

# Social and solidarity economy, the commons, and transition

We close the Module with some promising contemporary pathways forward. This short 2015 video from the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) introduces “A Story about Social and Solidarity Economy”. Note how macro level or landscape factors, and the financial crisis of 2008, spurred bottom-up alternatives in response.

## 1.11 Watch “A Story about Social and Solidarity Economy” by the Challenging the Crisis movement (4:40)



**Idea Ireland**, “A Story about Social and Solidarity Economy,” video, 4:40, posted by the creator to YouTube, September 27, 2015.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6fTpAygSpk> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6fTpAygSpk>)

Also available through the Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy (RIPESS) website at <http://www.ripest.org/a-story-about-social-and-solidarity-economy-by-challenging-the-crisis/?lang=en> (<http://www.ripest.org/a-story-about-social-and-solidarity-economy-by-challenging-the-crisis/?lang=en>)

In “Navigating System Transition in a Volatile Century,” Mike Lewis, one of your MOOC instructors, provides a guide to other responses to socio-economic and ecological inequality taking place in Japan, Canada and Italy. He introduces some of the rich conceptual foundations of co-operative economic democracy and the solidarity economy.

## 1.12 Read Michael Lewis, Navigating System Transition in a Volatile Century (pages 1-17, 24 Minutes).

Lewis, Michael T. “Navigating System Transition in a Volatile Century.” The Next System Project, March 2017. <https://thenextsystem.org/sites/default/files/2017-08/MichaelLewis.pdf>

<https://thenextsystem.org/sites/default/files/2017-08/MichaelLewis.pdf>

Mike Lewis introduces the practice of co-operative economic democracy, its main features of resilience and reciprocity, and teaches us about the third sector of the economy and society—what many call the social and solidarity economy.

Lewis then presents three examples: the Seikatsu Consumer Co-operative with over 300,000 members in 32 co-ops across 21 prefectures in Japan; the RESO (Regroupement économique et social du Sud-Ouest) community economic development corporation operating in five neighbourhoods in Montreal, Canada; and the Social Solidarity Co-operatives in Italy, where, from a single pilot 40 years ago, now 15,000 social care co-operatives exist across the province of Emilia-Romagna. As you read, note how each organization works at multiple levels to achieve their goal.

To explore more examples of the Solidarity Economy at work see the Supplemental List and the video produced by Cospes and Ireland's Susy Consortium: *Economy Changes. Change The Economy. Sustainable and Solidarity Economy.*

The models and innovations that Lewis and others present are diverse. Sort through the linkages each establishes, identifying where the approaches converge and where they branch off. It is vital for us as change-makers to connect the dots and find common ground. If not, we are unlikely to organize successfully to overcome the factors blocking the spread of generative alternatives, and change existing systems or regimes.

Consider how the alignment of efforts at different levels might organize and amplify our political capacity to leverage and change systems. We will return to the politics of systems change in Module 8, but the politics of systems change is present in every Module. Each week, note the different aspects of next system movements, from territorial emphasis (local to international strategies) to ownership emphasis (mixed forms of co-operative economic democracy across different sectors). Note too the emphases on building consortia or groupings, federations, and coalitions. Lewis discusses how the alignment of efforts at different levels can be organized and federated to amplify the political capacity of each co-operative to leverage systems change.

The on the ground descriptions by Lewis in this reading introduce the style of examples we will present in the following modules. It also points forward to Module 8 on how people working in progressive projects, organizations, and networks might more strategically co-operate and federate to leverage their collective efforts in a working framework of systems change.

Turn now to the Reflection exercise, where we apply our learning on MLP, double movements, niches, and regimes to Naomi Klein's study of the Puerto Rico hurricane disaster and recovery.