

TRAINING NEEDS IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: MEASURES AND EXPERIENCE OF BULGARIA

Nelly BENCHEVA, Teodora STOEVA

Agricultural University - Plovdiv, 12 Mendeleev Blvd., Plovdiv, 4000, Bulgaria, Emails: bencheva@gmail.com, teodorastoeva@gmail.com

Corresponding author: teodorastoeva@gmail.com

Abstract

The social economy model is one of the key tools for achieving socially significant goals within the frames of a sustainable and including growth. The social entrepreneurship and social economy, as concepts, allow the creation of alternative models for conducting business. They are market-oriented and at the same time integrate all of the free market participants - employees, employers, investors, consumers and others. Social enterprises have a key role in regeneration and economic development and in the promotion of social inclusion. The aim of this article is to explore the training needs in social entrepreneurship: measures and experience of Bulgaria and skills and qualifications of business advisors to provide the necessary consulting services to social intermediaries and social enterprises. The results of a pilot study under the Erasmus+ project "Social enterprise skills for business advisors" are used. The collection of the primary data included a questionnaire survey to collect information and data by using a face-to-face interview. 104 representatives of different types of organizations from the South Central Region, administrative district of Plovdiv were interviewed.

Key words: social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, development

INTRODUCTION

The social economy model is one of the key tools for achieving socially significant goals within the frames of a sustainable and including growth. The social entrepreneurship and social economy, as concepts, allow the creation of alternative models for conducting business. They are market-oriented and at the same time integrate all of the free market participants - employees, employers, investors, consumers and others.

Social entrepreneurship is one of the most innovative ways to achieve a better quality of life, independence and inclusion in society of persons from vulnerable groups. Need to be taken key legislative changes in order set in strategic and political national documents measures to become real mechanisms to support social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria, as well as the successful development of social enterprises, requires the creation of sustainable partnerships between business, NGOs and the public sector - partnerships in which each of these actors recognizes its role to achieve socially important objectives and is willing to invest resources in that [1].

Bulgaria develops various forms of social entrepreneurship - social enterprises, non-governmental organizations, cooperatives, business consultant organizations and others. The country has developed a legal framework containing several important strategic documents, such as the Law on Enterprises for the Social and Solidarity Economy. A National Concept for the Development of the Social Economy by 2019 has been developed. The concept is fully geared to achieving the Europe 2020 goals - a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth that offers a vision for the social market economy of Europe for the 21st century.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of the research is based on is based on analyses of existing regulations, strategic documents and analysis of the development of social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria.

The results of a pilot study under the Erasmus+ project "Social enterprise skills for business advisors" are used. The collection of the primary data included a questionnaire survey

to collect information and data by using a face-to-face interview. 104 representatives of different types of organizations from the South Central Region, administrative district of Plovdiv were interviewed. The survey included representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises, social enterprises, training and non-governmental organizations which support social entrepreneurs or provide consultancy services on the following issues:

- (1) Types of organizations providing consulting to social entrepreneurs
- (2) Business advisory offered to social entrepreneurs
- (3) Supporting frame for social entrepreneurship start up
- (4) Social entrepreneurs needs for advisory.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

For the conditions in Bulgaria the investment in social entrepreneurship may become a key factor in providing employment and development of entrepreneurial initiatives leading to sustainable development [2].

Tools to promote employment are creating programs and measures are developed and implemented in compliance with the requirements of the Law on Employment Promotion and regulations for its implementation. The financing of active policies to promote employment becomes annually by the State Budget Act. Every year it prepares a National Action Plan for Employment, taken by the Cabinet of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. In the national plan shall specify the programs that will be implemented during the year, the target groups that will be targeted priority active employment policy during the planning year, and bet size of financial subsidies that will benefit employers involved in measures and programs employment promotion [5].

Financial incentives to promote employment

As intended the funds to be provided for the implementation of programs and measures for employment are shared among employers, unemployed and training organizations. Incentives and preferences for employers in several directions in order Task Force recruitment of young long-term unemployed,

people with disabilities, war invalids, single parents and other vulnerable groups, education and vocational training for newly recruited people to develop entrepreneurship of unemployed persons [8].

Each year National Action Plan for Employment determine the size of the funds allocated for implementation of programs and measures to promote employment. The modalities and criteria for the use of incentives to implement incentives are determined by the implementing regulation of the law.

The law and regulations provide the general framework of the regime for the use of preferences. In the individual programs may provide for additional conditions and requirements for the candidates employers.

The funds are provided based on the contract between the territorial division of the Employment Agency and employers, the contract must specify the type of program or measure to promote employment [7].

Survey of social enterprises in Bulgaria started in 2013 and has an annual periodicity.

The research is all non-financial corporations and non-profit organizations in the country that have developed activities during the reporting year. The main source of information are the annual accounts of non-financial enterprises, compiling and compiling balance sheet and annual report of the non-profit enterprises [7]. (Fig.1).



Fig.1. Survey of social enterprises in Bulgaria
 Source: National Database of MLSP for social enterprises in Bulgaria - NSI, 2012 [5].

Training in social entrepreneurship

Training in social entrepreneurship are available in varying degrees in the formal education system according to curricula developed for different levels and educational levels - primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary education. Vocational training centers, vocational colleges and organizations operating in the field of trainings provide much greater options and flexibility by conducting informal training.

Priorities of the National Strategy for lifelong

learning are (National Strategy for lifelong learning - 2014-2020) [6]:

- A step towards a new educational approach and innovation in education and training;
- Improving the quality of education and training;
- Provide educational environment for equal access to lifelong learning for active social inclusion and active citizenship;
- Promotion of education and training to meet the needs of the economy and changes in the labor market [4].

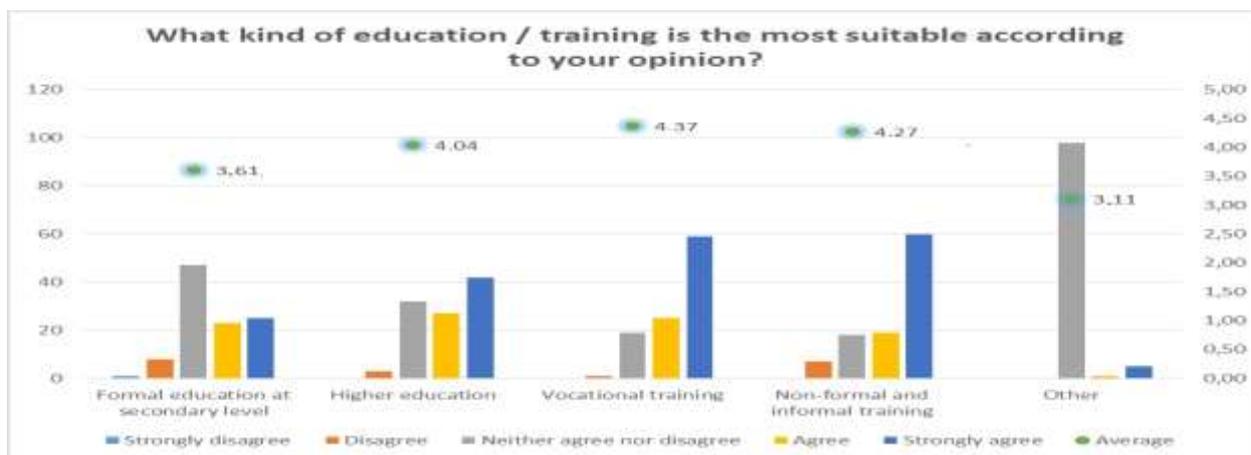


Fig. 2. Needs of training in social entrepreneurship
 Source: Own calculation.

All areas of impact support the acquisition and continued development of nine key competences for lifelong learning in a single process: communication skills in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;

digital competence; learning skills; social and civic competences; initiative and entrepreneurship; cultural awareness and expression through creativity; skills to support sustainability and a healthy lifestyle [7].

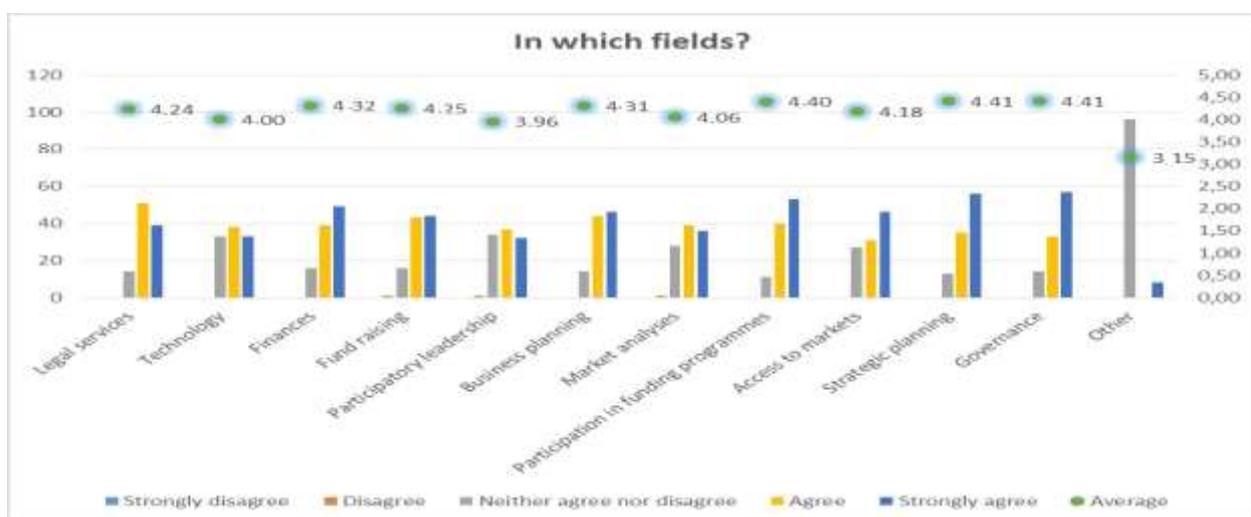


Fig. 3. Fields of training in social entrepreneurship
 Source: Own calculation.

Although the importance of entrepreneurship is mentioned in a number of programmatic and strategic documents concerning training and education, extracting data on the opportunities provided is very difficult to achieve, not to mention the results achieved (Fig. 4).

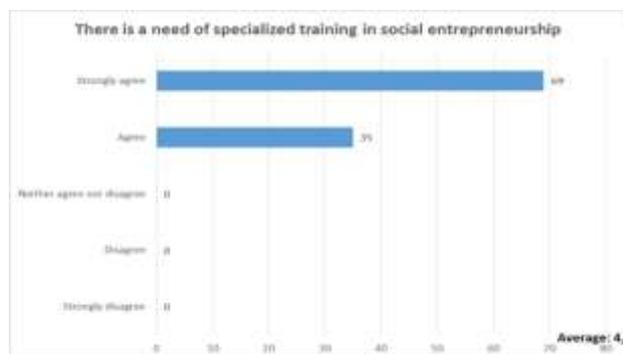


Fig. 4. Need of specialized training in social entrepreneurship

Source: Own calculation.

However, it is a fact that more and more projects and programs are oriented towards entrepreneurship, in particular social entrepreneurship as a particular focus, and include training of target groups as a compulsory component, for example: social entrepreneurship program for non-profit organizations of the Bulgarian Center for Not-for-Profit Law (Fig. 2). In addition, the research set out the role of advisors in the training of employees in social enterprises, the realization of contacts and lasting relationships with social partners as well as the opportunities for development of social activities and communication [3]. The main content of the training is to understand the role of the business advisor in identifying the opportunities for improvement of services for social enterprises, development of professional networks in the field of social entrepreneurship. This will contribute to a better understanding of the expectations of social enterprises and will decide how these expectations need to be met [9].

CONCLUSIONS

Social enterprises have a key role in regeneration and economic development and in the promotion of social inclusion. The main conclusions are related to the fact that social

enterprises have the capacity to become one of the most reliable partners of the central and/or local authorities to tackle the social sphere and to promote inclusion into society of persons of different vulnerable groups.

As a major opportunity for the development of the social economy sector in Bulgaria can be defined the need to promote the social added value of the products of social enterprises.

The challenge for Bulgaria regarding the training needs in social entrepreneurship can be formulated as follows:

- Broad understanding of the social enterprise Bulgaria at that time has a broad legal framework, or rather lack of explicit one, and this allows free self-determination. At the same time, it should be noted that the broad criteria for the definition does not offer a real opportunity for encouraging policy oriented towards concrete results.

- Need for sectoral reforms

Social enterprises operate in Bulgaria and developed traditionally as a means of providing employment and in the fields of education, social services and in rare cases, education, health and culture.

- Prioritizing a target group.

Social enterprises need mainly support and advice provided by well-trained practicing business advisors who possess the necessary key skills, qualifications and competencies to provide quality advice for the development of social enterprises.

Specialized trainings in social entrepreneurship and consultancy tools provided to business advisors should be oriented towards the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies in the field of management and communication, with a special emphasis on social entrepreneurship and social innovation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is prepared under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships Project entitled SESBA: Social Enterprise Skills for Business Advisers, funded with the support from the European Commission. The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the

contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

REFERENCES

- [1]Aleksieva, P., Shabani, N., Panov, L. Handbook "New opportunities for social enterprises. The Italian Experience in the Bulgarian Environment. "Project No. BG051PO001-7.0.01-0052-C0001". An initiative for innovation in the social economy", http://www.znanielovech.org/social_n.pdf, Posted on November, 7, 2017, by Znanie Lovech. Accessed on Feb. 2, 2020.
- [2]Bencheva, N., Stoeva, T., 2018, Impact of social factors on rural development, pp. 135-140; In the book: Challenges of Agrobusiness and Rural Areas - The Central and Eastern European Online Library. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/book-detail?id=687658>, Accessed Feb.2, 2020.
- [3]Bencheva, N., Stoeva, T., Todorova, S., 2018, Key Skills and Competences for Social Business Advisors: Views from Experts, International Journal of Organizational Leadership, 7, pp.413-425.
- [4]Bencheva, N., Terziev, V., Stoeva, T., Arabska, E., 2016, Policies for encouraging social enterprises and improving skills for social entrepreneurship development in rural regions, Bulgarian Journal of Agricultural Economics and Management, Vol.2-4, p.116-129.
- [5]National Statistics Institute, NSI, 2012, National Database of MLSP for social enterprises in Bulgaria
- [6]National Strategy for lifelong learning, 2014-2020.
- [7]SESBA, 2013, IO1: Research Report about the status and reinforcement of social entrepreneurship in Europe. Final Report, http://sesbaproject.eu/images/sesbaproject/files/IO_1_FinalReport.pdf, Accessed on October 10, 2017.
- [8]Terziev, V., Bencheva, N., Arabska, E., Stoeva, T., Tepavicharova, M., Nichev, N. 2016. Social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria: barriers to growth.//Ninth International Scientific Conference The teacher of the future, 17-19 June 2016, Albania. Knowledge International Journal Scientific Papers, Institute for knowledge management, 13(1):197-202.
- [9]Terziev, V., Bencheva, N., Stoeva,T., Georgiev, M., 2020, Developing social entrepreneurship in the EU: A cross-country analysis, Proceedings of INTCESS 2020-7th International Conference on Education and Social Sciences 20-22 January, 2020.Dubai (UAE), pp.746-753.

