

# SOCIAL ECONOMY-HUMANITARIAN ACTION-DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

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The social economy is often evoked as a source of leads for facing up to today's major challenges, in particular the crises of employment and the Welfare State in industrialised countries, as well as the problems related to structural adjustments in most of the developing economies. This "third sector", alongside the traditional corporate and public sectors, is making headway internationally, bringing together co-operative enterprises, mutual societies and, above all, voluntary associations. The Spanish-speaking countries refer to the "popular economy", "labour economy" or "solidarity economy"; the English-speaking world would say "community development"; in French and Dutch speaking areas, the terms "social economy" or "co-operative economy" are used. These different terminologies are not interchangeable but they all refer to a wide range of organisational forms based on solidarity and co-operation.

For the time being, the social economy represents only a small number of jobs, but its expansion requires personnel who are increasingly professional (and perhaps less activist), for technical questions seem to have overridden ethical and political ones. This trend concerns the non-governmental organisations above all, in the humanitarian and human rights sectors as well as development assistance or education programs. The work involved is not limited to humanitarian remedies alone. The employers, fields of action and profiles of positions offered by international solidarity structures are quite varied. At present, the slightest ad for a job with the associations requires specialization, often at Masters level, work experience and several foreign languages. In parallel to the "operational" positions, the international solidarity, development and humanitarian aid fields are giving rise to considerable intellectual production which calls upon numerous experts and researchers in fields such as micro-finance, public policy or economic modeling. Under these circumstances, the studies undertaken guide any career in this sector.

Over the past decade, educational opportunities in the fields of the social economy and international solidarity have increased considerably. For the most part, they involve fairly generalist university programs in the social economy, international solidarity and development assistance, but there are also a limited number of programs offered by the "Grandes Écoles" which are more oriented towards management strategy or engineering (in particular, agriculture and town and country planning). See the "Sustainable Development" data sheet as well.

## ► Websites

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs : dossiers on development assistance, decentralized aid, human rights, NGOs, and more (see search tool for searches by theme)  
<http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr>
- A report on education for development and international solidarity from the Ministry of National Education  
<http://www.education.gouv.fr/int>
- Center for Development Research and Information, CRID (154 French associations in the field of international development)  
<http://www.crid.asso.fr>
- Center for Research in International Development  
<http://www.cerdi.org>
- Review of Economic Alternatives  
<http://www.alternatives-economiques.fr>

## ► Keywords

humanitarianism, action in the public interest, co-development, equitable trade, communication, project management, international development assistance, crises, law, basic rights, social economy, ethics, management, project management, humanitarian interventions, logistics, management, politics, health, humanitarian health, solidarity.