



The first Summer school Social Solidarity Economy (SSE) was organized by a study group of Kassel University in 2004 with representatives from four other German universities, from Brazilian Solidarity Economy Movement (where some of us had experiences) and from CECOP.¹ We owe a lot to these partners united by the same perspective to create a strong democratic society and economy with wholistic ecological vision, cooperation and orientation towards common welfare on all levels. Other meetings followed with guests from SSE Italy², North America and France³ as well as travels to SSE enterprises in Italy and France. We travelled to Italy with Kassel university students, persons from the regional trade union DGB and from Hessian protestant church. A SSE working group was formed and in April 2007 we officially founded the Association for the Promotion of Solidarity Economy e.V.

¹ www.vfsoe.de Publications of our summer schools and conferences as well as of the ATLAS or Solidarity Economy of Northern Hestia :<http://www.upress.uni-kassel.de/katalog/schriftenreihe.php?entw.html> (from 83/84 ff onwards) <http://www.upress.uni-kassel.de/katalog/abstract.php?978-3-86219-130-7> <http://www.upress.uni-kassel.de/katalog/abstract.php?978-3-7376-0394-2>

² 2005 visit of SEE in three Italian regions.

³ 2018 we visited a textile solidarity value chain in the south of France.

We started off to make the SSE more visible in Northern Hestia by mapping Solidarity Economy Enterprises and published the Atlas of Solidarity Economy in Northern Hestia. Afterwards we produced a series of films on the SEE and the historic roots in Northern Hestia, a hilly region right at the former East-West border.⁴

Responding to the requests of the solidarity economy enterprises we initiated a regional forum, which was meeting four times a year in order to bring into contact people from regional solidarity economy enterprises, this was an experience that generated mutual information, consolidation of SSE initiatives and further endeavours to build a common strategy promoting the strength of solidarity networks and value chains for necessary transformations of production and supply in agriculture, energy, transport systems and handling of raw materials.

From the beginning onwards we cooperated with the Forum Solidarity Economy e.V.⁵ in the organization of international meetings in Berlin and a regional meeting in Kassel. Nowadays we carry out SSE workshops with school students⁶, promote students cooperatives and organize conferences. For our association education in the field of SSE is very important. To make SSE visible and to create networks even across borders is significant for democratic European citizens.



Participants of the international colloquium "The economic dimension of peace: Social Solidarity Economy" in the Stiftung Adam von Trott, Imshausen e.V. 2017 www.vfsoe.de

⁴ See http://vfsoe.de/?page_id=117 . "

⁵ www.solidarische-oekonomie.de

⁶ Film: „Self determined and Self administered“ Visit of four SEE with school students http://vfsoe.de/?page_id=117 .