

Fostering social enterprises and civil society: A case study

Unión de Cooperativas Madrileñas de Trabajo Asociado



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The context; some facts about social economy in Spain

- Long tradition of social enterprises
- More than 50.500 social economy enterprises
- Over 110.417 million € income in 2005
- 7 % Gross National Product
- 2.300.000 workers
- At the European Level: 8 % of European enterprises and 10 % of the European employment

The context; some facts about social economy in Spain

The families of social economy enterprises:

- Co-operatives
- Mutualities
- Associations
- Foundations
- Labour societies
- Social insertion companies
- Sheltered employment centres

Gathered at the Spanish Business
Confederation of the Social Economy
(CEPES)

The relevance of social economy

- As a tool for social inclusion
- As a community development agent
- As a social capital provider
- As a promoter of civil society development

The relevance of social economy

Why?

- Primacy of the **individual** (the person) and the social objective over the capital
- **Voluntary and open** membership
- **Democratic** management by members
- Conjunction of **interests** between user members and general interests
- Defence and implementation of **solidarity and responsibility** principles
- Management autonomy and **independence** vis-à-vis the authorities
- **Re-investment of the benefits** either for the development of their own activities or the interest of the community

An example: Helechos S.Coop.

- Co-operative enterprise created in 1985
- Municipality of Leganés (Madrid)
- Activities:
 - Plants and flowers production
 - Garden design
 - Public gardens maintenance
 - Training

An example: Helechos S.Coop.

- Re-restructuring context
- Unemployed and non experienced founder members
- Strong link with the community of Leganés
- Re-investment of benefits in the co-operative
- Economic growth: 170 workers and first gardening enterprise in Madrid
- Quality employment
- Awareness-raising projects in sustainable development
- Financing of cultural awards
- Training

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