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**SEED'S Planning Solidarity Economy Districts for Social,  
Economic, and Environmental Sustainability**

**Module 6: Solidarity Economy Districts: an overview**



Center for  
Not-for-profit  
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## Brief introduction about the module and its objectives and competences

Dear Learners,

Welcome to our MOOC module on Solidarity Economy Districts (SEDs)! We're excited to explore how these districts foster cooperation, mutual aid, and social justice.

You'll learn about the key principles and features of SEDs, their economic and social impacts, future prospects and challenges, and the role of social innovation and digital ecosystems in agriculture.

Happy learning!



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# Brief introduction about the module and its objectives and competences



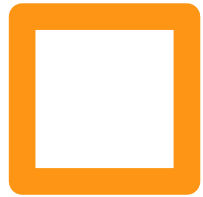
## Learning Objectives



1. Ethical and sustainable thinking: reflect on how sustainable long-term social, cultural and economic goals are, and the course of action chosen
2. Use your imagination and abilities to identify opportunities for creating value: Identify needs and challenges that need to be met
3. Systems thinking: to approach a sustainability problem from all sides; to consider time, space and context in order to understand how elements interact within and between systems



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# An introduction



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# An introduction



Thanks to this video, you are going to explore what what “Solidarity Economy District” means: a transformative approach to economic development that is grounded in the principles of cooperation, mutual aid, and social justice.

[Wahtch the video from here](#)



## AN OVERVIEW OF SOLIDARITY ECONOMY DISTRICTS

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# An introduction

The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) encompasses various forms of economic activities and relationships that prioritize social and environmental goals over profit. It involves collective citizen action and solidarity to democratize the economy and society, including participation from producers, workers, and consumers. SSE serves as an umbrella term that includes the "social economy," "solidarity economy," and third-sector organizations and enterprises. At its core, SSE aims to reassert social control over the economy and reconnect it with society and nature. While many SSE organizations and enterprises are created to address specific community needs, some also strive to transform the economic system based on values such as participatory democracy, solidarity, equity, human and Earth rights, self-determination, mutuality, and cooperation. All emphasize social values and ethics in economic activities and relationships, building their practices on democratic governance, self-management, reciprocity, solidarity, and active citizenship.



# An introduction

In recent decades, these kinds of organizations have rapidly increased in both developed and developing countries. Organized at the grassroots level, they have helped mitigate long-term harmful trends such as rising poverty and inequality, especially in developed nations, environmental degradation, and deindustrialization, which has led to skilled workers facing unemployment. Additionally, SSEOs play a crucial role in providing social services to communities, particularly during times of government budget cuts and financial constraints. Besides offering fair services, SSEOs have shown a remarkable ability to maintain and create jobs during crises when government and market solutions fall short, including throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, an increasing number of policymakers are recognizing the importance and potential of these kinds of organizations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the local level.





# An introduction

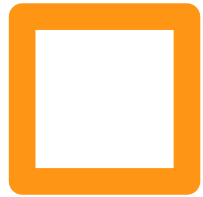
Solidarity Economy Districts (SEDs) represent a transformative approach to economic development, rooted in principles of cooperation, mutual aid, and social justice. Unlike traditional economic models that prioritize profit maximization and competition, SEDs focus on the collective well-being of communities, fostering economic practices that are equitable, sustainable, and democratically governed. In an era characterized by increasing economic inequality and environmental degradation, SEDs offer a compelling alternative that addresses both social and ecological challenges.



# An introduction

The significance of SEDs extends beyond mere economic transactions. They embody a vision of society where economic activities are aligned with the values of solidarity, respect for the environment, and the common good. This approach not only promotes local economic resilience but also strengthens the social fabric of communities by fostering trust and collaboration among their members





# Key principles and features of solidarity economy districts



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# Key principles and features of solidarity economy districts

Solidarity Economy Districts are characterized by several core values and principles that distinguish them from traditional economic models. At their heart, SEDs prioritize the well-being of people and the planet over profit maximization. This is reflected in their commitment to social justice, environmental sustainability, and democratic governance.



# Key principles and features of solidarity economy districts



Social justice is a cornerstone of SEDs, as they strive to create equitable economic opportunities for all members of the community. This involves addressing issues such as income inequality, discrimination, and exclusion. By fostering economic environments where all individuals, regardless of their background, have equal opportunities to thrive, SEDs help to bridge economic divides and promote social cohesion.



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# Key principles and features of solidarity economy districts



Environmental sustainability is another fundamental principle, with SEDs promoting practices that minimize environmental impact and support the regeneration of natural ecosystems. This commitment to sustainability often involves the adoption of green technologies, the promotion of renewable energy sources, and the implementation of sustainable agricultural practices. By prioritizing the health of the environment, SEDs contribute to the long-term viability of both local and global ecosystems.



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# Key principles and features of solidarity economy districts



Democratic governance is a defining feature of SEDs, ensuring that all members have a voice in decision-making processes. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, encouraging members to work collaboratively towards shared goals. The culture of cooperation and mutual aid that pervades SEDs further distinguishes them from traditional economic models, where competition often undermines collective well-being.



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# Key principles and features of solidarity economy districts

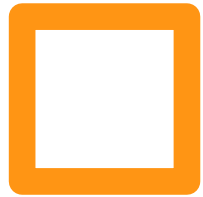


The organizational structure of SEDs is diverse, typically encompassing various types of cooperatives, social enterprises, and community organizations. Cooperatives, such as worker cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, and producer cooperatives, operate on democratic principles and play a central role in the functioning of SEDs. Social enterprises, which prioritize social and environmental goals alongside financial sustainability, are also integral to SEDs. Community organizations, including non-profits and grassroots groups, facilitate broad-based participation and community engagement.



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# Economic and social impacts of SEDs



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# Economic and social impacts of SEDs

Solidarity Economy Districts have a profound impact on both the economic and social fabric of the communities they serve. By prioritizing collective well-being over individual profit, SEDs contribute to more inclusive and resilient local economies.

SEDs create jobs and provide stable employment opportunities, often in sectors that are neglected by the mainstream economy. They stimulate local economic activity by keeping wealth within the community and reducing dependency on external markets and corporations. This localized approach to economic development enhances the economic resilience of communities, making them less vulnerable to external shocks. By fostering local entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses, SEDs help to build diverse and dynamic local economies that can better withstand economic fluctuations.



# Economic and social impacts of SEDs

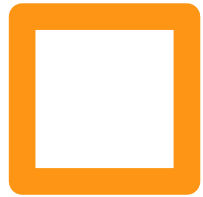
The social benefits of SEDs are equally significant. They foster a sense of community and social cohesion, as members work together towards common goals. This collaborative spirit helps to build trust and mutual support among community members. SEDs empower marginalized groups by providing them with access to resources, decision-making power, and economic opportunities. By promoting education and skills development, SEDs enhance the human capital within the community, contributing to long-term economic and social well-being. The inclusive nature of SEDs ensures that all members of the community, regardless of their socioeconomic status, have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from local economic activities.



# Economic and social impacts of SEDs

Despite their many benefits, SEDs face significant challenges. Limited access to capital, regulatory barriers, and competition from larger, profit-driven enterprises are among the primary obstacles they encounter. Maintaining democratic governance and ensuring broad-based participation can also be challenging, particularly as organizations grow in size and complexity. Addressing these challenges requires innovative solutions and supportive policy frameworks that can help SEDs overcome these barriers and realize their full potential.





# Future prospects and challenges



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# Future prospects and challenges

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# Future prospects and challenges

However, potential obstacles such as limited access to finance, regulatory barriers, and competition from larger, profit-driven enterprises must be addressed. Innovative solutions such as the development of social impact investment, the creation of supportive policy frameworks, and the use of digital technologies to enhance collaboration and coordination can help overcome these challenges. By leveraging these solutions, SEDs can enhance their resilience and capacity to achieve their social and economic goals.



# Future prospects and challenges



Solidarity Economy Districts offer a transformative approach to economic development that prioritizes social justice, environmental sustainability, and democratic governance. By fostering inclusive and resilient local economies, SEDs contribute to the creation of more equitable and sustainable economic systems. However, realizing the full potential of SEDs requires addressing the challenges they face and leveraging the opportunities offered by emerging trends and technological innovations. With the right support and strategic interventions, SEDs can play a crucial role in shaping a more just and sustainable future.



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# Future prospects and challenges

The role of technology and innovation is particularly important in the future development of SEDs. Digital platforms can facilitate the sharing of resources, enhance communication and coordination among SEDs, and provide new opportunities for community engagement and participation. By leveraging these technologies, SEDs can enhance their efficiency, reach, and impact. For example, digital platforms can enable SEDs to connect with a broader network of stakeholders, access new markets, and mobilize resources more effectively. Additionally, technological innovations can help SEDs to streamline their operations, reduce costs, and improve service delivery, thereby increasing their competitiveness and sustainability.





# Social innovation and digital ecosystems in agriculture



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# Social innovation and digital ecosystems in agriculture



Join us to explore the fascinating intersection of social innovation and digital ecosystems in agriculture with Gianluca Brunori from the University of Pisa. His insightful video delves into how digital transformation reshapes our interactions, enhances learning, and revolutionizes agricultural practices. Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights within our MOOC module!

[Watch the video from here](#)



## SOCIAL INNOVATION AND DIGITAL ECOSYSTEMS IN AGRICULTURE

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