

EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES



Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.

HENRY FORD

BENEFITS OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

FOR LOCAL ECONOMIES

(„No One Is Left Behind“)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our words of gratitude go to all our colleagues and friends from Poland, North Macedonia, Czech Republic and Hungary for opening their minds, for exploring new horizons, and for together developing new potential and innovative ideas on social entrepreneurship.

Further, our deepest gratitude goes to all the visited municipalities, NGOs, social cooperatives, social enterprises, centres for the elderly, companies and home owners who warm-heartedly welcomed us in own countries, who opened their doors to us, offering space for mutual learning, exchange and inspiration. We shall never forget the hospitality and kindness received in Poland, in all the Barka communities, as well as in Hungary, Czech Republic and North Macedonia.

Thanks to Mrs. Irina Janevska, who has put together the audio-visual materials of our visits to the 4 partner countries. We can now together look back and get a sweet taste of a wonderful working atmosphere, combined with the feelings of mutual support, friendship and solidarity.

Special thanks goes to The Barka Foundation, Poland and to all the Barka leaders for being our driving force and inspiration. An immense sense of gratitude is felt also towards the Krobia municipality representatives for believing in us; to our partners from the Salvation Army, from the Czech Republic; to the Municipality of Revuflop, from Hungary; to the NGO ARNO from North Macedonia, who all partnered with each other to support us in this significant project that connects the EU and the South-Eastern European regions.

Finally, we also want to thank the Visegrad Fund for their support in the process and for believing in our idea of social entrepreneurship and future international collaboration.

With this international project, we have learnt how we surely can bring more meaning and a human dimension to our work and subsequently create more sustainable solutions for empowering local communities.

What is more, this project has made us believe even more strongly than before, that social entrepreneurship creates opportunities for all citizens - not only can it open horizons of innovation in work integration but it can also bring new aspects in local, regional and international collaboration in arts, music, gastronomy, tourism, culture and elsewhere. So, let us together explore social entrepreneurship opportunities and start empowering our own communities, now.



WHY THIS E-PUBLICATION?

This Visegrad project publication is a result of a fruitful international cooperation that brings together social entrepreneurship practices as a motivation and inspiration to the local, national and international institutions, NGOs, companies and individuals who want to seek positive social impact through the SE practices in various parts of Europe.

As participants of the Visegrad project, we want to inspire you to start finding ways of boosting local economies and upgrading own societies via social entrepreneurship.

Visiting Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and North Macedonia gave us opportunities to exchange good practices about various start-ups and social enterprises.

We got inspired and motivated by the positive stories of social entrepreneurship. We have seen how it can strengthen local communities. With enthusiasm and hope, we want to share our story and inspire you.

BEHIND THE VISEGRAD PROJECT

Connections between people are important. They move us, motivate us and bring new ideas. This Visegrad project is basically a product of people keeping connections, staying in touch.

This project on social entrepreneurship started creating connections between Poland, North Macedonia, Czech Republic and Hungary. Initial ties started between Poland and North Macedonia, while Hungary and Czech Republic were intertwined into the Visegrad story based on their prior positive experiences of social entrepreneurship.

It is grounded both on necessity *and* mutual inspiration, whereby the current project leading NGO from Poland, Barka Foundation and its Vice-President, Ms. Barbara Sadowska, was a part of an international project on capacity building regarding social entrepreneurship in North Macedonia. Within the mentioned EPTISA project called „Fostering Social Entrepreneurship” (implemented in North Macedonia for 2 years), Mrs. Sadowska came in contact with several NGOs from Macedonia who

are aspiring to develop social entrepreneurship concept in the country.

On the other hand, Poland and other countries such as Czech Republic and Hungary have good practices that might be inspirational for Macedonian NGOs, institutions and companies who are interested in pioneering the concept in their own country.

So, keeping in touch, getting together and bringing our ideas to the common table – this is how our international story of solidarity and friendship begins.



WHAT IS SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP?

Social entrepreneurship is nowadays almost a trendy word, but what does it actually mean? In reality, there are various definitions of social entrepreneurship - as the Wikipedia definition claims, „social entrepreneurship is an approach by individuals, groups, start-up companies or entrepreneurs, in which they develop, fund and implement solutions to social, cultural, or environmental issues. This concept may be applied to a wide range of organizations, which vary in size, aims, and beliefs”.

On the other hand, the Polish model of social entrepreneurship, which is an inspiration for our project, is guided by the principles of social entrepreneurship whereby social economy serves for professional and social re-integration, creating jobs, providing social services and local development opportunities.

In practice, solidarity economy is a part of social economy. It focuses on professional activation and social integration of marginalized groups of citizens

who are in need of social and vocational rehabilitation. Social enterprises are thus beneficial for the overall society as they contribute to the local

WHY COLLABORATION?

As this project has shown, Poland, North Macedonia, Czech Republic and Hungary have several things in common when it comes to social entrepreneurship practices: even though they all have entities that implement social entrepreneurship ideas and initiatives in their respective countries, none of the countries have created clear legal frameworks and legislations fine-tuned into the specific needs of social enterprises.

In this respect, an immense amount of work evidently lies ahead of us – even despite the fact that some of the countries have recently created strategies and action plans for social entrepreneurship, such as Poland and North Macedonia.

With a certain amount of progress made, in all four countries there are no specific laws for social entrepreneurship. Rather, in each of the countries, there are various laws that are only indirectly associated with creating preconditions for social entrepreneurship.

Taking the above into account, the four partner countries decided to join forces within the Visegrad project on „Social Economies without Borders” based on their strong belief that social entrepreneurship is an extremely powerful tool for economic development and social and professional reintegration of marginalized citizens.

The most advanced form of social entrepreneurship is to be found in Poland, where successful stories

WHO ARE THE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS?

Barka Foundation, Poland – is the lead organisation and the driving force behind the project. Barka’s mission is social and professional reintegration of citizens. Barka was established in 1989 as a response to increasing social problems during the transformation years. In 1989, the

communities. In other words, social enterprises always strive towards contributing to social causes.

of collaboration between NGOs and local municipalities were an inspiration to all the participating NGOs, social cooperatives, municipalities and regional centres for support of social entrepreneurship to gather and learn from each other within a one-year period.

In the participating countries, there is obviously a need for social entrepreneurship initiatives, but proper preconditions have to be created in terms of awareness-raising, legislation and financial support for the current and future social enterprises.

So, if you are an NGO, a company, a municipality or other entity that works with employment, social inclusion or social and work re-integration of marginalized groups of citizens, then you should start seeking new, innovative ways in finding the solutions for local communities empowerment.

We believe that social entrepreneurship can give some answers on how to deal with the complexity of multi-disciplinary solutions for the position of your local, socially-deprived citizens who will, together with you, use social entrepreneurship tools for their own self-empowerment.



founders set up the first Barka community, where they lived in an old school building, together with the citizens who were left on the margins of the society, due to poverty, mental illnesses, addictions.

Believing in mutual support and solidarity principles, the members of the community managed to overcome the conditions of poverty. With their

vision of self-sustainability and own economic self-empowerment, they managed to create around 200 social enterprises in the course of 30 years. Based on its pioneering projects, Barka co-created 4 legal acts with the Polish Ministry for Social Labour and Policies: 1. on Public Benefit Organisations, 2. Social Employment, 3. Social Cooperatives, 4. Public Procurement with social clauses.

The Barka founders and great visionaries behind the social entrepreneurship model of economic empowerment of people and communities are **Tomasz Sadowski and Barbara Sadowska**, 2 psychologists who believed in the power of mutual support and solidarity, and that every person deserves a dignified life. The Sadowski family did not establish Barka to simply provide food or shelter for the marginalized people; they wanted to empower them and bring them on a path of self-reliance.

For their magnificent work, they were selected as European Heroes by the Time magazine, receiving many other national and international recognitions such as the UN Habitat Award, World Bank Award of the Global Development Network, SOLIDAR Silver Rose Award, Pro Publico Bono Grand Prix, the Albert Schweitzer World Academy of Medicine Gold Medal, and membership in the Ashoka Foundation. (<https://barka.org.pl>)

Municipality of Krobia, Poland - Barka Foundation has been cooperating with the Municipality of Krobia from 2012. At the time, Barka and the Polish Ministry of Labour and Social Policy implemented the project titled "Integrated System of Support for Social Economy".

The municipality of Krobia was one of the most open municipalities when it comes to the concept of economy of solidarity. Thanks to this initial cooperation, social economy foundations were created. This partnership resulted in the creation of several social cooperatives in Krobia and in the Gostyn sub-region (e.g. Ecos, Arka, Kamerdyner, a centre for social integration). In 2020, the Municipality of Krobia supports social enterprises by using the public procurement procedures containing social clauses, which is their strong tool for the empowerment of local communities. (www.krobia.pl)

NGO ARNO, North Macedonia - stands for Social Innovation since 2013. Its first project "Coolinari" got recognized as a Social Entrepreneurship Initiative (sales of cooking classes and profit re-investment for young chefs' job integration). ARNO is further acknowledged as a national resource for awareness and inspiration in the field of Green Entrepreneurship (organizer of 6 editions of the Green Ideas Competition). In 2017, ARNO visited Barka together with representatives of 20 other organizations, including but not limited to ministries and job centers. ARNO believes in future-oriented leadership and collaborative relationships. (<https://www.arno.org.mk/>)

Armáda Spásy, Czech Republic – The Salvation Army was registered by the Ministry of the Interior in May 1990, as a civic association. At the time, it was not possible to register as a church, because the Armáda spásy did not meet the legal requirements for a church registration, but in 2013 it was registered as a church by the Ministry of Culture. (<https://armadaspasy.cz/>)

Municipality of Revfulop, Hungary - Mayor of the Revfulop Municipality, Mr. Geza Kondor, visited Poland on several occasions for cooperation with Barka and with the Municipality of Krobia. Strongly believing in the concept of social entrepreneurship, the mayor of Krobia presented the Barka social economy model to his visiting colleagues from Hungary. During the visit, the prospects for a common project for social economy within the Visegrad Fund were discussed and decisions made to join forces within the Visegrad project for social entrepreneurship. (<http://www.revfulop.hu>)

NGO Social Integration & Empowerment Centre – SIEC, North Macedonia – contributes to returning dignity and self-respect to the people of the South-Eastern Europe region. SIEC has more than 20 years of accumulated expertise and experience related to projects in the Balkans and Western/Northern Europe in a wide range of areas, including community development, gender equity, Romani integration, immigrant and refugee rights, anti-discrimination, legal assistance, human rights, education, healthcare, and employment. Inspired by the Barka model, SIEC has long-term plans of



developing social entrepreneurship initiatives with other relevant stakeholders (www.siec.mk),

NGO Misla, North Macedonia – is concerned with the issues of mental health of the Macedonian citizens and works on awareness-raising for social integration of the citizens who face mental illnesses and who often get stigmatized and socially excluded. NGO Misla aims at developing future projects of social entrepreneurship that will ensure the social inclusion of all marginalized citizens. (<https://www.facebook.com/asocijacijamisla/posts/3448948911790162/>)

NGO Ljubeznost, North Macedonia – offers assistance to homeless citizens and to socially marginalized families and individuals. Their vision is to create a support centre for deprived citizens and to design projects for their future empowerment. (<https://www.ljubeznost.mk>)

Citizen Association SOLEM, North Macedonia – supports adults with intellectual disabilities in developing skills with which they will be able to contribute to the society. SOLEM's vision is for persons with intellectual disability to exercise their human rights and freedoms and to be completely included in society as equal, responsible and capable citizens of North Macedonia. Association SOLEM fulfills its goals through the development of Self-advocacy and Self-determination skills and running a social business handicrafts4u (<https://www.solem.org.mk/>)

NGO AHP Prilep, North Macedonia - Humanitarian Organization "Aid for Handicapped and the Poor" stands for equal opportunities for all, advanced level of education, strengthened social well-being of marginalized and vulnerable groups and improved multi-ethnic understanding into society. The organization is active in several sectors of activity: education, social inclusion and social entrepreneurship. The main focus of NGO AHP-Prilep is recycling of wood and plastic waste and production of new products with an added value. The profit is reinvested in NGO and AHP-Social Enterprise (<https://ahpmk.wordpress.com/>)

WHAT DID WE ACCOMPLISH?

Every project focuses on its final results. This one too, you could say. Yet, one thing is sure. Our

participants did not see the international study visits as mere opportunities to visit new countries or taste new dishes, which is also a nice part of the story, as cultural exchange is an enrichment to our private and professional life. They have truly grasped every moment to pose relevant questions, demonstrating eagerness to explore and learn, pay attention to the work of various social enterprises and get inspired by their wonderful ideas.

As initially envisaged, the project was planned for one year, 2019-2020, with 4 study visits in Poland, North Macedonia, Czech Republic and Hungary consisting of internships, seminars and field visits to social enterprises, municipalities, social cooperatives, NGOs and companies. The opening and the closing conferences were planned in Poland. All the envisaged activities were implemented by the original action plan, apart from the closing conference that needed to be organized online, due to the corona crisis.

The aim of visiting each of the 4 partner countries was learning and inspiring each other on new social entrepreneurship ideas and financial and legislation tools that can be used for creating better conditions for social entrepreneurship. The international study visits were organized in the period of September 2019 - February 2020. The final online conference of the Visegrad project gathered approximately 70 participants from Poland, North Macedonia, Czech Republic, Croatia and The Netherlands.

What we are especially proud of is the fact that the project team produced an added value to the project by forming an international ISEN Network (International Solidarity Economy Network) that has plans of contributing to the social entrepreneurship practices all over Europe (and globally). Within the momentum of the **Launching of the Decade of Action** for the **Sustainable Development Goals**, the **ISEN Network** has sent a **Letter of Support** to the **United Nations**, underlining the necessity of creating alliances and synergies in combating poverty, hunger, gender inequality, marginalization of citizens and fighting for equal rights, solidarity and economic prosperity for all.

Furthermore, we are happy that this informal, international network on social entrepreneurship will bring future connections between the EU and the Western Balkans SE practices. New project ideas on developing tourism and culture opportunities within the social entrepreneurship innovative approach are planned within the network, while we are at the same time open for new ideas and approaches from new potential members in 2021.



WHAT ARE OUR TAKEAWAYS?

After such a fruitful project collaboration, the most crucial takeaways concern awareness-raising on the significance of social entrepreneurship. In this respect, the following are the recommended actions that will lead towards an improved eco-system for social entrepreneurship:

- Introduce the concept of social entrepreneurship to your local communities.
- Involve local authorities, NGO and companies and create mutual alliances
- Involve the donor community for an additional support of social entrepreneurship.
- Create networks and alliances between municipalities, NGOs, companies, universities and other entities based on the principles of solidarity, friendship and common good for all.
- Believe that you can make a positive social impact, despite the current lack of legal frameworks, financial support or the right circumstances.
- Create a legislative framework for a more favourable eco-system.
- Believe in the power of inspiration and innovation. Start acting now, even when your ideas seem small or need fine-tuning.

- Believe in the power of mutual support and solidarity.

These lessons learnt are at the same time our future steps that we need to take after the completion of the Visegrad project. With joint efforts and at community level, we need to promote social entrepreneurship as a significantly powerful tool for economic empowerment on one hand, but also as a personal self-empowerment tool for individuals who can re-gain dignity and self-respect, on the other. As the project participants, we shall continue with our mission of spreading the word on social entrepreneurship. Even if only some of you get inspired by our story in this process, we shall still recognize that our mission has been accomplished.

OUR NEW INSPIRATION

In 2020, the Visegrad project has come to its end – however, for the Visegrad partners, this is also a new beginning. This project has actually opened new collaboration perspectives, via the above mentioned **International Solidarity Economy Network (ISEN)**.

The ISEN Network aims at implementing proper mechanisms for social entrepreneurship development and establishing cooperation between the following parties: public authorities, civic society organizations, social enterprises, individual experts, academia, private companies and all the entities or individuals who can offer their expertise in supporting further development of the ISEN Network. The current partners intend to strengthen inter-sectoral partnerships for social and professional reintegration of disadvantaged groups and for the development of local communities.

The current network members are: Barka Foundation for the Mutual Help, Poland; Barka The Netherlands & Belgium; Barka UK & Ireland; Municipality of Krobia, Poland; ARNO, North Macedonia; Centre for Social Integration & Empowerment – SIEC, North Macedonia; Ljubeznost, North Macedonia; AHP Prilep, North Macedonia, Mislja, North Macedonia; P3 - People, Planet, Profit, o.p.s., Czech Republic; Institute for Innovation, Dialogue and Development, North Macedonia; Local Municipality of Pniewy, Poland, Local Municipality of Rogozno, Poland; CES

Academy, North Macedonia; Ambrela, North Macedonia

This informal network is open for accepting additional members in 2021. For additional information on joining the ISEN network, potential future cooperation and idealexchange on social entrepreneurship, please contact us via e-mail: Barbara Sadowska, sadowsky@barka.org.pl and Gordana Rodic-Kitanovska, siecofficeinfo@gmail.com

WHY INVOLVE LOCAL COMMUNITIES?

Global changes start with local actions. This is the reason why we believe that involving local communities is crucial and it is therefore one of our main priorities, but also one of our future challenges, especially if we still need to set up an entirely new social entrepreneurship eco-system and create financial instruments for the development of social entrepreneurship.

So, one of the 1st steps is to bring together NGOs and companies that both need to be embedded into the local structures. Can they actually be brought to work together, in a structural way? In short, yes, they can.

The practical examples from Poland, whereby collaboration between NGOs and national and local institutions was created as an ad hoc project, have gradually grown to become one of the major good practices on social entrepreneurship in Europe. Based on this example, we recommend to other partner countries to follow the Polish model, as a globally recognized model of social entrepreneurship. The NGO Barka and the Municipality of Krobia have shown that partnerships between such entities can be long-term and effective for local communities, later producing national and international regulations and good practices.

Further, they have shown that short-term projects can create long-term collaborations and positive social impact. In this light, the partnerships between municipalities, NGOs and companies will be pivotal in setting up a healthy and favourable eco-

system that will promote innovation and thinking out of the box.

But why should municipalities, NGOs and companies get involved? Put simply, such partnerships could much more effectively tackle the issues of social exclusion and the passive social policy system. Social entrepreneurship could support social and professional reintegration of marginalized groups of citizens. Finding solutions for their employability could lead towards economic empowerment of local communities and reduced costs of passive social policies.

In other words, social entrepreneurship could positively impact long-term unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, by working on the basis of principles of social economy and economy of solidarity. This empowering approach to citizens could ensure overall social integration and return dignity and self-respect to local communities. Networking and collaboration of all relevant stakeholders are extremely significant in this process.

Municipalities can play the most important role in this process, as they have the power to bring local and national stakeholders, NGOs and companies together, and by simply initiating dialogue, can start sharing community challenges, needs and ideas. The common dialogue will in turn bring understanding, multi-disciplinary solutions and innovations. In promotion of the necessity of future collaboration and initial dialogue, we claim that: „**Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success**” (Henry Ford).



THE END...WHAT DID PARTICIPANTS SAY?

During on the study visits, the final online conference and the mutual interactions, we have gathered testimonies with regards to the benefits of the project on social entrepreneurship:

Barka Foundation Poland - „Let us continue this collaboration in the spirit of solidarity, mutual support and friendship, let us together start building the bricks of social entrepreneurship so we can build a better home for all, so no one is left behind.”, Mrs. Barbara Sadowska

Krobia Municipality, Poland - „I have good hopes that the SE cooperation within our Visegrad group will further contribute to the development of the Wielkopolska region.”, Mr. Lukasz Kubiak, the Mayor of Krobia, during the online conference in September 2020, with the regard to the continuation of the ISEN Network and future cooperation

Revuflop Municipality, Hungary - “The Visegrad project was helpful and interesting and will hopefully help us in developing social entrepreneurship in Hungary” - Gyorgy Feher, Advisor to the Municipality of Revuflop, Hungary

ARNO, North Macedonia - „I believe this is a good start and reflection of our joint interest to continue the work in the field”. Mrs. Irina Janevska, with regard to the future collaboration via the ISEN Network

SIEC, North Macedonia - „The Visegrad project was more than a project to us – it was a beacon of light, our motivation and inspiration. We got inspired to create awareness-raising projects that will support the concept of solidarity, which is a

basis for social entrepreneurship. We are grateful for having the opportunity to learn from our colleagues from Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary and are determined to continue our collaboration in the future, in support for the marginalized citizens in our respective countries.”

Ljubeznost, North Macedonia - „We support you with establishing the network”, Mr. Toni Stankovski, on establishing the ISEN Network for future collaboration on social entrepreneurship


Misla, North Macedonia - „It is good that our partners successfully managed to complete the Visegrad project under the given circumstances. The project partners have learned a lot on how social entrepreneurship works in the 4 partner countries. We hope to use this knowledge on social entrepreneurship in our new projects”, Mr. Dimitar Ilcov, during the final closing conference

AHP, Prilep, North Macedonia - „We support your effort for establishing a network. We are with you today and in the future”, Mr. Zarko Ginovski, on the establishment of the ISEN Network and future collaboration.

P3 - People, Planet, Profit, o.p.s., Czech Republic - „I felt a lot of positive energy at the conference and I believe that it will happen also in the new network”. Mrs. Petra Francova, on the establishment of the ISEN Network and future collaboration (a new network member)

Institute for Innovation, Dialogue and Development - „I would like to thank all of you for this wonderful opportunity to work on my favorite blueprint: *humanity + economic benefit = prosperous community*”, Mrs Ana Mukoska, on joining the ISEN Network.


ANNEX 1: BRIEF COUNTRY OVERVIEWS

<p>COUNTRY SPECIFICS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poland • Inhabitants: 37.97 million • Unemployment rate: 6.8 % • Estimated nr. of social enterprises: 46 000/ about 300 000 work places • Existing SE forms: foundations and associations running economic activities, non-profit companies, cooperatives of disabled and blind, social cooperatives, workers' cooperatives, Social Integration Centres and Centres for Vocational Activation of the disabled persons
<p>VISIT PERIOD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7-14 September 2019
<p>LOCATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poznan, Krobia, Gostyn, Borek WLKP, Piaski, Brodnica, Chudobczyce, Kwilcz, Oborniki, Pniewy, Wladyslawowo • Visited: organisations / social enterprises working with persons with special needs, elderly people, former addicts, long-term unemployed persons, women workshops for clothes and linnen production, culinary social enterprises, carpentry shop social enterprise that makes wooden toys for children, social cooperatives that do city landscaping, cleaning of roads, organic farms with vegetables, organic food and meat production, car-parts assembly non profit company
<p>SE LAW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on SE: no specific law on social entrepreneurship (it is foreseen to have it to the end of 2020)
<p>LEGISLATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other supporting regulations: the Polish Ministry for Social Labour and Policies in cooperation with Barka and other SEs co-created other supporting regulations: 4 legal acts - on Public Benefit Organisations, Social Employment, Social Cooperatives, the Public Procurement with social clauses; SE Program and Action Plans present; grants and re-payable financial instruments are implemented
<p>LOCAL ENGAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Integration Social Enterprises and Social Services Providers / Participation of local communities: strongly present support structures (61 centres to support SEs in 16 regions), Poland offers a hybride model of social entrepreneurship with strong reintegrative component whose good practices are taken over by many local communities and other countries
<p>BENEFITS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits to local economies: reduced numbers of unemployed persons, increased social participation of marginalized groups
<p>GOOD PRACTICES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful good practices: the Wielkopolska Centre of Economy of Solidarity run by Barka Foundation provides financial assistance to create jobs in new and existing social enterprises. This benefits those who are the most at risk of exclusion; 200 successful SEs were created e.g, Ecos, Common Table, Uciec Dysforii, Furia, Diakonijna non-profit Com[any for Employment, Horyzont, Opus
<p>CHALLENGES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges : one specific Law on social entrepreneurship
<p>FUTURE STEPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future steps: social entrepreneurship promotion on the local and national level

COUNTRY SPECIFICS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Macedonia • Inhabitants: 2.08 million • Unemployment rate: 17.9 % • Estimated nr. of social enterprises: app.130-400 (including cooperatives and protected companies) • Existing SE forms: associations, foundations, cooperatives, protected companies, self – employed companies, companies registered by NGOs ; fields: work integration, personal social services, local development of disadvantaged areas, other (recycling, environmental protection, sports, arts, culture or historical preservation, science, research and innovation, consumer protection and amateur sports)
VISIT PERIOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-8 October 2019
LOCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skopje region • Visited: organisations / social enterprises working with: differently-abled persons, elderly people, long-term unemployed persons, Roma women care for elderly and in home care, 2nd hand clothing shop for marginalized citizens; also a visit to the Suto Orizari municipality that presented their local integration challenges on combating poverty, social exclusion etc.
SE LAW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on SE: no specific Law on social entrepreneurship, several versions of the draft Law existing
LEGISLATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other supporting regulations: The national strategic documents (government strategies 2012-2017 and 2018- 2023 and action plans, in preparation), draft Law on social entrepreneurship (several existing versions), Law on Associations and Foundations, Law on Cooperatives, Law on Employment of Persons with Disabilities, Law on Public Procurement (no. 24/2019), Strategy for Cooperation of the Government with the Civil Society Sector (2012-2017), Law on Social Protection (reform on deinstitutionalization of social services providing)
LOCAL ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of local communities: the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy cooperates with the Association of the Units of Local Self Government (ZELS) under the project “Project for Improvement of Social Services”. Last year launching events were organized in order to inform the local authorities in detail about the opportunities for the development of social services, in accordance with the needs of the beneficiaries. Already few municipalities initiated the call and opened the floor for local actors to offer services and receive financial support
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits to local economies: for elderly persons, Roma citizens, long-term unemployed, former addicts, ex-prisoners, youth, differently-abled persons, persons with disabilities
GOOD PRACTICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful good practices: Solem - Handicrafts4U, Skopje, Elderly care SEs Hera Nega Plus, Humanost-HumanaS, / Red Cross-Nega Centar, Association of Roma Cerenja, Stip, Romni -Nadez, Romski Mladinski Centar Metamorfoza, Pokrov Strumica, Kopce Red Cross, Lice v Lice, Public, National Network of SEs, Social Impact Award (mladi Info / HUB Initiative), NGO ARNO- Green Ideas Award, In VIVO, AHP Prilep, Creative Macedonia-Esnaf
CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges: specific law on social entrepreneurship, implementation of the SE Strategy and Action plans; no certified register for social enterprises, creating definitions for social entrepreneurship and SEs criteria; lack of funding and specific SE loans; lack of collaboration between various stakeholders


FUTURE STEPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future steps: adopting the SE Law, establishing a Support Centre to Social Enterprises, establishing in total 8 regional SE support centra, supporting social enterprises in terms of capacity building, marketing, creating pre-conditions for optimally using the article 29, Law on Public Procurement social clauses, creating a certified SEs database; overall SE promotion
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<p>COUNTRY SPECIFICS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Czech Republic • Inhabitants: 10.69 million • Unemployment rate: 2.6% • Estimated number of social enterprises: 300; 156 social enterprises with 276 establishments • Existing SE forms: the most common legal forms are: limited liability company 53%, public benefit company 16%, association 10%, cooperative 8%; 95% work integration SEs; 53% micro enterprises, 34% small and 13% medium-sized enterprises. The most common area of business is trade 31%, food production 22%, other production 22%, promotional and gift items 21%, food and beverage services 20%, greenery maintenance and technical services 20%, cleaning services and products 20%.
<p>VISIT PERIOD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-6 December 2019
<p>LOCATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prague, Řevnice, Dobřichovice, Zelený Ostrov • Visited: organisations / social enterprises working with differently-abled persons, former addicts, long-term unemployed persons, a community centre with a culinary social enterprise, a book & toy store social enterprise, a dry-cleaning shop social enterprise that employs citizens with impaired hearing
<p>SE LAW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on SE: no specific Law on social entrepreneurship; SE bill exists in several revised versions, not yet agreed.
<p>LEGISLATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other supporting regulations: Public Procurement Law with reserved contracts is currently used; SE included in National Reform Programme 2014, Strategy of Regional Development 2014-20, Strategic Framework of Sustainable Development 2010-30, Strategy of Employment 2014-20, Strategy of the Support of Small and Medium Entrepreneurs 2014-20, Social Inclusion Strategy 2014-20; Strategic Framework of Sustainable Development 2010-30, Strategy of Employment 2014-20, Strategy of the Support of Small and Medium Entrepreneurs 2014-20, Social Inclusion Strategy 2014-20, Policy Statement of the Government of the Czech Republic 2014-17, Partnership Agreement 2014-20, National Plan for Development of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2010-14, Strategy for Combating Social Exclusion 2011-15, Roma Integration Strategy until 2020
<p>LOCAL ENGAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of local communities: only to some extent
<p>BENEFITS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits to local economies: for elderly persons, long-term unemployed, former addicts, people with disabilities, others (e.g. asylum seekers, migrants, people over fifty years of age), youth / young adults in difficult situations
<p>GOOD PRACTICES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful good practices: National SE network TESSEA, Ministry of Labour and Soc. Affairs network of consultants, Social Impact Award, Best Entrepreneur Award; there is some support by the local action groups and grants but it is mostly closed now; social farming (social workers and farmers cooperations); Association of social farming in CZ, project Social Farms in V4 countries; further, positive trends are: bottom-up approach, community initiatives, people from the NGO sector improve their business skills, growing cooperation in regions, more interest in socially responsible public procurement, growing awareness of responsible way of life incl. responsible purchasing

<p>CHALLENGES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges: no specific law on social entrepreneurship; no certified register for social enterprises; lack of funding; additionally, the negative trends are: the lack of broader political support, missing SE strategy / an action plan, little public recognition of SE, lack of public money for SE ecosystem, support structures are not financed from public funds, high bureaucracy
<p>FUTURE STEPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future steps: lobbying and advocacy to achieve more support for SE, develop SE strategy and use the Polish model of OWES centres in Czech Republic



<p>COUNTRY SPECIFICS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hungary • Inhabitants: 9.773 million • Unemployment rate: 4.8 % (July 2020) • Estimated number of social enterprises: n/a • Existing SE forms: associations, cooperatives, social cooperatives supporting employment of disadvantaged and providing social services •
<p>VISIT PERIOD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23-25 February 2020
<p>LOCATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balaton region - Ábrahámhegy, Keszthely, Revuflop • Visited: organisations / social enterprises working with marginalized groups of citizens; visited the regional and local municipality offices to discuss the issues of social entrepreneurship and how they could be linked to tourism around the Balaton Lake
<p>SE LAW</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on SE: Act III on Social welfare from 1993 with later modifications
<p>LEGISLATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other supporting regulations: various, different levels of legislative measures serving the implementation of the Act III on Social Welfare, clarification would be advantageous. minutious supervision of the whole system required
<p>LOCAL ENGAGEMENT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of local communities: mostly depending on the budgetary situation of the given municipality and the activity of the volunteers in the community. Regional coordination among municipalities is required to reach the level of application of assistance from the central budget
<p>BENEFITS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits to local economies: for elderly persons, the long-term unemployed, former addicts
<p>GOOD PRACTICES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful good practices: support of minorities, the elderly, municipality level
<p>CHALLENGES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges: rejuvenation of social welfare system, including the definition of a social entrepreneurship system
<p>FUTURE STEPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future steps: act locally and regionally, make coordinated regional efforts to reach support from the central budget