

SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

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Abstract: In the last decade the concept of development and promotion of social economy and social entrepreneurship are part of EU policy to tackle the social exclusion of persons in a vulnerable position. Also, the model of social economy is one of the key instruments for achieving social objectives within the framework of the sustainable and inclusive growth. Social benefits are measured by integration and employment of disadvantaged people, the contribution to the process of social inclusion of other vulnerable people, and the economic indicator is expressed by saved public funds for social welfare, on the one hand, and the additional funds compensating the social costs of long-term unemployment. What is important to happen is to create suitable conditions for the development of social enterprises with the widest possible range - vulnerable groups themselves and their problems are diverse and different, and the "answer" to their needs must be flexible in order to be efficient and effective; "way to solutions" is not important (the path may be different, as are diverse and vast opportunities for economic initiatives) that leads to the result itself, the result is important - better integration and sustainable tackling of social exclusion.

The Economic and Social Council of the Republic of Bulgaria (ESC) believes that social enterprises in Bulgaria are still an untapped business model. Current social enterprises are mainly non-governmental organizations by applying the relevant legislation creating social enterprises whose business is focused on the realization of the social purpose and mission of the organization. Social enterprises in Bulgaria operate in various sectors, the most serious part are in: the delivery of social services; providing jobs for people with disabilities; mediation in finding employment of unemployed persons; provision of health services; activities in the field of education and others.

In realizing these activities the leading is not the end product but the achieved social effect on individuals themselves expressed in obtaining the necessary support to integrate into society. In this sense, there are three basic models of social enterprises:

- The most common model is the one that creates jobs and develops the workforce. By business jobs are created primarily for people with disabilities. Most often the social enterprise is the employer of people with disabilities in order to achieve the integration of persons with disabilities in the labor market and create conditions for a better life.

- Another popular model of a social enterprise is the one in which the enterprise produces goods and seeks markets, also engaging with their distribution. Most often social enterprises involve persons with disabilities in the form of occupational therapy involved in the production of certain goods. Existing social enterprises in Bulgaria within this model are engaged in the manufacture of certain products by persons who are unemployed or socially excluded. The aim is to enable them to work and improve their social inclusion.

- The third existing model in Bulgaria is related to the provision of social services generally through payment of external customers, while social enterprise provides social services to its members. Payment is under contract with the state or a municipality. Within this model, services are provided to different users paid directly to social enterprise for direct service.

Keywords: support structures, organization, development, social entrepreneurship.

INTRODUCTION

By providing opportunities for absorption of European funds through the operational programs in Bulgaria there is a growth of organizations and individuals providing consulting services. Interest in obtaining grants and poor knowledge and development of social entrepreneurship leads to a focus on providing consultancy services to

the preparation of project proposals according to the available options at that time. There are no long-term strategies and a clear vision of sustainability activities.

Below are mentioned some of the representative associations of consulting organizations in the country as an example of the activities carried out in general management consulting and European programs, which social entrepreneurs also could benefit from. Considering the placement of social entrepreneurship as a priority, consulting organizations start orienting towards activities in this direction.

Bulgarian Association of Management Consulting Organizations (BAMCO) [1] brings together and represents professional consulting organizations and certified consultants. The Association was established in October 1997. Through its members BAMCO have access to more than 400 highly qualified management consultants.

BAMCO mission is to maintain high professional and ethical standards in the field of management consulting, to assist in the development of the market of consulting services to assist its members in the identification and realization of business opportunities.

Vision: As an official representative of professional management consulting in Bulgaria, BAMCO aims to be one of the main partners of Bulgarian and international business, governmental and non-governmental organizations in accelerating economic and social development and integration of the country and the region within the European Union.

Key priorities

- Joining professional consulting organizations and individual consultants who contribute to the reputation and recognition of the profession.
- Maintain high professional and ethical standards in the field of management consulting, development of professional qualifications and competence of management consultants.
- Presentation and protect the professional interests of members of the organization.
- Identification, exchange and implementation of business opportunities by creating the conditions for mutual understanding and partnership between members of the organization.
- Identification and realization of business opportunities through partnerships with Bulgarian and international business, state, municipal, government and NGOs.

BAMCO members are active in many industry sectors in the areas of consulting:

- Project management;
- European projects;
- Corporate Strategy and Organizational Development;
- Financial and administrative systems;
- Human Resources;
- Production Management and Services;
- Marketing and Corporate Communications;
- Information Technology;
- Economic and environmental studies.

Bulgarian Association of Consultants in European programs (BAKEP) [2], established in 2009, is the first and a unique non-governmental professional organization of consulting organizations and independent experts whose sphere of activity is focused on the full and efficient absorption of EU funds as a tool for achieving the objectives of the regional policy of the European Union.

Through its activities BAKEP aims to contribute to increasing the efficiency of implementation and management of the entire project cycle to support funding of European funds of Bulgarian private and public sector, thereby contributing to improving socio-economic conditions for sustainable development in Bulgaria. To achieve this, the organization brings together and channeled competence of its members and partner managing authorities to optimize the development and implementation of European programs.

In this connection, part of the targeted activities of BAKEP can be divided into three main modules:

Cooperation with the competent state authorities:

- Organizing and participating in contact groups with the state and local administration.
- Participation at the expert level and civic organization in the development of policies in the sector;
- Identify, summarize and officially presented to the competent authorities of the opinions of beneficiaries of EU and other donor programs, accompanied by recommendations for change inappropriate practices;

- Preparation of opinions on the draft regulations, instructions, decisions and other acts in the sphere of the objectives of the Association.

- Participate and assist in governmental projects in areas similar to the objectives of the Association.

Establishing a uniform standard of professional consulting companies:

- Organization study issues related to the development of consultancy in Europe and the country.

- Organization of consulting, expert advice and coordination on various issues, as well as offices for legal, economic, informational and other services supporting the activities of the members.

- Organization of staff training.

Promotion of local and international experience and best practices:

- Support and promote the organization of scientific conferences and meetings on the objectives of the Association in the country and abroad;

- Implement and maintain relationships with the media and carrying out activity to familiarize the public with the objectives and work of the Association, as well as the importance of issues related to the absorption of EU funds allocated to the country;

- Making the cooperation with similar goals and activities;

- Organization of national, regional and international symposia, lectures, conferences on issues related to the utilization of funds under grant programs;

Strategic goals of BAKEP

Expertise of BAKEP:

- Attracting new members with extensive experience useful know-how and proven consulting market positions;

- Timely consideration of any proposal made by members of BAKEP and assistance for every constructive idea.

Assistance to the State Administration for removal of the key issues in the implementation of the programs and increasing the absorption of EU funds:

- Maintain this pace regularly lodged with proposals for each European program and delivering information about errors and consequently to the best practices of Bulgarian authorities, working with EU funds;

- Include BAKEP in the development of strategic and programming documents for the next programming period, as well as active participation in the interim and ex-post evaluations of implementation of EU programs, avoiding conflicts of interest between members of the Association;

- Finding the right approach for presenting their expert opinion on the effective work on the programs, as well as the relevant institutions and potential beneficiaries - a certain period of time to prepare an analysis of the development of programs, including impact assessment and others.

Protecting the interests of professional consulting organizations, human rights advisers and grant recipients:

- Finding an appropriate way of sending a message that the consultancy business respects ethical rules - through specialized interview articles and putting an emphasis on the activities of BAKEP that leads to more open and lawful planning and spending;

- Development of a register of advisers in European programs.

The variety of consulting services is driven by the needs of different sectors and so far there is no single registry of consultants and consultancy organizations, but suggestions are made to create such records.

Consulting services in the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020 [3] are regulated in a separate ordinance and the National Service for Agricultural Advisory [4] provides free consultations and train farmers in crop production, animal husbandry, agricultural economics and RDP.

The Program for Rural Development accepts that weak entrepreneurial activity in rural areas is an obstacle to the utilization of internal resources of the local economy (tourism, processing of agricultural and forestry production, social entrepreneurship, disposal) and to strengthen the vertical and horizontal links in the economy. It is therefore necessary to support the development of entrepreneurial skills to promote business initiatives by local residents and to improve the business environment in rural areas. Entrepreneurship development is also a successful method for increasing women's employment and integration of people at risk of marginalization. It is also a priority of the National Strategy to promote development of small and medium-sized enterprises 2014-202 [5].

Based on the analyzes and conclusions of them it can be considered that social enterprises can find their application and development in rural areas. There are two main options identified taking into account existing

conditions in rural areas, which can lead to a positive economic impact for a social enterprise. Tourism and agriculture have great potential for development in Bulgaria and social entrepreneurship has a place in the development of these sectors [6]. This means there is a potential for development of consulting services in the field of social entrepreneurship in these areas, which implies the need for capacity building among business consultants.

Usually business consulting services offered on the Bulgarian market are oriented to research on funding, project development, project management, design services, legal services and more. To these can be added and business analysis and business development, business software, reporting and control. Recently developed: a management training business negotiations, ERP selection, team building, recruitment, IT consulting, etc. [10-16].

SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

As a start in the development of social enterprises in Bulgaria the year 2002 can be considered, when Counterpart Int. - Bulgaria began implementation of a program for creating and supporting social enterprises funded by United States Agency for International Development [7]. This is the first targeted use and introduction of the term "social enterprise" in the public domain in Bulgaria, causing concern among NGOs and local communities. Under the program in the period 2002 - 2006 year are conducted campaigns for promotion of social enterprises as a tool for social inclusion, employment of disadvantaged groups and strategic opportunity to increase the capacity of social service providers. Simultaneously, after the two competitions for non-profit organizations were selected 45 organizations from 17 communities participating in trainings and obtaining technical assistance and funding for the creation of social enterprises. As a result of the program and in view of the growing role of social economy within a united Europe as part of activities was the support to social enterprises organized campaign to prepare legislative changes to legislate social enterprise in existing regulations. Despite the efforts of NGOs and expressed political will of the government to ensure adequate legislation, the proposals remain only on paper [8].

The first step for institutional support of social entrepreneurship was made in 2009 when the Social Assistance Agency initiated direct grant assistance under the scheme BG051PO0015.1.01 Social entrepreneurship - promoting and supporting social enterprises /Pilot phase/. Purpose of the procedure is to support the development of social entrepreneurship as an opportunity to improve the quality of life of individuals at risk and overcoming social isolation.

In 2011 it launched a new procedure - BG051PO001-5.1.02 "New opportunities". The main objective is to support the development process of social economy and create social capital by supporting municipalities to provide employment and activity of persons at risk. The specific objectives are: Support for individuals from target groups; Optimizing social costs of municipalities; Support local initiatives aimed at tackling local problems arising from poverty and social exclusion of people from the municipality; Creation and support of best practices for the development of social enterprises.

Other government agencies and NGOs that provide support for activities in the field of social entrepreneurship are the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, the National Association of Employers of People with Disabilities, Open Society Institute, Social alternative Trust which supports mostly members of the Roma community, the organization "Reach for Change", which aim is to raise charity to a higher level through the development of models of social entrepreneurship for children and youth at risk.

CONCLUSION

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 [9].

The study conducted an analysis on what extent is developed and adopted the concept of social entrepreneurship and the role of social enterprises for socio-economic development of Bulgaria by exploring opportunities to promote social entrepreneurship in the country through government policy, NGOs, business initiative, training and counseling.

This report provides an analysis of the development of social entrepreneurship in Bulgaria according to: International project Social enterprise skills for business advisors - SESBA of the European program for education, training, youth and sport "Erasmus +", Grant Agreement №2015-1-EL01-KA202-014097 (2015-2018).

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