



MEXICO CITY 2021
GLOBAL SOCIAL
ECONOMY FORUM

Summary | 10 June 2020

GSEF Kickstarts a Webinar Series on SSE and COVID-19 for global stakeholders

Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) successfully organized a webinar with the topic “Challenges and Strategies of Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) in Times of COVID-19 Crisis” on 9th June with more than 100 participants from 45 countries. The first round of this GSEF Webinar Series invited GSEF members and key partners to share their experiences and initiatives towards supporting the SSE sector and alleviating the socio-economic impact of the crisis on communities through SSE. This webinar is part of a series of webinars in 3 languages (English, French and Spanish) in collaboration with the Local Organizing Committee of GSEF2021, in the lead-up to the GSEF2021 Mexico City forum.

The speakers included:

- Mr. XIA Xuan, Founder, Star of Social Innovation, China
- Ms. Lynn COLLINS, Strategic Relations and Engagement Advisor, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA), United Kingdom
- Ms. Nonhle MEMELA, Programme Manager, eThekweni Municipality, South Africa
- Mr. Cho Ju Yeon, CEO, Seoul Social Economy Centre, South Korea
- Mr. Anthony Wong, Business Director, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service, Hong Kong, China

The moderator of the session was Ms. Laurence KWARK, Secretary-General of Global Social Economy Forum.

After presenting the scale and structure of social enterprises in China, Mr. XIA Xuan shared the diversity of economic activities provided by social enterprises to prevent the pandemic such as elderly service, health care service and grocery delivery, etc. It is encouraging to see the COVID-19 provide chances for social enterprises to show their contribution, to advocate governments for public policies to support social enterprises and to attract more young people to join the sector with their creativity, resilience and social responsibility.

In Ms. Lynn COLLINS presentation, the huge negative impact of COVID-19 to both developing and developed countries were demonstrated. The disadvantaged and vulnerable communities such as women and youth suffered the most during the economy downturn caused by the pandemic. The new forms of economic and daily activities have also created another type of inequality, digital exclusion, when a specific group of people do not have access to or knowledge on smart technology. To cope with the challenges, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) is working on an overall strategy with the mayor to recover the economy with the methodology of social dialogue and communication with the community. It provides opportunities to strive for a sustainable and inclusive local development.



Ms. Nonhle MEMELA mentioned that the impact of the pandemic to the local residents is significant since the proportion of informal economy is high in South Africa. The unemployment rate in EThekweni Municipality is anticipated to rise by 42%. EThekweni Municipality is preparing the 6 pillars of the economic recovery plan: monitoring the City income and health of the economy, facilitating the City's share of national support, supporting tourism, supporting the rural and informal economy, kick-starting construction and operationalizing the Socio-Economic Trust Fund, with the mayor as Champion.

Mr. Cho Ju Yeon illustrated how Covid-19 hurt different SSE organizations sectors and even make them hard to survive, particularly in culture, arts, convention, tourism, education, and catering. Seeing the opportunity during the crisis, Social and Solidarity economy Centre where Mr. Cho is working in is trying to build its momentum in Korea for promoting democratic citizenship which also facilitates the transformation from "social and solidarity economy centred" policies to "sustainable civic economy". Mr. Cho also used some examples to explain how this transformation can help SSE to scale up as a civic economy rooted with democratic citizens at local level to recover the economy by managing daily business and building up trust in the community.

Mr. Anthony Wong revealed that work integrated social enterprises suffered most in the pandemic. The existing political context which stimulates structural isolation in Hong Kong enhanced the complexity to solicit an organized and coherent support to SSE. To overcome the problems, he recommended the immediate action is to divide the tasks according to the strength of each stakeholder. However, a long-term recovery strategy by SSE needs the collective voice through civil society facilitators as intermediary platform among different parties such as government, business, and community groups.

GSEF2021 Preparatory Series of Webinars will continue until **late September** with topics related to SSE, particularly in the times of COVID-19:

1st: Challenges and Strategies of the Social and Solidarity Economy in Times of COVID-19 Crisis

2nd: Recovery and Development of Decent Work through SSE

3rd: Power of Community: SSE and Financial Systems to Fight against the COVID-19 Crisis

4th: New SSE Ecosystems: Health, Education, Informal Economy, and the 4th Industrial Revolution

For more information about the series of webinars, please visit our website: <https://www.gsef-net.org/en/node/27207>