

At the crossroads of structural change and regulation

Public and private aids: autonomy and sustainability of social and solidarity experiences.

International comparison between Bahia and Calabria

Carmela Guarascio¹

What does “*make a local society*” (Magnaghi, 2003) mean in concrete? What are impacts at the local level of a project of development? What kind of flows cross these practices? How autonomy and sustainability can be promoted?

Making a local society, in a social and solidarity practice, actually means that development is needed to be built through a democratic mechanism (Singer, 2002) and it is meant to involve a territory wholly (Mance, 2010). An experience of social and solidarity economy meets the needs of territory and thinks, with the stakeholders, the possible development of that specific area. Social and solidarity economy in fact tries to set up an economy strongly linked with local environment. The sustainability of these experiences is done not only in an economic frame, but also in a social and environmental one and it is connected with the autonomy of the local too.

Autonomy here has the meaning of distribution of power decision in the community. It could be produced through different tools, such as democratic participation, or durable economic activities. It means promoting social inclusion to empower the local, making empowerment of people on themes of an alternative economic and sustainable system.

The two case studies proposed are both experiences of social and solidarity economy. They try to be promoters of a sustainable development in their regions. Even if they relate to different contexts, they have both a strong relationship with the local and with the idea of building an alternative way of producing, in a form of plural economy (Laville, 1998). Although this relationship, they face the dependence that could results from public and private aids. This affects their durability and it seems to create a non-autonomous relationship.

The first case study concerns the experience of the community Matarandiba, that made a solidarity economy project thanks to the help of the “Technical Incubator of solidarity economy” (*ITES-Ufba*), a public institute connected to the “UFBA” (Federal University of Bahia, Brasil). ITES helps the organization of network of solidarity economy in communities based in periphery, which face problems of poverty and social exclusion. It is not a traditional incubator, in fact it uses a very interesting method that intends the community as a whole and for this it doesn’t help only one enterprise, but it tries to put each action in a global work of empowerment of the community, from many points of view.

The second case study concerns the experience of the social cooperative “*Il Segno*”, based in the town of Fuscaldo, in the South of Italy. This experience tries to be an engine for the local development

¹ Carmela Guarascio, PhD Student at Università della Calabria, Italia (carmela.guarascio@unical.it)

working towards labor inclusion of youth and people who have been fired out. Similarly to Matarandiba, this cooperative, just because of its legislation, acts towards an economic sustainability, but also towards an environmental, cultural and social one. Moreover it could also assume the role of an incubator of new ideas. It means that sometimes it tries to be a promoter of projects for youth that live in Fuscaldo, stimulating human resources, creating networks among different local associations.

Both of these experiences stimulate the active involvement of the people, their awareness and responsibility towards development. In this sense, these actions are fully policies. Moreover they work in areas that are institutionally weak and face vulnerability. They are both experiencing innovative democratic mechanisms of participation, that need a longer time to be effectiveness, but that have an important impact on people. Democratic mechanisms will be analyzed as social innovations in territorial governance. They fully represent a structure of solidarity economy.

This work will make a comparison between these two case studies, trying to analyze them from the point of view of important categories that are essential in the construction of an alternative socio-solidarity economic system: autonomy and social and economic sustainability.

The comparison will consider how solidarity values and the networks created by these experiences could positively impact on social inclusion.

Methodology used is qualitative one. Tools are structured and unstructured interviews. In the first case the structured interviews were made to the Director of the incubator and to others students or people involved in the incubator, that work directly in communities. Unstructured interviews were made to some people of the communities involved in the project activities of the incubator. In the second case structured interviews were made to the three woman members of the cooperative and to others volunteers. Interviews were made with a group of students. We analysed also some reports on activities in both experiences. The research benefits also by observing participation. The research lasted from April to August 2012 in Brasil and in December 2012 in Calabria.

This work has four main part and a brief conclusion. In the first part there is a reflection on some key words such as *solidarity economy* and *sustainable development*; in the second part we will describe the two case study; the third part contains a reference to what does sustainability and autonomy mean in this concept; finally we will present a brief comparison between two case study and in the conclusion we try to point out common aspects and good practices.

1- Solidarity economy, a different conception about development

1.1 Sustainable development

McMichael assumes that *development* has been built as a project which each State has to engage if it wants to reach the developed stage.

<<In the past we used to think that development was a process of economic growth organized nationally, and nowadays global economic integration is transforming the development in a process of economic growth globally organized>> (McMichael, 2006:18)

He explains how this project of development was the response to the processes of decolonization, because it imposed an economic vision of social change. It had two main ingredients, the national State and the economic growth, both indicators of material well-being.

However, in the nineties, when the failure of this project was clear, it began to have a movement that contrasted it:

<<Development project has been put increasingly under scrutiny in the nineties, considerably it has lost credibility among the member States of the Third World. Its success was very uncertain and there was a growing reaction to its will of homogenizing everything to an only right way of developing. In some parts of the world ethnic or cultural movements of advocacy have begun to reassert their political demands. There is also a growing movement that tends to develop alternative ways of living going beyond formal economic relations>> (McMichael, 2006:54)

In line with this strategy of processing alternative ways of living life, Meadows report in 1972 was especially important because it put into question the belief that development is limitless, linear and constant, characteristics that classic economics have put as bases of their actions. It was a study made by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to investigate the long-term consequence of growth concerning five variables: population, industrial capital, food production, consumption of environmental resources, pollution. Conclusions pointed out the need for a modification to the idea of growth, in favor of *<<an idea of economic and ecological stability>>* (Meadows cit. In La Camera 2005). This idea included, for the first time, a reflection on limits of growth identified in the available resources, against the idea of the market where everything is the result of production and therefore of exploitation of something for the purpose of capital appreciation.

<<Sustainability does not mean static or stagnant economy; we must carefully distinguish between growth and development. The economic growth, which is a growth in quantity, can not be limitless in a finite planet like the Earth. Economic development, which is an improvement of the quality of life, not necessarily causes an increase in the amount of resources consumed; it can be sustainable>> (Meadows cit. In La Camera 2005:12)

The best-known definition of sustainable development was then provided in 1987 in the Brundtland Report "Our Common Future", prepared by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). It states that sustainable development is:

<<Able to meet needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs>>

Brundtland Report formulated a program of environmental and social actions aimed at reconciling outcomes of the debates of different organs of development and environmental policy of the United Nations, which from the 70s up to that moment were separate. For the first time these two aspects were put together. Sustainable development thus became a precondition for ensuring development.

1.2 Social and solidarity movements

In order to this strategy of processing an alternative and sustainable way of life, in nineties a concrete action has been materializing in movements of *solidarity economy*. For twenty years these practices have tried to safeguard social spaces from the invasion of the capitalistic market system intended as the only way of producing wealth. The binomial "Solidarity Economy" appeared in South America, in particular in Brazil, in the movement of popular economy and it includes all the resistance practices put in place in response to inequality and privatization, identified as consequences of the crisis of the traditional economy of the capitalist and financial market (Singer, 2002).

This phenomenon developed in various ways. In nineties in Brazil was born the SENEAS (department of solidarity economy) in the department of labour, that institutionalised some practices, putting them in political programs. On the other hand social movements, joint for the first time in Social Forum in Porto Alegre in 2001 (until now they have met every year), work towards a post-capitalistic solution, thinking about the solidarity economy as a form of resistance.

Although these practices are different, they have as a common goal to limit the dangerous effects of financial and monetary economies, and to work on real economy. They want to build space of democratic participation seeking the absence of public authorities, and promoting social justice, integrating economy to society through solidarity bonds.

Also literature about solidarity economy divides into different prospective, in a teleological sense, *into substitutive and complementary approaches* (Caille, 2009); on the one hand there are a number of alternative economic practices that have as purpose the overthrow of capitalistic way of production and the system of private relationships which it supports and stimulates; they are defined as practices of solidarity economy (Mance, 2003; Razeto, 2003); other practices seek to restructure the current economy through a variety of economic forms, taking up the theoretical model of social and policy regulation, among State, market and community (Polanyi, 2000). This second front is identified as pluralistic practices (Laville, 1998; Caille, 1998), and also as social economy. Nevertheless Social and Solidarity economy proposes a development approach structured on local production and networks (Mance, 2010), on democratic participation and social justice (Singer, 2002), on ecological ideas (Saroldi, 2003) and on a participation with institution and public space (Laville, 1998).

To sum up practices of socio-solidarity economy aim to a sustainability not only from an economic point of view, but also from an environmental and social one.

1.3 Local development meant in social and solidarity economy

Magnaghi (Il progetto locale, 2003) assumes that a sustainable development, since environment and humans are closely related, is given by the virtuous relationship between the natural and the anthropic environment. Moreover each community establishes a strong relationship with the territory, thus it is an actor of sustainable development only when its actions meet the needs of the territory. In this way it actually builds its local identity, in which it recognizes and re-thinks itself.

<< A local society, sufficiently complex, has to be able to take care of the environment and of its territory >> (Magnaghi 2003:66) and to do this it is needed to *<<Make a local society>>* (ibid.).

In conclusion we can say that social and solidarity experiences aim to build this *local society*, fighting the strategy of homogeneity and profit limitless wanted by the capitalistic market economy. Reaching this goal there is not difference between the solidarity and the social prospective. Making a local society actually means that it is needed to build, through democratic mechanism, a development that involves a territory wholly. It means that an experience of social and solidarity economy cannot work without meeting needs of territory and thinking, with the stakeholders, the possible development of that area. Social and solidarity economy in fact try to set up this kind of economy that is strongly linked with local environment, working in networks. These practices try to make also a new regulation among State, market and community, balance re-establishing.

What place does territorial autonomy of local society has respect at these regulation? How can this kind of experience be durable long run? Does dependence could affect these experiences?

We would like to present the two case study to make this question more understandable.

2- Description of the two case studies

2.1 Solidarity economy in Matarandiba

In Matarandiba was born a project made with the help of the ITES-Ufba (Incubator of solidarity economy of Federal University of Bahia).

Incubators are authorities, that belong to both public and private universities. Their aim is to foment solidal and economic activities in weak economic areas, with people excluded from the labor market. Incubators offer technical assistance to area that want to implement projects of solidarity economy. One of their way of acting is establishing democratic participation in taking decisions, in which everybody is equal. In this way, workers become aware of their strength and possibilities (Freire, 2011) and together they can seek answers to common problems, following the principles of self-government and democracy.

Incubators, since the beginning, started to build themselves in networks. The network of Incubators of popular cooperatives (ITCPs)² was born in 1994. The network Unitrabalho³ was founded in 1996. Today the reality of the incubators is widespread in Brazil. The Incubator of solidarity economy (*ITES-Ufba*) of the Federal University of Bahia has been active in the area for ten years and has built up experiences in the field valuables for each incubators, especially for those in the Northeast of Brazil.

Because of they were born within universities they aim too to train teachers and students on the themes of solidarity economy and community planning. They are an important tool in the hands of those excluded from the labor market, which can organize themselves in productive activities and follow a socio-economic development. The term *social* is very important because it determines the quality of the activities that are created; in fact they are productive activities that do not take in consideration only the economic aspect, but that try to preserve the social, cultural and environmental aspects too. The activities are not a strategic device to satisfy the interests of a single company, but they are the natural result of community decisions, gathered in the "Community Committee", with the technical collaboration of the incubator. In this way community becomes conscious of itself and it tries to organize itself from the point of an economic, social, environmental and cultural durability.

In addition to technical support, incubators address the community towards the forms of alternative finance, intercepting both public policy programs and private funding.

The important feature of the *ITES-Ufba* incubator is that the methodology which it uses, means the territory as a community, in the sense that the interventions are not only socio-economic initiatives, but also socio-cultural, political and environmental issues. Moreover methodology involves the insertion of the inhabitants in the process of incubation. So thus it is established a relationship of action research and extension, in an equal relationship between incubator and territory, instead of a top down approach.

The incubator has several projects in the areas adjacent to the city of Salvador. The project that we will analyse in depth is the incubation of the network of solidarity economy in the community of Matarandiba, located in the island of Itaparica, in the municipality of Vera Cruz, Salvador de Bahia, which has 40,000 inhabitants. Matarandiba is a fishing community with about 200 families; most of them have a very low income and a big difficulty in entering the labor market. The project has been running since 2006, and has received several financing, both public and private.

² The National Programme of incubators of popular cooperatives (PRONINC) was born thanks to the help of FINEP (Studies and Projects Finance authority), the Bank of Brazil, the foundation of the Bank of Brazil and the COEP (Committee of Public Entities in the Fight Against Hunger and for Life), with the aim of fomenting the creation of activities in solidarity economy by offering technical assistance, study areas, research and development of social technologies. The ITCPs integrates today 50 incubators

³ The "Unitrabalho" is a national university network of incubators that aggregates 92 universities along with schools.

In Matarandiba there are currently five projects funded by different agencies, even with the involvement of multinational Dow Chemical, which has an installation of rock salt in the municipality of Matarandiba, from which it extracts mineral salt which then it works industrially. It is present from the beginning of the project, in fact in 2006 the community, together with the prefecture and Dow, asked the intervention of the incubator to start a process of incubation with the intention of developing a local network of solidarity economy in order to ensure a better quality of life. It was created the program "Ecosmar", through which the bank financed the birth of community bank, which in turn financed the birth of a small supermarket, a restaurant and transportation management. It uses local and social currency and this mechanism, as a lot of studies prove, speeds up the local economy.

Today the local network in Matarandiba is divided into two local associations, a forum for community development, an Info center, a community radio station, the community bank, a transport system, a market, a bakery and a group of extractors oysters, that relate to other similar groups in the State of Bahia.

2.2 Social enterprise "*Il Segno*"

<<A cooperative is an autonomous association of people that voluntary join themselves to satisfy their common economic, social and cultural needs, through an enterprise that has a common property and it is democratically managed>> (Cimini et Al. 2004)

Law 381/1991 "Regulation of social cooperative" regulated the normative on this issue. It established that a social cooperative could be of two types "A" or "B":

- Cooperative "A" manage health and social services and educational
- Cooperative "B" include in economic activities disadvantaged people. They can carry out any activity but the 30% of workers have to be disadvantaged.

Members of a social cooperative could be of different kind: volunteers, sponsors, users, workers, disadvantaged people.

The social cooperative "*Il Segno*" is a cooperative "B", founded by three women that wanted to solve together the problem of lack of work. It is based in the little community of Scarcelli, in the town of Fuscaldo, in the north coast of Calabria. Calabria is the last region in the south of Italy. It is a region with notable development delay and lack of social services available for people; at the same time it has innumerable natural resources, such as water, natural landscape; two see flow its coasts and there are precious historical findings of "Magna Graeciae" time.

Scarcelli is one of four communities based in the municipality of Fuscaldo. Fuscaldo has a surface of about 60 Km, with a population of 8279 inhabitants. Like the regional territory where it is based, it is not well organized to welcome tourists, social services are weakly organized and inhabitants have a low revenue. Nevertheless the majority of them can cultivate and transform products on their own and have some animals, like pigs, for family sustenance. There are kept some important tradition such as slaughter of meat of pork at home.

In 2007 *Il Segno* started its activity as a social cooperative producing textile products, because one of the members was a seamstress that made available her ability and knowledge to the cooperative. Then they bought a place where sell their products joint with "*Fair Trade*" products.

Until nowadays the cooperative decided to ask the municipality a land where it is possible to start an agriculture activity, because one of the woman is formed as a land surveyor and decided to integrated the main activity of the cooperative to make it economically sustainable. The municipality of Paola, nearby

Fuscaldo, gave them a land that had not been in production for 30 years. Today agriculture is the main activity of the social cooperative *Il Segno*.

The first step for the cooperative was to put into production the land, clearing of mines and reclaiming. It started in 2010 selling fresh and transformed products, grown up as biological production.

Because of *Il Segno* is a social cooperative type “B”, one of its aims it is also social inclusion of disadvantaged people. Until now in the cooperative there are two disadvantaged people with an open ended contract, then there is one with fixed term contract, and about forty volunteers that help during the years, especially during the summer. During the summer the cooperative hosts group of youth that exchange their work in the cooperative, with a period of education and holiday. Majority of them comes from the North of Italy, experimenting an useful cooperation and exchange of knowledge.

3- What kind of sustainability and autonomy?

The two case studies are located in territories institutionally weak and with characteristics of periphery. They are embedded in different normative frames; while the first is a project promoted by a public institution, the second is a social cooperative, both within a network of solidarity economy with the task of engaging mechanisms of local empowerment in a frame of solidarity economy (social justice, social inclusion, democratic participation, local production, sustainability, promoting social bonds).

While the first is in an experience of solidarity economy that is institutionalized, because it refers to the secretary of solidarity economy (SENEAS) in the national department of labour in Brazil, the second is a social cooperative that tries to promote development creating networks collaborating with other economic experiences and also the local institutions. Both of experiences build social capital, empowering the community.

<<Social capital has the source of public good: people who try to reinforce structures of reciprocity through networks, produce benefits not only for themselves, but for everyone who is in these structures>> (Mutti, 1998:13)

3.1 Social and environmental sustainability

3.1.1 The methodology of incubation, a way of building cohesion

ITES-Ufba has a particular methodology of action on a territory. In fact building a network of solidarity economy needs time and a good understanding about the community. It is composed by four objectives: education, research, network planning and implementation of the project.

This axis about education could also be called “continuing education course”, because it is the first thing done but that never ends, because change is seen as a long process of capacity building of inhabitants wholly and specifically that ones who will work in local initiatives such as community bank, cultural associations and economic activities. Of course this process is oriented to ITES technicians too, because they can educate themselves understanding a specific community. Very often the communities are poor, with an high school-dropout rate or illiteracy, so thus for this reason education is the first step of the methodology. It has different aspects because it aims to educate on solidarity economy and citizenship in general, but it is also very technical for inhabitants who want to directly involve themselves in network’s activities such as bank, restaurant, cultural activities. In this sense education has as a task the role of making people consciousness of their capabilities (Freire,2011). It is constructed on a series of courses involving community and ITES technicians, made by professors working at ITES. This is for ITES the first contact with reality, in

order to begin to assess features and identify inhabitants who can work more closely to the project, supporting ITES technicians in the process of incubation.

The second axis of the methodology is the research. If the training is completely managed by professors, this second phase involves inhabitants. It is divided into two parts:

- a map on socio-economic situation, on local production, that lasts about six months. In Matarandiba were involved twelve youth of the community.
- a cultural map. There were interviewed ten old women of the community, the oral custodian of the history of the community.

The third step is that of setting up a project for the community, creating projects based on community needs and discussed by the community, ITES-*Ufba* together in the Community forum. The final step is the implementation of the project with the participation at public and private financial calls.

This kind of methodology helps in the structuration of a solidarity economy network. In Matarandiba the network is structured into two associations of inhabitants, a community bank and some economic activities. This methodology especially involves inhabitants in the construction of the network in an active way. Three woman, in fact, entered as employed in the community bank. It was a conquest because as illiterate they had not possibility to enhance themselves.

In the community, thanks to the project, there were made also traditional shows and cultural initiatives, in which the community wholly was invited to participate. These cultural events were important moments of cohesion among inhabitants.

3.1.2 // *Segno* and its co-operation vice versa

// Segno tries to put together work and education. It works and divides its buildings with a volunteer association of Scarcelli too, "*Associazione Go'el*", founded in 2000, that assures post-school for children in the afternoon; it has a free internet-point and it proposes children also different activities and games. They are included in an education process long term, that challenges them creating important social bonds and experimenting new ways of working.

This union with "*Go'el*" for members working at *// Segno* means that within the agriculture there is an educational action. Furthermore they have done together a project called "*Costellazioni*" (Constellation), that aimed to put together local associations to solve problems. The project was done also with the help of *Università della Calabria*, that helped in analyzing the territory, and that charted 41 local associations. Ones charted it was built an help desk which associations could reach to solve problems and to connect themselves with others. The desk, in fact, knows if there are other associations with the same problem and it tries to make them speaking. In this way *// Segno* enhances the creation of networks, strengthening hubs and promoting cooperation. This project was not really immediately used by associations, because the territory is split and fragmented, but it represents a good practice and an example. It would be a way of promoting a different way of cooperation on the territory, even if until now it is not very usual.

Moreover *// Segno* is a social cooperative that employs people in needs, and for this it tries to encourage a new form of cooperation among people. This represents an educational path for inhabitants of *Scarcelli* who can experiment that this way of working is sustainable and it functions. Those who come from the North of Italy test a cooperation vice versa, because it is historically meant that north Italy has to help south, poorer. In this case there is a parallel exchange with a common goal. In fact enhancements done by

the cooperative to the local territory was possible also because there were a lot of volunteers involved in it, through this change of knowledge.

The territory wholly, thanks to the action of *// Segno* experiments solidarity economy, a different way of producing and co-operate, because it proves itself that doing an economic activities does not involve only an economic issue. An enterprise has also to take care about local needs and people and has to experiment cooperation with other territories to make its action available and durable.

Social sustainability it is also done building local and national networks that allow knowledge sharing and improvements. *// Segno* it is in different networks, even if national ones work better. It sells a part of its products in the local market. Since the birth it sold also “Fair Trade” products, promoting cooperation among north and south of the world. Until nowadays *// Segno* started selling also in a local network of solidarity economy, to GAS⁴ *UtopieSorridenti* (solidarity purchasing group). In this sense there is a prospective of doing something also in local, trying to help local producers too.

The majority of its products are sold in the north of Italy, in supermarket that sell biological products. There are a lot of GAS that book products, because are interested in buying Calabrian biological products that usually are difficult to find. In this sense *// Segno* tries to establish a cooperation vice versa between north and south of Italy, spreading and idea of south that is different from that usual of poverty. Through its products a different idea of south is promoted, and its resources and products are valorized.

3.2 Economic sustainability

3.2.1. ITES-Ufba, public and private funds

The first case study, *ITES-Ufba*, supports projects of development through public and private aids. “*Ecosmar*” is the project developed in Matarandiba. Firstly they created the community bank that gives credit to inhabitants for production and for consumption. With the credit of the bank it was possible to give credit for the construction of a local market and a little restaurant. Credit for the consumption was very useful, in fact until now 100% of habitants have had a loan. They are very little loan, made in social currency, with a tax of 1% or 2,5%.

Community bank has a particular way of functioning, because it bases the credit on a personal relationship, on a community rely, and in this way people who couldn't have a loan in a normal bank could invest their money.

Others economic activities are decided by the community, gathered in the Community Forum, during the period of planning and implementation of the network. It decides what kind of global proposal is suitable to apply in the community. The proposal is global because it doesn't work with only one aspect or enterprise, but it tries to involve the territory wholly. Technicians of *ITES-Ufba* than support the community in writing a proposal to submit in some announcement or private company. So thus they build a financial path that is useful for the future of projects, because when a project ends there is a way to renovate it.

Thanks to these mechanism it was possible for the community to make every year a show of a traditional dance, “Samba de roda”, where the community wholly participated. Everyone has a task, they were involved in sew costumes, programming dance, in the advertising of the event. This event until now is getting better.

⁴ A system of purchasing goods collectively where producers and consumers cooperate. It is a part of alternative agriculture networks, enhancing local and sustainable production.

Public funds are very important for Matarandiba, such as that financed by SENEAS (Department of solidarity economy) and Ufba-Fapex. Hors of these, the relationships between community and municipality are rarely structured. There is not a parallel relationship and a real democratic process of participation in the structure of public policy.

Private funds are also very important, for example those offered by Dow Chemical that is present on the isle with a site of rock salt. Dow Chemical is present in the community forum as an actor living in the isle. It doesn't try to manage the project and it gives money as an action of social responsibility, but in the same time this presence could be a way of controlling the territory. In fact Dow Chemical exploits resources of the community for private profit, and has the property of a big amount of territory. By reports made by ITES in 2006 and 2008 it is clear that Dow Chemical supported the project financing budget wholly.

Projects in Matarandiba are dependent on external support. It doesn't make the community able to engage a free and independent local development, because everything is linked with the external credit line. Experiences encouraged in Matarandiba are not durable on their own but they always need a loan to go on. This situation create a sort of dependence that closes the possibility of development in the local area, and doesn't promote the development of solidarity experiences hors of Matarandiba. Closed in its area the network has low possibility of being durable on its own.

3.2.2. *Il Segno*, local municipality and commons goods

The social cooperative had always had a good relationship with the local municipality. It in fact, started using a land gave as a loan for use by the municipality for 30 years, in which members could start cultivating. Transforming it in a productive land was a very hard work. For this work were involved volunteers from the north of Italy in a form of cooperation vice versa. They in fact are association of volunteers, catholic association such as Scout, association involved in social services such us help to orphans. These associations exchange their work, with an experience of education and holiday too, because the social cooperative is based by the see. Different experiences meet at the same time and this could be an interesting way of meeting and exchanging values.

Il Segno works in a territory institutionally weak. It means that even normal services are not assured. Its idea is to support also the development of the area making good practices available for the inhabitants. For example they made some enhancements such as a part of the water main, which was useful even for others farmers. They started producing natural and biological products, and they choose to sell only biological and local products. From the birth they wanted to cultivate and sell a product of quality not only to make profit, but to promote a different idea of agriculture and conservation of environment. They followed these values producing a biological, local, seasonal careful to work justice.

Others producers nearby the land of *Il Segno*, started thinking about the idea of biological production, and about the idea of working in common to assure common goods, such as water main or conversion or commercialization of products.

One of members said that at first it was strange for others producers of Scarcelli, that three woman had a land to cultivate, and decided to cultivate biological products, with less profit. Until now this was a point of discussion and promotion of a different way of producing and first of all of an agriculture respectful of workers and women.

<<Gender changes nothing on agriculture, it can only produce better goods>> (Giusy, member of "Il Segno")

So they valorized a common good, producing not only materials values but also relational with the others land's owners. Through this cooperation there was also a promotion of biological production and social justice. This activity is until now sustainable. They in fact sell about 20000 pot of transformed product made with biological olive oil, and during period such as Christmas or Ester they sell in the North of Italy a quantity of 100 Kg of products.

4- Comparison between the two case study

Both case study are involved in a little community, both of about 500 people; they try to involve the community whole in their actions. Sustainability and autonomy for these experiences mean building empowerment of the community, and the possibility of production of values in the community with a careful impact on the environment.

When there is an interception of economic, political and relational flows there could be local development, durable on time and sustainable from the economic and environmental point of view.

In the first case study, Matarandiba community, incubator ITES provides public or private funding for the area, in collaboration with private corporations such as "Dow Chemical". Even if in the community has been set up an interesting system of micro-credit, there are many factors that threaten the durability of the experience, such as a powerless relationship with the exterior of the community and a wick economic durability. Economic activities are dependent by funds and they are not sustainable in its own. When investments will finish, it will be difficult that they could be able to continue. One example of this is the community bank, that without public funds cannot go on, even with a fee on each credit that it gives. This kind of dependence affects an autonomous and sustainable process of development.

Moreover the relationship with Dow Chemical is not clear and puts into subordination the community, even if Dow doesn't interact with the finality of the project, it puts limits on a normal development. It is owner of the majority of the isle, and when the network will be strength enough there is possibility that Dow will prevent its actions. Until now, in the rock salt mine, it is exploiting natural resources of community for its private profit, and it is, without any doubt, a way of having a control on the territory.

ITES technicians try to involve inhabitants in their action. In this way they are responsible of that action of development and thanks to it are able to build their future, instead of feeling oppressed by poverty (Freire, 2011). In fact in the bank were involved three analphabetic women, that were educated as accountants, as experts who could work in the bank. This could help in the building of an independent path of development for the community.

In the second case study, social cooperative *Il Segno* has benefited only of public goods, such as land to cultivate and a school for the activities with children, and it has participate also of public calls, but it tries to engage a sustainability on its own, with the sale of products.

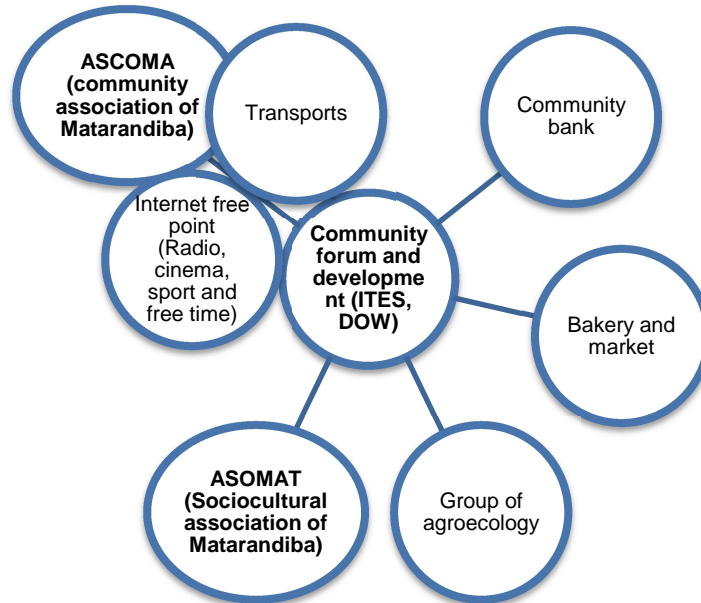
First of all there is a different approach in relation to funding. Matarandiba is so far very weak and activities without funding are not durable on time. This affects the relationship with the territory and the social sustainability. *Il segno* is a social cooperative, and for this it has an economic sustainability, even if so far weak. It has to improve its sells. Economic sustainability is also important because it affects also the prospective of solidarity economy on inhabitants.

Social sustainability is strong in both cases, because both created social inclusion related to their strength. They are based on social justice and people interviewed feel more independent and believe on their possibility.

In both experience there is the will of building a local network among other organizations, meeting also institutions, university and private organizations.

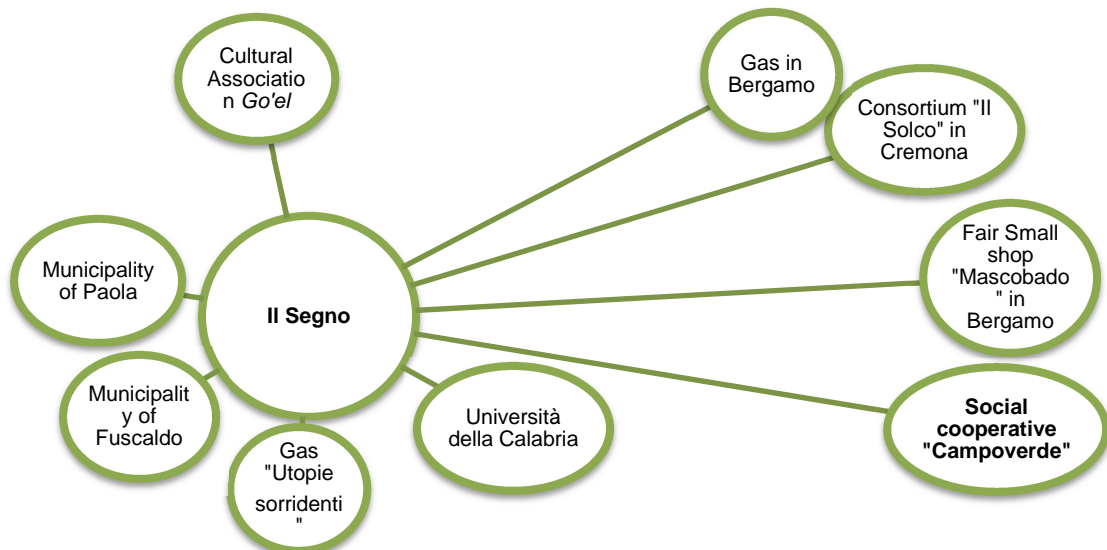
We can compare the two networks:

Picture 1: Map of solidarity economy network in Matarandiba



Source: personal elaboration on ITES-Ufba report.

Picture 2: Map of network about social cooperative Il Segno



Source: personal elaboration.

In both we have a well-structured network, crossed by different type of flows, cultural, public and economic.

In the first case we have a network concentrated on local, that produce values, social inclusion and empowerment with the action with children, woman and fired men.

<<In Matarandiba we have, for example, a cultural activity that receives public resources especially. It is an activity made by 120 women in the community which makes in this way a job redemption and preserves the traditional patrimony. They participate in various public calls to support their actions. These sources are for small investments, but necessary. They are needed for the realization of an annual calendar of cultural activities, for the maintenance of these assets, for paying for the structure of the sound for an event of "Samba de Roda" and women of our community who sewed clothes. The activities have symbolic importance of reaffirmation of cultural identity and enhancement of these populations and, on the other hand, they have an educational importance, because they enhance a culture not only related to violence and poverty, but to the community strenght>> (from an interview with Mariza, inhabitants who works in ASOMAT)

Even if its action of empowerment is relevant in the community, it has a few relationship on exterior. This condition is a limit to growth, even if in the community the network works very well, thanks to the fact that community bank speeds up the local economy. Network in this way is closed and it has no possibility to engage other territories. In this way it creates a good condition in the community but it doesn't stimulate an inter-cooperation with other communities, and this is a limit. It cannot spread out and create other bonds of solidarity economy to strength an alternative socio-economic system.

Matarandiba is in this way a good experiment of evaluation of traditions and cultural manifestations, but it has not the strength needed to impact positively on territory. In fact inhabitants are partly solving the problem of unemployment but they are not autonomous for being independent from funds.

Another example of this condition it is the group of fishers. They could work and sell with the other groups of other communities on alternative markets but they choose to sell products on the market. It means that they have a less profit and they are not as strong as if they could cooperate with other cooperatives. Cooperation could in fact nullifies their need of appealing to private funds for continuing their activity. This reproduces dependence of the territory. Instead of this, solidarity economy involves ways of production and commercialization in the sphere of gift and reciprocity, hors of the sphere of the market, creating news relationships. Otherwise, if solidal relationships stop in the community, they are not able to produce enhancement hors the community.

In the second case, Il Segno, the network produces empowerment and social inclusion in local, and its network is also open to other experiences in the North of Italy. This makes at the center of the network the community of Scarcelli, and makes it discussing with other experiences that could help in the growing. The majority of help was in fact done in volunteer form, from association of the North of Italy. In fact one difficulty exposed by members of the cooperative is that from local associations they had less help; they feel a relationship with a lower trust. This could be the result of the fragmented territory in which the cooperative is based. Moreover in this cooperation with the north of Italy there is a good promotion of products made in Calabria and associations are able of doing a good network on territory. It, in fact, sells to different GAS (solidarity purchasing groups) of Bergamo (Presezzo, Scanzo, Valle Brembana, Zogno, "Cento Passi" Ponteranica, "Campo delle rane" Almenno San Salvatore, Almenno San Bartolomeo, Villa D'Almè, Almè, Zanica). The network is connected also with the experience of small shop "Mascobado" in Ponte san pietro (Bergamo), ACLI (catholic Italian association of labour) in Pedrengo (Bergamo), missionary group of the church "SS Fermo e Rustico" in Presezzo (Bergamo), Consortium "Il Solco" in Cremona (that is composed by Cooperative "Sociale Nazareth", Cooperative Sociale Varietà; Social cooperative "Gruppo Gamma",

Cooperative “Sociale Pulisoff”) and finally the social cooperative “Campoverde” that is also associated with “Il segno”.

With these experiences there is an economic change, but also a passage of ethical flows in which the community of Fuscaldo could identify itself, in a different way from poverty. It proposes itself as an actor of change, in an alternative socio-economic system.

One common goal of the two experiences could be the building of integrated networks among associations, consumers and producers, to create a territory that is cohesive and solidal.

Another characteristic that both cases have in common is the connection with university that has the important role of accompanying the experience towards social innovation. This is possible through a concept of extension of the university, that can improve knowledge taking information by real case and helping community in solving problems.

In the first network is remarkable that each decision is taken in the community forum. This mechanism creates faith and promotes values of solidarity economy. ITES-Ufba helps in balancing interest, taking care that nobody has an upper hand on others. This process building makes the community a relevant actor and promotes a change in cultural habits.

In the second network is remarkable that there are a lot of connections with different social enterprises and volunteer associations. It is a network that goes through the local territory and passes across, making connections also with experiences that don't belong to the same territory. Democratic decisions pass through the network that promotes itself as an actor of change.

5- Conclusions

In conclusion both these experiences aim to promote local development through actions that involve inhabitants in an *active* way, working on making them stronger and responsible of their projects. In this sense these two experiences are political, because they act in a specific territory trying to enhance it. It is relevant that these experiences incubate the territory wholly, but it is needed to improve actors that can advertise themselves. So thus experiences have to give them instruments to emancipate from poverty.

In Matarandiba, in fact, not only one enterprise is incubated, but the territory wholly; in the same way the cooperative, because of its specific legislation form, doesn't work only for an economic goal, but it tries to spread its action on the territory, improving empowerment and social inclusion.

Moreover both experiences build themselves in networks with other experiences, producing a cooperative relationship. This could also help in strengthening the Community economic process without entering in the capitalistic market. Making community stronger on this aspect could reduce the forced consumption (Mance, 2010) and promote the solidal one.

Borzaga (2011) assumes that the exaggerated recourse to funds is a limit of policies that, instead of improving the real empowerment of reality, make them dependent. It is although necessary that social enterprises and community entertainers take the territory as the reference. In this way these two experiences could be actors of change and social innovation. In fact they:

- Involve the territory wholly: social, economic and environmental aspects.
- Permit the interception of different flows of values: cognitive, economic, relational and environmental.

To sum up we can say that these are flows of *buen vivir* (Mance, 2010)

- Stimulate an active participation of actors, to make the community autonomous. Inhabitants are responsible of what they do in community and they identify in it.
- Educate people involved at each level, inhabitants and technicians, because solidarity economy is a different way of acting. They promote education on new forms of production, on solidarity values, a new relation with the environment. They realize the pedagogical process of which Mance talks about (2003), that envisages an alternative need to become real. It means also promoting a new way of thinking that creates around experiences of alternative.
- Both cooperate with the university, that extends itself on the territory to implement an action of *action research*, that creates knowledge with and for the territory.
- Cooperate in networks
- Undertake development action related to specific territories, with identity and history.
- Evaluate common goods and promote social inclusion.
- Promote democratic mechanism of participation, forming a multi functionality of policies as actors of development

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