

The logo for REVEES, consisting of the letters R, E, V, E, and S in a white serif font, each letter contained within a dark blue rectangular box. The boxes are arranged horizontally and separated by thin white vertical lines.

REVEES

Réseau Européen des Villes
& Régions de l'Économie Sociale

European Network of Cities
& Regions for the Social Economy

Local Examples

Local partnership and the Promotion of Social Economy Entrepreneurship

Coopcity (Brussels, Belgium) has the objective to promote inclusive and collective social entrepreneurship as a point of departure for greater (social) cohesion. It is an initiative of the French-speaking social economy federation and development agency SAW-B - who joined forces with other public and private key actors/institutions: Febecoop (federation of cooperatives and development agency), Impulse (the Brussels Agency for Entrepreneurship), Solvay (the centre for entrepreneurship of ULB, the French-speaking University of Brussels), Ichec (an SME Management School linked to the Haute-Ecole ICHEC), Job Yourself (coopérative d'activités) and Innoviris (institute for the promotion of scientific research and innovation of the Brussels-Capital Region).

Coopcity acts in the first place as an incubator and hub which develops its actions in the framework of several programmes:

The programme SEEDS has the objective to support persons finding themselves in the start-up phase of their entrepreneurial project. To be eligible, each project has to a) respond to a specific social need in the Brussels-Capital region, b) be economically viable and c) have a democratic governance. The projects are accompanied, during 8 months, by (social economy) enterprise consultants and other professionals from the different partner structures. Among the projects that have been selected and developed so far figure initiatives in the field of participative and multigenerational housing, Aquaponics&Education, the development and promotion of 'cultural baskets' following the example of solidarity purchase groups in the food sector with the aim to make local/regional artists and cultural events better known, the establishment of a neighbourhood cinema, a cooperative proposing delivery of goods by bicycle etc. Many of these are or are preparing to become cooperatives or associations. A number of the initiatives are launched, realised and/or based in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (e.g. Anderlecht or Molenbeek) - neighbourhoods, however, where one can notice nowadays a forte mobilisation of citizens, the creation of a number of citizen initiatives and a certain willingness of different local players to work together, for example in the framework of shared working spaces, participatory fab labs etc. Throughout the whole period of support all initiatives also have the opportunity and are encouraged to meet each other, exchange knowledge and experiences, and develop joint projects or at least perspectives of cooperation. This happens during events and seminars and/or by using the coworking spaces provided by Coopcity.

In the framework of another programme (BLOSSOM), (social) enterprises and cooperatives which are already active for at least two years receive support in elaborating their development strategy. Among the selection criteria figure those that apply to the SEEDS programme, but also the willingness to increase social and societal impact and to cooperate with other enterprises (taking part in the programme). The programme 'Blossom' aims to assist existing social enterprises in consolidating their activities, including through a review of their strategy and approach. Finally, with the programme INNOVATE, Coopcity would like to encourage enterprises to (more strongly) apply social innovation strategies.

Coopcity, however, goes in its initiatives beyond these programmes. It has created an important space for public debate and encounters - for example through the organisation of conferences, seminars and training also for organizations and individuals that do not benefit from the aforementioned programme. These events -and other initiatives - are organized frequently in cooperation with other organizations such as SMart, Groupe One and others. A main objective here is to increase visibility of social and solidarity economy and spreading of its values among the local population. The events address thus also single citizens a key agents of change (also without entrepreneurial aspirations) and have the potential to be a breeding ground for new local/regional initiatives.

Local partnership and Rural Development

In the context of the experimentation around [Territoires Zéro Chômeurs de Longue Durée](#) (Zero Long-Term Unemployment Territories) in France long-term unemployed have become protagonists also of rural development by creating their own professional activity within a co-entrepreneurship context, whilst responding to concrete and unsatisfied needs of rural territories and their inhabitants. Activities range from services such as elderly care over homework assistance or (new) services ensuring safety of children leaving school to activities in the field of circular economy, mobile food provision ('food trucks' etc.), tourism or mobility services, to quote just some examples. The process is accompanied by social economy organisations - in a number of cases also in partnership with local authorities - which fulfill, however, less a work integration function than that of a mentor, administrative support and broker of links to the local community. A second national law adopted in 2020 extends the experimentation to at least another 50 territories.

Local partnership and Urban Regeneration/Youth

In the Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg, right after the fall of the wall, a civil society movement consisting of single inhabitants, artists, persons pursuing social activities, small enterprises) came up with the idea to jointly establish a socio-cultural centre. This structure should focus on support and training for cultural and social activities, on one hand, and development of small enterprises and craft on the other hand. In 1999, with the support and subsidies provided by the Berlin Senate, the Pfefferberg real estate was bought. In a contract with the Berlin Senate specific conditions for renovation and general-interest-related use of the area were fixed. A Foundation ([Pfefferwerk Foundation](#)) was established which acts as the owner of the real estate.

Today the area hosts art institutions, cultural industry, vocational training, (further) education, research, services (hostel, restaurants) attracting a mix of users in terms of social background, nationalities and ages.

The income generated by rental activities through the Foundation is then used for funding of a diversity of general-interest-related projects addressing local needs - with a specific (but not exclusive) focus on children and youth.

Local partnership and Digital Platforms

The French region Hauts-de-France is using financing provided in the framework of the REACT-EU initiative to strengthen platform cooperatives and cooperation among them as an important pillar for the promotion of solidarity and (social) cohesion.

The objective of the initiative is to investigate practices of existing platform cooperatives, to encourage processes of mutualization (including the development of shared software) between the latter and to raise awareness among local authorities regarding the potential of platform cooperatives as well as possibilities of cooperation with them.

Local Partnership and Integration/Intercultural dialogue/Migrant entrepreneurship

[Univerbal](#) is a social interpretation service in the Belgian city of Liège which was set-up collectively by persons with migration background and with the support of the association Le Monde des Possibles. The service responds to a growing demand by public and private actors and was developed based also on partnerships with authorities such as the Wallonia region.

The sector of social interpretation is for the moment not considered a real market and is thus not supervised in the framework of a specific professional reference system. Social interpreters are therefore often underpaid.

Therefore, beyond accompanying persons with migration background in the set-up of their entrepreneurial activities, Le Monde des Possibles also carries out policy work such as, in the specific case of UNIVERBAL, awareness-raising and advocacy for a fair payment of the service. The association is campaigning for a professionalization, better recognition and therewith different status of social interpreters.

Local Partnership and Culture

[RAMA - Art Residency](#) was created in 2019, by artist Paulo Brighenti and Ana Margarida Sousa, who lived in Maceira, near the Portuguese city of Torres Vedras. Wishing to bring more life to this small rural village and its community and with the support of Torres Vedras City Hall, right in the middle of a pandemic situation, they managed to launch RAMA's activities in September 2020.

RAMA intends to develop as an advanced research center in the arts field and at the intersection with science and education, looking for ideas linked to sustainability, ecology and the balance between systems. Dedicated to research and experimentation by national and international artists, researchers and curators, it promotes the interaction between professionals and the crossing of artistic practices, the sharing of experiences and knowledge, the relationship with the local community, culture, crafts and traditional knowledge, and not at least, an encounter with the region's history and landscape.

One of RAMA's main goals is to increase integration in countryside living, fomenting curiosity and appreciation towards other ways of living. For that reason, RAMA promotes activities - not only for the artists but also for the public at large - related to nature, landscapes, territory and community.

Local Partnership and Energy

In Central Catalonia, the municipality of Saldes aims to deploy a social economy approach to revive a former mining area it owns by transforming it into a space serving the village and its inhabitants. Since 2019, the municipality, together with the Ateneu Cooperatiu, has been setting up an alliance of cooperatives, other third sector organisations and local authorities and, in cooperation with local inhabitants, a concept for the creation of a local energy cooperative. The cooperative will establish and run a solar park producing energy for 42 households. Surplus production will be sold, with the revenue a new resource for the cooperative and its members. The initiative has also provided the opportunity to bring together the locals and people with a second residence in the municipality around a common project, which could be to the benefit of both groups.

Local Partnership and Housing

The [Community Land Trust Brussels \(CLTB\)](#) develops permanently affordable owner-occupied housing on community-controlled land. Since 2012, CLTB has been recognized and subsidized by the Brussels-Capital Region. With these funds, it acquires land on which it develops homes for people with a low income. Houses are sold, but the land remains the property of the CLTB community. Homes remain affordable, even after the first generation of residents have sold their house, because the sale price is limited through a resale mechanism that captures surplus value. CLTB works with very diverse multicultural groups, often composed of vulnerable families, in difficult neighbourhoods in the former industrial area around the canal. The community is the cornerstone of its work. This is evidenced in 5 domains: Board: The Board of Trustees of the CLTB is composed of one third of current and future residents, one third of representatives of civil society and the neighbourhoods in which the CLTB operates, and one third of government representatives. Major policy orientations of the organization are decided there.

(Extract from the CLTB application to the REVES Excellence Award 2019 for which the association received the golden award.)

Local Partnership and job creation for persons with disabilities

The social enterprise [Mamas Retro](#) is a second-hand shop in Gothenburg, Sweden, specialised in children's articles.

The successful social enterprise was initiated in 2011 by [forum SKILL](#), an NGO and resource organisation, aiming at promoting human rights through the creation of a model for work based on methods, structures and tools for a sustainable development and communication for entrepreneurs in the sector of social enterprises.

The idea was to encourage entrepreneurship among unemployed women and transgender persons with intellectual or neuropsychiatric disabilities, and to challenge the stereotype image of entrepreneurs. Job training at Mamas Retro is also procured by the local employment agency and the municipal departments for social welfare in order to support persons with disabilities who wish to enter or re-enter the work market.

The store started as a project providing education, new experiences and knowledge which will increase opportunities for empowerment. Today, Mamas Retro is an established non-profit organization and a social enterprise that shows that women with disabilities may well start-up and run a successful business.

Local Partnership and Farm to Fork

The [Sustainable School Food Program](#), set up by the Municipality of Torres Vedras (Portugal) in 2014, aims to provide healthy school meals in a social, ecological and sustainable way by, for instance, taking into account the products freshness, territorial development and job creation. The Program is based on 4 pillars:

1. **Production Pillar:** the Program promotes the direct contact with the vegetable cultivation process consistent with organic farming techniques, through school gardens and study visits to organic farms managed by the Municipality ("Programa BioHorta Escolar") and with a support of the Environmental Education Centre with an initiative of vegetable gardens in small boxes for some schools. "BioHorta" currently reaches an estimate of 1.250 students enrolled at pre-school as well as in primary school.
2. **Acquisition Pillar:** exclusively purchases of high quality and fresh raw food materials, preferably from local small and medium producers and suppliers, demanding bulk products (when applicable - the product boxes' are always collected by its suppliers on the day after, promoting the reusing of the materials and avoiding waste, thus contributing to a lower ecological footprint), thereby promoting territorial development by increasing the turnover for this sector in the region, as well as increasing the net job creation. For this to be possible, the Municipality divides the products into lots generating multiple tenders, specific for which one of them. This represents lower tenders' values and, though, less will on large companies to be interested in providing raw food materials, representing a promotion of the small and medium suppliers.
3. **Cooking Pillar:** the Municipality has two central kitchens which supply around 1.700 meals/day and developed a network strategy which delegates the competences to the 12 local council's authorities, which contract's local private social institutions for the management (cooking and distribution) of the school meals (around 2.900 meals/day). The menus are carefully prepared with the support of a nutritionist, respecting the nutritional balance, taking into account anthropometric values and favouring local seasonal foods, traditional dishes or the most appreciated in each location, according to the Mediterranean Diet. The municipal kitchens work as "laboratory kitchens" creating the guidelines for the private social institutions' ones.
4. **Consumption & Healthy Eating Habits Pillar:** parallel programs for the development of healthy food and the promotion of physical activity.