

Social economy stimulating the transformative potential of communities

**Opportunities and challenges of participatory co-design of development strategies
in rural and peripheral areas**

16 April 2021

The current and increasing tendency to urbanisation of people is evident, sometimes even considered as an irreversible phenomenon. Lowering quality of life and lack of opportunities in one's own place are often the engines forcing people to move to urban areas.

From a merely economic point of view, concentration in urban areas represents a solution in terms of market efficiency, as it allows lowering the production costs, thus improving the margins and guaranteeing a better return on investment. This generates a loop in which services in rural and peripheral areas are constantly reduced, pushing thus even more towards urbanisation.

A way to break this vicious circle is to refer to solutions responding to an alternative paradigm than the one based on maximum return, such as the model proposed by the social economy.

This seminar – part of a series of webinars **co-organised by REVES and CEFEC, in collaboration with Dafne – Donors and Foundations Networks in Europe and ECFI (European Community Foundation Initiative)** aims to shed a stronger light on the potential for a revitalisation of rural areas through community action, participation and cooperation in particular between social economy and municipalities. Particular attention will be paid to the role of the cultural and creative sector as a driver for participation and innovation, but also to main challenges promising initiatives are confronted with.

9 am Welcome

Jan Olsson, REVES Co-President

Christiane Haerlin, SFE CEFEC founder and SFE CEFEC board member

9.15 Panel I:

Designing and realising effective development strategies in a rural or peripheral areas - Challenges for partnerships around the social economy

From local development partnerships and CLLD to PTCE (Territorial Poles for Economic Cooperation) – in the last decade(s), all over Europe, innovative approaches to rural development emerged. A number of elements, however, constitute brakes and prevent a full deployment even of most promising initiatives. How could they best be addressed through a social economy-based approach?

Experiences will be shared by:

- Dr. Senan Cooke, member of WESN and board member of Waterford LEDC (IE)
- Antoine Franco, President, Entrepreneurs Solidaires du Centre Isère (FR)
- Vasi Gafiuc, Secretary-General, CEFEC
- Justyna Duriasz-Buřhak, Program Manager at Fundacja Wspomagania Wsi (PL)

10.15 Break

10.45 Panel II:

Stimulating and valuing the creativity of local communities – a main factor in keeping rural territories alive

Creative use of empty buildings and wasteland, revitalisation of local know-how, creation of new type of clusters for local welfare - initiatives from the cultural and creative sectors have become a driving engine for the revitalisation of local communities in rural areas also and in particular through their large capacity to involve citizens and stimulate cooperation between different players. An increasing number of municipalities and regions builds on these processes and actors to relaunch local development strategies and processes – experimenting new forms of participation.

Experiences will be shared by

- Anders Bro, Örebro County Region (SE)
- Marinka VOVK, Director of CPU -REUSE CENTER (SI)
- Elena Jachia, Fondazione Cariplo (IT)
- Mart Veliste, Interreg Europe Policy Learning Partnership and Maria Ramon, Coordinator of Cooperactivas, (ES)

11. 45 Panel III

“Towards a new rural strategy – which place for creative local communities and participation?”

With the development of strategies and initiatives linked to the RRF or the drafting of the new operational programmes for the new programming period of the EU Cohesion Policy Funds the current period seems to be more favourable than ever for a re-orientation of local development strategies towards more participation, creativity and innovation. However, which place should and will participatory rural development have in the “New European Bauhaus” era beyond topics such as broadband development or Farm to Fork?

Contributions by:

- Laurent de Mercey, European Commission, DG REGIO
- Niklas Nienaß, Member of the European Parliament
- Ana Umbelino, REVES board member and member of the GECES expert group
- Felicitas Kresimon, President, CEFEC
- Francesca Mereta, Assifero

Interpretation from and into English and French