

Public Policies Enabling the Social and Solidarity Economy in the City of Montréal

**UNRISD Project. Promoting SSE through Public Policies:
Guidelines for Local Governments**

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Context

- ▶ The paper covers municipal public policy enabling the social and solidarity economy (SSE) from 2013 (adoption of the Quebec Social Economy Law (framework legislation) to 2019 but is *rooted in a process initiated by civil society in the mid 1980's*)
- ▶ Municipal government is embedded in the Canadian political system and division of powers, limiting their autonomy to enact policy.
 - ▶ **Canadian cities are « creatures » of provincial governments with limited revenues and increasing responsibilities**
- ▶ Provincial and federal interventions have been an essential in the development of the SSE social economy in Montréal and the source of most strategic public policy measures.
- ▶ Like other cities around the world, devolution of responsibility to city governments is on the rise, along with policy measures to increase their autonomy.

Context cont'd....

- ▶ Montreal is itself divided into *numerous boroughs* (districts) with their own action plans and priorities. Overarching policy measures set by City administration
- ▶ Recent measures by the provincial government are increasing the autonomy of the City of Montreal

To sum up:

Three predominant trends: (a) constitutional division of powers; (b) collaboration between three, mostly two levels of government (province and municipality) (c) loosening of rigid divisions by introducing new legislation giving more power to the City (d) action at the level of boroughs

Within this institutional context, the SSE in Montreal is rooted in social dialogue, co-construction and collaborative processes that have been key elements in the building of the Montréal SSE. Policy initiatives have responded to SSE collective action on the ground.

An integrated ecosystemic approach

- ▶ The Montreal (and Quebec-wide) story is embedded in an ecosystemic» approach intervening in finance, technical support and accompaniment, training, research, knowledge transfer, citizen mobilisation, commercialisation
- ▶ SSE is also a « place based » comprehensive and integrated approach to local development, beyond the aggregate of its numerous collective enterprises
- ▶ Policy development has been consistently initiated by stakeholders based on needs and aspirations identified within communities leading to processes of co-construction within and with all levels of government
 - ▶ Horizontal: across divisions within levels of government
 - ▶ Vertical: municipal, provincial, federal (limited)
 - ▶ Like other cities around the world, devolution of many responsibilities to the municipal level is on the rise

Major policy initiatives

- ▶ Derivative provincial measures impacting social economy at a municipal level:
- ▶ *Social Economy Act (2013) and 5 year action plan*
- ▶ *New juridical structures: social utility trusts*
- ▶ *Action plan on entrepreneurship*
- ▶ *Access to capital through investment tools*
- ▶ *Access to resources for research and knowledge transfert*
- ▶ *Policy measures in sectoral ministries: eg housing, homecare, childcare, , workplace integration, recycling, food security,*

Municipal policy initiatives

- ▶ 2009 ‘A Social Economy Partnership for Community-based and Sustainable Development
- ▶ 2009 Social economy office (Economic Development Department)
- ▶ 2018: Action plan for social innovation
- ▶ Sectoral policy initiatives: community housing, culture, sports and recreation, food systems
- ▶ Procurement initiatives ‘Economie sociale j’achète’
- ▶ Community infrastructure investment
- ▶ Support for emerging sectors: new technologies, micro-transport,

Lessons learned

- ▶ Importance of an integrated ecosystemic approach
- ▶ Relationships based on partnerships and co-construction (versus subordination to a political agenda or public administration)
- ▶ Importance of integrating the social economy into an overall vision of ecological and social transition in an urban setting
- ▶ The strength and resilience of Montreal's social economy is linked to its roots in citizen mobilisation and alliances with social movement
- ▶ Young people are attracted to the social economy as a component of ecological and social transition and the transformation of the docminc economic model