

Porto Alegre III :

Workshops and seminar on “Solidarity Finance”

Why not take a decisive step forward toward a global system of social finance?

Today’s solidarity finance: Countless initiatives

We are witnessing the rapid development of solidarity finance within each of our countries. To a large extent, such development explains the indifference exhibited by traditional financial institutions toward a major portion of territories, communities and economies; nonetheless, this movement has gone anyway, thanks to the efforts of people, groups or associations who have refused to comply with this situation of being ignored.

Thus, we note the following:

- The emergence and development of a multiplicity of solidarity finance agents at various levels : the majority existing at the local level (microfinance institutions, MFIs) ; those at the national or semi-national levels (financial concerns, or even banks), and sometimes at the international level (guarantee funds or solidarity investment companies),
- The emergence in certain regions of new creative currencies, of new kinds of exchanges and of new local financial systems,
- The construction of new financial channels including, on one hand, financing offers (by private savers or public lenders) and, on the other hand, financing requests (by borrowers or private entrepreneurs). Such channels are also active on various levels, including internationally.

Strengthening cooperation between solidarity finance agents and, as such, why not construct a “global solidarity finance system” at the same time?

Finance attempts to reconcile financing offers to requests. Social finance endeavours to ensure that such linking is done fairly and that the financing of economic activities contributes beneficially to the society, the environment and the territory.

Nowadays, each solidarity finance agent acts within a complex environment, an environment which in general, is hardly favourable. Each obtains its own financial resources, forming partnerships with local institutions or international financial agencies and consequently, their activities are defined in function of the means of assistance.

The following conditions all favour the matching of offers to requests in the solidarity finance realm: associations of the various solidarity finance agents; the creation of new channels that bring together savers and social entrepreneurs as well as motivate the necessary intermediaries to facilitate the functioning of these financing chains; and active support of international solidarity finance agents (investment companies, guarantee funds, instances of labelling and control...). Furthermore, these solidarity finance offers and requests thus are equally available to all, regardless of geographic location. Such co-operation between actual agents and initiatives implemented to reinforce weak or non-existent links in the bonds of solidarity will give rise to what we call a “global system of solidarity finance” (GSFS).

This GSFS must be understood as the total of all those solidarity finance channels or systems, both national and international, who come together on the basis of the principles of subsidiarity. Its very structure must give appropriate priority to local channels, creators of economies and local resources.

Toward the participation of all the solidarity finance agents from all around the world

We number in the hundreds, and tomorrow, in the thousands. We are in contact thanks to the Internet as well as to the networks we have built together. The event in Porto Alegre will be a meeting for dozens of us, solidarity finance agents, representing hundreds of partners, brought together by our desire and intention to engage in exchange, as well as the next step of co-operation. We come together once again to pursue this concept of the GSFS and we will determine what each of us, specifically each group of agents, can do to contribute as well as to benefit from such a global cooperation. Porto Alegre III could represent an historic moment for solidarity finance, a point of departure for the creation of a GSFS. The success of this process depends upon us.

We thus propose to you, much as we have proposed to ourselves, that you come and participate in an encounter of the “Founders of GSFS” and contribute your efforts toward the creation of a global collaboration in the area of solidarity finance. We will gather in Porto Alegre to see how we can organise such an encounter. However, we wish to stipulate from the very outset that the number of institutions created will be limited. For us, a GSFS should be nothing more than a synergistic exploration between independent agents that share the common intention to draft an entirely new concept of finances that resolve social dramas and environmental issues, questions which affect nothing less than the future of humanity and the planet.

I would like to participate in the encounter of the founders of a global system of solidarity finance:

- **Organisation:**
- **Address:**
- **Name of the undersigned**