

*for  
trainers!*

# INFO PACK

## BUILDING UP SOCIAL SOLIDARITY ECONOMY



## Building Up Social Solidarity Economy

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# INTRODUCTION

Dear readers, Dear future SSE trainers,

Welcome to our Info Pack, a useful know-how publication based on experiences gained during the Erasmus+ BUSSE (Building up Social and Solidarity Economy) project. The main aim of BUSSE is to promote and spread knowledge about the social and solidarity economy (SSE) in Central and Eastern Europe, specifically in Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Austria, with support from RIPESS EU, a European network in the field.

Within the project framework, we have created an educational programme about four areas that are connected to SSE. We have tested the programme through real training sessions organized in Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

These four areas are:

- 1. Starting up**
- 2. Community building**
- 3. Co-operatives**
- 4. Food Sovereignty**

The first two areas, namely Starting up and Community Building, are horizontal and can be practices in any of the SSE topics. We can start up a SSE project, initiative or business model in food, energy, culture...you name it. Here you will see how to create or turn a project into an SSE model as a crucial and the most challenging part of the SSE ecosystem. It is not an easy task to run an SSE organisation or entity, especially in countries without such a long and powerful tradition of SSE. Therefore, in this and also further chapters you will find plenty of useful and practical information and teaching materials. In Community building training sessions we have been teaching participants how there is no real SSE without community, without people who use reciprocity in their exchanges, mutual aid and solidarity. Here, as in the previous chapter, we can use know-how in any topics, in food and agro-ecology, in being part of a neighbourhood or being active in a community of online activists.



The next two chapters in the Info Pack will focus on the background, and here we shall explore content and good teaching methods with a focus on Co-operatives and Food Sovereignty. Co-operatives have a long tradition of supporting the SSE world, and for a long period of time they have acted as an important practical example of more humane, just and fair relationships in the world of work. Co-operatives operate in the area of employment and today also in the broader fields such as finance, housing, consumer groups etc., and food sovereignty is part of larger movement for more solidarity, fairness and sustainability in food production, distribution and consumption.

You should also consult the accompanying publication from the BUSSE project, the educational booklet “Building up Social and Solidarity Economy”, where we have gone into further detail on the content of our four main areas (download it for free at [socioeco.org/busse](https://socioeco.org/busse)). In this Info Pack, our emphasis is on the methodology for running training sessions in these areas. There are several useful hints and tips on how to organize training, how to explain a specific area or topic with games, interesting workshops, practical ideas and field visits. SSE is best taught by using active learning and hands-on experience. We have also tried to choose examples and good cases that best exemplified the values and principles of SSE from Central and Eastern Europe, with the aim of providing real and close inspiration for future readers, trainers and practitioners from this part of Europe.

Within the BUSSE project, we wanted to make an impact on better knowledge and skills for SSE in the CEE region, to strength individuals and organizations that wish to set up, create and run transformative activities and policies with SSE values and principles. In the hope that this Info Pack will help you on this path, we wish you pleasant reading and a successful and enjoyable practical experience of the social and solidarity economy.



## STARTING UP

The Social Solidarity Economy is about a “real utopia”, which means already existing economic alternatives. This content is aimed both at persons and organizations willing to found an SSE initiative or enterprise, who would like to transform and help it to become a more solidary and democratic one.

Since SSE is about practice, we suggest incorporating “good practices” and interesting cases into the training. We have learned from our pilot testing that every training session should be participatory and not top-down. Consider the specific needs of your group of learners and make use of the experience and expertise of your “learners”.



Consider making excursions and inviting experts from the field of SSE. Let your participants discover what worked well and what did not work well when existing SSE projects and enterprises (also ones that failed) started up. Take advantage of certain methods like the “SSE canvas”. When conducting training, do not forget to address what SSE is about, especially democratic governance, solidary relations inside and outside the SSE initiative, or enterprise and contributing to the socio-ecological transformation of society.

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## SCRIPT PROPOSAL

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### DAY 1

#### **Preparation of the room, registration, arrival (30–60 min.)**

Check that you have sufficient time to prepare everything in the room before the first participants arrive (pinboards, projector).

#### **Welcome – presentation of agenda (15 min.)**

At the beginning welcome everybody, briefly introduce yourself/ yourselves (as trainer/s) and present the agenda. We recommend you present the agenda before introducing the participants to each other. Also inform about organizational issues (facilities, rules)

#### **Getting to know each other (<30 min.)**

Since the training is supposed to be participatory, it is important that the participants get to know each other. For how to do this, please read the section “methods” and “hints and tips for facilitators” in this chapter. In our experience, the introductions of projects and people can be lengthy. To avoid spending too much time on this stage, keep the introduction of participants rather short, especially if the group is larger. You can also combine the introductory round with content on SSE.

#### **Theoretical introduction (20–30 min.)**

Although many of your participants may mainly be interested in the practical aspects of starting and managing SSE enterprises, it is useful to at least give a short introduction to SSE. This helps



How to start the seminar

Get the participants involved! Use a method that functions as an “opener” concerning the topic, and which gives the participants the opportunity to express why they want to found an SSE initiative or enterprise.

To learn more please see “Methods” below.

them understand the major differences between SSE and the for-profit-economy or other sectors of the economy (such as the “Third Sector”). A short theoretical introduction will help the participants grasp the difference between SSE enterprises and mainstream capitalist firms.

### **Historical introduction (30 min.)**

For a historical introduction you could show a short video such as “The Story of the Rochdale pioneers”. It is advisable to check beforehand whether subtitles are needed, whether a local historic example would fit better or whether a more general historical introduction is of interest. The idea of a historical approach is to make the participants aware of the long and distinguished tradition of SSE – be it in a certain country or region, or even worldwide.



To avoid losing the participants' attention, we advise you not to place too many theoretical inputs in a sequence (historical introduction, dimensions of SSE, fields and types of SSE). You can choose, according to the participants' needs, which of these contents are the most relevant, and spend just a little time on the least relevant ones.

### **Dimensions of SSE (45–60 min.)**

To dig deeper now you can prepare a short presentation on the dimensions or on the various principles of SSE. The participants can then be invited to discuss how SSE principles can be implemented in everyday life.

### **Fields and types of SSE (45–60 min.)**

To illustrate the fields and types of SSE, you might want to show a video on one good example. Then there should be room for the participants to mention SSE initiatives and enterprises they know, and to discuss why these can be considered part of the Social Solidarity Economy. When planning this it is worth considering whether to start from the concrete to the abstract or vice versa.

### **Process in building of SSE (60 min.)**

When you now turn to the practical part – starting up an SSE – it may be helpful to invite participants to imagine for themselves how to get started instead of presenting an entire guideline on how to do this at the very beginning. Invite the participants to deal with the question:

What should we think about before we start a SSE project?

### **Field visit – preparation (30–60 min.)**

If it is possible to make a field visit, do it! This makes SSE tangible. Be clear on what you want to learn during your field visit, select



the practice carefully and finally reserve time to prepare the visit together (what the participants want to learn, which questions to ask..) with your group of learners before you get going.

## **DAY 2**

### **Field visit (3 hours for the visit – plus travelling time – plus time for harvesting 30–60 min.)**

Have a well prepared agenda for the field visit (who is going to speak and /or give a presentation, who shows the participants around, how much time is there for questions and discussions? etc.) Do you want to harvest what you've experienced when you return to the venue of the seminar?

During our project we organized a field visit to one co-operative in the Czech Republic. This was an amazing experience! During the visit a long and very honest discussion took place with one of the members. This was highly appreciated by the participants.

### **Legal questions (60–120 min.)**

One important aspect of starting an SSE initiative or enterprise is the legal part. You can deal with this by giving a presentation on legal forms for SSE enterprises according to the specific laws in your country. The legal aspects are usually mentioned as important by the participants. Information on tax regulations for different types of legal forms might also be an interesting topic. Consider whether to invite an expert or practitioner to relate to these questions, because these topics usually require sound expertise and/or experience.

### **Case studies (90–120 min.)**

We urgently recommend that you make use of case studies during the training. In our pilot testing we had excellent experiences with this method. So take a closer look at how to do this below (-> methods).

## **DAY 3**

### **Cases of participants (90–120 min.)**

Most of your participants are likely to be taking part in the seminar because they have their own projects or ideas in mind. So



Use the “SSE canvas”-method  
In order to plan an SSE (be it concrete or fictional), you can conduct group work using the “SSE canvas” method. Discuss questions like: What are your value propositions, what is your uniqueness, what is your cost structure etc.?

To learn more, please see “Methods” below.

reserve sufficient time for them in order to work on their own cases. Whether it is an idea for a co-op or for a local initiative, the participants will appreciate the possibility to develop these ideas or projects during the training.

During our pilot tests, we experienced that the participants appreciated the opportunity to present their ideas to others, that they could work on the example of their own initiatives, and receive feedback from the group and from experts.

### **Funding (60–90 min.)**

Approach the aspect of funding the start-up of an SSE organization by asking the participants. For example, you could invite them to imagine an already existing SSE initiative such as a food co-op that wants to move from “members-only” to a shop open to the public, and to work on different possibilities to finance this.

### **Communication / decision-making / soft skills (60–120 min.)**

These topics are especially time-consuming when you want to experience them in practice with the participants and then discuss the result. You can tackle this challenge by dealing with the topic in a more superficial way due to the time constraints. So consider presenting general ideas and principles, giving examples from one good practice and then having a discussion with the participants. Make clear that in this 3-day seminar it is not possible to go deeper into these issues, and suggest having an extra 1-2-day seminar on one of these topics only. Please also see the section below on “Community building”.

Our pilot training in Poland showed that although only more or less general ideas and principles were presented and discussed in the group, the participants nonetheless felt they left the training with many skills needed to start a co-op or an SSE initiative. They also felt very motivated to start their initiatives, including one person who came with just a vague idea for an initiative.

### **Perspectives of SSE (45–60 min.)**

In order to deal with perspectives of SSE, you can give a short presentation on a flipchart about the fields and types of SSE, plus possible perspectives of the Social Solidarity Economy. This can be followed by a discussion in small groups on these topics:

- What should happen in order for SSE economy principles to be applied more often?
- What are the limitations and challenges?
- Who could be allies in promoting SSE and changing the framework?

In the presentation you can also include information on the organizations and networks (national and international) promoting SSE.

### **Final feedback round (20–30 min.)**

The entire training should be concluded with a final feedback round. For how to do this, please see the general “hints and tips”.

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## **GOOD CASE**

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### **VISIT TO THE SOCIAL CO-OPERATIVE BISTRO STŘECHA (CZECH REPUBLIC)**

#### **Social aspect:**

Employees have a criminal record or history of homelessness. They receive a decent salary, which is a priority for the co-op. The co-operators subsidise the bistro with their voluntary work (they take half the salary they should). The bistro offers customers the option of pre-paying for a meal / soft-drink for anybody in an adverse socioeconomic situation (e.g. the homeless) who can come to Střecha.

#### **Democratic aspect:**

It is a co-op. There is quite a low threshold for employees to join the co-op (although none from the target group have done so yet). Decisions that are important for everyday work are discussed within the working-groups.

#### **Environmental aspect:**

100% vegan

For other good examples, please also see the accompanying booklet “Building Up Social Solidarity Economy”.

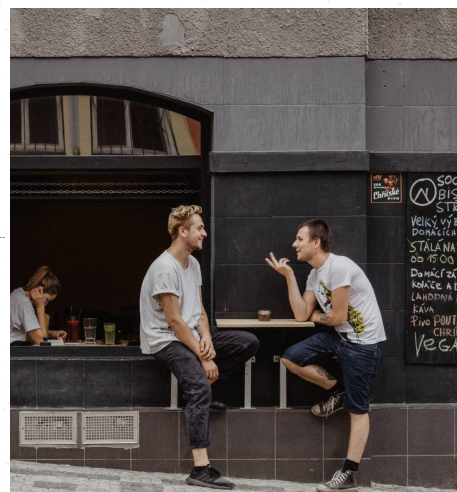


Photo: bistrostreacha.cz

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## METHODS

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The following methods were used during the training sessions:

### **BRAINSTORMING**

This method fosters creative processes: You will be overwhelmed how many good ideas or answers your participants will generate when they are “allowed” to voice every idea without cutting out ideas from the outset. There is so much experience and creativity in the room! Every self-managing organization (which tries to find ways to be as non-hierarchical as possible and to reflect existing hierarchies) will rely on its members and their manifold capabilities.

### **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

When you do not present the answers or solutions at the start, but rather ask questions and invite the participants to find the answers themselves, this activates the learners and makes them participants in the training process. Besides this active role in the process, it is more likely that the learners will remember what they discovered themselves than what was presented to them. The same applies in SSE initiatives and enterprises. There will not be bosses who give the “right” answers. The members have to develop their capabilities to find answers and solutions themselves.

### **DISCUSSIONS**

Discussions are another way of involving learners in the process. Learners are not presented with information by experts that they have to accept in a “top down” manner. They are invited to question what they have learned, to narrate their experiences, to share their expertise and to express different views. This helps to create a setting where participants actively get to understand what SSE is about, to remain curious about others’ opinions, to learn to listen to others, to understand each other and probably to develop common insights and points of view.



## GROUP WORK

Exchanging and discussing in a large group is often tiresome and not so creative. It helps to split up the participants in smaller groups in order to work more efficiently. As concerns the output, it is not necessary to repeat everything in the plenum, but only main results. So every (smaller) group has more time and can concentrate on 1-2 issues. To do this in the plenum would be too time consuming and exhausting. Working in pairs or in smaller groups is a good learning experience for SSE, since in an SSE enterprise or initiative it is the same thing: sometimes it is more useful to split members into smaller (working) groups.

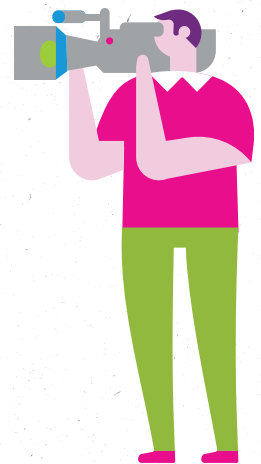
## INPUTS (WRITTEN OR ORAL):

practical information, general ideas, concepts, principles, specific knowledge such as legal regulations

Even in a participatory setting, learners will appreciate receiving some input, be it written or oral (or a combination of both). Since the learners will be eager to learn about new content, be clear about which way to do this and how much content to present. Sometimes “less is more”, and it is better to actively “digest” the input together in the group instead of piling up too much content. You can also refer to “further readings” and give useful hints instead of presenting “everything”. In SSE enterprises and initiatives, in order to make democratic decisions it is important that hierarchies between “experts” and “ordinary members” are avoided. This needs time and effort so that everyone is enabled to share as much knowledge as possible and to understand what is going on. Inputs should therefore be given and dealt with in a way that ensures no one is left behind.

## FIELD VISITS

Field visit (excursions) are probably some of the most “hands-on” methods that enable the participants to learn in a very vivid way. This involves not only the possibility of getting to see “real places” with “real people”, but also getting to meet the persons behind the SSE projects and enterprises, the ones who make those already existing “real utopias” tangible. It is often their “authenticity” that impresses the participants, and their spirit, their values and their commitment that makes those projects memorable to us. SSE field visits may be very motivating, and they can create long-lasting memories which may serve as an





important source when starting and managing an SSE enterprise or initiative.

## **CASE STUDIES**

Case studies are about concrete projects. They tell stories about practical projects and enterprises of SSE, inform about such organizations and they contain information about different relevant aspects of every SSE initiative or enterprise: the solidarity aspect of the project, how democracy works in everyday life, how decisions are made, the legal and organizational form of the entity, who benefits from it,... So case studies will be very helpful in the phase of starting up an SSE initiative or enterprise.

## **ELABORATING IDEAS, CONCEPTS ETC. BY PARTICIPANTS**

When it comes to actively participating in the process of learning SSE, this is of great importance. Giving the learners the possibility of elaborating their own ideas, concepts, cases and so on serves as a laboratory or small peer-to-peer incubator where new ideas and concepts can be (further) developed with the help of others, where the participants receive feedback and also new ideas, which helps them to proceed with their cases.

## **FACILITATING**

A seminar on SSE which is participatory and not frontal will still need facilitating. In this case the trainers will be the facilitators, they will monitor the time and keep an eye on the process so all the participants have an equal possibility to say something and ask questions. The learners appreciate that there is sufficient time for discussion, and at the same time they like the facilitators to stick to the agenda. The method of facilitating is a central aspect of democratic meetings which lie at the core of SSE.

## **FEEDBACK ROUNDS**

One important aspect of participation in SSE is learning to give and receive feedback from others. This is why practicing feedback is of great importance and should be done from the very beginning of the seminar, and throughout the whole process of learning. Always calculate sufficient time for feedback rounds. In

the accompanying booklet you can find hints and tips concerning giving and receiving feedback for your participants.

## **GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER: BINGO!**

- For introducing participants you can use a game called "Bingo!" There is a questionnaire – set of questions (on flipchart). Each participant asks the others. The more positive answers you get, the better (though this is not the point of the game, of course :-). The questions can address experiences of the alternative economy, altruism, co-operativism, for example: Have you already attended an event called Swap-shop? Have you recently helped anybody without expecting reciprocal help? Have you ever been a part of a co-operative? Etc.
- The key point in this game is that the participants talk to each other and introduce each other while trying to get the answers. The participants will understand that it's more important to get to know each other by discussion than to try to win the game. Trying to fill in the questionnaire helps them talk with more people, so ideally everyone introduces himself / herself at least briefly to all the others.
- The questions should be clear enough. Since some of the participants may talk for too long about one question only, facilitation is very much needed. Use simple questions and also tell the participants that at that moment it is not necessary for them to understand everything.

## **ANALYSING CASE STUDIES – HOW TO DO IT WELL**

Important benefits of studying cases are:

- cases are practical, not just theoretical
- they enable participants to study certain aspects of SSE like democratic organization or joint decision making
- participants can share experiences others have already had: ways that worked or that failed
- case studies are ideal because learners actively learn instead of receiving input passively

Depending on the size of the group, you should choose how many cases you want to study. These cases should be well prepared by the trainers and cover different areas (be it gastronomy, textile production, wood fuel production, food co-ops, car sharing, coffee roasting, housing,...). Some or all of them can be co-operatives. It is useful to choose local examples, but you can also pick ones

from other areas if you don't find sufficient examples in your own locality. Besides looking at cases that succeeded, it may be interesting to also study examples that failed.

Have the participants form pairs or small groups (of 3-4 persons) and analyze the case studies. It is good to have 2 cases per group, not only one practice. Let the participants find answers to the following questions:

- How do those cases represent the main SSE principles (economic, environmental, democratic and social)?
- What are the strong points in those cases? How could they be used to further improve the project?
- What are the weak points and how could these be eliminated or avoided in order not to threaten the stability of the SSE initiative?

This group work should be followed by presentations from each group and by a discussion.

You may want to add further questions such as:

- What was the impact of the enterprise regarding their clients / community / neighbourhood?
- What do you consider to be a success of this case study?
- What are the specifics of the target groups (if there is any specific target group)?

For questions please also see our booklet ([socioeco.org/busse](http://socioeco.org/busse)).

### **“SSE CANVAS”**

In order to plan an SSE (be it concrete or fictional) you can do group work using the “SSE canvas” – a method inspired by the “business canvas” method. Each group (of 3–5 persons) is supposed to discuss all the questions. It would be useful to

go deeper into at least 1 or 2 of the questions that interest the groups the most.

This will require

- 10–15 min, to explain the method and build groups
- 60 min (minimum) for group work
- 10–15 min (each group) to present the outcome in the plenum
- 10–15 min to deal with questions or to have a discussion

Value propositions	Practicalities	Uniqueness	Your Delivery
<p><b>Democracy &amp; participation</b>            What will be your democratic structure?            What will your decision making processes look like?            How do you sustain participation?</p> <p><b>Socio-ecological transformation</b>            What is the problem to be solved?            How do your activities contribute to a socio-ecological change of society and economy?            Who will benefit? How?</p> <p><b>Solidarity</b>            What is solidarity in regard to your internal relations?            In regard to external relations? (SSE, other stakeholders, global south etc.)</p> <p><b>User value</b>            Who is using it?            What problem is it solving for the users?            Why would users choose your SSE?</p>	<p><b>Main activities</b>            What are your main activities in order to realize your value?</p> <p><b>Main resources</b>            What do you need for it to work?</p>	<p>What is different about what you represent and how you are doing things?            What could defeat you? (internal threats, market or external risks)</p>	<p>How will you reach your users / clients?            Who are your key partners?</p>
	<p><b>Financial value and revenues</b>            Who contributes financially?            Why do they contribute?            How do they pay?</p>		<p><b>Cost structure</b>            What are your key costs? (fixed, variable)</p>

SSE canvas (inspired by "Superhero canvas")



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## SUMMARY & POSSIBILITIES TO PROCEED WITH

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Try to find out the needs of your (potential) participants beforehand as much as possible. This will help you write your individual script and define the specific programme of your seminar. There are many ways to organise a seminar for beginners. You will definitely have to choose from all those possibilities and make decisions: which content to choose, which methods to use, which kind of group work and which case studies to prepare. You are probably already an experienced trainer, so this is not news for you. If not, don't hesitate to talk to experienced trainers – be it in the realm of SSE or in some other area – they can give you some good advice or feedback on your individual script. Also ask people who have already started an SSE initiative or enterprise whether they are willing to give you some feedback, since they are experts in starting up.

Put practical cases and persons in the middle. Let the participants do group work and let them work on their cases. When you deal with the theoretical part of SSE, it is just as important to design settings that are oriented towards active participation as it is in the case of practical issues.

This 3-day seminar is mainly aimed at beginners (individuals with a concrete idea of a SSE project or even persons with only a vague idea) who are interested in starting up their SSE initiative or enterprise.

This script or curriculum should be considered a proposal. Due to lack of time or certain restraints, it might be the case that your potential participants rather prefer a 2-day seminar. In this case you could drop some of the content (probably from day 1, since days 2 and 3 are the more practical ones). You can start your seminar in the morning, but you can also begin in the late afternoon/evening.

In any case, think about organizing a process which is as vivid and participatory as possible, not just a university-style lecture or front-led school teaching where the participants mainly listen to experts and teachers. Try to remember seminars you have participated in or have already facilitated: What did you like about them? What worked well? What was inspiring? What helped you to get new insights and get new ideas?



Refer to the accompanying booklet “Building Up Social Solidarity Economy” ([socioeco.org/busse](https://socioeco.org/busse)). It provides not only information for learners but also content, methods, diagrams, cases, hints and tips for trainers and facilitators.





## COMMUNITY BUILDING

Community building is a field of practices that brings about the formation of a community within a regional area or around a common good. This common good can be a co-operative or other endeavour, whose members are working on developing an alternative economic model that is based on people's needs. The process of forming a community around such an initiative can be spontaneous and unconscious, but if you are starting from scratch or want to further develop and expand your project, efforts will be needed to encourage new people to join the ranks, or integrate existing members and make them feel that they are part of a community and own it collectively.

As trainers, we have the skills and many tools at hand to support the processes that can lead to forming, developing and strengthening a community. Below is a set of tools that enable you to involve, get to know and integrate people, and help the initiatives you are building or wish to support flourish.

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## SCRIPT PROPOSAL

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Here you can find a script proposal based on the notion of community building. It is a script that has been tested with a real audience and modified according to feedback from participants and experts. The objective of this particular selection of methods is to empower activists and organizers, and give them tools to explore notions of community building on different levels: from interpersonal skills and communication to strategic planning and outreach. This script is not meant to be exhaustive in any of the fields, but rather it is designed to inspire and show the breadth of subjects that come into play when talking about community building.

### DAY 1

#### **Registration, welcome and getting to know each other (60 min.)**

Allow time for people to acquaint themselves and feel comfortable with each other. The basis for any fruitful co-operation – even during workshops – is trust.

#### **Expectations (30 min.)**

It is important for you to know what people actually expect from the workshops, so that you can tweak the script to better meet their needs and focus on the things they are interested in. You can refer to the expectations at the very end of the workshops to check if they were met.

#### **Break (15 min.)**

Remember to give the participants breaks! Workshops tend to be an intensive time so make sure people stay fresh and focused.



Keep the expectations together on a flipchart so you can return to it at the end of the training.

### **Motivations vs. resources (60 min.)**

This method is a first attempt to gather information about the case studies. It will allow the participants to assess what is driving them and what they can build on.

### **Case introduction/choice (45 min.)**

Participants introduce their cases and decide what they want to work on during the workshops. They can develop their own ideas or join someone else. Working on real cases boosts engagement and empowers.



For more information on Social Solidarity Economy check the accompanying brochure and other materials on [socioeco.org/busse](https://socioeco.org/busse).

### **Intro to Social Solidarity Economy and how Community Building is part of it (30 min.)**

Showing the workshop theme in a wider context can be inspiring and help to illuminate broader connections beyond our own backyards.

## **DAY 2**

### **Opening Round (30 min.)**

Always start the day with a warm welcome and check energy levels and motivation. This is a good moment to ask what people liked about the previous day and what they were struggling with.

### **Team communication training (150 min.)**

This subject matter is so broad and rich that it can easily fill a year's worth of workshops. This block only provides a glimpse into some of the most important concepts like feedback and moderation.

### **Lunch (90 min.)**

Confirm that you know beforehand of any alimentary issues the participants may have. Make sure the meal is nutritious and tasty. Good food = happy participants! ;)

### **Local relationships – Power mapping (120 min.)**

This method will help participants to look beyond their own group and assess where to find potential alliances and targets.

## **Community integration (120 min.)**

Here participants will get a chance to look more closely at their community and evaluate different levels of engagement and corresponding communication and practices.

## **Local visit / evening programme**

This is an opportunity to get to know the history of the venue and surroundings, and to test community building activities in practice.

## **DAY 3**

### **Morning round (15 min.)**

If you have less time at your disposal, you can keep the morning round short and sweet by asking just a couple of sentences from each participant.

### **How to communicate your message outside/inside (60 min.)**

This part is to ensure that the values and goals of your organization are well defined and communicated both inside and outside your initiative.

### **Evaluation (30 min.)**

Try to find time for participants' feedback and use it as an opportunity to learn and improve your workshops.

### **Closing round and next steps (30 min.)**

End the workshops with everyone writing out the next steps they will undertake in their own initiatives.

### **Networking & working in the garden (optional)**

Here again this is a chance for participants to establish ties for future collaboration and try out community building in practice.



Ask participants beforehand what their interests are and what they like to do. Use this information to shape common activities.



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## GOOD CASES

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### VENUE AS CASE STUDY

Try to base the training on the cases closest to you, both with regard to the content of the training as well as the venue. This will result in a lot of material to work with and reflect upon. Working with real and tangible examples from the surroundings is inspiring and gives a lot to talk about.

Part of the programme can be a sightseeing tour in the neighbourhood or activities defined by the needs of the venue. Meeting local activists can also greatly enrich your workshop and make for an interesting experience.

During this project, the venue we chose for the workshop was part of a democratically governed neighbourhood in the centre of Warsaw. Part of the programme was a sightseeing tour in the neighbourhood led by one of its activists, and the workshop concluded with a proposal for helping in the local community garden that forms part of the venue. Read more about the Jazdów neighbourhood here: [www.jazdow.pl/en](http://www.jazdow.pl/en)

### TRAINING RESOURCE

The best practical resource for this training will be experiences and know-how derived from real initiatives. Participants will be more eager to learn about the internal workings and rules of an existing organization, and will ask a lot of practical questions. Concrete and practical experiences of democratic organizing, community building and team communication will also be indispensable for making this workshop interesting, engaging, and useful. For example, in the BUSSE project we based this training on the example of the Dobrze Food Co-op in Warsaw. Read more about Dobrze here: [www.dobrze.waw.pl/english](http://www.dobrze.waw.pl/english)

### PARTICIPANTS' CASES

The basic idea we put forward here is to ask participants to prepare their own proposals of cases to work on and apply all or part of the subsequent exercises to these cases. This will

ideally result in a deep involvement of the participants in the different stages of the training, and the exercises will achieve a high level of relevance and affect the work the participants are doing outside of the workshops.

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## METHODS

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### **MOTIVATIONS VS. RESOURCES – ENGAGEMENT TREE**

This method will help the participants to realize their own motivations for building an SSE initiative and to judge the resources they have available.

This is an individual exercise – participants read through the instruction and draw an individual tree, (alternatively you can prepare empty copies for everyone) and hand out together with this instruction [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oySg95uY6ACgTVac447fPdQUpf1uN\\_gSHVKoUJDFa6k/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1oySg95uY6ACgTVac447fPdQUpf1uN_gSHVKoUJDFa6k/edit?usp=sharing).

It is good if participants can start the exercise together and finish it at home.

### **TEAM COMMUNICATION TRAINING**

Skills for group work, communication, facilitation and other group tasks are fundamental in developing any community driven activities and democratic initiatives. This is especially relevant for SSE initiatives, which are based on grassroots involvement and transformative missions. An introduction should be provided to basic levels of the following skills and capacities:

- Meeting moderation
- Methods of facilitation and decision-making
- Feedback

This subject is too broad to cover it extensively in this publication. For more information check out our brochure “Building up

Social Solidarity Economy” at [www.socioeco.org/busse](http://www.socioeco.org/busse) and other online sources like [seedsforchange.org.uk](http://seedsforchange.org.uk).

## LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS – POWER MAPPING

How to establish long-term relationships with authorities and the local community. Using the power mapping technique to identify local actors who are likely to support your SSE initiative and work out ways and connections to reach and influence them. After the method has been explained, participants should apply it to their own cases. Trainers check that the method is applied accordingly.

Browse [thechangeagency.org](http://thechangeagency.org) for an in-depth explanation of the power mapping tool and its use or check out [beautifulrising.org/tool/power-mapping](http://beautifulrising.org/tool/power-mapping) for another take on the tool. Here’s also a video explaining the method: [youtube.com/watch?v=jSS367drdQ0](https://youtube.com/watch?v=jSS367drdQ0)

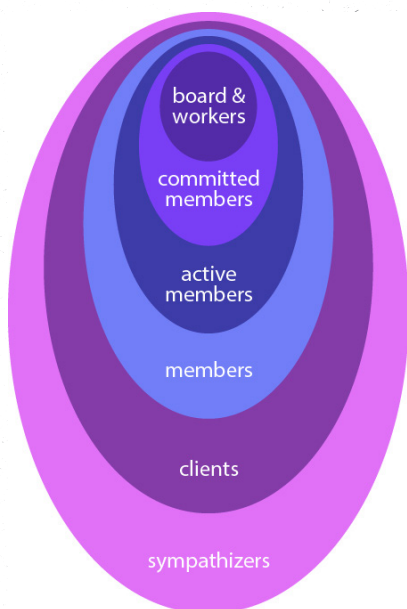
## COMMUNITY INTEGRATION – CIRCLES OF COMMITMENT

Maintaining flow and communication within the community requires active operation on different levels, and strategies to engage existing and potential members. The main issue facing us, as ensues from experiences from the Dobrze Food Co-op and other organizations, is engaging members: dealing with low engagement of existing members, finding a place for different types of engagement, communication strategies across different circles of commitment, integrating and strengthening the community. Considering communication strategies and channels (fb, email, newsletter, print media, Youtube, instagram, blog, etc). Examples to be worked on with participants.

An example of using this method in the context of campaigns can be found at [thechangeagency.org/circles-of-commitment](http://thechangeagency.org/circles-of-commitment). You can also check out the source text that inspired this method: [jrmyprtr.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/purpose-driven-campaigning.pdf](http://jrmyprtr.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/purpose-driven-campaigning.pdf)

## HOW TO COMMUNICATE YOUR MESSAGE OUTSIDE/INSIDE – ORGANIZATION DNA

How to work out a vision and unifying message for your SSE initiative. How to communicate it internally and externally in order



to enhance an understanding of the initiative's underlying values and mission, and integrate it into everyday practices.

Description: People can work in pairs or groups. They work by answering simple, organizing questions which consist of organization DNA:

- What problem do you want to solve?
- What is the solution (do you have a vision of the solution)?
- What values do you communicate?
- Are those values reflected in action?
- What is the role of your initiative in solving the problem?
- What is your personal role?
- What are your concrete, measurable goals?

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## SUMMARY & POSSIBILITIES TO PROCEED WITH

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The above examples, tips and methods are just an introduction to the broad field of community building. Some of them are more suitable for planning strategically whom you want to reach and how, others address the skills within the team working closely together.

Largely missing is a vast amount of activities that you can organise and encourage people to spend time together, get to know each other, share skills and interests and so on. We decided not to present examples here, as these can be all sorts of things: picnics, workshops, gardening, cooking, making music, reading and writing poetry, exchanging recipes, establishing a communal bicycle repair station – the only limit is your imagination.

These activities don't necessarily have to be directly related to the endeavour they originate from. By encouraging people to meet, get acquainted and spend time together, we are effectively forging a community. People who know each other and have shared some activities and interests are more likely to create something together and help a common initiative.





## CO-OPERATIVES

The co-operative movement is the strongest part of the social solidarity economy, with a long and distinguished tradition. Co-operatives or co-ops are the most common really existing democratic economic organizations, spread all over the world. The key feature of the co-op is the democratic decision-making process and democratic ownership. In an ideal case, each member of a co-operative has 1 vote and is involved in all the important decisions made in the workplace.



The trainers can contribute to strengthening the SSE and its vital part – the co-operative movement – by helping its potential members to fully understand the values and principles, and to be able to implement it in their own economic activities. At the end of the training session, the participants should know what the co-op is, what are the most important co-operative values and principles, how democratic decision-making works and what we should expect from co-ops as part of SSE. The most important questions are how co-ops take care not only of their members, but also the communities of which they are part, the co-operative movement as such, society as a whole, future generations, and the environment and non-human nature.

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## SCRIPT PROPOSAL

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Below you can find an example of a 3-day training session for people who are interested in joining the co-operative movement. The script was tested in several simulated training sessions and consulted with experts, and feedback was incorporated to it. The full version could and should be adjusted to the needs of the specific group with which the trainer is going to work, and to the circumstances in which the training will take place. It can be divided and shortened. If possible, it is recommended to consult the participants on the length and content of script for any particular testing. The longest and fullest version of the training contains the following parts:

### DAY 1

#### **PART 1. INTRODUCTION (30 min.)**

- brief introduction of the whole project
- getting to know each other: short introductory round of participants

During the introduction, the participants should receive basic information on the training – they will obtain a detailed programme and all additional learning materials. In the second part, the participants will get to know each other and the trainers, their motivation to participate in the training, their expectations and their experiences with the training topics.



To help the participants open up and set the stage for the introductory round, it is always good when the trainers start by introducing themselves and then give the floor to the group. However, it is important to keep this introductory round brief and informative (to the point). Our experience suggests that this introductory round may require some time-keeping on the part of the trainers, who should make sure that the time the participants spend on introducing themselves is appropriate and equally allocated to each member of the group.

## tip

Know your participants in advance  
If possible, try to get to know your participants before you start the training, e.g. when registering for the training you may ask them to fill in a short questionnaire to help you gauge the level of their knowledge of the subject-matter, the level of their practical experience, their reasons for their interest in the training and their expectations. This information will help you calibrate and adjust the content of the training to address the needs of the participants, and to make the training interesting and engaging.

## tip

If it is not possible to organize an on-site field visit, you may choose to show a short film, or even several short films, instead (see [socioeco.org/busse](http://socioeco.org/busse)) or have them speak about their experiences with their own projects (however, this must be well prepared in advance).

There are several ways the trainers may approach the introductory round to get the participants involved and “break the ice” – some of them are mentioned also in this Info Pack. You may find inspiration e.g. in the Bingo! game (see the chapter “Starting Up”).

## PART 2. SSE AND CO-OPERATIVISM – SOME THEORY & HISTORY (90 min. with breaks)

- introduction to SSE
- what is a co-operative
- what is the history of the co-operative movement
- what is the role of co-ops and the co-operative movement in SSE

In this part, the participants will receive basic information on the main concepts and topics of the training. Here it is the concept of SSE and the concept of the co-operative and their linkages. This part requires some delving into the theory and history of SSE and the co-operative movement, so it is important to make sure that the participants understand how this theoretical part fits into the logic of the training and also to make sure that all the participants have a common understanding of the concepts (which otherwise may have different meanings for different people, based on their level of experience, educational background or general exposure to the tackled themes). After a short presentation, a discussion follows which provides space for questions from the participants and further clarifying of the concepts and any potential misunderstandings. To make this theoretical part more participatory, make sure that enough time is reserved for participants’ questions and discussion. The part on the history of the co-op movement provides the participants with a brief overview of the distinguished and long historical traditions of co-ops in the participants’ country and its ties to the broader regional and global context. Our experience is that people may not be aware of the historical background of the movement – this is an opportunity to familiarize them with the ties between the present and the past, which may also lead them to think further about the future of the movement.

## PART 3. FIELD VISIT (120 min. plus adequate travel time)

- field visit to a selected good practice example

The aim of the field visit is to show the participants the operation of a particular co-op and have the possibility to speak to actual members or employees of co-ops. Allow yourself ample time to prepare the agenda of the visit: e.g.

who is going to present the co-op to the participants, how questions of the participants will be tackled and the like). The field visit experience is mostly very strong and lasting, and the participants have a chance to see how the concept works in practice.

## DAY 2

### OPENING (15-30 min.)

- this a space to ask people about what they liked about the previous day, what they felt was lacking, answer their additional questions and address any outstanding issues from Day 1, and to present them with the agenda for Day 2

### PART 4. ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY (60 min.)

- history and basics of the concept and various approaches

This is the most abstract and theoretical part of the training. The aim is to explain the tradition of democratic decision-making and thinking in the field of the economy. A clear understanding of the tradition and various democratic approaches to the economy will increase the chances that participants will fully understand the difference between a capitalist authoritative economy and SSE, and would be able to avoid approaches applied by authoritarians which are not transformative, but merely reproduce the shortcomings of the capitalist economy.

### PART 5. DEMOCRATING DECISION-MAKING (120 min. with breaks)

- introductory presentation – aims and methods of democratic decision-making
- practical workshop

Democratic decision-making is crucial for the operation of a democratically structured workplace. The initial presentation summarises various methods of democratic decision-making. In the following discussion, questions and uncertainties should be answered. During the practical workshop, the participants will experience some of the methods in practice and learn to listen to the others and relate to them as equals with the same voice. The case can be chosen from a real co-op, or it can be elaborated at the beginning of the workshop by the participants themselves. Each participant will play the role of a member, employee or manager of a co-op.

**tip**

To present the history of the co-operative movement, you could chose to show a short film (e.g. The History of the Rochdale Pioneers) and complement it with the history of co-ops in your country (see [socioeco.org/busse](http://socioeco.org/busse)). For the film, you may want to check whether subtitles would be needed.

**tip**

After the introductory theoretical presentation and a short break, reserve enough time for participants' questions and discussion.

**tip**

Democratic decision-making may be rather lengthy and time consuming, so make sure that enough time is reserved for it, and that it is in proportion to the introductory theoretical presentation. It is also important to provide short breaks during the session, so that people have time to refresh themselves. The aim is to help them experience the process or at least to give them a "taste" of what it is like, not to wear them out.

## **PART 6. ORGANIZING FOR CO-OPERATION (75 min. with breaks)**

- introduction to community organizing (presentation)
- practical workshop – one-on-ones



One-on-ones is a method that requires good listening skills as well as skills in asking the right types of questions. We strongly recommend that the trainers familiarize themselves with the method well enough before the training session (see [socioeco.org/busse](http://socioeco.org/busse)). Alternatively, the trainers may invite someone from outside who is already skilled and experienced in this method.

In many cases, community support is the bedrock of co-ops and other SSE initiatives. The participants should have a chance to learn how to build relations with the people inside and outside of the co-op and various techniques on how to create and sustain a community.

The practical workshop is aimed at training in the building of the relations to the people and cultivating the skill of talking to people individually to get their support for the case (co-op) or recruit new members of the co-op. The participants will be divided into pairs, and they will take turns talking to each other – this way each of them will have a chance to play both the more active role of the initiator of the co-op and the role of its potential member or supporter.

## **DAY 3**

### **OPENING (15-30 min.)**

- similarly to Day 2, this a space to ask people about what they liked about the previous day, what they felt was lacking, answer their additional questions and address any outstanding issues from Day 2, and to present them with the agenda for Day 3

### **PART 7. ESTABLISHING A CO-OP (240 min. with breaks)**

- how to establish a co-op in your country
- practical workshop – we are starting a co-op

The participants will learn about the necessary steps towards the establishment of a co-op, what they will need and with which institutions to communicate. They will learn about the possible structure of the co-op and its operation, different positions in the co-op, how to plan a production/service, or where to find resources and help for the beginning. They will try to use the information from the presentation in the following practical workshop and simulate the steps leading to the establishment of a co-op. The case can be taken from an existing co-op or can be created by the participants themselves, based on their work experiences, skills or needs.



## **PART 8. EVALUATION (30 min.)**

- feedback from participants

Trainers will receive feedback on the training, its parts and their own performance. This information serves as a basis for improving the training process and the performance of the trainer. Participants' feedback can be collected through various methods, e.g. in an open discussion or using a questionnaire. In the case that the trainers want to gain some specific information, the discussion should be structured and facilitated by them, and specific questions prepared in advance.

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## **GOOD CASES**

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When selecting good cases to present and analyze during the training, keep in mind the following:

### **STICK TO THE VALUES**

Choosing the right example is crucial. The example should first of all stick to the co-operative values and principles, as well as the aims and values of SSE. In practice there are a lot of co-ops which do not operate in concert with the ideal concept of an SSE initiative. The trainers should be aware of the shortcomings and problems of certain co-ops, and prefer those which are the closest to the ideal.

### **THE REAL THING IS THE BEST**

It is better (i.e. more inspirational and interesting) when the participants are introduced to a co-op and its operation by some of its members. The best case scenario is to organize training directly in a co-op or to choose a venue close to one. If the participants are provided with any services, it can be provided by co-ops – e.g. catering services. If no co-op is available, it is preferable to approach another SSE organization or enterprise. In the case that there is no good example near the venue of the training, it may be possible to invite guests from a more remote co-operative to talk about their experience or show a short film with good examples.



## **VIKTORINA LOCA – A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A LOCAL CO-OPERATIVE**

The Viktorina loca co-operative is based in Přebor, a small town in northern Moravia, Czech Republic. Its goal is to help Food Sovereignty on a local scale by shortening the supply chain between the local producers and consumers. In the words of the co-op members: “We strive to create the conditions for the processing and distribution of local food, and currently we’re running a waste-free food store and catering kitchen.”

<https://viktorinaloca.cz/>

# Viktorina loca

For other good examples, see also the accompanying booklet “Building Up the Social Solidarity Economy” (see [socioeco.org/busse](https://socioeco.org/busse)).

### **PARTICIPANTS’ CASES**

Over the course of the training, many participants may seek answers to their everyday problems. During the testing, the most lively discussions were usually about how co-ops and other SSE organizations could contribute to solving concrete real-life issues, and how they can improve the lives of people and the lives of their communities. Trainers can approach this from two perspectives: either they can choose an already existing example selected on the basis of participants’ needs, or they can work with participants’ own ideas and the challenges they are trying to resolve. In such a case, it may be useful to ask the participants to think about their ideas and concerns beforehand.



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## METHODS

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In the training, we used the following methods:

- presentation and discussion
- field visit
- short films
- practical workshop
- one-on-ones

### PRESENTATIONS

Presentations are used as the best method to deliver basic information to the participants. In the case that the trainer is working with a target group of people with no experience with the topic this is the basic step to start any further training. The presentations should be as short as possible (in an ideal case not longer than 20 minutes) and very informative, i.e. to the point. The presentations are always followed by a discussion to clarify the message and answer any questions, and by a break. Some participants might find the format of the presentation boring, so presentations could be combined with workshops or games so as not to lose people's attention.

### FIELD VISITS

– see other parts of this Info Pack e.g. Starting up

### SHORT FILMS

In the case that the training is taking place in an area with no good real-life examples of a co-op or other SSE initiative, or in the case that it is not possible to invite any practitioners, short films can be a good substitute to show the operation of a co-op. Films should be 5-10 minutes long and followed by a discussion to give the participants the chance to clarify their questions. It is also important to adjust the selection of the films according to the participants' interests or the problems they are trying to address. The trainer can use short films even if there is a field visit planned, in order to show the participants the diversity of the co-operative movement and various types of co-ops or their fields of operation.

## **PRACTICAL WORKSHOP**

Participants can experience what it takes to establish and/or run a co-op or a SSE enterprise on their own, and they can “get a taste” of the process of imagining and planning the practical steps towards founding a co-op. The testing showed that this method meets with a positive response, and many participants felt inspired to immediately start their own co-op. A case for the practical workshop can be prepared collaboratively with the participants – based on their skills, needs or problems, or selected from real life. During the workshop, other methods can also be used, such as games where participants play roles according to real working positions in the co-op.

## **TRAINING IN ONE-ON-ONES**

Through this method, the participants will learn how to get to know their allies, supporters and members, not by “guessing” their stance, but by actively approaching them and involving them in a dialogue. It is also an opportunity to learn about people’s experiences, networks and skills, in order to open up a conversation about what role might be the best fit for them within the organization. A one-to-one is a planned meeting between two individuals, in which they establish a personal ‘public’ relationship. It is a strategic meeting used to shed light on the problems and issues people care about (their interests) and to figure out other people’s ideas, motivations and visions, and identify where they intersect with yours. It is a purposeful semi-structured conversation/dialogue, in which the organiser ensures the main protagonist is the other person, in order to gain insight into his/her values and priorities. This method is widely used in community organizing for various causes and in various areas of life. For more information on this method see the further resources recommended in the chapter “Co-operatives” (see [socioeco.org/busse](https://socioeco.org/busse)).

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## SUMMARY AND POSSIBILITIES TO PROCEED WITH

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The first step is to map the needs of the participating group. Trainers should try to gain information on the participants before the training takes place and prepare the training accordingly. The training sessions can be different – shorter or longer, more theoretical or more practical, for absolute beginners or for more experienced participants or practitioners seeking to improve their skills.

It is important to combine the methods wisely. Trainers should be able to deliver some basic information, but a one-way stream of information can be seen and experienced as boring – although this information may be vital for a full understanding of the SSE or co-operativism, why they are important and how they are different from standard capitalist enterprises. Therefore, non-participatory methods such as presentations should be followed by games, hands-on workshops or discussions.

No training can ever fully cover the particular topic, all of its nuances and intricacies. Therefore it is important to provide the participants with further reading, materials, links and contacts. In an ideal case, it is possible to involve the participants in some type of co-operation or advise them on where and how they can join the movement.





## FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Food Sovereignty shares its core values with the Social Solidarity Economy. It is also possible to look at Food Sovereignty as a manifestation of SSE. Various enterprises based on Food Sovereignty values (such as food co-operatives, community supported agriculture, etc.) could be understood as SSE in practice. This is the reason why this chapter focuses on Food Sovereignty.

But you may be asking: What exactly does Food Sovereignty mean?



It is an answer to the multiple crises which the world has been facing in the last decades. Disrespect for the natural background of our civilisation has brought us deterioration of ecosystem functions and destabilisation of the global climate. At the same time, the social crisis is deepening the gap between the rich and poor to an unimaginable extent. Power inequalities, gender inequalities, racial and cultural prejudices, conflicts and the rise of populist and authoritarian political discourses... all these conditions complicate the issue of providing all people with a very basic need – food. The goal of Food Security (which means ensuring enough calories for all of humankind) will not solve the problem itself. It is necessary to promote the principles of Food Sovereignty:

- to regain and redistribute the control over the means of food production in a democratic and more autonomous manner
- to respect the rights of all people without any exceptions, and to value all food providers,
- to respect nature and replace destructive means of acquiring food by resilient and regenerative ones,
- to develop and pass on the knowledge necessary for the above-mentioned points, and enable appropriate research systems.

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## SCRIPT PROPOSAL

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This script proposal aims not only to introduce the values of Food Sovereignty and show various examples of practical approaches. The main goal of this script is to encourage the participants to imagine their own project working within the concept of SSE and Food Sovereignty. It is written as a script for a stand-alone training session. However, the optimal situation is that the participants in this training session have been through all the previous workshops. The skills gained during Starting Up, Community building and Co-operatives (or at least one of them) can be useful also in this training session, and help develop the concept of the participants' project.

## DAY 1

### **General introduction (60 min.)**

Briefly introduce your organization and the training session. Then let the participants introduce themselves. Create an informal atmosphere to give them opportunity to be open. As a lecturer you will find it very useful to gather the following from the participants:

- their motivations to participate in the training
- their expectations
- their level of experience with the training topics

### **Opening the Food Sovereignty topic (5–20 min.)**

You can use a short and catchy video to open the topic. If you don't know the participants' level of knowledge about Food Sovereignty, then it might be useful to conduct a short survey (find more below in the Methods section).

HINT: Did you discover that the participants might not be aware of the severity of problems concerning access, distribution, quality of food and problems connected with food production? Especially in such a case, it is important to include a brief description of these problems (in the part of Introduction to Food Sovereignty).



In the case that the participants did not attend the preceding training sessions, it is important to start with brief info about the Social Solidarity Economy (basic information about the SSE principles, values, dimensions, and examples of SSE initiatives).

### **Introduction to Food Sovereignty (30 min.)**

You may use a presentation aiming at:

- Global food issues – threats to global ecosystems and humanity
- FS as a solution, why and how this concept is different from Food Security
- Principles of FS
- Worldwide FS movement, organizations on a local and global scale
- Examples of FS practice

### **Participants' projects intro (60–90 min.)**

Give the participants about 10 minutes to prepare a short (5–10 min) presentation about their project, based on Food Sovereignty values. Continue sharing, possibly followed by a short discussion after each presentation. Encourage those participants who do not have any plan at the moment just to think about a hypothetical project.

### Case studies analysis (100 min.)

Let the participants choose from a set of case studies which your lecturing team have prepared in advance. After that, give them an opportunity to share what they've learned in different case studies in a short presentation; let them compare the case studies and discuss what kind of good practices are common.

### Evening programme (about 90 min.)

Think about some possibilities for inspirational activities during the evening, like cooking dinner together (using seasonal, organic or vegan ingredients) or watching an inspiring film related to the topic.

## DAY 2

### Opening round (30 min.)

Share the morning's emotions, thoughts and anticipations. It may be also a good opportunity to reflect on the previous day.

### Good practice example (90–180 min.)

This part will show the participants a particular Food Sovereignty enterprise or initiative, and provide the possibility to learn about the good practice and share knowledge.

### Developing participants' projects (90–120 min.)

The aim of this part is to synthesise all the information the participants received during the previous training sessions, and to have space to think about their own project and get feedback from their peers and trainer.

Let participants work on their own project, based on Food Sovereignty values. It may be based on their visions, dreams or also they can try to improve the project they are currently involved in. Continue with presentation and discussion.

### Evaluation and Feedback

At the very end of the seminar, ask the participants how they liked it. Give them an opportunity to discuss what worked well and what would be good to improve.



Play some board games related to the topic, like Allotment games – where you get points for enriching a big grey city with allotment gardens and local food stalls (instead of building medieval towns on green meadows as in Carcassonne). You can download Allotment games for free and print it.

<http://siirtolapuutarhapelit.wikidot.com/download>

Another possibility is to purchase one of the games created by the TESA collective.

<https://store.tesacollective.com/collections/games/>



According to local possibilities, you can look for good examples such as a local food co-op, CSA, organic farmers, community urban garden, allotment garden, waste-free shops, or activist groups (e.g. guerilla gardening group or Food Not Bombs initiative) etc.

## Networking and Follow up

Some participants will undoubtedly want to share their contact or information about interesting events with someone else!

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## GOOD CASES

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### DIG DEEPER IN A VARIETY OF EXAMPLES

The most helpful parts of the training sessions are the good example visits. Because of the length, it is not viable to think of more than one, or maximum two such excursions. However, it would be a great opportunity if participants could look beneath the surface of more than just one good example project! To analyse different or similar attitudes, to compare what worked well in which conditions, to get more inspiration. Exactly for these reasons, it is well appreciated by participants if they have an opportunity to dig deeper into several case studies. This worked well when the case studies were prepared by the trainers. You can use a questionnaire in which you ask about ten different initiatives / enterprises.

We suggest the following set of questions (specific to projects based on food sovereignty values):

- How big is your group and what is the subject of your enterprise / initiative?
- In what way does your project fulfil the values of Food Sovereignty?
- What were the reasons why you started your project?
- What are the relationships within your enterprise or initiative? Is there any formal or informal hierarchy? How do you make decisions?
- What is your attitude towards the outer community (people who are in contact with your initiative / enterprise)?
- Did you prepare any demand analysis before the start of your activities? If yes, was the estimate close to reality?
- Is your enterprise / initiative financially sustainable? What sources did you use for funding the establishment of your project?
- What are the main difficulties you encountered? Do you have any inspirational ideas for how to deal with them?
- If you work with foodstuffs, do they have any certificates (e.g. Organic, Fair Trade, Eco...) Why did you decide to use (or not use) the certificate?



- Have there been any main changes since the beginning of your project? Or do you plan any?
- Do you actively promote the values on which your project is based? Have you seen any effect yet?
- Do you co-operate with other organizations that share similar values?

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE JASAN

- an example of good practice for a case study

Jasan is a social enterprise from South Moravia in the Czech Republic. It focuses on ecological agriculture while helping disadvantaged people. "With respect to people, animals and all nature, we plant vegetables and fruits using ecological techniques. We process part of our production of various products, such as syrup, pesto, marmalade and sourdough bread," said Jiří, the co-founder of Jasan. The enterprise also plants trees and bushes in order to create sanctuaries for small animals and wild plants. Increasing biological diversity leads to various benefits. "We also decided to be part of a project which aims to re-introduce partridges into the local environment. Together with my co-founder Renata, we also discuss with our employees and make decisions based on consensus."



Renata, one of the co-founders of Jasan.  
Photo: Martin Matěj

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## METHODS

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### AMOEBA: SURVEY FOR THE KNOWLEDGE AMONGST PARTICIPANTS

Use the Amoeba method (alternatively called "Trunks and Roots") as an evocation – to open up the topic of Food Sovereignty and to assess the participants' level of knowledge about the topic.

- Participants form groups (at least two groups consisting of 3–5 persons).
- Each group will get one question (from the list below).
- The goal of the group is to find as many answers as possible by asking other people.
- One person in each group is "the body of the amoeba", who has a paper and takes notes of the answers.





- The others from the group are “pseudopods” (fingers) of the amoeba. They walk around gathering the answers for their question, and then bring the answers to the core (writer). After that everyone shares the answers they collected with others.

Possible list of questions:

- What does Food Sovereignty mean to me?
- What are good examples of FS initiatives?
- What are the main challenges (related to food) locally?
- What are the main challenges (related to food) globally?

## **VIDEOCLIP “GARDENING IS GANGSTA”**

If you know that the participants are informed about Food Sovereignty (based on information about the participants before the workshop), the videoclip may be a funny way to open the Food Sovereignty topic and create a good atmosphere.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGHzh6HV1Dk>

## **COOKING TOGETHER**

To help the participants establish new relationships (leading to potential future co-operation), it is a good idea to give them a basket of local and seasonal food and let them prepare a dinner for themselves. It might also test their abilities to co-operate and co-ordinate the processes (figuring out the recipe, distributing the tasks of cutting, peeling, cooking and cleaning...).

## **DEVELOPING PARTICIPANTS’ PROJECTS**

### **Part 1: Individual work (possibly also group work)**

In this part, the participants will have the possibility to work on their own project, based on Food Sovereignty values. It may be based on their visions and dreams, or also they can try to improve the project they are currently involved in. Each person should be empowered by the trainers to work on his / her own project – but this is still voluntary. If there are some participants who would prefer to co-operate on a project, naturally they can do so.

Those who will work on already existing projects should focus on the following points:

- how to adjust the project to be based on SSE values (if it isn't SSE yet)
- how to adjust the project to be based on F.S. values (if it isn't F.S. yet)
- how to improve the aspect of democracy
- how to improve the financial sustainability of the project
- how to make it more environmentally sustainable
- how to increase the social profit, community building

The others, who will develop their “dream project”, may start with the points listed below (and then possibly continue with the above-mentioned ones):

- What are the needs / problems you see in the place you want to start (or within the community) concerning Food Sovereignty?
- What are your resources and time possibilities?
- What is your main goal?
- Market analysis – will your enterprise survive within the competition of the market?
- Organization form – how will you organize your group?
- Community building – how can you develop a good community – the inner one, and how will you let the outer community to support your project?
- Funding – how would you ensure you have enough finances – at the beginning and later...
- What are the next steps you will take after the training (in the case that you are working on a real project)?

## Part 2: World café (60–90 min.)

Use the World café method, which will give participants the opportunity to comment on each other's projects and bring new ideas or find strong / weak sides of the plan.

Example of this method adapted for our goal – each participant gets the maximum input for his/her project: Let's say there are 10 participants:

- Arrange 5 tables, each with 2 chairs.
- Let 5 participants sit at the tables. They will be “hosts” – each of them will gather inputs (proposals, hints, tips) about her/his project.
- Tell the other 5 participant to randomly choose a table, they will be the visitors. They have 5 minutes to help the host with his/her project.
- After 5 minutes, each visitor moves to another table (and host).
- Repeat until all hosts have talked to each visitor.
- Then switch the roles of hosts and visitors and repeat the whole exercise.



The projects that participants will develop may vary greatly – some could be just hypothetical ideas and some may be existing and working initiatives. This may result in different needs: some could use more technical and professional help while others just need to play around with general ideas and are more inclined towards visioning exercises.

Another version of World café is explained here:

<https://workshopbank.com/world-cafe>

### **Part 3: Finalization of the project (20 min.)**

Participants will continue with their work on their project and finalize it. They might prepare a short flipchart presentation.

### **Part 4: Presentation of the projects (20–40 min.)**

Sharing the draft of the projects with the others, discussion...

## **GROUP WORK – CASE STUDIES ANALYSIS**

It might be very helpful for the participants to read and analyse the case studies in small groups or pairs. Also, they can co-operate on developing the project in groups according to what project they are interested in. The number of people in each group may vary. If you choose the group work variant but one (or more) participants would prefer to work on her / his own, it is advised not to force her / him into group work.



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## SUMMARY & POSSIBILITIES TO PROCEED WITH

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During a two day training session is not possible to comprehend all the important aspects of a successful project based on Food Sovereignty values. However, with a good combination of skilled trainers, open-minded participants and a disciplined environment, this training can be a very valuable starting point towards a successful project, especially for those participants who have undergone more training sessions – including Starting Up, Community Building and Co-operatives.

Will you choose to focus on gaining basic know-how about the CSA? Are the participants interested in starting a community urban garden? Would you like to encourage them to establish a Food Sovereignty activist collective? Or a combination of all these (and many more) possibilities? It is up to you and your colleagues (and possibly also the participants of your training sessions) to choose the cases.



# HINTS & TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

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## PREPARATIONS

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### **PLANNING YOUR SEMINAR**

Try to be as precise as possible when planning the agenda. Do not underestimate that in practice usually you need more time than you reckon with beforehand. Be aware that there are usually participants who are much more involved than others. This may not only be time consuming but also annoying for others who then do not have the chance to participate but have to listen. So on the one hand, always plan enough time for discussion and participation, but on the other hand also stick to the agenda. This is usually very much appreciated by the participants.

### **ORDER AND CHOICE OF METHODS**

It's not always possible to conduct a training programme as planned. You often deal with time constraints and other limitations. You always have to be ready to adjust the order of the programme and modify the choice of methods.

Some of the methods proposed require a considerable amount of time if you want to tackle them thoroughly. If the participants' needs and expectations indicate they want to focus more on a particular aspect of the programme, don't hesitate to give it more space and sacrifice something else instead.

### **FLEXIBILITY**

There are different styles of facilitating, and some trainers like to have a very detailed and precise plan while others prefer to leave room for spontaneity. Whatever your preference, you need to be prepared for some degree of improvisation and be able to react to unpredictable situations. The number of participants can be different from what you expected or even change throughout the duration of the workshop (be prepared to execute the activities with an even as well as odd number of people). The spatial conditions can affect your work-flow (change of light, sound, temperature). The reactions of the group can be quite different from what you expected or experienced during other workshops. In any case, it is good to have some alternative exercises at hand or be able to react with a quick change of plan in case the original script doesn't work for whatever reason.



## **TIME CONSTRAINTS**

It may often feel that a workshop script can fit an endless amount of methods, but more often we will find ourselves short on time. Remember it is better to work through a few methods thoroughly than to hurry through the whole script just to check everything off.

Also take into account that the more people you have in the room, the more time you need to count on for discussions, presentations and rounds. On the other hand, having only few participants may shorten the distance and result in very deep and engaging conversations, which can also take a lot of time.

## **ALTERNATIVES TO FIELD VISITS / EXCURSIONS**

A field visit or excursion is always a great opportunity to learn, but may not always be possible, e.g. due to time constraints. You can invite a representative of the "good practice" enterprise / initiative to visit your training session and give a presentation about their project. Talk to them in advance, regarding what kind of experience and knowledge they could talk about during their visit.

## **AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF STARTING THE SEMINAR**

In order to introduce the participants to each other, try something that gets the participants involved, which functions as an "opener" concerning the topic and gives the participants the opportunity to express why they are interested in the topic, why they want to found an SSE. For example you could start with small groups.

Let the participants introduce themselves / exchange why they are interested in / would like to engage in SSE / alternative economy? What would they like to do differently? Why? Do they have concrete ideas or projects in mind? Let them write this information on flipchart paper

After that, let the participants present a quick overview on the outcome (without repeating every detail) in the plenum. You could also start with more "open" or basic questions like: What does SSE mean to me? What is socio-ecological transformation about? You could also start with a biographical approach. Ask the participants: what is my (or my group's) own history regarding SSE?

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## DURING THE WORKSHOP

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### CLARIFYING EXPECTATIONS

If you would like to clarify the expectations of the participants, you can do this at the beginning of the seminar or collect expectations beforehand. If you ask for expectations, you should seriously try to meet them during the seminar. If you write the expectations on a flipchart or on cards, you can check at the end of the seminar (together with the participants) whether the expectations were met or if something remained open.

### OPENING CIRCLES AND WARMING UP

We added opening rounds and warming up in the beginning of each session. These elements may sometimes feel superfluous and not directly connected to the subject of the training, but leaving them out might result in lower engagement. Some people are talkative and immediately ready to speak in public, but others need more time to build trust and confidence. The workshop space is about creating learning opportunities for everyone, and it is important to make space and time for those who need it.

Observe and consult the participants. Use breaks and energizers to keep everyone fresh and engaged.

### MORNING ROUNDS

If your seminar lasts longer than one day, it is useful to have “morning rounds” to “arrive”, in order to warm up, to get connected with the group. Everyone should get the opportunity to say a few words on questions such as: how do I feel right now, is there any content / experience from the previous day that preoccupies me (have any questions arisen, do I agree/disagree with something), do I have anything on my mind that I would like to share with the group and the trainer?

### LENGTH OF DISCUSSIONS

When planning the good practice visit /excursion, provide enough time for the discussion. Neither you nor the speaker can fully anticipate what will make the participants curious.

Usually it is not very easy to anticipate how long will the participants need to discuss different subjects. If the schedule of the training is not pressed too much, try to plan a little more time for each discussion. If the participants don't need it, then they can have a longer break! Always try to listen carefully and sense the

atmosphere – e.g. if the discussion becomes a dialogue between two participants and the rest of the group is getting bored, it is time to cut the discussion politely and encourage the parties involved to continue their discussion during the break.

## **BREAKS**

It is good to have enough breaks during the day. This helps refresh the participants (physically and mentally), to have informal talks, to discuss.

Reserve sufficient time for a good lunch break (e.g. 90 min.).

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## **WRAPPING UP**

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### **FINAL FEEDBACK ROUND AND EVALUATION**

We are sure that after any training, you as a trainer will have a lot of questions about how it was for the participants. To explore it, we advise that you follow each training session (be it a 1, 2 or 3-day training) with an evaluation and final feedback round.

Evaluation will give you overview – what were the responses to the different parts or aspects of the seminar you conducted? There are many ways to evaluate your training, find the most suitable in your case.

Besides the evaluation, we advise that you end the training session with a final feedback round. Invite everyone in the circle and ask them to say something, what they liked about the training, what their insights were.

### **NETWORKING AND FOLLOW UP**

Also leave some time for sharing contacts and information about events you and / or the participants are interested in. According to the situation, consider the possibility of continuing the meeting in an informal way (e.g. in a restaurant).



*This publication is based on experiences from the educational programme developed during the Erasmus+ project BUSSE (Building up Social and Solidarity Economy). This is an Info Pack, a useful know-how publication for future trainers on Social and Solidarity Economy. An accompanying theoretical brochure and other materials can be downloaded from: [socioeco.org/busse](https://socioeco.org/busse)*

*In the hope that this Info Pack will help you on this path, we wish you pleasant reading and a successful and enjoyable practical experience of the social and solidarity economy*

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