



REPORT ABOUT THE SES4FOOD

FIRST MEET-UP

FIRST MEET-UP DATA:

- 14 July 2017 at Impact Hub Amsterdam.
- Purpose: to discuss the opportunities of SES4Food and how within this initiative jointly and individually create the best conditions for social entrepreneurs and their support organizations to make them flourish and be effective in increasing food security.
- 18 participants from the ministries of Foreign and Economic Affairs, incubators and accelerators, NGOs, finance and knowledge institutes.
- This first meet-up was organized around 4 components:
 1. Participants explored the current situation, emerging issues and the potential of support for social entrepreneurs in the agro-food sector.
 2. The need and purpose of the SES4Food initiative and the kick-start of Communities of Action.
 3. They jointly determined steps for further development of SES4Food.
 4. They explored their possible role in the development of SES4Food.

INTRODUCTION

The afternoon, led by Ard Hordijk, was kicked off by Margreet van der Pijl, director of SocietyWorks. She enthusiastically explained that after the F&BKP/SocietyWorks bottom up [mapping project](#) in seven Dutch partner countries time has come to link the recommendations and conclusions to the work of related Dutch organizations. This was underlined by two of the project LinkingPins:



Bikundo Onyari (Kenya):

“What we can offer to the Social Entrepreneurs is a methodology that they become aware of their connected world, their Ecosystem, whereby they learn who are the actors surrounding them and how they could work with them, of purposes of mutual benefit. It is a two-way approach whereby the Ecosystem can support the entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurs can be able to benefit from what has been offered by the actors in the Ecosystem.”



Louis Agboku (Benin):

“Social entrepreneurs are not organized. Via the mapping study, we notice that two social entrepreneurs major challenges are lack of organization and financial support. Through a good connection with support organizations, social entrepreneurs will be more trained, organized and get financial support. We need guidance and more tools to really manage the network, to let it known and organize support industries around the social entrepreneurs.’

INTRODUCTION

The participants in the Meet-Up thereafter introduced themselves and explored how they connected with each other and to what extent they wished to collaborate with each other in the future. Most of them expressed that more cooperation will be good and is necessary, but some expressed that they are aware not to make cooperation a purpose on itself.

*“We need to ask ourselves: what is creating what?
The Ecosystem for Social Entrepreneurs working on
Food Security is now created by outsiders.
Let the Social Entrepreneurs create the Ecosystem.”*

Roel During, Wageningen University

*“It is good to take into account what the true drivers are for
social entrepreneurs and also the cultural aspects, to be able to
check reality and see the possible impact.”*

Margriet Reinders, Gender and Water Alliance

1. EXPLORING THE CURRENT SITUATION, EMERGING ISSUES AND THE POTENTIAL OF SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IN THE AGRO-FOOD SECTOR.

Conclusions from the synopsis report:

Evert-jan Quak, author of the [mapping synopsis report](#), presented the project and recommendations. In his presentation he explained that there is a momentum. On the one hand, there is an increasing role of the private sector in food security; and on the other, NGOs embracing the concept of entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship can play a vital role in connecting both: working with private sector actors that look for social impact (e.g. food security) and working with NGOs that seek more cooperation with private sector, but without losing their social values. With many activities and programmes (e.g. incubator and accelerator) starting now, it is time to answer questions around the many recent experiences in the field of social entrepreneurship for food security and to bring the lessons learned further.

He added that the mapping project was based on earlier F&BKP activities; In February 2015 a “[Pop-up Friday](#)” session with Dutch social entrepreneurs dedicated to food security organized and in August 2016 a [literature review](#) on social entrepreneurs as change makers for food security was published. The lessons from these reflective exercises, recognized a need for the mapping project, as a result of a lack of information and knowledge on social enterprises

that work specifically on food security, their specific demands for support, and to understand from who these social entrepreneurs have received support.

Evert-jan showed that half of the social entrepreneurs in the sample received neither financial nor non-financial support from professional regional, national or international organizations or institutes. This results from the fact that social entrepreneurs who work outside the main cities are less connected with professional support organizations. More importantly he added that there is a mismatch between top-down support and bottom-up needs; creating resource, knowledge, awareness and network gaps between social entrepreneurs and the support organizations. Also, the non-existence of a network and awareness about available support outside the own community is a challenge that was mentioned in the mapping. Lastly, many support programmes are offering good support, but act as isolated islands; there is no coordination to reach out beyond the usual suspects.

Debate on the mapping results and emerging issues:

The participants then, in subgroups, discussed four emerging issues derived from the mapping:

1. How can we reach beyond the usual suspects?
2. How can we increase impact?
3. How can we build bridges between actors to jointly tackle common bottle necks?
4. How to develop unique profile and contribution for each organisation?

The groups were asked to reflect on whether they recognized the emerging issues and the potential, whether they saw things differently and if they wished to add emerging issues.

Louis Agboku (LinkingPin Benin) added via Skype:

“When collecting the data during the mapping study, I met entrepreneurs who even did not know that they were social entrepreneurs because they don’t know about the concept. The institutional environment is so inadequate; there is not specialized institutions to support social entrepreneurs in Benin. I think that connect social entrepreneurs with international organizations that promote social entrepreneurship will be truly beneficial and will enhance the agricultural production and food security in Benin.

One example I could give about the social entrepreneur organization is the National Federation of Rabbit breeder cooperative. Some

of them are social entrepreneurs. I think it is important to precise that they don’t organize themselves as social entrepreneurs network but it is an organization of young entrepreneurs facing challenges and who put themselves together to take up the challenges.”

Generally, the emerging issues were recognized as important issues by the attendees. Participants came up with many valuable additions, remarks and questions. For example, around usual suspects it was suggested not only to recognize usual suspects, but to find ways to include them, which can be problematic regarding working in the informal sector. Around building bridges and strengthening the ecosystem it was noted that it is important to take into account that social entrepreneurs shape the ecosystem and the environment around them as much as they are shaped by the ecosystem. Also a lot of information sharing between support organizations already takes place and tools are being shared. Therefore, the need for a new platform of platforms depends on what is already happening in a certain context. On the unique contributions it was suggested to develop a menu of what kind of support social entrepreneurs need in their life cycle and map the initiatives of different support organization on that menu.

1. Unusual suspects	It is important to build a bridge between usual suspects and unusual suspects.
	Are the Linking Pins usual suspects themselves?
	Also informal channels should be found to find SEs.
	In some countries the government does not allow NGOs to reach out to other groups of people than the ones they indicate.
2. Increased impact	Cultural aspects need to be taken into account.
	Include power imbalances and great differences in income in supply chains, also those between man and woman.
	It is important to start from the local context.
3. Building bridges	Is the ecosystem shaping the social entrepreneurs or are the social entrepreneurs shaping the ecosystem?
	Is a Platform for Platforms is needed?
	There is a lot of informal sharing happening, we do not always see.
	Be mindful of what is already there: use the toolkits of others.
	It is important to take joint action.
4. Added value and unique contribution for each organisations	Make a menu of what is already there: not all SE's can use the same support.
	Is there added value for Dutch businesses to be involved?
	If you start at grassroots level; what then will be the role of the Dutch Government?

2. THE NEED AND PURPOSE OF THE SES4FOOD INITIATIVE

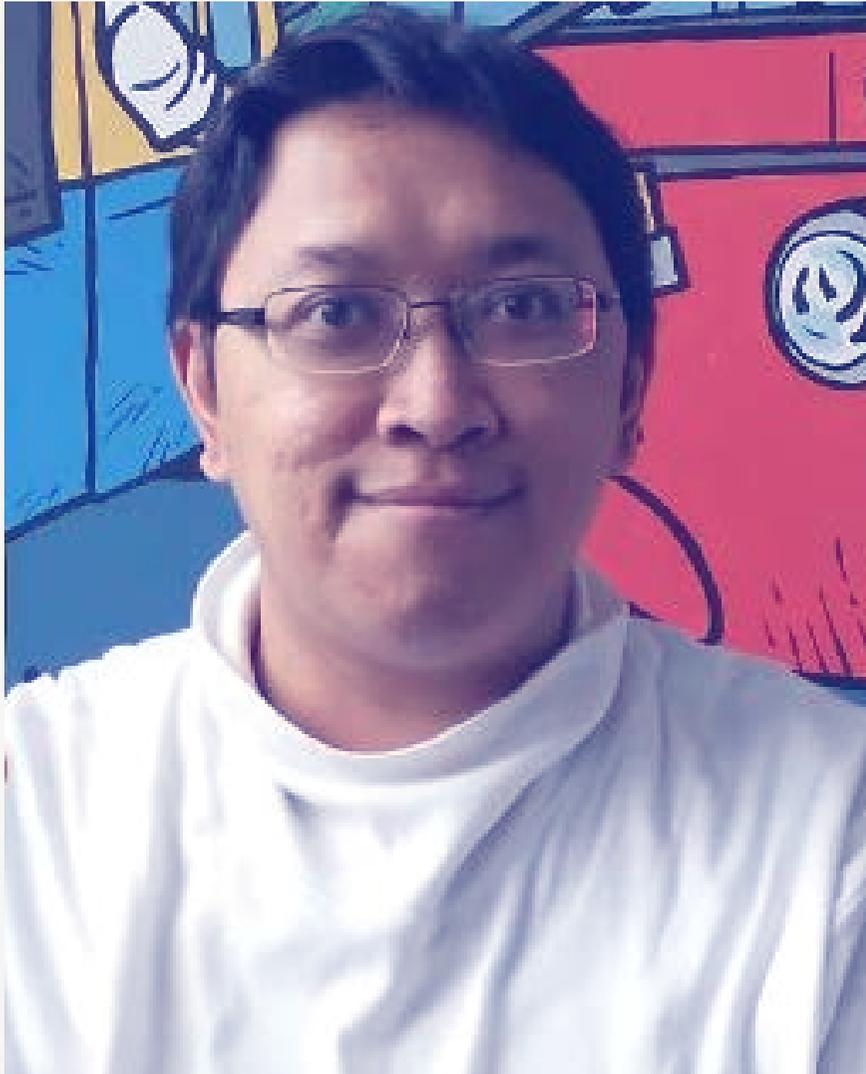


Margreet van der Pijl (SocietyWorks) introduced the purpose of the SES4Food Initiative. SES4Food aims to strengthen the ecosystem and the enabling environment for social entrepreneurs that work on improving food security. It aims to bring together support organizations, social entrepreneurs and other actors in the wider ecosystem in each country that was researched. In so-called Communities of Action, they will identify key barriers in the ecosystem of social entrepreneurs and develop and execute concrete action plans to address these barriers.

Each organization will use the resources and unique qualities that are already available to them to play their role in executing the action plans. This will enable social entrepreneurs to become more effective and contribute optimally to improving food security. By doing this the different organizations will become closer working partners in creating the best ecosystem for social entrepreneurs working on food security.

support entrepreneurship in the agro-food sector. SES4Food distinguishes itself from other initiatives in the following ways:

- It brings together different organizations in the ecosystem (social entrepreneurs, financiers, support organizations, government bodies and clients) to address barriers in the environment, there is no support programme;
- It focuses on social entrepreneurs, that have social and environmental issues as the purpose for starting up the business, not on agri-businesses that aim to become more inclusive/more sustainable (environmental friendly or social);
- It focuses on SMEs, not on large, mature businesses;
- It has no standard programme, but develops tailor made solutions for each context.



Fajar Anugerah (LinkingPin Indonesia):

“Kinara and I are of the believe that food security is a strategic issue in Indonesia. We have 270+ million population and most of our livelihood is on agriculture and fisheries. We have a relatively young demography (>50% are of 40 years or younger) and we live in a tropical region, therefore we will be most affected by climate change effect to our food production capabilities. Our aim is to be part of the stakeholder map/ecosystem of food security, playing to our strengths as investor to impactful businesses.

“In Indonesia, the regulations about social enterprise are still vague and there is no one government agency has direct authority to support social enterprise. In the case of food security-related social enterprise, various government agencies (Min. of Agriculture, Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of SME and Cooperatives, Ministry of Health, etc) have/potentially need to be engaged as part of their work. At the local government level, those ministries have local counterparts which might have different (and overlapping/conflicting!) authorities.

“We hope that the mapping and the network will be able to influence policy making and how the strategic management of food security to involve social enterprises, in the spirit of Public-Private Partnership as well as community involvement.”

3. DIALOGUE ON SES4FOOD AND ITS FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The participants each gave advice on next steps for further development of the SES4Food initiative that can be summarized as:

1) *Fit it in already existing support and coordination structures*

- It is important to see what is already there, how does this fit in existing structures;
- Build further and show the complete picture to the actors in the Ecosystem and invite them to come on board in the Communities of Action.
- Connect with Dutch SME (programmes) in the countries;
- Start presenting outcomes of the mapping in a Toolbox/Database;
- Currently there is no natural balance in the ecosystem: there are too many support organizations, you should choose the best, filter them out;
- Find out if there are Food Platforms for donor coordination in each country;
- Keep the Dutch Embassy close; politically it is now time to get involved;
- Structurally put organizations together in a community of action;
- Bring the Dutch Initiatives together around concrete projects with focus on supply chains.

2) *Work with a clear vision and mission and measure the impact*

- Make clear: what are the measurable indicators for success; what do you wish to achieve in 5 years? (Local feedback loops);
- Make the projects concrete and act in a total chain;

- Maybe SES4Food can become in certain countries the “Social Enterprise NL”-spokesperson for SE’s towards government etc.

3) *Work lean, mean, open, locally driven and non-hierarchical*

- Make a Business Model Canvas to clearly define your objective and competitive analysis;
- Use quick gain approach with a concrete pilot(s);
- Present the SE’s as role models for the positioning of young people working in agri-food business with a success story;
- Be modest in what you wish to achieve;
- Constantly share information;
- Establish a local driver (team);
- Use another word for Food Security and Social Entrepreneurs; maybe local teams have good alternatives (how do they call themselves?);
- Be independent;
- Create peer to peer learning.

The participants were asked what they would wish to contribute in the further development of SES4Food. All of them were seeing concrete opportunities to incorporate the initiative in a certain way in their activities.

Other representatives that could not be attend this meeting but are interested in SES4Food, are: Nyenrode Business University, Triodos Bank, Oxfam Novib, NABC, Orange Corners, Aqua Spark, CTA, RVO, The Network University and INCLUDE knowledge platform.

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF SES4FOOD

Participants agreed that SES4Food has potential to play an innovative role in connecting actors and facilitating change in the social entrepreneurial ecosystem. The initiative must work with existing programmes and link them to innovative entrepreneurs that seek for social impact, but have to operate in informal structures and networks. The proposed way to do this is to establish Communities of Action. Furthermore, it must work with a pro-active vision that actors themselves can shape the ecosystem.

The overall ambition is to kick-start SES4Food with a core team of 4-6 committed people coming from relevant stakeholders including supporting organizations and the F&BKP. They will operate within an umbrella structure together with representatives of local teams in developing countries linking and connecting Communities of Actions in selected developing countries. This will be facilitated by Evert-jan Quak, Ard Hordijk, and Margreet van der Pijl, the initiators of SES4Food.

This team will work out how strategic partnerships with RVO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Embassies can be further built to support the set up of national core teams in the Dutch Partner countries. Those teams will host a local Community of Action, in an income generating way. They will consist of local support organizations, local SEs working on food security, (impact) investors and other local actors in the wider ecosystem that together decide upon the most effective improvements in the ecosystem and design a way to implement these improvements.

To discuss the specific roles, responsibilities and business model for SES4Food and its partners a second meet-up will be organized in autumn 2017 (more information will follow on the F&BKP website).

If you have questions, or are interested in joining the SES4Food Initiative, please contact our Knowledge Broker Vanessa Nigten: vanessa.nigten@knowledge4food.net