

# Transnational Report on Successful Stories and Recommendations for Social Entrepreneurship Enhancement - executive summary

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## About @ESEN Project

According to the European Commission, social enterprises uniquely combine a social goal with an entrepreneurial spirit and the common good. These enterprises have become the preferred route to tackle high unemployment in Europe, as it is precisely such entities that fully respond to important social needs. The declaration made at the end of the event organized as part of the Social Entrepreneurship Initiative (SBI) in Strasbourg in 2014 emphasizes the importance of education in the field of the social economy, establishing new social enterprises, building a network of relationships between them and supporting the development of this sector. The main problems faced by social enterprises are complex legislation, both at national and European level, and thus - difficult market access and a lack of adequate training and cooperation between stakeholders from different regions / countries. Based on the above facts, the **European Social Economy Network (ESEN)** project aims to catalyze the rapidly growing movement of social enterprises in the EU, providing them with the resources they need to succeed, while supporting and developing the idea of social entrepreneurship.

Main objectives of the @ESEN project:

- ❖ to help build and support existing social enterprise networks and increase the interaction between them;
- ❖ to raise awareness of social enterprise (SE) as a way to create employment, reduce poverty and contribute to a better world;
- ❖ to promote the work of existing social enterprises, within the context of a social economy movement that also includes social entrepreneurs, cooperatives mutual and ethical companies;
- ❖ to add to the body of knowledge around social enterprise including the setting up of an ESEN on-line knowledge centre that will provide training and education and help spread good practice.

@ESEN partnership consists of **6** organizations from **5** countries with different levels of social economy development Poland, Italy, United Kingdom, Cyprus and Greece.

During over 2 years of the project, the following results will be developed:

- ❖ transnational report containing success stories of social enterprises and recommendations for the development of social entrepreneurship.
- ❖ training program and syllabus that will enable support in the development of already functioning social enterprises and will be helpful for potential future social entrepreneurs who have an idea for a new activity.
- ❖ e-learning platform, increasing knowledge and improving the competences of about 100 people participating in the pilot training courses planned in each partner country.
- ❖ a knowledge base that will be a specific network of contacts for social entrepreneurs, social economy organizations, facilitators, business angels, mentors, trainers, students and everyone interested in the social economy.

We present a ready summary of the research on the development of the social economy carried out in partner countries.

## Aims and objectives of Transnational report

The Transnational report includes a set of final recommendations for social entrepreneurship enhancing and key points for improvements on training, support, sharing of good practices and networking. It is the basis for the elaboration of the future @ESEN Programme and Syllabus but is also a self-standing document, useful to anyone interested in the subject.

The report is based on the comprehensive cross-analysis of five national reports, for which desk and field researches were conducted in partners' countries - Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Poland, and the UK. **The desk research** consisted of the analysis of relevant social economy legislations, publications, projects and databases available on national levels. **The field research** was conducted through a semi-structured questionnaire addressed to @ESEN target groups in each county. The main aim of these surveys was to find out the training and educational needs of SEs.

The Transnational report compares the following subjects to draw the final recommendations and conclusions:

- ❖ National and European legal framework, policies and strategies regarding the social economy and social entrepreneurship;
- ❖ Key stakeholders supporting social entrepreneurship;
- ❖ Good practices from partner's countries (25 in total);
- ❖ Identified training and educational needs of social enterprises, identified through comparing the results of 135 questionnaires and the results from the available reports from partners' countries and analysis of 25 good and bad practises.

**Details can be found in National Reports and the full version of the Transnational Report**

**Reports are available on request, after the contact with project Coordinator/Partners.**

## Good practices from partner's countries

Overall 25 good practices (5 per country) of social entrepreneurship were selected and presented in the Transnational report. The idea of sharing those good practices was to give the examples to follow and inspire other SEs. Good practices were identified based on the following set of criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, planning, monitoring and evaluation, versatility, innovation, ethics, entrepreneurship and maturity.

**The identified good practices are available online:**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/118FRNcAG8cBhk73SQaK9UaPY-BpGSjj6/view?usp=sharing>

## Recommendations for social entrepreneurship enhancement through replicable SE models

Social enterprises combine social aims with entrepreneurship, delivering products and services that benefit local communities and society. They tackle social challenges and promote sustainable development. Scaling social enterprises' social impact, which can be defined as the most effective and efficient way to increase a social enterprise's social impact, based on its operational model, to satisfy the demand for relevant products and/or services, is important for decision-makers and societies as a whole. Although very often

social enterprises are concentrated in specific niches, acting locally, and are not evenly distributed within and across countries there are different ways in which their impact could be scaled, increasing the effects of their activities (services and products).

Scaling social impact is a big challenge for all entities supporting the development of social enterprises – public and private bodies, networks of social enterprises, communities of practitioners and researchers because in most cases the value-creation chain of social enterprises differs significantly from that of conventional enterprises. The difference in the scaling strategies of social and conventional enterprises can be mainly seen in three key aspects: their objectives, the specific characteristics of goods or services delivered by social enterprises, and the highly collaborative relations they establish with other stakeholders. The main strategies that can be used by social enterprises to scale their impact are expanding, replicating, partnering with others, and/or sharing their knowledge.

From the experiences of the social enterprises presented in the @ESEN project, all decided to scale their impact. The methods chosen were different and depended on the type of activities provided by enterprises, the available resources, and the environment they operated in.

### Recommendations for improvements in training and networking

From the results of the field research (questionnaires) conducted in 5 partners' countries it can be concluded that the @ESEN training should be comprehensive and address the following categories and fields:

Category	Field of training
<b>Ethical activities</b>	Developing a code of ethics, a system of ethical and business values applicable in the company
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Formulating mission and clarifying or revising business goals
	Developing methods or tools to assess company effectiveness
<b>Efficiency</b>	Developing and implementation of a system to increase the efficiency of the use of your resources
<b>Planning of the company's activities</b>	Developing a strategy and developing an operational plan
<b>Monitoring and evaluation</b>	Developing a system, methods or tools to monitor and evaluate activities
<b>Innovation</b>	Developing new services, products or offers for customers
	Improving the quality of customer service
	Identifying areas where innovation can be applied (an innovative approach)
<b>Evaluation of the company's entrepreneurship</b>	Raising the competence of company managers and management, finance and accounting, human resource, marketing, sales and promotion
	Raising employee competences
	Diversifying revenue sources
	Assessing the company's potential for development and determining possible development directions

<b>Communication and promotion</b>	Improving internal communication in the company
	Assessing interpersonal relationships (developing an improvement plan)
	Developing a system, methods or tools to verify customers or suppliers
	Strengthening the company's image and visibility
	Assessing used means of promotion (developing an improvement plan)
	Assessing relations with the company's stakeholders (developing a program to improve these relationships)
<b>Solutions to social problems</b>	Assessing to what extent the company's activities meet the needs of the society or local community
	Recognizing the needs of beneficiaries, target group or local community
	Assessing how a company is perceived in its environment, among beneficiaries and target groups
	Customising activities to the needs of beneficiaries or target groups
<b>Stability and maturity</b>	Assessing the risks associated with the business
	Developing possible actions to prevent the occurrence of the identified risk
	Developing alternative scenarios in case of the expected risk

The support for SE should be offered in the form of online training which should be practical and problem-oriented. The other forms of support are individual counselling followed by mentoring and coaching. These forms of support should address the particular problems faced daily by the SEs. Therefore, @ESEN e-learning platform should facilitate a place for the SEs, in a form of a chat/virtual meeting place for the representatives of SEs, where people can ask questions and get answers to their identified problems from advanced and experienced social entrepreneurs.

Almost in every country, except Cyprus, some SE networks already exist, but in every country, the need for good network support for social enterprises was indicated. For example in the UK, where SE sector is most advanced and mature, it was mentioned that new self-sustaining networks need to be formed using social media and high participation with low central costs and ability to go with the flow.

The main aims of the @ESEN network should be: exchange of opinions and advice; sharing the problems, solutions and good practices; integration, promotion of social economy and education both new and established SEs. The @ESEN network should be also capable of connecting SEs, social entrepreneurs, social economy organisations, facilitators, business angels, mentors, trainers and experts in the field of social economy. @ESEN network transnationality could help the SEs create relations among different regions and countries, improve transnational interactions, which generates new knowledge and cooperation opportunities.



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