



Cypriot trends in Social entrepreneurship

As stated in the 2019 country report Social enterprises and their ecosystems in Europe, report, the term “social enterprise” is generally unknown and rarely used in the country. In the Greek language, a single word is used for both “enterprise” and “business”— **επιχείρηση**. Therefore, the language cannot distinguish between the terms “social enterprise” and “social business”.

The term "enterprise" is not perceived positively in Cypriot society. Previous studies (e.g., Eurobarometer 2008) show a negative perception towards entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in general; thus, many people would like to avoid labeling their activities as social enterprises and prefer to place their activities under the "non-profit" label. The term "non-profit" (or "not for-profit") is closely associated with volunteering and equated with philanthropy; therefore, "non-profit" is capable of generating more empathy from Cypriot society than the term "social enterprise".

Associations and foundations occasionally identify themselves as social enterprises. This happens sporadically when they wish to be included within the framework of European projects under the general theme of social entrepreneurship. However, when it comes to direct, public visibility, these entities prefer to identify themselves as NPOs rather than as social enterprises.

The Cypriot social enterprise sector is in evolution. Its trend towards socially-oriented businesses will likely gain further momentum over the next decade. Businesses that combine social or environmental goals, and economic activity, and transparency criteria are expected to become the "social businesses of tomorrow" and fill the gap or absence of today's social enterprise sector, particularly if the government does not actively engage in the sector's development.



Challenges for Social Entrepreneurship in Slovenia

One of the greatest obstacles in the development of social innovation and social entrepreneurship in Slovenia is the fact, that the concept of social economy and social innovation is still very new and is just starting to establish themselves as generally recognized.

The next problem Slovenia has been facing (similar to other transitional countries) is confusion in values and attitudes and the use of terms related to the social economy. At the political level, the social economy is not well understood, and in particular, the specific form of social enterprises, as a new tool for social cohesion.

This poor understanding is no doubt the result of years of top-down socio-economic development strategy and the confusion regarding the meaning of 'social ownership' which was always associated with state ownership and is markedly different from what democratic countries understand as a 'social ownership initiative'. There are many concerns regarding the situation in the field of social entrepreneurship in Slovenia. Top-down program-driven strategy is driving the adoption of strategies for the social economy is true in all countries, but even more so in the transition economies.

In Slovenia, there is the necessity for a process approach to new policy initiatives that take into consideration the need to transcend historically rooted perceptions. Even vocabulary cannot be universally applied; the metaphors are not the same. A more extensive public dialogue and popular education about the social economy and social enterprises is necessary. This is as true within government as it is for society at large. Path dependency is not a barrier to change but it will shape how change is implemented. The fact is also that there is a lack of any competent study on social innovation in Slovenia. There are no accepted standards, nor criteria regarding what constitutes social innovation. Therefore, it is hard to source and include all relevant stakeholders (https://zavod14.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Social-Entrepreneurship_Case-of-Slovenia.pdf).