

THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the problems of social entrepreneurship development in the Republic of Belarus, among which the institutional environment formation can be noted. Main directions of its development are identified; they are associated with the solution of socially significant problems. It shows that the activity of social entrepreneurship contributes to the employment and socialization of people with disabilities. The study of educational process in the field of social entrepreneurship is paid particular attention to. It considers the development process of educational programs that allow acquiring competencies in the field of social entrepreneurship. Various educational institutions and organizations operating in the Republic of Belarus carry out implementation of such programs. Activation and more effective implementation of educational programs in Belarusian universities, as well as the development of additional and business education in the field of social entrepreneurship will contribute to professional competencies formation of social entrepreneurs. An increase in the number of skilled workers in the field of social entrepreneurship will have a positive impact on the organizational structures efficiency of this sphere.

Keywords: Social Entrepreneurship, Areas of Activity, Non-Profit Organizations, Educational Process, Social Problems.

INTRODUCTION

An increase in the number of unresolved social problems amid the economic crisis manifestation requires a structural transformation of the socio-economic relations system and redistribution of priorities and roles among the main institutions of society. Under these conditions, in order to achieve sustainable socio-economic development of society, interaction of various sectors of the economy is necessary. It will integrate social and economic effect through the use of innovative and entrepreneurial methods for solving social problems. Social entrepreneurship contributes to the active interaction of all sectors of the economy. Successful development of social entrepreneurship involves a combination of principles such as innovation, social orientation and self-sufficiency. It is one of the public institutions that effectively copes with the solution of various social problems. Social entrepreneurship activities attract additional financial resources in a social sector. It is no coincidence that the concept of social entrepreneurship has become widespread both in the academic environment and among active entrepreneurs.

Therefore, examination of the educational process in the field of social entrepreneurship is of undoubted interest. Moreover, it contemplates to consider the development of educational

programs that various educational institutions and organizations of Belarus implement and thus, allow to acquire competencies in the field of social entrepreneurship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a variety of approaches to the definition of social entrepreneurship in the scientific literature. It should be noted that it was the founder of the Ashoka Foundation Bill Drayton who indicated this phenomenon for the first time. He described social entrepreneurship as practical and result-oriented methods of business activity in order to obtain a social effect (Kickul & Lyons, 2014). In academic literature, the term “*social entrepreneurship*” first appeared in 1998 owing to the American economist G. Dees. By social entrepreneurship he meant the use of traditional entrepreneurship methods to achieve social goals or fulfill a social mission (Dees, 2001). Many researchers held the same point view. Considering the concept of social entrepreneurship, attention is focused on the need to maintain a balance between the social and economic components of this activity (Boschee, 2003, Austin et al., 2010). Part of the research is devoted to examining the concept of social entrepreneurship, determining its specific characteristics, emphasizing the creation of dual values and a mixed nature of activity (Alter, 2005, Mair et al., 2006, Robinson, 2006, Thompson et al., 2000). Some approaches add a philosophical dimension to the notion of social entrepreneurship. In this case, the functioning of social entrepreneurship implies that you conduct your business honestly, implement a certain social mission, select means that are morally appropriate to achieve your goals, recognize the possibility of creating social value, use innovative approaches and are ready to take existing risks yourself (Mort et al., 2003). Social entrepreneurship is also viewed from the perspective of innovation process, which involves the use and combination of available resources to implement social changes or meet social needs of certain categories of population (Alvord et al., 2004, Mair & Martí, 2006, Peredo & McLean, 2006).

The phenomenon of social entrepreneurship is relatively new for the Republic of Belarus. Available studies examine the theoretical side of this area and certain aspects of the social entrepreneurship development in the Republic of Belarus (Erofeeva & Podberezkin, 2016, Kraenkova & Vankevich, 2018, Kuchko et al., 2017, Vishnyakova, 2018). Existing definitions of the social entrepreneurship essence are based on a review of existing European and Anglo-American approaches. The works of the above researchers are based, as a rule, on a review of various foreign approaches in the field of social entrepreneurship. In this regard, the identification of the of social entrepreneurship concept is based on the characteristics and criteria corresponding to certain foreign approaches. Despite the available work, the topic of social entrepreneurship remains insufficiently developed to a large extent in the Republic of Belarus. In particular, trends and prospects for the development of the educational process in the field of social entrepreneurship have not been considered and determined. In this regard, the development of the educational process in the field of social entrepreneurship is highly relevant.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological and theoretical basis of the research consists of scientific works of both domestic and foreign scientists involved in the study of the social entrepreneurship sphere. The methodological basis of the work is historical, dialectical and hermeneutic methods of cognition, which suggest a scientific interpretation of economic phenomena. This allowed us to correlate essential characteristics and forms of social entrepreneurship manifestation and to

highlight the problems and prospects for the development of the educational process in the field of social entrepreneurship.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Over the last decade, social entrepreneurship has begun developing dynamically on the territory of the Republic of Belarus. Creation of an informational platform on the social economy became the impulse for its development. This platform considered issues related to the social entrepreneurship functioning and directions of its development.

Based on data from studies conducted in the Republic of Belarus, areas of social entrepreneurship activity were identified (Kuchko et al., 2017). The priority area of activity for social entrepreneurship is job placement and employment promotion. Social entrepreneurship is dynamically developing in the field of providing specialized social services for people with disabilities. Social entrepreneurship is also connected with education. Organizations in this sector are implementing educational programs and courses for people with disabilities and people who found themselves in difficult situations. Owing to such arrangements, these categories of citizens have an opportunity to socialize and adapt to society. Another area of social entrepreneurship is solving environmental problems. First, efforts are underway to eliminate the consequences after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, to develop infrastructure and improve the environmental situation of settlements.

The target audience of social entrepreneurship in the Republic of Belarus is primarily people with disabilities including mental ones, as well as low-income and large families, children in socially dangerous situations, affected by the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident. Very often, social enterprises do not have a specific target audience. In this case, the activities of such enterprises are directed to a wide circle of persons.

Currently, at the legislative level, social entrepreneurship is not allocated as a separate legal entity. Legally, it can be carried out in a variety of legal forms stipulated by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus for commercial and non-commercial organizations. Variety of legal forms in which social entrepreneurship is carried out in the Republic makes it difficult to monitor the activities of its organizations. For this reason, a certain idea of the social entrepreneurship condition in the country can be compiled based on an analysis of the public associations condition involved in solving social problems.

According to the Ministry of Justice, in the Republic of Belarus as of January 1, 2020, 2,995 public associations were registered, as well as 43,545 organizational structures of public associations, 40 public associations and 217 foundations. The increase in the total number of registered public associations was 3.4%, and the organizational structures of public associations for the year was 2%.

Among main problems restraining entrepreneurship development in the Republic of Belarus are a lack of a legislative framework for social entrepreneurship and a proper infrastructure to support this sector, a low level of public recognition and a lack of a system for accounting, reporting and monitoring on a regular basis.

The most promising direction in promoting the social entrepreneurship development in Belarus is education and management professionalization. First, it is connected with the fact that an increase in the number of skilled workers in the field of social entrepreneurship will have a positive impact on the efficiency of organizational structures in this sphere.

Therefore, academic and professional communities play an important role in the development and support of social entrepreneurship. The great interest of scientists in the problem of social entrepreneurship stimulates its institutionalization.

Foreign experience shows that research centers, specialized scientific journals are created in this area, scientific conferences are held, and what is most important, educational courses, which are of theoretical and practical nature, are developed and included in the curriculum for training specialists in the field of social entrepreneurship. Leading universities and business schools opened their own research centers that deal with the social entrepreneurship development. These trends have contributed to the fact that various courses on social entrepreneurship have become full-fledged training programs. Both academic institutions and non-academic organizations provide social entrepreneurship training.

In the Republic of Belarus, social entrepreneurship began to develop a little later in comparison with global trends. Therefore, it is worth noting the lack of a holistic education system in this area. First courses and trainings in the field of social entrepreneurship in the Republic of Belarus began to appear in 2009. Their implementation is associated with activities of the Center for Social Innovation public association and the non-profit organization ODB Brussels.

After the analysis of existing educational programs in the field of social entrepreneurship, it can be stated that training in social entrepreneurship in the Republic of Belarus is provided by existing non-academic organizations, with the support of commercial organizations and foundations. For example, it can be a non-profit organization or a public association that organizes various educational projects and courses and opens schools of social entrepreneurship. As a rule, the implementation of such measures aimed at increasing a general level of knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship. Very often, such courses do not have restrictions on the target audience. They are aimed at a wide range of citizens, including citizens who do not have basic knowledge about the field of entrepreneurial activity. In this regard, training courses often include a section related to the study of entrepreneurial activity key concepts. As a rule, such programs are short-term and irregular.

An example of the development of educational programs in the Republic of Belarus is the activity of the *“Healthy Choice”* public association. Owing to the activities of the *“Healthy Choice”* public association, over the past five years, such projects as *“Social Workshop”*, *“Social Enterprises”*, *“Our Masters”*, and *“Social Entrepreneurship: From Example to Self-Sufficiency”* have been implemented. One of the main directions of these projects is training in the practical foundations of social entrepreneurship. According to the results of project implementation, each participant receives a theoretical basis for organizing their productive activities. In June 2019, *“Healthy Choice”* launched the *“Applied Business Education for Social Entrepreneurs”* project. As part of its implementation, participants will develop 12 detailed business projects. Business coaches and teams of social entrepreneurs support the learning process. The target audience of this educational project is representatives of various organizations who want to implement social projects and develop social entrepreneurship.

The School of Social Entrepreneurship *“Good Impact”* has been operating in Belarus for several years. It works in three regions of the Republic of Belarus: Gomel region, Grodno region and Minsk region. The target audience of this school is citizens who want to open their own social enterprise or who did this no more than a year ago. This training program includes conducting training courses and master classes. In addition, the educational program provides for the exchange of experience with representatives of socially oriented businesses. Owing to the

training at the School of Social Entrepreneurship, its participants get acquainted with the algorithm for creating a social business idea, acquire necessary knowledge and skills on creation and development of a socially oriented business and learn about possibilities and mechanisms of financing a social enterprise.

With the financial support of the European Union, the non-profit organization ODB Brussels launched the “*Social Entrepreneurship Incubator*” program in 2017. The goal of the project is to create a set of Russian-language programs for training in social entrepreneurship. As part of the implementation of this educational project, it is planned to create an online platform. Based on it, training programs will be implemented, the duration of which will be 9 months. Another area of this project is a training program for young people. The purpose of this direction is to introduce adolescents and youth to the of social entrepreneurship.

Also on the territory of the Republic of Belarus, a forum of social business of Belarus has been held for the third year in a row. Its goal is to exchange best practices in the field of social entrepreneurship, as well as to discuss ways of business participation in solving social and environmental problems.

Unfortunately, it should be noted that educational programs in the field of social entrepreneurship are virtually not represented in Belarusian universities. Certain issues of social entrepreneurship are studied fragmentarily in the framework of certain educational and methodological programs. For example, at the State Institute of Management and Social Technologies of the Belarusian State University, for the specialty “*Social Work*”, when taking the course “*Fundamentals of Entrepreneurial Activities in the Social Sphere*”, the topic “Social Entrepreneurship as a Form of Solving Social Problems of the Society” was highlighted. Education in the field of social entrepreneurship also represented partially in additional programs of occupational retraining and advanced training. For example, short-term courses on training in social entrepreneurship organized at the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Sukhoi State Technical University.

CONCLUSION

Taking in consideration everything mentioned above, we can conclude that the issues of developing social entrepreneurship and training qualified specialists for this sphere are very relevant at the present stage of the Belarusian society development. Along with a solution of legal regulation issues and formation of necessary institutional environment for its development, special attention should be paid to issues of education and competent development in the field of social entrepreneurship, since the growth of skilled workers contributes to a more efficient functioning of socially oriented activities.

Competencies in the field of social entrepreneurship should be developed in all specialties, and not only within the framework of individual courses. For this, educational programs for training social entrepreneurs at universities should be actively introduced. It is necessary to systematically carry out various activities and implement results-oriented ones at universities. An important factor in the process of training in the field of social entrepreneurship and a formation of professional competencies is the presence of a complete closed cycle of the learning process and support for social entrepreneurship. It should include both the formation of basic knowledge and a support mechanism for incipient social entrepreneurs with subsequent consulting support.

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