

The Social Economy in the United States

Social Economy Symposium
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How is the social economy understood in the U.S.?

- Minimal (or non-existent?) use of the term “social economy”
- Non-profits and cooperatives are strong in certain sectors

Non-profits in the U.S. (2004)

- How many? 1,397,263
- Total Assets? \$2,474,987,292,921
 - Health: \$713,146,727,827
 - Education: \$534,900,998,336
 - Arts, Culture, Humanities: \$301,355,294,994
 - Human Services: \$109,708,051,425

Cooperatives in the U.S.

- Estimated total: 40,000 co-ops, with over 100 million members
- Combined revenue of the top 100 co-ops: \$117 billion

Cooperative Sectors

- Credit unions: 10,000 credit unions, \$600 billion in assets, 84 million members
- Farmer-owned: 3000 cooperatives
- Housing: 6,400 cooperatives, 1.5 million households
- Rural Electric Cooperatives: 900 co-ops, 37 million members

Trends

- Increasing interest in social entrepreneurship, social enterprises, and CDCs as community asset builders
- Renewed interest in solidarity at the grassroots
 - Fair trade coalitions
 - Community loan funds
 - Worker ownership increasing
 - Local cooperatives in food, health, energy sectors

Social Economy Survey Dane County Wisconsin	Responding to urgent social needs	Responding to opportunities
Social development (non-market based)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Luke House ■ Grace Church shelter ■ Grassroots Leadership College ■ Neighborhood Centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children’s Museum ■ Madison Community Health Center ■ Respite Center
Economic development (market based)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dane Loan Fund ■ Women’s Business Initiative loan fund ■ Troy Gardens ■ Homestead Housing cooperative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Non-profit business incubators ■ Home Grown WI Co-op ■ Union Cab ■ Willy St. Grocery Co-op ■ Commonwealth CDC

Examples of Legislative & Financial Support

- Favorable tax status for non-profits, credit unions, cooperatives
- Targeted support to cooperative development in rural communities
- CDFI Fund: Administered by U.S. Treasury to support community development financial institutions

Issues & Challenges for Research

- Multi-stakeholder organizations
 - Trends in non-profits and cooperatives
 - Evidence of growing involvement of users in service delivery decisions in non-profits?
 - Legislative barriers to multi-stakeholder co-ops?
- Place-based sustainable economies
 - Evidence of growth of the social economy in certain regions? If so, what were the catalysts? How is success sustained?
- Democracy in cooperatives & non-profits