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Indigenous Solidarity Economy for *Buen Vivir* in Mexico

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**Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals:
What Role for Social and Solidarity Economy?**

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Abstract

In most indigenous contexts, exogenous developmental models have not originated satisfactory effects, and development policies, often inspired by "extractivist" logics, have contributed to the expropriation of indigenous lands and to the systematic exploitation of natural resources.

Against this background, several studies have highlighted the role of indigenous economic initiatives in sustaining endogenous development processes. This paper aims at contributing to this debate, claiming that solidarity economy (SE) organizations are an effective vehicle for an indigenous self-determined process of development. More specifically, SE appears able to sustain *buen vivir*, an indigenous conception of well-being that, overcoming the mainstream Western conception of development based mainly on economic growth, emphasizes the importance of indigenous culture, the natural environment, and collective well-being.

This paper presents a case-study carried out in the Mexican state of Querétaro, where local SE initiatives have been analyzed with an ethnographic approach in a rural community characterized by a strong indigenous component. The results highlight the potential of SE arrangements in sustaining alternatives to development and the fundamental role of education in supporting the recovery of local culture, which constitutes the basis upon which SE projects can be implemented.

Keywords

Mexico, *Buen Vivir*, Solidarity economy, Indigenous peoples

Bio

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Introduction

The contribution of solidarity economy (SE hereinafter) to development has been highlighted in different contexts. The term SE is employed to identify those organizations that are created by people who freely join in order to develop economic activities and job opportunities on the basis of cooperative relations, solidarity and reciprocity (Gaiger, 1999). SE organizations, also have been studied also in indigenous contexts, where they are also identified as community-based enterprises and share three specific characteristics: (i) their social base is inscribed in the local indigenous community in which they are embedded and their activities are directed not only to their members, but to the whole community (Peredo and McLean, 2013; Somerville y McElwee, 2011) (ii) they pursue a plurality of objectives, which are not only the satisfaction of material needs, but of also social, political and environmental needs ((Peredo and Chrisman, 2006; Somerville and McElwee, 2011; Giovannini, 2015); (iii) the contribution of reciprocity, barter and collective work which derive from indigenous tradition is crucial for the creation of SE organizations in indigenous contexts, and some authors highlight that indigenous cultural endowments give a competitive advantage to SE organizations that are created in those contexts (Lindsay, 2005; Berkes and Adhikari, 2006; Peredo and McLean, 2013). As a consequence, indigenous culture is a fundamental component around which community members gather in order to develop social and economic activities.

Against this background, this paper proposes an ethnographic analysis of a case study focused on SE projects developed by the *Unión de Cooperativas Ñõño de San Ildefonso* (the Union hereinafter), in the Mexican state of Querétaro. The main objective of the analysis was *Decora y Construye*, a productive organization that was part of this Union and that was managed as a cooperative. San Ildefonso Tultepec is a community in the municipality of Amealco de Bonfil, characterized by a strong Otomí (Ñõño) indigenous presence and a disadvantaged socioeconomic situation.

The research has been oriented by three main questions: first, which are the main needs of the community in the opinion of the organization's (*Decora y Construye*) workers? second, how do workers judge the capacity of SE projects to address these needs? and, third, what is the potential of SE projects in relation with self-determined development strategies?

Buen vivir as an alternative to development

The scarce results provided by exogenous development models implemented in indigenous communities call for the necessity of looking to alternative approaches. Mainstream development models are based on a narrow conception of need, exclusively linked to income, and the deriving policies, characterized in neoliberal terms, have contributed to the expropriation of indigenous lands and the indiscriminate exploitation of their natural resources (Gudynas, 2009; Tauli Corpuz, 2012). The 'extractivist' logic of this development model, often promoted by the IMF, the World Bank and some bilateral donors, has had serious environmental and social consequences: entire ecosystems have been destroyed, due to high-impact projects such as hydroelectric dams and large-scale mining. These projects have caused the displacement of many rural indigenous communities and a generalized worsening of their living conditions (Gudynas, 2009). In Latin America, as a matter of fact, there is a strong correlation between indigenous peoples and poverty indexes, in spite of the fact that they generally live on rich territories in terms of natural resources, as reports by the World Bank recognize: the Human Development Indicators (poverty, education, health, income determinants, and access to basic services) are still low (Hall and Patrinos, 2006), and the impact of the economic crisis has worsened the situation even more.

Against this background, *buen vivir* is an original contribution by Latin American indigenous peoples that deserves attention in the debate on development. This conception is an ethic paradigm that has been developing in the last decades at different levels, from civil society to institutions and academia. *Buen vivir* is a polysemic concept which is in a constant construction, an “idea that is constantly being created” (Gudynas, 2011a). *Buen vivir* has three innovative aspects: first, it is elaborated by peoples who have been historically marginalized, and belong to the periphery of the world (Acosta, 2013); second, well-being is not conceived in its individualistic western sense, but rather in the context of a community; and third, the natural environment is a subject of rights (arts. 71-74, Constitution of Ecuador). These peculiarities derive from the indigenous belief of the interconnectedness of all life forms (Whiteman, 2009). Far from being a nostalgic and static idea imbued with mysticism and rooted in a romantic past, *buen vivir* has not only philosophical and spiritual dimensions but also a range of practical applications, and not solely for indigenous communities. As Gudynas (2011b) argues, *buen vivir* can be positioned within the stream of the post-development critique defined as ‘alternatives to development’ and in opposition to ‘alternative development,’ following Escobar (1992). Among others, Escobar calls for deconstructing the mainstream western idea of development by overcoming its colonial implications and its reliance on economic growth and commodification of natural resources. The western idea of progress is antithetic to *buen vivir*: some mainstream approaches to development, such as modernization theory, consider indigenous culture as an obstacle to progress, and indigenous peoples as passive actors that should renounce their traditions in order to pursue development. The role of grassroots social movements in this sense is crucial, because they can favor a reconceptualization of the ideas of development, modernity and economy. As a consequence, a crucial role is played by indigenous social movements: in opposition to the neoliberal discourse of inclusion or assimilation of indigenous people into the dominant culture, social movements claim indigenous peoples’ right to be different. In this sense the defense of the “local,” that is to say of indigenous cultural specificities and livelihoods, is the main objective of social movements struggle (Mohan and Stokke, 2000). Thus, the attachment of indigenous peoples to their territories is reflected in the localization of social movements action (Escobar, 2001), that in turn reflects itself in the embeddedness of their socio-economic activity. Social movements are indeed crucial in contributing to a different view of development. Giving voice to subaltern groups, they can foster processes of autonomy and construction of direct democracy. Thanks to the contribution of social movements, where alternatives can be discussed and translated into political practices, the mainstream conception of “need” can be overcome (i.e. needs are linked essentially to income), it can be revised and adapted to the real necessities of people and communities (Escobar, 1992). As a consequence, needs to be satisfied are differentiated and expressed by the indigenous communities themselves, instead of being imposed top-down like in the cases described above of development aggression. The contribution of post-development theory is interesting because, against the exclusion of civil society brought by a “top-down, ethnocentric and technocratic approach” to development (Escobar, 1995, p.44), it emphasizes its role as an autonomous entity that can complement or the role of the state and the market.

Context and methodology

The study has been carried out in the community of San Ildefonso Tultepec, municipality of Amealco de Bonfil, Querétaro. The municipality of Amealco accounts for a 27% of the population who speak Nõño (Otomí), the local indigenous language (INEGI, 2010). The community has 11 sub-delegations or neighborhoods, quite dispersed and difficult to be reached due to poor

conditions of roads. Basic infrastructure and housing are in precarious conditions and there is lack of basic services like drinking water, drainage, as well as education and health. The study was directed to analyze a series of SE projects that started to develop since 1999, when local leaders together with a civil society association (*Grupo Jade*) and a religious order (*Religiosas de la Asunción*) gathered in order to explore the main needs of the community and productive activities that could address these needs. Between 2002 and 2009, eight cooperatives, two *sociedades anónimas* and one civil association were operating in different sectors of activity, like art and crafts, transportation, exploitation of a local stone (*sillar*), food services and a microcredit cooperative (Romero y Hurtado, 2011; Monroy, 2014). In 2006, after 5 years of activity, the Unión de Cooperativas Ñõñho de San Ildefonso A.C. (UCÑSI) was formalized. The Union is composed by representatives of each organization and its objective is to coordinate projects coherently with local development plans, in agreement with SE, *buen vivir* principles, cooperative work, gender equity and Ñõñho culture, as well as the independence from political parties, churches, and entrepreneurial groups (Monroy, 2014). *Decora y Construye* was founded in 2006 in order to create job opportunities and contrast chronic migration towards the US. The organization is devoted to tiles cutting, receiving orders from two of the main tiles producers active in Mexico. *Decora y Construye* is legally a SAPI (*Sociedad Anónima Promotora de Inversión*), a legal figure that, according to founders, guarantees economic sustainability and democracy in the decision making. The effort is to manage the organization as a cooperative, since Mexican legislation does not favor this legal figure¹. The *Instituto Intercultural Ñõñho* started its activity in 2009 with a master program in SE. This is the first intercultural university in the state of Querétaro and one of the pioneer universities in Mexico to offer a specific program on SE. The Institute privileges access to indigenous population, which constitutes the 80% of students, and has bilingual teaching. It is important to stress this aspect, since in Mexico only 3% of indigenous population has access to university education, and the very existence of many indigenous languages is threatened.

The research employee ethnography inscribed in a case study (Yin, 2009) and was carried out during 40 days of living in the Tenasdá neighborhood, sharing the daily life of the community and of the *Decora y Construye* organization. Participant observation and semistructured interviews were carried out. Interviews were directed to all the workers of the organization (19) and the director of the Instituto Intercultural Ñõñho. The main themes were basic personal data (age, education, knowledge of otomí language, migration experiences), opinions on the relations with the organization (advantages of being members and of this job with respect to previous ones, functioning of the assembly), involvement in the community (participation in community activities, needs of the community, opinions about government's aid measures), opinions about other organization's activities and projects. Interviews' duration was comprised between 20 minutes and 2 hours and a half, with an average of one hour. Interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed, under condition of anonymity. In addition to daily routine at the cooperative, including spontaneous exchanges during breaks, lunchtime and in the route home-workplace, I participated in three weekly assembly, and in some special events like the anniversary of the Instituto Intercultural Ñõñho, three compete days of course on SE directed to the organization's workers, and one day when I delivered a 6 hour class on development and *buen vivir* in the framework of the same course. This activity has been organized as a participatory workshop, with opinion and experience exchanges and group work. Informal interviews have been carried out with three students of the Institute in the framework of a project of food self-production which involved a dozen families of the community. Thanks to the daily presence in the community, I

¹ For this reason we will sometimes refer to *Decora y Construye* as "the cooperative"

had several informal conversations with people living in the community about health and education services, social issues like gender violence, alcoholism, illiteracy, migration, as well as opinions about government's aid programs. Most of this information has been recorded through field notes.

Federal aid programs

The “*Programa de Desarrollo Humano Oportunidades*” (since 2014 “*Prospera*”) is based on money transfers to families in extreme poverty. The aim is to support education, improve health and diet, favor labor inclusion through co-responsibility measures. That is to say that families, and especially women, are seen as active actors in the development process as opposed to simple aid receivers. Some international institutions have judged *Oportunidades* as “one of the most innovative and successful programs for those living in extreme poverty” (OCDE, 2010, p. 23).

Some studies, based on governmental data, evaluated these programs as effective, highlighting the increased number of school years and the increased number of kids who attend basic education (Attanasio *et al.*, 2012). However, these studies do not take into account qualitative aspects, for instance whether education is coherent with indigenous world-view or if the increased number of education years is translated into the capacity of finding decent jobs. Other studies are critical towards *Oportunidades*, highlighting that the real objective is to socialize individuals in poverty situations to different behaviors, making them co-responsible for the aid intervention (Mora, 2007). This aspect can be seen as positive with respect to more paternalistic approaches, but actually it hides a neoliberal logic that shifts responsibility for individual and family well-being from the state to subjects with scarce resources, while structural causes of poverty are not challenged. Beneficiaries, who are mainly women, are considered as active actors who can take decisions with respect to the money they receive: from being clients (passive receivers of social aid) they thus become consumers (Luccisano, 2004). UNDP partially share this critical view, stating that it is a paternalist development program since it creates dependency and it is not sustainable if not accompanied by employment creation and improving of infrastructures and public services, especially health and education (UNDP, 2010).

Other programs financed by *Sedesol* (Secretary of Social Development) integrated in the framework of the *Programa para el Desarrollo de Zonas Prioritarias (PDZP)*² are mainly focused on the improvement of housing, with the distribution of construction materials.

In San Ildefonso, opinions were positive concerning the aid itself, but quite critical regarding the way in which aid was distributed and managed. Nevertheless, some people interviewed had a critical view about these programs themselves:

At the beginning I didn't believe in government's aid. I used to say these people (people in the government) they want to live at our expense, they get to the power and they forget about people. So, I've never dared in asking for help to the government, and they also make it difficult to get aid, you have to go to many places...

² Program for the Development of Priority Areas

Another interviewee said: “about this aid I think it’s not good to get used to stretch out the hand and begging”.

And another added:

I think these are good ideas but they are poorly managed. For instance, the government gives you sheep and then nobody knows what people did with that sheep and they just wait for more. It’s just something that the government gave you as a present and that’s it. Here for instance it’s different, with the project of food production that we have, people started to believe they were part of a productive project, and discovered that they already knew many things. And they almost didn’t believe it, people they don’t think they are able to do things, and that reinforcing what they already know is much better.

As mentioned above, critiques came mainly concerning aid’s management, since many people noted that aid was not distributed in a fair way, as one interviewee explained:

My mother has Oportunidades. She once asked for a house, but they didn't give it to her since the responsible for aid distribution gave it to a relative of hers. She’s the one who decides, and I think they should have given her some money in order to get it...

Another one added: “Now there are many aids here, but there are people who make business with that. Some people use to receive three or four times the same aid while other people they don’t get anything”.

Another person told her direct experience with Oportunidades-Prospera:

It’s a big help for women, but it’s also a lot of time that you have to spend on it, because you have to go to school, make exercise, play football, too many activities! Kids have to go to school, Women have to go to primary and secondary school, participate in meetings, collect rubbish... it’s a lot of time you need!

Community’s needs

Interviews also dealt with the perception by workers of *Decora y Construye* of the most urgent needs of the communities where they lived (mainly Tenasdá and other close neighborhoods), and the ability of the Union’s projects to address these needs. They also expressed their opinions about Government’s social programs.

Main needs have been grouped into five categories, as reported in Table 1. The idea of having different categories of needs, contribute to overcome poverty as related only to socio-economic indicators or to income (Bebbington *et al.*, 2010).

Table I. Community’s needs

Cultural needs	Recovery of local culture and indigenous language
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Social needs	Health and education services Reduction of migration processes
Economic needs	Employment generation Basic infrastructures
Political needs	Participation in decision-making and increased awareness
Environmental needs	Protection of territory Food sovereignty

Cultural needs are seen as important for most of the workers, especially concerning the recovery of the language and of local culture. Only two workers were able to speak Otomí, while others expressed the desire to improve or to learn it, like for instance this interviewee:

We would like to have more trainings, even of our own language. I would be proud to speak it, and I say to my parents: why didn't you teach it to me? They say that Otomí was useless, because it was spoken only here. When I was a child school was not bilingual, well in theory it was, but it was not true.

In this sense the role of the Institute is really valued, and also the possibility for the workers to attend the course on SE, as one interviewee explained:

Yes I heard about the Institute before, here we help them with some of the profit of the cooperative and it's good because, thanks to this, there are youngsters who can go to university, while before not many could study. If somebody told us that there would be a university here in San Ildefonso we would not believe it! I say that the most important thing is to recover the language. We know many people who are able to speak, but they are ashamed of it. Our parents they didn't speak Otomí to us because they were ashamed.

Some interviewees were also actively involved in cultural activities promoted by the Union, such as documentary films, theatre plays, and a community museum.

Social needs were dealing mainly with lack of education and health services. Concerning health, there were complaints about the scarce quality of the service, for instance: “the most important thing would be to have a good doctor, and to have a daily medical service”.

Another interviewee added:

In the clinic there are no doctors, no medicines, doctors come once per week... in every community there is a clinic, but the doctor doesn't come, only the nurse. In the clinic you cannot buy medicines, only in San Ildefonso or in Amealco there is a pharmacy.

Concerning education, there were primary schools in the neighborhoods, but the educational quality was low and the illiteracy percentage was high, even though it was not possible to have official data regarding illiteracy rated in the area. One interviewee expressed his opinion about which was the most urgent need of his community, highlighting the high costs of secondary education:

I think we need more education and more educational workshops, because education is very expensive. I thought about taking my diploma, but when I saw how much you have to pay for enrolling, I thought "it's better if I remain ignorant forever!"

The role of the Union was assessed as positive in this sense, since many interviewees highlighted how *Decora y Construye* was supporting them with the medical expenses, and in the educational sphere the course on SE was evaluated as important by the totality of the interviewees, even though at the time of the study it has just started.

Among economic needs, employment creation was seen as the main issue, also as an antidote to migration towards the United States. Half of the interviewees had migrated to the US, and all of them had family members with similar experiences. As one of the interviewees put it: "we need more work. Having a job, all the rest comes along".

Other interviewees highlighted needs related to basic infrastructures, such as: "I say we have many needs! Such as having a phone line, or drainage system, which they are now putting it, but not in every house. I say there are many needs, maybe I'm not able to explain, but there are many...".

Other two added: "Roads, drinking water... water is pure because it comes from springs, but pipes are not safe! And transport... there are two buses, every hour and a half, but sometimes they are so full and they don't wait for you!", and: "Many things... the road surface, that they are now putting in the main road, and that they help us to pave other roads. And also drainage, bathrooms, houses, we have never had help in my community. There are old houses that are falling into pieces".

Some also highlighted the lack of resources to cover basic necessities, like food and clothing: "especially food, clothes and shoes. Food is hardly enough!". This was not the same for all workers, there were families who were able to provide meals to their members every day, and others that had more difficulties.

The fact of having a job that was close to their homes without having to migrate, was a very important aspect that all the interviewees highlighted. In this sense, the positive impact of the cooperative was emphasized.

Concerning political needs, these were not clearly expressed by the interviewees, differently from what happens in other contexts where indigenous identity and consciousness are stronger (see for instance Giovannini, 2015). However, some interviewees expressed the need of a change in the mentality of the people in order to address some social issues that affected them, for instance: "People need more awareness, most of them drink a lot of alcohol, there is a lot of violence inside the families." Others highlighted the need of a mentality switch in order to support education: "we have to make youth willing to study. There are many youngsters who could study, but they don't want!".

Some highlighted the role of the Union in becoming aware of several issues:

We were in a workshop called 'health and gender' and they taught us to respect women and it helped me a lot. Before I used to think 'women should cook, they should clean the house' and then I changed my mind. They are free. (...) I don't know if this happens in all cooperatives, but here you change your way to look at the world, because before I didn't think as I think right now.

In this respect, the ability of the Institute and of other experiences of SE developed by the Union seems fundamental in bringing up positive examples that other members of the community can replicate. The Institute's director explained:

Culture is so degraded that we need to recover it, and in this sense we are succeeding with the Institute. There are female students that get beaten to school, because their parents don't want them to study. Other students walk two hours to get to school. I know all their houses and it seems impossible to me that they can study and do their homework. Many times they are not taken into account at home or in the community, but when they assume a responsibility the best of them comes out and they are an example for other youngsters.

The Institute is crucial to train indigenous professionals who can support their communities and defend their rights. For instance, one of the former students was studying at the INALI (National Institute of Indigenous Languages), at the time of the research, in order to become an interpreter in trials with people seeking Otomí.³

Environmental needs were mentioned only by a minority of the interviewees, even though for instance the issue of illegal tree felling in the area was a well-known problem: "What I like about the cooperative is that we plant trees because here there is a lot of felling and the hill is becoming half-bald. We also have a demonstrative plot⁴ where we work in order to take care of the territory."

Another one, when asked about the main need of the community, explained:

I think that we need a switch in the brain, to have a different view, to respect animals and the environment. We have a very rich natural environment, but is very deteriorated. We have a spring and we don't appreciate it, we don't care about protecting trees...one need would be to find a way to protect animals and the environment.

A socio-environmental project of the Union was devoted to the production of food ("Domestic network" or "Family farm"). Ten families were involved: they received workshops in order to learn or improve farming techniques and they then received hens and seeds for eggs, vegetables and mushrooms in their homes. The idea was to produce for self-consumption and then commercialize the surplus. Students of the institutes and families of Decora y Construye were

³ in Mexico there are many cases of judicial abuse due to lack of interpreters of indigenous languages. Many people who do not currently speak Spanish are often unable to defend themselves against accusations.

⁴ several workers were involved in the demonstrative plot, a project financed since 2011 by CDI (Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas) of reforestation and recovery of the local territory.

also involved and the food generated was used also to prepare meals at the Institute and the cooperative.

Conclusion

As reported in Table 2, starting from five pillars of *buen Vivir*, as extracted from the literature, it is possible to analyze five needs of the community, as found from the fieldwork and from antecedent studies. To each of these category corresponds an area of action of SE, intended here as the totality of the Union's projects, and a corresponding impact on the local community, as extracted from interviews and observation.

For instance, if we look at the first row, the first pillar of *buen vivir*, which is decolonization, corresponds to the need of acknowledgement and respect of indigenous cultural specificities. The area is cultural, and the impact of the Union's projects is mainly related to the recuperation and the promotion of indigenous language and culture. In the cultural dimension the Union, and not only thanks to the Institute, supports the recognition and the revival of indigenous culture, which seems coherent with the *buen vivir* that seeks for alternatives to the neoliberal system.

In the second row, the social dimension implies a reinforcement of social cohesion and an improvement in life conditions of the Union's as well as the community members, thanks to the action of SE. This is visible especially in the reduction of migration processes and in the improvements of some aspects related to health and education. Obviously, the impact is still not sufficient for a radical and generalized improvement, but it is to hope that a wider diffusion of SE projects, involving larger sectors of the community, could have a stronger effect.

In the economic sphere, there is a partial improvement of living conditions of the cooperative's members and of the community in general. This is due mainly to employment generation that impact on workers and their families, and it has to be noted that in most of the cases they are the only bread winners in the family. In this sense, the expansion of economic pluralism and economic democracy is seen as a pillar of *buen vivir* thanks to the intervention of SE which widens opportunities for subjects who are usually excluded from traditional productive processes.

In the fourth row, the political sphere involves the promotion of sociopolitical issues of the community as a response to the need of generating political awareness that can bring to increased self-determination. In general, SE intervention is seen as useful in reinforcing awareness in several issues that affect the community, as detailed above. It is especially thanks to the educational interventions, by the Institute and the course on SE at Decora y Construye, that this process develops. The involvement of workers in the decision-making of the cooperative, even though still not perfect, seems as an important step towards the self-management of productive activities and of cultural, environmental and social projects.

In the fifth row, the environmental dimension is one of the most crucial aspects of *buen vivir*, which guarantees rights to Nature. This dimension address the community needs of respect of the territory and food sovereignty. In SE projects in San Ildefonso there is an attention to the environment through dedicated workshops and activities. The examples of the Demonstrative Plot and the Domestic Network are important in order to spread a culture of respect towards the natural environment and improve food sovereignty, aspects that appear still neglected in the community.

Table 2. *Buen Vivir* and solidarity economy.

<i>Buen vivir</i>		Solidarity economy	
<i>Buen Vivir</i> pillars	Community's needs	Area	Impact on the community
Dcolonization (Walsh, 2010)	Enhancing of indigenous language and local culture	Cultural	Recovery and promotion of indigenous language and culture
Community well-being (Albó, 2009; Huanacuni, 2010)	Education, health, reduction of migration processes	Social	Enhancing of social cohesion, improvement of life conditions
Economic pluralism, economic democracy (Coraggio, 2011; Acosta, 2013)	Employment and income generation Basic infrastructures	Economic	Improvement of life conditions of workers, their families and community
Plurinacional State (art. 1, Constituciones de Bolivia y Ecuador)	Increased awareness; self-determination and participation in the public sphere	Political	Participation in the decision-making; increased awareness in the individuals
Rights of Nature (art. 71-74, Constitución del Ecuador)	Respect for environment and territory Food sovereignty	Environmental	Protection of the environment; self production of food

Source: adapted from Giovannini (2015)

The study has highlighted the potential of SE organizations in sustaining an approach to endogenous development coherent with *buen vivir* in a context characterized by severe socio-economic issues and low social cohesion, with a threatened local indigenous culture. Obviously, the impact of these initiatives is still limited, and the involvement of local people and communities is not free from contradictions. However, the research has stressed, above all, the importance of SE arrangements in recovering and revitalizing the local culture and in improving community awareness by creating good examples and practices that, if replicated, can have a stronger influence on an autonomous process of creation of self-managed solutions to community needs.

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