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Title: The use of social entrepreneurship in the field of municipal services to build social security of the people threatened by social exclusion. European experience

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**THE USE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE FIELD OF
MUNICIPAL SERVICES TO BUILD SOCIAL SECURITY
OF THE PEOPLE THREATENED BY SOCIAL EXCLUSION.
EUROPEAN EXPERIENCE**

**WYKORZYSTANIE PRZEDSIĘBIORCZOŚCI SPOŁECZNEJ
|W DZIEDZINIE USŁUG KOMUNALNYCH DO BUDOWANIA
BEZPIECZEŃSTWA SPOŁECZNEGO OSÓB ZAGROŻONYCH
WYKLUCZENIEM SPOŁECZNYM. DOŚWIADCZENIA
EUROPEJSKIE**

Abstract


The main problem of this article is the possibility of using social entrepreneurship related to the provision of communal services to strengthen the sense of social security in people threatened by social exclusion. This problem is important because ensuring social security in a direct and indirect way is the task of the state. This task also applies to people who are socially excluded or at risk of this phenomenon. Its implementation may take place with the participation of social economy entities, supported by the state in a financial manner as well as through appropriate legislation in the scope of shaping the conditions for the development of the social economy.

The aim of this study is to get to know the scope of social economy enterprises in the municipal services and their impact on people employed in this type of institutions, including the possibility of increasing the sense of social security of this people and confirming or denying that the majority of people working in this type social economy entities are people who are socially excluded or threatened with this phenomenon.

Keywords: *social entrepreneurship, communal services, social innovations, social exclusion, social security*

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Streszczenie

Głównym problemem niniejszego artykułu są możliwości wykorzystania przedsiębiorczości społecznej związanej ze świadczeniem usług komunalnych do wzmocnienia poczucia bezpieczeństwa społecznego u osób zagrożonych wykluczeniem społecznym. Problem ten jest ważny ponieważ zapewnienie bezpieczeństwa społecznego w sposób bezpośredni i pośredni jest zadaniem państwa. Zadanie to odnosi się także do osób wykluczonych społecznie czy zagrożonych tym zjawiskiem. Jego realizacja może odbywać się przy współdziałaniu podmiotów ekonomii społecznej, wspomaganych przez państwo w sposób finansowy jak również poprzez odpowiednie ustawodawstwo w zakresie kształtowania warunków dla rozwoju ekonomii społecznej. Celem niniejszego opracowania jest poznanie zakresu działalności przedsiębiorstw ekonomii społecznej w sferze usług komunalnych oraz ich wpływ na osoby zatrudnione w tego typu instytucjach z uwzględnieniem możliwości zwiększenia u tego typu osób poczucia bezpieczeństwa społecznego oraz potwierdzenie lub zaprzeczenie, że w większości osoby pracujące w tego typu podmiotach ekonomii społecznej należą do osób wykluczonych społecznie lub zagrożonych tym zjawiskiem.

Słowa kluczowe: przedsiębiorczość społeczna, usługi komunalne, innowacje społeczne, wykluczenie społeczne, bezpieczeństwo społeczne

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Statement of the problem in general outlook and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks.

The main problem of this article is the attempt to determine the possibility of using social entrepreneurship associated with the provision of municipal services to strengthen the sense of social security in people at risk of social exclusion. This problem seems to be significant from the practical point of view because ensuring social security in the direct and indirect manner is the task of the state. This task also applies to people who are socially excluded or at risk of this phenomenon. Its implementation can be carried out with the use of social

economy entities, supported by the state in a financial manner, as well as through appropriate legislation in shaping the conditions for the development of the social economy. The issue being raised is also important from the scientific point of view because there are only a few studies on real social enterprises operating in the municipal services industry, trying to describe the principles of their operation and approximating the so-called exemplary practices that are worth spreading. This article is an attempt to fill this gap.

Analysis of latest research where the solution of the problem was initiated.

The phenomenon of social exclusion cannot be defined without understanding and defining the issue of marginalization. The

social position of groups whose social status has been diminished by the dominant activities of other groups is considered to be

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marginalization. It is a peripheral or ambiguous social position of the group, or deprivation of equal rights because of less access to power, including economic, cultural or political ones (Szarfenberg, 2006, p.33-48). People from marginalized groups are characterized by limited subjectivity, which is manifested in the limitation or complete lack of their impact on institutions, on which the level and quality of life depend. Due to the ever-growing objectification, a marginalized person is subjected to ever stronger, impersonal processes. People from marginalized groups are often defined according to labels that express disapproval and human contempt, which further reduce their self-esteem (Pankiw, Duranowski, 2014, p.16).

For example, in Poland, there are two categories of people in relation to the problem of social exclusion. They are people susceptible to social exclusion and seriously threatened with social exclusion. The first category includes victims of the pathology of family life, people with low qualifications, unemployed people, people living in very difficult housing conditions, disabled, chronically ill and mentally ill.

The category of people seriously threatened with social exclusion, among others, includes long-term unemployed, people leaving prisons, economic migrants entering the grey employment zone, homeless people (Regulska, 2015, p.188).

Social exclusion is a synonym of permanent marginalization. It is a situation in which a person (a member of the society) cannot participate in the activities of citizens of society (on the principles defined in it, adopted by them). However, this limitation is not a result of the person's internal beliefs but is beyond the control of the excluded individual. Social exclusion is a multidimensional phenomenon and in practice means a

lack of opportunities to participate in economic, political and cultural life, as a result of lack of access to resources, goods, and institutions, limitation of social rights and deprivations of needs (Internet Management Encyclopedia).

The third sector and its activities are a response to the essential needs expressed by society. These needs most often could not be satisfied by the state or the market. According to supporters of the social economy, there is potential in people with disabilities and low qualifications that can and must be used. However, it must be kept in mind that some of these people are unable to work due to their health, some will prefer to take care of their family, and yet another for various reasons will not be interested in starting a professional activity at all. However, for those who want to work – social entrepreneurship is an opportunity to return or enter the labor market. The conclusion is obvious: if the active social policy is to bring the expected results, new jobs must appear. Social entrepreneurship, or, more broadly, social economy, will not solve the problem of unemployment, it will not change socio-economic mechanisms, but it can help long-term unemployed or give work to those people who, for various reasons, are too big a burden for private entrepreneurs. The social economy also plays an important role in the service sector for people who are disadvantaged in the labor market (creating jobs or providing necessary services), who are not a very interesting (low profitable) group for the market, while for the state they are a considerable burden. (Pankiw, Duranowski, 2014, p.23-24).

Social entrepreneurs identify a stable and unjust balance in society that causes the exclusion, marginalization or suffering of certain groups of people who do not have enough financial resources or are excluded

from political reasons, which results in the inability to live in dignity. Then, these socialists look for inspiration to solve this problem and start a business to introduce a positive change in the existing balance. This action releases the trapped human potential or reduces suffering and creates a friendly ecosystem that ensures a better future for selected groups of people (Martin, Osberg, 2007, p.33).

In the literature, there are many definitions and expressions of three synonymous terms: social entrepreneurship, social enterprise and social entrepreneur. Johanna Mair and Ignasi Martí (2006) indicate three different ways of understanding social entrepreneurship. First, it can be treated as a search for alternative financial strategies for non-profit initiatives or management programs for creating social value. Secondly, it can be understood as a socially engaged business practice in a cross-sector partnership. Thirdly, it is a way of mitigating social problems and catalyzing social change (Mair, Martí 2006, p. 37).

Social entrepreneurship, like every economic phenomenon, has different cross-sections. One of the wider definitions of social entrepreneurship refers to socially-oriented innovative activity, arising both in commercial organizations as well as in non-governmental organizations (Chell et al., 2010, p. 485)

In Europe, social enterprises are perceived as part of the idea of the social economy, which main driving force is the social benefit. What is characteristic here is: the democratic mode of managing the organization, including recipients in the activities of entities and the involvement of public authorities. Except for the United Kingdom, a social enterprise usually takes the form of a social cooperative or association providing employment or specific care services with

the involvement of beneficiaries (Kerlin 2006, p. 249).

The concept of a social enterprise in Europe focuses more on how to manage an organization and purpose than on whether it strictly adheres to the limitation of profit distribution in relation to formal non-profit organizations (Kerlin 2006, p. 249).

In turn, in the United States, a social enterprise is defined as any type of non-profit organization involved in generating income. As observed by Janelle A. Kerlin (2006, p. 248–249; 2008, p. 120–122), there is no concept of social economy here, and the activity of a non-profit social enterprise is often perceived as part of a market economy. In the category of a social enterprise, every type of non-profit oriented initiative is focused on generating income. They can take on various organizational forms. This group includes both profit-oriented entities that engage in social activities within the framework of philanthropic or corporate responsibility activities of the business, as well as hybrid forms, i.e. enterprises that combine and strive for profit, and social purpose, and non-profit organizations that run a business supporting the implementation of their mission. The European understanding of social entrepreneurship is closer to the last proposal to define social entrepreneurship in typology by Mair and Martí (2006), while the American definition refers to the first and second grasp (Pacut, 2010, p.46).

The area of operation of social enterprises is wide in Europe. It includes:

1. Initiatives in the field of social and professional reintegration for groups affected by social exclusion (people who can work but are professionally idle).
2. Social services (e.g. care for the elderly, pre-school education for children, tourism, services for households).

3. Local development (e.g. agritourism, social revitalization, waste utilization) (Leś 2008, p. 38–46).

Using the research conducted by the EMES research group in the EU-15 countries, different types of entities of social economy were identified, among them social integration enterprises and social inclusion enterprises (Work Integration Social Enterprise–WISE) (Spear, Bidet 2003) – which main objective is the professional integration of people experiencing serious difficulties on the labor market (among others, people with physical and mental disabilities, women in a difficult life situation, representatives of national minorities, young people with low qualifications, addicts and people difficult to employ).

The concept of social security is not a fully defined category. It can be perceived in the existential dimension as protecting the foundations of people's lives, satisfying

their needs and enabling the performance of life aspirations. On the other hand, it is related to the assessment of the activities of institutions set up to minimize the various social threats (Gierszewski, 2018, p.25). The activity of social economy entities, including social enterprises, is conducive to increasing the sense of social security of socially excluded people being employees of this type of institution. Performing work for which they receive remuneration enables them to meet various needs. The task of the state is to minimize social threats, including those affecting people belonging to the group of socially excluded people or those threatened with such exclusion. However, indirectly, organizations that act as social economy entities that are supported by the state also pursue this goal. They should be subject to scientific research to determine how this can be done more efficiently and better.

Aims of paper. Methods

This article uses the analysis of case studies concerning the activities of social enterprises operating in Europe. Based on the information available on the Internet and on the websites of the analyzed institutions, their activities related to the provision of municipal services and the approach to people working in such organizations operating within entities related to the social economy are described. Conducted research and analyses are qualitative. They allowed to get to know the activity of the analyzed institutions and on this basis determine the scope and the way their activity affects the

social security of the people employed in them.

The aim of this study is to determine the nature of social economy enterprises in the operation of municipal services and their impact on people employed in such institutions, including the possibility of increasing the sense of social security in such persons and confirming or denying that in the majority of persons working in this type of social economy entities belong to people socially excluded or threatened by social exclusion.


Exposition of main material of research with complete substantiation of obtained scientific results. Discussion.

In this article, three case studies of social economy entities operating in the municipal services sector will be presented. These are

entities operating within the so-called third sector from various European countries.

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Case study 1. Green Works – a social enterprise from Scotland

Green Works is a non-governmental organization operating mainly in Scotland as well as expanding its activities to other parts of England. Its activity focuses on various aspects important for the protection of the environment and taking care of greenery and gardens. Among others, this organization collects furniture and office equipment, and gives it to charity organizations. It is supported by, among others, Bacardys Bank, Mark&Spencer. By running this kind of activity, it frees businesses from problems, while giving jobs to long-term unemployed and disabled people (Promess Project, 2014, p.32). Running this type of activity, Green Works initially offered the collected and repaired furniture to other non-government organization in Great Britain, especially those that did not have the money to buy new ones. A large amount of furniture collected and repaired by Green Works was sold at charity auctions for a lot of money. Financial resources obtained in this way were used to train people with cognitive problems in England and to send necessary furniture to local communities in developing countries. After 10 years of running this activity, it turned out that large companies that previously threw away furniture, not interested in what is happening to them, began to sell them themselves to companies dealing with waste or sale of used goods. This situation resulted in a lack of financial resources for training disabled people run by Green Works. Therefore, Green Works undertook activities related to the conclusion of contracts for the collection of used furniture from great English companies. The activities of this non-governmental organization became more business and ended in success. It has enabled the employment of over 800 people belonging to

socially marginalized groups and the supply of furniture to over 15,000 small non-governmental organizations (Crooks, 2010).

The current activity of Green Works includes courses on which people are willing to learn the rules of gardening and mowing grass, so that it is safe. These trainings provide an opportunity to acquire qualifications for people who want to deal with this type of services activity in a professional manner on behalf of individual or public clients.

Employees employed by Green Works deal with the care of gardens in a professional manner. Their services include mowing, weeding, painting the fences and gazebos. They also make and sell breeding houses for birds and bird feeders, garden tables and wooden plant pots. They also implement larger projects related to the maintenance and care of public green areas in Scottish cities and repair broken garden furniture. Green Works is a social enterprise run by Brothers of Charity Services dealing in services for people with learning disabilities. This organization applies principle close to human resources management in its operation. They are based on the recruitment and employment of people with specific skills and abilities and who want to have a real impact on their lives. Each person employed in this organization has the same principles as respect for individuality, development of positive social relationships, and respect for other people employed in Green Works. This type of people can count on the support of Green Works. As a kind of return for observing the above-mentioned principles and values, Green Works undertakes to develop employed people, involve them in the management and the strategy of this organization and increase

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their value as employees. (Green Works internet side, 2019).

Case study 2. Social cooperative Communal Service from Poland

Brzeziny is a municipality located in the Lodz voivodeship, in 2014 inhabited by 12577 inhabitants. Rogów is a rural municipality adjacent to Brzeziny, located in the the Lodz voivodeship in 2014 inhabited by 4789 inhabitants. The social cooperative Communal Service was established in 2010 employing 9 unemployed and disabled people. The foundation of the cooperative was supported by funds from the European Social Fund. Thanks to the ESF support, the necessary equipment was purchased:

- a delivery vehicle for 7 people + a loading box with a total weight of 3.5 tones
- a device for Surface over-filling of road defects;

Members of the analyzed cooperative are also the two municipalities mentioned above. The cooperative offers municipal services, including: replenishing defects in the roadway, clearing snow, cleaning works, cleaning up green areas, and moving. It also runs a selective waste collection point. In both municipalities, municipal services, minor cleaning works, demolitions of buildings, etc. are commissioned by cooperatives thanks to the use of social clauses. The example of Brzeziny and Rogów can be used by other municipalities, small or large, within the revitalization activities. The subject of PES (Social Economy Enterprise) activity may be municipal services, as in Brzeziny and Rogów, but the entity established in this way may also carry out activities within the revitalization of investment projects (renovation and construction work) (Kotynia, Puc, 2018, p.3-4).

Case study 3. Activities of the Italian consortium of social cooperatives Oscar Romero

The analyzed consortium includes 19 member cooperatives. In 2000, the Consortium introduced the mark “Romero Ambiente” (Romero Environment). Under this agreement, six social cooperatives operating under the above-mentioned mark, being the members of the Consortium Oscar Romero and three other social cooperatives, also operating in the province of Reggio Emilia and belonging to another organization – Consortium 45, being part of the Legacoop federation. These nine social cooperatives specialize in various aspects related to the maintenance of urban greenery, cleaning and waste collection. These are the “green works”, which include collection of rubbish, sweeping roads, mowing grass, gardening and running the so-called ecological islands. These are specially designated areas for separate waste collection, equipped with special containers, to which residents can throw large-sized litter and other types of waste. Qualified staff assists residents in throwing garbage into appropriate containers.

The decision to merge into an internal organization within the Consortium structure, under one brand, was aimed primarily at simplifying the relationship with the local government, which preferred to talk to one entity, as well as to facilitate dialogue with private companies. An important issue was also coordinating activities and related procedures. Each of the social cooperatives maintained its autonomy and specialization in terms of the business profile, and thanks to the cooperation established, all these entities could receive more orders from local governments and were able to significantly reduce the costs related to the requirements imposed by the law for this type of activity. Cooperation within Romero Ambiente began with simple works, with time it was de-

decided to start providing selective waste collection services. At the very beginning, the self-government provided free machinery needed for this task. Therefore, it was rather a benefit consisting in making the workforce available. In time, the cooperatives began to invest. They were leasing machines or bought used ones. Some works are carried out with the strength of human hands and can be implemented by all cooperatives (for example, street sweepers). Other jobs require more mechanization and more organization (for example, collection of waste paper). Within the cooperatives belonging to the Romero Consortium, persons threatened with social exclusion are supported. Some of the cooperatives that belong to the Consortium employ the number of people at risk of social exclusion bigger than predicted by the act – they make up, on average, 40% of all employees. Larger social cooperatives have staff trained to work with people threatened with exclusion (usually it is one manager). In turn, each new employee is entrusted with more or less complex tasks, depending on his capabilities. A vocational reintegration program is prepared, which assumes training and further development of skills in a given field. The whole process starts with the assessment of the social and professional abilities of the person, and then it is introduced into the workplace, accompanied by continuous monitoring (Wojtowicz, 2014, p.15-16).

Based on the case studies presented above, it can be stated that activities related to the municipal economy may be the subject of activities of social enterprises.

While it can be stated that the scope of this type of offer can be varied. It may be broad as in the case of the Polish social cooperative Communal Service or the Italian consortium of social cooperatives Oscar

Romero. As well as it can be a rather specialized activity and limited to some types of municipal services extended by other related services to some extent with communal services such as garden care. This type of approach is presented in the example of the English social enterprise Green Works. In this case, the collection of used furniture from large companies and services related to mowing the grass or renewing light objects in recreational areas of private gardens can be considered as activities related to municipal services. While activities related to the repair of used office furniture or their sale at a profit or listing at auctions can be considered other areas of activity, which in some sense relate to the offered municipal services.

All the social economy entities described in this study employ people who belong to socially excluded groups or those endangered by this phenomenon. They are usually long-term unemployed, prisoners, people with mental health problem.

The presented case studies concerning the functioning of social economy entities in the municipal services did not directly answer whether the work performed by people, considered as socially excluded, positively affects them, causes them to want to change their lives and feel useful to the society. However, it can be assumed that carrying out activities related to the reintegration of employees, as in the case of the consortium of social cooperatives Oscar Romero from Italy or using the approach to management based on the concept of human resources by Green Works is to serve this purpose by these social enterprises. For a wider confirmation of this assumption, it would be necessary to carry out direct research among people employed in social enterprises regarding these issues.

Conclusions.

The main problem of this article was the issue of using social entrepreneurship associated with the provision of municipal services to strengthen the sense of social security in people at risk of social exclusion. This problem seems to be important because ensuring social security in a direct and indirect way is the task of the state. This task refers to people who are socially excluded or are at risk of this phenomenon. Its implementation may take place with the active participation of social economy entities, supported by the state in a financial manner, as well as through appropriate legislation in the scope of shaping conditions for the development of the social economy. The presented examples of social enterprises operating in European countries show that it is possible to conduct their activities in the municipal services sector. Despite the various organizational forms and the scope of support provided to people employed in them, they provide people with


work and undertake additional activities to bring out their potential. For this purpose, they use the concept of human resource management, as it is the case with the English social enterprise Green Works or they undertake reintegration activities, as it is the case with the Italian consortium of social cooperatives Oskar Romero. The activities of this type of social economy entities give the chance to change the lives of people undertaking work in them and provides them with funds for life as well as positively affects their self-esteem. Considering these conditions, it can be stated that in this way social enterprises contribute to increasing the social security of the people employed in them, usually belonging to socially excluded groups or those at risk of this phenomenon. However, determining the effectiveness of this type of activities requires further research.

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