



# Impacts of Seoul's SE on Sustainable Development

**T**HE PRINCIPLES OF SOLIDARITY, cooperation, equity and democracy on which social and solidarity economy (SSE) is based suggest that this approach to development is capable of building a more equitable, sustainable and inclusive society (Hillenkamp, Lavelle, and Birchfield 2013, Utting 2015, UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy 2014). SSE is well positioned to be a means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through its role in addressing unsustainable patterns of economic growth, environmental degradation, and social exclusion and vulnerability affecting young people as well as those marginalized by rising unemployment and inequality, among other factors (McMurtry 2015, UNRISD 2016).

To assess the contribution of SSE to achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda, and in particular the localized SDGs, we need to go

beyond assumptions and anecdotal evidence and rigorously evaluate the impacts of SSE in specific local contexts. This in turn involves measuring the extent to which SSE activities affect economic, social and environmental objectives and goals. Such evidence helps move the discussion beyond assumptions about what works and why, towards what worked and how. It allows stakeholders of SSE to refine their activities and projects to better meet the needs of people and operate more effectively. Identifying strengths and weaknesses based on evidence, SSE actors can learn from the experience of others, improve their management and operation styles, and identify ways to collaborate with other economies to create synergies. Impact evaluation also raises public awareness of the relevance of SSE as a means of implementation for development goals such as the SDGs. Such recognition is key to mobilizing political and financial support for SSE.

This chapter explains the impacts of SE in Seoul on selected objectives related to economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. One of the major strengths of SSE, which is often neglected when considering impacts, are elements related to democratic self-management, solidarity and empowerment—that is, political dimensions. Based on existing data on the impacts of SE on sustainable development and our own survey on the perceptions of SEOE workers, the chapter evaluates the potential impact of SEOEs with regard to all four dimensions.

The chapter is structured as follows. The next section identifies methodologies and measurement tools that are used for impact evaluation of SSE, explaining both advantages and disadvantages of each method. Next we outline our approach to interpreting the data on impacts of SE in Seoul and present the data and results of previous analyses. The following section examines impacts related to economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development. Drawing on the results of our survey, we then discuss evidence regarding the political impact of SSE. The survey gauged the perceptions of SE actors in Seoul about participation in policy-making processes, women's empowerment, and social inclusion of multicultural families and foreign migrant workers (officially defined as vulnerable groups). The chapter concludes by identifying the limitations of existing evidence of the impact of SE in Seoul and suggests directions for the further development of a methodology for impact evaluation.

## **Methodologies to measure the impact of SSE**

Impact evaluation of SSE is a challenging task since SSE activities have become increasingly diverse, involving a variety of actors in different sectors and with different objectives. Applying a one-size-fits-all approach, such as monetization of outputs, be they economic or social, may not be appropriate since diverse types of SSE activities generate multiple impacts, some of which are not readily quantifiable in terms of monetary value. Impacts related to the political dimension, such as democratic self-management, are a typical example.

A variety of methods have been employed to measure the different impacts of SSE. These methodologies and measurements can be roughly categorized into four groups. The first category includes those that take

into account the anticipated benefits of investment in relation to its costs. The most commonly used methods in this category are the two traditional methodologies of cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) and cost-benefit analysis (CBA) (Commonwealth of Australia 2006, World Bank 2010). These methodologies measure the value of the financial return or benefit of an intervention against the total cost of its delivery. For instance, Social Return on Investment (SROI), built upon the logic of CBA, measures impacts and outcomes of SSE through the lens of cost by quantifying social and environmental values in monetary terms, and comparing these with the costs of achieving those values (Layard and Glaister 1994, Rotheroe and Richards 2007). Some drawbacks to CEA and CBA approaches, however, are apparent. By definition, it is impossible to assign market prices to things that cannot be traded, such as well-being (Rauscher, Schober, and Milner 2012). They tend to ignore social outcomes that cannot be quantified or counted (Wood and Leighton 2010). Also, although the monetary values of goods and services are constantly changing, these methods often fail to capture these changes, which are reference points of the social impacts they are intended to measure (Ebrahim and Kasturi 2010)

The second category includes methodologies and measurements based on management planning approaches. A prominent example is the Logical Framework Approach, developed in 1969 by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and its variations such as the Theory of Change approach developed in the 1990s (UNICEF 2014), and the Logic Model (Ebrahim and Katsuri 2010). These are designed to map changes or progress of an intervention or programme by laying out the linkages from the inputs required for activities, to outputs, outcomes and, ultimately, impacts. They are particularly useful for understanding the path to an intended impact; for tracking and monitoring the progress of investment; and for illustrating the factors needed to produce impact. Although effective, these approaches have been subject to criticism for oversimplifying procedures of analysis. For instance, the Logic Model is based on a simple linear process of cause-effect, but the real world is more complex than this because of the presence of multiple (often nonlinear) pathways leading to change (Vogel 2012). Development problems have many causes that cannot be easily disentangled and written down in the form of a flow chart. A specific programme or an intervention such as building more schools cannot address all the factors and reasons behind low enrolment rates.

A third category covers approaches which focus on measuring sustainability-oriented innovations. Some studies have raised awareness of the limitations of analysing organizational success using only financial data (Brignall and Modell 2000, Maltz, Shenhar, and Reily 2003). This has spurred interest in multidimensional integrated approaches in which environmental and social aspects are as important as economic ones (Figge et al. 2002). It also reflects the fact that an increasing number of organizations want their economic success to go hand in hand with social justice and environmental protection, and are adopting more sustainable business models based on triple bottom line approaches. Reporting guidelines such as ISO 26000 and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) facilitate the task of evaluating the work of an organization according to how it contributes to the improvement of economic, social and environmental development goals (Global Reporting Initiative 2017, International Organization for Standardization 2016). Using multiple quantifiable indicators, such frameworks provide detailed guidelines to assess organizational performance in terms of sustainability.

The Global Impact Investment Reporting Standards (GIIRS) are another widely used methodology within this category. This method measures and assesses the social, environmental and financial performance of an enterprise, and its impact on different stakeholders, including workers, customers and communities. This tool delivers a thorough and comprehensive report to impact investors. The rating system is particularly useful for comparison and analysis (New Media Group 2017).

Another comprehensive triple bottom line measurement tool is the Sustainability Balanced Scorecard (SBSC). It involves planning, managing and reporting on business results in three areas: economic, environmental and social (Rohm and Montgomery 2010, Figge et al. 2002). It connects goals and actions or measures through cause and effect relationships. These causal links not only indicate how each measure impacts the relevant goals, but also illustrate to stakeholders what kind of impacts their actions have on the outcome (Kaplan and Norton 1992, Kaplan 2010).

Lastly, social accounting and auditing (SAA) also reports on an organization's performance and impact relating to the triple bottom line. By engaging stakeholders, including managers, employees, investors

and even customers, this method assesses business strategies and performance against an organization's mission and end goals over time.

While all these methods are suitable for addressing sustainability issues and assessing a broader range of impacts of organizations, they have limitations. GRI and GIIRS, for example, both require third-party audits which can be costly for small organizations and enterprises, and can marginalize members' ownership of evaluation and monitoring (Cheam 2017). Also, the unilateral rating system in the GIIRS platform may not capitalize on the benefits of the assessment process, since it lacks a feedback mechanism to enable management to consider issues arising in the course of the assessment (Florman, Klingler-Vidra, and Facada 2016). The GRI reporting has also been subject to criticism for being too technical and laborious. As for SBSC and SAA, since both methods allow customization of indicators, they may not allow comparability across different organizations and interventions.

The fourth category, statistical data collection, has been used as a method to measure the impact of SSE because of its capacity to capture a lot of information on organizations' characteristics, production, social innovations, beneficiaries and so forth. Nonetheless, these data are often collected at the macro level and, particularly in the aggregate data, fail to differentiate between different forms of economy, such as the SSE sector, the public sector and the market economy. Their purpose is often to describe some aspect of the entire economy rather than SSE specifically.

In response to such limitations, there have been efforts to develop reliable quantitative approaches that measure SSE activities separately. Currently, CIRIEC's satellite account of social economy (SE), and Eurostat's data on cooperatives, mutual organizations and the associative sector, serve this purpose (CIRIEC 2006). These data are particularly useful for assessing the overall economic impact of SE organizations and enterprises (SEOs). In general, however, statistical data collection is typically limited to economic performance, which does not properly reflect the types of social changes SEOs bring to people and communities. In other words, financial and administrative data have limitations in explaining the diverse impacts of SSE, whose main objective is not merely profit maximization.



## Methodology for measuring the impact of Seoul’s social economy on sustainable development

### Four dimensions of SE impact

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a universal agenda with 17 goals and 169 associated targets. It seeks to realize people-centred and planet-sensitive sustainable development with the principle of leaving no one behind. As an approach to accomplish such broad and diverse goals, the Agenda underlines the importance of achieving sustainable development across the three dimensions—economic, social and environmental—in a balanced and integrated way. The methodologies reviewed in the previous section can be used to measure the impacts of SSE on sustainable development if they are appropriately redesigned to measure impacts across these multiple dimensions.

Although the development of SE in Seoul intensified in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis by focusing primarily on job provision and poverty alleviation, a wide variety SEOEs in fact exist with diverse missions in different sectors (see Chapters III and IV). They include: reduction of poverty, particularly that of the elderly; social service provision, particularly care and education; revitalization of deteriorated communities; promotion of sustainable environment and energy; reduction of inequality, particularly income inequality; redressing regional disparities in income and social conditions; reduction of unemployment, particularly of young people and of women with interrupted careers; promotion of participation; and strengthening social trust and solidarity (Jang et al. 2016).

Existing research and surveys on SEOEs, particularly those focusing on Seoul, measure the impacts of SEOEs in some but not all areas. The types of

methodologies employed are also limited. They include SROI and a modified version of the satellite account method which is not aligned with the national accounting system. Research and surveys associated with SROI mostly focus on economic and social impacts, such as income and jobs generated or social services provided by SEOEs. While environmental impacts may be measured, in most cases the focus is on SEOEs working in the renewable energy sector and their capacity to generate electricity.

The impact of SE in relation to the political dimension attracts less attention. Although governance is highlighted as one of the targets in SDG 16, reviews of progress towards the SDGs have yet to give much attention to such aspects as collective action, solidarity, participation, empowerment, advocacy and active citizenship. This neglect or omission is also notable when it comes to measurement of SSE and, by extension, its role as a means of implementation of the SDGs. Since the impacts associated with democratic and participatory governance are one of the distinctive characteristics of SSE in comparison with other forms of economic activity and organization, it is important to assess how principles and activities of SSE based on values of democratic self-management, cooperation, solidarity and inclusion affect people’s political perceptions and behaviour.

The summary of the impacts of SE below (see Table V.1) is based on existing data and analysis of the main areas of activity in which Seoul’s SEOEs engage (Jang et al. 2016). These areas largely correspond to the areas of the SDGs—social, economic, environmental, governance and financing. The analysis on which we draw used two methods: SROI; and satellite accounts on the size and types of SEOEs and their outputs in terms of jobs and services.

**Table V.1. Areas where SE in Seoul has impact and the SDGs**

Social development initiatives	Corresponding areas of SDGs	People	Corresponding SDGs	1	2	3	4	5	6	Missions of SEOEs in Seoul	
Environmental initiatives		Planet		7	11	12	13	14	15		Revitalization of community, environment and energy
Economic development initiatives		Prosperity		7	8	9	10	Inequality reduction, unemployment reduction			
Governance		Peace		16				Participation			
Financing		Partnership		17				Social trust and solidarity			

Source: Author’s modification of Torres-Rahman et al. 2015 and Jang et al. 2016

## Data on SE in Seoul

Despite growing efforts to improve data collection and impact evaluation, standardized, harmonized and comprehensive data on SSE are still scarce across the world. The Republic of Korea is no exception. In the Republic of Korea, data collection based on the satellite account methodology has been undertaken by various agencies, but not in a systematic manner. The Republic of Korea's satellite accounts relating to SE have generally centred on administrative information such as: (i) number of SEOEs by type; (ii) number of employees; and (iii) number of service beneficiaries. Also, most SE data are typically at the macro level, examining SE as a whole at the national level, although some regional breakdown, mostly at the municipal or provincial level, is available as well. While macro-level information on the number, size and activities of SEOEs is valuable, the shortcomings of this type of data are also clear. The macro-level data often omit information on various outputs and the internal structure of SEOEs, which any assessment of social effectiveness and sustainability needs.

Furthermore, since the (national) government's interest in SE relates primarily to its role in job provision, measurement of SE often focuses on data and indicators related to employment or economic activity, rather than the broader potential of SE to achieve various social and environmental goals and objectives. In sum, comprehensive data to show the significance of SE across various dimensions of development are not currently available.

Against this background, and because extensive fieldwork and primary data collection were beyond the scope of the research for the present report, the following section on the impacts of SE in Seoul is based on desktop research reviewing all available data and information on SE. The materials used include: the satellite accounts on SE collected by the Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency (KSEPA); social return on investment (SROI) analysis documented by the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG); and monitoring and performance evaluation reports of various research institutes. Some relevant examples from case studies are introduced to enrich the narrative of the theory of change. Lastly, given the lack of data concerning the impact of SE on democratization and solidarity in the Republic of Korea, we present the results of a small self-assessment survey of Certified Social Enterprises (CSEs) in Seoul, which was conducted by UNRISD for this study.

## Economic, social and environmental impacts of SE in Seoul

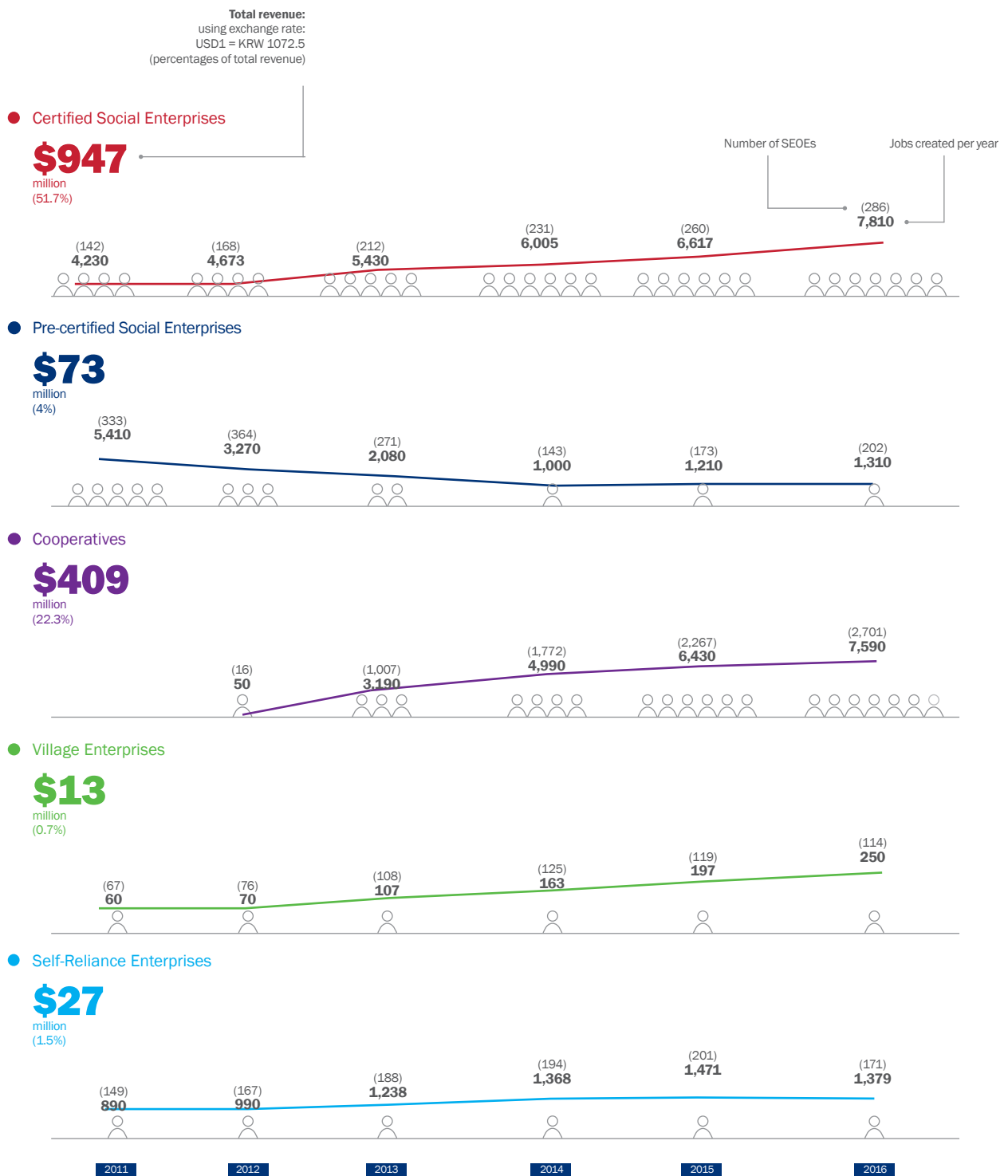
As of 2016, about 3,500 SEOEs existed in Seoul. It is estimated that the number of SEOEs actually in operation, however, is about 2,240 (Seoul Social Economy Centre 2017). Total turnover amounted to KRW 1,960 billion (USD 1.9 billion), while the average turnover per SEOE was KRW 875 million (USD 800,000). Total employment amounted to 19,800 employees, with an average of 8.8 employees per SEOE. Although the average turnover per SEOE is far lower than the average in the for-profit sector, the average number of employees per enterprise is similar in both sectors. While the average turnover per SEOE is 24 percent of that of for-profit enterprises, the number of employees per SEOE is 90 percent of the average of for-profit enterprises (Seoul Social Economy Centre 2017). The contribution of SEOEs to both Seoul's gross regional domestic product (GRDP) and total employment increased from 0.4 in 2014 to 0.5 percent in 2016 (Seoul Social Economy Centre 2017, Seoul Social Economy Center 2015). Pre-Certified Social Enterprises (PCSEs) and CSEs have a significant impact in terms of turnover and employment within the SE sector, considering their relatively small share of total SEOEs. In contrast, cooperatives have a relatively small economic impact, despite the fact that they are quite numerous (see Figure V.1).

### Poverty and inequality

Ending poverty in all its forms everywhere and reducing inequality within countries are important SDGs (1 and 10 respectively) for both developed and developing countries alike. The Republic of Korea achieved extremely rapid growth with a significant reduction of poverty and relatively low income inequality up until the late 1990s. Since the Asian financial crisis of 1997, despite increased social expenditure on welfare programmes and a resumption of economic growth, both income inequality and absolute poverty have increased (see Figure V.2). Increasing unemployment and the growth of non-standard forms of employment were among the major reasons for poor performance related to poverty reduction and inequality (Koo 2004).

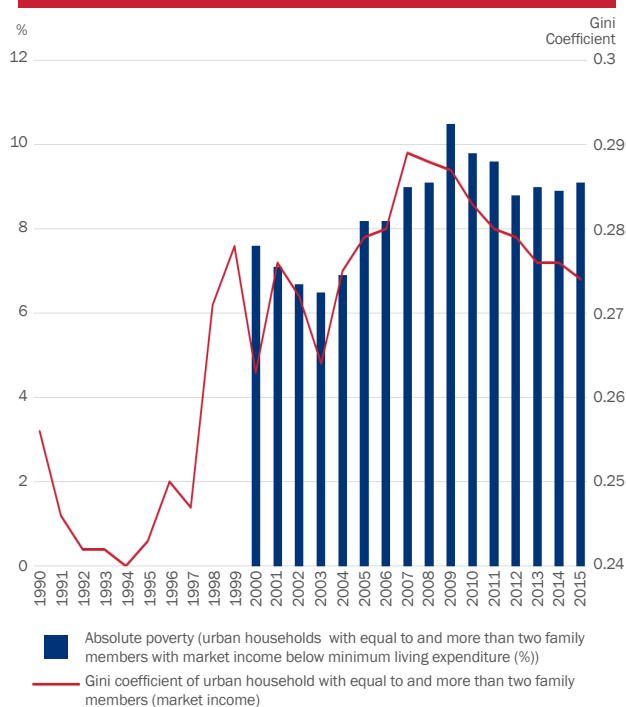
Recent research finds that inequality and absolute poverty in Seoul are worse than the national average. As of 2015, households in Seoul with income below the minimum living expenditure accounted for about 9.6 percent of the total, while the Gini coefficient was 0.336. The corresponding figures nationally were 9.1

**Figure V.1. Contribution of SEOEs to employment and revenue in Seoul (2011-2016)**



Source for data: Seoul Social Economy Center 2017

**Figure V.2. Trends in inequality and absolute poverty in the Republic of Korea**



Source: Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs 2016

percent and 0.274, respectively (Kim and Chang 2017). Poverty in Seoul is concentrated in specific areas or districts where numerous public rental apartments, offered at below-market prices, are available for low-income households (OECD 2005, Jun and Lim 2013).

The situation of youth who are neither in employment, nor in education or training—so-called “NEETs”—is also a serious social and policy concern in Seoul. While the share of NEETs in Seoul, at 12.5 percent, is lower than the national average of 15.6 percent, it is still far higher than the OECD average of 8.2 percent. The only countries with higher ratios were Turkey (24.9 percent) and Mexico (18.5 percent)—countries with lower GDP per capita (Kim and Chang 2017, OECD 2016b). The poverty level among the elderly in Seoul is also a serious policy challenge. About 24.6 percent of elderly people live in poverty; this rate is significantly higher than the poverty rates for children (4.8 percent) and women (8.2 percent) (Kim and Chang 2017). According to recent research, 6.8 percent of the elderly living in Seoul experience multiple deficits, notably isolation or the lack of social participation, which affects 49.6 percent of this segment, and poor health (48.5 percent) (Kim 2014).

One of the conditions for certifying PCSEs and CSEs is that they hire people from vulnerable groups (see Chapter III), in order to reduce poverty and inequality.

**Table V.2. Employment of people from vulnerable groups**

	Those from vulnerable groups employed by CSEs (2016)		Beneficiaries of the NBLS (2016)	
	Number	Share	Number	Share
Seoul	4,342	45	267,023	34.8
Busan	1,387	14.4	149,528	19.5
Daegu	568	5.9	107,763	14
Incheon	1,428	14.8	100,301	13.1
Gwangju	1,003	10.4	69,420	9.0
Daejeon	321	3.3	54,490	7.1
Ulsan	604	6.3	18,776	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,653</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>767,301</b>	<b>100</b>

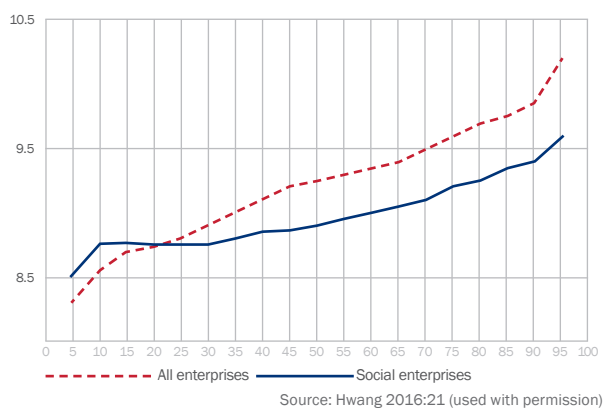
Source: Incheon University Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation 2017

Indeed, the share of employment for vulnerable groups in CSEs in several municipalities, including Seoul, was higher than the share of beneficiaries of public assistance under the National Basic Livelihood Security (NBLS) Act.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that CSEs have been relatively effective with regard to poverty reduction. As of 2016, CSEs in Seoul hired 45 percent of their employees from vulnerable groups while the share of beneficiaries of NBLS was 34.8 percent (see Table V.2).

Using the SROI method and a survey of 439 CSEs and PCSEs in Seoul, research conducted in 2016 (Cho and Yoo 2016) estimated that Seoul’s CSEs and PCSEs produced social returns, in terms of salaries and premiums paid into major social insurance programmes, for vulnerable groups at a rate of almost 13 times the amount of investment in their own enterprises. Given that the ratio of total salary to new investment, as of 2016, was estimated at around 71 percent in the case of for-profit enterprises with more than KRW 50 billion in stockholder’s equity, the role of CSEs and PCSEs in reducing poverty and inequality is significant (Byeon 2017). However, about 27.2 percent of the CSEs and PCSEs still provide vulnerable groups with less monetary value than the amount of investment. This indicates that there is a wide variation across CSEs and PCSEs in terms of their performance in reducing poverty and inequality (Cho and Yoo 2016).

Although the average wage of CSEs and PCSEs is generally lower than the national average, within the bottom 19 percent of the wage scale the figure is higher than that of for-profit enterprises, demonstrating a significant contribution of CSEs and PCSEs to reducing inequality as well as poverty (Hwang 2016).

**Figure V.3. Natural log of hourly wages by wage percentile**



Nevertheless, the lower wage level of CSEs and PCSEs in other wage groups, particularly the second bottom quintile, is a cause for concern since this could be a major disincentive which would discourage CSEs and PCSEs from entering higher value-added industries with better paying jobs.

The role of self-reliance enterprises (SREs) in reducing poverty and inequality is particularly important since their main mission is to provide jobs to the recipients of the NBLs who are capable of working. The absolute poverty line based on minimum living expenditure is roughly equivalent to 40 percent of the median income, and the majority of low-income groups receive NBLs benefits (Government 24 2018).

The number of workers participating in SREs in Seoul increased from 1,060 in 155 SREs in 2010 to 1,457 in 171 SREs in 2016. Of these workers, 43.2 percent were NBLs recipients, 49.4 percent of them had an income below the minimum cost of living but they were not eligible for NBLs benefits, and 7.4 percent had an income above the minimum cost of living and were thus ineligible to apply for the NBLs benefits (Seoul Province Self-sufficiency Centre 2017). The share of recipients of NBLs benefits among SRE employees increased by 12.7 percent between 2010 and 2016, while the share of poor people not eligible for NBLs benefits decreased.

Although the number of SREs decreased from 201 in 2015 to 171 in 2016, their turnover and employment increased. The increased share of employees receiving NBLs benefits, coupled with the increased size of turnover and employment, indicates that SREs are playing an increasingly important role in addressing

poverty, particularly that of the NBLs beneficiaries through employment generation (Seoul Province Self-sufficiency Centre 2016, Seoul Province Self-sufficiency Centre 2017).

Given the high share of women workers in SREs—they are estimated to account for 65 percent—it is also fair to say that SREs make a significant contribution to addressing the problems faced by women in poverty (Kim, Yang, and Kang 2016). However, there are risks of gendering low-paying and low-skilled labour-intensive jobs (UNRISD 2010). For instance, the nursing and elderly care sectors, the biggest sectors of SREs in terms of the number of employees and the amount of turnover, employ mainly women in labour-intensive low-paying jobs. In 2016, the nursing and elderly care sectors accounted for 52 percent of total employees in SREs and 34 percent of total turnover. Despite the high poverty rate of elderly people, the contribution of SREs to providing income to the elderly is minimal. In 2016, only around 1 percent of all employees in SREs were over 60 years old. (Kim and Chang 2017).

Although the performance of individual SEOEs in addressing economic and social problems has improved, the SEOE sector remains small in terms of employment and turnover. Furthermore, the fact that many SEOEs operate in labour-intensive, low-skilled industries means that they are less likely to be linked with value chains or generate value-added that can guarantee sustainable growth of turnover and surplus (Kim 2016).

### Employment and decent work

Countries that have succeeded in reducing poverty and inequality relatively quickly are those that transformed the structure of employment to improve productivity and create decent jobs (UNRISD 2010). While there are multiple paths to tackle poverty and inequality, employment is one of the most important channels through which resources are redistributed among the population and quality of life is secured (Giovanni 2008). Although several advanced countries have made progress in generating jobs since the global financial crisis of 2008, global unemployment levels and rates remain high as the global labour force continues to grow. Furthermore, global GDP growth, which hit a six-year low at 3.1 percent in 2016, raises concerns about the achievement of SDG 8, particularly the ability of the economy to generate a sufficient number of jobs and improve the quality of employment for those with a job (ILO 2017).



In the Republic of Korea, the rising unemployment rate, particularly for young people, is a serious social concern. Seoul has performed worse than the national average (see Figure V.4).

One of the major purposes of SEOEs in the Republic of Korea and Seoul is to increase employment, particularly forms of employment that can be considered decent work.<sup>2</sup> During 2016 SEOEs in Seoul created 19,800 new jobs (Seoul Social Economy Center 2016a), accounting for 6.9 percent of the total number of jobs (283,104) created in Seoul in that year (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2017a).

A recent survey found that 49 percent of SEOEs in Seoul had job provision as their main mission, and work integration specifically (that is, bringing poor and vulnerable groups into the labour market through job provision) was the main mission of 17.6 percent (Cho and Yoo 2016, Jang et al. 2016). In the case of CSEs, the figures were 27.75 and 35.4 percent, respectively, while 81 percent of Village Enterprises considered job provision as their key mission.

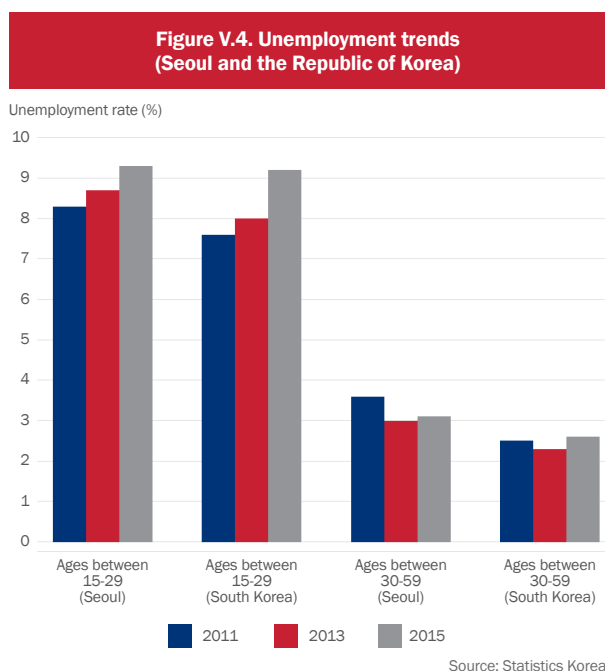
A similar tendency is also apparent at the national level. For instance, as of May 2017, 69.2 percent of CSEs across the country were primarily associated with job provision and work integration, which is higher than the proportion reported in Seoul. Since other types of CSEs, namely those engaged in social service provision and providing mixed services, also need

job provision as one of their purposes in order to be certified, approximately 85 percent of the SE sector is currently contributing to job provision nationally.

As noted in the previous section, these jobs mostly target poor and vulnerable groups. At the national level, CSEs have provided more than 50 percent of their employment to vulnerable groups such as the elderly, persons with disabilities and low-income groups since 2007 (Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency 2015, Jang et al. 2016). As of 2015, 55.7 percent of CSE jobs in Seoul went to people from vulnerable groups (see Table V.3).

Guided by legal frameworks targeting vulnerable groups, such as SEPA and NBLs, most SEOEs comply with their legal obligation to pay the employer’s share of contributions to social insurance for their workers. For instance, in 2013, the coverage rate of National Employment Insurance in PCSEs and CSEs was about 96.8 percent, which was far greater than the national average of 66.6 percent for for-profit companies (Seoul Institute and Seoul Social Economy Center 2016).

The economic impact on income, however, is modest with average pay in the SE sector just 65 percent of the average urban worker’s wage (Seoul Social Economy Center 2016b). This is partly due to the nature of jobs in the SE sector, which tend to be either part-time or entry-level positions. However, even modest gains in income have contributed to improving the financial conditions of vulnerable groups, particularly those in the bottom 19 percent of the wage scale, since their wage level is higher than that of those in the equivalent category in the for-profit enterprise sector, as seen in the previous section (see Figure V.3) (Seoul Social Economy Center 2016b).



**Table V.3. Structure of employees in CSEs by municipality (2015)**

	Those from vulnerable groups employed by CSEs		Those from non-vulnerable groups employed by CSEs	
	Number of employees	Percent	Number of employees	Share
Seoul	3,683	55.7	2,934	44.3
Busan	1,283	64.9	694	35.1
Daegu	604	68.1	283	31.9
Incheon	1,241	70.2	528	29.8
Gwangju	846	65.1	453	34.9
Daejeon	295	54.6	245	45.4
Ulsan	585	59.8	393	40.2
<b>Average</b>		<b>62.6</b>		<b>37.4</b>

Source: Korea Labor Institute 2016

## Care for the elderly and children

Care services, from childhood through old age, are both essential to reaching many of the SDG targets and means for realizing the principle of leaving no one behind. The limitations of existing care systems are a growing concern in the Republic of Korea as the nation undergoes major demographic changes. The Republic of Korea is an ageing society with nearly half of the elderly population living in poverty, which is about four times higher than the OECD average of 13 percent (OECD 2016a). About a quarter of elderly people live alone. Many experience feelings of isolation and depression, resulting in a high level of suicide. Although the elderly suicide rate has declined since 2011, it remains one of the highest in the world (Statistics Korea 2016). The statistics indicate that the current level of welfare and well-being for the elderly is lower than in other countries with comparable levels of economic development. The government has instituted some programmes to address the welfare issues of elderly people, but their effectiveness is limited. For instance, in 2015 only 32.1 percent of the elderly population received national pension benefits (OECD 2016a). Moreover, the non-contributory basic old-age pension, which was doubled in 2014 to approximately USD 200 per month, is only 6.2 percent of the average wage. Despite its contribution to long-term care needs of the elderly, the social insurance scheme for long-term care, introduced in 2008, has limited coverage, partly due to a rigorous system to assess the functional status of individuals in order to reduce inclusion error. In 2015, only 59.3 percent of applicants for pay-outs from long-term care insurance received benefits (Hwang et al. 2016); a mere 7 percent of the elderly population with a psychological or physical disability received benefits (Lee 2017b).

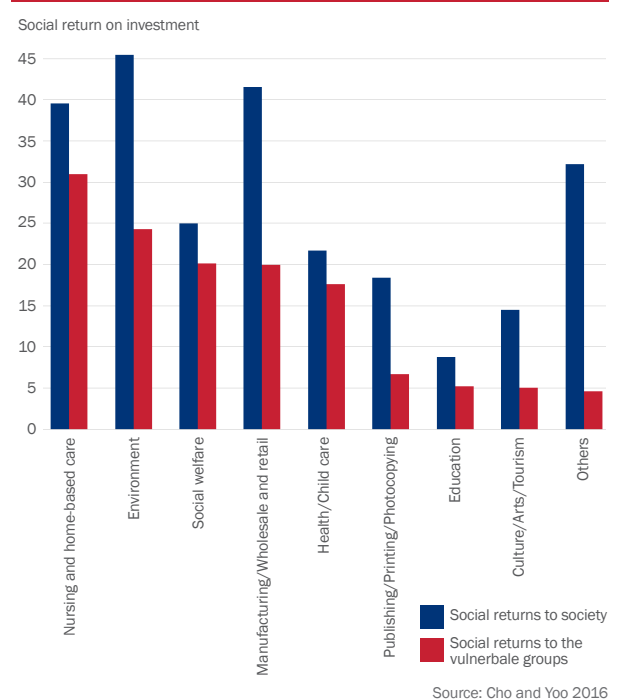
A care deficit also exists among younger generations, with parents facing difficulties when it comes to childcare. Despite the government's efforts to expand social care since the early 2000s, as more Korean women enter the labour force out of choice or of necessity, working parents with very young children struggle to afford good-quality care services (Peng 2009). This situation has led to a decrease in both the level of female employment after childbirth and the fertility rate; consequently the Republic of Korea now has the eighth lowest fertility rate worldwide (Kinoshita, Guo, and IMF 2015, Worldatlas 2017).

SEOs working in the care sector in Seoul are playing an important role in meeting the growing need for care services. Service users are normally people with health issues and disabilities, elderly people, as well as parents with infants and children (Seoul Institute and Seoul Social Economy Center 2016). SEOs also provide long-term care services such as home-based and hospital-based support.

Although data on provision of care services are lacking for Seoul's SE sector as a whole, there are statistics for CSEs and PCSEs. According to a 2015 survey, enterprises working in care sectors (those in the categories of health/child care, social welfare, and nursing/home-based help) provided nursing, home-help, and health/child care services to an average of 4,781 users per enterprise. It is estimated that 69.2 percent of these users were associated with vulnerable groups (Cho and Yoo 2016).

Of all of the PCSEs and CSEs in Seoul, those in the social care sectors have produced the highest social returns for vulnerable groups (see Figure V.5). An analysis (Cho and Yoo 2016) employing SROI indicates that every Korean won invested in Seoul's CSEs and PCSEs in care sectors generated social returns equivalent to KRW 31.0 in the area of nursing/home-based help, KRW 20.1 in social welfare, and KRW 17.6

**Figure V.5. Social returns produced by PCSEs and CSEs (by industry)**



in the area of health/child care, calculated in terms of income and social services for vulnerable groups in Seoul. The overall return to Seoul as a whole in care service provision was greater, with KRW 1 invested generating social returns equivalent to KRW 39.6, 25.0 and 21.7 (Cho and Yoo 2016).

### **Sustainable and affordable energy**

Following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which has a strong emphasis on climate actions, 195 countries signed the Paris Agreement to show their commitment to tackling climate change (UNFCCC 2015). As of November 2017, a total of 170 countries had ratified the Agreement and set their own national goals, among them the Republic of Korea, the world's seventh largest CO<sub>2</sub> emitter.

Seoul is one of the most polluted cities in the world (Yonhap News 2017). In 2009 the Seoul Metropolitan Government established the 2030 Seoul Low-Carbon Green Growth Master Plan, and announced its own provincial target to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent compared with 1990 levels (Lee and Kim 2017). The Plan emphasized the growth of environmentally friendly industries, but because it was also aligned with the central government's nuclear and coal-based approaches to power generation it was incompatible with the ideal of sustainable development (Lee 2015).

After assuming the mayorship of Seoul in 2011, Park Won-soon introduced flagship energy policies that deviated from those of the central government and were more conducive to the transition to clean energy. They also shifted the policy focus from coal and nuclear power toward safer and cleaner sources such as renewable energy. The One Less Nuclear Power Plant policy, for example, aims to lower reliance on nuclear energy and fossil fuels in Seoul, and increase investment in green technologies with the aim of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2017c).

In November 2017, the SMG unveiled a new master plan called Solar City Seoul, which will invest USD 1.55 billion over five years to reduce the city's electricity consumption and produce solar energy equivalent to the capacity of one nuclear plant (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2017d). This plan is expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 540,000 tons and provide electricity for 9 percent of households (310,000 households) in Seoul.

Seoul's SEOEs and cooperatives have been major supporters of the SMG's policy initiatives for safe and sustainable energy. Several factors help the SE sector to engage with this energy transition. The 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan served as a wake-up call, and created a civic culture and market demand in the Republic of Korea for safe energy and energy conservation. The accident was also a blow to public confidence in government ability to handle a crisis related to nuclear power plants, leading residents to take action rather than rely solely on the government to pursue efficient and renewable energy. As the Framework Act on Cooperatives of 2011 provided a legal basis for citizens to easily establish cooperatives, people in villages and urban neighbourhoods started to establish solar power cooperatives, generating electricity in sites such as high schools, universities, libraries, city halls and parking lots.

In September 2013, renewable energy cooperatives in Seoul introduced a "veranda solar power plant" project for individual households or neighbourhoods to gain easy access to solar energy generation. The project encouraged citizens to install one or more 260W photovoltaic cells (or "ultra-small solar power plants") capable of generating energy equivalent to 300kWh per year, which is sufficient to run a refrigerator and consequently reduce the annual electricity bill by approximately USD 60 (Song 2017). In 2015, the monthly average electricity usage of households in Seoul was 304kWh (Seo 2016).

While SEOEs took an early leadership role in the energy transition, in 2014, the SMG selected seven energy enterprises, including some cooperatives, to install solar panels in individual households or villages under the government's renewable energy programme, for which the SMG provided financial subsidies. The subsidy covers 50–75 percent of the USD 600–650 needed to install a solar generator (Seoul Metropolitan Government 2017b). Four out of these seven companies were cooperatives. Together they made a significant contribution to the government initiative by installing solar panels in 18,591 households during the 2014–2017 period. This accounted for approximately 65 percent of the total sales of the seven companies (Hwang 2017). Through these households, the four cooperatives have generated more than 5.58GWh annually, which has saved the city roughly USD 1,115,460 per year. While this is still a small amount of energy production compared to Seoul's total solar power

production of 224.9GWh in 2016 (Ministry of Trade and Korea Energy Agency 2017), it indicates that SEOEs have entered the renewable energy sector and are playing a role in implementing the government's energy transition initiative. Moreover, while there are no aggregated data, it is worth noting that there are 19 renewable energy cooperatives in Seoul, including the cooperatives involved in the government programme (Korea Cooperatives 2017). If all of these cooperatives had a similar capacity to install solar panels, they would be able to produce 26.5GWh for Seoul.

One of the challenges confronting the installation and use of solar energy is the city's low rate of home ownership, which stood at 52.7 percent in 2016 (MoLIT 2017). In the case of Seoul, where many people traditionally live in rental housing, residents find it difficult to own a solar power system since landlords make virtually every decision regarding the residence (Lee 2013). The fact that energy saving is largely dependent upon the landlords' decisions poses a structural constraint on low-income people becoming energy producers.

Also, to generate more electricity, the veranda or the biggest windows must face south or southeast, which is normally the most expensive orientation for housing in the Republic of Korea (Shin 2013). Furthermore, recovering the installation costs through lower electricity bills takes on average two years. However, the recurring maintenance costs such as replacing the inverter (USD 300-400), which is normally required every five years, can be financially burdensome for low-income residents and may seem excessive compared to the savings (Soh 2014). While the citizens' energy movement, which aims to conserve the environment, save energy and benefit all people, is well-intentioned, poor people may unintentionally be excluded because of structural and financial constraints.

## Political dimensions of SE impacts in Seoul

### Increased opportunities for SE voices to be heard

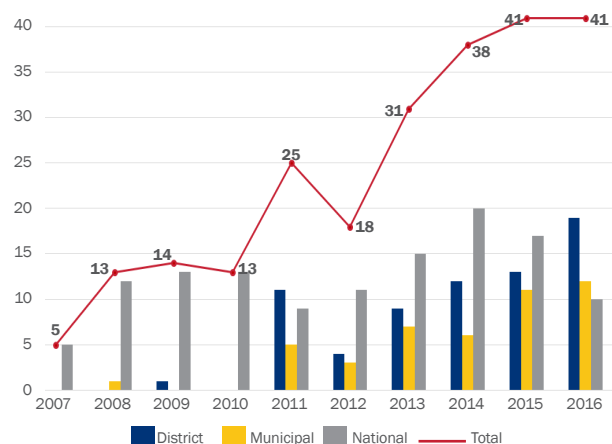
Strong participatory practices, democratic decision making and solidarity-centred organizational management are key determinants of SSE impacts in relation to the political dimension of sustainable development. They are also prerequisites for the co-construction of

policies (Mendell 2014), which requires governments to acknowledge SSE actors as key players in policy formulation and provide them with opportunities to actively participate in policy dialogues and voice their concerns and needs (Mendell and Alain, 2015).

Without strong democratic self-management skills and democratically empowered members, SSE cannot fully utilize official recognition or greater political bargaining power for co-construction of policies. Democratic culture and behaviour within SSE can also spread to other sectors, as seen in the case of Mondragon's expansion process (see Chapter II for details) (Flecha and Ngai 2014).

The increase in the number of SE-related events (policy dialogues, workshops, fairs, seminars, forums, conferences, and so on) in the past decade in Seoul demonstrates an expansion of the public sphere where the voices of SEOEs can be heard more widely (see Figure V.6). Between 2007 and 2016, the number of municipal and district-level events increased significantly. In particular, the number of events organized by the SMG has increased rapidly since 2012 and even exceeded those organized by the national government. This partly reflects the strong will of the SMG to promote SE in Seoul. It is particularly notable that the number of events organized at the district level has also increased rapidly since 2012, suggesting that awareness of SE has spread to the district level too.

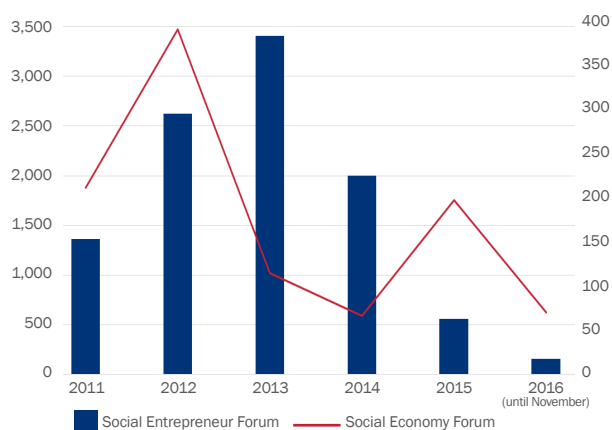
**Figure V.6. Trend in the occurrence of SE-related events, 2007–2016**



Note: In order to find all types of events related to SSE, we utilized the largest Korean search engine Naver, and the largest global search engine Google. The search term used was "social economy", in Korean since this is an umbrella term akin to the English "social and solidarity economy". The results in the figure count series of lectures or workshops as one event. The search is not comprehensive since many small-scale events at the community level are not announced in the media.



**Figure V.7. Volume of communications in two online forums on SE**



Source: Lee 2017a

The increasing number of face-to-face events has been accompanied by a substantial volume of communications through various online social media. For instance, a social media platform, the Social Entrepreneur Forum, which is run by Seoul-based SE organizations, had 4,828 participants posting 75,196 communications on SE between 2011 and 2016. Participants tend to be young people whose main focus is social entrepreneurship. Another, the Social Economy Forum, had 527 participants posting 4,278 communications in the same period. Participants in this forum tend to represent an older generation of SSE actors who are primarily associated with cooperatives (Lee 2017a).

Analysis of the data shows different trends in the amount of traffic on the two forums since 2012. This reflects a shift in the interests of online forum participants, with those promoting the social mission orientation of SSE (that is, the Social Economy Forum) declining relative to those focused on social entrepreneurship (that is, the Social Entrepreneur Forum).

### Politicization of SE

At both the municipal and district levels in Seoul, SE intermediary support organizations (ISOs) have had a significant influence in political terms due to the following factors. First, many former activists from the democratization movement who had been pursuing solutions to social polarization and weakened solidarity entered the movement for social economy and became the leaders of the ISOs. Second, they engaged in advocacy for SE values of solidarity, social inclusion and democracy rather than simply focusing on issues of economic viability (see Chapter III). Third, the leaders of SEOEs and ISOs,

who are mostly supporters of Mayor Park’s party, have played a leading role in creating the SE ecosystem in Seoul, building a strong partnership with the Seoul Metropolitan Government.

While SE in Seoul has expanded significantly under Mayor Park and his party, it should be pointed out that the national legislative process that resulted in legal frameworks such as the SEPA and the FAC were led by multiple political parties, and the bills were enacted with cross-party support. Although each party emphasized different aspects of SE, such as its social mission or economic entrepreneurialism, in large measure they all agreed that SE is a potential means of addressing poverty and inequality through the provision of jobs and services to vulnerable groups. However, as SE in Seoul gradually became a political symbol associated with Mayor Park and his party, some natural tension has occurred between the mayor and leaders of district governments who belong to different political parties. Leaders of district authorities who do not belong to the mayor’s party do not participate in the Council of Local Governments for SE which is led by the district government leaders of Mayor Park’s party. This indicates that Seoul’s SE development under Mayor Park has been accompanied by politicization of SE to a certain extent, which raises concerns about the political sustainability of the current policy regime that supports SE.

### Democratic self-management and solidarity

Political empowerment and genuine participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the policy-making process is a key determinant for achieving the SDGs (Cook, Smith, and Utting 2012). They are also important within civil society organizations which are contested spaces that reflect struggles in society as whole (Mercer 2002). CSOs are not, however, preordained to be democratic. They may or may not be democracy-enforcing (Fisher 1998). A key factor in this regard is the capacity of civic organizations to internalize, socialize and popularize democratic attributes, norms and practices such as tolerance, moderation, willingness to compromise and respect for opposing views (Diamond 1994, Hadenius and Ugglä 1996).

Although SSEOEs emphasize democratic self-management as a major principle of organization, the level of democracy within SSEOEs in terms of participation and inclusion, particularly of marginalized and vulnerable groups, is diverse. The principle of solidarity, furthermore, may be practiced among members of

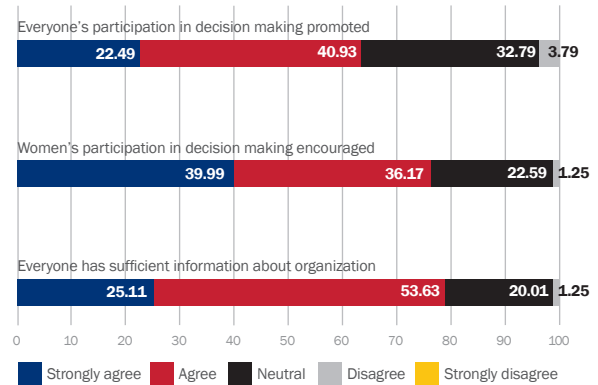
the organization but not necessarily beyond them. To contribute to understanding the political impact of SE and the level of democracy within SEOEs in Seoul, UNRISD conducted an online survey to gauge CSE members' participatory democratic tendencies, as well as their attitudes towards women's participation in decision-making processes, towards migrant workers and multicultural families (see Appendix for the methodology and descriptive statistics).

According to the survey, 63 percent of the CSEs promote the active participation of people in decision-making processes regardless of their age, gender, disability and national origin. Only 3.8 percent reported that decision-making processes within their organizations are not participatory. More than 76 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their organization encourages women's equal participation in decision making. Over 78 percent agreed or strongly agreed that all people in their organization have sufficient information about the organization. These results indicate that CSEs have a strong propensity to build participatory democracy and make the work environment more equal, inclusive and cohesive for all people (see Figure V.8).

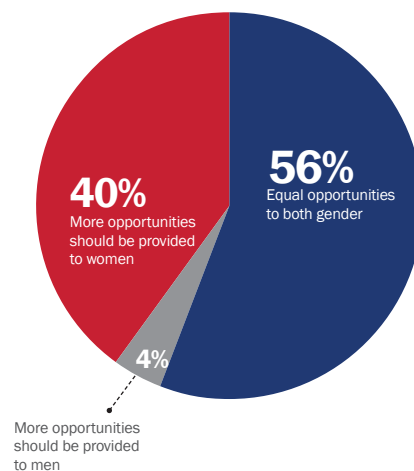
This is a significant improvement compared to the results of a 2010 study (Lee and Hwang 2010) which found that the level of participation of CSE workers in decision-making processes was 2.63 on a scale of 1-5 (1: no opportunity to express opinions and no information to 5: absolute freedom and autonomy in decision-making processes). This figure was even lower than those for small and large enterprises, which were 3.78 and 2.76 respectively.

The survey also shows that participatory and inclusive mechanisms institutionalized within SEOEs affect individual behaviour. Of the 61 people who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "your organization encourages women's active participation in decision making", about 79.6 percent (48 people) reported that their perception of women's participation had changed since they started working at that organization. Among those who changed their perceptions of women in the workplace, 40 percent said that more opportunities should be given to women and 57 percent said that women and men should have equal opportunities (see Figure V.9). Clearly, there are positive institutional effects on perceptions and attitudes towards women's role in the workplace, confirming SE's potential to contribute to achieving Target 5.5 of the SDGs: "Ensure women's full and

**Figure V.8. Attitudes towards participation in decision-making process**



**Figure V.9. Attitudes towards women's participation in the workplace**

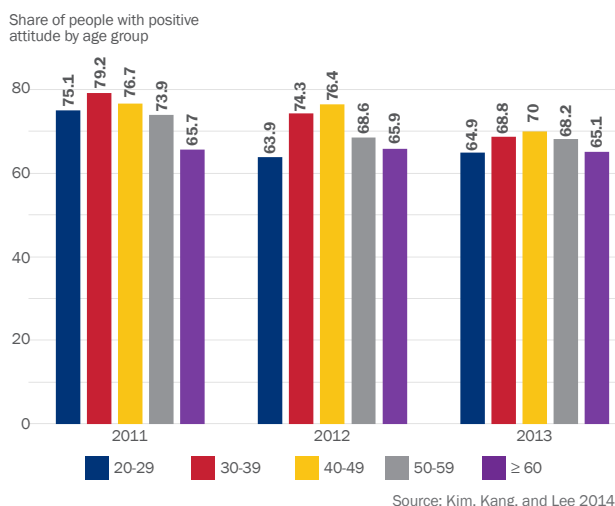


effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”.

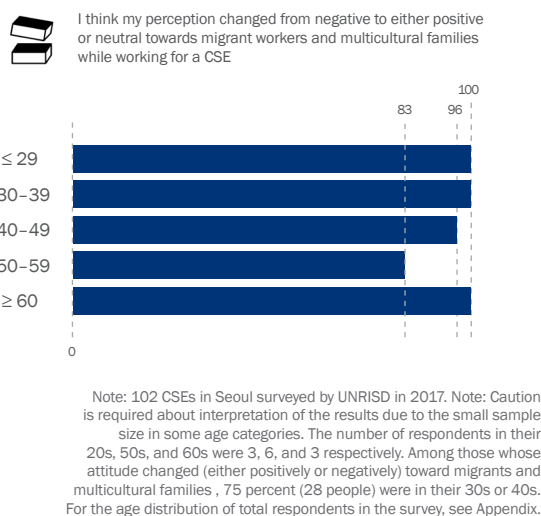
Working for SEOEs also changed the employees' understanding of solidarity, which is clearly illustrated in their changed perceptions towards migrant workers and multicultural families documented in the UNRISD survey. Having long been an ethnically homogeneous society, the Republic of Korea has witnessed a rapid increase of foreign migrant workers and multicultural families. The number of foreign-born residents increased from about 300,000 in 1998 to more than 2 million in 2016 (Korean Statistics, 2017). Although the attitude of the public towards migrant workers and multicultural families is generally positive, there have been recent increases in negative perceptions, particularly among those of working age (see Figure V.10).

The majority of UNRISD survey respondents confirmed that they had changed their perception and attitudes towards foreign-born migrant workers and multicultural families. About 63 percent of respondents changed their perception about migrants and multicultural families during their time working in the SE sector. Among those who changed their perception, only 4 percent said they had changed their perception from positive to negative. Everyone else (96 percent), regardless of age group, changed their perception from negative to either positive or neutral, accepting the presence of migrants and multicultural families and their right to claim rights (see Figure V.11). This demonstrates that people employed in SEOEs have a higher tendency than other Korean people to develop either a positive or neutral attitude toward migrants and multicultural families.

**Figure V.10. Perception of the contribution of multicultural families to increasing competitiveness of the Republic of Korea**



**Figure V.11. CSE-influenced perception change, by age group**



Overall, the survey showed the potential of SE to increase and strengthen solidarity and contribute to establishing an inclusive society via the workplace. However, it is important to note the limitation of self-reporting as a methodology which tends towards response bias, or the individual's tendency to respond in a certain way regardless of the actual evidence (Cook and Campbell 1979). For instance, given the nature of SEOEs and the purpose of the research, the participants may have tended, either consciously or unconsciously, to provide responses which they believe are more socially desirable than a true reflection of reality. For instance, participants may have overstated positive opinions relating to women's participation and role in the work place. Individually and institutionally they may have wanted to appear to behave in a way that conforms to current cultural norms as well as to the social mission of their organization.

## Conclusion

Evidence of the economic, social and environmental impacts of SE in Seoul demonstrates that SE can be an effective means of implementation of the SDGs. In particular, currently available research and data show that Seoul's SE has contributed to reducing poverty and inequality in the city by creating decent jobs for vulnerable groups and providing care services, particularly for the elderly. It is also contributing to the energy transition via activities associated with the generation of solar power. UNRISD's survey found that people working for CSEs tend to be more supportive of women's participation, which is a good litmus test of the contribution of SE to democracy. It also confirms that CSE employees tend to have a more positive attitude towards foreign migrant workers and multicultural families than other citizens.

Whether and to what extent the impact of SE is transformative is, however, still an open question. Despite its contribution to generating jobs for women, there is the risk of feminizing low-paying and low-skill labour-intensive jobs, particularly in the sector of SREs. Inequality in home ownership, which is a structural constraint on the SEOEs engaging with energy transition through the installation of solar panels, is not seen as a major concern by SE actors.

The underdevelopment of methodologies to collect and analyse data on the impacts of SE is another challenge for assessing the role of SE in sustainable development. The most widely used methods and data on SE impacts relate to job provision and social

service provisioning. Other aspects of SE, such as its impacts related to the environment and to democracy, are often ignored in data collection and analysis. Scientific methodologies and data to assess the impact of SE on all dimensions of sustainable development need to be developed further to mobilize support for SEOEs from the public and policy makers, and to help legitimize government support for SEOEs through financing mechanisms such as subsidies and procurement.

## Appendix

UNRISD conducted an online survey of certified social enterprises (CSEs) located in Seoul from July to August 2017 for 45 days. The survey contained 24 questions pertaining to: (i) the status of individual participation and involvement in decision making; (ii) perceptions of women's participation and representation in decision-making processes; (iii) perceptions of disadvantaged people such as migrants and multicultural families in the workplace. In addition, socio-demographic information (such as age, gender, number of working years), as well as organizational information (age, size, goals, sector, employment composition) were collected.

In July 2017, there were 316 CSEs in Seoul. A list of their telephone numbers was obtained from the KSEPA website, where it is publically available. The list also contained information about the organizations' primary objectives when they were set up: (i) job provision, (ii) social service provision, (iii) local community contribution, (iv) other, and (v) mixed (a combination of these objectives). Using this information as the basis for stratification, a stratified sampling design was employed to yield proportional representation. Approximately one third of the telephone numbers from each category, or 102 combined, were randomly selected and contacted to ask for potential participants. The majority of people we contacted via phone expressed willingness to take part in the survey. When consent was given, an email link to the online survey with more specific information about the research was sent to the person. Several attempts were made to re-contact those who agreed but then did not complete the survey. The response rate was approximately 78.4 percent. In addition to pre-stratification for adequate representation, we calculated sample weights to adjust for non-response bias in the sample.

Table A.1 presents descriptive statistics of respondents and their workplace. Out of 80 respondents, 44 people (55.25 percent) were female and 36 people

(44.75 percent) were male, showing a good gender balance. Respondents were primarily people in their 40s (50.75 percent) and 30s (25.43 percent). The vast majority of respondents (nearly 88 percent) work for social enterprises, meaning the sample under-represents the remaining groups: cooperatives (8.5 percent), self-reliance enterprises (2.5 percent), and village enterprises (1.25 percent). Approximately 57 percent of respondents' SEOEs have male leaders and 38 percent have female leaders. Small-size SEOEs—with less than 20 employees—account for 66 percent of the organizations surveyed. In terms of the sectoral diversity, most of the SEOEs were in the retail sector (22.4 percent); while the second largest group were those from the education sector (17.7 percent) and third largest group were from the theatrical and music performance sector (10.66 percent).

**Table A.1. Descriptive statistics of respondents and their workplaces**

	Weighted (%)
<b>Gender of Respondents</b>	
Female	55.25
Male	44.75
<b>Age of Respondents</b>	
29 or younger	5.00
30-39	25.43
40-49	50.75
50-59	13.78
60 or older	5.04
<b>Type of SEOEs respondents work for</b>	
Social enterprise	87.76
Cooperative	8.49
Self-reliance enterprise	2.50
Village enterprise	1.25
<b>Gender of Leader</b>	
Female	38.60
Male	57.56
Both	3.84
<b>Size of SEOEs</b>	
Less than 10 people	36.28
10-20 people	30.05
20-30 people	13.91
More than 30 people	19.76
<b>Sector (multiple responses)</b>	
Wholesale/retail	22.46
Education/training/consultation	17.73
Care for elderly/children/disabled people	7.35
Health/medical services	5.99
Recycling, re-use, repair	3.69
Real estate/housing construction/ rental accommodation	5.30
Environment/green communities/conservation	5.94
Theatrical/music performance	10.66
Publishing/printing/photocopying	9.72
Other community services	11.16



## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The NBLs provides benefits for living expenses, health, housing and education.

<sup>2</sup> According to the International Labour Organization, decent work involves full and productive employment, stability and security in the workplace, social protection for workers and their families, and the promotion of social dialogue to express concerns, to organize and to participate in decisions that affect the workers' lives (International Labour Organization 2013).

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