

SOCIAL WORK IN SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONTEXT

student research

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Résumé

- social entrepreneurship and concept of integration
- discussion of acquired knowledge with the results of qualitative phase of the research “Social Work in the social entrepreneurship area”

This student research „Social work in the area of social entrepreneurship“ is funded by the University of Ostrava. PhD. and Master students from Faculty of social studies of University of Ostrava participate in this research. The research period is February – December 2012

The main objective of the research is to try to answer the question:

What are the fields and forms of social work that are applied in the field of social entrepreneurship?





There is a general expectation of social work to provide clients protection from social exclusion or to support them in their **reintegration** into society. In situation, when **employment** is considered to be a keystone of integration, social work gets into trouble, as social work is not able to create any job opportunities itself (Castel, 1995).

Social economy (Noya, Clarence, 2007) = interconnection of economy activity with social and/or environmental goals and use of procedures and work methods with social benefit.

Goal of this speech is **to identify ways of meeting integrative goals of social entrepreneurs.**

The research process

Two phases

- qualitative
- quantitative



1st phase (qualitative)

Research aim – To contribute to recognition of social entrepreneurship's reality and put forward possibilities of social work application in the area of social entrepreneurship.

Semi-structured interviews with social entrepreneurship's founders. It was created 3 categories of social entrepreneurship according if social worker is employed there or not:

1. Social entrepreneurship, where is employed social worker
2. Social entrepreneurship, where is employed person, who is primarily occupied with social problems of staff (target group), but this berth is not called "social worker"
3. Social entrepreneurship, where is employed nobody from categories above

The interviews were analyzed by the method of grounded theory .



2nd phase (quantitative)

- with goal to prove model gained by grounded theory's method in 1st research phase
- this research phase will be oriented by quantitative research strategy addressed czech social entrepreneurs (about 80 in this time in Czech republic)



Social entrepreneurship

At the time when the problems of economies of so called advanced countries are gaining strength, we should focus on new alternative forms of entrepreneurship that could change, at least on a small scale, the issue of (un)employment.

The social entrepreneurship can be seen both (Lehner, 2012):

- **on the micro level**, as a business activities focused on employment of group of people threatened by unemployment,
- **on the macro level**, as a state strategies to relieve their budgets in the area of social welfare



Work Integration Social Enterprise

- is intended for social integration of people and communities through their inclusion in the labour market (EMES, 2003)
- often does not depend on their production
- usually in parallel provide social services and support to such a target groups and communities that actively participate on processes in these enterprises
- non-for-profit and socially orientated organizations and associations, municipal enterprises and activities of socially responsible enterprises, especially of social firms (that provide assist employment to the target groups)





Objects of our research were social entrepreneurs, who had led (and also had founded) social enterprises of WISE type.

Considering the main aim of WISE type social enterprises – **(re)integration of people and communities into society through their inclusion in the labour market.** This integration does not need to consist in employment as such, but may also take the form of education and career development (i.e. in increase of employment).

Concept of social integration

Integration, in sociological context (Lockwood in Zollschan, Hirsch, 1964), expresses stable, cooperative relations within a clearly defined social system.

Integration can also be seen as a process that empowers the relations within the system and brings new actors and groups to the system and its institutions.

Social integration refers to the inclusion of individuals to the systems, to creation of relationships through individuals and their attitude to the society. Whereas the emphasis is put on the **conscious interaction of all interested, thus sharing a common goal.**





It is a **foolish** idea (Goldhorpe et al., 1968-1969) to assume that the integration of groups of disadvantaged people in the labour market can be achieved **only by wages increase, improving working conditions and introduction of more liberal labour policy**. Although changes in one part of the system will influence the system itself they will not reach the desired goal.



Social integration forms (Esser, 2000)

1. *Acculturation* (also term *socialisation*) is a process by which an individual acquires knowledge, cultural standards and competencies needed to successful acting within a society (in terms of interaction)
2. *Placement* means an individual obtaining of position in society – in education or economic system, in professions or as a citizen. Placement also includes obtaining/acquisition of rights attached to specific positions and an opportunity to build social relations and to win cultural, social and economic capital. Acculturation is a prerequisite for placement.
3. *Interaction* is a groupment of relations and networks by individuals who share mutual orientation. This includes friendship, romantic relationships or marriages, or more general membership in social groups.
4. *Identification* refers to individual identification with social system: individuals see themselves as a part of a collective whole.



Social integration forms (Defourny, 2006)

- with respect to employment
 1. Temporary employment that enables the disadvantaged access to the labour market, albeit for a short term.
 2. Creation of self-sustainable jobs with partial grant support.
 3. Full sustainability with a hundred-per-cent form of subsidies.
 4. Integration through productive activities.

Most social enterprises prefer a combination of the above forms of integration.

Esser (2000)	Defourny (2006)	Student research FSS OU (2012)
acculturation		Education (theoretical preparation for employment, job search)
placement	Temporary employment with training Jobs with hundred-per-cent financial support	Training (job/social) rehabilitation, retraining
interaction	Jobs with partial financial support	Jobs with partial financial support (ESF)
identification	Sustainable jobs without financial support	<i>An issue of future ability to maintain jobs thanks to their production after the end of the subsidies</i>



In the surveyed social enterprises was identified a uniformly declared goal “integration of certain disadvantaged group of people through its employment opportunity”, but the way of its achievement varied considerably by individual enterprises (in agreement with Defourny, 2006). In principle, we could identify two ways:

1. Attempt to pass gradually all forms of integration (from acculturation to identification, respectively from temporary job with training to sustainable job without financial support)
2. “Legs first to integration” (i.e. immediate providing of jobs on the basis of obtaining certain financial support, mostly from ESF)

Attempt to pass gradually all forms of integration

- a long-term professional experience of the social entrepreneur with a selected group of disadvantaged people
- social entrepreneur was originally social worker or manager of a social service designed especially for the selected target group
- the realization that the integration can be achieved by gradual, well planned and long-term interventions





- an attempt to create some kind of support multidisciplinary team of professionals, whose aim is to flexibly suggest to the management of social enterprise how to adapt working conditions to specific needs of employees (from the target group) and to provide them with any support/assistance needed in their personal matters
- emphasis is placed on development/support of civil initiative from informing general public, through the involvement of local authorities to support of local formal and informal groups of citizens

All this, it seems, with a sophisticated goal – to get involved in shaping of the social enterprise image a lot of interested individuals, groups, institutions (stakeholders) in order to become for them as significant as for its employees (the target group).

Forms of social work

Social worker is here employed, part time. The job description - to provide advice to employees from the target group → **inclusion**

Social entrepreneurs-founders with background of social work (they were social workers or professionally moved in the area of social work) who actively and intentionally create and exploit space to influence the life of the local community, the sense of social responsibility of subjects of all three sectors → **integration**





“Legs first to integration“

- a motivation to begin to run a social business
- some civil experience with the target group
- social entrepreneurs have opted for business at a time when it was possible for them to get a financial support (usually from the ESF),
- they have no background within the area of social work
- can be find neither the position of social worker nor other helping professions
- describe how they daily solve problems that arise from the specific needs of their employees and how they need to adapt working conditions according to these problems
- they deal with these problems usually by themselves



Forms of social work

- no social worker
- they do not have a support multidisciplinary team, which would operate in integration dimensions of *acculturation-placement* (Esser, 2000), the gradual achievement of which seems to be a requirement of movement in the *interaction* dimension and of progression into *identification* dimension
- Basic social advice are the social entrepreneurs trying to provide on their own
- the social work at macro level (and therefore the integration process in its complete form, not only on the level of inclusion), we can from the interviews assume that there was kind of lack of breath by the social entrepreneurs in the area of this activity

Conclusion

It therefore seems that social male and female workers employed in the field of social entrepreneurship finally get the desired space to be the initiators of changes in their clients lives (micro level) and also in the life of the community, in the field of integration in the labour market, but also in the possibilities to influence sense for social responsibility (macro level) and hopely to complete by this way the process or (re)integration of their clients into the society through their employment.

It seems, however, that while social workers are hired to provide case management and individual counselling, the other professionals in the meantime create an organisation structure and work at macro level. From our research it appears to be promising for the social work and its integrating goals when these “other professionals-managers” have social work background





But what is the situation in social enterprises without social workers where the managers perceive the role of social work as unnecessary? How these enterprises succeed in declared goals of integration? Is it in these cases really about local development (in terms of system) or about support clearly defined group of disadvantaged people?

These and other questions can be answered by help of the next phase of our research made by quantitative research strategy among Czech social enterprises.



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