

COLLECTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

On behalf of the PROSOCENT cross-border tender's developers we concluded the data collection of 1000 people (500 Hungarians, 500 Serbians), measuring their knowledge of and attitude towards social enterprises. Based on the received data - analyzed with the help of business experts – we propose the following recommendations.

1. Increasing the regionally affected citizen's width of knowledge regarding social enterprises

Based on the collected data we saw that the majority of the responders have not heard of social enterprises, let alone characterize them. At the same time the penetration of social enterprises (or organizations considered as such) is significantly higher in Hungary. A possible way to resolve this issue would be getting the general population more familiar with these enterprises.

In order to achieve this, we must increase the visibility of social enterprises. As shown by the data, the populace values enterprises with social aims. For this shown interest and for the novelty factor of these businesses we must make them visible, feature them on various events, expos, thus getting the open-minded people more familiar with their activities, functions to make the social goal feasible.

An event, like the successful annual “Night of the Museums” could serve as an example of such an event. The “Night of Social Enterprises” would be a perfect chance for people to get more familiar with local representatives of the subject. As the interest and willingness to purchase from these businesses seems quite significant, an event or expo could be organized where the visitors can meet, find out more about the background and directly purchase from the chosen

enterprises. With this they become aware that the purchase is a decision as well. As the study shows that most people would rather purchase from a socially aware company, even if this means higher rates, these events would both support the public understanding towards these businesses, and by connecting the demand and supply sides they would generate income as well.

2. Introducing a wider knowledge about social enterprises to the locally concerned entrepreneurs.

It would be quite important to introduce the alternative ways of social enterprises to the future potential entrepreneurs (especially the NEET youth). There are several programs that try to orient individuals towards enterprises, yet – based on the research – the will to actually launch a new enterprise is quite low in the program region. On the other hand, currently the enterprises have a possible negative connotation, as often entrepreneurs are associated with quite negative terms.

To introduce the social and communal use of enterprises we need to (1) move people towards launching new enterprises and (2) make it possible for them to establish socially responsible businesses.

Therefore we need programs supporting new entrepreneurs, need to cooperate with them and need to identify those exemplary representatives of social enterprises who reached significant results in both economy and social importance. These individuals would serve as catalyzers in the establishment of new social enterprises. There's also the possibility of study tours, company visits, where the participants can see these enterprises first-hand, meet the owners, employees and get to experience social usefulness.

As first steps the identification of such enterprises, and working out cooperation plans with them are inevitable. In addition to the company visits, lectures and presentations for the target audience could help to call attention to social enterprises.

As social enterprises are wider spread in Hungary, there's a possible chance of cross-border study tours. On the one hand there's the possibility of visiting the Hungarian exemplary businesses, on the other hand, Hungarian experts could visit Serbian social enterprises, or send excellent entrepreneurs who can give advice about good and avoidable techniques.

It's important to show the possible entrepreneurs how wide the circle is from where they can choose the inspiration for their future businesses. In addition they need to learn the ways they can achieve positive goals, such as how to support the disadvantaged, how to maintain an environmentally conscious operation. For this reason, specific trainings and workshops are necessary. All interested potential individuals should have enough background knowledge before launching a new successful social enterprise. To local civilian organizations could significantly support the feasibility of these events, therefore the mutual cooperation with them is quite important.

3. Emphasizing social benefits that come with the appearance of social enterprises

The research clearly showed that a large quantity of the (potential) buyers are willing to accept higher rates when it comes to purchasing a socially aware company's products/services. It's important to emphasize that the investigated region has a shortage of labor and based on our research most of the people would be happy to work for a company that serves social benefits. Therefore highlighting the social benefits should be of utmost importance in all communication channels, including advertising products/services or recruiting new employees.

4. Clarifying the goal of social enterprises

The research showed that most of the people can estimate the pillars of social enterprises quite well, yet at the same time we experienced different opinions at specific questions. For example: integrating disadvantaged employees and having an environmentally conscious mindset. Both of these factors should be kept in mind, however both investigated countries showed different opinion regarding these subjects. It is important to define what factors are needed to consider and enterprise socially conscious, both in closer and wider points of view. With this we can

avoid those businesses that consider themselves environmental enterprises, yet their operation does not show any sign of social awareness.

5. Utilizing possibilities provided by civilian and entrepreneurial platforms

Social enterprises have a chance to introduce their operations and emphasize their usefulness by partaking in civilian organizations' events, (small expos, festivals, civilian villages). As this means businesses and enterprises with an undoubtable novelty factor, the local, county or national chambers could help by introducing them on their platforms and publications.

It carries a significant potential, that the entrepreneurs are interested in social businesses because of the social awareness, while civilian organization have an interest in realizing the entrepreneurial income. This possibility could be utilized with proper communication towards the target group.

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This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union through the Interreg-IPA Cross-border Cooperation Programme Hungary-Serbia. The content of the document is the sole responsibility of Southern Great Plans Region Social Research Association and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union and/or the Managing Authority of the Programme.

