

NEW TRENDS IN THE CREATION AND MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES: STUDY CASES (II)

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SOM MOBILITAT: a new model of sustainable mobility

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GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The case of Som mobilitat (We are Mobility) (non-profit consumer cooperative that works for more sustainable mobility) offers us an opportunity to understand the new business models that can be generated in the field of the social and solidarity economy.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

In order to achieve the previous general objective, it is proposed to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To become familiar with the differences between the social and solidarity economy and the conventional or capitalist economy.
2. Understand what cooperatives are and what they represent as social enterprises.
3. Be aware of the importance of organizational values and culture.
4. Reflect on new business models focused on the collaborative economy and platform cooperativism.
5. To know the forms of organization and operation of this type of cooperatives.
6. Understand the economic and financial operation of this type of cooperatives.

1. INTRODUCTION

Som Mobilitat (We are mobility) is defined as a “non-profit consumer cooperative that works for a more sustainable mobility”. Its main activity is to offer services for sharing electric vehicles between people who make up a neighbourhood, local entities, companies and administrations throughout Catalonia. They are born with a purpose as they express in their manifesto¹:

“ We want to transform mobility based on a private use of the vehicle into a mobility where the vehicle and the journey can be shared by networking people and groups in order to build efficient and sustainable transport models. Today, new technologies and advances in alternative mobility formulas allow us to design a model of decreasing mobility in the number of vehicles and CO2 emissions. “

2. HISTORY OF THE COOPERATIVE AND FOUNDERS

Som Mobilitat (We are mobility) is a cooperative created by Arnau Vilardell and Ricard Jornet. The project arose in June 2016. The initial base was in Mataró. Many of the original members of Som Mobilitat (We are mobility), about 70 people in total, were also members of the cooperative Som Energia (We are energy). This cooperative was set up as a non-profit cooperative formed by the consumers themselves of the product it generated, green energy. The founders of Som Mobilitat (We are mobility) have decided to follow this model: the non-profit consumer cooperative and have adapted it for the sustainable mobility cooperative. The main activity of Som Mobilitat (We are mobility) is to make electric vehicles (cars, bicycles, etc.) available to the public, which the customer can use for hours, paying for the time of its usage. By putting this service into operation, the company aims to help the sustainability of the ecosystem.

1. <https://www.sommobilitat.coop/manifest/>

Ricard Jornet is an entrepreneur and professor of marketing at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. He is one of the founders and currently chairman of the governing council and manages the strategic functions of Som Mobilitat (We are mobility). He created this cooperative because of his entrepreneurial eagerness for renewable energy projects.

On the other hand, Arnau Vilardell is the other founder of the cooperative and is currently its coordinator. For many years he has been dedicated to the management of different projects and welcomes the idea of Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) as a challenge with the incentive of collaborating in a social initiative. Together with the programmer responsible for the development of the app and the engineer with extensive experience working in multinational companies in the energy sector, Arnau and Ricard launched the Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) cooperative.

The four co-founders are professionals aged 40-45 with many years of experience and a lot of professionalism. They are not young people who have just set up their first start-up, and they could set up another project, which would also be successful. After years of working in large companies, success, good pay, and the prestige lost value for them, they wanted to dedicate their lives to something in which they could really contribute to improving society, that is, a business project with which they can identify. The founders wanted to change the world, and that's what brought them together. They were all members of Som Energia (we are energy), and they liked the model proposed by this cooperative: to cause a change through consumption. Hence the idea of creating a consumer cooperative.

3. MISSION OF SOM MOBILITAT (WE ARE MOBILITY)

Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) SCCL is constituted as a non-profit Cooperative Society of Consumers and Users, subject to the principles and provisions of Law 12/2015 of 9 July, on Cooperatives of Catalonia. The aim of Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) is to promote all those actions or projects that contribute to make all the trips of its partners more sustainable and pollute less the environment,

reducing the number of vehicles accumulated in our cities. Always based on the six founding principles:

1. Mobility. Expand alternatives in sustainable transport.
2. Community. Build together other mobility options.
3. Sustainability. Betting on less polluting mobility.
4. City. Share vehicles and reduce the number of cars.
5. Quality. Improve the air quality of cities.
6. Savings. Reduce expenses in individual mobility.

All those who are somehow part of Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) take into account the mission. It is important to keep it in mind every day so as not to deviate from the initial idea. They do so through continuous debates, collective exploration of various solutions, etc. It can be said that the internalization process of the mission, with the aim of exchanging experiences, keeping alive the strategic objectives and values of the cooperative, is carried out through four main events. These events help generate community, share experience, and define business management in the future:

- The annual assembly, in which about 60 members participate annually.
- Working day, a full day retreat that they organize once a year just after the annual assembly.
- Car rally, where the winner is the one who consumes the least electricity.
- “Hackathon”, where a challenge is launched to the programmers at the Tecnocampus of Mataró, and they give the answer to the cooperative.



Figure 1: Designs Som Hackathon 2019 and 2nd Rally Som Mobilitat (we are mobility).

Source: www.sommobilitat.coop

4. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) has its own structure of a cooperative, but at the same time works on a network model deeply rooted in the territory. As shown in Figure 2, we will go on to describe these two aspects that are important to understand the functioning of this cooperative.

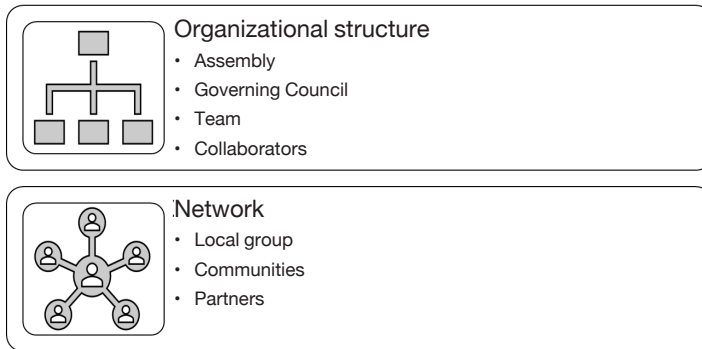


Figure 2: Organizational structure and Network in Som Mobilitat (we are mobility).

Source: www.sommobilitat.coop

4.1. ASSEMBLY

The assembly brings together all members and it is where the key decisions of the cooperative are made: one person, one vote. There are two profiles of partners: partner-user, and partner-activist. According to the founders of the cooperative:

“ The partner-user does not care about cooperative values, but the service. They come to us because they like the product, but they are not interested in the mission of the cooperative. Members-activists do. And it is important for us all to share our values. That’s why we try to educate users, giving information about our activities and collaborations. We leave “messages” to show them that we are more than just our competitors, that our mission goes beyond the shared car service. We surround ourselves with collaborators in the social and solidarity economy sector.” (Co-founder Arnau Vilardell)

4.2. GOVERNING COUNCIL

The Governing Council, chosen by the members, is responsible for implementing the guidelines set by the assembly while respecting the values set out in the bylaws of the cooperative, with unpaid voluntary positions.

4.3. NETWORK

Som Mobilitat (We are mobility) operates in Catalonia under a logic of proximity: local agents from each municipality are contacted to understand better each reality and thus offer support so that in each territory the people who live there are the ones who decide how to make mobility more sustainable. That's why local groups, communities and connectors work. First, local groups are formed by people, entities and municipalities that, voluntarily, make the Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) project take shape, grow and take root in the different local realities of the territory. Local Groups are the soul of the cooperative. Second, the communities are the group of people, entities and municipalities that, voluntarily, make the project of Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) a reality in each neighbourhood or municipality. Third, they are partners who commit to the cooperative to energize the local group of a territory or municipality with the aim of forming a local group. To become one of these partners, once already a member, she or he has to communicate it to the technical team. This is how the business model is expanding.



Figure 3: Ordinary assembly. **Source:** www.sommobilitat.coop

4.4. EQUIP

The Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) team includes both professionals from the conventional sector, with experience in commercial companies and large corporations, as well as those in the third sector, who form or were part of other cooperatives, sustainable companies, and entities of the social and solidarity economy. This approach is in the hybrid profile of the team, which combines the economic axis with the axis of sustainability, and helps the company achieve its economic and environmental objectives.

4.5. COLLABORATORS

Finally, the collaborators are the ones who help the cooperative to grow and develop, but without being part of the fixed team of the cooperative. They are very important for Som Mobilitat (we are mobility), as they share their experiences, help in key decision-making and in the integration of the cooperative into the network of the social and solidarity economy.

5. INTERCOOPERATION AND ALLIANCES

The company Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) is participating in the field of shared and sustainable transport throughout Europe. This company has participated in the constitution and is part of RESCoop Mobility, the first network of European mobility electric cooperatives (with renewables) shared. It has also signed an agreement with Partago, a Belgian electric vehicle cooperative, to share a technological platform and create a second-tier entity that governs and oversees technological development. This entity is open to all cooperatives that want to share electric mobility technology. The company collaborates with the global movement of Ouishare people and entities that work to give a social sense to the sharing economy.

Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) does not want to stick with it, wants to improve, open and share the platform with all the electric mobility cooperatives in Europe to create together a shared electric mobility network that allows us travel around the continent sharing electric vehicles.

Nowadays, there are already five cooperatives that have joined the project to share their best practices and technology. But they need help to continue funding the development of the shared electric mobility platform for European cooperatives.

If electric mobility cooperatives progress together, under the same technological umbrella, sharing digital tools, good practices, products and knowledge, surely they could build a successful project that, rooted in the territory and creating community, it will help to structure innovations in mobility from a social perspective and in a sustainable way.

6. FINANCING AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

At the start of the company, in 2016, the project of an initial investment was made by the founders Arnau and Ricard, and consisted of the purchase of five cars, doing a test in the city of Mataró.

As the number of members of the cooperative grew, a portal was opened in which people could become partners with the contribution of 10 euros to the share capital of the company.

Another source of financing that the company has is the option to invest by acquiring shares that have an interest rate of 3%. The participations are 100 Euros.

Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) has collaborated with Goteo, an organization to share projects and offer the option of making small contributions. The cooperative is financed by income from the services it offers, products that sell, contributions to capital (compulsory and voluntary), sale of participatory titles, grants from

different public administrations in free competition and other possible income (prizes, etc.). The company only works with ethical financial institutions.

On the other hand, through a crowdfunding campaign, in which people who believe in the project can contribute the economic amounts they consider appropriate, that is, the campaign must focus on economic sustainability in order to achieve real change in the society. Through a consumer cooperative, the founders think it is vital that the community becomes aware of how essential sustainable transport is to the world in which they live in. Since today transport is essential, it would be good to try not to leave any mark on the ground and leave as little as possible. Som Mobilitat's (we are mobility) mission includes community components, sustainable mobility and sustainability, as well as the economic factor. For the cooperative, self-financing is the key to success, and all participants, from partners-cooperatives to governing council, understand and share it.

As they have no motivation for profit, they reinvest the profits in the cooperative itself, because this makes it grow: they have bought more cars, expand geographically and its growth attract new partners. The 85% of profits remain in the local territory (where the partners themselves are), and 15% goes to the maintenance of the app and the website. Economic sustainability is part of the DNA of the cooperative, because it allows them to grow and cause real change, a change in the community itself, to engage the community. It is important, since they are a consumer cooperative.

7. THE FUTURE OF MOBILITY GOES THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY IN BARCELONA

Barcelona is a large city, really very populated, and less car lines on the streets and more use of public transport or sustainable transport. From the point of view of Som Mobilitat (we are mobility), the best option for the service offered by this company to be successful is by advertising awareness to potential consumers, who are all those who

have a driver's license. This advertising should be linked to the municipalities of each area of Barcelona and should have great support from public administrations in order to create a more sustainable society.

The way to finance that can be useful is through users and partners who use the service. These users belong to local groups that are financed through the advantages of exercising the service (once the costs have been covered), are distributed by 15% by the cooperative and 85% by local group. In this way, the advantages are maintained in the territory and can be reinvested in new products and services to promote more sustainable mobility.

At Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) they are aware that entering Barcelona for these types of companies is not an easy task, since when it comes to cars, there is a part of the possible consumers who rejects the offer simply because they do not drive a car in the city. But the founders believe that the idea of implementing a sustainable and community transport system is an excellent way to reduce the number of vehicles in circulation and the level of pollution created in Barcelona.

From their point of view they have concluded that the best way to get into the Barcelona business would be to make available to potential users, a series of electric cars parked in public car parks and distributed between the different districts of Barcelona.

The number of vehicles per district would be based on district size and number of potential users in each area. They think that the decision to divide Barcelona by districts is a reflection of the company's policy, which is committed to local groups. The aim of this local groups is to make mobility more sustainable in their territory by sensitizing and developing changes so that their movements have the least negative impact on their environment. These groups are the ones who know best the mobility needs existing in a territory and can know better which most sustainable mobility services should be promoted.

8. QUESTIONS

- What is the business model of Som mobilitat (we are mobility)? What are the differences with a conventional vehicle rental company?
- What are the main characteristics of the governance model of a cooperative company such as Som mobilitat (we are mobility)?
- Companies in the sharing economy base their economic sustainability on growth. What are the key factors for Som mobilitat (we are mobility) to grow and be economically sustainable?
- Using the data of figures 4 and 5 (see annex). It answers the questions: How is the current financial situation of the company evaluated? What is the dynamic of the last 3 years?

9. REFERENCES OF INTEREST

9.1. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ley 5/2011 de Economía Social. Gobierno de España. Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración.
- Número 410 de la revista “*Cooperació Catalana*” de la Fundació Roca Galès.

9.2. LINKS

- Statutes of Som mobilitat (we are mobility)
<https://www.sommobilitat.coop/wpcontent/uploads/2017/10/EstatutsSomMobilitat.pdf>mobility

- Federation of Labour Cooperatives of Catalonia
<https://www.cooperativestreball.coop>
- Confederation of Cooperatives of Catalonia:
<https://www.cooperativescatalunya.coop/index.php/ca/>
- Solidarity economy portal REAS (network of alternative economy and solidarity): <http://www.economiasolidaria.org>
- Charter of Principles of the Solidarity Economy promoted by the Solidarity Economy Portal REAS (network of alternative economy and solidarity): http://www.economiasolidaria.org/files/CARTA_ECONOMIA_SOLIDARIA_REAS.pdf
- Catalan Cooperation Magazine:
<http://www.rocagales.cat/publicacions/cooperacio-catalana/>
- Network of Solidarity Economy of Catalonia XES:
<https://xes.cat>
- <https://www.coceta.coop>

10.ANNEXES

	31/12/2019	31/12/2018	31/12/2017
Net amount of turnover	180.772,49	74.547,25	31.492,23
Other operating income	192.244,88	189.153,41	44.046,86
Supplies	0	-23.962,76	-16.778,86
Staff expenses	-151.731,33	-105.256,40	-23.794,34
Other operating expenses	-129.574,87	-71.413,63	-39.904,44
Depreciation of fixed assets	-50.628,14	-33.132,10	-7.271,64
Other results	3.419,22	0	0
A) Operating income	44.502,25	29.935,77	-12.210,19
Financial income	0	0	0
Financial expenses	-10.439,90	-3.351,88	0
B) Financial result	-10.439,90	-3.351,88	0
C) Profit before tax (A + B)	34.062,35	26.583,89	-12.210,19
19. Income tax	-6.812,47	-4.380,94	0
D) Result for the year (C + 18)	27.249,88	22.202,95	-12.210,19

Figure 4: Profit and loss account. **Source:** Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) Annual Report

ASSETS	31/12/2019	31/12/2018	31/12/2017
A) Non-current assets	537.836,65	217.002,32	119.523,31
Intangible fixed assets	28.249,34	0	0
Property, plant and equipment	493.158,80	204.878,30	119.000,90
Long-term financial investments	14.624,02	12.124,02	124,02
Deferred tax assets	1.804,49	0	398,39
B) Current assets	221.152,34	197.527,14	90.358,23
Trade and other receivables	160.007,14	123.180,29	75.243,41
Cash and other equivalent liquid assets	61.145,20	74.346,85	15.114,82
Total assets (A + B)	758.988,99	414.529,46	209.881,54

LIABILITIES			
A) Equity	52.718,90	63.880,62	4.134,29
Capital	19.471,74	15.080,00	7.930,00
Profit or loss from previous years	5.997,28	-15.783,89	-3.585,52
Profit or loss of the year	27.249,88	22.202,95	-12.210,19
Grants, donations and legacies received	0	42.381,56	12.000,00
B) Non-current liabilities	501.177,98	305.882,55	196.700,00
Long-term debts	67.427,47	0	0
Deferred tax liabilities	12.599,51	3.982,55	0
Debt with special features in LP	421.151,00	301.900,00	196.700,00
C) Current liabilities	205.092,11	44.766,29	9.047,25
Related liabilities held for sale	0	20.000,00	0
Debts with credit institutions	39.521,79	0	0
Short-term provisions (training, education)	1.620,91	1.199,13	0
Other short-term debts	7.996,74	3.510,00	11,82
Short-term debts with group companies	75.410,00	0	0
Creditors and other accounts payable	80.542,67	20.057,16	9.035,43
Total Equity and liabilities (A + B + C)	758.988,99	414.529,46	209.881,54

Figure 5: Balance Sheet. **Source:** Som Mobilitat (we are mobility) annual report

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Collaborating entities

