

SSEN straightening
social
entrepreneurial
networks



BOOKLET OF GOOD PRACTICES ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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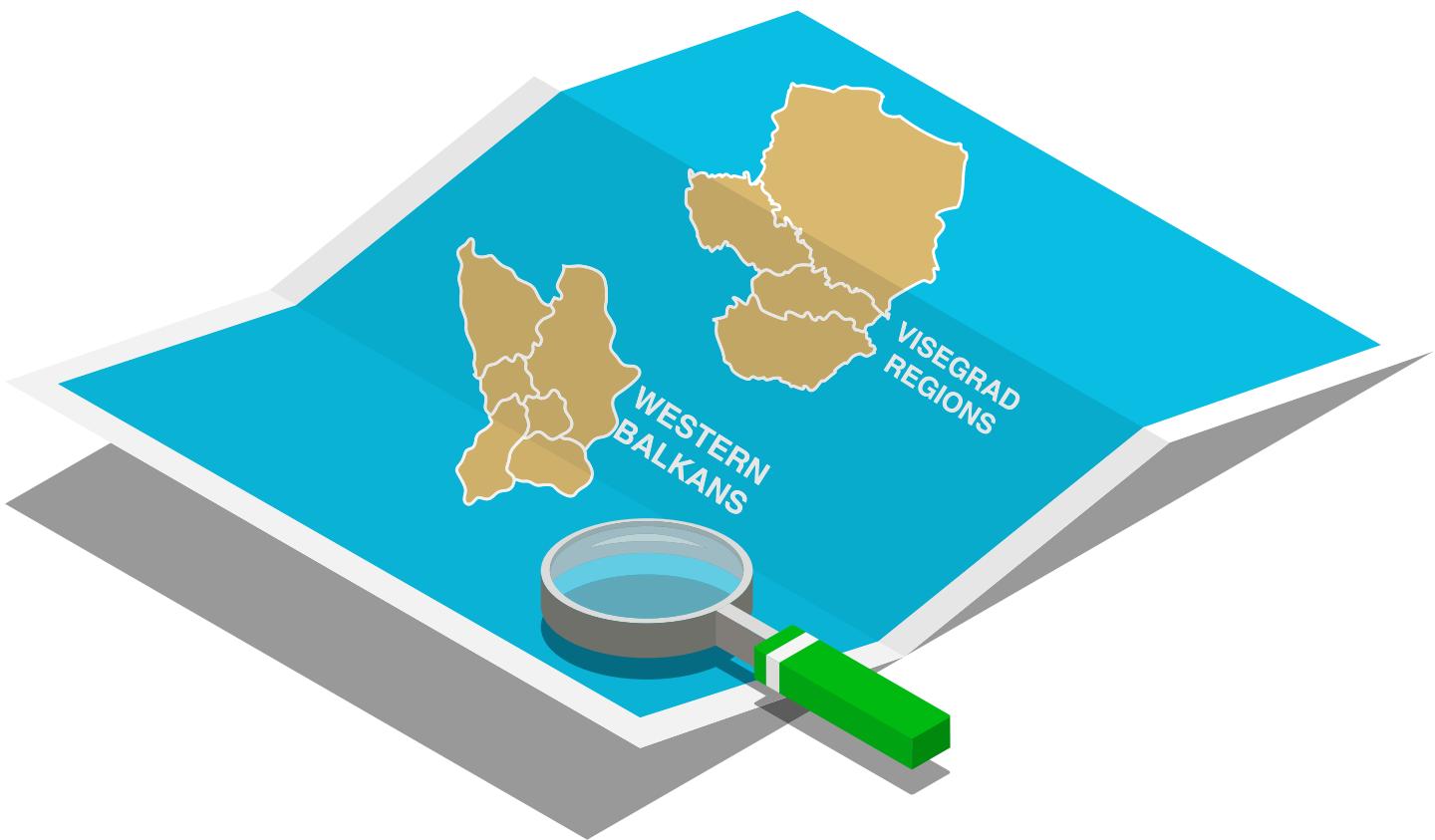
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This project “Strengthening Social Entrepreneurial Networks” has been founded by the International Visegrad Fund. The project was initiated by the Youth Alliance – Krusevo, and developed together with the project partners: European Foundation for Human Development, Vijeće mladih općine Ključ, Eurotender Association, Organization for Aid to Refugees, Youth for Equality, Initiative for Development and Cooperation, and Youth for Social Changes.

INTRODUCTION





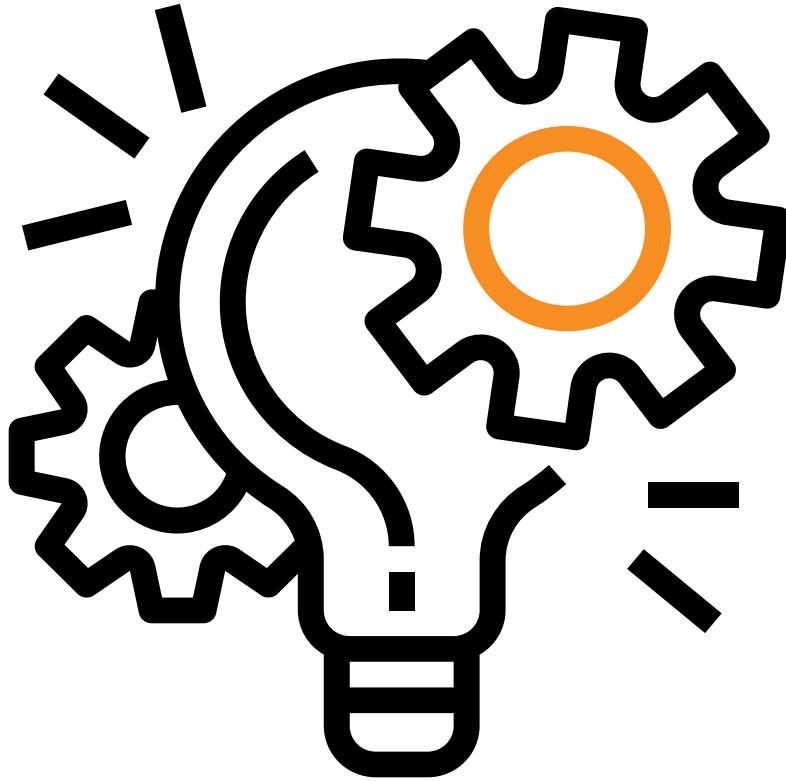
In the Western Balkan and Visegrad regions, there are huge number of social enterprises named differently, with different tendencies, shapes and sizes; from small local cafes to wider national and regional foundations. Regardless of their concept, profit or non-profit associations, cooperatives, small or medium enterprise, a clear commonality is that they are founded by individuals or groups with strong social values. Social needs are all around us and for any problem that you can think of – there is a social enterprise addressing that specific problem. Young people of today have strong inclinations towards living in a better community, society, region and

world. Therefore, young people represent a significant category in the social entrepreneurship world.

They are the future social entrepreneurs – they aspire to make positive changes in their community as well as for the people around them. Perhaps more than ever, the true potential of social entrepreneurship, which is still not fully recognized, presents an opportunity for developing our regions and countries.

This year, 2020, proved that the innovative concept of entrepreneurship is not only desirable, but also indispensable. We need innovative and alternative

approaches for solving social needs and problems, based on the cooperation and use of business tools, techniques and models that have already proven to be effective, this time with a new goal: for positive social changes in our regions. These conclusions are the outcomes of the project "Strengthening Social Entrepreneurial Networks", a 14-months action supported by the Visegrad Fund. The project focused on the lack of cooperation between youth organizations, coming from Visegrad and Western Balkans. in the field of social entrepreneurship. The elements explored topics such as: increasing young



people's entrepreneurial spirit, developing competencies needed to establish and run social enterprises, creating supportive social entrepreneurial environment for developing social enterprises as a response to youth unemployment, supporting cross-sectorial cooperation between schools, youth organizations, social

enterprises and state institutions. The project idea was initiated by the Youth Alliance – Krusevo (North Macedonia) and developed in partnership with the project partners: European Foundation for Human Development (Poland), Vijeće Mladih Općine Ključ (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Eurotender Association (Hungary),

Organization for Aid to Refugees (Czech Republic), Youth for Equality (Slovakia), Initiative for Development and Cooperation (Serbia), and Youth for Social Changes (Albania). This action involved 8 organizations from 8 different countries within the Western Balkan region and Visegrad region.

As a result of the project actions, we have curated this ‘Booklet of good practices on social entrepreneurship in Visegrad and Western Balkans’ which contains good practices gathered through the project and practical tips that can be applied by different stakeholders within both regions. We hope this will help strengthen cooperation between the Visegrad and Western Balkans regions. Both regions face similar social and economic challenges therefore transferring good practices is good starting ground for future cooperation.

GOOD PRACTICES FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP



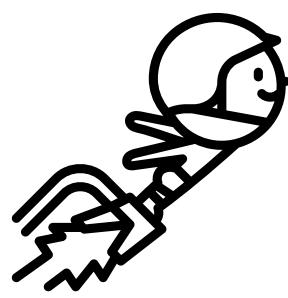
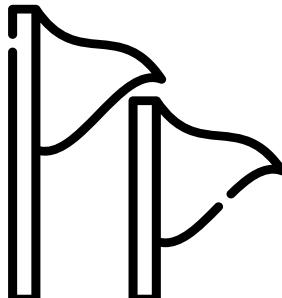
KEY LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE PROJECT?



There is a need to raise awareness and visibility about the potential of social entrepreneurship as a tool for regional cooperation.

Stronger efforts in establishing strategic and multi-stakeholder partnerships are needed.

Trainings and exchange of good practices play a critical role in developing social entrepreneurship ecosystems.



Within the educational programs, the fostering entrepreneurial skills should be supported with resources and contacts about cooperation and partnerships.

Each country's national context should not be an obstacle for collaborative actions, on the contrary the unique contexts should be a motivating factor.

Future actions should serve as a base and background for future developments.

2.1. NORTH MACEDONIA

CONTEXT

Progress has been made from defining social entrepreneurship towards functional social enterprises. Social entrepreneurship in North Macedonia is constantly receiving more attention. Their missions are strong, well-recognized and formalized within the institutional environment. The biggest problem remains in building a healthy ecosystem to support social entrepreneurship, particularly in reference to access to financial instruments. In the past decade, the country has been making efforts to develop this sector. The non-governmental sector is making good progress towards shifting to a social enterprise model. The state is slowly catching up with the trend of support, through EU funds and in line with its policies, although the situation is far from encouraging for social enterprises, which are still doing their best with their own resources and tools.

In 2020, North Macedonia is a country where there is still no official definition of social entrepreneurship or a framework that formalizes it, despite several attempts to do so. The terms related to the social economy are adopted from EU terminology. An association or company would rely on self-determination to

ascertain whether it is a social enterprise or not. Although North Macedonia is committed to the development of social entrepreneurship, it is evident that sufficient budget is not allocated, currently provisions come from pre-accession funds or through grants funded by the EU or other smaller donors. Young people in North Macedonia are exposed to high levels of unemployment and low living standards, apathy and emigration. Our society is facing high unemployment rates, as well as high inequality and social exclusion. A significant portion of young people are unemployed, which in turn carries a high risk of social exclusion as a result of their unfavourable circumstances. The participation of young people in the labour market is low. In the past years, we have significantly neglected to create opportunities for young people to participate in creating policies that reflect the entire social sphere. Formal opportunities for participation, such as high school unions and student

parliaments, were destroyed in political squabbles without giving young students the opportunity to participate in work and create education policies for their realities. The inclusion of young people in the creation of local development strategies is minimized or does not exist thus pushing young people further away, leading them to revolt and ultimately self-exclusion.

OVER

70

percent



of young people want to leave North Macedonia. The reduction of emigration is possible only if the factors that “push” the citizens to emigrate are acted upon (push factors). In that sense, joint efforts of many institutions and a comprehensive approach are needed to improve the status of young people in society, their quality of life, and above all through the realization of their employment opportunities.

2.1. NORTH MACEDONIA

GOOD EXAMPLE

“DIVE” CYCLE OF ACTIVITIES

In 2017 the capacity building project “Dive in Social Entrepreneurship” was initiated, an idea that was supported by the Erasmus plus program. The aim of the project was to fight the high rates of unemployment by building capacity of youth organizations. Using a transnational approach, youth organisations were assisted with methodologies and tools to develop young unemployed people's competencies to create social businesses.

This initiative continued with a

project called “Dive deeper into the social entrepreneurship” whereby the partners were striving towards raising their capacity for cross-sectorial cooperation - a global network of people actively involved in this topic was created as a result. In the third edition “DIVE 3: Zero to One > 1 to N” the partners put strong efforts to find the formula for Zero Poverty, Zero Unemployment, Zero Carbon Emissions in the world. This initiative involved more than 10.000 young people from

14 different countries from the whole world. Young people with ideas, social entrepreneurs, educators, trainers and activists from North Macedonia, Romania, Peru, South Africa, Costa Rica, Portugal, Italy, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Poland, Nicaragua, Greece, Turkey and Brazil aligned their forces for encouraging the young people to be future social entrepreneurs and drivers of positive changes in the world.

Consequently, collaborative tools and methodologies were produced as follows:

Comparative Analysis of the local research studies from 9 countries



Guide for young people with business ideas for positive social changes



Guide on cofounding and lobbying



WH questions for social entrepreneurship (video compilation)



2.1. NORTH MACEDONIA

RECOMMENDATIONS



• The state encourages only social entrepreneurs who take care of socially marginalized groups of citizens, while excluding from support those who are innovative or work on environmental issues. This endangers the existence of the latter or they are forced so that the social enterprise is not their only job;

• There is no cross-sectoral connection of state policies to be able to build a quality ecosystem for social enterprises, but it is only recognized declarative how it should be set up to be functional, but there is no work on its establishment;

• In search of quality life, stable and well-paid employment, with fast entry after graduation, young people do not recognize social enterprises as an opportunity, nor are they motivated to start their own stories, due to all the fog and

instability that follows these entities.

• Social enterprises are not taken as important actors in local development, neither economic nor social. Except at the level of partial projects of civil society organizations, there is no practice of cooperation and exchange of experiences on the topic of social entrepreneurship. The expected development in the community does not happen and there is no support at the local level. Their work is often seen as a humanitarian mission and is thus treated, with compassion, and as imposed.

• Increasing entrepreneurial spirit of young people is in high importance. Social entrepreneurship plays an important role supporting the employment of young people, especially those from vulnerable groups. The education system plays a significant role in preparing young people for the labour market.

• Developing competencies needed to establish and to run social enterprises is crucial if we want sustainability.

• North Macedonia has educational programs that are not adapted to the new trends, and the curricula

do not recognize social entrepreneurship. Additionally, the educational staff has not gained any education on this topic (unless the professor has personally shown personal interest in the topic). This educational gap is filled by civil society organizations through the production of their own educational materials.

• It is necessary to support cross-sectorial cooperation between the schools, youth organizations, social enterprises and state institutions. The necessity for establishing this type of cooperation is also shown by the activities of the civil society organizations. Unfortunately, they are also isolated examples or are reduced to one-time activities or time-limited project activities. What is most lacking is systemic cooperation and mutual planning of all steps.

2.2. CZECH REPUBLIC

CONTEXT

The transformation of the socialist planned economy in the Czech Republic started in the early 1990s and nowadays it is a democratic country with a free market and a member of the EU. Social entrepreneurship is gradually becoming an integral part of not only business but also of the whole society. Certain positive developments have occurred in the past ten years, mainly due to the support of the European Union. Still, the Czech Republic desperately needs a legal framework and there is overall exhaustion because of its absence. The Social Entrepreneurship Act is still pending, it is currently being prepared for the Parliament, but the current version is considered controversial by some stakeholders. There is no systematic, uniform approach to keep track of social enterprises and their financial indicators, nonetheless, there are 239 entities officially considered as social enterprises, according to the registry. In 2018, social enterprises employed 5,254 people, mostly focused on care services, and are mostly integrative. The major issues of Czech social entrepreneurship are the absence of the Social Entrepreneurship Act and a clear legal definition of the sector. Most enterprises are hybrid,



social enterprises in the Czech Republic have adopted eight different legal forms, the majority are limited liability company (s.r.o.) or NGOs operating social businesses. The two most common target groups are people with health disabilities and the long-term unemployed as these two groups receive

Czech social enterprises mostly function as small businesses with around 15 employees and an annual turnover of around 170,000 EUR, more than half of them generating profit within the last year or two (2018-2019). Key actors of the Czech social enterprise ecosystem include the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MPSV or MoLSA); several public bodies; the umbrella group TESSEA R; several regional and municipal networking and supporting initiatives; some universities active both in topical research and education; two mainstream banks developing programs targeting social enterprises; and several business incubators

systematic support for work integration from public resources. Some cooperation with universities is evident, but there is still not enough data and published studies to significantly support an evidence-based approach in the field. Public awareness and/or reasonable understanding of the concept is relatively low, although there is noticeable momentum and social enterprises are gaining more supporters and “fans”, media report on social enterprises sporadically and there has not been any major public campaigns. The creation of a national strategy and action plan specifically addressing the needs of social enterprises during and after the corona crisis is essential for their immediate survival and in the long term for their prosperity and sustainability.

2.2. CZECH REPUBLIC

GOOD EXAMPLE

Special importance can be given to the birth of TESSEA ČR, formerly a network of academics and practitioners, recently transformed into a membership organization. A broad range of stakeholders has accepted it, including the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. TESSEA covers social enterprises from all over the Czech Republic, connects them, supports their

interests, and represents them externally. At the same time, it provides them, and all others interested in the topic, with up-to-date information on social entrepreneurship not only in the Czech Republic but also elsewhere in the world. Its full members are, in addition to the founders, generally active and successful social enterprises and other organizations and

personalities dedicated to the long-term support of the social economy. In addition to other companies and individuals, associates are also many people interested in their own social entrepreneurship. At the end of 2019, TESSEA had a total of 66 members, of which 22 full members and 44 associate members.

A total of
19
indicators are set by TESSEA
for the general social
enterprise, of which
8
are mandatory.

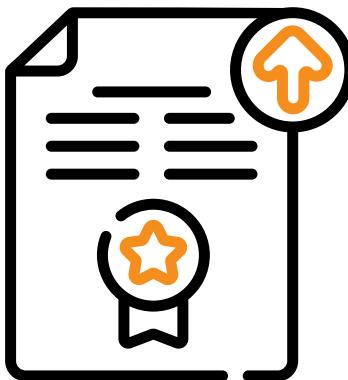
The company should meet all
mandatory and more than
80%
in total, i.e. at least
16
indicators, to qualify as a
social enterprise.

A total of
20
indicators are set for a hybrid
social enterprise, of which
10
are mandatory.

The company should meet
all mandatory indicators and
more than
80%
in total, i.e. at least
16
indicators, to qualify as an
hybrid social enterprise.

2.2. CZECH REPUBLIC

RECOMMENDATIONS



• The current number one priority is to use all available means to help social enterprises overcome the shockwave caused by the Covid-19 pandemics, as the majority face or will soon face severe difficulties. It is crucial to focus on the law and legal environment which would finally define social entrepreneurship, the Social Entrepreneurship Act is still pending. State apparatus should significantly decrease the bureaucratic burden and define its role in supporting social enterprises clearly.

• It is vital for the state as well as for all other stakeholders to keep track of developments, success, and challenges in the field of social enterprise and utilize them. To achieve that more cooperation with universities is needed to initiate more data collection. Cooperation with researchers and academics will provide data, essential for an evidence-based approach.

• More cooperation with media is vital to increase public awareness and understanding of the concept. Start-up enterprises should use all available means of consultancy as well as utilize previous experiences to decrease chances of failure, future entrepreneurs should gather inspiration from already operating businesses.

• Social enterprises should not forget that they also exist in order to create dignified job opportunities and provide a working environment of the highest possible standard according to the modern perception of human resources and personal management. All social enterprises should operate with social, economic, and political transparency.

• Closer cooperation is needed on all levels by all stakeholders to create a sustainable and supportive environment for social enterprise in the Czech Republic. Representatives of social enterprises should be involved in the preparation of legislation, policies, plans, and strategies. Social entrepreneurship strategies should not only be nationally but reach local and regional levels. Different types of platforms and umbrella organizations should be supported, meetings, conferences, and other networking events should be organized.



2.3. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

CONTEXT

Complicated governance structures caused by the war in the 90's impedes the fast economic and social development of the country. Besides the challenges in economic development, the country faces similar challenges as its Balkan neighbours: social inclusion, unemployment (particularly among vulnerable groups) and poverty.

Bosnian society is deeply divided on many grounds. Its divisions are not only territorial and administrative; less visible but equally important divisions are based on ethnicity, politics, and material inequality. As such, Bosnian society is characterized by a very low level of generalized trust and a high level of specific trust, trust that can be found among family members and a narrow group of people. The level of trust in those outside these narrow circles, such as members of other ethnic groups, is extremely low (UNDP, 2009).



Such an environment makes building a transparent picture of the state of the social enterprise sector almost impossible. Even more challenging is the fact that there is no systematic data available about the number, size, impact, fields of activities, or financial turnover of Social Enterprises. In general, the sector is in the early stages of development. Existing social enterprises engage in wide ranging activities including graphic design, agriculture, information technology, delivery of services to marginalized groups, preservation of traditional crafts, and manufacturing - **Social Economy in Eastern Neighbourhood and in the Western Balkans, Country report – Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2018.**

The social entrepreneurship discourse is characterized by several diverse and distinct tendencies such as: primary focus on social integration and employment of vulnerable groups; economic activities of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to ensure financial sustainability; and wider understanding of social entrepreneurship from the aspect of a good economy. The policy framework, while universally recognising the need and potential behind a vibrant social enterprise sector, is underdeveloped and provides limited real support.

2.3. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

CONTEXT

CONTINUED

The social enterprises that do operate are small, most have been created with donor funding and are dependent on grants. The social investment market is nascent; beyond the regional players, only Mozaik Foundation provides equity loan support to young social entrepreneurs.

The spirit of the social economy in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not new, although the discourse on its characteristics and values, currently present in most European countries, is a recent phenomenon. In one form or another, voluntarily or not, during its recent history, organizations like those seen today as part of the social economy were born in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the post-war period in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the establishment and growth of

such organizations was largely supported by international donors with goals that were more suited to projects than to the situation on the ground. Although there is no special law regulating the existence of the sector, several laws provide a framework in which these organizations operate, such as the Law on Foundations and Associations, laws related to vocational rehabilitation and work integration of persons with disabilities, and laws governing companies.

From one side legal frameworks are being established, the process is slow because the entities are trying to develop this area separately, and on the other side, they are working on raising awareness, networking actors, precise understanding of the definition of social

entrepreneurship and similar. As it is often the case, social enterprises themselves are moving forward rapidly, not waiting for the system and legal framework to evolve as they take advantage of current market opportunities and opportunities.

There are several limiting factors in the development of social entrepreneurship in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of them, in addition to the above separate work on the development of this topic and area, is the insufficient level of understanding of social entrepreneurship by the authorities and key decision makers in the country.

2.3. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

GOOD EXAMPLE

LONAC

LONAC.pro is the unique end-to-end ecosystem for youth activism, entrepreneurship and social (impact) entrepreneurship. It provides numerous and collectively crafted professional opportunities for any young man or woman in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region (scaling planned in 2019), regardless of her or his identities.

What makes LONAC good example? LONAC is offering the following opportunities:

- the Q&A section where all questions about activism and entrepreneurship are answered by peers, practitioners from the private sector, NGO and academia;
- learning materials, videos and blogs;
- peer advisory support for development of community projects;
- micro-grants to support youth-driven community projects including peer advisory support for development of social micro-businesses;
- micro-grants to support incorporation of new micro-businesses;
- investments into prototypes, minimum viable products of future social businesses;
- investments into incorporation of new social businesses (limited liability companies);
- opportunities to develop themselves and help others.

In addition, LONAC ground rules do not allow hate-speech or discrimination. Its advanced IT solution enables community oversight with easy systems for reporting of any violation of these ground rules.

By 2026, LONAC aims at:

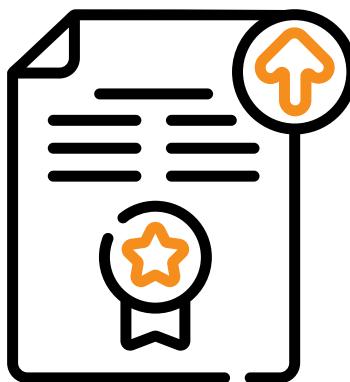
Attracting and offering numerous opportunities to at least 50.000 registered members.

Empowering youth through grants for at least 5.000 youth-driven small community projects

Supporting numerous social (impact) business prototypes with an objective to invest into at least 500 social (impact) businesses

2.3. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

RECOMMENDATIONS



The study conducted by the Center for Promotion of Civil Society within the SmartStart Project (2015-2019) shows that one of the most difficult obstacles for anyone who wants to launch a social enterprise is the lack of an appropriate framework. The lack of a clear legal framework for CSOs whose

operational models include economic activity has led to the search for alternative routes, e.g. to register as small business, crafts, or to continue maintaining economic activity for as long as possible at an informal level. Bureaucratic procedures also present difficulties in interacting with public institutions, and in some cases this leads to a lack of appropriate recognition for organizations providing services to society.

It is very difficult to accurately estimate the number of social enterprises in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to the lack of official registration data and the diversity of operational definitions for "social

enterprises". At this point, companies declare themselves to be social enterprises based on their own perception of that concept. Individual definitions of the term "social enterprise" vary considerably and hinder the general public discussion on state level. Moreover, the lack of official definitions means that quantitative analysis of the importance of the sector of social enterprises is not possible.

Attempts to create a legal framework for social entrepreneurship are welcome and desirable, but stronger political will is needed in this process.

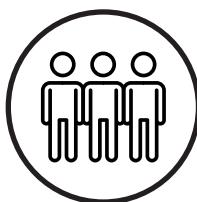
It is necessary to make social entrepreneurship visible through public sector strategies and policies (horizontally and vertically), from local to entity to state level, including through the development of a comprehensive media strategy for the promotion of social entrepreneurship:



In the general public



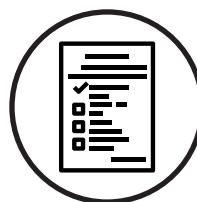
In the business sector
(private businesses, employers' associations)



In the civil society sector



In the labor market
(employment bureaus, job search clubs, unemployed persons, employed persons, business owners, employers)



In education programs
(primary, secondary and tertiary education as a special subject/class or ensure a certain number of lessons within a relevant subject or as a special training)

A partnership in the promotion of social entrepreneurship is recommended. Actors such as public employment bureaus, ministries, municipalities and international projects need to coordinate their activities in developing and supporting concrete models of social entrepreneurship.

2.4. POLAND

CONTEXT

Since the early 1980, Poland has overcome changing times in the social entrepreneurship distribution and system. After the hard times of World War I and II, and while the Iron curtain was on a decline the country welcomed nonviolent protests which opened the gate to overthrow the totalitarian regime in 1989. During that changing process, the Solidarity Movement drove Polish citizens and residents to establishing social systems and teams: in the absence of any top-down leading it was still possible to publish regularly and disseminate illegally printed materials widely and run educational services that would thrive underground. Added to that, structured group of workers and civilians were able to organize demonstrations and showing dissent thus rendering authorities speechless. Poles were establishing collective actions at a specific time, resulting in a powerful impact and sending strong messages without verbal or physical confrontation with the police.

Thanks to a growing social approach, a flourishing cohesion was rapidly born, and those growing actions transformed into complete social organization and enterprises uniting civil society, increasing



independence and consistency; through those underground enterprising channels and methods. Poles prepared their free market economy and their own grass-root and higher-level systems. The bottom-up way gave impulse to many connections, including those increasing exchange between cities and rural areas, including arts, were embraced in this underground planning – and those entrepreneurs knew how to weave their networks and manage human interaction with care and attention.

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Still today, Poland shows a particular and vibrant growth in social entrepreneurship, having a traceable history characterized in those inherited times; it was in 1997 when the new Polish Constitution was highlighting the relevance of the “social economy” while in 2004 the first kick-off to “social cooperatives” was given. In those times relevant regulations were also spread.

2.4. POLAND

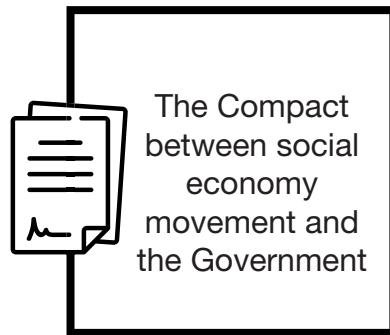
CONTEXT

CONTINUED

Further steps were taken when in 2008 a dedicated advisory body was introduced in the sector: the Council on Systemic Solutions in the Field of Social Economy (in relation with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy). The Council published three relevant documents in mid 2013:



The Draft
Act on
Social
Enterprise



The Compact
between social
economy
movement and
the Government



The National
Strategy of
Social Economy
Development.

At the same time, notions of social economy interlinked with the Draft Act on Social Enterprise along the principles of solidarity – a current controversial topic in the country. Nowadays social enterprises may embrace soft businesses

and the NGO sector. Social enterprises are often filling a significant gap on the job market and they represent a unique opportunity to provide practical and frontal competences to people. We can see that they represent a standpoint

for the country, as well, since the entrance of Poland in the European Union, social enterprises have been boosted - driven and managed by younger generations.

2.4. POLAND

CONTEXT

CONTINUED

Under the references to law and the determination of technical info, we can see that the social enterprise system can refer to different typologies of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations); the distribution can be so far shown as:

- Non-profit Organization (not operating within for profit systems);
- Voluntary Organization (mostly based on work and actions set by volunteers);
- Social (civic) Organizations understood as social aid, health care and education
- oriented for public benefit;
- Third sector.

The perception of social entrepreneurship in the country may vary from region to region and consideration if the entities are located in larger or little areas and communities; the majority of the entities are involved in different activities.

2.4. POLAND

GOOD EXAMPLE

BIONANOPARK

Bionanopark is a science and technology park with an attractive research, investment and incubation offer for companies and institutions operating in the field of advanced technology. Currently hosted in the park are: 7 innovative laboratories, 46 researchers, 140 companies in the incubator, 8 training and conference rooms.

The complex includes bio- and nanotechnological laboratories with top-class research equipment. The equipment profile of laboratories was selected in such a way that entrepreneurs would be able to research conduct at every stage

of development of their products or technologies. The devices located in Bionanopark enable entrepreneurs/practitioners to carry out various tests in one place and at the highest world standards. The research offer is addressed to many industries. Within the park is the incubator which is a community of young, creative entrepreneurs who want to develop their business in a modern place with maximum positive energy and reduced limitations of bureaucratic processes.

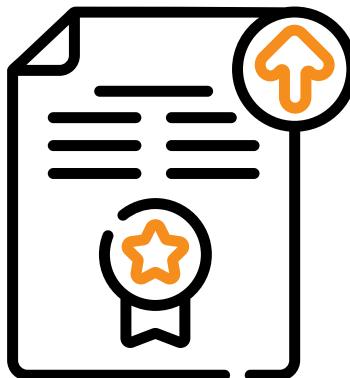
The investment area is a perfect place for company headquarters. A protected area with full infrastructure and

dozens of potential cooperants in place. The offer is particularly attractive to those companies that do not wish to invest in their own R&D units while they may outsource the research of their products to the laboratories of Bionanopark implementation centre.

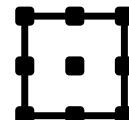
Through the investment plot they also offer free space for new business (maximum 3 years old) and can provide different trainings aimed at spearheading their development and leading them to succeed in their endeavours. Every year they have an internship programme which is also open for students from abroad.

2.4. POLAND

RECOMMENDATIONS



Looking at the future and observing the evolution and progress of Poland in social entrepreneurship, and taking into account the Visegrad dimension and the relevance of the Western Balkans, the following recommendations and conclusions will boost and improve social entrepreneurship to reach better impact in our society:



Increased budget and structural enlargement of funds available (both as polish Government per regional distribution and as for the own Visegrad Fund);

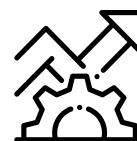
Allocation of ad hoc resources supporting social enterprises with a focus on the uniqueness of each country and its socio-historical background;



A concrete policy support embracing both financial and social response to Covid-19;



Establishment of periodical gatherings for concrete exchange of practices and know-how not limited to the representatives but extended to civil society organizations;



Development of Visegrad digital platform/s and tools to overcome the Covid-19 crisis;



Support young people and children to overcome social issues they face on a day-to-day basis;



Focus on concrete local / regional issues and boost cross-border cooperation to showcase how problems can be overcome jointly;



Provide plans and/or set of periodical recommendations and samples on how to establish and accelerate social entrepreneurship, especially after Covid-19 crisis.

The recommendations are proposed with the hope of seeing a reinforced joint system where the acquired Visegrad experiences can be translated into adaptable and portable solutions for Poland as well provide inspiration for the Visegrad and Western Balkans cooperation process.

2.5. ALBANIA

CONTEXT

The most widely accepted definition in Albania for social enterprise is an “Operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative way and uses its profits primarily to achieve its social aim. The decision making in social enterprises is based on an open and responsible approach through involving employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its economic activities”. According to this definition, social enterprises embody both social and economic aspects through running commercial activities in order to achieve a societal common good. The profit non-distribution constraint guarantees the social aim of the social enterprise.

In Albania, the Law No. 65 “On Social Enterprises in Albania” was approved by the parliament in 2016.

Regardless of the definition in the law which prescribes that only Non-for-profit organizations can receive the social enterprise status, following the EU



operational definition of social enterprises, SEs in Albania have adopted various legal forms: for-profit entities, non-for-profit organizations and cooperatives.

Most social enterprises recently established in Albania have chosen the for-profit legal form to register their entity. The for-profit legal form is considered the most convenient form of registration to operate as social enterprise due to the flexibility given for economic activities conducted and less operational barriers compared to the other legal forms. Most social enterprises in the research sample have 1-5 full-time employees. Apparently, it is difficult for social enterprises to expand their capacities and workforce as their income sources are very few and they operate without any fiscal incentive. The results show that in Albania, social enterprises apply four main strategies: a) work integration; b) fair trade enterprise; c) bottom of the pyramid; d) others operating in the field of tourism and culture heritage using social innovation.

There is an ongoing debate about cooperatives, the question is whether this form fits the concept of social enterprise based on the three main principles. Usually, cooperatives belong to social economy organizations, which is a broader concept because they promote mainly the interest of their members (farmers) and have an indirect impact on the communities, while other forms pursue an explicit social aim in the benefit of the community and society. However, in Albania particularly agricultural cooperatives can be considered social enterprises, if one takes into consideration the specific context of the country. The industry suffers from fragmentation and informality and farmers lack economic resources, purchasing power, raw materials, and distribution channels. Thus, agricultural cooperatives are seen as the only solution to strengthen the economic power of farmers, their families and rural areas at a larger scale.

2.5. ALBANIA

GOOD EXAMPLE

Yunus Social Business

Balkans believes in the power of business to solve social problems and serve humanity. It is co-founded by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Muhammad Yunus, and is headquartered in Tirana, Albania. It first started as a social business development project in Albania in June 2012, and then was formally registered in February 2013 as an NGO (named Foundation "Yunus Social Business Fund Albania").

Since 2015, aiming to further widen its impact in the region, it has expanded to cover the six non-EU Western Balkan (WB6) countries, under its "Yunus Social Business Balkans" name.

YSB Balkans' vision is that entrepreneurs in the WB6 countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia) are empowered to take bold actions towards bringing significant positive change to the society. Hence,

their mission is to enterprise people and equip entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills, tools and means to design, test, build and grow entrepreneurship initiatives that have the potential to create positive impact for the society.

YSB Balkans supports entrepreneurs and development of the inclusive and social entrepreneurship sector in the region through:

- (i) designing and implementing social/impact entrepreneurship inspiration and awareness campaigns;
- (ii) running incubation and acceleration programs;
- (iii) investment readiness programs;
- (iv) providing coaching and mentoring to social and impact entrepreneurs;
- (v) facilitating access to financing for social and impact oriented startups;
- (vi) providing guidance and implementation support to entrepreneurship development projects and actors;
- (vii) supporting development of an enabling entrepreneurship ecosystem in the region.

YSB Balkans is among the pioneers of the social and impact entrepreneurship ecosystem in WB6 region. It launched its first incubator and accelerator programs in 2013 and, since then, it has established a proven track record of activities in supporting startups/businesses with potential for positive social impact, through capacity building (training, coaching, mentorship and accompaniment) as well as access to financing and networks. During these years, YSB has implemented several projects, working in close cooperation and partnership with many local, regional and international actors, joining forces towards common goals of promoting entrepreneurship and supporting impactful and social entrepreneurs to tackle societal problems in financially sustainable way.

2.5. ALBANIA

RECOMMENDATIONS



Based on the needs and challenges identified by established and potential SEs, training programs should address particular topics such as the agility to seize new opportunities in the market, market research, PR & communication, financial management, problem solving, business plan development, sales, risk management, and social entrepreneurship;

Training programs should be designed as fully-fledged packages including workshops, mentoring, coaching, networking and funding opportunities;



Introduction of social enterprises to national and international networks aiming to have better and organized advocacy initiatives related to the challenges concerning social enterprises' sector.

More cross-sectoral activities among donors, social enterprises, businesses, and public institutions should be organized with the main purpose to expand the opportunities for concrete investments in SE sector.

2.6. SLOVAKIA

CONTEXT



In Slovakia, social entrepreneurship has a legal framework governed by Act 112/2018 on the social economy and social enterprises and on the amendment of certain laws since 13.3.2018 and on the amendment version legit until 31.12.2020. The definitions used in this country for the social entrepreneurship are:



A positive social impact for the purposes of this act is the fulfilment of public interest, or community interest.



Provision of socially beneficial services for society, or for an unlimited circle of natural persons, provision of socially beneficial services to disadvantaged, or vulnerable persons and provision of socially beneficial services.



Provision of social services for a group of persons, which can be delimited and identified according to territorial, membership, interest or other objective criteria, except the provision of social services to disadvantaged, or vulnerable persons and social services.

In general, a solid framework for social entrepreneurship exists in Slovakia, but the methods and support systems are not sufficient. Bureaucracy and problematic administration are slowing down RC SE- Regional Centers for Social Entrepreneurship and so they need help from other companies.

According to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic proportion of the social enterprises by region is as follow:

30,27%
(67 subjects)

West Slovakia region

29,82%
(65 subjects)

Middle Slovakia region

39,91%
(87 subjects)

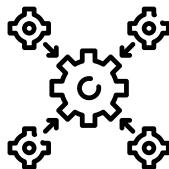
East Slovakia region

2.6. SLOVAKIA

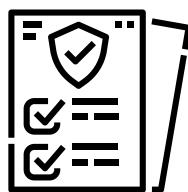
CONTEXT

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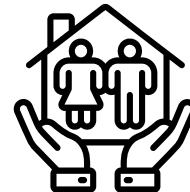
The government recognizes 3 kinds of social entrepreneurship:



integration enterprise =
percentage of employees are
disadvantaged and vulnerable
persons (min. 30% of total
labour)



general registered social
enterprise = social, cultural, or
educational purpose



housing social enterprise
= provision of housing,
administration, maintenance and
renewal of the housing stock

The most common model, among all established social enterprises in 2019, became a municipal social enterprise with 100% participation of the municipality. This type of social enterprise has become extremely popular in the self-government of towns and municipalities. This is also because the municipalities themselves are not in need of potential employees, build on their own experience from previous projects and know which services burden the budget the most. This is also the reason why these companies are dominated by construction work and cleaning work. It is these that are not only reducing local unemployment, but also easing general budgets. In addition, trade between social enterprises is more advantageous due to the reduced VAT rate and therefore they can offer their services at lower end prices without having to go the way of reducing quality. This makes them an ideal solution for how the municipality can provide, at its own expense, for example, various construction and reconstruction works on buildings, which it manages itself. It also has great potential to succeed in the fight for new contracts and to cover the demand for this type of services in the surrounding municipalities.

2.6. SLOVAKIA

GOOD EXAMPLE

OBECNÉ SLUŽBY RASLAVICE s.r.o. (Municipal services Raslavice, Ltd.)

The municipality of Raslavice is located in the Bardejov District in eastern Slovakia.

The municipality counts

2 700

inhabitants,
of which approximately

600

are Roma people.

The rate of registered
unemployment in the
district is

16.2%.

Obecné služby Raslavice, s.r.o. was founded in May 2015 as a municipal enterprise, with the municipality of Raslavice acting as a 100% shareholder. The enterprise's main objectives include support of the municipality and the creation of job opportunities for difficult-to-employ groups of the population. The business focuses on activities in

construction and agriculture. For the purposes of its construction activities, the municipal enterprise employs 11 full-time employees. The wages of 8 of these employees are subsidised under active market policies, the remaining three wages are paid from revenues from the company's own activities. The primary client of the construction team is the municipality itself, but also local inhabitants, who order small makeovers.

For the purposes of its agricultural activities, the municipal enterprise employs 12 employees, mostly Roma women, 11 of whose wages are subsidised. As part of its agricultural activities, the enterprise farms on rented soil and grows vegetables in BIO quality. In 2016, it produced 100 tons of vegetables, which it supplied to the school cafeteria and to a canteen. The vegetables are also sold to

locals. At present, the municipal enterprise invested in the construction of a large-capacity polytunnel, which will allow it to extend its range of vegetable products. The business model has been conceived so as not to be based on seasonal employment so typical for businesses active in construction and agriculture. During the winter months, the construction team completes projects in interiors, while agricultural employees are engaged in vegetable processing and preparatory works.

2.6. SLOVAKIA

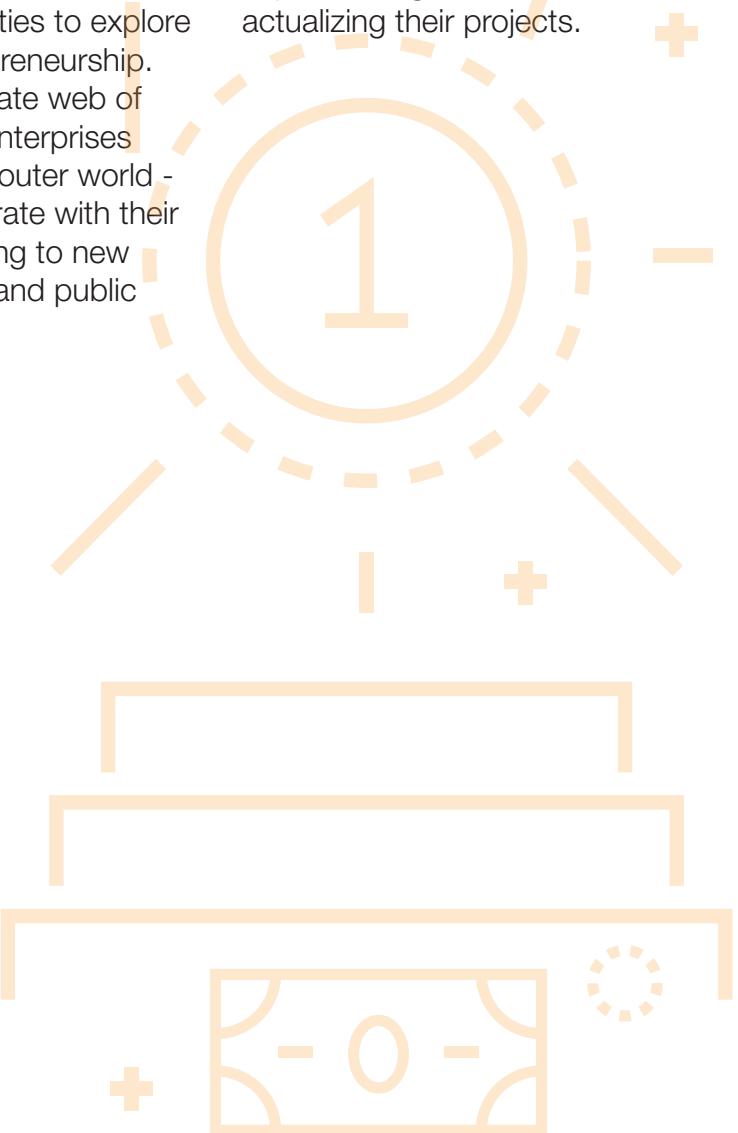
RECOMMENDATIONS



Slovak Republic has strong legislation borders, yet we have problems with bureaucracy, administration and corruption, where population values are at fault, created by the state as well. Slovak Republic has more funds from the EU at their disposal to use, with that said, there is a lack of methodology development and education in social entrepreneurship.

In Slovakia, people are avoiding using many financial tools, because they can not use them, or they are not created so, that they can apply for them, this stems from legislative and institutional failure. Avoidance of these tools could also be a result of mismanagement or lack of management skills, nonetheless we still see a space created that has led municipalities to explore local social entrepreneurship. After creating a state web of municipal social enterprises connected to the outer world - they could cooperate with their local NGOs, leading to new job opportunities and public relations.

The frame for this already exists through regional centres of social entrepreneurship, so we have to make them cooperate so that activities in local areas can be well-coordinated, and drive efforts towards engendering new possibilities for the common good and supporting people when implementing their ideas and actualizing their projects.



2.7. SERBIA

CONTEXT

Social entrepreneurship is a relatively new phenomenon in the Serbian economy, in both the theoretical and practical sense. Social entrepreneurship is rooted in some of the economic forms from early social-economic systems but it was introduced under this name and as a defined concept after the political and social changes during the 2000s. There are two known reasons for the recognition of the social entrepreneurship and the visibility of social enterprises in Serbia after year 2000. The first reason is the increase in social needs of the citizens who were left out due to the political, regional and economic problems in the previous decade. The transition from a socialist state-led economy to the open market and democratic state created the gap between the scope of the needs of the citizens and

the available capacities which led towards the emergence of new models of providing social services and support to socially vulnerable groups. These models of economic activity required a skilful combination of prominent social goals, available resources and appropriate organizational solutions, thus qualifying themselves as social enterprises. Another reason for the recognition of social entrepreneurship in Serbia has been as a result of transformation of social policy in the European Union (EU). As the EU, with its donations and set standards to the candidate countries, has the greatest influence on the course of social policy transformation in Serbia, the development of social enterprises has been promoted as an important means of helping socially vulnerable citizens, following the

requirements set by the EU for Serbia as a candidate country.

There are two paths to take if you engage in social entrepreneurship in Serbia. One is to adhere to the known legal framework recognized by the legal system in Serbia, but can provide space for development of social entrepreneurship initiatives. It involves cooperatives and work integration social enterprises for persons with disabilities. The other path is rooted in the recent post socialist transformation of economy and social protection system which was introduced in Serbia with a certain delay compared to the other post socialist countries.



2.7. SERBIA

CONTEXT

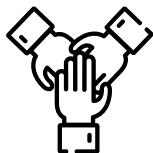
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Social enterprises are mentioned in the Strategy for the Support of SMEs and Entrepreneurship (2015-2020) where development and promotion of entrepreneurial spirit is mentioned as well as encouraging entrepreneurship of women, young people, as well as social entrepreneurship. However, there is no legal act regulating social entrepreneurship, despite the efforts of social enterprises to prove the need for legally defining the sector in order to attract more investors and stakeholders in general. Since the 2012 the relevant

ministry (currently Ministry of labour, employment, veteran and social affairs) initiated several working groups with experts and relevant stakeholders with the aim of creating a legal framework for social entrepreneurship since this is seen as a first step in the development of a healthy and prosperous social economy ecosystem. The draft of the Law on social entrepreneurship was only finalized by the working groups in partnership with government representatives in 2019. Although government officials agreed on the draft,

it was never presented to the National Assembly due to the fact that the Minister of labour, employment, veteran and social affairs was against it, stating that the draft was unfairly favourable to civil society organisations (CSO), giving them the freedom to make a profit through social entrepreneurship activities. Should this draft be adopted by the new Assembly, all existing forms of social entrepreneurship will be recognized, so there will be no need for reregistering or changing the registration of the economic activity.

The following types of social enterprises are recognised in the Serbian social economy ecosystem:



Cooperatives



Enterprises for work integration and professional rehabilitation of persons with disabilities



Association of citizens and foundations (non-profit organisations)



Limited liability companies and joint-stock companies (usually a spin-offs of the non-profit organisation or business incubators)

2.7. SERBIA

CONTEXT

CONTINUED

On the government side we have the relevant ministry that has been involved in the process of structuring the ecosystem - Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, and other governmental bodies such as Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) which provided great amount of support to the relevant actors in social economy. It is also important to highlight the importance of the work of National Employment Service which implements programmes for active employment of vulnerable groups through subsidies and trainings, then Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Economy with their support mechanisms for development of (youth) entrepreneurship.

On the side of civil sector, the most prominent stakeholders are the Coalition for Solidarity Economy Development (CoSED), having been active for more than 10 years advocating for a better legal framework and promoting social entrepreneurship, while also working on the research and analysis of the ecosystem. Social Economy Network Serbia (SENS) was the first ever network of social enterprises initiated by several civil society organisations in order to provide structural support to the enterprises and provide them with the base for networking, exchange of experiences and knowledge and peer-to-peer support. Smart Kolektiv is also one of the prominent actors in

the ecosystem who has been providing expert support directly to the social enterprises mostly on business development and financial matters. In 2019, Smart Kolektiv launched the Fund for the Development of Sustainable Economy with the aim of providing permanent and adequate professional and financial support to companies with a strong social impact. In the next 5 years, the Fund will invest around half a million euros in initiatives through an innovative financial instruments and professional support.

2.7. SERBIA

GOOD EXAMPLE

SUPER BAKE

Super Bake is a social solidarity enterprise initiative where retired senior ladies prepare authentic homemade cakes and pastry, not only to earn extra income but also to enrich their social lives.

The group of senior ladies and grannies has joined together with an idea to share their delicious sweets with the community. The Super Bake concept is reviving the childhood experience of visiting the homes of beloved grandmas where they made and served the most delicious homemade treats prepared with love. It is a workshop for baking authentic homemade cakes, sweets and other desserts using authentic, decades and sometimes even a couple of generations old recipes. The goal of this solidarity initiative and workshop is to develop into a self-sustainable cake shop in the centre of Belgrade. When it all started, people from the local community, 160 of them,

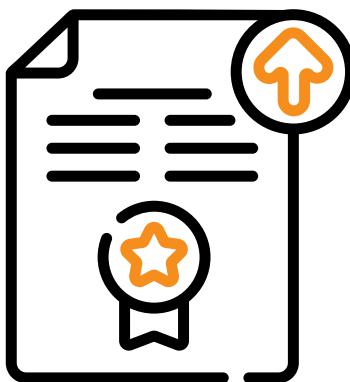
invested in the project through a crowdfunding campaign in an exchange for vouchers for cookies and cakes they would receive once the workshop opens.

From the beginning, senior ladies have been at the centre of the “Super Grandma” project as it is a place where they can demonstrate, share and improve their skills in making homemade pastry. Since senior citizens are often excluded from social life, the idea behind this social enterprise aims to engage them, in accordance with their abilities, and enable them to earn extra money and socialize not only among each other but with the local community. There is an interesting explanation behind the name “Super Bake.” In Serbian, “bake” is the plural of “grandma,” so the name of the enterprise in Serbian means Super Grannies. The English meaning is more obvious.

Most young people, whose grandmothers and grandfathers have passed away, do not have any contact with seniors. They want to change that! Therefore, at Super Bake, cakes are made by grannies, and younger people help and work hard to make the whole project evolve. This connection between grannies and young people proves it's possible to achieve a lot of things when we join in solidarity, that our differences (only age differences, in our case) do not separate us but bring us together, make us stronger, better, and that we are creating a better environment for all of us together.

2.7. SERBIA

RECOMMENDATIONS



The modest economic and social impact of social enterprises is imminent, despite of the unfavourable environment in which social enterprises operate. An ideal environment for social enterprises is setup on available resources that bring about the success of achieving their social goal - solving certain problems in the local community. The most important resources for social enterprises are people and networks. Another important resource is the legal-institutional framework, on which the success of the use of the previously mentioned resources, directly and indirectly related to a social enterprise, depends. The more sensitive, flexible and open the environment to solve local problems, the greater the chance of social enterprises operating successfully in the community. As the environment of social enterprises in Serbia is inadequately regulated and not sufficiently stimulating, actors

operating in the sector have a limited scope of action except for social enterprises, which are driven by strong motivation yet often display a lack of adequate management skill. Therefore, advocacy organizations in this area are a significant resource for social enterprises. In addition to policy knowledge, these organizations, such as those in the Coalition for the Development of Solidarity Entrepreneurship, provide financial and support in the form of developing knowledge and skills and advocating for a more stimulating environment for the development of social entrepreneurship. Other important actors are public administration bodies (national, regional and local institutions), financial institutions and the economy. Their task is to create incentive policies, map needs, design support measures (financial or non-financial), as well as to encourage cooperation between different entities in order to encourage the production of goods and services, and thus influence development economic and social capital. Public institutions in Serbia have insufficient knowledge of the concept and practice, and even if they are familiar, they have a clear way to contribute to the sector and most often consider it only

as an instrument for reducing unemployment. The private sector (financial institutions and entrepreneurs), on the other hand, has little knowledge of social entrepreneurship and could also be involved in the development of the sector through the production and sale of services and goods in cooperation with social enterprises. A key obstacle to the development of the sector has been identified in the non-incentivizing legal and institutional framework. Since social entrepreneurs have been driven by personal motives and the eagerness to bring positive changes to their communities, there have been significant developments in the sector of social economy in the past few decades in Serbia, even though the institutional and legal framework, as well as the business environment have not been supportive towards the pioneers in the social economy ecosystem. The civil sector has provided great support to the development of social entrepreneurship. However as we have seen, this is not enough to create a prosperous environment for the development of social entrepreneurship. It is evident that there is huge room for progress in the development of different aspects of social economy.

2.8. HUNGARY

CONTEXT

The concept and phenomenon of social entrepreneurship is quite new in Hungary. The concept of social enterprise and social entrepreneur first appeared in Hungary in the second half of the 1990s and in the first half of the 2000s, when US-based international non-governmental organisations and foundations (Ashoka in 1995 and NESsT in 2001) began their activities in the country. The roots of social enterprises lie in voluntary, non-profit, civil society organisations, such as associations and foundations, the history of which goes back centuries.

In Hungary, the various actors in the social enterprise ecosystem do not employ an unanimous definition of social enterprise. No specific law acknowledges and regulates social enterprises in Hungary, therefore they make use of the regulations related to the various legal forms related to other entities (e.g. association, foundation, nonprofit company or social cooperative) and the public benefit activities.

In terms of fields of activity, recent research demonstrates that social entrepreneurial missions are mainly linked to work integration, improving the livelihoods of disadvantaged groups, local development and environmental protection. The main sources of income for potential social enterprises with non-profit legal forms come from core activity revenue and business revenue; the rate of state support, private support and other revenue measures significantly lower.

As of 2018,

212

organisations

(110 social cooperatives, 40 non-profit companies, 35 associations, 26 foundations and 1 church organisation) already qualified as social enterprises in the PiacTárs (MarketPartner) Online Prequalification.



2.8. HUNGARY

CONTEXT

CONTINUED

Key actors in the social enterprise ecosystem in Hungary:

- Governmental departments/institutions:

Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Human Capacities; Prime Minister's Office; Ministry of Agriculture; Regional and local authorities.

- Authorities designing and enforcing public procurement legislation:

Public Procurement Authority; Directorate-General for Public Procurement and Supply; Ministry for National Development and Prime Minister's Office.

- Public background institutions:

National Employment Public Benefit Non-profit Ltd; IFKA Public Benefit Non-Profit Ltd. for the Development of Industry; Foundation for Small Enterprise Economic Development.

Social enterprises usually cooperate within the same fields of activity. They have also established certain federations advocating for legal forms. The National Federation of Social Cooperatives (SzoSzöv), founded in 2010, contains

44-member organisations and aims to represent social cooperatives, provide networking opportunities, and promoting the model. The National Federation of Charity Shops (ADSZ), founded in 2014, contains 10 organisations that

work on the legal background for charity shops and help organisations wishing to open a charity shop. The Hungarian Social Farm Federation, established in 2016, provides social farms with a legally recognised status in Hungary.

2.8. HUNGARY

GOOD EXAMPLE

ROUTE4U

Route4U is a for-profit company whose social mission is to enable transport with fewer challenges. To this end, it has developed the world's first road planner app, using sidewalks and pedestrian crossing information, provided personalised, door-to door navigation for people using wheelchairs, strollers, or any other rolling device. It also makes data concerning

the accessibility of cafés, restaurants, public buildings and other public places available in the Route4U application and map.

Péter Bodó, the inventor of the idea, receives help from marketing, cartography and PR experts in his team. At the same time, Route4U represents a genuine community initiative, as the information on

the map receives automatic updates from the application's users. The implementers also cooperate with local authorities and organisations to make information accessible to anyone. Several forums have recognised the initiative, and it received the first prize in the regional finals of the American 1776 Challenge Cup Social Innovation Start-up Competition.



2.8. HUNGARY

RECOMMENDATIONS

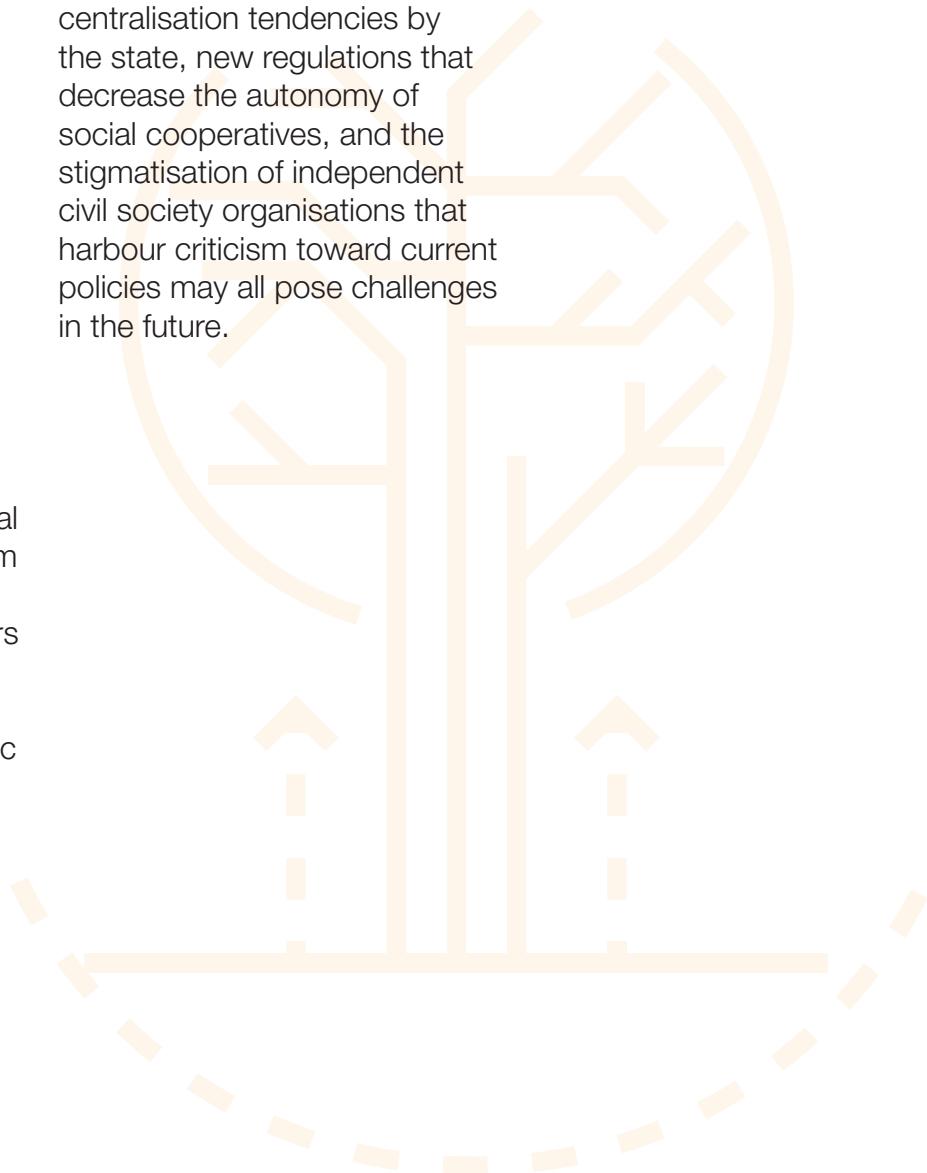


Though the concept of social enterprise seemed foreign for a long time to policy-makers, today a number of state initiatives support their development.

Public services are rarely outsourced and the role of social enterprises in the welfare system in Hungary mainly focuses on work integration. Various barriers and opportunities have shaped how social enterprises develop, in relation to the state and public policies, civil society and the non-profit sector, conventional enterprises and cooperatives, the European Union as well as international and domestic actors in the ecosystem.

Today, a few trends provide opportunities for growth while others pose limits: the increase in public (EU co-financed)

funding, growing interest and new actors entering the ecosystem seem to be providing a space for the development of social enterprises. Meanwhile, centralisation tendencies by the state, new regulations that decrease the autonomy of social cooperatives, and the stigmatisation of independent civil society organisations that harbour criticism toward current policies may all pose challenges in the future.



**TOOLS USED BY BOTH REGIONS TO PROMOTE SOCIAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG THE YOUNG PEOPLE**



3.1. FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Entrepreneurship is introduced in the countries in both regions, Western Balkan and Visegard, in primary and secondary education programs at a basic level and without a specific focus on development of entrepreneurial mind-set, competencies and skills; hence, there are no success stories.

In some countries within these regions, implementation of specific courses or programs in the tertiary education system has already been established. On the other hand, in all countries reached by the initiative “Straightening Social Entrepreneurial Network” there are many non-formal educational

opportunities provided by development international organizations or existing social/youth entrepreneurship support local structures. In the next section, we will share a variety of good examples of educational programs from different countries.

3.1. FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CONTINUED

The authors of this booklet have selected the entrepreneurial learning methodology of University American College Skopje (UCAS) as a good educational example originating from North Macedonia. The UCAS curriculum includes dedicated learning on social entrepreneurship including modules such as: social innovations, basics of social entrepreneurship, international and local social business, funding models and schemes for social business. There is an example of a mechanism to facilitate the teaching of entrepreneurship education in the Czech Republic. Teachers are able share their experiences, as well as their practice-based teaching methods, using a special internet forum, the ‘Methodological portal’, which also covers other subject areas. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the program “I Have an Idea” provided students from three universities from Banja Luka, Sarajevo and Mostar an opportunity to submit their business ideas either individually or as a student team. The program assists students to

turn their ideas into concrete business plans in a specialized practical training courses provided at their universities. In Poland, we found a very interesting example, ‘Lifelong Learning Perspective’ strategy, which is a two-part strategic objective to develop skills and practical learning to support employability. There is also a broader emphasis on creativity and innovation within the strategy. Regarding educational programs in Albania, there is a social entrepreneurship program presented in the faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Tirana. Slovakia has the strongest efforts towards education and social entrepreneurship, being funded through the ‘Strategy for Youth 2014-2020’. This strategy highlights creativity and entrepreneurship as one of the nine priorities for young people, breaking this down into four strategic objectives with 13 supporting actions. In Serbia, the Business Innovation Program has been implementing the ‘Pupil Entrepreneurship programme’.

A total number of

212

secondary schools from all over Serbia participated in the programme, with

441

teachers and

6.456

students who formed

1.387

student companies.

Finally, in Hungary the National Core Curriculum defines 12 cross-curricular aims, amongst which, three are related to entrepreneurship education: taking responsibility for others through volunteering; career guidance and developing financial literacy.

3.2. NETWORK OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACTORS

ACTORS IN THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FIELD



Government:
national, regional, local



Business:
business and financial institutions



Social sector:
social enterprises, NGOs, employee associations and cooperatives



Academia:
Universities and research institutions



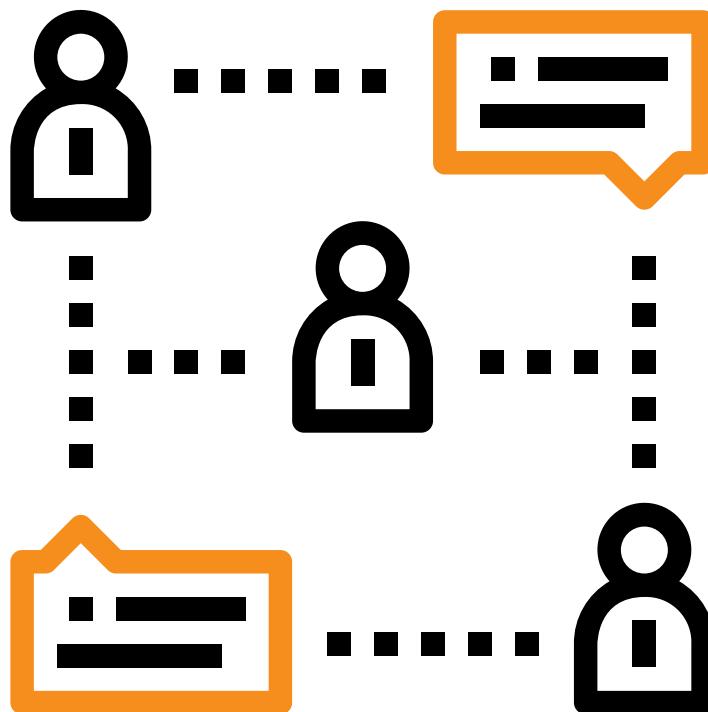
Public and private investors

ACTIVITIES ENABLED THROUGH NETWORKS

- information and dissemination
- discussion, debate, knowledge and exchange of best practices
- networking, marketing and promotion of social businesses
- training and mentoring
- creation of partnerships and consortia
- matching demand and supply of products and services for B2B procurement
- business development consulting, mentoring and technical support
- providing spaces
- engagement with users, beneficiaries, and citizens

3.2. NETWORK OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ACTORS

CONTINUED



The creation of networks of social entrepreneurship actors is a very powerful tool used by different countries to promote and support social entrepreneurship among young people. All kinds of actors can be involved in them: government agencies on national, regional and local level, universities and their incubators, financial institutions and businesses at all stages of development and civil sector actors, such as non-profit organisations, non-governmental organisations, social enterprises, employee associations and

cooperatives, and even citizens. Public and private investors also play a major role in providing the necessary funding.

The activities that are pursued by young people through the networks are very broad, including discussion, debate, knowledge and best practice exchange, networking and commercial promotion of social businesses, information dissemination, business development consulting, mentoring, technical support, procurement matching and providing co-working space.

The role of technology and digital platforms in the design and implementation of activities has been very important in some cases, as it is used to increase information outreach, market social businesses, match demand and supply, promote discussion and collect large amounts of information over short periods of time. Digitalization is very important in the field of social entrepreneurship support, especially when the target group young people.

3.3. INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPACT HUBS

Most infrastructure and impact hubs supporting social entrepreneurship are mainly business incubators and places to host events, workshops and training activities. In this booklet we identified some examples: CEED Hub in Skopje, North Macedonia; SkyHub, Łódzkie

Voivodeship in Poland; Impact Hub Bratislava in Slovakia. The primary service offered by infrastructure and impact hubs is tutoring on business management. Young social entrepreneurs are supported with drafting, developing, implementing and assessing

business plans; as well as receiving advice on legal, financial, fiscal, administrative and human resources issues. Specific assistance is usually provided at the start-up and launch phase of a social enterprise.



INFRASTRUCTURE AND IMPACT HUBS

- independent foundations
- jointly managed structures



BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STAGES SUPPORTED

- idea
- start-up
- scale up and transfer



ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTING

- technical support
- special advice: legal, financial, fiscal,
- administrative, patent registration and
- quality certification
- training
- evaluation of results or impact
- monitoring
- contribution to policy making



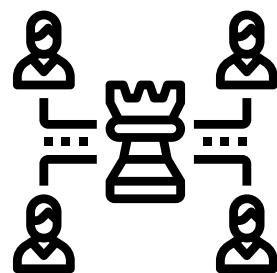
SUPPORT MODE

- online
- offline
- mixed

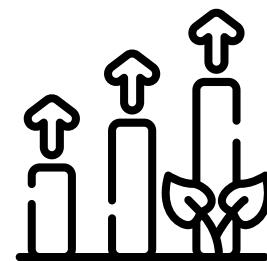
SUCCESS FACTORS, BOTTLENECKS AND CHALLENGES FOR NETWORKING



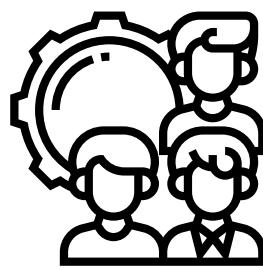
4.1. SUCCESS FACTORS FOR PROMOTING YOUTH NETWORKING IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP:



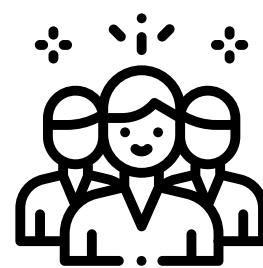
**Networking
strategy**



**Raising
awareness**

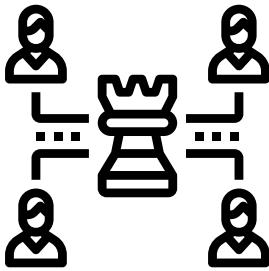


**Capacity
building**



**Citizen
participation**

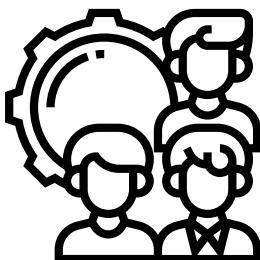
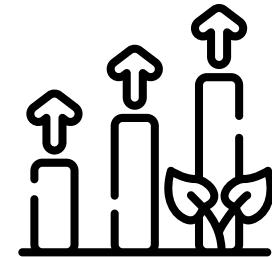
4.1. SUCCESS FACTORS FOR PROMOTING NETWORKING IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND YOUNG PEOPLE:



The existence of a **strategy for networking** and supporting the transfer of good practices is a very important driver for bringing social innovations to our communities, countries and regions. Relevant stakeholders that are actively promoting and encouraging young people to be active in the field of social entrepreneurship should have a strong focus on networking initiatives. The activities and initiatives for collaboration are providing resources for development of ideas and opportunities for achieving common goals with respect to social entrepreneurship. A substantial networking strategy can only be established with clear direction from the policy level. Monitoring of the actions and ongoing data collection from the networking process are essential for creating targeted actions and activities that better match procurement needs, enable success and sustainability in the field.

Raising awareness activities about potentialities of networking and sharing of good practices is very important in order to collate success stories. A strong motivator is

that networking brings knowledge, capabilities, and resources. Stakeholders that can be mobilised in the promotional actions are businesses, start-ups, universities, experts and youth organisations. This way we are also nurturing the development of existing networks in many ways.



Capacity building of entrepreneurs for cooperation and networking is essential for promoting social entrepreneurship in both Visegrad and Western Balkans regions. Social entrepreneurs often lack the necessary skills and contacts needed for cooperation and networking. Moreover, social enterprises are usually micro-businesses, so they often have limited access to resources, especially for non-vital costs. It is essential public authorities and donators support new skills development and provide necessary environments to help social entrepreneurs develop their networks. Training, coaching, mentoring, study visits, job shadowing are some of the ways this goal can be achieved. Others include the providing networking and collaboration opportunities, and providing information to entrepreneurs through single access points, like digital platforms.

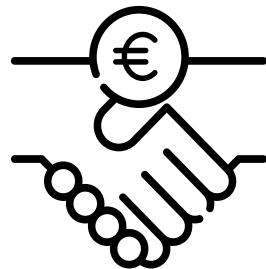
Citizen participation – also referred to as the ‘bottom-up’ approach – has multiple benefits. When the aims and focus of the supported social innovation initiatives

are decided in a bottom-up way, and when solutions are created and assessed by citizens and other social actors, they are more likely to result in relevant, successful and sustainable social enterprises. A bottom-up approach has many positive affects

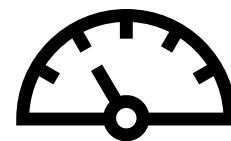
for the networking for the citizens too. It contributes to awareness raising about the value of social entrepreneurship and makes it more likely citizens will eventually make the conscious decision to buy products and services offered by those enterprises. A cultural shift can begin as citizens become ‘agents of change’ for a more socially-driven lifestyle model.



4.2. COMMON CHALLENGES VISEGRAD AND WESTERN BALKAN REGION FACE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO SUPPORT NETWORKING IN THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FIELD:



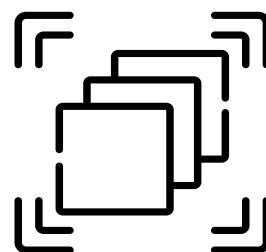
Lack of access to financial resources for cooperation and networking



Absence of measurement actions of the impact from the networking and cooperation



Lack of a legal framework



Diverse perception and understanding

4.2. COMMON CHALLENGES VISEGRAD AND WESTERN BALKAN REGION FACE IN THEIR EFFORTS TO SUPPORT NETWORKING IN THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP FIELD:



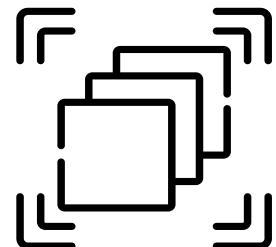
A commonly identified challenge in both regions is the **lack of financial resources for cooperation and networking**, often linked to the limited awareness and recognition of the importance of the cooperation and exchange of good practices. Current national policy frameworks and fund allocation practices generally support cooperation and alliances between traditional businesses. However, social businesses are usually local micro-businesses. This means they lack capacity and have limited access to development opportunities. To tackle this challenge, regional foundations try to invest in project ideas for cooperation and networking.

Measuring the impact from the cooperation activities is challenging, subjective and costly. Therefore, **absence of impact measuring of networking and cooperation activities is a continuous challenge**. The regions do not have the necessary mechanisms to allow them to monitor and evaluate the results of the networking initiatives. As a result, the impact is usually measured through concrete outputs, such as the number of networks created, and the value of grants allocated to cross-border actions, rather than the results. This makes it hard to assess the wider societal and economic contribution of these initiatives.



The absence of a **common approach to the social entrepreneurship** as a concept in different countries from Visegrad and Western Balkan regions is another barrier in the development of the connections and networking. As a result, organizations and associations as well as the social enterprises face difficulties to jointly establish proper legal frameworks and pool resources with national networks and regional representative authorities which would enable networking and cooperation if successful.

Different cultures are bringing diversities in perspectives and perceptions of the social entrepreneurship. These diversities need to be combined effectively, addressing attitudes towards entrepreneurship, sustainable lifestyles, innovation, public dialogue and participation, and education and training. Civil society organizations have valuable knowledge and experience to offer in the development of a common culture, such as having a better knowledge of the demand side of social entrepreneurship, as well as from their rich experiences in the international actions. For this reason, NGOs/CSOs should be invited to participate in the official dialogues among different countries to help reach a common definition and adopt a common approach towards the future of the social entrepreneurship.



RECOMMENDATIONS

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE NETWORKING AND COOPERATION ACTIONS

- WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO BETTER DEFINE A NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES
- FACILITATE AND SUPPORT THE EXCHANGE, SCALE-UP AND TRANSFER OF GOOD PRACTICES
- EFFECTIVELY USE THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL FUNDS FOR COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS.

5.1. WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS TO BETTER DEFINE A NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND REGIONAL STRATEGIES.

The limited opportunities for cooperation and networking between different stakeholders

active or supporting social entrepreneurship is usually due to the lack of a clearly defined

regional, national and European legal framework.



Defining a better national and European legal framework regarding social entrepreneurship is important for the development of networks for a flourishing social entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Usually, the legal frameworks clarify and define issues related to public procurement, fiscal regulations and access to different forms of finance, including public grants, business loans, and capital markets. It

should be emphasized that clarity is also needed about the availability of financial resources to support cooperation and networking. This information and resources need to be availed through accessible mechanisms.

It would also be helpful if the national and regional legal framework and strategies promote cooperation and exchange of good practices.

5.2. FACILITATE AND SUPPORT EXCHANGE, SCALE-UP AND TRANSFER OF GOOD PRACTICES.

Although many valuable initiatives in the youth field currently exist in both regions, Visegrad and Western Balkans, opportunities for exchange of know-how, identification and communication of the best practices in social

entrepreneurship remains limited. Current communication channels for best practices are instigated indirectly or from the bottom-up, for example through networks, or through EU funded research projects and competitions. However,

our activities demonstrated that there is a strong need for structured communication and dialogue for future actions and projects dedicated to young people and social entrepreneurship.



The creation of a knowledge exchange platform would be helpful; enabling involved stakeholders to explore specific ways to support different forms of social entrepreneurship in different contexts.

5.3. EFFECTIVELY USE THE CULTURAL DIFFERENCES TO FURTHER THE UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

Social entrepreneurship is, by definition, associated with the development of a culture of openness in social representation and inclusion. Therefore, different aspects of culture need to be combined

effectively, addressing attitudes towards entrepreneurship, sustainable lifestyles, innovation, public dialogue and participation, and education and training. Youth civil society organizations have valuable knowledge and

experience to offer facilitation techniques that embrace the clever use of the cultural differences to understand social entrepreneurship.



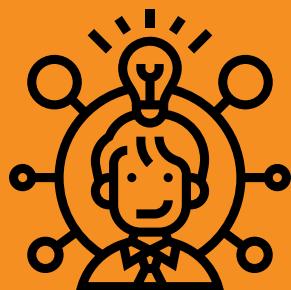
For this reason, we are recommending youth grassroot organizations to be invited to participate in the development strategies of social entrepreneurship in different countries.

5.4. IMPROVE ACCESS TO THE EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL FUNDS FOR COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Access to funds for cooperation projects in the field of social entrepreneurship is relatively advanced in the EU. However,

most young people lack the skills, capacity and institutional characteristics required to access these funds. Therefore,

more flexibility regarding funding is needed, especially given the broad definition of social entrepreneurship itself.



The results of our activities point to the fact that more funds should be channelled into cooperation projects for exchange of good practices.

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