

Workshop: Social and Solidarity Economy for Advancing the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia

18-19 June 2024

Session summaries & key takeaways

The Social and Solidarity Economy's role in Facilitating Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy

Moderated by **Simel Esim**, Unit Head of the [ILO's Cooperative, Social and Solidarity Unit \(COOP/SSE\)](#), this session explored how SSE entities help transition workers and enterprises from the informal to the formal economy by creating jobs that guarantee rights at work, extending social protection, and increasing workers' voices through social dialogue. The discussion emphasized the role of [ILC Recommendation No. 204](#), which recognizes the potential of SSE entities in formalization processes.

Ms. Poonsap Tulaphan, Manager of [HomeNet Thailand](#), described efforts to advocate for policy changes that expand social protection coverage for informal, home-based workers in Thailand. She highlighted the role of membership-based organizations in advancing labor rights and ensuring more equitable access to protections.

Ms. Mirai Chatterjee, Chairperson of the [SEWA Cooperative Federation](#) in India, shared insights on how self-employed women in the informal economy transition to formality through cooperative structures. She detailed SEWA's support programs, including healthcare, childcare, and insurance schemes, which have enhanced workers' well-being.

Ms. Fish Ip, Regional Coordinator for Asia at the [International Domestic Workers Federation](#), explained how her organization supports domestic workers by providing training and access to social security benefits, ensuring formal employment opportunities and better working conditions. She stressed the need for stronger legal frameworks to safeguard domestic workers' rights and integrate them into formal labor markets.

The session concluded with discussions on how to scale up SSE initiatives to support formalization, with recommendations focusing on enterprise capacity building, development and advocacy. There remains a need for more inclusive policies and expanding social protection coverage protect the most vulnerable workers.

[The full recording of the session is available for viewing online.](#)

The Social and Solidarity Economy towards a Just Transition

Moderated by **Mr. Eric Roeder**, Technical Specialist for Green Jobs at the ILO, this session examined how SSE entities contribute to sustainable economies and societies. **Mr. Peerada Patitas**, Chairman of the Community Enterprise Waste Revolution Coalition in Thailand, showcased how the Suphanburi Waste Revolution Coalition manages plastic waste through community-led recycling initiatives and the development of eco-friendly products. She emphasized that community involvement is essential for long-term environmental sustainability.

Mr. Hadiyanto Rashid, Mayor of Palu City in Indonesia, shared Palu City's efforts to develop and implement policies that support SSE entities in recovering from natural disasters. These policies focus on building resilience, supporting local businesses, and ensuring that recovery efforts are inclusive and sustainable. Mr. Rashid discussed specific regulations, such as Regional Regulation No. 13 of 2023, which provides a conducive framework for promoting SSE in the context of post-disaster rehabilitation.

Ms. Donna Dizon, a representative from [CLIMBS](#) in the Philippines, explained how CLIMBS' climate insurance protects cooperatives and smallholder farmers from climate-related risks. She underscored the importance of financial tools in building resilience against extreme weather events and ensuring the sustainability of agricultural operations.

The session concluded with recommendations on strengthening community-based sustainability initiatives, developing supportive policy frameworks, expanding access to climate insurance and green financing, and fostering knowledge exchange among SSE stakeholders.

[The full recording of the session is available for viewing online.](#)

The Social and Solidarity Economy and Workers' Rights and Conditions in Digital Labour Platforms

Moderated by **Phu Huynh**, Employment Specialist at the **ILO**, this session highlighted how SSE entities leverage digital platforms to promote fair and inclusive work. **Akkanut Wantanasombut**, founder of **Tamsang-Tamsong** in **Thailand**, described how his platform uses an SSE model to create a multi-stakeholder cooperative that prioritizes fair treatment and equitable profit distribution. **Heira Hardiyanti**, co-founder of **MyCoolClass** in **Indonesia**, illustrated how the platform empowers teachers by providing democratic decision-making structures and ensuring fair compensation. **Anita Gurumurthy**, Executive Director of **IT for Change** in **India**, analyzed the broader impact of platform cooperatives across various sectors, including agriculture, care services, and ride-hailing, stressing the importance of worker-controlled business models.

The session concluded with a discussion on potential next steps to further the role of SSE entities in the platform economy in the Asia-Pacific region. Key recommendations included promoting the development and scaling of platform cooperatives, advocating for policies that support the growth of cooperative models in the platform economy, enhancing the capacity of SSE entities through training and education, and facilitating the exchange of best practices and knowledge among SSE entities, governments, and international organizations. By highlighting the potential of SSE entities to create fair and inclusive workplaces in the digital age, the session showcased how by adopting cooperative models and innovative practices, SSE entities can significantly contribute to building a more equitable and sustainable platform economy in the Asia-Pacific region.

[The full recording of the session is available for viewing online.](#)

Advancing Statistics of Cooperatives and the Social and Solidarity Economy

Moderated by **Tite Habiyakare**, ILO Regional Statistics Specialist, this session explored the importance of robust SSE statistics for policy development. It provided an update on the progress of the ILO initiative on the applicability and implementation of the Guidelines concerning Statistics of Cooperatives in five countries: Costa Rica, Italy, Republic of Korea, Tanzania, and Türkiye. Additionally, the session outlined the next steps in expanding the scope to include the SSE. The session underscored the growing interest in statistical measurement of the SSE and the limited data currently available on its size, scope, and contribution to the economy. Participants recognized the need for robust statistics to inform policy decisions and to advocate for the SSE's role in achieving the SDGs.

Ms. Barbara Sak, Director of [CIRIEC International](#), shared experiences from Europe in data collection and standardization. She emphasized the importance of comprehensive and comparable data for understanding the qualitative and quantitative impact of SSE entities on the economy and society.

Mr. Mansour Omeira, Social Innovation Specialist at the ILO's COOP/SSE Unit discussed the ILO's initiatives and next steps on SSE statistics with support from the Korean Government. He outlined the roadmap presented in the [ILO room document entitled "Measuring the social and solidarity economy \(SSE\): A roadmap towards guidelines concerning the statistics of the SSE"](#) and stressed the need for a harmonized approach to ensure the full scope and contributions of SSE entities are accurately captured.

Mr. David Hunter, ILO consultant and expert in data standards and classifications, provided an update on the progress of the ILO pilot initiative to develop the [Guidelines concerning Statistics of Cooperatives](#) in select countries. He discussed the findings from Costa Rica, Italy, Republic of Korea, Tanzania, and Türkiye, focusing on the challenges and successes in implementing the Guidelines. Mr. Hunter highlighted the importance of these guidelines in facilitating the collection of reliable and comparable data on cooperatives.

The session concluded with a Q&A, where panelists discussed how improved statistics can drive policy changes, enhance resource allocation, and elevate the SSE's visibility, emphasizing the need for collaboration among governments, international organizations, and SSE entities and calling for accurate, comparable data to support decent work and sustainable development.

[The full recording of the session is available for viewing online.](#)

Social and Solidarity Economy and Supply Chain Development

Moderated by **Ms. Valkyrie Hanson**, Regional Coordinator for Decent Work in Supply Chains at the ILO, this session examined how SSE entities promote ethical supply chain practices. **Mr. Kon Onn Sein**, Managing Director of the [Foundation for Community Studies and Development in Malaysia](#), discussed the [OA Organik](#) profit-sharing model, which provides fairer compensation to indigenous farmers. **Mr. Xu Mingfeng**, Division Chief at the [All-China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives](#), highlighted cooperative-to-cooperative trade models that ensure stable pricing for rural producers. **Ms. Joanne Choi**, Board Secretary of [World Fair Trade Organization Asia](#), emphasized the importance of fair trade certification in ensuring sustainable working conditions.

The session concluded with recommendations on scaling cooperative-to-cooperative trade models, expanding fair trade certification, strengthening SSE capacity-building initiatives, and advocating for SSE-friendly policies in supply chains.

[The full recording of the session is available for viewing online.](#)

Social and Solidarity Economy and South-South and Triangular Cooperation

Ms. Anita Amorim, Unit Head of Emerging Partnerships in PARDEV at the ILO discussed the [social and solidarity economy and South-South and Triangular Cooperation](#). Ms. Amorim, in her [presentation](#) highlighted that the social and solidarity economy and the South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) share many common areas - they both are solidarity-driven, have a community-based network orientation, and focus on localizing the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.

Ms. Amorim added that the South-South and Triangular Cooperation significantly benefits the SSE by fostering collaborative partnerships and knowledge exchange among countries. Ms. Amorim shared how [ILO SSE Academies](#) and the [Asian Solidarity Economy Council](#) have been instrumental in bringing together the SSE stakeholders for knowledge sharing and institutional capacity building.

Outcomes and next steps

The workshop underscored the **critical role of the social and solidarity economy (SSE)** in advancing sustainable development, reinforcing the need for stronger policies, investment, and collaboration across sectors. Delegates from **Cambodia, Mongolia, Thailand, and Viet Nam** developed national action plans to operationalize key recommendations, ensuring that SSE entities are better supported through legal recognition, financial mechanisms, and capacity-building efforts.

A recurring theme across discussions was the **need for policy coherence** to integrate SSE into national and regional strategies. Governments were encouraged to align SSE policies with **decent work, social protection, and sustainable enterprise development** to maximize its impact. Expanding **financial access**, including impact investment and cooperative financing, was highlighted as essential for enabling SSE entities to scale and thrive.

Participants also emphasized the **urgent need for better data** to inform policy and advocacy efforts. Strengthening statistical frameworks will be key to measuring SSE's contribution to economies and guiding future investments. Additionally, **South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)** was recognized as a valuable platform for knowledge-sharing, enabling countries to learn from successful SSE models and experiences.

Moving forward, the ILO will continue to provide technical support to its tripartite constituents and SSE actors, through implementation of its [seven-year strategy and action plan on decent work and the social and solidarity economy](#). By fostering collaboration between stakeholders, the SSE can be further strengthened as a driver of inclusive growth, decent work, and environmental sustainability across Asia-Pacific.