



# Fostering Social Innovation in Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs)



## What is Social Innovation in SFSCs?

Social Innovations are processes that change SFSC systems by changing the relationships, perspectives, and ways of thinking and acting of the actors involved, leading to the achievement of, primarily, social goals that benefit all (of the SFSC actors). Social Innovations bring about change (new relationships, new mentalities).

## Why is Social Innovation in SFSCs important?

A SFSC is a coherent and co-operative system of interconnected producers, processors, and consumers, distinguished - but also demarcated - by geographical and social proximity. To make a social impact and enhance society's capacity to act, SFSCs need to embrace Social Innovation.

## What drives Social Innovation in SFSCs?

Solutions must be developed and implemented by stakeholders themselves. Hence, engage as many actors as possible in co-developing Social Innovation. Make sure you (a) organize special training for communication and cooperation, and (b) seek strong leaders or a small group of "initiators" in the early stages.

## Best practices for Social Innovation in SFSCs

Shorten both the physical and the social distance: a) share spaces and resources (even with the wider community), b) get closer to other SFSC members (organize fun activities), c) keep the chain open, and sell directly albeit differently (use a moving grocery), d) use formal agreements but also informal rules (trust).

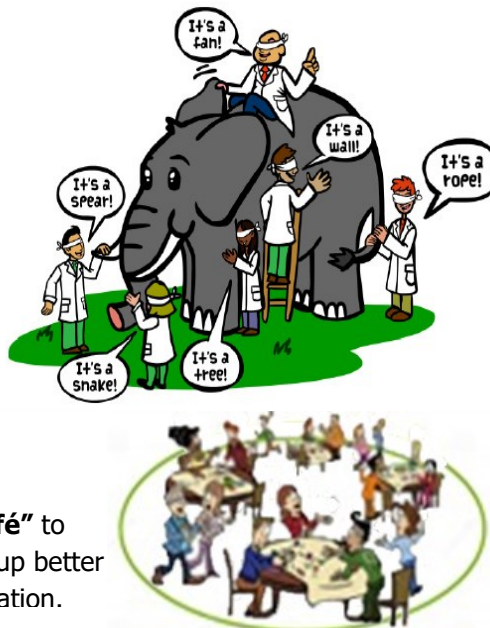
### SFSCs are social living systems

In the elephant metaphor, we can see why a living system should not be mistaken for separate parts. If we fail to see how a living system works, then we may draw wrong conclusions, just like the blindfolded scientists in the metaphor. In fact, the behavior of a system cannot be known only by knowing the system's elements. We need to have the big picture. Similarly, a SFSC is a living organism. It is not merely a commercial transaction or a collection of parts.

## Release the "Co"(too) from Social Innovation in SFSCs

- ✓ Co-creation and co-responsibility will engage your SFSC members
- ✓ Co-operation among your SFSC members will get your SFSC going
- ✓ Collective leadership eventually makes the difference for your SFSC
- ✓ Co-materialize your own future, and communicate it to others

Trust is both an input and an outcome in SFSCs / Trust leads to more trust



### Multi-actor approach

Keywords to understand SFSCs as complex social living systems



Organize a "World Café" to understand your SFSC group better and boost Social Innovation.



These recommendations have been derived from two systematic reviews, and have been validated in 12 Community of Practice events in 9 countries (RS, IT, EL, HU, ES, DE, NL, CH, FR).



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