



REPORT ABOUT THE SES4FOOD

SECOND MEET-UP

ABOUT THE 2ND MEET-UP:

- *29 September 2017 at Oxfam Novib in The Hague.*
- *Purpose: to follow-up on the outcomes of the first meet-up with a dialogue among committed professionals about the positioning of SES4Food and about co-designing a final operational plan and business model for SES4Food.*
- *15 participants from NGOs, knowledge institutes, social enterprises, multilateral organizations and international networks.*
- *This first meet-up was organized around three components:*
 - 1. How and where SES4Food could make the participants' work lighter and more effective.*
 - 2. A dialogue on the positioning of SES4Food by looking at several models that could be used to design a Theory of Change.*
 - 3. Open discussion on the earning model, legal status, organizational framework and the steps needed to start prototyping the unique concept of "Communities of Action".*

INTRODUCTION

The afternoon was opened by Margreet van der Pijl (SocietyWorks) who made some remarks on how this second meet-up would follow-up on the outcomes of the first meet-up, which was organized in July the same year. Where the first meet-up had the objective to discuss the opportunities of, added value of, and the needs and purposes for SES4Food, this second meet-up was about co-designing an operational plan and business model for the SES4Food initiative with the aim to open a trajectory of prototyping the SES4Food approach in one or two countries.

Before the dialogue started Margreet asked in the check-in the participants to explain the one thing that they would like to take away from the meet-up. A mix of expectations were mentioned, like:

“To understand better what could be the sustainable business model for SES4Food”

“Having a better understanding about more creative approaches for inclusion that could suit Dutch companies”

“To have a better and clear idea what role I could play in SES4Food”

“I want to be inspired by innovative ideas that could change the development debate”

“To connect the dots and find alternative ways that could release the energy and potential of young entrepreneurs”

“To ensure that this initiative will go beyond the scope of neo-liberalism by remaining an alternative, which works from the people’s perspective and embraces different cultures and ideas”

“I want clarity: how can I support SES4Food and vice versa, because I think there is a win-win for both of us”

1. HOW COULD SES4FOOD MAKE THE PARTICIPANTS' WORK LIGHTER AND MORE EFFECTIVE

In this session, the participants could explain where in the world the SES4Food initiative could make the difference for them and their organization. Although some organizations are also active in Central America, Asia, the Caribbean and Pacific region, it became clear that Africa is the continent where SES4Food should first focus on and start connecting with existing entrepreneurial and food security programmes. West-Africa (e.g. Ghana and Nigeria) and East-Africa (e.g. Kenya and Rwanda) are the regions where most organizations are working on such programmes and could see most potential for SES4Food.

SES4Food seeks to make the work lighter and more effective for the potential partners, therefore, the follow-up question was: where in the ecosystem should SES4Food focus on specific topics that could make a difference for you and your organization.

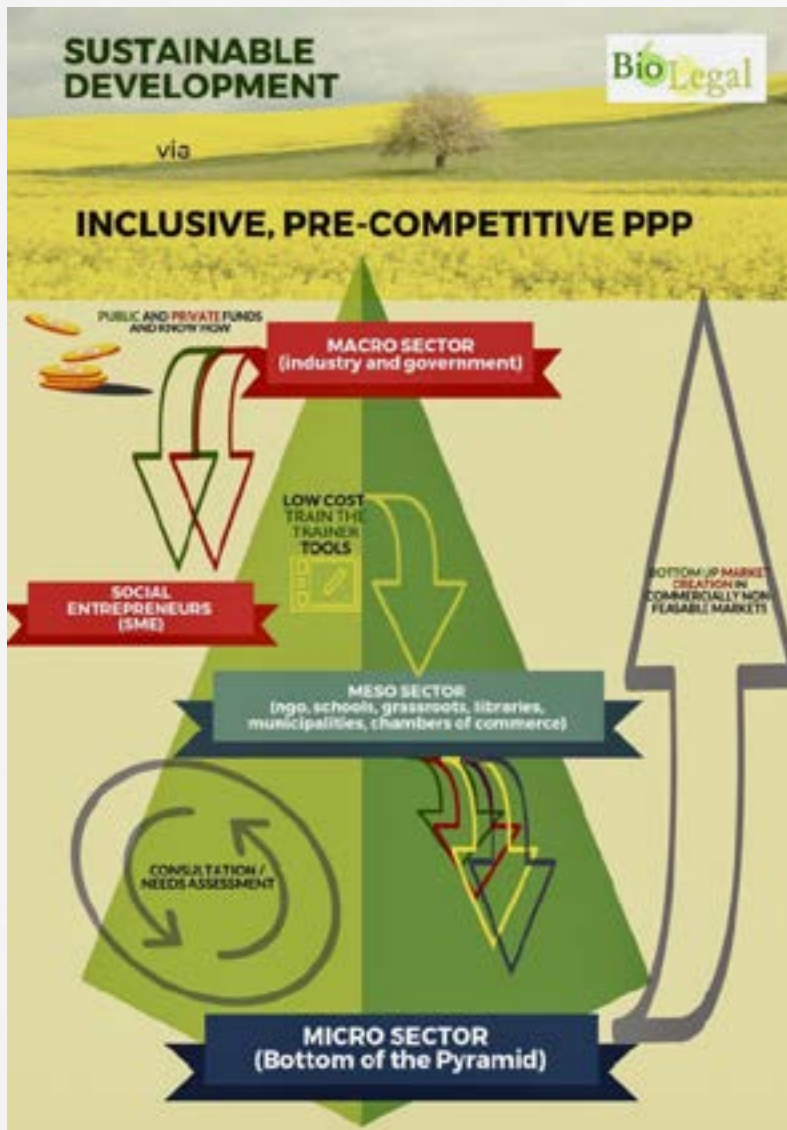
- *Inner circle of social entrepreneurs:* All participants work directly or indirectly with social entrepreneurs and recognize their potential for activities and programmes. Where SES4Food could make the difference for them is to work directly with social entrepreneurs who are mainly overseen in the dynamics of current formal processes. Furthermore, SES4Food must recognize and understand the urgent needs of the social entrepreneurs that must go beyond a quick consultation, being the start of a sustainable dialogue with entrepreneurs, as this is time-consuming for many stakeholders.

- *Middle circle of support organizations:* SES4Food could make the work of the participants more effective if it would focus on support becoming more demand-driven and entrepreneur-based as most of the participants want to move away from supply-driven and NGO-based support. Furthermore, just providing trainings is not sufficient; an intense coaching and quality support system is needed that does not focus on quick wins. Looking for alternative ways to open the access to investment was also mentioned as a must, because existing programmes offer mainly non-financial support.

A discussion about the real importance of access to finance emerged. There was the recognition that the resource gap is one of the main challenges for social entrepreneurs, also after receiving support or seed funding. For example, current support initiatives should not be too much satisfied by organizing pitches for entrepreneurs for potential investors as most investors will not invest in the enterprises. However, it was also recognized by most participants that entrepreneurs too often focus on the financial challenges, while losing sight on measures that could improve their enterprise.

- *Outer circle of the wider ecosystem:* The participants recognized that SES4Food should focus on establishing mechanisms to create impact on the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Connecting with potential investors and actors that could open alternative ways of finance was again one of the main issues as was creating opportunities for linkages with Universities. Furthermore, it was mentioned several times that the wider ecosystem should not end at national borders, but must be international as international actors could play an important role in improving local ecosystems. One example is to use the knowledge, networks and investments of the diaspora to connect with their mother countries.

2. POSITIONING SES4FOOD BY LOOKING AT MODELS, WHICH SHOW HOW TO INTERACT WITH STAKEHOLDERS.



A. Presenting two ways of positioning SES4Food

Positioning SES4Food amongst stakeholders:

Nikolet Zwart (Biolegal) presented a model that she uses in her business activities as she believes that it could pin-point where the SES4Food initiative could position itself as connector of social entrepreneurs with support organizations and big actors like businesses and governments (see figure).

As a connector SES4Food needs to understand what business opportunities could be generated from the bottom of the pyramid and where such new markets could be opened to show business actors the benefits of working closely together with social entrepreneurs. Time constraints are the main obstacle for the macro actors (big businesses and governments) to really engage with social entrepreneurs and understand rural communities at grassroot level. This is why SES4Food could position itself the best among the actors at the meso level, according to Zwart, by offering the support to cooperate closely with social entrepreneurs and their target groups in rural communities (micro level) and create business opportunities that now are often overseen.

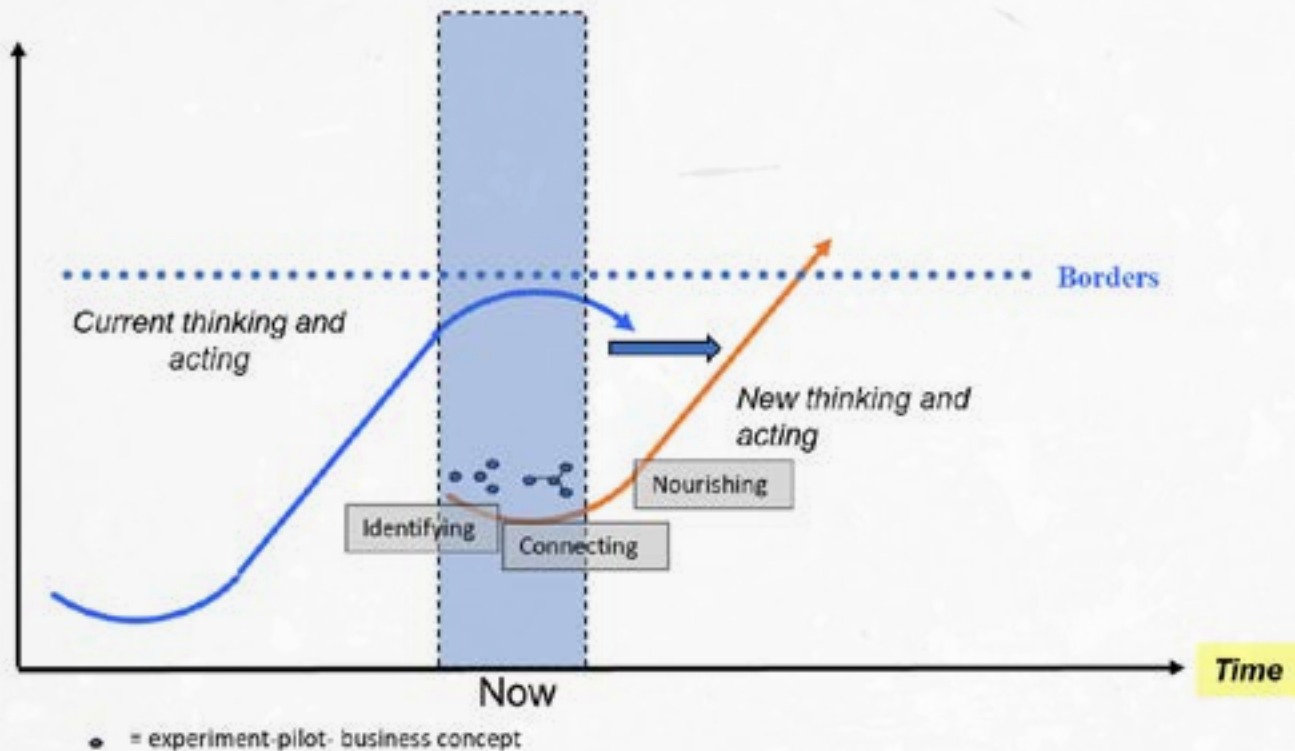
Positioning SES4Food in time:

Evert-jan Quak (independent knowledge broker) presented a second model that shows the positioning of SES4Food by using a time-based framework. SES4Food has been inspired by the work of the Berkana Institute on problem-solving through self-organized communities. The two loops model has been a fundamental piece of The Berkana Institute's theory of change. It makes use of the double S-curve model and shows that all systems eventually will start to

collapse as they reach their limits. As this happens isolated alternatives slowly begin to arise and give way to the new. Innovative ideas for problem-solving and opportunity-seeking in new structures and networks are the response of front-runners. They will experiment and eventually better practices and systems will emerge that will be adopted gradually by more people until it will reach its own limits (see figure).

SES4Food could be positioned by focusing at the start of the cycle where the dynamics occur by front-runners who seek for innovative solutions by looking out of the box. Activities should focus on them as SES4Food belief is that widespread change and impact does become possible when people working at the local level are able to learn from one another, practice together and share learning with communities everywhere. The Berkana Institute evidenced from their observations that “large-scale change emerges when local actions get connected globally while preserving their deeply local culture, flavor and form”. They call this trans-local learning.

By using this model, SES4Food has to position itself there where it could help isolated local experiments to be connected with each other and with support organizations as networks that strengthen themselves through learning and knowledge sharing. In practice this means that identifying unique social entrepreneurs, connecting them with each other and with support organizations, and nourishing them over time are the main tasks that will create upscaling opportunities and impact.



B. Discussion about how these models could work in practice and/or could hinder progress

In three sub-groups the participants discussed further the two proposed models with a focus on how they could be used in practice and what potential dangers could occur if implemented. This discussion put on table some very delicate and interesting issues. At the same time warnings were mentioned not to let SES4Food disconnect from its unique bottom-up approach as discussed in the first meet-up.

Sub-group 1:

- *SES4Food must be aware of the cultural differences and power structures between the stakeholders, like NGOs, social entrepreneurs, investors, local authorities etc. "Be careful of power structures as this easily creates frustrations and mistrust between social entrepreneurs, partners and stakeholders."*
- *SES4Food aims to create impact. But what is impact? Participants in this sub-group want SES4Food to be more specific on how it will generate and measure impact. "To show impact involves time consuming measurements, paperwork and reporting. If there is no mutual understanding about what impact is wanted and how to measure it, this could back-fire further development."*
- *One other issue that was raised was: "What is SES4Food going to do when social enterprises are growing and eventually will take decisions against their social goals?"*

Sub-group 2:

- *They asked the question if SES4Food as a connector can create sufficient impact. "SES4Food wants to be a connector, but it could be considered to revise this into becoming a representative of social entrepreneurs."*
- *Looking at both models, they spot two actors that were less mentioned. "We are not sure what the Dutch link and role is? And there is not yet a specific direct connection with small-scale farmers. How will they be included and represented?"*
- *Another point was to be more explicit in what way SES4Food wants big business actors on board. "If SES4Food wants to let businesses be part of it, how you are going to react on their risk averse attitude? They consider social entrepreneurs as highly risky."*
- *They also mentioned that both models do not show enough the unique selling points of SES4Food.*

Sub-group 3:

- *They see a danger that in practice SES4Food could become less bottom-up as wanted. "SES4Food should not work according to a model in which knowledge and methodology is dictated from above, as it must focus on creating positive, innovative local dynamics for change."*
- *They want to be sure that social entrepreneurs remain the actors of change. "Do not focus too much on mainstreaming, but look at the transformative power of social enterprises on their environment. Social entrepreneurs should not assimilate to the mainstream, but the mainstream has to embrace the alternatives that social entrepreneurship offers them."*
- *Support for upscaling must "never disconnect from culture and traditional way of life."*
- *And a final lesson: "Focus less on theory, but be more practical to really allow dynamics to emerge."*

3. CO-DESIGNING A BUSINESS MODEL **SES4FOOD'S** EARNING MODEL, LEGAL STATUS AND ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Margreet van der Pijl presented the draft Terms of Reference for SES4Food as was shared with the participants in advance of the meet-up. She was looking for concrete points to improve the document and to build a business model around the “Communities of Action”. Again, many ideas and suggestions were exchanged:

On Communities of Action:

- *Introduce a mechanism how to solve power struggles within “Communities of Action”*
- *How long will a prototype Community of Action last? Is one year not too short?*
- *How to secure that a Community of Action can generate real impact through a recognizable and transparent process?*
- *Who owns the solution that comes out of the Community of Action?*
- *Is the solution money-driven or problem-driven?*

On an earning model and operational framework:

- *What legal status has SES4Food? What options are there? Does SES4Food want to become a social enterprise?*
- *Do not turn a blind eye on philanthropy.*
- *How to introduce a membership fee, which is very difficult. It will not be feasible to receive enough earnings from members alone - 70% more earnings are needed.*
- *No cure no pay for support for social entrepreneurs could be part of business model.*
- *To make use of resources and networks of the diaspora.*
- *Make more explicit and visible how to calculate hours that people put in SES4Food voluntarily and how to value that*
- *A clear operational framework is missing. A potential partner must understand how the organization is working, who is responsible for what part in the organization (e.g. who is managing the funds) and what checks and balances are there to secure quality deliverables.*

Other issues:

- *Look more to the lessons learned from some initiatives that created rural hubs and rural communities of practice.*
- *Show more explicitly in Terms of Reference that we believe in social entrepreneurship.*

List of participants:

Abubakarr Bangura	Network University
Thijs van Bommel	BemBem Creates
Barbara Cruz	MDF
Roel During	WUR
Mirjam Horstmeier	Oxfam Novib
Evariste Karambizi	UNITAR
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Annewies Kuipers	Partos
Ken Lohento	CTA
Vanessa Nigten	F&BKP
Alain Nkurikiye	Wajenzi
Margriet Reinders	Gender Water Alliance
Nikolet Zwart	BioLegal
Mohammed Tsaalbi	Social entrepreneur
Lies Krajenbrink	In between jobs, International Development & Corporate sector
Organisers:	
Margreet van der Pijl	SocietyWorks
Ard Hordijk	Synnervate
Evert-jan Quak	Independent knowledge broker