

A QUALITY EDUCATION AS AN IMPORTANT OBJECTIVE OF THE SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Yulia Fomina – Natalia Leshchenko – Jana Černá – Zuzana Bezáková

Abstract

The conference paper deals with the issue of Agenda 30 and sustainability development goals in social enterprises. In the theoretical part is the theoretical background in the field of socially responsible behavior of enterprises and specific targets that should be implemented by 2030 and were accepted by UN member states defined. The paper presents the results of research carried out in 7 European social enterprises focused on education. The main results consist of identification of factors that lead to success of social entrepreneurship in the field of education and enlightenment in the European Union, as well as barriers. The results of our study confirmed that respondents perceive quality education as work to achieve some goals of sustainable development

Key words: sustainable development goals. human Capital. social Enterprise. quality Education.

JEL Code: J24, Q01, Q56

Introduction

In recent decades, we can see constant and intense pressure on economic performance and growth, which has its global consequences. The most striking feature is the overload of the ecosystem. At present, natural resources are used disproportionately, some human activities adversely affect climate change, biodiversity is disrupted, and so on. It is biodiversity that is the basis of all life on earth and, above all, of human activity. A healthy and balanced ecosystem is a prerequisite for maintaining human health, the social structure of the population, well-being, economic and social development. These problems are global; no continent or region is outside this fact. Therefore, even its solution can be managed only with the involvement and contributions of all and on a global level.

1 Sustainability over time

The trigger for solving the mentioned negative impacts at the international level was the meeting of the so-called The Brundland Commission, one of the bodies of the United Nations, which aimed to address issues relating to the destruction of the environment and natural resources and the consequences for economic and social development. The result was a report entitled "Our Common Future" (United Nations, 1987), which for the first time defined sustainable development as "sustainable development will meet the needs of the present without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

However, the topic of sustainability gained real strength only at the summit in Rio De Janeiro in 1992 - both by the number of participating countries (up to 179 states), but also by the adoption of several documents and strategies at the national level. The central theme was the environment and sustainable development. The result was the milestone documentary "Agenda 21" (United Nations, 1992). Later, the issue of sustainability also enters European Union policy; the Amsterdam Treaty was adopted, entered into force in 1999 (European Union, 1997) and later the Gothenburg Strategy (2001), which was later updated in 2006 (European Commission, 2016).

The currently binding document for all UN member states in the field of sustainability is the document "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". It is directly linked to the above-mentioned documents, which have the most fundamental impact on the European area but also on others (eg The Millennium Development Goals, etc.; see United Nations, 2015, part 11). It is one of the most ambitious document of its kind; on the one hand by the scope and universality of the concept of sustainable development, but also by the specificity of individual goals for achieving sustainability. „They seek to realize the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental” (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, p. 1).

The commitment of the countries and organizations concerned is to meet 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 associated targets which are integrated and indivisible (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, p. 6, art. 18). A particularly important aspect of the document is the view of sustainability in relation to humans. It declares equal rights to health care, education, social security, material security, legal status, regardless of gender, age, race, religion, etc. for all people. Eradicating extreme poverty and the hunger associated with it is a key goal that is integrated and indivisible in all The 2030

Agenda goals, and the way out of these challenges is access to education at all levels: from early childhood to old age (life-long learning opportunities help to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society). All countries stand to benefit from having a healthy and well-educated workforce with the knowledge and skills needed for productive and fulfilling work and full participation in indivisible society (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, p. 8, part 28).

2 Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals

The means of implementation targets under Goal 17 and under each Sustainable Development Goal are key to realizing Agenda and are of equal importance with the other Goals and targets. The Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals, can be met within the framework of a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, supported by the concrete policies and actions. It will be possible to meet the set goals only if „implementation targets under Goal 17 and under each Sustainable Development Goal will be key to realizing Agenda and will be of equal importance with the other Goals and targets“ (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, p. 10, part 40).

Figure 1: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations



Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

Social entrepreneurship, combining the pursuit of economic, social and environmental sustainability in achieving its mission, is increasingly associated with the concept of sustainability and sustainable entrepreneurship (Defourny, Nyssens, 2010).

Although some scientists claim that sustainable entrepreneurship differs from social and environmental entrepreneurship (Munoz, Cohen, 2018; Schaltegger, Wagner, 2011), while others argue that sustainable entrepreneurship includes both social and environmental

entrepreneurship (Hockerts, Wüstenhagen, 2010; Vuorio et al., 2018), nevertheless, the ideas of social entrepreneurship obviously overlap with the concept of sustainable development (Robertson, 2017; United Nations 2015). Social entrepreneurship may provide a long-term economic efficiency while addressing social and environmental issues and ensuring successful social business.

3 Sustainability development in the field of human capital

Human capital is recognised as the level of education and health in a population and is considered an important determinant of economic growth. Human capital refers to the attributes of a population and, together with physical capital such as buildings, equipment, and other tangible assets, contributes to economic productivity (Lim et al., 2018). Investing in human capital through education and health is attracting the attention of many economists, researchers, and policy makers. The most important variables of human capital development are therefore focused on investments in education or health care. At the same time, we consider education to be a key input for the development of research that produces new knowledge and contributes to increasing the efficiency and productivity of the individual, which significantly affects economic growth.

Scientific analysis of educational processes is the topic of several social sciences. Economics as one of the social science disciplines provides an economic methodological approach to understanding rational human behaviour in relation to the issue of education, which is reflected in the theory of human capital. In the 1960s and 1970s, American economists, under the influence of American economists, developed an idea based on the analogy between investing in education and in physical capital.

With the emergence of this theory, there was a change in the perception of education as a certain social need towards education as an investment, which resulted in the emergence of the economics of education. The main representatives of the theory of human capital, Schultz (1961) and Becker (1993) assumed that education as an investment in human capital directly increases the productivity of the individual and has a positive effect on economic growth (Kabir Usman, Adeyinka, 2019). Kuzmišínová (2010) mentioned statements about the positive impact of human capital on economic growth confirmed by several studies (Nelson and Phelps (1966), Romer (1989), but also Barro and Salai-Martin (1995), Doménech (2006) and others).

In the theory of human capital, there are several approaches that can be used to measure the return on investment in education, assess the impact of education, whether at individual or social level, respectively. by category of income from investments in education (cash, non-cash). The dominance of the theory of human capital in the economics of education corresponds to its authority in the public and political spheres. Nevertheless, there is a gap between the theoretical understanding and the real economic and social world in which it applies, and this gap may widen (Marginson, 2017).

The objectives of the SDGs are linked to the area of human capital, which is an integral part of many of them and directly affects it. We consider the SDG area to be important in connection with the development, maintenance but above all a sustainable view of human capital and the related sub-objectives. The definition, measurement and concept of human capital uses the resulting variable, which according to Kabir Usman and Adeyinka is related to several of the seventeen goals of sustainable development:

Goal 1 - The eradication of poverty in its entirety.

Goal 2 - Elimination of hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, promote sustainable agriculture.

Goal 3 - Ensuring a healthy life and supporting wellbeing for all age groups.

Goal 4 - Ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Goal 8 - Promoting a sustainable inclusive.

Goal 9 - Sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all and Goal 10 - Reduce inequalities within and between countries (Kabir Usman, Adeyinka, 2019).

4 Methodology

This study is based on the theoretical background in the field of sustainable development goals, human capital and qualitative research methodology (Patton, 2015). The qualitative research methodology is implemented by applying the case study method, in particular the method of collective case study (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2014; Grima-Farrell, 2017).

The object of this study is represented by seven organizations – social enterprises, the main activity of which is related to education and enlightenment in the territory of the European Union (from the local to the international level). The inclusion of organization in the collective case was carried out on the basis of the following principles: 1) belonging to a certain group, namely being a social enterprise registered in the EU (Monzón and Chaves,

2012); and working in the field of education and enlightenment as the main field of activity, and 2) maximizing the variability of data (enterprises at the local, regional and national levels, as well as at the EU level) (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008). Table 1 presents the data on social enterprises included in the sample.

The data collection was based on the data triangulation method (Bryman, 2006; Sato, 2016), including personal interviews with leaders, field observations, analysis of documents and materials. Most of the information was collected by the authors in the period 2017-2019; the documents' analysis and clarification of the information received earlier were carried out in 2020 and 2021.

Data analysis was carried out using the methodology of content analysis. Data analysis proceed through the several stages: getting acquainted with the data; assigning codes to data to describe the content; finding topics/ categories in codes; revising topics, defining and naming the final topics; generalization (Clarke et al., 2015). Due to the large amount of qualitative textual data the data analysis was done by exploiting the QDA Miner 2.0.8 (Qualitative Data Analysis Software). The use of QDA Miner software provided the iterative process of the data analysis.

Tab. 1: Social enterprises working in the field of education and enlightenment of the EU included in the sample

Project ID	Organization	Field of activity	Area of responsibility of the respondent	Mission of organization. Main activities.	Cash inflow
01	Non-profit organization, association, since 1985, EU level.	Cultural, educational, political (not a party)	The head of the office at the local level.	Establishing connections between students throughout Europe and between student cities. Summer schools in Europe, meetings.	Grants, including European; donations
02	Non-profit organization, association, since 1949 (current status since 1972), EU level	Political, educational, cultural	Project manager at the local level.	Creation of the democratic European Federation as a key element of a peaceful society, the guarantor of freedom, justice and democracy. Lectures, summer schools.	Grants, including European; donations; sale of branded goods
03	Non-profit organization, foundation, since 2004, national level	Cultural, educational	Manager of one of the projects implemented by foundation.	Providing access to cultural events (visiting museums, theaters, operas, circus), training in singing, dancing, drawing, etc. for children from low-income families. A volunteer is attached to each child during the event.	Sale of books; donations; grant support

				Volunteers are guides between the art world and children.	
04	Non-profit organization, association, since 2008, national level	Educational, enlightenment	Project manager at the local level.	Informing and supporting young people on their way from entering university to graduation and career start. The support is primarily addressed to those who are the first in the family to receive higher education (children from “non-academic” families).	Financing from ministries, foundations (including international), universities; donations from individuals
05	Non-profit organization, association, since 2002, regional level (region of the country)	Cultural, educational	Project manager, team member.	Language courses: improving the language skills of the native speakers (children), as well as teaching foreigners, including refugees; social work in schools; inclusive projects; multilingual and sustainable kindergarten; professional development of teachers in the field of intercultural education and youth protection.	Sale of services; grant support
06	Students Association at the university, no legal entity, local level	Cultural, educational	Team leader for one of the EU countries.	Helping foreign students to adapt to the university and the city. Teams of volunteers are formed by country and language (according to the native language of the participants) so that compatriots can help each other.	University support
07	Consortium (network of social cooperatives), regional level (country region), since 1999	Educational	Leader of Consortium	Professional trainings for social entrepreneurs, unemployed, and commercial companies that have a social mission. Promotion of the creation and implementation of social innovation among the members of the consortium.	Grant support, including the European funds; sale of services

Source: Own processing

5 Results

Table 2 shows the answers of the research participants to the questions related to the project success, its innovativeness, the proportionality of efforts and results (effectiveness), as well as the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Table 2 shows that most of the respondents consider their social entrepreneurial projects to be successful and innovative (6 out of 7 are successful, and 6 out of 7 are innovative). The analysis of documents and materials that we used for data triangulation showed that all seven social enterprises were successful as during the long period (more than 10 years each) they were able to attract investments and participants, scale-up, and to reach their goals. We also consider all these enterprises as innovative as they have the unique missions and mechanisms of interaction. As

for the effectiveness of the efforts, there is a wide variation in the opinions of the participants: 3 out of 7 believe that the results have exceeded the efforts, 2 out of 7 say that the results and efforts are equal, 1 out of 7 believe that the efforts exceed the result, and 1 out of 7 found it difficult to answer this question.

All our respondents unanimously and first of all defined the SDG 4 “Quality Education” as the main goal of their activities, which corresponded to the chosen field of education and enlightenment. In addition, among the specified SDGs were the following: SDG 5 “Gender Equality”, SDG 8 “Decent Work and Economic Growth”, SDG 9 “Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure”, SDG 10 “Reduced Inequalities”, SDG 16 “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions”, SDG 17 “Partnerships for the Goals”.

Tab. 2: Success, innovation, efficiency and sustainability of social entrepreneurship in the field of education and enlightenment of the EU

Project ID	Do you consider your project to be successful?	Do you consider your project to be innovative?	Compare the results and efforts of your team and volunteers. What was more, effort or results?	Does your project aim to achieve the SDGs? If so, which ones?
01	Yes	Yes	Results	SDGs 4, 16, 17
02	Yes	Yes	It is hard to say	SDGs 4, 16, 17
03	Yes	Yes	Results	SDGs 4, 10
04	Maybe	Yes	Equality of effort and results	SDGs 4, 5, 10
05	Yes	Yes	Efforts	SDGs 4, 5, 10
06	Yes	No	Equality of effort and results	SDGs 4, 10
07	Yes	Yes	Results	SDGs 4, 8, 9

Source: Own processing

The main result of the content analysis of the interviews was the identification of factors that lead to success of social entrepreneurship in the field of education and enlightenment in the European Union, as well as barriers (Table 3). Table 3 presents the paired factors of success and barriers placed in one line, as well as non-paired factors that are separated.

Tab. 3. Factors of success and barriers of social entrepreneurship in the field of education and enlightenment of the EU

Factors of success	Barriers
1. Networking and social capital.	1. Weak social networking.
2. The project team: professionalism, dedication, solidarity.	2. Weak internal organization, including the project team, internal conflicts in the team.
3. Financial sustainability.	3. Limited financial resources.
4. Open mind of participants, readiness for innovations, new knowledge and skills.	4. Barriers in the participants' minds.
5. Significance of the social mission, commitment to the social mission and creation of a new and innovative social value.	
	5. Bureaucracy and political barriers.

Source: Own processing based on QDA Miner analysis

Table 4 presents some citations retrieved from the interviews. The citations in the table did not have a project ID to keep the privacy of the respondents.

Tab. 4. Citations from the interviews

Factors of success	Barriers
<p>„Friendship, having fun in multicultural group, being a part of student group to understand different culture“.</p> <p>„We feel responsibility for them“.</p> <p>„The main successful thing was a high intellectual level of the message, of mission of this organization, capability to show that our message was beneficial for people“.</p> <p>„The main thing is to enjoy what you do. This way you will be motivated to do as much as possible to succeed“.</p> <p>„Team spirit, being able to rely on others, conscientiousness, proactiveness.“</p> <p>„Team work, being open minded, close relationship to the participants“.</p> <p>„Financial and technical support“.</p>	<p>„Barriers – we do not have barriers to implement the project, difficulties – in bureaucracy“.</p> <p>„Barriers were political barriers, mission is very hard“.</p> <p>„Finical barriers, we did not have resources as parties have“.</p> <p>„Low, little budget...“</p> <p>"Organizational barrier...“</p> <p>„It was well-known organization, but only by the professionals not by ordinary people“.</p> <p>„Hard conflicts inside organization for identity of their ideas (ideological conflicts)“.</p> <p>„To find enough volunteers to meet the need of accompanying the children.“</p> <p>„Diffusion of responsibility and commitment“.</p> <p>„Mindset.“</p> <p>„Language barrier ...“</p>

Source: Own processing

6 Discussion

The study revealed that high-quality education is perceived by respondents as work to achieve some sustainable development goals. The study partially confirmed the statements of Kabir Usman and Adeyinka that the integral variable of human capital is related to the goals of sustainable development. Significant goals that are implemented by the organizations under study include: Goal 4 - Ensuring inclusive and equitable access to quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Goal 8 - Promoting a sustainable inclusive Goal 9 - Sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all and Goal 10 -

The main factors that contribute to the achievement of these goals are the development of networking and the formation of the social capital of the organization. Special attention is paid to the composition of the team and the professional qualities of its members: professionalism, passion, cohesion. Respondents emphasized the importance of the factor of qualification and culture of teachers, lectures, volunteers, which can be considered a characteristic feature of the sphere of education and culture. The composition, qualifications and interaction of team members form the social sustainability of organizations. Practically all the organizations have a hybrid form of financing, which ensures economic sustainability. Economic sustainability is the second basic component of sustainable development. Another factor of sustainable development of human capital is open-mind thinking. Open-mind thinking ensures the dynamism of the institutional, organizational and social environment, which is necessary for the success of social entrepreneurship and the growth of the quality of education. Open-mind thinking gives impetus to global thinking and the preservation of the habitat, everyone's responsibility for the balance of the ecosystem, and then to environmental sustainability as an underestimated component of sustainable development in the field of education. The factors of sustainable growth of education are the importance of the social mission, commitment to the social mission, the creation of a new social value (including innovation).

7 Conclusion

The goals of sustainable development are an important challenge for the coming period. It is important to implement them and involve all the important institutions that can contribute to making our lives more sustainable. A particularly important topic is the field of education as an integral part of human capital, which must itself be an executor and at the same time one alone can contribute to the fulfilment of individual areas and the achievement of goals. The results of our research have pointed out that it is important to address this area.

Also, enterprises consider the field of education to be extremely important and worthy of special attention. The results of our research showed many important attributes of the projects implemented in social enterprises in Europe. They have the potential to be innovative and successful, thus contributing to the fulfilment of “The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” goals.

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Contact

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Julia Fomina
 Department of Economics
 Dostoevsky Omsk State University
 Pr. Mira 55-A, Omsk
 Russian Federation, 644077
 Fomina-u-a@yandex.ru

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Natalia Leshchenko
 Department of Economics
 Dostoevsky Omsk State University

Pr. Mira 55-A, Omsk
Russian Federation, 644077
mntomsu@yandex.ru

Ing. Jana Černá, PhD.
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Námestie Jozefa Herdu 2, 917 01 Trnava
jana.cerna@ucm.sk

Ing. Zuzana Bezáková, PhD.
Faculty of Mass Media Communication
University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava
Námestie Jozefa Herdu 2, 917 01 Trnava
zuzana.bezakova@ucm.sk