



Carolin Grieshop

LUX'09: THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM FOR SOLIDARITY IN SCHIFFLANGE/ LUXEMBOURG

Around 600 people from all parts of the world participated from April 23-25th 2009 in the International Forum for Solidarity Economy. For the fourth time this forum took place and each time on different continents organised by RIPESS (Réseau Intercontinental de Promotion de l'économie social solidaire). In the last forum leaders, activists, researchers and people from like-minded organisations met in Dakar/ Senegal in 2005.

Twelve thematic workshops dealt with different topics around social and solidarity economy (SSE). Carolin Grieshop, Secretary General of MIJARC involved herself in "Formation and Education for SSE" as well as in "research and conceptualization of SSE". In the workshop on "Youth and SSE" she had the chance to present the work of MIJARC groups all over the world and focussed on the approach of MIJARC regarding SSE. Also George Dixon Fernandez, President of MIJARC, participated in the FIMARC (Federation internationale des mouvements agricole rurale et catholiques)-organised workshop on "food sovereignty and SSE". George held also an intervention on various projects of MIJARC. Plenary sessions with experts from all over the world, among the 17 experts, Paul Singer, state secretary for solidarity economy of Brazil and one of the founder of SSE, gave their inputs and opinions on SSE politics.

Building networks on various issues was the stable factor through all workshops. As well as youth, women, teachers, researchers and activists committed themselves to strengthen or creating networks. "SSE exists since a lot of time, but in the last years another kind of economy dominated. In any case the failure, demonstrated by the current economic crisis, built a fruitful ground for an ongoing process to profound SSE initiatives", said Carolin Grieshop, "MIJARC's action plan 2008-2012 highlighted the role of projects especially in the field of agriculture, related to food sovereignty."

Even the form took place in terms of the economic crisis; the declaration of the RIPESS- Forum is a vague outcome. The discussion focused on various elements of SSE, a common definition of SSE could not be defined. On the points the opinion of the participants are different and also regarding the necessity of a common definition.

Finally, this is one of the most important outcome, youth play an important role in promoting SSE. More than 50% of the world's population are young people. If a change is wanted to a better rural world, youth play a superior role. SSE provides an alternative to the failed economic model, values are needed!

Solidarity Economy is not the opposite of capitalism. But, it tries to implement new forms of regulation within capitalism, according to ethical principles, for the benefit of people, families and communities. It is a reconstruction of the relation between economic and social dimension, which puts people at the centre of economic and social development, and looks for a sustainable development. Solidarity Economy is based on the following principles: Organisation, Democracy, Autonomy of management,

Reciprocity, Equality among participants, Gender equality, Solidarity between generations, Services to the community, Conservation of the environment, Involvement in political and social life.