

**THE ROLE AND RESPONSES OF SOCIAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIAL AND
SOLIDARITY ECONOMY IN A CONTEXT OF
ECONOMIC CRISIS**

[RA1]

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MAIN FINDINGS

The crisis has been weighing down upon society since 2008. In France, 8.6 million people live with less than 850 euros per month. There is therefore a need to seek out a new economic model by bringing about changes in the current model – a model which creates exclusion. In this context, stakeholders are marking out a new path, with economic activities that make sense: those of the social and solidarity economy (SSE) and social entrepreneurs. Can they inspire a new economic model to be founded? If we want to change our society's model, we will have to start considering profit as a means and not an end. Putting together hybrid approaches, with partnerships between the conventional economy, the SSE and the general public will mean that it will become possible to expand and find new financial resources. Governance needs to be rebalanced in favour of the citizenry in order to co-construct and to give meaning once again to the system. In this way, the whole world will be able to invest their energies in creating a more solidarity-based society.

SPEAKERS

Stéphanie Goujon

Managing Director, Agence du Don en Nature

Joël Grosjean

Regional Chairman Europe Centre, Macif

Thibault Guilluy

Managing Director, Ares

Elisabeth Masse-Bourgain

Deputy Mayor, L'Ile-Saint-Denis / Chairwoman,
pôle d'hospitalité aux activités à rayonnement
écologique et solidaire de L'Ile-Saint-Denis

Arnaud Mourot

CEO, Ashoka France-Belgium-Switzerland

MODERATOR

Emmanuel Gautier

Impact Investing and Employee Savings Schemes
Portfolio Manager, Natixis Asset Management

SUMMARY OF INTERVENTIONS

A few examples of structures that bring together economic effectiveness and social aims

Stéphanie Goujon points out that after studying at HEC Paris business school and spending eight years working in publicity, she took a turn in completely the opposite direction. She helped to create the Don en Nature agency, based on an astounding observation: millions of brand-new products are destroyed by companies, while at the same time, many people are in dire need (there are three million poor workers in France). The Agency collects these unsold products from businesses, stores them in a warehouse and puts them onto an online e-donation catalogue for associations working with destitute groups.

Joël Grosjean presents the principle of mutualisation, which is at the heart of Macif's work, allowing for the playing field between the well-off and the destitute to be levelled out. People today are very heterogeneous and everyone is after the cheapest products. Elected officials and employees work in order to offer a quality service even for those on low incomes; the profits generated by providing insurance cover allow for a rebalancing in finance. The economy is at the service of the social sphere.

Thibault Guilly, a graduate from the ESCP Europe Business School, points out that he works for his convictions. ARES, an association for getting people back into employment, allows people to put a foot back on the ladder with "springboard jobs" for those who have been out of work for a long time. The aim is to create viable businesses, to support employees in their problems and their professional aims, to manage their transition into work and to help them to believe in the future once again. A calculation made in 2011 shows that for every euro given to a government employability agency, the returns in terms of tax and direct savings were €2.71.

Elisabeth Masse-Bourgain presents PHARE, a centre for welcoming people, for sharing and for exchange, which groups together social and solidarity economy organisations in order to work on the local area. This centre allows for people, young people in particular, to discover a set of ethics and a new way of working. The leaders of the project see it as a source of support, advice and network building. In forgotten areas there is defeatism, but also a desire to get involved. It is important to give a chance to these initiatives because humans represent the wealth of these areas.

Arnaud Mourot presents Ashoka, which brings together social entrepreneurs in order to create a movement and

leverage. Social entrepreneurship is a state of mind: it is made up of people who put their entrepreneur qualities at the service of society's needs, people who innovate and reflect on ways to change the system. Social problems are often dealt with by the general public, companies and the SSE. Working together leads to cultural chaos, but also allows for the emergence of hybrid solutions which will reach further.

How can SSE values be positively spread throughout the conventional economy? How can we ensure that the SSE is not sidelined as an economy that simply repairs what is broken? What governance values and principles can guide the conventional economy towards another model?

Joël Grosjean points out that this question is of central importance. The problem of democracy is one which is dealt with within Macif, a mutual fund. Here, all customers are associates with the right to become members. The running of the group is split up regionally and there are 2000 associate representatives. This form of governance is based on networks organised across society, particularly through trade union networks. We should strive for more participatory democracy in our society. This is a question which is voiced within Macif.

Thibault Guilly states that faced with the crisis, there is a moral and rational imperative to give meaning once again to business. The dialogue between social business and conventional business leads the way. A major challenge is having entrepreneurs who are committed to serving the causes that affect them: it must be shown in schools and universities that this is possible.

Stéphanie Goujon confirms the importance of spreading positive waves of change among students. ADN is growing, it communicates, measures and shows the usefulness of its work. The Agency is expanding in Europe by identifying and training local teams up until the point at which they can be independent. A union of agencies allows for synergies to be created and work in networks to be carried out.

Arnaud Mourot points out that for evaluation there are hundreds of forms of methodology for gauging impact: what is important is ensuring that the project works, that it solves the problem being addressed, that it reduces the group's expenditure and is economically viable. A survey carried out by McKinsey shows that the expansion of social entrepreneur initiatives allows the government to make billions of euros in savings. Awareness raising has to take place among young people and they should be allowed to act as early as possible.

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Elisabeth Masse-Bourgain notes that the Pôles Territoriaux de Coopération Economique (PTCE, Local Economic Cooperation Centres), are very recent and emerging. In order to set up a centre, the local area must have activities to feed it. The role of politicians is important in identifying desires, setting up networks and providing support. This is a complicated dynamic, often fragile and one which carries huge hopes with it. The aim is to be as contagious as possible.

SUMMARY OF DEBATE WITH THE AUDIENCE

At what point should we include banks and the world of finance in the reflections on the social and solidarity economy, with their cash flow which pays no heed to the poor?

Stéphanie Goujon answers that movements are starting to be made in this direction: people have to be given the right desire. Role models must lead to a change in mentalities.

We are told about reducing the debt, but what is most important is investing in youth, the future and green growth.

It is necessary to put an end to the systemic risks in the euro zone. Following this, a path towards a new

model must be drawn up. The aim is that social usefulness and environmental impact are more widely taken into account.

The SSE needs to evolve, to scale up, to prove that its solutions work. The debate over status is sterile, the final aim has to be worked upon and each citizen must become a co-creator of solutions.

The SSE needs to evolve, while still avoiding being solely for profit: the status of a supervised profit-making company is currently being experimented with, particularly in the USA.

Have you got in contact with the Minister for the SSE in order to develop the sector?

Elisabeth Masse-Bourgain points out that Benoît Hamon is interested in the PTCE dynamic. The means in order to implement it are yet to be found, however. **Le Mouves:** the role of local authorities is fundamental in supporting the SSE and integrating social entrepreneurship into the development of the local economy. **L'Atelier:** the fight for gaining more support for social entrepreneurship continues.

Conventional business should be seen as a potential partner; we should leave behind this idea of a dichotomy and work together. Alone we will go faster, but together we will go further.

REPORTER

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- Agence du Don en Nature: www.adnfrance.org
- Ares: www.ares-association.fr
- Ashoka France-Belgium-Switzerland: france.ashoka.org
- Groupe Macif: www.macif.fr
- PHARE: www.lelabo-ess.org/IMG/pdf/Cite_PHARES.pdf