Biannual report
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President’s Message

2018-2019 marks the end of a full cycle for CITIES. At the GSEF 2018 in Bilbao, in the presence of all its staff and many of its partners, we took stock of how far the organization has come. What started out as the wish of a few territories to learn more and more efficiently from each other has become a concrete tool for knowledge transfer for the development of the social and solidarity economy. As you will discover from this report, these last two years of initiatives have been useful to the practitioners in the field, as well as to others looking to develop new practices in SSE. While the CITIES team and the roster of projects they are working on continue to grow, elections in several of the founding territories raise the question of how CITIES should determine its priorities and means in the coming years, and over the long term. The work of the GSEF secretariat to raise awareness of the SSE in territories that have little policy-making experience in this regard has also identified new ways in which CITIES can help systematize and transfer best practices to foster a SSE ecosystem. As a consequence, strategic discussions are underway with the GSEF secretariat to determine where and how CITIES can be of most use.

CITIES is a young organization with many opportunities to grow and many learning experiences to develop. As the social economy continues to emerge and expand around the world in response to the complex challenges facing cities, the need to learn from each other is more important than ever. With a mission to structure and accelerate knowledge transfer, CITIES remains an important tool for the future.

Béatrice Alain
President of the Board of directors of CITIES
Executive Director’s Report

Technological and economic mutations are accelerating at a dizzying pace, creating opportunities and disruptions alike in all areas of society. These rapid changes highlight the growing necessity for the social and solidarity economy to innovate and keep pace, as well as for local governments to co-create public policies and economic models that can ensure these changes are inclusive of all.

Likewise, the urgent need for a profound ecological, social and economic transition cannot be achieved without the participation of all actors in society. The social and solidarity economy which is built on the practice of open democracy, participation and fair distribution of power and wealth offers proven solutions to better achieve this transition and rebalance society and help attain our sustainable development goals.

To be successful in this endeavour, civil society, local governments and academics must intensify their collaborations and identify open, concrete and practical ways to rapidly identify and disseminate practical and proven solutions. CITIES was created for this purpose.

By using knowledge transfer as a catalyst to accelerate and develop the SSE, CITIES has been working with the GSEF, its members and a huge variety of local, continental and international actors on over a dozen projects that cross-pollinate initiatives from all continents, allowing us to better answer the needs of our communities.

We are proud to present the results of our first two years of work which would not be possible without the participation of our many collaborators and experts. Without naming them all, we thank them for their valuable support in these projects.

Finally, I would like to thank the cities of Montreal, Seoul and Barcelona, as well as Montréal International for supporting CITIES in its development. Based on the results of these two years of collaborative work, we are more than ever convinced of the relevance of CITIES and the need to pursue these international collaborations in the years to come with an increasing number of new participating territories.

Martin Van Den Borre
Executive Director
History of CITIES

In the wake of the 2016 Global Social Economy Forum in Montreal, a dozen organizations and local governments in Spain, Korea and Quebec co-founded CITIES, International Centre for Innovation and Knowledge Transfer on the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE), based in Montreal, Quebec. The founding members pledged to pool resources and expertise in order to learn from each other’s practices and collectively develop new approaches to strengthening the SSE in their territories and around the world. This achievement was made possible by a number of factors, including the formidable tool that is Montréal International; Montreal’s unique position as an international hub; the indisputable reputation of Quebec in SSE; and by the conviction of our founding members that international collaborations have an important role to play in further developing the social economy. Their active support since launch has made CITIES an ongoing success.

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Our common approach

CITIES believes that the SSE is key to the harmonious development of territories.

While social innovations and meaningful initiatives spread across the world, CITIES aims to facilitate the successful scaling of the social economy by promoting and facilitating the sharing of knowledge and good practices at an international level.

In a world of growing economic and social inequalities, threatened by the ecological crisis, more and more governments consider the SSE to be an essential contributor to the harmonious development of territories. Since most innovative SSE solutions are in the form of bottom-up, community-based social initiatives, local governments have a key role to play in promoting these projects and the development of the SSE. Bringing together local governments, social economy networks, institutions of higher learning and international organizations from three continents, CITIES supports the cross-pollination of experiences and models based on an open and collaborative approach that recognizes and values the complementary expertise and perspective of civil society, SSE practitioners, local and national governments and academics.

Official Launch

May 2018

In May 2018 CITIES, International Centre for Innovation and Knowledge Transfer on the Social and Solidarity Economy opened its headquarters in the Maison de l’économie sociale in Montreal’s South Central district. Before over a hundred guests - partners and government representatives from here and elsewhere, including Mr. Gerardo Pisarello, Vice Mayor of Barcelona, and Mr. Álvaro Porro, Political Commissioner for the Social Economy of the City Council of Barcelona - CITIES presented its vision and strategic orientation, positioning itself as a tool of international collaboration in the service of cities committed to innovation in the social economy. Its activities in Montreal were officially launched.
As urban populations become denser and more diverse, social innovation is emerging as a possible way to maintain social cohesion and quality of life for all citizens, and tackle the various economic, social, cultural and environmental issues that communities face. How can these social innovations be adapted to different urban development contexts? How can stakeholders work together to develop innovative concepts that deliver concrete, effective results? What new governance models will drive this change? These are some of the questions that were discussed by CITIES and guest experts from Montreal, Barcelona, Rennes and Seoul at a working breakfast on social innovation during the Conference of Montreal in June 2018.

On the panel, in order:

• Géraldine Martin, Director of Entrepreneurship, City of Montreal
• Martin Van den Borre, Executive Director, CITIES
• Marguerite Mendell, Concordia University, Montreal
• Jongick Jang, Hanshin University, Seoul
• Emmanuelle Rousset, Deputy Mayor, City of Rennes
• Ester Vidal, Director of Services of Cooperative, Social and Solidarity Economy and Consumption, City of Barcelona
GSEF2018 Bilbao

October 2018

CITIES was an active partner and contributor at the fourth and most recent Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF), held in Bilbao in October 2018.

The first Forum was hosted in 2013 by Seoul, the capital city of South Korea, in collaboration with its local social economy partners. GSEF2014, also held in Seoul, culminated in the founding of the GSEF as a permanent international association uniting local governments and civil society stakeholders that recognize the social economy as a key factor in local economic development. The City of Montreal and the Chantier de l’Économie Sociale co-organized GSEF2016, showcasing the collaboration between local governments and social economy actors in the inclusive and sustainable development of cities. For further information about the GSEF Association, go to: http://www.gsef-net.org/

For GSEF2018, CITIES coordinated the preparation and participation of an important delegation of 20 representatives of the social economy from different sectors, institutions and local governments from Montreal, in partnership with the City of Montreal. CITIES was also on the Forum program, making a presentation during a plenary session and offering a workshop on the international transfer of best practices in SSE. In addition, CITIES organized a side event during the Forum: the “CITIES Breakfast” brought together nearly 100 participants with a common interest in international collaborations in SSE.
In the fall of 2018 CITIES was mandated by the Seoul Social Economy Center (SSEC) to complete a series of case studies concerning different social economy approaches to primary and secondary healthcare services.

In its examination of seven health co-ops, the report offers a critical perspective of the overall situation of health co-ops in Quebec and identifies potential collaborations and parallels between the health co-op networks in Quebec and Korea.

Following the completion of this report, in March 2019, the SSEC and Korea Health & Welfare Social Cooperative Federation invited CITIES to Korea for an in-depth conversation on the innovations of Quebec health co-ops and a visit to one of their service centres. Participants discussed a wide range of issues: the impact of social economy enterprises on the determinants of health; how vulnerable and at-risk populations can be served more effectively; the expanded role of specialized nurse practitioners in the provision of healthcare; and the role of unions in fostering innovation in the SSE healthcare sector as an alternative to the privatization of healthcare services.

During our many conversations we found unmistakeable parallels in the challenges facing the public healthcare systems and health cooperative networks in South Korea and Quebec, which may serve as the basis for continued exchanges. On behalf of our respective populations, governments and various healthcare network stakeholders, we hope that this report is a source of inspiration to future collaborations between Québec and Korea in this sector.
History and Methodology of TIESS: Quebec, Seoul & Barcelona

In the fall of 2018 CITIES worked with Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire (TIESS, a Quebec-based organization engaged in liaison and knowledge transfer in social innovation) to document the history and methodology of knowledge transfer.

TIESS was created in 2013 to collectively empower SSE actors across Quebec, promote the democratization of knowledge and more generally to support a social and ecological transition that fosters a more inclusive and democratic economy and society.

As a founding member of CITIES, TIESS is a source of inspiration in our approach to knowledge transfer and remains a key partner in many of our projects. One of the distinctive philosophical and practical underpinnings of both TIESS and CITIES is a multi-stakeholder approach to knowledge transfer, which recognizes the equal and essential role and expertise of civil society, local governments and academic actors for the successful sharing of knowledge and good practices and their adaptation to new contexts.

Genevieve Huot, Deputy Director of TIESS and Treasurer of CITIES, subsequently presented the report to local actors during a visit to Korea in March 2019, and discussed with them how the model could be adapted to their ecosystem and context. In parallel with this process, CITIES is working to further the design of different approaches to knowledge transfer in an international context.

In keeping with that theme, in the fall of 2019 CITIES will be working on the transfer of the TIESS research-action methodology to Barcelona for application in the InnoBA equipment and programs of Barcelona Activa, the municipal local development agency. The stakeholder groups involved in this project include academics and SSE organizations from Montreal and Barcelona.
Since February 2018 CITIES has been working intensively on the transfer and adaptation of the model for Cooperative jeunesse de service (CJS), a Quebec youth cooperative program ongoing for the last 20 years.

Seven years ago the CJS was successively transferred to France, where it went from a regional experiment to become a national program recognized by the former presidency as a major innovation in the French SSE ecosystem. Learning from France’s approach, CITIES, its Barcelona partners and La Fabrique (the organization supporting the CJS in Quebec) undertook two CJS pilot projects in neighbourhoods of Barcelona and the neighbouring city of Sabadell during the fall of 2018. Prior to the pilots, CITIES and La Fabrique had adapted the support material and organized a workshop in Barcelona to prepare the local facilitators. A second round of pilot projects is planned in Catalonia for 2019. CITIES is using this transfer project to map, document and analyze transfer approaches to further inform future initiatives of this kind.

The International CJS program promotes a sense of collective action and responsibility among youth through guided experiences in the co-op model at the local level. It aims to help young people transform their local communities to meet their needs and aspirations. CJS is an outstanding educational program focused on youth entrepreneurship, collective dynamics and the notion of active citizenship.

The model was presented in Seoul in April 2018 and a further presentation is slated for the World Human Rights Cities Forum in Gwangju, South Korea in October 2019. CITIES will also be supporting a study to assess the potential of drawing on the French and Canadian experiences to create a CJS network in Catalonia.
In October 2018 Barcelona hosted the Sharing Cities Summit, at which 42 large-scale cities formed a collaboration to collectively tackle the threats and opportunities facing the “collaborative economy.” This initiative lead to the Common Declaration of Sharing Principles and Commitments, which integrates different urban perspectives on the platform economy and updates and expands upon a set of seven principles established during the New York meeting in 2017.

The declaration, which inaugurated the Sharing Cities Action Task Force, incorporates three new principles:
- the differentiation between platform models, depending on the impact they generate;
- the defence of the sovereignty of cities vis-à-vis big digital platforms;
- public support policies for the collaborative economy that have a positive impact.

CITIES also attended the Sharing Cities space at the 2018 Smart City World Congress, accompanied by Dardan Isufi of Eva.coop. This new Montreal cooperative platform presented its alternative to private ride-sharing applications and for a full week shared information with other social economy organizations from around the world that, like Eva, are dedicated to new ways of sharing and mutualizing resources in a democratic, fair and citizen-based approach. During this event CITIES met with the IDIT-IBERO Puebla University to discuss their multidisciplinary innovation approach to business incubation in which they focus primarily on projects that have the potential of reducing economic, technological and ecological inequalities.

In September 2018, CITIES executive director Martin Van den Borre delivered a presentation in Puebla, Mexico on public policies that empower the social economy, showcasing Barcelona’s SSE Impulse Plan and Montreal’s social innovation policy as well as the SSE policy of Rennes, France.
Urban commons:
A study mission to Barcelona and an ongoing theme of inter-city collaboration

February 2018

CITIES shares the growing interest of its partner territories in “the urban commons” and is actively exploring the concept’s natural linkages with the SSE.

Many cities around the world today face the issue of how to effectively and sustainably allocate limited resources to meet the demands of a rapidly increasing population. In addition, increasing numbers of local citizens aspire to participate more actively in city-making, in order to create “cities for people.” For example, they seek to create new spaces, both physical and virtual, that facilitate citizen participation and collective governance and ownership of urban assets (public spaces, knowledge, data, transportation, services, etc.). The dynamics of effective urban resource management and new participatory initiatives are transforming the role of the municipality in local projects from manager to facilitator, and the role of the city resident from voter to actor.

Trending movements in the urban commons have a great potential to contribute to the inclusive and sustainable development of cities. Internationally, CITIES has identified an interest in collaborations between local governments and citizens to develop inclusive and equitable strategies for the urban commons.

To this end, CITIES organized an initial knowledge transfer project in the fall of 2018: a study mission on the theme of the urban commons in Montreal and Barcelona. Barcelona’s municipal government is seeking to integrate the commons into its public policies and has launched ambitious urban solutions to which the social economy and collective projects are central. For its part, Montreal hosts several emerging spaces of social innovation, based on the notions of “commons” or “third places.” Still under development is the linkage between the governance of these projects and the emerging movement in participatory democracy. An intensive 6-day study tour in Barcelona, co-organized by CITIES and the community organization Solon, was aimed in part to gain insight into this very process. The trip provided a mixed Montreal delegation of SSE organizations, researchers and municipal representatives with opportunities to learn and share experiences with their hosts.

To ensure a broader transfer of knowledge, CITIES has been coordinating the collective production of deliverables to share the learning and feedback from this mission – ten study cases, a comparative tool and a short video, all of which are available on the CITIES website http://cities-ess.org/topics/commons

Based on the success of this mission CITIES has decided to undertake a similar study tour in Seoul in October 2019 with participants from Montreal, Barcelona and other urban centres of Europe and the Americas.
Access to finance is widely recognized as one of the key pillars in the development of the social economy. From tool design to capitalization, socially responsible finance requires strong partnerships between social economy networks and governments. How are these partnerships built? What tools have to be developed? What solutions are emerging today?

In July 2018, CITIES published its first strategy paper on social finance knowledge transfer, a comprehensive examination of the status of social finance in Quebec. Conducted in partnership with the GSEF secretariat in Seoul, this project included the production of three policy briefs. It reflects the joint efforts of experts and practitioners from Quebec and Korea and was complemented by a one-week tour of Korea by representatives of MCE conseil, RISQ, CAP Finance and CITIES. They conferred with Korean social finance practitioners, policy-makers, civil society organizations and union leaders about Quebec’s approach to social finance and its adaptation to the Korean context.

This tour also provided an opportunity for a two-day training workshop on the evaluation of social economy enterprise in Quebec and Korea. Experts highlighted the differences in our approaches and explored potential improvements and adaptations for their respective national contexts.

“Strategy for Knowledge Transfer of Social Finance,” the final report on this, CITIES first transfer project, constitutes the most recent and complete case study on the Québec social finance experience. To build upon this experience, CITIES, with the support of Quebec’s Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie, has organized a gathering in Barcelona in December 2019 on the social finance systems of Quebec and Catalonia. This one-day event will bring together practitioners from Catalonia and a representative of RISQ to juxtapose the social finance ecosystems of Quebec and Catalonia, and identify opportunities for collaboration between territorial actors in a second phase. This collaboration could target solutions to their specific needs, or to a common challenge.
CITIES-SVSF MOU on Social Economy Enterprise Assessment Guide

March 2019

On March 22, 2019, CITIES visited the Seoul offices of the Korea Social Value and Solidarity Fund (SVSF) for the ceremonial signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CITIES, SVSF, CAP Finance, and RISQ for a forthcoming publication, “A Guide to the Assessment of Social Economy Enterprises.”

It is currently being translated from the original French and will be further adapted for use by Korean social finance practitioners. Collaboration is essential to the process of knowledge transfer: collaboration between the original architects of the knowledge and the organizations at the receiving end, as well as with the stakeholders in the ecosystem that the innovation will impact. In line with this approach, the adaptation of this publication will be co-constructive, with stakeholders in Korea and Quebec establishing a platform on which to work together, share their ideas and iterate the model along the way.

Exploratory mission of Montreal’s Quartier des Spectacles Partnership

March 2019

In March 2019, CITIES and Montreal’s Partenariat du Quartier des Spectacles (PQDS) visited the Seoul Foundation for Art and Culture, the Seoul Design Foundation and the Seoul Urban Regeneration Center.

The mission aimed to initiate expertise and knowledge transfer between the cities of Seoul and Montreal regarding the application of social economy approaches to the management of public spaces. The mission also sought out co-production opportunities between PQDS and Korean partners.
**CANAL: The Caribbean North American Laboratory for Social and Solidarity Economy**

June 2019

CANAL is not a formal organization, but rather a project undertaken by the allies of SSE organizations in the Caribbean and North America. Participating groups value the impact of international collaboration for learning, teaching, and most importantly, for generating real, on-the-ground projects of mutual benefit.

CANAL’s mission is closely in sync with the work of CITIES, and thus a mutually beneficial relationship has grown up over the past year. CANAL has been able to take advantage of CITIES analytic systemization of SSE experiences, as demonstrated in June 2019 at a conference to launch a SSE network in Puerto Rico.

Another common project of CITIES and CANAL was to organize, with SOL Economics from the United States, an international conference in Barcelona in May 2018, “For a local development based on public policies of social and solidarity economy (SSE).” It brought together 60 Cuban SSE academics, government representatives and practitioners, as well as actors from international SSE networks in Quebec, Mexico, Spain and elsewhere. In addition to the conference itself, CITIES organized field trips for participants to a variety of SSE sites around Barcelona. At the same time, CANAL is reciprocating by helping extend the reach of CITIES in these regions, especially in the Caribbean.

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**FSMET 2020: Public Policy Axis for the World Social Forum of Transformative Economies**

October 2018

The World Social Forum of Transformative Economies (FSMET) is a campaign to unite the forces driving the convergence of local and international movements in alternative economy, also known as “transformative economies.”

This campaign seeks to deliver public visibility and recognition of transformative economy projects, as well as to challenge hegemonic capitalist discourse with an alternative narrative, as per the declaration of the Catalan Network of Solidarity Economy (XES), the Spanish Network of Networks of the SSE (REAS), and the Global Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) at the last World Social Forum of Salvador de Bahia.

CITIES is responsible for the coordination, mobilization and structuring of the public policy axis for FSMET 2020, to be held in Barcelona. Preparatory to that event, a CITIES delegation participated actively in the meeting of convergence in Barcelona in April 2019.
Youth Engagement

Young people today are building the social economy of tomorrow. As generations that are facing unprecedented global mutations, they bring a fresh but often radical perspective on social, political and economic issues.

They are also building new, audacious and transformative social economy projects and enterprises to which our support mechanisms and frameworks are often poorly adapted. In response to the call for youth to play a more central role (as expressed in the youth declaration at GSEF2018), CITIES has made youth mobilization and engagement a key priority.

Too often the voice of youth is missing from key international issues and networks. CITIES and GSEF are exploring the creation of an international youth network to bring young SSE actors from around the world into a dynamic space in which to share ideas, aspirations, projects and concerns and ensure their voices and actions are recognized and valued throughout SSE events and international movements.

Jonathan Leibel, LOJIQ
Publications

- The engagement of citizens and workers in the governance and management of healthcare services
- The engagement of citizens and workers in the governance and management of healthcare services (French)
- The engagement of citizens and workers in the governance and management of healthcare services (Korean)

- History and methodology of the TIESS (territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire) (French)
- History and methodology of the TIESS (territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire) (Korean)

- Strategy for knowledge transfer of social finance
“CANAL’s mission is closely in sync with the work of CITIES, and thus a mutually beneficial relationship has strengthened over the past year. CANAL has been able to take advantage of the analytic systemization of SSE experiences provided by CITIES as was seen in the June conference to launch a SSE network in Puerto Rico. At the same time CANAL is reciprocating by helping extend the reach of CITIES in the regions, especially in the Caribbean.”

— Eric Leenson, Président, CANAL.

“On behalf of all Global Social Economy Forum(GSEF) member local governments and social and solidarity economy(SSE) networks, I would like to congratulate CITIES’ trial and achievement for the last one year. This annual report could provide inspirations for our member cities to develop their social economy policies further. We sincerely hope that CITIES, as a sister organization and technical wing of GSEF, will find the best methodologies and programs of knowledge transfer in the area of social economy and innovation to match with our members’ needs and capacities. Therefore, we could see a more sustainable and inclusive society through the development of SSE in each of our members’ regions.”

— Mr. Joung Youl Kim, Co-president of the Global Social Economy Network/Chairperson of Seoul Social Economy Network

“The City Council of Barcelona considers its collaboration with CITIES key to achieve collaborative learning in the process developing the social solidarity economy (SSE) and in the consolidation of public policies for its promotion. The relationship with the cities of Montreal and Seoul and its SSE ecosystems, as well as the multiple relationships with other territories, make CITIES a strategic project and process for the consolidation, locally and globally, of plural and transformative economies, which the Barcelona City Council has undertaken to promote.”

— City Council of Barcelona

“We are pleased that CITIES has been providing diverse opportunities for multilateral exchange of each territories’ experiences in the field of social economy and social solidarity by developing collaborative projects since its establishment in 2016. We sincerely hope that CITIES can strengthen the organizational capacity and keep playing a key role as a knowledge transfer facilitator among territories through the partnerships with Seoul, Barcelona, Montreal and member organizations, At the same time, we wish CITIES to explore new relationships with more cities and organizations which are pursuing cooperative and inclusive growth in the next year.”

— Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG)

“Dans le contexte mondial actuel où tous sont à la recherche de solutions pour réaliser la transition socio-écologique, le travail de C.I.T.I.E.S. est essentiel. Être inspirés par les expériences d’économie sociale et d’innovations sociales menées ailleurs, être nous-mêmes reconnus comme sources d’inspiration, créer des liens productifs à l’étranger et au sein des groupes de mission sont autant de bénéfices qu’apporte le travail de C.I.T.I.E.S. La mission à Barcelone sur les communs urbains a été une activité extrêmement riche qui a d’importantes retombées non seulement dans mon travail mais également dans le développement de nouvelles pratiques d’aménagement et d’urbanisme à la Ville de Montréal.”

— Élaine Gauthier, Ville de Montréal

CITIES would like to thank the following organizations for their support and ongoing collaboration:

Montréal international, City of Montreal, City of Seoul, City of Barcelona, Territoires innovants en économie sociale et solidaire (TIEESS) (Montreal), Chantier de l’économie sociale (Montreal), the Concordia University of Montreal, Réseau d’investissement social du Québec (RISO) (Montreal), La Fabrique entrepreneuriale (Montreal), the Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) (Seoul), the Seoul Social Economy Center (SSEC), the Institute of Government and Public Policy (IGOP) (Barcelona), Barcelona Activa, Labcoop (Barcelona), Node (Barcelona), Coopolis-Ateneu Cooperatiu de Barcelona, SOM Mobilitat (Barcelona), the Caribbean North American Laboratory for Social and Solidarity Economy (CANAL), the social value foundation (SVF) (Seoul), Jongick Chang, Garam Lee, LPS productions (Montreal), the Karl Polanyi institute of Montreal and Asia, CAP Finance (Quebec), Solon Collectif (Montreal), the Ministry of economy and innovation of Quebec, Seoul Social Economy Network, Office franco-québécois pour la jeunesse (OFQJ), Les Offices jeunesse internationaux du Québec (LOJIQ), MCE Conseil, Xarxa d’Economia Solidària (XES) (Catalonia), REAS (Basque Country), Réseau Intercontinental de Promotion de l’Economie Sociale et Solidaire (RIPESS), the Seoul Urban Regeneration Center, The Ministry of International Relations and La Francophonie (Quebec) and its field offices in Barcelona, Seoul and Mexico City.