The Social and Solidarity Economy Movement in the US

Potential Linkages to Social Welfare and Related Social Justice Movements

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Abstract

The SSE movement is gaining recognition in the U.S. and numerous projects that incorporate SSE values that give primacy to social and environmental needs over goals of profit and wealth accumulation, are in process and being initiated. The current U.S. political/social/economic context clearly illustrates the need for transformation of the existing system. The lack of the existing system to meet basic human needs such as healthcare and refusal of political leaders to acknowledge environmental issues are key concerns. The SSE movement is an important partner for on-going movements with similar values and goals, as well as providing critical resources to participants in SSE projects and the communities they are operating in, and the development of useful examples for potential replication. The potential of strong mutual-support linkages to the social welfare movement and other human rights and social action groups that can generate resources to further SSE program development and implement SDGs is explored. Attention is called to the critical linkage of the personal, interpersonal, community, and political/social/economic to personal and social problems. The basic values and selected intervention strategies of radical social work are reviewed with reference to the transformative goals of SSE, principles of SSE projects, and potential collaborations.

Keywords

Social and solidarity economy, social welfare, radical social work, social justice

Bio

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The Social and Solidarity Economy Movement in the US: Potential Linkages to Social Welfare and Related Social Justice Movements

This paper argues that there is a critical need for expansion of the social and solidarity economic (SSE) movement and development of SSE projects/program in the U. S. The need for and potential of this expansion is discussed relative to the current political/social/economic context. The on-going nature of SSE efforts in the U.S. including challenges and opportunities will also be analyzed as they relate to U.S. social welfare policy and characteristics, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and related social justice movements. Finally, empowerment-oriented, radical and progressive social work theory and practice will be briefly described and the current and potential contribution of this approach to selected SSE oriented projects in the U.S. will be analyzed.

Analysis of the diversity and complexity of theoretical perspectives and variant approaches to defining SSE that have been developing around the world and in the U.S. are beyond the scope of this paper. However, this effort coupled with implementation of ever-increasing types and numbers of specific SSE related programs have served to strengthen the visibility of the overall SSE movement and support SSE related policy and project development. A critical component of agreement in these efforts include urgent need to create a new form of economic system/s with a primary focus on common human need and a safe environment rather than profit (for example see, Laville, 2015; McMurty, 2015; Utting, 2015; Democracy Now, 2018b; Loh & Agyeman, 2018; U.S. Solidarity Economy Network (USSEN), 2017; Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy, 2015b). Inherent in the SSE movement is incorporation of key SSE values into all aspects of design and implementation of new economic efforts. Kawano (2018) summarizes the principles as: a) solidarity, cooperation, and mutualism; b) equity in all dimensions race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc; c) participatory democracy; d) sustainability; and e) pluralism(not-a-one -size-fits-all approach) and f) people and planet first. These principles and the values they represent embrace a strong commitment to social, political, and economic justice and demonstrate recognition that major structural transformation will be necessary to displace capitalism and other oppressive social, political and economic systems. Most advocates of the SSE movement tribute the increasing commitment and activity related to SSE articulation and project development as rising from the vortex of economic and environmental crises, wars and other forms of violence, and the impact of these conditions on people. The diversity of these conditions around the world requires SSE efforts to challenge conditions and build social, political, economic projects uniquely responsive to local needs.

Current Political Social Economic Context in the USA

The key political and economic visions supported by much of the upper class and most blatantly by the current power structure includes a political vision of the U.S. as the primary super power, capitalism as the primary world-wide economic system, and perhaps to a lesser degree worldwide incorporation of western values (as defined for political purpose by the elite). The impact of these choices has led to: a) even less governmental resources available to address poverty; b) the bulk of governmental resources being transferred even more radically to expanding military resources and tax breaks for corporations; c) increased bipolar distribution of wealth; d) increased power of wealth as a factor in controlling the democratic process; e) attacks on civil rights; f) efforts to abolish environmental protection regulations and action; and g) destruction of

the already limited positive response in environmental protection and attempts to reduce fuel and coal energy dependence (Foster, 2017; Giroux, 2017; Karger & Stoesz, 2018).

Political use of economic fears, racism, sexism, anti-immigration, religious discrimination, fear of racialized crime, and deep-seated fear of 'socialism', coupled with real hardships being experienced by specific populations (for example many farmers) has been used to create a new populism. This form of populism supports the U.S. government's inhumane anti-immigration actions, abolition of most social welfare policy and programs, ending environmental regulations, and attacks on civil rights (including voting rights and increased criminalization of poverty, homelessness, and protest activities). There is strong support for 'climate denial' despite the disastrous fires, floods, and other weather threats that often directly affects these supporters. This new populism thrives, supported by far-right rhetoric of conservative media touting racist and nationalist material to promote division, and job promises and wealth creation as justification for fuel, coal promotion, racialized crime reporting, and other divisive strategies. Mainstream media adds to the situation by failure to cover critical human needs and rights issues, despite evidence that many are suffering from severe poverty and deep cuts in programs providing physical and mental health care, income support, housing, etc., and failure to mention global warming as related to environmental disasters they report. This limited reporting reflects the power of corporate interests and their ownership of the media (Giroux, 2017, Democracy Now, 2018a; Jones, 2016).

The USA in comparison to programs in other wealthy democratic countries has always had a meagre social welfare system due to strong reliance on the market to meet human needs. Phillip Alston's report to the UN Human Rights Commission detailed key factors regarding extreme poverty and human rights in the USA. He notes that despite being the richest country in the world the U.S. has 40 million people in dire poverty, infant mortality in 2013 was the highest in the developed world, is ranked 36th in the world in terms of access to water and sanitation, is alone among developed countries not to accept heath care a right, has the highest rate of incarceration, and is 35th out of 37 in OECD countries in terms of poverty and inequality. Alston calls out the reality in the U.S. in regard to human rights noting that, while international human rights law recognizes a right to education, a right to healthcare, a right to social protection for those in need, and a right to an adequate standard of living. "In practice the United States is alone among developed countries in insisting that while human rights are of fundamental importance, they do not include rights that guard against dying of hunger, dying from lack of access to affordable healthcare, or growing up in a context of total deprivation." (Alston, 2017; Gurcan, 2015).

Addressing the psycho-social impact of this extreme growth/wealth/materialism focused economy, support for competition as the primary basis for human relationships, extreme militarism, unfettered environmental destruction, and the powerful socialization processes employed to support this system is critical to SSE development. Economic survival fears are used to foster increased racism, sexism, ageism, anti-immigrant as well as other forms of discrimination, setting oppressed groups against each other (blaming the victim strategies) and decrease values/beliefs in social responsibility. Fears of collective activity and socialism (undefined by most) decrease engagement in thinking about alternative economies (Putnam, 1995; Mullaly 2007; Giroux, 2017).

It is evident that the USA falls well short most SDGs and shows few sighs of positive movement toward meeting these goals. Challenges include change in social, political and economic conditions. Strategies that all these arenas are critical to SSE related development (Draper & Freedman, 2010).

Meeting SDGs in the US: The Role of the SSE Movement

The SSE movement has a strong base to build on in the U.S. This base includes: the current surgency of social action for human rights and social justice issues, often led by members of oppressed populations, social justice groups, and individuals who are working for major transformation of the political, social, economic system in the U.S. These forces struggle actively to preserve, reform and expand existing concrete resources provided by the social welfare system, and to strengthen and expand social and economic rights. While contributing to a limited extent to a number of SDGs the existing system remains drastically inadequate, complicated, not geographically uniform, politically unreliable, hard to access, and have many punitive, discriminatory, stigmatizing and other disempowering features.

Despite these limitations, the SSE movement is utilizing social welfare resources and positive partnerships with advocates working to change the system toward one that meets basic human and environmental needs as rights. (USSEN,2018, Miller, 2009). Many of these social advocates and organizations such as The Poor Peoples Campaign (2018), Black Lives Matter, National Coalition for the Homeless, American Civil Liberties Union, Grassroots and Economic Organizing Collective, have values and goals fitting the SSE movement and: a) have knowledge of ways to utilize resources of the social welfare system to support SSE oriented programs; b) have worked to address governmental and organizational policies that impede collective, cooperative means of survival; c) are aware of the critical need to develop alternative economic systems: d) have experience in working with exploited and impoverished populations as partners in social change; e) have direct experience related to social movements and collective survival efforts as participating members and as consultants; and f) have an accumulation of Robin Hood strategies that use resources available from federal, state, local, and private foundation, traditional not-for-profit agencies, major corporations and other sources to support social action, and project development.

Potential Linkage to Radical Social Work Efforts

Radical Social Work embraces the need to work toward new social justice -oriented economic, political, and social structures that focus on meeting human and environmental needs. John Longres (1996) summarizes the underlying principles of radical social work as follows: "(1) a belief that the institutional structure of society is the primary source of the personal problems of clients; (2) a focus on economic inequality as a central concern and cause of other social and individual problems; (3) a critical view of social service agencies as instruments of social control, co-optation, or stigmatization; (4) a focus on structural and internalized oppression; and (5) a linkage of cause and function and private troubles and public issues."

The on-going critical challenge to radical social workers is and has been the translation of these beliefs and principles into social justice oriented-practice and action. Intervention models and methods include development of: a) social action and policy development strategies to impact political and economic policy related to human rights and human and environment (Scanlon, 2001); b) strategies that change social service agencies as instruments of social control to agencies that meet survival needs and facilitate empowerment of clients, c) intervention models and methods that assist clients with personal, interpersonal, community and political empowerment (Paulo Freire, 1974; Gutierrez, Parson, & Cox, 1998; Delgado & Staples, 2008). Results of these intervention models have led to: a) increased participant's knowledge of the personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional aspects of problems; b) motivated participants to increased mutual support, collective problem solving, and involvement in community, and in social action activities that are congruent with SSE principles; c) strong alliance and partnerships

with social justice movements and organizations; d) strong alliance with artists (musicians, painters, investigative journalists, other writers, directors and producers, etc.) that speak to, and inspire action and hope for social justice; and e) strong partnerships with the courageous reporters and other members of the media who take tremendous risks to provide information critical to social justice efforts. Common visions for a transformed society include anti-poverty, anti-racism and other forms of oppression, anti-materialism, anti-militarism and a functioning democracy, strong support of a safe environmental, and social and economic rights for all.

SSE Activity in the US: Noting Diversity, Strengths, and Challenges

The growth of the SSE movement and related economic programs is making much needed contributions toward addressing the dire political economic and social situation in the U.S. Groups struggling to find ways to meet their economic needs outside the current dominate system worked for decades, mostly in isolation. The SSE movement advocates SDGs and builds on these efforts and brings new energy and expertise, for example:

1. The SSE movement provides a contextual framework for both sharing and development of theoretical knowledge and intervention knowledge that supports SSE projects/programs and groups seeking to incorporate SSE principles and values into their work.
2. SSE projects often provide survival resources to people struggling to meet basic needs targeted in SDGs.
3. Participation in SSE projects stimulate and support increased skills and commitment to - participation to democratic processes, to collective action, to mutual support and concern for community and for the environment.
4. Participation in SSE projects stimulates the development of a stronger consciousness of the personal, interpersonal, community, and larger political/economy aspects of their common needs and issues and potential ways to address these issues. A process that often leads to social action.
5. Contributes to efforts for structural change and development of social, political, economic system/s that adhere to key SSE principles and SDGs.

Strategies and issues related to SSE's current and potential activity targeting three key SDGs (food, housing, and poverty), currently underway in the U.S are discussed below. Work in these areas often stimulates movement in community development, increased democratic participation, networking among diverse populations, service agencies and potential resources that can assist SSE development in other areas of need/concern.

Food Projects

SSE food-related projects in the U.S. have rapidly increased in numbers, diversity and location. These projects are building on the limited efforts of food stamps, meals on wheels, gleaning projects, tribal food distribution programs on Native American reservations, charitable food banks (for example see Park Slope Coop, http://foodcoop.com/ or Cultivating Thriving, Resilient Communities, http://revision.coop). Community gardens, urban farming, farm co-ops and community owned grocery stores have grown in number and used as a base to further SSE goals and principles. A major SSE guided food project in the Boston area demonstrates the great potential of a food sharing system that is rooted in community control, democratic participation, and other social justice principles (Loh & Agyeman (2018). Many projects are developing using the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) model which connects consumers more directly with farmers. One CSA supported example is a small network of around 50 organic family farms based in Wisconsin that connects interested consumers to fresh and healthy local foods through

community supported agriculture (CSA) and with the goal of building an equitable food community-based system. By investing a lump sum amount upfront (typically $350-650 dollars/28) payment plans that, includ financial assistance or farm work for limited income households, households receive fresh produce (https://www.csacoalition.org/about-csa/). Farmers in the coalition uses sustainable and organic farming methods to minimize impact on the environment and help connect interested consumers with local farms and learn about sustainable agriculture practices. SSE organizers work to expand and assure that programs provide poor and oppressed communities with affordable, high quality food and employment in related activity as well as, expand SSE principles through out these programs.

Major challenges to food security development include increasing access to land due to increased privatization of already scarce public land, land grab efforts of large agricultural corporations, exploitation of land for fuel fossil extraction and the disastrous impact of environmental issues. Fair Food Standards Council (http://www.fairfoodstandards.org/) regarding human rights of farm workers, and their community-based development of collective efforts and mutual support are strong partners among social action groups, including the SSE movement seeking to address these issues. SSE workers encourage collective, democratic, and community development activities, as well as, opportunities to increase knowledge of political, social, and economic issues related to food issues in the US.

Housing Projects

SSE related housing efforts struggle in an environment of rapidly increasing rents and home prices, government withdrawal from housing projects, land use issues and homelessness. Lack of affordable housing is the primary factor in increasing poverty (a key SDG) in the US. Political battles to save or initiate rent control programs, support anti-eviction efforts, to eliminate zoning regulations that prohibit home sharing, co-housing, granny flats, tiny home projects, having mobile homes on one's home property, or home modifications to serve additional residents, and to eliminate policies that perpetuate racial and class discrimination are rampant and critical to SSE development (Ehlenz, 2018). All these options are critical to inclusive housing.

A movement to develop home and community based social services and for seniors gained wide support in the 1990s. A critical goal was to increase mutual support, encourage community engagement and to assure access to health and social services, as well as, recreational, educational and volunteer opportunities. Radical social workers were able to use empowerment-oriented individual and small group interventions, community organizing, and social action in many sites serving poor seniors. (Cox & Parsons, 1994; Estes, 2001). Many seniors joined in social justice work for housing and other senior and broader community issues, took leadership roles in their buildings, accepted board positions for community services agencies and developed strong mutual support networks with their neighbors. These strategies also encouraged SSE principles of mutualism, cooperation, participatory democracy, community, prohibitions of discrimination (regarding race, ethnicity, and gender). (Greenfield & Grantz, 2016; Webster, Greenfield, Lehning, & Scharlach, 2017).

Housing co-ops based on principles congruent with SSE goals are a strong component of possible positive change in housing in the U.S. Vo (2016) argues from a comprehensive review of case studies in Costa Rica that "Cooperatives bolster the well-being of their associates and the entire community along economic, social and political axes" and also found the importance of ideological commitment to joining a co-op based on affordability, solidarity and community building characteristics. The NESRI (2019) new social contract stresses the need for increased public lands for housing and finding ways to assure housing for all. Despite multiple housing

strategies including green housing efforts, advocates fighting increased homelessness find very few resources to alleviate the problem as legislators exaggerate the issue by criminalization of the homelessness, leaving the US far from Meeting the SDGs. The economic expertise of many SSE advocates is critical to finding a way to transform housing and land use in the U.S. from a source of profit to shelter for all (NESRI, 2019). Residents in poverty areas that are engaged in political action to gain or save housing are critical partners for SSE development or are now utilizing SSE strategies. While barriers are tremendous, geographically based housing struggles also provide a strong opportunity for community based engagement in social/economic /political justice efforts.

Income Strategies

Social action to increase and or maintain Social Security, Food Stamps and other food related provision through all levels of the government, NGOs, and the private sector is being supplemented by SSE oriented strategies. Income strategies that have potential to alleviate poverty and can to be linked to SSE movement include: income that can be generated from food and housing projects suggested above; self-employed worker collectives; worker-owned businesses; smaller not-for-profit income generating projects; tribal owned and administered projects (such as casinos, water preservation, and green projects (Democracy Now, 2018b), unions and worker co-ops, local currency programs (on occasion used for community organization and development needs); and small not for profit exchange programs for example, volunteer skills banks/time banks, and caregiver share projects. Low-income workers, who often are not union affiliated, seeking better conditions and pay such as home-care workers, adjunct faculty members, house keepers, fast food workers, alternative healthcare workers are increasingly active in protests. More often, their social action efforts are supported by their local communities and sometimes local governments (Mauldin, 2015); Some community owned businesses are able employ community members who are strongly discriminated against such as ex-prisoners. Worker co-ops provide a high potential for creating increased mutual support, more democratic working conditions, equitable compensation, and respect for and involvement in community. The Democratic Work Institute (2019) estimates that over 200 democratic co-ops among the over 600 worker-coops in the U.S. Despite criticism from the left concerning neoliberal co-optation of a number of co-ops, many co-ops have been and are functioning within SSE guidelines and provide base for further action (Kawano, Masterson &Teller-Elsberg (2008).

Hudson (2018) in her study of worker cooperatives in New York City from a feminist perspective notes that some view worker-co-ops as primarily antipoverty solutions and entrepreneurship, versus the solidarity perspective that views worker-cooperatives as potential sources of support for radical structural change and that strong support from government comes to support the first view. She notes that the majority of NYC participants in worker co-ops are women, primarily in domestic related work. Her qualitive interviews indicate that few women workers in these sites have critical political awareness but do appreciate social aspects of the sites regarding wages, work schedule flexibility, benefits and in some case respectful leadership. In conclusion, she finds hope in the belief that much of the work toward SSE goals is occurring, perhaps outside the formal organizational structures of work sites and that worker-co-ops remain a critical base for furthering the SSE movement.

NESRI's (2019) new social contract proposal argues that the best approach to income security should include guaranteed basic income to eliminate poverty and insure the right to material security for everyone. This strategy may not be considered as an SSE related effort. It would however, be an important way to move the U.S. toward SDGs. A guaranteed income

strategy has long been sought by Radical Social Workers, however success of this strategy will require an economic system that puts people before profit.

A final income strategy that has been key to social work is in developing small worker co-op/democratic work sites through creation of thousands of not-for-profit agencies. These not-for-profit organizations that have been developed with the primary aim of generating resources or mitigating problems have demonstrated a strong commitment to democratic work place guidelines, anti-discrimination, and consumer participation. Not-profits created by radical social workers using empowerment-oriented strategies, or by the people they serve have often begun as an outcome of small empowerment groups with common issues such as poverty, homelessness, mental health problems, and criminal justice issues. Common characteristics of these programs are: addressing a critical need not met by existing income, health or social service means; initiated and often surviving with 'shoe-string' budgets that include volunteer effort, personal donations, grants from local foundations, transportation in vans, meeting space from religious organizations, government grants or allocations especially from local governments; strong personal commitment and enthusiasm of instigators and their ability to educate and motivate diverse groups in support of their goals; long lasting perseverance as challenges arouse; and, importantly the commitment to social, economic, and political consciousness raising in all aspects of their work. Several agencies only survive a few years, while others grow to strong living programs. The Gathering Place (2019) was initiated as a day time shelter and resource center for homeless women and children in 1984 has grown as a major source of empowerment and resources, as well as, has been the base for start-ups of numerous income-generating projects for homeless women. Youth projects such as The Spirit House Project (2019), umbrellas The Jonathan Daniels & Samuel Younge Institute which supports as it primary goal to: a) prepare a new generation of peace and justice workers who want to discern a call to social justice and non-violence; b) strengthen their courage, hope, resolve and reason that enable them to do this work; c) prepare them to play leading roles in public policy debates and creation of new visions related to issues such as poverty, racism, the prison industrial complex , militarism, and environmental concerns. These projects are operating with goals that fit SDGs and SSE goals and help to educate people regarding the need for structural change toward these goals. These programs provide also an excellent opportunity for SSE advocates to link with social welfare advocates and address poverty-based homelessness in the SDGs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The SSE long term goal of asserting social power over economies worldwide, guided by SSE principles described by the leadership of the USSEN provide an excellent umbrella for furthering the solidarity economy movement related projects in the U.S. The failure of laissez-faire capitalism to meet basic needs included in SDGs for many Americans materially and/or socially, and its role in environmental destruction is increasingly evident. The lack of basic economic rights, such as healthcare and adequate income, the decline of social welfare, and political attempts to destroy civil rights is gaining attention. The current power structure seeks to use this context to more deeply divide groups by race, ethnicity, sex, age, and class and other differences.

Strong but diverse social and economic protests are on the rise. The lack of a major political party that has been consistently representing workers, common human needs and social justice for all groups, and monitoring the rising power of corporations and critical environmental issues makes a politically unified protest difficult. The Green Party has such values and goals but lacks membership. Socialization of U.S. citizens over time through formal education, and all

forms of media has prioritized: individualism; support for militarization; consumerism/materialism; competition as the predominate form of relating to others; many forms of prejudice and discrimination; fear of socialism (that is diversely defined and often includes collectives, social welfare, other mutual support efforts); and a very limited sense of social responsibility for others who are outside their families and chosen social networks.

The SSE movement that provides alternative economic examples and principles and is an active partner in the creation of visions that can guide transformation to a new political/social/ economic system/s in the U.S. The economic opportunities provided by SSE is of assistance to many, and the values that are supported by these projects help to move against the negative socialization of participants. The economic expertise of SSE consultants is badly needed to further related efforts to develop similar projects.

We argue that the SSE movement will gain momentum and success through close integration of SSE projects with local community building, strong alliance with individuals and groups with common values, active support for social action organizations and activities that are addressing economic and social rights and movement toward transformation of the dominant political social economy (Simmons, 2016). The attempt above to briefly review selected strategies to address issues of food security, housing needs, and income adequacy suggested a number of areas that fit well with SSE goals. Programs utilizing strategies at least partially congruent with SSE principles can be made more effective with knowledge about the SSE movement and connection to SSE advocates.

Common concerns regarding SSE projects and related projects include: the difficulty in generating resources/capital to develop and sustain programs; governmental and organizational policies that impede SSE activities; questions regarding the distinction or balance between poverty alleviation as primary program outcome versus energy directed toward the transformative goals of the SSE movement. We offer the following suggestions and comments regarding these concerns.

1. The lack of resources/capital for social solidarity efforts is not surprising considering the powerful commitment of U.S. to capitalism and consequent on-going privatization of collective resources and monetarization of social functions where ever possible. Increased resource generation from governmental sources, despite fears of co-optation is one potential for the SSE movement. The federal government has many legislatively directed requirements for social welfare, civil rights and economic development that SSE may be able to use. States, counties, cities, and designated regional areas have diverse political, social, and economic preferences and needs that can stimulate willingness to support SSE initiatives. Collaboration of SSE advocates and social welfare advocates can strengthen governmental resource potential and the visibility of SSE programs.

2. Governmental policies that pose barriers to SSE development are being identified as projects progress in their work. For example, as noted above, many issues arise regarding collective housing efforts, even to definitions of who can habitat specific homes or apartments. Rules and regulations developed in an effort to provide safe care for the elderly, persons with disability and children, frequently make mutual assistance in the form of care sharing arrangements illegal, home share programs come under IRS scrutiny, zoning and land use laws challenge low income housing expansion. Such barriers are found in many areas targeted for SSE development. Comprehensive research to identify these barriers, and to identify the policy efforts and alternative that have been developed to minimize their effects needs to be increased and widely disseminated.

3. Challenges to achieving SDGs and the SSE movement and projects in the U.S. relating to its role as a transformative force in changing the U.S. social, political, economy through

development of SSE presents a grounds-up dilemma facing most transformative groups, including NESRI, radical social workers and many others discussed above. The inclusion of space and time for workers associated with SSE projects to participate in empowerment-oriented groups will strengthen their commitment to SSE principles. These interventions strength participants ability to link their personal situations to the values and goals of SSE, provide education regarding available resources for income, health, education and other needs, as well as education regarding related political, social, economic issues. SSE supporters at local levels can work to advance media coverage, and linkage to local social justice efforts through multi means, for example conferences, work with local educational institutions, and sponsoring small working conferences. National strategies led by the USSEN that focus on increasing visibility and public support, increasing connection to the global movement, increased research to build a stronger knowledge base regarding SSE activities, and increasing formal collaboration, and with selected potential allies provide resources to assist advocates across the country.

In summary, the SSE movement provides knowledge to support SSE projects based in part on history and on-going international experiences with SSE success. SSE advocates are also active partners in the creation of visions that can guide transformation to a new political/social/ economic system/s in the U.S. Participation in SSE projects not only provides survival resources to increase US compliance with SDGs, but also provides experience and education related to social values that counter the negative values that many in the US have accepted under neo-liberal control.

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