters of their own destiny after their exit from the exploitative system and the successful finalisation of their social and labour inclusion pathways that enabled them to strengthen their personal skills. Terre Sicure's products are sold in local supermarkets and at the garden's market, which has also turned into a key place for community outreach.
- Sustaining.** The sale of products currently provides sufficient income to pay wages, but Terre Sicure has not yet achieved complete economic sustainability because of the high costs of the technologies required for productive activities. The protection services provided by Proxima are funded through contracts with public institutions, such as the Department for Equal Opportunities. These are, however, short-term contracts that are normally awarded according to the lowest price criterion while overlooking the quality and experience of applicants in the evaluation of proposals. Social and work inclusion services draw on a wide variety of resources, resulting from either European, national or local funding.
- Scaling.** This initiative is weakly sustainable. To consolidate its structure, it needs to both increase the share of income from trading activities and enter into long-term contracts with public authorities. For the time being, the latter do not, unfortunately, value the experience and know-how accumulated by bidders.
- Systematic change.** The cooperatives Terre Sicure and Proxima have managed to empower their workers who would otherwise have been victims of labour exploitation and/or exclusion. Being involved in a collective enterprise has allowed for a radical change in roles, from being fragile workers seeking work opportunities to promoters of new enterprises that remunerate workers, including especially vulnerable workers. Nevertheless, the cooperative business model is quite fragile because of a number of critical issues: (i) short-term contracts do not allow for planning and hamper the long-term beneficial impact of cooperatives. In addition, the resulting state of uncertainty burdens the labour and personal well-being of workers, eventually pushing them to leave their workplaces. This turns into a loss of capacities and skills for the cooperative; (ii) contracting modalities do not value the cooperative experience accumulated in the territory, which should instead be regarded as a key element, especially in the fight against exploitation. The channels, mechanisms and peculiarities of the functioning of the exploitation system are, in fact, closely linked to territorial factors; (iii) labour exploitation is a minor issue in the policy agenda at the national, regional and local levels. Moreover, the areas of intervention of cooperatives are not clearly defined (i.e. what protection is and what inclusion is), so calls for proposals tend to overlap, resulting in a proliferation of short- and medium-term projects, a lack of systematisation of interventions and a lack of networking among actors working in the field; (iv) economic uncertainty also affects the beneficiaries. This has two implications: members end up being excessively burdened with responsibilities, and beneficiaries

feel less protected as they perceive a sense of insecurity; (v) local public institutions, to which co-operatives turn to solve problems related to the territory, are often weak in terms of economic or organisational resources and are not sufficiently skilled; and (vi) methods for defining interventions and the openness to co-planning and co-design vary dramatically depending on the interlocutor.

► Proxima SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Wide knowledge of the territory gained in 20 years of field experience
- Positive experience and settled links with the educational system also thanks to peer to peer experiences
- Holistic approach: "Orti Sociali" is a complex project that takes both the safeguarding of the environment and the well being of workers into account
- Strong channels of communication with potential victims and victims of exploitation and recognized capacity to find adequate tools and means to approach them
- Wide availability of information and data on the characteristics of labour exploitation in the territory)

Weaknesses

- Dependence on public funds and short-term contracts (for providing protection serviced)
- High turnover of workers, some operators leave due to sufferance caused by difficulties to mediate with the system
- Short term contracts and multilevel intervention influence the organisation of work and long term planning
- High costs of the innovative project "Orti Sociali"
- Low involvement of the beneficiaries in decision making processes
- Inability of migrant members to participate actively due to high bureaucratic challenges: support and mediation of Italian members needed

Opportunities

- Increasing visibility, "Orti Sociali" offers the opportunity to reach the local community and the market
- Unexploited potential of "Orti Sociali" and Terre Sicure in terms of market expansion
- Capacity to involve an increasing number of victims of labour exploitation. This can contribute to increasing knowledge on exploitation

Threats

- Scarce networking with other relevant actors (SSEEs, public institutions) and poor dialogue
- Poor valorisation of professionals working in inclusion and protection often leads to dropouts and high turnovers
- Poor awareness of public institutions about the challenge of labour exploitation turns in inadequate support
- Low level of co-design of initiatives and projects with public institutions and authorities

► 4 Conclusions

The desk research and case study analysis both provide general considerations of the conditions that contribute to innovative solutions in fighting against labour exploitation and promoting labour market inclusion. Moreover, the desk research sheds light on the limitations of SI as a conceptual approach. While it has grown impressively as a concept in academic circles in recent times,⁸⁸ there is no shared definition of what SI is. Nevertheless, the analysis conducted shows that most innovative solutions mapped have been triggered by SSEs, sometimes in collaboration with other actors, including public bodies. This suggests partially shifting the focus from the outcome and process of innovation—e.g. models of service designed and the inclusive process experimented with—to the actors who actually contribute to boosting it. Indeed, as well documented in the literature, not all types of organisations have the same ability to be socially innovative.

The added value of the SSE stems from its inclination to deal with crucial economic and social problems at the local level that are overlooked or simply not dealt with by public agencies and traditional for-profit providers (e.g. inaccessibility of basic services of public interest and high unemployment rates and risks of exploitation among certain vulnerable groups of the population). Given their direct contact with victims of exploitation or specific groups vulnerable to trafficking or exploitation (e.g. refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers), SSEs give a voice to their concerns and support their participation in informing policies and actions that affect them. Being close to recipients' needs, SSEs also have access to valuable sources of data and information that can shed light on violations of the rights of exploited workers and on the risks of exclusion and vulnerability of specific groups.

Innovative solutions promoted by or involving SSEs have been proven effective in facilitating the social and labour market inclusion of groups vulnerable to exploitation while benefiting local communities, especially in rural or remote areas. This is achieved by supporting the recovery and valorisation of local resources (i.e. abandoned buildings and land), meeting the labour demands of local businesses and contributing to the reactivation of public services and the promotion of new diversified economic activities.

Acknowledging the role and potential of SSEs in the transformation of economic and welfare systems is of utmost importance. As highlighted in this paper, when compared with other institutional arrangements (e.g. public agencies and mainstream enterprises), SSEs show some structural characteristics that make them better suited to transform the mainstream models through the proposition of alternative development and employment patterns. Such characteristics include their inclusive ownership structures and governance models which allow for the participation of different stakeholders, representing and giving voice to diverse interests, and the use of specific devices, such as the asset lock. Together, they have a role in strengthening the local anchorage and proximity to the needs of the community and in ensuring that the general interest pursued will survive over time, beyond the involvement of the funders of the SSEs.

⁸⁸ Edwards-Schachter, M. and Wallace, M.L.. 2017. 'Shaken, but not stirred': Sixty years of defining social innovation. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 119, pp.64-79.

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► Annex – List of social innovation definitions from the literature review

Definition	Source
"Innovative activities and services that are motivated by the goal of meeting a social need and that are predominantly developed and diffused through organisations whose primary purposes are social"	Mulgan et al. (2007)
"Complex process through which new products, processes or programmes are introduced, leading to a deep change in daily routines, resources' streams, power relations or values within the system affected by the innovation"	Westley (2010)
"New solution to a social problem which is more effective, efficient, sustainable or fairer compared to existing solutions, and which generates value primarily for society instead of single individuals or organisations"	Phills et al. (2008)
"Process of 'empowerment and political mobilisation' targeting a bottom-up transformation of the functioning of a social system, in terms of stakeholders and in terms of distribution of material and immaterial resources"	Hillier et al. (2009)
"Conceptual, process or product change, organisational change and changes in financing, and new relationships with stakeholders and territories"	OECD (2009)
"Distinctive both in its outcomes and in its relationships, in the new forms of cooperation and collaboration that it brings. As a result, the processes, metrics, models and methods used in innovation in the commercial or technological fields, for example, are not always directly transferable to the social economy"	Murray et al. (2010)
"New solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes etc.) that simultaneously meet a social need (more effectively than existing solutions) and lead to new or improved capabilities and relationships and better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are both good for society and enhance society's capacity to act."	The Young Foundation (2012)
"Social innovation' means an activity that is social both as to its ends and its means and in particular an activity which relates to the development and implementation of new ideas concerning products, services, practices and models that simultaneously meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations between public, civil society or private organisations, thereby benefiting society and boosting its capacity to act"	Regulation (EU) 2021/1057
"New or novel ways that society has to deal with Relevant Social Challenges (RSCh), that are more effective, efficient and sustainable or that generate greater impact than the previous ones and that contribute to making it stronger and more articulated"	Herrero de Egaña (2018)
"Changes in the cultural, normative or regulative structures [or classes] of the society which enhance its collective power resources and improve its economic and social performance."	Hämäläinen and Heiskala (2007)
"An iterative, inclusive process that intends to generate more effective and just solutions to solve complex social problems"	Beckman, Painter, and Rosen (2020)
"Changes of attitudes, behaviour or perceptions of a group of people joined in a network of aligned interests that, in relation to the group's horizon of experiences, lead to new and improved ways of collaborative action within the group and beyond"	Neumeier (2016)
"Entrepreneurial activities from the bottom up, by organisations and actors with roots in civil society and the third sector (such as cooperatives, associations and foundations). Social innovation thus overlaps with grass-roots innovation but, unlike the latter, it focuses only on innovations in social practices and organisation."	UNCTAD (2017)

“Significant, creative and sustainable shift in way a given society deals with a profound and previously intractable problem leading to new forms of interactions and partnerships at and across the scale”	Baker and Mehmood (2015)
“Novel combinations of ideas and distinct forms of collaboration that transcend established institutional contexts with the effect of empowering and reengaging vulnerable groups either in the process of SI or as a result of it.”	Rehfeld et al. (2015)
“SI can be defined as the development and implementation of new ideas (products, services and models) to meet social needs and create new social relationships or collaborations. It represents new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions. It is aimed at improving human well-being. SIs are innovations that are social in both their ends and their means. They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance individuals’ capacity to act.”	BEPA (2011)
“Those changes in agendas, agency and institutions that lead to a better inclusion of excluded groups and individuals in various spheres of society at various spatial scales.”	Moulaert et al. (2005)
“SI is a new combination and/or new configuration of social practices in certain areas of action or social contexts prompted by certain actors or constellations of actors in an intentional targeted manner with the goal of better satisfying or answering needs and problems than is possible on the basis of established practices.”	Howaldt and Kopp (2012)

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