



Social
Economy
4Ces

3.2. STATE OF THE ART AND NEEDS ANALYSIS REPORTS FOR SPAIN

Autonomous University of
Barcelona



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Authors	Dr. Angelos Varvarousis Pierre Smith Khanna

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Part 1: State of the Art

1. Institutional context of Social Economy in the country

Spain has a long tradition of social economy (SE), as a great number of SE organisations have been involved in income-generating activities over the last decades. Consequently, SE enterprises have traditionally played an essential role in meeting Spanish social needs and producing goods and services for the market. The Spanish Business Confederation of Social Economy (CEPES) estimates that the 43,192 SE enterprises in Spain represent 10% of the national GDP and 12.5% of employment, while 42.8% of the country's population is linked in various ways to the SE (CEPES, 2021).

According to the European Parliament's Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee, Spain was the first Member State to present a Social Economy Act. Further, Spain is one of the few Member States that provide for a high level of formal recognition for the SE and social entrepreneurship, including references to the SE in their constitutions (European Parliament, 2016).

The adoption of Law 5/2011 can be considered as the intersection point of institutionalisation of SE in Spain (European Commission, 2020). Law 5/2011 provides an overarching legal framework on the SE and sets up the legal framework to work alongside current legislation in order to increase visibility and recognition of the sector and so to provide more legal certainty. Law 5/2011 also distinguishes between the government and the SE sector. It recognises the right of association of SE organisations to represent and defend their interests. The law also specifies the requirements for umbrella organisations.

Besides the legal status, direct support schemes have been introduced specifically designed for the SE entities (Figure 1). These public financial schemes take various forms, including the provision of grants, subsidies, loans, and financial compensations. In 1990, the Government established a National Institute for the promotion of the SE. In 1992, CEPES was established as an umbrella organization by the collaboration of 28 organizations. Since then, CEPES has acted as a national and cross-sector confederation for institutional dialogues with public authorities, becoming the highest representative of the Spanish SE. In addition, the Council for the Promotion of SE was established in 2001, under the Spanish Ministry of Employment, as an advisory board to the SE. The adoption of the first national strategy on SE, in 2015, is equally considered as a '...milestone to locate social economy in the government agenda. ...It is based on the understanding that the social economy can provide a key contribution to the resilience of the Spanish economy and to sustainable and inclusive growth' (European Commission, 2020).

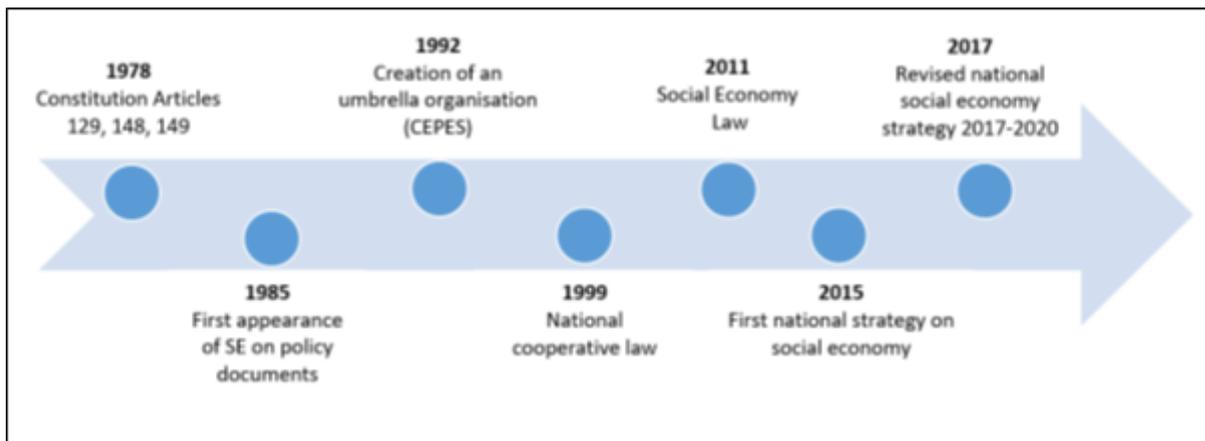


Figure 1. Spain: Timeline of some milestones on the recognition of the SE (OECD, 2020).

2. Definition of Social Economy applied in the country context

Law 5/2011 (Article 2) defines SE as ‘the group of economic and business activities carried out in the private sphere, which in accordance with the principles set out in Article 4, pursue the collective interests of its members, in terms of general economic or social interests, or both’ (CEPES, 2011). However, there is no formal definition of what constitutes a social enterprise, as the main purpose of the 2011 national law was to set up a general legal framework, without replacing existing regulations specific to SE organisations (European Commission, 2020). Therefore, any legal entity has to be aligned with a set of principles, in order to be considered as an SE enterprise. Such principles include democratic characteristics, transparency and participatory nature, the emphasis on the individual and social objectives over capital, benefits obtained by the business activity distributed directly to the members and the social objective of the entity, commitment to internal and external solidarity, local development, social cohesion and sustainability, social cohesion and inclusion, independence from public authorities (CEPES, 2011).

SE Entities in Spain include “traditional” organizations such as cooperatives, foundations, and associations in addition to entities that are creatures of specific regulation such as labour associations, special employment centres and labour insertion entities. Thus, several models of social enterprise can be identified in Spain, such as social initiative cooperatives (CISs) (operating in sectors of collective interest), employment integration enterprises (EIs), special employment centres of social initiative (CEEs), associations and foundations that carry out economic activities and cooperatives pursuing general interest goals (European Commission, 2020). Law 5/2011 provides also for emerging forms of social enterprises, such as the “social enterprise holding group”, where a foundation or association operates as a CEE.

3. Types of educational/training programmes identified

Focus

According to Flores et al. (2016), in Spain there were 32 postgraduate programs on social economy, social entrepreneurship and social innovation in 2014, representing 3.92% of postgraduate courses related to Business and Economics. We have encountered in total 19 postgraduate programs that

are currently running and are explicitly related to SE. These correspond to two PhD programmes, nine masters, four postgraduate courses, one specialization course and three expertise courses. Masters usually account for 60 ECTS and their duration corresponds to one year in most cases (sometimes two years). Postgraduate courses are similar in content but usually correspond to 30 ECTS. Specialization and expertise courses are technically and professionally oriented and their duration varies from three months to one academic year.

The courses are located mostly in public universities, usually in the department of economics or in faculties of social and business sciences. There is also a cooperative university, Mondragon University, which was established in 1997 by the association of three educational cooperatives. Another important example is a postgraduate course on Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) and Cooperative Studies, coordinated by a solidarity economy network of Catalunya and academically recognised by the Barcelona School of Management. The course is economically supported by multiple cooperatives as well as the local government authority for SE in the region.

Most courses focus on social economy or SSE or combine the focus on these two aspects with cooperativism. There are few programs focusing on social entrepreneurship or solidarity economy. Furthermore, the vast majority of them focus on management, while there are few cases of a focus on local development, social transformation or social innovation. The courses are addressed to university graduates as well as professionals already working in the SE sector.

Thematic content

The postgraduate courses in Spain mainly apply a professional rather than a research approach. This is translated into a thematic content combining theoretical and practice oriented modules, focusing more on the second ones, including modules, for example, on marketing, HRM, public policies, legal framework, financial strategies and IT technologies. Apart from focusing their content on SE business management, many postgraduate courses also train students to facilitate cooperation and networking in the SE sector.

Two interesting examples are the following: In the postgraduate course on SSE coordinated by a solidarity economy network mentioned above, the sources of knowledge of the course come from the systematic analysis of the cooperative and SSE experiences of the network members, as well as from experience in research projects, consultation of cooperatives, business administration and participation and intervention at the community level and in the socio-political networks of SSE. Furthermore, there is a “Master in Social Innovation and Solidarity Economy” in the University of Salamanca whose content has been developed in collaboration with the “Latin American Social Innovation Network” project, as part of the Erasmus+ European Commission program, “Capacity Building in Higher Education”.

Structure

Almost all programmes reviewed are modular, including from three to seven modules, with the exception of one case of a mission/objectives-driven structure and a case that combines both the two modes of structure. Most of them are based on face-to-face classes, but there are also some cases of a mixed online and face-to-face model as well as a case of an online master. The “Master

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in Communication and Management of SSE Entities” in Universitat Abat Oliba CEU, which follows the mixed model, offers the possibility of taking the program remotely, through real-time telematic access to the classroom. About half of the programs involve internships ranging from 80 (in case of expertise courses) to 150-250 hours (in case of masters). The internships in SE businesses, organizations or institutions are compulsory in most cases and they are jointly supervised by an academic and a SE professional. The hours of work of SE professionals, taking the course, in their organization can usually be counted as internship hours. Furthermore, most postgraduate courses include a final project. This project is individual (with the exception of a master thesis involving an outline of a social economy business model, created in groups of three to five students) and is usually placed at the end of the course. However in the “Master on Cooperative Enterprise and Social Business Management” in Mondragon University, students work on it throughout the program. In some cases, the final project corresponds to the real challenges that SE organizations face.

Teaching methods and materials

The courses combine theoretical and practical approaches. Standard theoretical elements include academic lectures, research and critical reading of articles, conferences, seminars, as well as debates and forums. Practical elements include f.e. the study of SE experiences and their impacts on the territory (usually after a presentation by a SE professional) as well as internships. Quite common is the use of learning methodologies based on problems, cases, challenges, and projects that allow entry into real professional situations. Other activities include field trips and visits to SE actors, preparing an outline of a SE business model, theoretical assignment on the panorama of SE in the region or one of its sectors and creating a proposal for a SE initiative corresponding to its needs. In some cases (e.g. postgraduate in School of Social and Solidarity Economy, Barcelona), the above-mentioned projects are presented in an open session to the initiatives studied.

Collaboration between HEIs, SE organisations and their local communities

In most cases SE organizations are involved in the postgraduate courses via the participation of SE professionals in the teaching activities, the field trips to local SE actors and the internships, as well as sometimes via the focus of the final project in real cases of SE actors. Nevertheless, in Spain there are also cases where SE actors and local government institutions participate in the development and / or financing of the program. Apart from the Mondragon University and the postgraduate course on SSE by the Barcelona School of Management mentioned in the focus section, there is a postgraduate course in UAB in collaboration with the local government (Municipality of Sabadell) and a civil society organization, and another course in TecnoCampus where the regional SE authority participates and which is subsidized by the national and regional government and delivered free of charge to students.

Innovative educational approaches

In its PhD program on ‘Advanced Management of Organizations and Social Economy’, the Mondragon University adapts an innovative concept of research as Collaborative Research and Transfer (Collaborative R+T). This concept clearly reflects the relationship between the research carried out by the university and the applicability of the knowledge generated in the business fabric. This collaborative R&T model is viewed by business groups and organizations as an effective and

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real extension of their always scarce and insufficient R&D capabilities. Another innovative educational approach is that of the postgraduate on SSE in the School of SSE in Barcelona, where two of the three modules take place in cooperative places and only the last one takes place at the University. Furthermore, some universities run employment bureaus to connect graduates with institutions, enterprises and organizations. One of them involves only SE actors.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, postgraduate studies related to SE in Spain, mainly focus on SE, SSE and cooperativism. They have a quite strong managerial and practical focus and they often involve internships. What is particularly interesting is that, apart from the participation of SE professionals as guest lecturers and the field trips to SE organizations, there are some cases where networks of SE actors participate as co-organizers and / or funders of the programs and that the students' final projects aim to respond to real SE challenges and needs.

Regarding the needs' analysis, the HEIs that are important to address are: a) the Mondragon University, which was established by three educational cooperatives, b) the University of Valencia, which runs a master and a PhD on Social Economics, a University Institute of Research on Social Economy, Cooperativism and Entrepreneurship (IUDESCOOP) and is also the institution where the Spanish department of CIRIEC (International Centre of Research and Innovation on Public, Social and Cooperative Economy) was established, and c) the University of the Basque Country, where the GEZKI institute (Institute of Cooperative Law and Social Economy) was established.

As Spain has a long tradition on SE, there are many umbrella organizations to address. The largest are CEPES, the Spanish Social Economy Business Federation and REAS, a network of networks in alternative and solidarity economy, with regional branches all over Spain. There are also many sectoral umbrella organizations like COCETA, the Spanish Confederation of Worker Cooperatives, HISPACOOOP, the Spanish Confederation of Consumer Cooperatives, CONCOVI, the Spanish Confederation of Housing Cooperatives and Housing Rehabilitation, UNACC, the National Union of Credit Cooperatives and LABORPAR, the Spanish Federation of Worker-Owned Companies.

Regarding the student group, apart from distinguishing between those who have just graduated, and more mature students who already have work experience in the SE, it would be interesting to distinguish between those who have taken an internship and those who have not. This distinction would allow us to examine how internships may have improved their educational experience and how it can be further improved. The same goes for the SE organizations who participate in the internships, which can be asked about their experience with internships and the improvements they would suggest. Furthermore, due to the covid-19 pandemic, it would be interesting to ask students who have completed half the course via the regular face-to-face class and half via remote, online educational methods, and how this has affected their educational experience.

5. References

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Part 2: Needs Analysis – Spain

Note: Though interviewees’ definitions of the Social Economy (SE) varied slightly, in general there was a consensus that the SE is defined primarily in terms of its organisational and governance structure (more democratic and horizontal decision-making). There is, however, an important distinction to make between the SE and *the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) which is characterised both by its organisational structure and its goals: pursuing goals other than profit.* The SSE is therefore seen as being subsumed within the SE given its governance structures are inline with SE principles. Whereas the majority of our participants spoke only of the SE, some spoke more specifically of the SSE. In what follows we will use these two terms carefully in order to clarify which one the participants are speaking about.

1. Educators/Trainers/Professors

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Educational programmes that are very well embedded in the SE ecosystem.
- A wide spectrum of programmes with both academic and professional formats, and varying educational approaches ranging from field trips and internships in SE organisations, to group-work, play-based-learning and tutoring.
- They focus on cooperativism more than on other aspects of the SE.
- The majority of the programmes offer a wide spectrum of experiential learning.
- They have varying degrees of innovation in their teaching methods.
- Strong relations to Latin American universities and SE organizations.
- Programmes that target both professionals and post-graduate students.
- There is a necessity and ongoing efforts to expand SE education also in the secondary school.
- Programmes that are less focused on theory and more practice-oriented.
- Professors update their materials very often.
- There is consultation with the SE organization about the content of the programmes but not to such an extent that we can speak about genuine co-creation.

Interviews on study programmes:

- ID1. Senior member of LANKI Institute of Cooperative Studies, Faculty of Humanities & Education, Mondragon University. Directs a master program on Cooperativism (cooperativismo) and also teaches in various programs (both academic and business oriented).
- ID2. Professor, Faculty of Business Studies, Mondragon University. Teaches in several educational programs of Mondragon University, formerly coordinator and professor in Masters on cooperativism.
- ID3. Coordinates Masters in “Social and Solidarity Economy” at the University of the Basque Country and its GEZKI Institute of Cooperative Law and Social Economy. Teaches one module.
- ID4. Co-Designed and Coordinates the Graduate Diploma in “Social Economy: Local Development, Cooperatives and Social Transformation”, at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Teaches in the introduction to the social solidarity economy module.
- ID5 and ID6. Both designed and are Program Coordinators of the *titulo propio*¹ course “Expertise in Solidarity Economy and Social Entrepreneurship” at the Universidad de Huelva.
- ID7. Designed, directs and teaches in the *Estudios Propios* course in “Management in Cooperativism and the Social / Solidarity Economy” at the Universidad Católica de Ávila.
- ID8. Director of Fundación Finanzas Éticas (a FEBEA member). He also teaches in both the academic and professional courses offered by the foundation.
- ID9. Lecturer at the University of Seville and formerly at the University of Huelva.

Due to the relatively high level of development of SE in general and of cooperativism in particular in many parts of Spain, the majority of the programs we reviewed for this report were very well embedded and connected to the broader SE ecosystem. Nearly all our interlocutors stressed the importance of meaningfully linking their programs with the actual world of cooperatives and SE organizations and they employ a plurality of methods and techniques to achieve this goal.

The spectrum of the SE-related postgraduate programs in Spain is vast. It contains full academic masters that last between one and two years (including a practicum) that usually offer 60-120 ECTS, other more professional-oriented courses (the so-called “*titulos propios*”) that usually offer 30 ECTS and last between 6 months and one year, and even crafted programs on demand that can

take place only once or they can be repeated if there is still interest. They usually take up to 15 ECTS and can last from a few weeks and up to three months. Although the theory is not unimportant, all our interviewees stressed the primacy of learning-through-practice and the active involvement of SE organizations in the conception, execution, and renovation of the programs.

Cooperativism and SE has a long history in Spain (and especially in certain parts of it such as the Basque Country or Catalunya) and therefore education in these fields has a richer background than in other countries. Hence, there are postgraduate programs that have run for decades while others were developed only recently. In our research we interviewed representatives of both. All our interlocutors argued that there is a strong demand for more specialized programs that will offer versatile tools for assisting SE organizations to thrive in “real world” conditions.

What follows below is a more comprehensive review of the general characteristics of the programs we reviewed divided into the following five subsections:

- I. What aspects of the SE do the programs focus on?
- II. How do the programs conceptualise/define the SE?
- III. What are the aims and objectives of the programs?
- IV. Who are these programs for?
- V. What values of the SE are put forward and how do these values inform the conception, content, delivery and assessment of the program?

I. What aspects of the SE do the programs focus on?

Despite the differences in their approach and the various stances towards mainstream economics, a shared sense among all the professors we interviewed is that SE is a broad and an umbrella concept that should remain open and inclusive and should also try to incorporate the emerging forms of alternative economics such as feminist economics, ecological economics and so on. In some cases community development is also explicitly outlined as a specific goal of their programs. The vast majority of the interviewees stressed the centrality of cooperativism in their programs and their explicit focus on developing students’ social skills along with the rest of the tools and theories they teach in their masters and professional courses. There are different focuses though, with some programmes being more management oriented (finance, marketing, strategy) while others are more oriented towards organizational disciplines (governance, leadership, organizational culture etc.). In some cases programmes try to combine both realms.

The interviewees belonged to different programs therefore emphasize different aspects of SE. For the University of Huelva for instance, which runs two different programs, one formal master’s with a more academic orientation and one professional course, the goals remain more generic and they try to cover all the aspects of SE. In contrast, the program offered by the Fundación Finanzas Éticas focuses more on the specific aspect of Ethical Finance which for them is an essential part of SE.

Other programs have a strong historical element and they trace the history of the phenomenon in Spain and Europe. Legislation, management, youth labor policies, social entrepreneurship, the international dimension of SE, and the political, transformative and anticapitalist aspect were also mentioned among our interviewees. Especially regarding the transformative capacity of SE, nearly all our informants mentioned that their programs understand SE as a phenomenon that develops within but also beyond capitalism. Characteristically, one of our informants said that *“the main difference that SE has in comparison to capitalism is that it starts from the premise that we should start from the common good in order to finally find the individual good and not the opposite”*.

Generally speaking, the aspects of SE that the programs focus on vary according to the faculty they belong to, the region they are in, the years that they’ve run, the audience they want to reach, the teaching methods they choose, and more. For instance in the Mondragon University there are four faculties: Engineering, Business, Humanities and Education (which also hosts LANKI, an institute that seeks to foster cooperative enterprise identity and culture), and Gastronomy. All these faculties run programs that, to varying degrees, are related to SE focusing, however, on different aspects of it.

In some cases, as mentioned also above, universities (such as LANKI), craft programs on demand for covering only specific gaps that emerge particularly in the way that cooperatives and SE organizations function and strategize their future.

A core element shared by all the interviewed professors is the necessity to synthesize the theory and practice of SE in the curriculum of the offered programs. Internships, practicums, work in cooperatives and other SE organizations are some of the opportunities offered almost by all programs while in some cases universities employ even more engaging and innovative ways to combine the two realms of theory and practice.

II. *How do the programs conceptualise/define the SE?*

In general, most of the programs use the concept of Social and Solidarity Economy rather than that of SE alone. In other cases programs focus more on cooperativism and on “democracy in the workplace” as a crucial dimension of the content of their programs. Social Economy is the broader field that encompasses a series of “families” of relevant concepts and processes such as “local development”, “p2p production”, “cooperativism”, “solidarity economy”. However, no tensions were expressed in a debatable manner that would point to a clash of concepts and contents. As one of our interlocutors put it, *“the social economy is so small in comparison to capitalism that even the worst in it is better than everything on the other side”*. REAS, a national “network of networks” of SE organizations which is connected to many of the programs we examined, played an important role in defining the way the SE is conceptualized and perceived by the various educational programs. REAS uses a specific scheme inspired by Alvaro Poro’s work² that connects SE with

many of the other forms of alternative economics including solidarity economics, care economics, feminist perspectives as well as environmental and ecological approaches.

Some of the programs we examined have developed their own systems for defining SE. For instance, the Institute GESKI of the University of the Basque Country in a recent publication defines SE along with 3 key points: the centrality of people in the workplace, democracy, and the needed commitments between the community and the territory. In a similar vein, Mondragon University has developed a view of the SE *“be a serious player in any economic sector, to demonstrate that worker cooperatives can flourish in the ‘core economy’, can provide any product or service.”* Some of the interviewees mentioned that their approach is mainly informed by the French-European and the Latin American tradition and less by the Anglosaxon view of SE.

III. What are the aims and objectives of the programs?

There is a great variety of courses in Spain with variant aims and objectives. As mentioned above, a shared goal among all programs is to prepare people to enter the practical field of SE or to help people who already work in the field to further develop their skills and competencies. We identified no programs that focus mainly on research or on the development of the intellectual skills of their participants. Some programs such as the joint master’s of the University of Huelva, the University of Cadiz, and the University of Granada aim at offering a complete overview of the SE in all its practical dimensions and help students understand that there is an alternative economic system beyond the dominant one. The more professional course run by the same university (Huelva) instead aims mainly at giving energy to the local cooperatives and *“move things at the local territory”*.

In other cases such as in the case of the universities in the Basque Country (the Mondragon University and the University of the Basque Country), the educational programs are pursuing two sets of goals: firstly, they seek to make visible the rich cooperative activity that exists in the area, and second, to strengthen it by providing the sector with large numbers of knowledgeable and qualified people with a broad range of skills.

IV. Who are these programs for?

The variety of the offered programs points to a mixed profile of participants. However, since all programs focus on linking universities with cooperatives and other forms of SE organizations, the main profile of the participants in the programs is either people who are already involved in the field or people willing to get involved after they graduate. In the professional oriented programs this is very clear since some of them are developed in response to what cooperatives demand ought to be learnt, and all the others focus on the development of practical skills and tools that will facilitate cooperative production and management. The same, however, applies to the majority of the academic programs and full master’s since students are asked to do a practicum or an internship at a SE organization or even (in the case of one particular degree program at Mondragon University) to set up a cooperative and run it for several years as part of their learning experience.

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An important dimension is that all programs seek to keep their fees at very low levels in order to remain as inclusive as possible. Thus, there are expert courses of 30 ECTS that are offered for only 100 euros (University of Huelva) or others that cost only marginally more (300 euros for the expert course offered by the Fundación Finanzas Éticas).

Another important dimension is that all of our interviewees mentioned the strong links that their programs have with Latin American countries that provide an important percentage of their overall students. As a professor from the Mondragon University characteristically put it, “*our programs are intended for the entire Spanish speaking world*”. In some cases more than one third of the students in these programs come from Latin America.

A final important remark is that many of our interviewees referred to the need to expand SE education beyond the graduate and post-graduate programs and also include the SE dimension in primary and secondary schools. In this vein, the Fundación Finanzas Éticas has launched a series of pedagogical activities for teachers to explain to them what ethical banking is in order to be able to teach it in their secondary schools. At the same time, there is a broad network of interested teachers that are asked to upload in a common digital space their experience with teaching ethical banking in schools. This network of teachers along with the members of FIARE hold a meeting every year to reflect on the process and design the next steps.

V. What values of the SE are put forward and how do these values inform the conception, content, delivery and assessment of the program?

The SE values that are put forward by these programs can be distinguished in two groups: the social values that their programs seek to foster regarding the entire society and the values that inform the pedagogical methods of the programs.

In the first group our informants chose to speak about feminism, responsibility, environmentalism, solidarity, participation, anti-discrimination, inclusion and openness, open control and democratic management, humane workplace environment, democracy, priority of work over capital, and local, place-based development.

In the second group our interviewees mentioned the need for the instructors to remain close to the student, the development of the whole person, the development of both technical and social competencies, pedagogical innovation, and participation and democracy in class.

Finally some of our interlocutors referred to the need to translate these values into public policies and mentioned the example of the municipality of Barcelona which introduced SSE criteria in hiring new personnel for its public services.

I. What are the main theories, what principles are taught, what are the main key concepts and disciplines?

Theory is not the epicenter of the SE related programs in Spain, although all our interviewees agreed that some theoretical bases are necessary for building a SE educational program. The nature and orientation of the program also defines the kind and level of theory that is taught. Theory is kept to a minimum in the professional courses and plays a more important role in the academic ones. Critical thinking is often practiced through observations in real life contexts. There is a general preference of European and Latin American theorists over the Anglosaxon tradition. Many start from a thorough criticism of the current economic model to then develop their alternative theories on SE. In other cases, they start by outlining the history of economic thought and practice. In many cases, programs teach feminist and ecological approaches along the more classical SE and SSE literature. In the economics departments, they combine critical management with social theory and, in general, interdisciplinarity is highly encouraged and practiced. In the Mondragon University and LANIKI in particular they often start from identifying a practical problem in need of a solution and subsequently try to look for theories that can potentially help in solving this problem.

Most theoretical knowledge, however, concerns the use of tools for assessing various challenges of running a cooperative or SE organization, such as social impact measurement tools, conflict resolution approaches etc.

II. What do you think are the current needs and challenges of the social economy? Do you think there is a gap between this and what you teach?

Most of our interviewees mentioned as a major challenge the economic sustainability of SE organizations in an increasingly competitive global market. Some informants mentioned that there is a lack of support for SE organizations that increase their sustainability, but others mentioned that there is also the counter-problem, that of too much dependence on the state. Another thing that was mentioned is a relative lack of young people in the cooperatives and also the increasing need for more “agile formats” in social economy organizations that would be more open and flexible to the rapidly changing challenges. Another challenge had to do with the often introverted character of SE organizations; they are unable to look outside and adapt to the new conditions or seek out networks. In the same vein, many mentioned the lack of effective tools for resolving internal crises and conflicts as well as tools for minimizing the total time and energy needed in assemblarian procedures. Also, a crucial point that was raised at least twice was that in some cases ventures can be cooperatives on paper but, ultimately, they do not differ substantially from the more mainstream entities and this reduces their popularity as well as their transformative capacity. One point raised in this regard is that, despite being members of cooperatives, many people do not believe in collective change and they keep insisting on individual and lifestyle choices to pursue

change, which leads to disappointment sooner or later. Finally, some mentioned the opportunities but also the threats brought about by the digitalisation of the economy.

Another set of challenges had to do with the lack of “academic efficiency of the SSE-related knowledge on the international level”. It seems that there are very few opportunities, globally, for a complete education on SE values and principles and also sparse opportunities for the development of social and managerial skills in mainstream education programs and this hinders the possibility for growth for SE ventures. There is also a lack of recognition and many forms of SE remain in the shadows of the institutional framework. However, for the first time in history, there is a ministry of SSE in Spain and this might solve some of these issues.

Most programs are on the “right path” according to our interlocutors and they try to address these gaps even though all recognise the need to improve in certain aspects. Some of them are the following:

- Economic faculties need more “unorthodox” inputs to complement SE principles and theory.
- Some programs would benefit from even stronger linkages with SE entities to offer even more experiences to their students.
- Some recognise the need to focus more on environmental aspects.
- More co-creation of knowledge is needed among SE organizations and universities.

III. How updated do you think your teaching material is? How often do you change this teaching material?

In general, all our informants stressed the importance of updating educational materials and the majority of them answered that they make adaptations every year.

EVALUATION OF PROCESSES/METHODS

I. What teaching methods, practical and theoretical, are adopted within the courses? What other learning experiences are offered to the students during the courses?

As already mentioned above, SE educational programs in Spain offer a vast variety of out-of-the-class experiences and they are strongly embedded in the actual field of SE. A very interesting element is that the same is also valid for those programs that are 100 percent online. However, not all programs have the same degree of innovation in their teaching methods nor do all of them have the same level of linkages to the local SE ecosystem.

Some of these experiences and innovative elements they offer are the following:

- The possibility to visit a series of SE organizations active in various fields of production and reproduction.
- To have all the classes online but also to do a three month internship either at Mondragon University or in students' country in a SE organization of their choice.
- To start a social business as an essential part of the educational program and develop it hand in hand with the development of their studies.
- Every student should have two tutors; one professor from the university and one professional from the SE sector.
- Incorporation of non-formal-education methods and learning through playing.
- Almost all universities employ group work during the classes.
- Courses about "how to sell" and courses on communication strategies
- Another method starts with posing a specific and concrete challenge to the student. As students work on responses to this challenge, they develop competencies. They work in both groups and individually.
- To have internships or produce their TMF (Final Master Project) in some of the umbrella networks the universities work with (e.g. REAS, Mondragon SEs etc.).
- Continuous and qualitative evaluation during the course and not at its end only.

II. What could be improved?

- In some cases the experiences that are offered are limited
- There is a need for teaching methods that would allow students to reflect on what they learn.
- Keeping abreast of new pedagogical methods needs improvement.
- Further improve networking among the universities that offer SE education to facilitate students' mobility.
- Further improve the relation with Latin American Universities and the network of universities around the globe.

EVALUATION OF COOPERATION/RELATIONSHIP WITH SE ORGANISATIONS

I. Who gets involved in the various stages of conception and delivery of the programme (design, knowledge creation, knowledge diffusion, assessment)?

- Different tendencies exist among the examined educational programs concerning the ways they capture, conceptualize and finally execute their courses. In most universities, this

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happens mainly by a group of professors who have a new idea about a new program. These groups can be either small (up to two persons) or larger (up to 10 persons). Once their idea is clear and the curriculum ready they can suggest it to the university council for approval. In most cases this stage has lots of bureaucracy but usually leads to the acceptance of the proposal.

- Another possibility, such as in the case of FIARE and the Fundación Finanzas Éticas, is that the SE organization creates the curriculum of the program and suggests it to several universities for approval. In these cases the professors are mixed, some from the university and some from the organization.
- In other cases, such as the institute LANKI of the Mondragon University, universities craft professional programs on demand for meeting some specific needs communicated to them by the SEs.
- Also in the Mondragon University the programs start after much consultation with the Mondragon SEs. However, this is not regarded as a “genuine co-creation” of an educational program according to our interviewees.

2. Students

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Working either directly or indirectly with a SE organisation creates a strong incentive to enrol in a SE study program to deepen their knowledge and effectuate change.
- In all cases the students enrolled were mature and had extensive work experience in or around the SE.
- The institutions running each program served as a point of attraction to all participants who held them in high esteem (Mondragon, Research and Degrowth, ICTA-UAB).
- Knowledge and competencies listed varied depending on the program attended. ID1 and ID2 were pleased with the program so far (in year 1 of 2) and valued the diversity of perspectives offered. ID3 and ID4 were more critical of the practical skills learnt in their program and suggested more time with the teachers (which suggests the need for greater financing of professors'/tutors' time) and a deeper involvement of SE actors.
- All participants valued diversity and innovation in teaching modalities and assignments, as well as inclusive teaching methodologies drawing on students' experience.
- An online masters ought to take into consideration people's working-hours and introduce them to using online platforms.
- Field trips, hands-on assignments and internship opportunities were all highlighted as positive ways to engage with SE organisations. A greater range and diversity of SE organisations contacted would be beneficial and universities should invest more time in connecting students with them.

1. PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION

Interviews on study programmes:

- ID1. MA Cooperative Enterprise and Social Business Management – Mondragon University (1st year student)
- ID2. MA Cooperative Enterprise and Social Business Management – Mondragon University (1st year student)
- ID3. MA Political Ecology, Degrowth and Environmental Justice – Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (former student)
- ID4. MA Political Ecology, Degrowth and Environmental Justice – Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (former student)

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Bachelor programmes students followed before the master study in Social Economy:

- ID1. BA in Philology
- ID2. BA in Philology and Semantics
- ID3. BA in Journalism and Communication Studies
- ID4: BA in Biology

Other study programmes students followed before or after the master study in Social Economy:

- ID1. Short professional development courses
- ID2. MA in Communications
- ID3. Selected courses of a MA in Political Sciences
- ID4. None

Did you have a job in the social economy before, during and after the course of study? If so, in which organization and what was your role?

All participants worked in or around the SE prior to undertaking their masters program. ID1 and ID2 came from over a decade of experience working in the Development and Cooperation sector in which they worked alongside cooperatives or what could be considered the SE in Africa. ID1 had a brief experience of starting up their own children's clothes company which had elements of the SE integrated in it whereas ID2 came from a background of working with labour unions in Spain. ID3 and ID4 were more directly involved with the SE, both working in and co-founding a SE organization (ID3, Periscope, a cooperative collective and ID4, Organic Cooperative focused on organic local products) as well as engaging with the SE in their personal lives as consumers.

Are/Were you a volunteer in the social economy before, during and after the course of study? If so, in which organization and what was your role?

- ID1: None
- ID2: None
- ID3: None
- ID4: Started an informal organic products consumers group and also became a member of Som Energia (energy cooperative) and COP 57 (cooperative bank) as a consumer and supported them in volunteer diffusion work, organising talks etc.

2. MOTIVATION/ASPIRATIONS

I. *Why did you enrol in the study programme? Were there any particular aspects of the course of study that interested you? How did you find out about the programme? What are/were your occupational aspirations during the study programme?*

All four interviewees had a marked interest in learning about the SE in both theory and in practise. They all perceived this as adding to their existing knowledge and experience, as a way to further specialise themselves in social entrepreneurship (ID1) and as a way to gain a clearer understanding of how to effectuate transformation in society (ID2, ID3, ID4). In the case of the latter, we note that theory was highlighted as a crucial part of their motivations for joining the program - noting that they felt they lacked it - and was perceived as a necessary step towards being able to then be applied in their own projects and work. ID1 also mentioned the fact that the program was in Spanish as an appealing factor for them.

“It was a very conscious choice to do it with Mondragon - for its reputation as an example for cooperatives in the world.” (ID1)

In all four cases the institute or location of the masters program played a determining factor in them applying to that particular program. Mondragon, in the case of ID1 and ID2, had a big appeal due to its international reputation as a pioneering and hugely successful cooperative with innovative perspectives, and the fact that it was online enabling them to access it from abroad. ID3 was motivated by the fact that the program was co-organised by Research and Degrowth and took place in Barcelona, as a way to open up to new activist movements and perspectives. ID4 was drawn by the fact that ICTA, the other co-organiser of the program, was a highly reputable institution composed of many top-quality researchers and scholars working in the fields of ecological economics and environmental justice.

Three participants heard of their programs by word-of-mouth and email lists.

3. EXPECTATIONS/WISHES

I. *What were/are your expectations regarding knowledge and competences offered by the study programme? What were/are your wishes regarding knowledge and competences offered by the study programme?*

Expectations varied among participants, two of which did not have specific expectations (ID2 and ID4), ID1 was looking forward to gaining specific tools and references which would then be useful to them later on in their profession (“*I want to know that there are tools that I can use when I need them*”). ID3 wanted clear economic knowledge and an overview of theoretical debates so as to better create arguments for communication.

4. EVALUATION OF THE EXPERIENCE

I. Evaluation of preparation to work in the social economy field

The information received on this question was limited. Both ID1 and ID2 are in their first year of their program - but note that so far it has been interesting. In the case of ID3 and ID4, the program was not primarily focused on the SE, except for two modules ('Professional Skills' and 'Transformations'). ID3 highlights that there was a debate in the class in which some preferred more practical knowledge than theoretical, but that overall the masters did well in their opinion. ID4 did not have high expectations about the skills received from the masters. As a biologist they found that parts were a bit simplistic - though they understood that other students had such different backgrounds that it was very difficult to make a program that would satisfy all of them. *"From this point of view I wasn't very happy with it but mostly I was very happy to discover new authors and have discussions about the economy, degrowth, ecofeminism - three of the most interesting points in the masters."* (ID4)

II. Evaluation of knowledge and competences

Participants were generally positive in their evaluations of knowledge and competences acquired. Tools and skills regarding working in groups, marketing and strategies were highlighted as particularly good and useful (ID1 and ID2). Emphasis was placed on the variety of knowledge as highly beneficial - being able to complement one's understanding of strategy from a development perspective for instance, with several other schools of thought. This broader and more diverse focus on the SE was highly valued. ID 3 and ID4 noted a slight dissatisfaction with the practical elements of the course - teachers may not have had enough time with the students to understand them and their needs properly, more practical skills were sought out particularly in terms of running a successful organisation, how to empower people within it, and a clearer understanding of economics. ID4 suggested that it would be interesting to have a forum with different actors from the SE sector, in which they can share their vast experience, challenges and struggles in the SE.

III. Evaluation of training and teaching methods

All participants valued diversity and innovation in teaching modalities and assignments. These were at times present (ID1 and ID2) and were received as a pleasant surprise: *"I didn't expect to have such a variety of modalities of study - so many videos for example. I was expecting something more boring."* (ID1) Practical assignments were also highlighted as highly beneficial, examples of good practice include making a video, creating a Wikipedia entry and playing a commons-inspired board-game (Commonspoly). Similarly, the final masters project was lauded for being open to a wide range of proposals and formats, and that each student had their own designated tutor to accompany them in their process.

In terms of teaching methodologies, traditional frontal teaching styles (i.e. a teacher in front of the class giving a presentation) were not appreciated as much as other more engaging styles of

teaching. Opening to the students' own experience and background was noted as a nice way for the teachers to treat the students (as opposed to treating them as if they had no relevant knowledge) and creating a rich and motivated class atmosphere.

Drawbacks noted were a heavy workload due to the final masters project starting too early (ID1 and ID2). Heavy quantity of academic readings was also problematic and could be better if a diversity of inputs/sources were included (films, podcasts, press articles etc...) (ID3). Language was noted as both a positive and a negative feature: ID1 appreciating the fact that 40% of materials were in English and allowed them to practise the language and give a sense of openness and internationalism to the masters. ID4 struggled at times with the fact that the entire program was in English, as did other students and teachers for whom English was not their first language.

Due to the hybrid modality of their masters, ID1 and ID2 noted some of the challenges inherent to this. Firstly, when synchronous classes are scheduled during working hours, those who work, though they can view the class afterwards, cannot participate in the same way as when present. Secondly, it took some time to get used to the online platform (Moodle) suggesting that a better introduction to it may be useful.

IV. Evaluation of the involvement of social economy organizations

All participants highly valued the involvement of social economy organizations in their programs. ID1 and ID2 were very pleased with the contact with different Mondragon cooperatives, appreciating the ability to speak with management and learn from them. Field trips were valued across the board. Although the online masters did not have access to this, "*it would be good to live it in person and visit them*" (ID1). It was also pointed out however that such field trips would benefit from a greater diversity and range - not to focus on too small a region (Barcelona) and to show an array of small-scale to big-scale initiatives as a way of understanding the fuller picture of the SE and its challenges (ID2, ID3).

Assignments and the final masters project were also noted as a good way to further deepen the connection with social economy organisations. On the one hand, the programs offer assignments which engage students in a more hands-on-way with these organisations (e.g. creating a digital strategy for a cooperative; improving a cooperative's human resources; creating a Wikipedia entry). On the other hand, they leave the final masters project very open for students to choose what they want to work on, enabling work with SE organisations (e.g. starting a new initiative with an existing SE organisation; doing an internship). More effort could be placed in connecting students with SE organisations.

3. Organisations

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- SE actors appeared to be motivated by both the social and solidarity aspects of the business and posit the SE as an alternative to capitalism.
- SSE actors perceive a clear distinction between the Social Economy and the Solidarity Economy.
- SE organisations face a range of challenges both at micro and macro level - these vary according to position and experience in the SE and lead to differing recommendations.
- SE organisations have a strong interest in SE educational programmes that are both theoretically rigorous and practice-oriented, context and territorially specific, and aimed at all age-groups in society from primary school upwards.
- SE organisations have ongoing collaborations with universities, independent research centres and other organisations. There is a strong desire to extend collaborations and extend public entities' financial support for such educational initiatives.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- ID1. CIRIEC Spain is an umbrella organisation composed of SE entities as well as individual researchers. It is one of the leading NGOs on the SE in Spain whose objectives are to promote education, scientific research and the dissemination of research and applied work on the SSE. Main activities include publishing scientific papers, bulletins and books as well as hosting international events and congresses.
- ID2. NUS Cooperativa is a Catalan cooperative which develops transformative actions and processes with a feminist and community perspective to address social issues and visibilize and transform power relations, through theatre, creativity and care.
- ID3. LabCoop is an umbrella organisation of various Catalan cooperatives working in 4 key areas of the SSE: education/training, consultancy, local projects and as an incubator of SSE projects.
- ID4. REAS is a decentralized network of networks for the SE in Spain. A prominent figure in Spain, the network covers over 15,000 employees and emphasises solidarity, their primary objective being to spread the values of the SE in the whole economy (finance, consumption patterns, ecology etc).

2. PERCEPTION ABOUT SE AND ONGOING CHALLENGES

I. *Perceptions of the SE*

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Our participants had slightly differing views and definitions of the SE, though two key traits emerged which are worth mentioning: firstly the distinction between Social Economy and Solidarity Economy and, secondly, prioritising the human beings over capital. In the case of the former, the Social Economy was defined primarily in terms of its organisational and governance structure (more democratic and horizontal decision-making) whereas the Solidarity Economy was characterised both by its organisational structure and its goals: pursuing goals other than profit.

Two participants noted the fact that there is a tension between these two aspects of the SE, which is a point of debate within their organisation (in the case of ID4) and a cause for discussion when speaking of the SE across European countries (ID1). There seemed to be agreement that the Solidarity Economy was subsumed within the Social Economy given that all Solidarity Economy organisations have governance structures in line with Social Economy principles.

The second point relates to how the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE hereafter) prioritises people over profits. Most participants spoke of how the SSE positions itself in contrast to capitalism, and, thus, as an alternative to it (ID2, ID3, ID4) e.g. “*SSE then is a reversal of capitalism: the ends are people and the means are economic activity*” (ID2). Although this was broadly agreed on, it is worth mentioning that ID1, (speaking of the SE and not of the SSE) also emphasised the need to consider SE organisations as businesses which “*compete in the market like any other business, though they distribute their earnings and profits differently*”. A similar point was made by ID2 when discussing the challenges faced by the SSE. Both point towards a cautionary approach to understanding both the SE and the SSE as being embedded in a capitalist system, rather than an idealistic understanding of SSE existing in a vacuum.

Other aspects mentioned were the values of solidarity, feminism, the arts, relationships, process-work and the environment.

II. Ongoing Challenges

A diverse range of challenges were identified by our 4 participants - perhaps an indication of their organisations’ objectives and their professional roles within them.

Stability and consolidation

The stability of SE organisations was highlighted in various ways (ID2, ID3, ID4) as a key challenge moving forwards. While in Spain, municipalities and regions offer substantial support for starting up SE organisations (something also mentioned in interviews with education institutions) the challenge is how these organisations survive once this support comes to an end. ID3 spoke of the need to consolidate SE projects - many of which “*die out after 3-5 years for financial or other reasons*”. ID4 spoke of ensuring the stability of SE businesses, not necessarily growing them but keeping them stable. ID4 also pointed to a concern (and ongoing debate within their organisation) with regards to the desirability of state subsidies and how to ease one’s dependency on them.

Reach, scale and visibility

In addition, issues of reach, scale and visibility were mentioned as challenges worth considering (ID2, ID3, ID4). These are also heavily mentioned in the interviews with educators. ID2 notes that many cooperatives are very small, a fact that raises costs both monetarily and otherwise. ID3 makes a related remark on the need to reach new markets - exceptions such as Mondragon notwithstanding - which require higher levels of finance even though the vast majority of SE organisations are in the service sector and not in industry. ID2 and ID4 speak of the need to make visible the SE through more training and educational programs. In particular, such programs ought to operate on all levels of education from secondary upwards to introduce young people to alternative economic models:

“There is a common sense among young people that they don’t want to learn economics because they conflate the economy with the banks and the “bad” parts of the system. But people should learn and understand the economy in order to change it.” (ID4)

Though none of the participants specified this concretely, presumably such education would affect the SE at various entry-points, as producers and service providers as well as clients and customers.

Structural challenges of capitalism and growth

Tensions between the values of the SE and the demands made by virtue of living within a capitalist economy were highlighted in various forms by ID2, ID3 and ID4. ID2 spoke at length about the challenges SSE organisations face in a capitalist economy. The nature of the SSE requires more time and energy to be invested into the processes that give rise to the end products, and stringent values can also limit one's scope of action (ex: not taking the plane, prioritising clients or colleagues from the SSE over the capitalist economy). This entails higher costs of running a SSE business - costs which their capitalist corollaries do not incur and which are then compensated for by lowering salaries and/or voluntary work.

“Sometimes I think it's like David and Goliath. Capitalism works so badly but so well, it has a lot of externalisations and when you try and change this it's huge and you need a lot of strength to do this [...] Support from Public Administration is very important but I think that something has to change on another level - it's not fair that a capitalist enterprise is so cheap.” (ID2)

For ID3 one of the key questions their organisation is battling with at the moment is how to *“position ourselves in the socio-ecological transition, given that we cannot support continued economic growth.”* These appear to be fundamental considerations giving rise to internal debates on growth vs stability, values vs burn-out, growth vs ecology.

In a similar vein, when talking about their work in creating hybrid spaces to replace the public sphere with a mixture of common and public, ID4 pointed to the need for more institutions that can guarantee different forms of property beyond the public and the private.

Values and practise

The specificities of debates regarding values were most spoken about by ID2 who, we should note, is the only participant coming from a SSE cooperative. The challenges ‘on the ground’ are of a different nature to those faced by SSE networks or networks of networks. ID2 thus emphasised the challenges of how to translate SE values into practise (e.g. solidarity, sharing and protecting one's intellectual property, working only with SE organisations, no planes for transport, the privileged position of those who can start SSE organisations vs those who cannot (initial and ongoing funding + support of spouse), bringing in a feminist perspective and challenging power structure.

Burn-out was highlighted as a cause for concern, given that many practitioners' *raison d'être* is highly ideological and thus easily pour in much more than they get back from the SSE project they participate in.

Common ground

One important challenge, which was stressed repeatedly by ID1, was the need to clearly define which organisations are considered part of the SE and which are not. This ties in to the point raised by several participants when defining the SE - namely the difference between the Social Economy and the Solidarity Economy. The participant pointed out that these definitions vary according to country, which is highly problematic given that the European Union has policies in place that favour, for instance, SE enterprises in the awarding of EU contracts. These contracts at times end up being given to organisations that are not actually SE organisations - creating the need therefore to have a clear and consistent definition of the SE and training those who offer the contracts to correctly identify SE from non-SE organisations. Here we note the participant's position as President of CIRIEC Spain as indicative of their points of views concerning the challenges facing the SE at a pan-European level.

3. INTEREST AND EXPECTATIONS FROM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES: AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE, COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS NEEDED

The participants indicated a strong interest in educational programs - all four of them in fact being involved in educational programs in both formal and informal sectors. These ranged from offering short workshops exploring topics of conflict and transformation (ID2) and introductory courses to the SE (ID3, ID4) to organising international academic conferences on the SE and supporting SE projects in universities (ID1, ID3).

The emphasis regarding which areas of knowledge, competencies and skills are most needed varied from participant to participant - presumably reflecting their personal and professional relations and experiences with education. Two overarching themes can be drawn out however: the first relates to the need to combine both theory and practise. The second relates to the need for education to be multi-levelled and context-specific.

I. Combining theory and practice

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All participants made it overwhelmingly clear that both theory and practise are core ingredients to any successful educational program. All students “*must have the experience of working inside a cooperative*” as a necessary element in their program - something which is reflected in most of the educational programs studied in this report.

Key topics that ought to be covered included (in order of repetition from high to low):

- conflict resolution, facilitation skills and group-work
- communication and listening skills
- understanding the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the SE and other economies
- feminist and care perspectives
- inter-cooperation
- environmental education
- understanding and improving forms of governance
- how to create a business plan and targets.

Overall, the vast majority of topics placed emphasis on ‘soft skills’ such as active listening and conflict resolution whereas technical, business skills such as creating a business plan were only mentioned once.

Two divergent positions are worth highlighting here: one that endorses a cautionary approach to educating for the SE and the other that represents a more assertive, enthusiastic approach. The former, represented by a participant speaking from their personal experience as a co-founder of a small cooperative, reflects on the real costs of setting up an SE organisation (emotional energy, time, family support). They suggest that some may hold romanticised visions of the SE when in reality burn-out is a real risk given their personal/ideological drive for the SE to work.

“It's easy to fall into being very romantic with our ideas and the SE without testing how these match with what the market needs.” (ID2)

The first position encourages working on the relationship to money, which some may perceive, somewhat naively, as unwanted, when it is in fact “a necessary evil”. It also highlights the importance of teaching one how to recognise failure: when to draw the line and call it quits. These would suggest a more pragmatic approach to the SE is needed to help people navigate the potential pitfalls of entering the SE.

The second position, represented by ID4, seeks to encourage more people to enter the SE with an entrepreneurial spirit. For them, all universities should have a course on transversal competencies

in entrepreneurship where they analyse the success of big businesses, “*which were not born as big businesses but born as small businesses like Google for example*”. They highlight the need to simply *start*, noting that SE businesses are in fact very easy to start up, and that they share many values with those of the university (collaboration, technological research, innovation etc...). Students should therefore be encouraged to feel confident about entering the SE which represents a low-risk and high-reward strategy. Two important representatives of the SE in Spain, clearly have quite different views.

II. *Multi-levelled and context-specific*

The second important element to take into account when considering knowledge, competencies and skills is the context in which the education is taking place. In the first place, it is important to consider who the students or participants are, their backgrounds and expectations, to know whether the programs should be delivered as formal or non-formal education (ID3). Secondly, it is also important to know where the program is taking place: different localities have different rules and regulations regarding the SE. Education should therefore be context-specific to best serve the students from that given region (e.g. laws in Andalusia that enable start-up co-ops with no money up-front) (ID1).

It was also remarked that education for the SE ought to be multi-levelled: it should be integrated in schools from primary or secondary school onwards. This echoes the perceived challenge of making the SE more visible in the society and engaging youth as early as possible. In addition to this, two participants pointed to cooperative schools as examples to emulate and learn from: these are cooperative schools in which the teachers are cooperative members. Children grow up knowing how to build a cooperative, how to work in teams, develop and market a product, etc...

4. RELATIONSHIP AND FORMS OF COLLABORATION WITH UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES

As noted above, all participants already work and are keen to continue their collaboration with research institutions, universities and educational agencies. ID1 and ID3 work closely with universities already. ID1's latest project was a ‘week of the social economy’ in which 28 universities and 4 Latin American countries participated and was hugely successful, running 150 activities over the course of a week. The main idea is to keep expanding the reach of, and information on, the SE. ID3 is currently engaged in several projects, most notably a 3 month training course for young people (18-30 years old), geared towards building a cooperative project together.

All participants are keen to spend more time creating links with universities and bringing the SE to students. One points to universities' support for ‘start-ups’ - it could be good to integrate the SE into this start-up culture (ID3). Another noted that they have set up an internal commission dedicated to

thinking about SE education and, although it is not their priority to create their own educational programmes, they are open to potentially co-create an international program and currently do advocacy work and lobby the government to include SE in public educational programs (ID4).

This latter point is supported by all participants, with one going as far as saying that “*people are not really in a position to pay for such training*”. Therefore it is both unsurprising and necessary that educational programs are supported and funded by Generalitat or universities (ID3). ID1 also noted that it is unusual for masters programs to include SE - saying that this depends a lot on the module or program coordinator and whether they have experience in the SE themselves.

I. What works well?

Echoing what was previously mentioned in section 3, participants highly valued practical learning or learning by doing. This included field trips, hands-on work, using real-life case studies drawn out from the student cohort itself (e.g. if some in the group is already part of a cooperative) and orienting group-work assignments towards concrete objectives such as creating a cooperative.

ID2 also noted the importance of having a space to process or debate the tensions which arise when undertaking a SSE project. For example, “*Taking care of the entity, the co-op, or the individuals? What’s first? When do you have a paid leave beyond what the state says? Only when you have children? Or if you don’t have children but you need that day for another reason, are we saying ok to this or not?*”

The involvement of SE organisations was also highlighted positively, such as inviting previous students who now work in cooperatives to teach parts of the course (as practised by ID1 in a course they teach) or involving SE entities and local entities as a support group to counsel and guide a group’s project (as practised by ID3 in the course they run with UAB).

Overall the emphasis is placed on the less-traditional modes of teaching, valuing more democratic and participatory processes (including students and organisations) both inside and outside the classroom. Such practises are more likely to be familiar to (and therefore necessary learning skills for entering) SE organisations than to professors from academia, thus mutually reinforcing the involvement of SE organisations in developing and teaching these programs alongside universities to the benefit of both students and universities themselves. SE organisations show a clear desire to continue developing and creating such relationships. These would be greatly advanced if financial support and/or academic coordinators opened up to such possibilities in their respective departments and courses.