

**Social economy entities and its eco-system in different
European countries –an comparative analyse based on
International research project - RESCuE.**

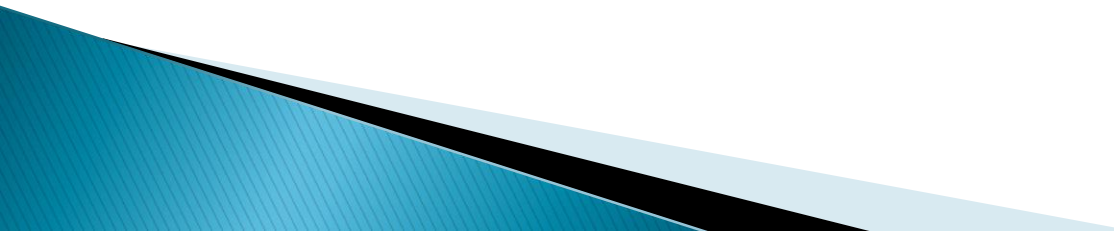
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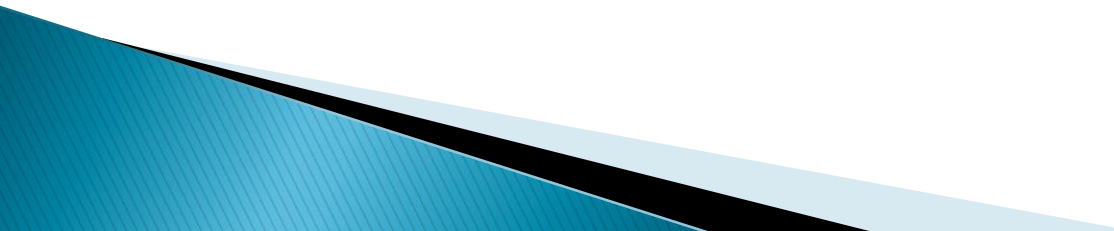
RESCuE Project

- ▶ The international research project RESCuE – *Patterns of Resilience during Socioeconomic Crises among Households in Europe* was carried out from 2014 to 2017 by partners from Germany, Greece, Finland, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Turkey and United Kingdom.
- ▶ The principal aim of this research was to determine (based on comparative qualitative analysis of the collected empirical material) the conditions and patterns of action that help and support, or limit and inhibit, the resilience of households in a difficult situation.
- ▶ One of the thematic areas of this project (included in the work package - NGOs, social economy and social entrepreneurship in community, neighborhood and household resilience), was to determine the influence of social economy entities, which act between welfare state institutions and resilient households, on building social resourcefulness and resilience of individuals, households and entire communities.

Concept of resilience

- ▶ resilience can be understood as a phenomenon according to which some people from a given population perform better than others under the same unfavorable conditions. (Werner, Bierman, French 1977; Masten 2001)
 - ▶ people's, households and community capacity to resile is highly dependent on the resources they can put to work in difficult situations. This emphasis's the important role of social resources for developing resilience (Nettles, Mucherah, Jones 2000)
 - ▶ social resilience is the ability of communities to withstand external shocks to their social infrastructure. This is particularly apposite for resource-dependent communities which are facing external stresses and shocks, both in the form of environmental disasters, as well as in the form of social, economic and political upheaval. (Adger 2000: 361)
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Pattern of Social Economy

- ▶ Based on the information gathered within the RESCuE project, it was possible to identify certain 'patterns' of understanding and defining social economy, which constitute the legal, institutional and cultural circumstances underpinning how social economy entities function at the level of individual countries.
 - ▶ The following classification is not a precise and unambiguous typology. It is rather an attempt to identify certain patterns of action of social economy entities in the different countries where the RESCuE project was implemented.
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Pattern of SE	<i>Social Economy as a field of NGO sector activity</i>	<i>Civic-entrepreneur type</i>	<i>Entrepreneur/labour market inclusion type</i>	<i>Community economy (communitarian) type</i>
(RESCuE project partner country)	Germany	Finland, Ireland, UK	Poland	Spain, Greece, Turkey, partly Portugal
Understanding of SE	Non-profit NGOs, mostly funded by public resources. No legal definition of social enterprise.	Both the NGO sector and social entrepreneurship. Strong position of the third Sector; high level of decentralization.	SE includes NGO sector and social entrepreneurship which is dominant and understood as (WISE) and other entities of socio-professional reintegration.	SE understood as NGO sector, social enterprise and (WISE) (except Turkey). In practice – SE activity closely related to the community economic activities but for social purposes.
SE in practice	Very strong position of the biggest third Sector organisations which are respected and professionally prepared.	NGO sector – diverse and competing for public funds. Social enterprises operating on the open market selling goods and services mostly to public authorities.	Significant importance of EU funds in promoting the idea of and understanding SE. Mostly top-down initiatives supported and financed in their initial phases by public institutions.	Often bottom-up, informal, not initiated or supported by public institutions. Great importance of local relationships, norms and ties.

Practice of social economy idea on local level

- ✓ Usually, presented in research material, entities are supporting individuals and households facing hardship by: „crisis intervention”, charity, distributing food and cloths,
- ▶ *„...the “Ant” offers one super-market bag for every household once in two weeks. The families who are taking part in the activities mostly suffer from poverty and unemployment. The people who are in need of these offers are primarily immigrants...” (Greece);*
- ✓ providing service, education , training and organizing internship
- ▶ *„... in Cemevi (religious organisation) education that aim to teach both Alevi belief/practices and courses such as English, computer programming and musical instruments are given to applicants. ” (Turkey)*
- ✓ few creates working places for it's clients/supported individuals
 - ▶ *In the recent years, the Centre for Social Integration has been executing projects for long-term unemployed people benefiting from social welfare and disabled people taking part in 6-month programmes of social employment. (Poland)*
 - ▶ *Some of the associations, such as Skolt Sámi Foundation are able to use the state and municipal support to employ people, at least for short-term with so called “work market support” and “salary support” systems. (Finland)*

- ✓ The respondents (from partner countries) participating in different forms of social employment (“*work market support*” and “*salary support*” systems, *one-Euro-Job*, *paid traineeships etc.*) usually were satisfied with these activities as it enabled them to earn same money, be active etc. But from the other hand this activities were also criticize to the short-term character.
- ▶ *However, these forms of support allow only short-term employment (RHh5). Therefore, the current state approach to employment is criticized – as the local employment offices have been closed, services digitalized and the support for individuals to become employment are just “short-term tricks” (RE2). (Finland)*
- ✓ Also low amount of money which was offered in this kind of social employment was criticizes as to low, which does not allow to cover all necessary expenses while reducing the possibility of finding another job.
- ▶ *„H1 really likes her one-Euro-job and it helps her to stay resilient. Nevertheless, she also criticizes the Jobcentre and the one-Euro-Job as she sees no real perspective to get a normal job, earn more money and leave Hartz IV ...”*

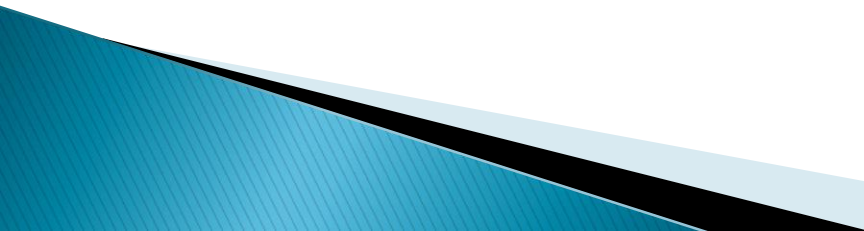
- ✓ In some cases, the programs related to the social employment are criticized in connection with the lack of long-term effects associated with some form of employment, the opportunity to obtain any fixed income at a terminus of the project itself.
- ▶ *The employees of the Club of Social Integration emphasize that the problem is a situation in which employers willingly employ trainees or make use of other forms of subsidized employment, because they can have an employee working for free due to the fact that their remuneration is refunded. However, many employers do not employ trainees when their period of employment is over and they look for other „free employees”. (Poland)*
- ✓ Respondents in a very positive way speak about projects that allow them to get some stability not only financial but also associated with a fixed profit activity.
- ▶ *„ ...and I started working here under the CE scheme and I loved it. ... I worked here for I think it was 3 years on the scheme and then being a Traveller I got another 2 years and then when my time was up it was terrible. It was more or less that I missed it as well but I used to come down voluntary and I used to come down and do the clubs ... but then [project co-ordinator] called me down for an interview for the caretaking job came up and I said that would suit me fine so I came down and I done the interview in here and I got the job and I was here for another 4 year..it's really like a second home to me at this stage and then it was funded by the Westmeath communities together and it was great ... ” (Aisling, INT.HU.005). (Ireland)*

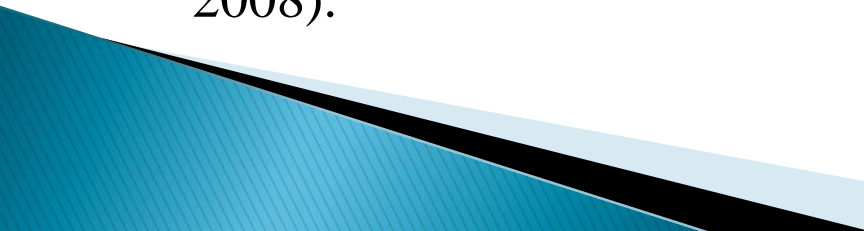
- ✓ Usually assessment of NGO activity is much better than in case of public institutions;
- ✓ there are cases in which NGOs are criticized for focusing more on attracting projects to maintain the employment of people working in them than in providing assistance;
- ▶ *„some of the beneficiaries themselves question the role of the NGO's actions. ... As he profoundly argued, “all the money for immigrants that are coming from the European Union were spent for other purposes. They take money for the immigrants, but they ask me to translate for them voluntarily”. It is obvious that they reproduce their existence by exploiting the precarious workers who lack citizen and labour rights in the social context of Greece under the existing political circumstances.” (Greece)*

- ✓ An examples of „community economy” (based on strong social capital), described in national RESCuE reports, is so-called no-middlemen movement (Greece) or Spanish vine cooperative which belongs to two thousand vine and olive oil producers who sell their products to the cooperative and receive an agreed price. The cooperative creates a number of working places and job opportunities for community members and offers other services, including trainings, counselling etc. The wine-production cooperative is a source of identity and pride not only for producers, workers and other staff but for the town as a whole.
- ✓ what is observed is the great importance of bonding social capital and a tendency to close off the community/group from everything that is foreign and unknown. This importance and exclusive (closing) character of social capital was very strongly emphasized in Turkish example, where an authors presented negative attitude of close relations and support leading to clientelism.
- ▶ *There was no way to get a job unless you were a ruling party supporter. While these practices were attracting the unemployed, needy people to contribute the activities of ruling party at the local level, dependency to the very same mechanism was inevitably increasing. The opposing groups such as CHP (Republican People's Party) voters and/or Alevi people had no chance to benefit from these opportunities with preserving their political position'. (R3, Turkey) (Poyras, Aytekin, Sengul, 2016).*

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Contribution of SE practices in individual households and community resilience	Wide range of help and social services -‘crisis intervention’, charity, distributing food and clothes, providing services, education and training.	Providing various forms of social service, as in the first case, by various types of NGOs; also creating a number of working places (or social employment) in social entrepreneur entities.	(WISE) constitute the dominant form of social enterprises in this type, achieved through the provision of a very wide range of goods and e.g. social services of general interest.	their implementation is possible thanks to mutual trust, willingness to cooperate and a sense of bonding. Their effect is not only the development of the people directly involved in them but also of the entire community and, thus, a high level of social identification and acceptance occurs.
Limitations	Limited number of projects undertaken by NGO sector, facilitating some form of long-term employment (not including employment of professional staff in NGO sector) which could give higher level of independence from external support.	Competition between NGO entities; short-term projects unable to create long-term strategies for clients; existing support helps to cover necessary expenses but limits job seeking. Social entrepreneur activities sometimes are accessible only for skilled and productive workers which may increase exclusion of members of	The vocational integration activities (training and courses) are often criticized for lack of possibility for employment after the training. (WISE) implemented with financial support of public institutions often exists as long as there is external (mostly financial) support.	In some cases cooperation and mutual support is reserved exclusively for members of the local community, religious group or political party. There is a tendency to close off the community/group from everything that is foreign and unknown.

Conclusions

- ▶ Existing entities of social economy take actions supporting social and professional integration, but their actions are very often „uniform” and adjusted to the needs and competences of low-qualified people.
 - ▶ The support can often be highly appreciated at introductory, training, motivating stage, which is good for a start, but at the stage of social and professional inclusion, the instruments that these entities possess are not sufficient. It often doesn't result in professional reintegration, what makes beneficiaries of these institutions more and more dependent on the aid system.
 - ▶ it is possible to conclude that the form of support that most effectively supports the ability to cope with difficult life situations resulting from poverty and unemployment is the raising of professional qualifications supported by the possibility of an internship. In the most effective option, the training process should be combined with an internship at a specific position carried out with a potential future employer who will not only be responsible for running the given internship but can also assure good preparation of the future employee.
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- ▶ With reference to potential of development of social economy, we should emphasize the role of grass-roots, local social activity as a factor generating the development of social economy and favouring stability of its institutional forms at the level of local community.
 - ▶ As a result, less formalized activities are omitted such as neighbourly help, which require greater involvement of people at the level of local communities, based on acquaintance, trust, willingness to help and cooperate, defining and solving common problems. All these elements made up the support of entities of social economy and people who take such actions. Whereas, lack of support causes failure of such activities.
 - ▶ Grass-roots social support and active cooperation and support from local authorities and public institutions give a chance for success for entities of social economy. Therefore, the implementation of activities in the field of social economy should be based on some similar principles and procedures as community work (Rothman, Tropman 1987; Haynes, Holmes 1994; Geddes, Benington (eds) 2001; Rothman 2008).
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Thank you for your
attention!

