



# SOCIAL ECONOMY UNIT



# SUMMARY

The Social Economy Unit was launched in 2018 and it is structured as an open innovative process for COSV staff and stakeholders. The goal of the unit is to develop a continuous action research across disciplines and within different cultural contexts to foster development cooperation “know-how”, social innovation and social economy. The unit aims to produce for the programs that COSV manages a multiplier impact on economic and social levels, especially for the interventions that have strong social entrepreneurship component.

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# ABOUT COSV

## COSV NGO

COSV is an Italian NGO working in the development cooperation, in different sectors, since more than 40 years across the world. In the last decades we capitalized our experience and we decided to focus on socio-economic development in the Mediterranean area and Africa, where our presence brings a stronger value to the intercultural facilitation among Europe and Local context.

## MISSION AND VISION

We are a leading INGO that focuses on the socio-economic development aspects where we design and implement projects that implant structural change within communities while involving all stakeholders in the process.

## COSV BUSINESS UNIT

COSV NGO operates under the legal form of SME, through **Co-Profit SRL**, registered **in 2021** as a Benefit corporation in Milan (Società Benefit law 208/15). Co-profit offers services for *social impact measurement, social business development, sustainable internationalisation of SMEs* in the countries where it operates. Co-Profit is also a talents' management strategy for COSV; through this business unit we encourage entrepreneurship spirit, where our talented local staff can contribute through the consultancies and the development of new services to scale the socio-economic impact in their countries and beyond the projects durations.





## UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIAL ECONOMY CULTURE

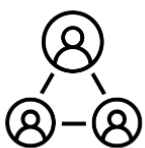
Plural forms of SE  
representing different  
cultures and values.

It is important to recognize the  
differences to avoid harming  
the young Social Economy  
Ecosystems in fragile contexts.



## BUILDING A CROSS- CULTURAL KNOW- HOW

- We build a cross-cultural  
know, investing in local  
resources and the talent  
management strategy



## FOCUSING ON HUMAN CENTRED APPROACH

We apply a human centred  
approach, embedding  
different tools and  
disciplines in our  
methodologies, including  
facilitation skills, creative  
thinking and co-design.

# ABOUT SOCIAL ECONOMY

## PLURAL DEFINITIONS

Social Economy has received a lot of attention recently. The phrase is increasingly used to describe businesses and organizations involved in the production and trade of products and services that are independent of the government and are guided by goals and standards that place a priority on social cohesion, cooperation, and solidarity. Cooperatives and other social enterprises, mutual associations, women's self-help groups, unions of workers in the informal economy, fair trade networks, and solidarity finance programs are a few examples.

Social Economy Organizations are impact multiplier generators for communities. They are driven by human centred design to enable the creation of a just and sustainable society by transforming the economic production and the welfare state to a more effective and impactful environment for all community members.

Across the history and the different perspectives we can find several definitions: **#social-and-solidary-economy**, **#social-entrepreneurship**, **#social-business**, **#entrepreneurial-noprofit**, **#public-sectorial-socialenterprises** with different legal forms: NGO, company, foundation, cooperatives, associations and others.

Each term identifies different values and concepts on how a social economy initiative may operate, and on what potential ecosystem may support them.

## PLURAL APPROACHES

COSV is specialized to operate in developing countries and fragile context, where Social Economy ecosystems are young. This is why we defined our SE strategy based on the principle of plural approaches in which we do **“Not harming the local ownership process and the sustainability of the interventions”**.

## A NEW ERA IN FRONT OF US

Social Economy is living an unprecedented momentum through a global recognition coming from different international agencies and institutions. Beside the traditional forms and practices, the conventional way of doing business is slowly shifting towards a more sustainable way of economic production activity, the *shared value* (A. Porter 2010) movement, it is generating an #impact-economy trend, that should be integrated in a new social economy scenario. We, at COSV, adopted methodology and tools that enable the impact economy players to be strategic partners in our programs.



## Social Economy as driver for development cooperation transformation.

# OUR APPROACH

We are an International NGO with core values for the International development cooperation and sustainable innovation, and we also play also the role of *social entrepreneurship support organization (SESO)*.

Our approach to social economy has been developed observing the social entrepreneurship movement at local and global levels and embedding the basic principles of this movement into our International development cooperation strategy:

### THE WELFARE COMMUNITY APPROACH

Our programmes are based on promoting subsidiarity and virtuous interaction between public bodies, businesses and civil society, across the different policies of intervention in the light of the welfare community approach where Public and private, family and institutions, third sector and the State: the horizon of social cohesion must be able to overcome old logics of separation, to relaunch that climate of trust which is the premise of a country that must return to growth, even over time of need.

### THE CAPABILITY METHODOLOGY

Social entrepreneurs have invented new business models or new community services tailoring the production process to Person with Disabilities and the most vulnerable in the societies, enabling them from a passive beneficiary status to a pro-active members of our society. This is the **capability approach** (M.SEN 1997) that changes the focus from means (the resources people have and the public goods they can access) to ends (what they are able to do and be with those resources and goods).

the capability approach as strong implication for us in terms of methodology : **co-design** and **co-production** are adopted in all the planning and management phase of our work.

### THE MARKET TRANSFORMATION SCHEME

Social Entrepreneurs along the last century were advocating for alternative economic paradigms, not filling the state or the market gaps but changing the welfare state and the market rules; in which economic, social, and ecological prosperity grow together and not apart. Especially in our employability program we support not only the adaptation to the current market need, but also the transformation capacity.



# CURRENT PROGRAMS

<i>COUNTRY</i>	<i>PROJECT</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>RELATED POLICIES</i>
LEBANON	LEB INC! promoting inclusive business in Lebanon. Co-funded by AICS	Leb inc! is pivotal platform for Universities, SMEs, and the social entrepreneurship movement to collectively join force in reducing unemployment of youth and to promote an inclusive and sustainable approach to in the Business Faculties.	Social Entrepreneurship education, Higher education, youth unemployment Market analysis, inclusive business incubation.
LEBANON	SEE CHANGE Social Enterprise Ecosystem Change Co-funded by EU MADAD	A comprehensive program to boost the advancement of SE ecosystem. COSV is leading the incubation of four new models of SE in Lebanon while measuring their impact on related policies: community enterprise, school-enterprise, NGOs in transition and public-private partnerships.	Social Entrepreneurship TVET Education Urban regeneration Good Governance
ALBANIA	TOKA JONE Reuse of confiscate land for social and green agriculture Co-funded by EU	TOKA JONË project aims to strengthen social enterprises in managing the confiscated assets from organized crime in Albania based on social agriculture models.	Social Green Agriculture Social Economy Confiscated asset
ALBANIA	GREEN AL Empower Grass-Root CSOs for Improved Innovative Environmental Protection in Albania Co-funded by SIDA	Targeting Albanian CSOs / grassroots associations engaged in the environmental field through an acceleration program via sub-granting scheme. Mentoring and technical will allow them to improve their organizational and financial sustainability, including through recourse to the market and the establishment of public-private partnerships for the establishment of ecological services for communities.	No profit entrepreneurial initiatives, Environment protection, Public-Private partnership for good governance
ALBANIA	LAGHI D'albania (Albania 'Lakes) co-funded by AICS	The action intends to promote innovative models of sustainable and responsible tourism in the areas related to the two main lakes of Albania - Lake Skadar and Lake Pogradec / Ohrid - in opposition to models of tourism and invasive development that are rapidly expanding throughout the territory. Albanian, in order to contribute to an inclusive economic growth of Albania.	Sustainable tourism, inclusive business, green transition
NORTH MACEDONIA	ENTEG Entrepreneurship skills for Higher education Co-Funded by EU	Targeting Higher education Student and Institution of North Macedonia and Greek, COSV is leading a component related inclusion of ROMA community in higher education and entrepreneurship program	Roma Inclusion and entrepreneurship programs al inclusive marketing

COUNTRY	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	RELATED POLICIES
MONTENEGRO	REACH Raising Environmental Awareness on Circular economy and natural Habitats of Cetinje and Lovcen Co-Funded by EU	The project will work with local actors active in the areas of Cetinje and Lovcen (national park), coming from public authorities, schools, CSOs and private individuals, for the realization of pilot circuits of circular economy in the bio-waste supply chain. This intervention will also increase the awareness and awareness of the same actors and the local population on the issues of the environment, proper waste management and climate change.	Circular Economy Public-Private partnership, Social Economy
NORTH MACEDONIA	BAIR BAIR - Bitola's joint Action for the Inclusion of Rome – Co-Funded by EU	The Project will work for the improvement of the basic conditions of the Roma communities of Bitola in terms of urban planning, housing, access to social services and participation in community life. In particular, a highly participatory approach will be adopted aimed at strengthening the target community in becoming an active part of the community and protagonist of the development and improvement of living conditions. This approach will be used especially in the use of the Housing Restoration Fund (HRF) which will be aimed at improving the conditions of homes and settlements, including energy efficiency interventions, in which these communities live	Social housing, Roma Inclusion Social Economy Urban Regeneration
BALKAN REGION	WBSEA western Balkan social Economy Alliance CO-funded by EU	The project aims at depicting social economy as a brain-gain catalyst in the Western Balkans, thus, building the capacities of youth organizations in WB region to embed social economy in their strategic planning and positioning and work towards the development of social economy programmes and advocacy initiatives. It intends to stimulate youth brain-gain in WB region by supporting the creation of an enabling environment for youth employment through promotion of self-employment and social entrepreneurship practices. Fostering regional cooperation, capacity-building and an exchange of know-how and good practices between WB countries and EU.	Social Economy Circular Economy



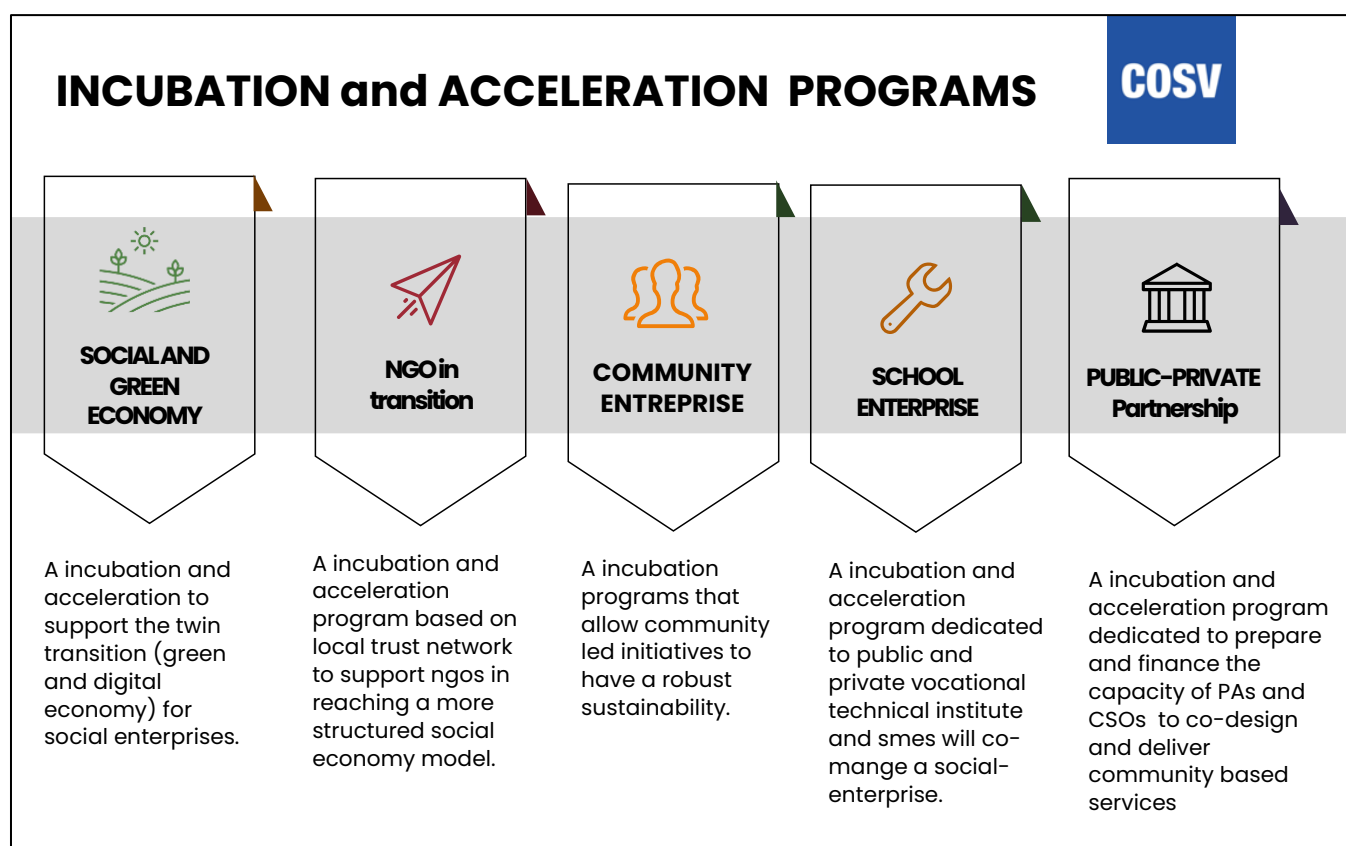
# WHAT WE OFFER

## SERVICE DESIGN and CAPACITY BUILDING

We are specialized in managing program that include service design and capacity building involving civil society organization, business, and communities in improving wellbeing, livelihood, employment education and social cohesion, putting in heart of our intervention also the tangible and intangible heritage.

With the term “**service design**” we refer to the design of programs that work, but to make services work, relationships must be designed: between the people who use them and those who offer them, between those who manage them behind the scenes and any external suppliers, between the users themselves. *This often means enabling different relationships, connections, processes and experiences.*

## SOCIAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES



We internally design and manage incubation and acceleration programs via sub-grant scheme, we are specialized in investment that have quick and broad impact on social justice policies and good governance as describe in the above tab.

## ACTION RESEARCH

We are constantly engage in action research, overall related the impact of our social economy programs on some specific policies, we Design and write policy papers. We Design and implement peer exchange programs that can help social entrepreneurs to share knowledge and reflect on their experiences. We Produce Impact also measurement framework.



## Social Economy PLUS matrix

- SE plus is a social economy assessment tool that integrates the social economy standards with the new impact economy trends.



## ANALYZING THE IMPACT

- Along with incubation and acceleration with analyze the impact of SE on different SE policy



## SUSTAINABLE MARKET ANALYSIS

- Youth led data collection methodology
- Access to data for all
- IT sustainable

# OUR TOOLS

## SOCIAL ECONOMY ASSESSMENT TOOL

In young SE ecosystem and/or fragile context it is important for us to integrate the context analysis with social economy indicators that are often implicit in observation of the practice on the ground. That is the reason why we have developed a social economy assessment tool, in order to have a preliminary understanding of the local social economy culture. This includes mapping the CSOs' trends, Businesses, PA's; and community.

## IMPACT4POLICIES

Our incubation and acceleration programs are designed as a cycle composed of (I) **a social economy feasibility study** (II) **co-design phase** with potential beneficiaries and stakeholders of the financing mechanism and coaching programs (III) **directly management of the incubation or acceleration programs via sub-grants scheme** and (IV) **the impact4policies component** (I4P). I4P is the analysis of the potential impact that financed initiatives on specific policies at national or international level. I4P is NOT an impact evaluation nor a performance measurement and evaluation. It is a pilot *qualitative analysis* developed by the COSV Social Economy Unit research team to quickly link the single SE initiative to policy indication beyond the project timeline constraint. The I4P includes participatory inquiry *the back-casting exercise, the international peer-exchange and the policy and legal review*.

## MARQAB

The Labour Market Observatory (LMO) named Marqab is a spin off run by COSV and TEC in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry of Tripoli (CCIAT). It began in 2018 as part of the Leb Inc/Al Mashghal program, which is funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS). Youth can use LMO/LSO as a platform named "Marqab" to learn about the skills and competencies that businesses require. Thus, they can invest in the demanded skills to successfully enter the workforce and find employment after graduating. Additionally, it will serve as a guide for companies that they may properly present the right job position for their company and that can be matched easily by job seekers. Based on reports, articles, and other materials gathered by the research team, the observatory will present data in an interactive Dashboards on the labour market. Students from different universities

# OUR TEAM



## SOCIAL ECONOMY UNIT TEAM



**Annalisa Contini**  
SE unit manager



**Luigi Cavallito**  
Social Business and open innovation expert



**Mohammad Makki** Research Coordinator



**Samer Al aswad**  
Social Business expert



**Suzanna Stijovic**  
Balkans coordinator



**Aisha Habli**  
Incubation coordinator



**Isjda Sinjari**  
Public Policy expert



**Tommaso Cassiani**  
M&E expert

Our team grow toghert along with the implementation of our programs, The Sub-grant Management of the SE Support Scheme (acceleration, incubation, innovation) is always an internal knowledge process, we don't externalise services, we co-manage with strategic partners.

We Contextualize: we bring value to the intercultural dialogue among European experienced SE countries and young SE ecosystems

we act as a third party on the micro and macro levels of the social economy ecosystem in the countries where we operate, with a

high innovative program, while giving input to national policy makers, without harming the local ownership process. We are constantly committed to action- research across development cooperation and Social & Solidarity Economy.

# STRATEGIC PARTNERS



## SOCIAL ECONOMY UNIT Key Partners








COSV is member of DIESIS since 2019, and recently it has become member of Catalyst 2030. Through the memebrship of this networks we collaborate to different level of the global social economy mouvement, by sharing knowledge, and being connected with peers around the world. We partner with specilized organization and local organsation to crate synergies. The Stragic partenr is a continuos woring in progress.