

*Project: ReinFORCE SOCIAL Entrepreneurial Spirit through setting up
Innovative Support Structures in the cross-border Territory „SOCIAL
FORCES”*

Report

Based on Info Day, Drama, Greece, 18-20/12/2019

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SOCIAL ECONOMY AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

There is no definition of a social economy. It is perceived to be an opportunity to create value for the individual and society. It has the capacity to correct significant social and economic imbalances and contributes to the achievement of various objectives of common interest. Social innovations are good ideas that improve the quality of life of society. Due to the direct contact between the social sector and the public, it has a special ability to identify new needs by directing them to the public administration and traditional private businesses.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Historically, the development of social entrepreneurship followed the development of entrepreneurship itself as a set of initiatives aimed not so much at accumulating profit as at seeking alternative financing strategies or modern management schemes to create social goods. Social entrepreneurship is a process

of innovation for the social entrepreneur, through alternative behavior when using and combining resources to meet social needs. Social added value is the social effect achieved for the target group as a result of the activity carried out by the social enterprise, taking into account both the positive and negative changes and the side effects resulting from other actions or lack of action by the social enterprise. A social objective is an objective in support of vulnerable people in terms of their employment, social inclusion, raising their living standard, improving their access to education and vocational training and protection of their rights, as well as improving and protecting the environment and biodiversity in support of ecological balance.

PROFILE OF THE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR /RESULTS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH SOCIAL MANAGERS/

Social entrepreneurs combine business and social issues in a way that improves people's lives related to the cause. They do not measure their success only in terms of profit - the success of social entrepreneurs is the fact that they have improved the well-being of certain social groups. Social entrepreneurship and social managers are becoming increasingly important for the development of the economy, and in particular of the labour market. It is of particular importance that all people, whether disabled or not, participate in the labour market and contribute to the creation of the public product. The main reason why most of the social managers interviewed start engaging in social entrepreneurship is precisely the emergence of some health problem that directly affects them or their family members. The social entrepreneurs themselves face daily problems affecting vulnerable social groups, with the most frequent difficulties being difficulties in integrating in the labour market and finding permanent employment. Another reason why social entrepreneurs start this activity is that it enables them to apply the knowledge acquired in university, as well as to upgrade it with new, different skills; to implement ideas and seek opportunities for development, desire for

change and combating labour discrimination by creating jobs for disadvantaged people. The profession of a social manager is a specific one because of the target group to which it is directed. Representatives of these specific social groups have social needs that the social entrepreneur needs to take into account. To do this, he or she must have the appropriate skills, experience and educational level to match the specifics of the target group. Social entrepreneurs are aiming to take greater responsibility for the health of their employees, which is revealed through their joint work with healthcare professionals, or through the accumulation of medical knowledge so that they can be of maximum benefit to their physically disabled employees.

The successful social manager, according to the collected data, should be purposeful and with a clear vision of objectives, i.e. to be able to set specific goals, organize their implementation in order to obtain financial resources, which subsequently invest in activities related to the social sphere and reaching vulnerable social groups. Also should have the ability to successfully promote the development of entrepreneurial activity in the representatives of vulnerable social groups themselves, i.e. to be able to successfully pass on his experience; should have the necessary skills and experience to work with public institutions and other social partners, as well as the ability to cope with the difficulties encountered in the field. From the in-depth analysis of primary and secondary data, it becomes clear that a successful social manager should have the appropriate personal, managerial and social skills, as well as the necessary education and the ability to apply them in dealing with representatives of vulnerable social groups.

PROBLEMS /RESULTS OF IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH SOCIAL MANAGERS/

- Inability to sell products
- Promotion and advertisement
- Needs of psychologists and mentors

- Lack of manpower
- Low paid overtime
- Delayed Social Security reimbursement
- Lack of credit facilities
- Total disinterest on the part of state institutions /Some have no difficulty, they even think that the state administration is helping them/
- Need for tax and garbage fee relief
- Improving social assistance policies
- Faster VAT refunds
- Dependence of public funds
- Increase in the minimum wage and minimum insurance thresholds
- Contradictory regulatory framework

ROAD MAP

Based on the information collected, a roadmap was drawn up. Provides the essential guideline for the establishment of a social enterprise and how anyone can become a social entrepreneur. The definitions of basic concepts are outlined. The business and social entrepreneurs are identified, as are the most important skills needed. The steps to be followed are outlined and the most important questions thought about by anyone with a desire for social entrepreneurship are answered. The roadmap is an easy and fast way to get into the matter and launch your venture successfully.

SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCE OF ILIODORA

Iliodora is a social entrepreneurship that produces handmade products of selected raw materials, following traditional processing methods for each product and emphasizing in its high nutritional value and quality, located in Drama, operated by women (former unemployed workers at a local factory). The company's products include handmade traditional pasta and herbal cosmetics. An

overview of the whole process shows what steps they followed for setting up their company and the problems they encountered at its initiation and function. As major problems were highlighted the information gap between the legal framework on social entrepreneurship and its actual implementation; with an example given on the total lack of training of the tax authority services on social enterprises registration process and their respective tax obligations. Another problem that was highlighted was the non-inclusion of social enterprises in many of the funding instruments launched by the Ministry of Development, the regional operation plan, LEADER programme and other funding institutions. An obstacle was the lack of training for their managers and members in marketing their products and managing their companies that resulted in wrong decision making and unsuccessful investment initiatives. At the same time, they asked for the Chamber's support in networking with the city's local authorities to support them in becoming main providers in some of the city's events.

References:

1. Presentation by Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria, Drama, 2019
2. Presentation by Mrs. Androniki Louloudi, Iliodora Social Enterprise, Drama, 2019