



Inter-Agency Task Force on
Social and Solidarity Economy

Building Participatory and Inclusive Institutions:

Bringing Meaningful Participation into Economic Decision-Making

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Abstract

While the SDGs are strong on their commitment of reducing economic inequality (SDG 10), inequality is not only experienced in economic terms. Rather, it is also about inequality of voice, as recognised in the commitment of Goal 16 to ‘inclusive societies and institutions’, and particularly target 16.7 ‘to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.’ A critical question is how Goal 16 can be applied not only to political and social institutions, but to decision making within the economic sphere as well. Drawing on work funded by the Open Society Foundations on bringing participation into economic decision making, this paper shares research by a team from the Institute of Development Studies on this question. In particular, we focus on participation in three areas:

1. Alternative forms of economic management that enable workers, consumers, communities, farmers, for example, to have a voice.
2. Citizen voice in government economic policymaking
3. Grassroots economic alternatives through the social and solidarity economy where people claim ownership over economic processes that affect their lives

The overall aim is to shed light on what constitutes meaningful participation in these areas and how it can be enabled, and to learn from existing experiences in order to frame future interventions.

Keywords

Participation, voice, agency, democratic economy, participatory economic governance

Bio

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1. Introduction

In the early 1990's, arising from their work with the UNRISD programme on popular participation, Stiefel and Wolfe (1994) published an important book entitled *A Voice for the Excluded: Popular Participation in Development, Utopia or Necessity?*. Twenty-five years on, a vast body of literature and experience has taught us a great deal on the nature and possibilities of participation in development processes, governance, accountability, and social programmes, (e.g., Gaventa 2006; Cornwall 2011).

However, while participation has been widely promoted in social, political and civic spheres, the question of participation in economic matters – ranging from citizen engagement in economic policy, economic development, or the governance of economic institutions – has received comparatively little attention. Building on work funded by the Open Society Foundations as part of their work on economic justice, this paper explores the question of how 'meaningful participation' is emerging in the economic sphere, including from within the burgeoning social and solidarity economy (SSE).

The commitment to participation in development has been a long-standing principle in a wide range of UN commitments and programmes. While the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) do not focus on participation *per se*, the universal commitment to 'leave no one behind' implies inclusion across the other ambitious social, economic and sustainability goals. And while the SDGs are strong on their commitment to reducing economic inequality (SDG 10), inequality is not only experienced in economic terms. Rather, it is also about inequality of voice (WSSR 2016), as recognised in the commitment of SDG 16 to 'inclusive societies and institutions', and particularly target 16.7 'to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.' A critical question is how SDG 16 can be applied not only to political and social institutions, but also to economic governance.

Of course the term 'participation' itself is a highly contested concept (Hickey and Mohan 2004). A central issue has been the degree of control or power participation implies, with a variety of 'spectra' or 'ladders' of participation suggested, ranging from mere information sharing, to consultation, to actual control, or 'empowered' participation. Another question is the participation of 'whom' – of the most marginalised, of 'beneficiaries' or of 'stakeholders', and who speaks for whom in these processes. A third issue relates to the 'spaces for participation', whether we are talking about participation in 'invited' spaces of co-governance, or participation in alternative 'claimed' or 'created' spaces (Gaventa 2006; Oswald et al. 2018).

In the midst of these debates, the definition given to us by Stiefel and Wolfe twenty-five years ago remains highly relevant. Participation entails 'organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements hitherto excluded from such control' (Stiefel and Wolfe 1994, 5). Such a definition (1) implies collective or 'organised' activity, not just individualised forms; (2) shifts the focus from 'inclusion' or 'consultation' to control; (3) suggests participation not only in the political or social realm, but includes control over resources (implying economic issues); and (4) is clear on the participation of whom – those 'left behind' from such control in the past.

Work by UNRISD on the SSE continues the earlier concern by Stiefel and Wolfe on social control. Utting (2018, 1) argues that “SSE is fundamentally about reasserting social control ... over the economy by giving primacy to social and often environmental objectives above profits, emphasizing the place of ethics in economic activity and rethinking economic practice in terms of democratic self-management and active citizenship”. However, while terms such as ‘democratic self-management’, ‘solidarity’ and ‘cooperation’, are widely used, we have found less work on how participation actually translates to increased ‘control over resources and regulative institutions’, to again use the Stiefel and Wolfe definition. Nor do we know very much on how participation in social and solidarity economy organisations and enterprises (SSEOs) contributes to the SDG target of ensuring ‘responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.’ While participation or some variant of it is an expressed aspiration in many SSEOs, how it is actually achieved, and with what challenges and consequences remains elusive.

This paper explores how participation enables the SSE to increase social control over the economy, and in so doing, to contribute to the SDGs. It starts with a brief review of how the concept and practice of participation has been treated in the SSE literature. It then shares results from research which maps examples of participation in the economic sphere. Finally, it draws lessons and challenges for the practice of ‘meaningful’ participation in the SSE.

2. Participation and the SSE

2.1 Participation as a principle of the SSE

Participation is often discussed in the literature as a key feature that sets SSEOs apart from conventional organisations. SSE ownership structures typically assign rights to a variety of stakeholders, rather than just investors, with a governance structure that “tends to be more inclusive and democratic, giving voice to different types of stakeholders (workers, volunteers, users, etc.) within the decision-making process” (Borzaga et al. 2017, 16). Where the public sector traditionally seeks ‘control/dirigisme’ and the private sector seeks ‘freedom/laissez-faire’, the SSE focuses on ‘participation’ (Dash 2016, 66). For community-based SSEOs, the whole community participates, rather than organisations being managed and governed by a few individuals on their behalf (Peredo and Chrisman 2006). Participation is both a means – to increase impact and performance – and an end in itself (Soviana 2013).

SSEOs embed learning and experimenting within participatory decision-making processes (Grasseni et al. 2015), in contrast to rule-bound participation in which the pre-eminence of procedure over just outcomes leads to decisions that are difficult to reverse when new insights emerge. In contrast, “the collectivist-democratic model of organization is oriented to helping participants to discover the ‘best’, the ‘wisest’, or the ‘right decision’” (Rothschild 2016, 8).

These general principles have been translated to practical criteria for specific SSE forms, including social enterprises (Defourny and Nyssens 2012), cooperatives (International Cooperative Alliance),¹ social economy initiatives (Government of Quebec; mentioned in, Poirier 2014), and community-based enterprises (Johnson 2010).

¹ Retrieved on 21 January 2019 from: <https://www.ica.coop/en/cooperatives/cooperative-identity>

2.2 Evidence on the level of participation in the SSE

While there is thus a general commitment to participation in the literature, empirical research on the practice and impact of participation in the SSE is limited, particularly in the context of developing countries. What does exist points to the challenges of implementing participation beyond the level of consultation, as part of non-hierarchical governance structures. In the United States, 14 million employees own stock through Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), but only 10 to 13% of the worker-owners have democratic control in decisional processes (Rosen and Rodgers 2007). Even when participatory governance structures have been implemented, including the recent enthusiasm for self-management styles like ‘holacracy’,² participatory experiments in business have been critiqued as more about cost-cutting than empowerment (Lee 2015).

A study by the Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia (2015) shows that poor communities are consulted in planning and processes, but their participation in governance structures is limited. In Bangladesh, the study found that the poor are represented in the boards of only 15% of social enterprises. Participation tends to be largely symbolic (Griffin-EL and Darko 2014; Darko and Koranteng 2015; Intellect 2015; Quak 2017). While social entrepreneurs may ‘educate’ stakeholders to change their behaviours, or engage them as ‘trainers for trainers’ or as ambassadors to promote their services and products, they are not participants in decision-making processes (Quak 2017). Where social entrepreneurs do introduce participation as a means of understanding the perspective of community members, most tend to implement participation gradually over time (Griffin-EL and Darko 2014).

Even community-based enterprises face challenges with participatory governance. People often lack information about ownership, meetings, and decision-making processes (Stone and Stone 2011). The result is “passive participation” (Pretty 1995), despite the community legally owning the enterprise.

2.3 Evidence on the impact of participatory decision-making

Egalitarian decision-making requires that the group is willing to search for common ground through sustained dialogue and learning, trumping the efficiency or hierarchical claims that prevail in more conventional governance models (Rothschild 2016). However, Leach (2016) shows that consensus seeking approaches can also be efficient. The absence of a rigid division of labour empowers people to speak and places on them the responsibility for listening carefully and weighing what other members have to say. Self-management is therefore correlated with decisional efficiency because members are proactive in decision-making.

Organisations and enterprises democratically controlled by their workers also perform well in terms of labour productivity. US-based ESOPs with a participatory culture of decision-making have been shown to be more profitable and productive, with less employee turnover (Blasi et al. 2013). Similarly, workers’ involvement in cooperative decision-making affords effective conditions for the productivity of capital (Melman 2001). At the Ghanaian Naara Rural Bank and

² Holacracy aims for a shift in mindset of workers toward greater autonomy and taking action. Power is distributed throughout the organisation, giving teams freedom to self-manage, while staying aligned to the organisation’s purpose (Robertson 2015).

Builsa Community Bank, employee participation in decision-making meant that “decision implementation becomes easy, creates a good working environment, increases commitment and satisfaction on decisions taken” (Abdulai and Shafiwu 2014, 1). The study concluded that participation resulted in improved productivity.

Conventional wisdom is that participatory democratic processes in organisations and enterprises only work in small entities at the local level, but not at a larger scale. However, growth is possible while SSEOs remain small or place more autonomy and self-management in smaller units. The rapid growth of the Burning Man festival in the US, for example, was possible because the organisers empowered local participants and volunteers to take action and plan events that would please them without waiting for leaders’ approval (Chen 2016). Ghosh (2015, 299) concludes that, “federated growth can enable an organisation to scale up while ensuring that the constituent village-level grassroots units remain at a manageable size”. SEMCO, a Brazilian marine company, managed to grow and increase participation of its employees through a process to split up manufacturing plants, making them smaller. By making every department smaller, the company fostered employee involvement in running the company (Vanderburg 2004).

2.4 Beyond individual SSE enterprises

The literature discusses the need for SSE entities to move beyond the idea of scaling as organisational growth. Instead, a transition from an enterprise to an ecosystem would result in strategic networks, with members adopting a broader, integral and more political approach to reach social goals (McPhedran Waitzer and Paul 2011). Engaging in an ecosystem requires new partnership capacities and the ability to support multi-stakeholder participatory processes. Bandini et al. (2014) linked higher efficiency and social impacts of participation in community-based enterprises with common conditions for enacting and maintaining multi-stakeholdership. Any support (NGOs, foundations, governments, impact investors) should not target individuals, but rather contribute to the position of the SSEOE within the ecosystem, emphasising collective responsibilities above individual leadership to succeed in their social mission (Rothschild 2016).

An enabling policy environment for participation should respect rights, such as freedom of association and information, as well as channels and forums for participation of SSE actors in policy-making and implementation (UNTFSSSE 2014). Governments can offer lines of credit or tax breaks, contract solidarity economy enterprises to supply goods or services, or promote cooperation between local solidarity economic units (Itzigsohn 2013). New technologies can impact participatory democracy. Digital innovations have created new connections across communities, giving birth to new forms of communal sharing and participation beyond geographical space (Acquier et al. 2017)

3. Mapping participation in the economic sphere

3.1 Methodology

Despite this literature, we still lack very much evidence on what constitutes meaningful participation and how it can best be enabled in support of the SDGs. These questions are taken up in rest of the paper, drawing on examples of efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions by groups formerly marginalised from such control.

Examples were identified through published literature, existing networks, and a public call for cases from March to June 2018, intended to surface unfamiliar or newer cases³. These may be grouped into three categories, based on the types of economic decision-making they enable, and the strategies through which they open spaces for participation. These are:

(a) **Alternative business and financing models:** These models enable workers, consumers, communities or farmers, for example, to have a voice in the way that businesses are run, investment decisions are made, and value chains or sectors are governed. In contrast with traditional centralised or hierarchical decision-making, groups affected by economic activities hold decision-makers to account, participate in decisions over how resources are deployed and production is organized, and directly own enterprises. Benefits created by economic processes are more justly shared by those involved.

(b) **Citizen voice in government economic policy-making:** In these examples, people are consulted, involved or collaborate in policy-making on issues such as debt, tax and interest rates, resource ownership, economic production or market governance. They contrast with traditional policy processes in which decisions are taken by technocrats or other experts, and their legalistic and technical nature is exclusionary or used to exclude wider voices. The result is greater transparency, accountability and quality of policy-making, reflecting the concerns and aspirations of ordinary people and protecting their economic rights (e.g. to a livelihood, to access resources).

(c) **Participatory economic alternatives:** These cases involve structures of exchange and ownership rooted in collective autonomy and mutual benefit, including various forms of cooperatives, and other alternative ownership models. Participation is fostered via democratic, horizontal and decentralised decision-making, including with respect to the rules and structures of governance. There is a strong emphasis on solidarity, group self-reliance, collective action and local wealth circulation.

Through this process, we identified 44 examples of participation for inclusion in our analysis (Figure 1). Given our primary focus on mapping and exploring models of participation, case selection was purposeful. Cases were chosen to span the spectrum of participation. Although only a portion involve actual control, or ‘empowered’ participation, all involve consultation (at a minimum). Diversity was sought in terms of geography and type of case. Where we found multiple similar examples, priority was given to those with particularly innovative or unusual features with respect to participation. Many of our cases are drawn explicitly from the SSE domain, but the examples also encompass broader approaches (e.g. in policy-making) which are relevant.

3.2 Three forms of participation in the SSE

Figure 1 shows the geographic spread of our examples across the ‘alternative business and financing models’ (red), ‘citizen voice in government economic policy-making’ (blue) and ‘participatory economic alternatives’ (yellow) domains. Examples of these cases are briefly described below, with more information available in the annex.

³ <https://www.ids.ac.uk/projects/linking-participation-and-economic-advancement/>

Figure 1: Map of cases of participation in economic advancement



Source: <http://eldis.org/keyissues/mapping-participation-economic-advancement>. Accessed 30 January 2019.

Alternative business and financing models that enable participation

- **W. L. Gore and Associates**, maker of Gore-Tex, is a privately-held multinational company operating through a ‘lattice’ system of employee self-management.
- **The Buen Vivir Fund** promotes solidarity-based lending practices that support communities’ holistic wellbeing, as opposed to maximizing capital accumulation. Its first round of investments supports nine projects led across the Americas, Southern Africa, and South Asia.

Citizen voice in government economic policy-making

- **The National Street Vendor Association (NASVI)** is a federation of street traders in India that advocated for and then co-authored the country’s first national policy on street vendors.
- **The Economic Governance Platform** is a coalition of CSOs advocating for civil society inclusiveness in major public financial management issues in Ghana.
- **The Citizens’ Economic Council Programme** is implemented by the RSA and explores how citizen voice can be embedded in macro-economic policy processes in the UK such as setting interest rates or making budget decisions.

Participatory economic alternatives

- **PEKKA** is an NGO enabling a self-governing network of women-headed households. Through the network, traditionally marginalized women run their own savings and borrowing cooperatives and group and individual enterprises in Indonesia, while also promoting political empowerment.
- **Banco Palmas** is an early example of solidarity finance in Brazil. It was developed based on a social currency (to keep wealth circulating locally); professional training of

entrepreneurs and a mapping of local consumption and production (identifying which type of local businesses could be boosted through credit and training).

- **The ‘Preston Model’** in the UK aims to change the procurement practices of Preston City Council and other ‘anchor institutions’ so that they support community wealth building and the creation of cooperative enterprises to fill supply gaps.
- **The worker-recovered enterprise movement** in Argentina emerged as a response to the country’s crisis of 2001, with workers fighting for their right to run abandoned factories.

4. Enabling participation in support of the SDGs

The SDGs set a universal standard for development that not only contributes to economic progress, but does so in a way that achieves inter-connected social, economic and environmental objectives that ‘leave no one behind’. Participation is crucial to these goals for multiple reasons. First, participation, e.g. of workers in the governance of cooperatives and other enterprises, can support goals such as decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and industry and innovation (SDG 9). The case of W.L. Gore & Associates is illustrative here. The company has become a leading maker of innovative products including medical equipment and outdoor wear, while consistently being ranked among the best companies to work for in the US. The company’s success is rooted in employee-driven innovations supported by its structure of workplace democracy and employee self-management.

Second, the SDG goal of ‘leaving no one behind’ will require participatory processes to overcome exclusion. As noted earlier, the commitment of SDG 16 to inclusive institutions, and particularly target 16.7 ‘to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels’, speaks to this issue. Responsive, inclusive and participatory *economic* organisations and institutions as critical to these objectives as political or social entities.

Third, the contribution of the SSE to inclusive and sustainable development will depend at least in part on whether it lays the foundations for participation. Certainly, as discussed in section 2, many elements of the SSE are participatory, requiring stakeholder voice in decision making. In addition, solidarity requires some a degree of deliberation and collaboration between workers, consumers and/or producers, implying a degree of voice and agency. Yet there are challenges to implementing meaningful participation in the economic sphere.

Participation as social control over the economy

As described in section 2, most research on participation and the SSE explores how workers, consumers and producers are involved in the ownership and governance of organizations and enterprises. While this is a building block of participation in the broader economy; it is a necessary but insufficient condition. While some literature also discusses the SSE eco-system (McPhedran Waitzer and Paul 2011, Utting, van Dijk and Matheï 2014), there is much yet to be worked out about how the SSE can support social control over the economy. Yet some of the examples we studied are innovating in this area.

Banco Palmas in Brazil is one such case. As an early pioneer in the SSE, this community development bank introduced a local currency to support community wealth through encouraging

local exchange, and discourage wealth being extracted from the local economy. Banco Palmas has now spawned the formation of a network of 113 community development banks operating across the country.

The city of Preston in the UK is also encouraging community wealth building, catalyzed in this case through redirecting public sector procurement to support existing businesses. While the six public bodies ('anchor institutions') involved previously spent only £38m in the city in 2013, this figure rose to £111m by 2017⁴, despite a fall in their overall budgets over the same period. With the support of the Preston Cooperative Network, the focus is now on encouraging the formation of cooperatives and solidary enterprises to fill gaps in provision.

The potential for the economy to serve social goals is also shaped by public policies and institutions. Boosting local spending (as in the case of Preston) may require changes to procurement 'rules', such as splitting up large contracts into smaller units so that SMEs can compete and advertising locally. Policy reforms can also create the legal basis for social and solidarity models. In the case of NASVI, a federation of street traders first advocated for and then co-authored a national policy on street vendors in India. They used sound evidence to inform policy advocacy, combined with more confrontational strategies through demonstrations and marches.

Linking economic with social and political participation

Transformative change towards broad participation in the economic sphere is unlikely to be possible or sustainable in isolation from other forms of social and political participation. While we did not find simple, clear evidence that participation in the economic sphere leads to directly to participation in the social and political arenas (or vice versa), in some cases these links are consciously fostered.

The roots of Banco Palmas, founded in 1998, lie much earlier in the creation of the local residents' association (ASMOCONP) in response to poor living conditions and a lack of social services and infrastructure. Even before ASMOCONP, the community experienced social participation through grassroots religious organizing. This prior community experience with social and political participation enabled the creation of new economic forms.

For PEKKA in Indonesia, the relationship worked in the opposite direction. PEKKA's starting point is economic: enabling very marginalized women to develop community-based savings and borrowing cooperatives. These democratically-managed groups give women greater control over their own resources, create mutuality between members, build women's confidence and change the way they are perceived in the community. Women are supported to use this as a platform to amplify their voice in local activities and decision-making, e.g. to advocate for access to government programmes. Some women have achieved leadership roles within their community.

Participation and 'leaving no one behind'

Across our cases there was no compelling evidence that participatory economic decision-making necessarily includes the most marginalised. However, in some examples, very

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jan/31/preston-hit-rock-bottom-took-back-control>

marginalised women and men are at the heart of participation. PEKKA is a strong case in point, as is NASVI. In others, inclusion of marginalised groups is being consciously fostered.

The Citizen's Economic Council Programme in the UK is one such example. The initiative brought together 50-60 randomly selected citizens, enabling them to co-produce recommendations on macroeconomic issues, while advocating for governments to draw on these councils in policy-making. To ensure greater participation, an 'Economic Inclusion Roadshow' was also implemented, engaging 190 socially and economically marginalised citizens, ensuring appropriate access support, e.g. for people with disabilities.

The Economic Governance Platform in Ghana has united diverse civil society organisations to collectively influence macro-economic and fiscal policy, e.g. the government's recent IMF bailout. Yet constrained in resources, the Platform has been frustrated in its vision to engage strong regional representation. To date, most activities have been restricted to Accra, although it is actively seeking alternative avenues to broaden its reach such as collaborating with regionally-based CSOs, and using radio to share information translated into local dialects.

Beyond funding constraints, hierarchies of power and authority that exclude marginalised voices remain a challenge, even in the SSE. In Argentina's worker-recovered factory movement, workers fought for and acquired the right to run abandoned factories following the crisis of 2001. However, despite progressive ideas about gender relations in some factories, 'machismo' persisted in others. Women workers had to fight to gain or defend their role in factory governance.

For Banco Palmas, a hierarchy of authority arose over time between the community association, ASMOCONP, and the Banco Palmas Institute. The institute was set up in 2003 to be externally facing, supporting the developing network of community banks across Brazil and managing new financing relationships with public banks, while ASMOCONP remained focused on the community. However, with its external connections and greater access to funding, the Institute has become the over-arching authority within Banco Palmas, while the role of the community in association has declined.

Enabling conditions for meaningful participation

From our analysis, we can deduce a set of conditions for meaningful participation in the SSE that supports SDG implementation. While democratic decision-making (one person, one vote) and stakeholder ownership are familiar features of SSEs, we identify additional factors.

1. **Distributed authority:** Ownership and control of productive assets by workers or other stakeholders enables more inclusive and democratic decision-making (Borzaga et al. 2017). Worker-owned enterprises are widely discussed, while other forms of ownership and control include savings and borrowing groups (PEKKA) and social currencies (Banco Palmas). In addition, distributed decision-making can be achieved through non-hierarchical and self-managed governance structures, as seen in the case of Gore & Associates.

2. **Democratising knowledge:** Narrow control of knowledge and expertise (e.g. on 'technical' subjects like the economy) often limits participation. Overcoming these barriers means recognising 'experiential knowing' (Heron and Reason 2008) as the basis of alternative expertise, e.g. NASVI co-authoring India's street vendor policy. It also means democratising technical

knowledge, e.g. through increased transparency and information flow, and translation (between languages or from jargon to everyday language). People may also access new knowledge, e.g. through engaging technical ‘experts’ to analyse policy (Economic Governance Platform), gather evidence (NASVI) or map the economy (Preston), provided that the terms for this engagement are set by the users of the information.

3. **Working in coalition:** There is strength in numbers when working to overcome exclusionary economic institutions, e.g. in advocating for change (NASVI, Economic Governance Platform, PEKKA). These efforts can be made even more effective through drawing on resources at multiple (local, national and global) levels. For example, the influence of the Economic Governance Platform on the IMF negotiations in Ghana stems from both the ability of civil society to speak nationally as a single coalition, and from parallel advocacy work with the IMF in Washington. However, care must be taken that access to new resources through multi-level networks does not negatively affect power relations and undermine participation.

4. **Mobilisation:** Participation in the SSE implicitly requires people have the awareness, capacity and ambition to engage in solidarity organisations; however, this cannot be taken for granted. In the case of Gore & Associates, the company accepts that its system of self-management would not suit all workers. For Banco Palmas, successful participation was built on pre-existing experience and capacity with community mobilisation. In still other cases (PEKKA, Citizens Economic Council Programme), these attributes have been supported through field staff or external facilitators who raise awareness of opportunities, create spaces for deliberation and enable access to new resources.

5. **Deliberation:** In order for people to come together in collective rather than hierarchical associations, whether for advocacy or enterprise management, more collective forms of decision-making are required. In the SSE, participatory decision-making may be based on the principle of ‘one member, one vote’ (e.g. PEKKA). However, many of our cases (Gore & Associates, Economic Governance Platform, Citizens Economic Council programme) emphasised processes that maximise the sharing of members’ viewpoints, and foster understanding of others’ thoughts and priorities, in order to discover the ‘best, wisest, or the right decision’ (Rothschild 2016). This may include, for example, bringing together producers and consumers or investors and investees (Banco Palmas, PEKKA).

5. Conclusion

While our mapping project has identified a number of promising examples of the role of participation in the SSE, there is still much to be done to achieve the vision set out twenty-five years ago by Stiefel and Wolfe (1994) ‘of increased control over resources and regulative institutions’ by previously marginalised groups or of Utting’s (2018) vision of the SSE as ‘social control’ of the economy. Despite the existence of possibly thousands of relatively small-scale examples of participatory SSEs, we still have limited cases of meaningful participation in larger enabling institutions, such as macro-economic policies regarding trade, finance, or industrial development policies. Similarly, although there has been experimentation with eco-system wide approaches based on networks of small enterprises or federations of cooperatives, there is limited knowledge and experience with meaningful participation and democratic control

in larger (public or private) enterprises that are likely to be necessary to support some forms of industrial development, for example, or manage large-scale infrastructure (Cumbers 2012).

Crucially, there is much to be learned on how participation in the economy enables or is enabled by participation in broader social and political arenas. One concern about the SDGs is that they have the potential to be treated as silos, when in fact they must be interlinked and integrated if the broad hopes for sustainable and universal development are to be achieved (Stafford-Smith et al. 2017). Only as we are able to build and link meaningful participation across social, political and economic institutions at different scales will the goal of 'leave no one behind' be fully achieved.

Annex: Case examples

Alternative business and financing models
<p>W. L. Gore and Associates, maker of Gore-Tex, is a privately-held multinational company founded in 1958. Since its founding, it has operated through a ‘lattice’ system of employee self-management which is said to verge on true workplace participatory democracy. Key features include a flat hierarchy in which the CEO is elected, self-managed work teams with small team sizes to secure ownership in collective decision-making, and free information flow. ‘Associates’ (as the workers are known) step forward to lead when they have the expertise to do so; a practice referred to as ‘knowledge-based decision-making’.</p> <p>www.gore.co.uk/about/our-beliefs-and-principles. Accessed 30 January 2019.</p>
<p>The Buen Vivir Fund seeks to promote financial models and practices that support communities’ holistic wellbeing, as opposed to maximizing capital accumulation. In early 2018, the Buen Vivir Fund launched its first round of investments to support nine projects led by organisations across Latin America, North America, Southern Africa, and South Asia. The Buen Vivir Fund investment model identifies solidarity-based lending practices developed by grassroots groups that are already proving effective on the ground, and then working collaboratively with them to uplift and apply these practices to the level of a global investment fund. Investors and on-the-ground experts have equal voting rights in decision-making; loan terms shift risk away from the small grassroots groups to investees; and borrowers make a solidarity contribution of their choosing based on the rate of growth and success of projects. https://thousandcurrents.org/buen-vivir-fund/. Accessed 30 January 2019.</p>
Citizen voice in government economic policy-making
<p>The National Street Vendor Association (NASVI) is a federation of street traders in India. NASVI advocated for and then co-authored the country’s first national policy on street vendors, which enabled more equitable economic participation of these informal sector workers. Through working in coalitions with others in civil society, they were able to use both evidence-based policy advocacy and more confrontational strategies through demonstrations and marches on elected assemblies in order to achieve change.</p> <p>http://nasvinet.org/newsite/. Accessed 30 January 2019.</p>
<p>The Economic Governance Platform (previously known as Civil Society Platform on the IMF Bailout) is a coalition of civil society organisations advocating for civil society inclusiveness in major public financial management issues. The initiative has been supported by Oxfam in Ghana, and initially focused on the government’s negotiations with the IMF, as well as the implementation of the subsequent bailout agreement. Through the platform, a diverse coalition of CSOs and think tanks worked together to facilitate a participatory deliberation process to agree common advocacy messages; supported civil society monitoring of public sector spending; and linked to global initiatives as levers for top-down influence. It led to CSO consultation being instituted as an integral part of the negotiation process, protection of pro-poor spending and the setting of transparency and accountability measures to address the underlying causes of indiscipline in public spending.</p> <p>http://www.csplatformghana.org/. Accessed 30 January 2019.</p>
<p>The Citizens’ Economic Council Programme is implemented by the RSA and explores how citizen voice can be embedded in macro-economic policy processes in the UK such as setting interest rates or making budget decisions. Deliberation processes, educational tools and technical support build people’s understanding and strengthen their voice. Economically</p>

<p>excluded communities are reached, through an ‘economic inclusion roadshow’, with access support, e.g. for people with disabilities or those who face language barriers.</p> <p>https://www.thersa.org/action-and-research/rsa-projects/economy-enterprise-manufacturing-folder/citizens-economic-council. Accessed 30 January 2019.</p>
<p>Participatory economic alternatives</p>
<p>PEKKA (which stands for ‘Female Headed Family Empowerment’) is an NGO organizing over 60,000 rural and urban widows, abandoned, single and divorced women in over 1,300 villages across Indonesia. PEKKA supports household livelihoods through savings and borrowing cooperatives and increased economic productivity through group and individual enterprises. PEKKA also promotes political empowerment by providing education on political rights and obligations as citizens to build critical awareness; developing the leadership potential of PEKKA cadres in participating in decision-making processes in the community; and facilitating the active participation of PEKKA cadres in political processes in Indonesia. https://www.pekka.or.id/index.php. Accessed 30 January 2019.</p>
<p>Banco Palmas: Banco Palmas is one of the early examples of solidarity finance emerging from the grassroots in an urban slum in Brazil. Banco Palmas works through three key pillars: a social currency (to keep wealth circulating within the neighborhood); professional training (to generate local entrepreneurship and a skilled workforce) and a mapping of local consumption and production (allowed for identification of which type of local businesses could be boosted through credit and training). Banco Palmas created participatory deliberative and decision-making spaces including the Local Economic Forum, which broad community voices into decision-making. The example of Banco Palmas has also prompted the creation of the network of community-based banks across Brazil. https://www.institutobancopalmas.org/. Accessed 30 January 2019.</p>
<p>The Preston Model: After the financial crisis of 2007/8 Preston, a city in Lancashire, UK, lost half its government grants and nearly US\$1.3 bn in planned private investments. In order to revitalise local businesses, Preston reoriented its plans towards a community wealth project. The project centres on several large anchor institutions (e.g. the local hospital), which shift their procurement practices from external to local sources, bringing money back into the local economy. Simultaneously, the project is developing worker cooperatives to address identified gaps in local supply capacity, while supporting a local cooperative economy. Preston continues to explore alternative ways of bringing wealth back into the community, such as through a windfarm for local energy generation and redirection of pension investments to the regional economy. https://cles.org.uk/tag/the-preston-model/. Accessed 30 January 2019.</p>
<p>The worker-recovered enterprise (‘empresas recuperadas’) movement in Argentina emerged as a response to the country’s crisis of 2001, with workers fighting for their right to run abandoned factories. Central to the movement is an ethos of solidarity, with worker-owned enterprises based on horizontal authority, collective decision-making and shared returns from the business. Vuotto, Mirta. 2012. ‘Organizational dynamics of worker cooperatives in Argentina’. <i>Service Business</i> 6, no. 1: 85-97.</p>

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