



Peer Review on “Social entrepreneurship to tackle unmet social challenges”

Norway, 12-13 December 2017

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Contact: Dijana Ror Boone and Bent-Ole Grooss

E-mail: EMPL-SPSI-PEER-REVIEWS@ec.europa.eu

Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1024>

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1 Introduction

This paper draws on experiences from across the EU to examine different approaches to developing social entrepreneurship for tackling unmet social challenges. It is particularly concerned with two areas: children and young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and labour market integration of those furthest from the labour market. And it will focus on three themes which strengthen the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship: support and funding structures which form part of an ecosystem for sustaining social entrepreneurship, target group involvement which enhances its effectiveness, and cooperation approaches with key stakeholders. The paper begins by setting the scene by considering the EU's policy framework for addressing social protection and social exclusion, and the challenges it still faces. It goes on to examine in broad terms how social entrepreneurship can contribute to ameliorating these challenges. Then it considers how state support measures and ecosystems can strengthen the role of social entrepreneurship, including the role of stakeholder collaborations. It then assesses the effectiveness of different measures including the design of target group involvement, and identifies the strengths and weaknesses of social entrepreneurship, and the positive and negative effect of different policy measures.

Social entrepreneurship has come to prominence in the last 10 to 15 years, as a way in which government, third sector, and civil society can help address major social challenges in the context of declining welfare budgets, increasing inequality (Piketty, 2014) and social exclusion, and demands for more inclusive patterns of growth. While it is not the only form that social entrepreneurship takes, the development of social enterprise is a major form, comprising several different models with sufficient evidence of strategies and structures (good practices) which enhance the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship in meeting such challenges.

2 Setting the scene

2.1 EU context for social protection and social cohesion policy

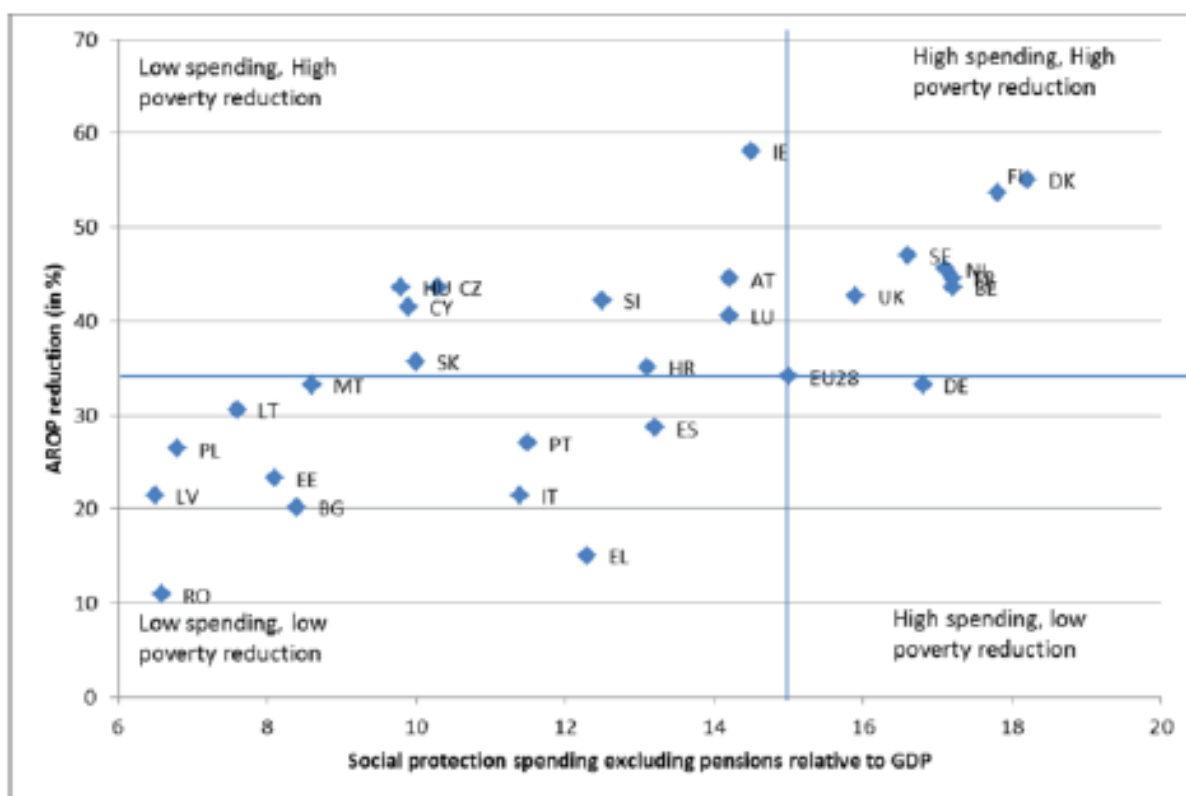
This Peer Review on "Fostering social entrepreneurship to tackle unmet social challenges" is part of the Social Open Method of Coordination (OMC) for social protection and social cohesion; it is supported by the Social Protection Committee, and helps the EU provide a framework for the development of national strategies for social protection and social investment. The Social Protection Committee uses a set of indicators to monitor Member States' progress towards Europe 2020 targets for reducing poverty and social exclusion, as well as monitoring recent social trends. It reports on social policy developments including social protection policies in Europe, as well as the key structural social challenges faced by each Member State currently. Within this broad perspective, it examines a wide range of employment and social issues which impact upon social challenges such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, social exclusion; such issues include work-life balance, working time, non-standard contracts and self-employment. Of particular concern are those most clearly disadvantaged, or at risk of poverty and social exclusion, such as children and young people, unemployed, women, older people and disabled, and homeless people. One of the major targets is to lift 20 million people from the risk of poverty or social exclusion by 2020, and an important new impetus for this is the European Pillar of Social Rights which will be a reference framework for monitoring employment and social performance of Member States, in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of social protection measures. Three indicators for the above target groups, and their interaction are particularly important for social inclusion: very low work intensity, severe material deprivation, and at risk of poverty.

These indicators are important because they differ by age group and country e.g. in Slovenia, Finland and Cyprus, with regard to long-term poverty elderly people are more at risk. The at risk of poverty rate is highly correlated with the persistent

poverty risk (inability to escape poverty year after year); and this in turn contributes to longer term impacts – physical and mental health, child development education, crime but also intergenerational impacts for children of such families - thus *children at risk of continuous poverty should be a primary target* for measures to address this intergenerational transmission of poverty. And it is interesting to note that pockets of persistent poor are present even in rich countries; exit from poverty is inversely related to the length of period in poverty – emphasising the importance of early intervention and prevention measures to address the cycle of disadvantage. (EC 2015. Poverty Dynamics in Europe).

Despite a general improvement in social indicators over recent years, the overall social situation in the EU still hasn't recovered from the economic crisis of 2007/8. It is important both to prioritise effective measures, and to ensure that the best outcomes are achieved at the lowest cost, with spill-over effects on employment and growth (European Semester Thematic Fact Sheet on Social Inclusion, 2017). Different countries have different welfare regimes, different challenges and levels of resources, but the impact on poverty reduction attributable to social protection expenditure varies considerably. The effectiveness and efficiency of social spending is due to a range of factors: levels of poverty and inequality due to distribution of income before social transfers, segmented and polarised labour markets usually produce high levels of inequality requiring higher levels of redistribution; and the level and design of social protection expenditure (including progressiveness of taxation, universal versus means tested benefits, and whether spending facilitates integration in the labour market and incentivises work).

Figure 1. The impact of social transfers on reducing poverty, 2014



Source: Eurostat, EU SILC 2014 and European System of integrated Social Protection, Statistics (ESSPROS), 2013 (except EL, PL and EU28: 2012)

The Europe 2020 strategy is designed for smart sustainable and inclusive growth, and has targets relating to poverty, social exclusion and employment. Its policy framework includes the Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion; and as a basis for future harmonisation of policy, the European Pillar of Social Rights has just been launched (November 2017), and has 20 principles and three themes:

- Equal opportunities and access to the labour market;
- Fair working conditions; and,
- Social protection and inclusion.

These policies require investment through a range of funds: a Social Investment Package, as well as structural funds such as the European Social Fund, and more specific financial instruments such as the Employment and Social Innovation Programme (EaSI), which has funds to support the modernisation of employment and social policies, job mobility, and micro-finance and social entrepreneurship.

2.2 EU policy and definitions on social entrepreneurship and social enterprise

Social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, and social innovation have grown in importance in policy and practice right across Europe. Some view them as closely connected in a market oriented perspective – social entrepreneurship uses social innovation to address social problems, through sustainable social enterprise. However, the terms often have a broader meaning and are more loosely connected. Social entrepreneurship takes several different forms: social entrepreneurs certainly create social enterprise, but they are also considered the agents of social innovation; the European Commission has funded more than a dozen major international research and practice projects on social innovation (BEPA, 2014), and one typology of social innovation (Tepsie, 2015) is: new services, practices (requiring new professional roles), processes (co-production), rules & regulations, organizational forms (hybrids). In some work sponsored by the European Commission, there has been a strong emphasis on collective action by civil society actors (and social movements) for social innovation (Moulaert, Jessop, Hulgård & Hamdouch, 2013), rather than on market oriented solutions. The focus in this paper is on market oriented solutions such as social enterprise, without ignoring the importance of civil society actors in the social entrepreneurial process – since this is very often an important part of social entrepreneurship, since self-help and bottom up dynamics ensure social entrepreneurship connects with local people, and the problems they face.

Since 2011, the European Commission has taken a number of measures to support the development of social entrepreneurship and social enterprise. The Social Business Initiative (SBI) in that year provided an important policy framework for the establishment, development and growth of social enterprises with strong support from DG Enterprise, DG Market and DG Employment. This linked with the Single Market Act, which had several instruments to develop social entrepreneurship; and this was further emphasised in the Single Market Act II, with one of the themes being social cohesion and social entrepreneurship (Communication from the Commission, 2012).

It provided a definition (SBI, 2011):

'A social enterprise is "an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities".'

More recently this was elaborated into a more operational form¹ with the following core criteria:

¹ This approach has drawn inspiration from the important work of the EMES network, see: www.emes.net

- *The organisation must engage in economic activity*: this means that it must engage in a continuous activity of production and/or exchange of goods and/or services;
- *It must pursue an explicit and primary social aim*: a social aim is one that benefits society;
- *It must have limits on distribution of profits and/or assets*: the purpose of such limits is to prioritise the social aim over profit making;
- *It must be independent* i.e. organisational autonomy from the State and other traditional for-profit organisations; and,
- *It must have inclusive governance* i.e. characterised by participatory and/ or democratic decision-making processes.

(Ref. European Commission, 2015. P.v)

Using this definition the most comprehensive European mapping study of social enterprise and their ecosystems (EC, 2015) revealed substantial variations between the countries of EU28 and Switzerland, in terms of levels of development, legal forms, policy measures². It has also become increasingly clear that social enterprise have several hybrid forms, and operates in several fields. In a mapping study of social enterprise in over 50 countries (ICSEM project: www.iap-socent.be/), four types of social enterprise have been identified (Defourny, J. and Nyssens, M., 2016):

- The entrepreneurial non-profit (ENP) model ;
- The social cooperative (SC) model;
- The social business (SB) model; and,
- The public-sector social enterprise (PSE) model.

In addition, the formation processes of these types are quite diverse: this is not just about new start-ups, the reconfiguration of existing organisations due to changing contexts has also been an important pathway, in particular this includes non-profits and NGOs becoming more entrepreneurial, and developing new income streams from private or procurement markets. Individual social entrepreneurship is just one model, groups of citizens collaborating to set up a social enterprise is another model (typically working with a supporting development agency), nonprofits becoming more entrepreneurial is another model, collaborations between public/private and third sector organisations to create a social enterprise is another model – and these are just for start-ups; capacity building and support for growth and scaling of established social enterprise is necessary if they are to become substantial organisations able to carry out public service procurement, and provide significant market services. Thus it is important to consider how these entrepreneurial pathways to different types of social enterprise can be supported through collaborations, state support, and ecosystems.

Social enterprise typically operate in a variety of fields³. Work integration social enterprise are the most prominent in Europe⁴ whereas environmental social enterprise (recycling, etc), fair-trade social enterprise linked to the millennium development goals (MDGs), community services including in rural areas, cultural services in the creative industries, and social and health care, are all well-developed (see S4.1 in

² A subsequent updating was conducted for a few countries: Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Spain.

³ The Italian social enterprise legal category covers a wider range of activities, namely: 1) welfare; 2) health; 3) social care; 4) education, instruction and professional training; 5) environmental and eco-system protection; 6) development of cultural heritage; 7) social tourism; 8) academic and post-academic education; 9) research and delivery of cultural services; 10) extra-curricular training; 11) support to social enterprises.

⁴ In Europe most work integration is transitional i.e. the beneficiary gets training by working in the social enterprise for a period, and then is placed in the conventional Labour market (see Nyssens, 2006).

European Commission (2015)). But there is a wide variety, also including food, cultural, sport and recreation activities. Social enterprise may also be seen as an attractive form in the new sectors of the economy. GECES (2016) has argued for social enterprise having a role in three emerging trends: the collaborative economy, the circular economy (recycling, etc.), and as one form of inclusive business.

3 Overview of approaches across Europe to developing social entrepreneurship tackling social exclusion

This section provides an overview of approaches adopted in the eight countries participating in the Peer Review: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta as well of approaches in other EU Member States where relevant.

It adopts a broad analytical approach to help explain the differences between countries, and indicate different pathways towards the development of social entrepreneurship that may be relevant at different levels of development, with different historical and contextual factors at play. Since the section is based mainly on secondary sources, together with visits and projects undertaken by the author in different regions of Europe, it cannot claim to be 100% up-to-date. However, its aim is to facilitate useful discussion and recognise the appropriateness of different pathways, rather than advocating a one size fits all approach.

3.1 Contextual factors shaping social entrepreneurship

The Member States of this peer review come from quite different regions of Europe: three from the Nordic region with its tradition of strong welfare states, three from Eastern Europe which may share some contextual similarities with the two countries from the Baltics as transitional economies, and one country from Southern Europe. And while there are clearly differences between each country in each of these regions, this paper begins with identifying some factors that make these regions distinctive, and shape the patterns of social entrepreneurship that emerge.

The factors that appear to be influential in shaping the experience and potential for social entrepreneurship include the following (Kerlin, 2010; UNDP/EMES, 2008; EC, 2015): the welfare/labour market regimes, and the historical development and relationship with the third sector/social economy – for example whether it plays a significant role in society or if it has been squeezed out; the appropriateness of current legal frameworks for social entrepreneurship, or whether any barriers exist; the drivers or development base for social entrepreneurship i.e. state, EU, civil society (including third sector/ social economy), international NGOs, and CSR.

Thus, for example transitional economies (including the Baltics) may find themselves at a relatively early stage of development of social entrepreneurship; and one that is supported more by the EU (ESF in particular), and international NGOs, such as the British Council, Ashoka, NeSst, and international research networks such as EMES, Ciriec (social economy), and ISTR (non-profits); and CSR may also play a significant role. While in the Nordics, one would expect the state to play a central developmental role, with the voluntary sector perhaps hampered by its traditional role of advocacy, as it moves towards service provision; while the strong tradition of co-operatives may paradoxically hamper their adaptation to new social movements. Sweden stands out as having demonstrated how cooperatives can adapt to new social movements – with 2,000 childcare cooperatives, and many others concerned with work integration. Finland has also been innovative, particularly in the work integration field, after overcoming the challenges of the economic crises linked to sub-prime debt, and the Russian economic problems; and more recently in welfare services, alternative economic production, and social impact (for profits) enterprises.

Denmark has established a vigorous level of social entrepreneurship, partly led by Roskilde University, but including various other stakeholders from the social economy

(coop federation), and think tanks (Mandag Morgen), leading to the development of investment funds (Sociale KapitalFonden), new incubators, and a new registration system for social enterprise. It has Work Integration Social Enterprise (WISE), as well as a wide variety of other social enterprises.

One particular challenge that social entrepreneurship may help meet is how to move from the experimental innovation laboratories of a project culture which use short-term grants to develop projects in addressing social problems, towards more sustainable solutions (TemaNord, 2015), which may involve citizen beneficiaries or social enterprise in a co-production process with public bodies.

3.2 Social entrepreneurship addressing social exclusion for children and young people and work integration

Work integration social enterprise (WISE) are perhaps the best-known form of social enterprise in Europe (Nyssens, 2006; Spear and Bidet, 2005). These are well-established and institutionalised in many countries with policies and legal regulations specifically designed to facilitate them. Amongst the countries in this peer review, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary and Latvia have this as their most prominent form of social enterprise. Long established co-operatives for people with disabilities are still active in some of the transition economy countries. And other forms of social enterprise for people with disabilities operate and negotiate different welfare benefit regimes.

A major comparative study of WISEs indicated that there are four main types for assisting people with disadvantages (Davister et al, 2004):

1. transitional employment and training - this is the most common form where the WISE provides training and employment for a period of time before placing the beneficiary into the conventional labour market;
2. permanent self-financed jobs - after a subsidy or contract has helped beneficiary achieve a standard level of productivity; some WISE may be a combination of the first and second types;
3. professional integration with permanent subsidies (typically for those with mental or physical disabilities); and,
4. socialisation through a productive activity (life skills & basic work skills for those with serious social problems – drug/alcohol abuse).

In some countries, e.g. the UK, the first category has been particularly important for helping disadvantaged young people - those "not in education or training" (NEETs). Work integration is an important labour market area with there are many different providers: private, public, social enterprise, and there may be a tendency towards "creaming" by selecting better beneficiaries with more training potential. However, Hazenberg et al, (2014) found that a WISE were more likely to resist this tendency, than for-profit work integration companies.

Resources used by WISE are typically 'hybridised' – meaning they draw on a mix of volunteers, subsidies, donations, and contracts. In some countries such as the UK labour market procurement is so well institutionalised that large private companies dominate the market, due to the large contract sizes, and social enterprise are relegated to the supply chains. Nonetheless there is still others to operate in the market – the Restaurant 15 was set up as a non-profit social enterprise by the celebrity chef Jamie Oliver to help disadvantaged young people into the restaurant business; 50% of its beneficiaries have had drug and alcohol problems in the past.

Social entrepreneurial activities assisting children and young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion is not so well established and institutionalised as WISEs, and often this may involve working collaboratively with other service providers. However, it is possible to identify some types:

- Firstly, those with a substantial degree of institutionalisation – Italian Type A social cooperatives are probably the most institutionalised form of social enterprise providing health, educational, and social services, particularly for elderly, disabled, and those with mental illness; this includes: home care, and residential care. Swedish childcare cooperatives are also well established.
- Secondly, some arise from large charitable organisations, which specialise in supporting particular target groups, becoming more entrepreneurial and supplying procurement contracts; but this also requires compliance with safeguarding processes for vulnerable people. There is some evidence (Czech Republic, Nordic countries) that for various reasons charities and NGOs may resist identifying this type of activity as social entrepreneurship, so to a certain extent this may be hidden from being seen as part of the field.
- Thirdly, professional people may be dissatisfied with current provision, and begin socially entrepreneurial activities to respond innovatively to new needs, or gaps in public service provision, in particular preventative measures which tend to be under-recognised and underfunded, mental health rehabilitation, and a focus on well-being, rather than sickness. Here social entrepreneurs may be personally linked through family or otherwise to disadvantaged children, young people or families.
- Fourthly, self-help and mutual support groups may move on to service provision, initially using substantial levels of volunteering.
- Fifth, collaborations between the charities and public bodies to develop new services.
- Sixth, spin outs of sections of the public sector to become independent contracting for public services – this has been seen in the health and care areas of the UK.
- Seventh, working with (innovative) public sector projects to develop income streams and achieve some measure of sustainability.

3.3 A rich diversity of social entrepreneurship – sector examples

This sub-section provides examples across the EU and beyond of different sectors of social entrepreneurship.

Childcare targeting disadvantaged communities, so that women have greater possibilities of work, so benefiting the families. (E.g. Swedish social cooperatives).

Social services – family support, health education: e.g. "Autism & ADHD" is a social enterprise in the UK providing support for young and old and their families facing these conditions daily.

Cultural, and Recreational Activities – music and art have been liberating and integrating themes in multicultural societies, with some outstanding examples: The youth Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar, Musethica (Spanish origin education programme for young musicians, also targeting socially excluded audiences); and Bradford's School of Rock & Media social enterprise that works with young people and those with learning and physical disabilities. Peer Productions through plays and films aims to address young people's social issues such as teenage pregnancy, mental health, homophobia, social exclusion and intergenerational relationships. Based in the UK it targets and works with hard to reach community groups, including LGBT teenagers, young Muslim men, young carers, young homeless people, disabled young people, those with mental health issues and young offenders.

GAME is a sport activity based non-profit helping young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Denmark. It relies heavily on volunteers with activities in street basket, parkour, dance and street soccer.

Multi-cultural and Creative activities - Creative Youth Opportunities is a community interest company, in the North East of England, which has been supported

by Teeside University's business hub, and provides creative workshops, events and opportunities for children and young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Made by Young People (MBYP) provides enterprise and employment opportunities for young people; it is a professional printing service producing promotional goods for companies, including Asda, IKEA and Aston Villa.

Housing based initiatives, Community/Youth Centres – social housing organisations (cooperatives and nonprofits) are taking more entrepreneurial initiatives to address social exclusion; similarly for well-established community anchors and settlements. Aston-Mansfield is a socially entrepreneurial community development organisation based in East London, which supports a wide range of learning activities to enhance the wellbeing and potential of children and young people, and their families. Kibble is one of Scotland's largest social enterprise and works with children and young people at risk. It provides tailored support and care packages to ensure each young person gets transitional support to overcome trauma, and lead healthy and fulfilled lives. It does this by integrating a wide range of services including: Residential Care, Secure Care, Primary and Secondary Education, Intensive Fostering Services, Young Workforce Development, Outreach Services, Preventative and Rehabilitative Community Services. Kineara in East London is focused on vulnerable people and family support. It addresses issues of wellbeing, tenancy security, improving employment outcomes, and educational achievement. And it works in partnership with other stakeholders e.g. schools and housing associations to improve family health, and build relationships.

Micro-finance: credit unions are particularly important to help families avoid loan sharks and debt induced poverty. (e.g. UK, Ireland, as well as Hordaland County in Norway (Unni Beate Sekkesæter, 2016).

City farms, food, environment: There are now more than 120 city farms and school farms, nearly 1 000 community gardens and community-managed allotments. They aim to engage all age groups and backgrounds to strengthen communities, particularly in deprived areas. They have been found to be effective for young people with learning difficulties, and mental illness.

Social Tourism & Cultural heritage: there are wide variety of initiatives including: Hidden City Tours is a social enterprise using homeless tour guides for alternative trips around Barcelona; Scotland's Social Enterprise Network has a tourism group which also includes developing accessible tourism; successful social enterprise have become sites for intellectual tourism, and FRC (UK) has generated income to support their work integration activities. And in Italy reclaiming social heritage, including restoring old buildings, has been a vehicle for social inclusion social enterprise.

Employment skills and entrepreneurship: social enterprise are engaged in a wide range of activities (less intensive and extended than work integration programmes), including workshops, activities for schools, and entrepreneurial games for young people in disadvantaged areas to develop their employment and entrepreneurial skills. For example, Games for Change is a New York social enterprise founded in 2004, with the aim of supporting social impact through the use of digital games.

4 Assessment of measures and approaches supporting social entrepreneurship

This section explores and discusses the effectiveness of different measures aimed at the target groups of concern in this peer review: children and young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion and labour market integration of those furthest from the labour market. It examines social entrepreneurship measures together with target group involvement and places these in the context of cooperation/partnership approaches as well as ecosystems of support including funding structures.

Overall, at the micro-level of the organisation, attributes of social enterprise that appear to contribute to effectiveness are:

- Use of local solidarity networks to draw in local volunteers, and sympathetic professionals and experts;
- Multi-stakeholder and participatory governance structures drawing in local stakeholders and thereby contributing to social capital;
- Use of ex-beneficiaries (and locals) as supporters and mentors; and,
- Responsiveness and flexibility.

Similarly at the micro-level of the social enterprise, it is particularly important to design in effective target group Involvement.

4.1 Strategies of Target Group Involvement

Effective strategies of target group involvement to a certain extent draw on the above mentioned overall success factors and it is possible to discern a number of ways in which this is done.

Firstly, there is an emphasis on bottom-up methods of development and entrepreneurship. This aims to ensure the involvement and ownership of an initiative by beneficiary groups and the community.

Secondly, emphasising a system of collaboration or coproduction, where knowledge and resources do not only reside with an external agency (state or third sector) providing support for social entrepreneurship, but also recognising that local people bring their own knowledge and resources to the socially entrepreneurial activity.

Thirdly, the system of collaboration may be more effective when seen as participative, giving influence to beneficiaries and their families in the development process, as well as in the established organisation, and where possible in governance.

Fourthly, drawing on networks of knowledge, resources and support. This relies on identifying and collaborating with sympathetic stakeholders from all sectors – public, private, and third.

Finally, where relevant emphasising local proximity in building relationships and developing initiatives.

These attributes may not be found in all social entrepreneurial strategies for these target groups, and the rhetoric may differ from the practice; but adoption of some of these practices is more likely to engage and involve target groups which may be vulnerable and demotivated.

Moving to the meso-level of how to best to support the development of social enterprise and a social enterprise sector, developing collaborative arrangements and support measures are clearly critical factors for achieving success, and are addressed below in 4.2.

4.2 State Support Measures and Ecosystems

4.2.1 Rationale for support measures

The rationale for supporting the development of social entrepreneurship is not just based on the promise of their effectiveness and social impact, it is also based on a number of key points: firstly, there may be barriers that need to be addressed (institutional, legal/physical, as well as resources); secondly, there needs to be a level playing field of equal levels of support compared to that for SMEs; thirdly, there may be market failures for example in the supply of finance for different stages in the life-cycle of social enterprise from start-up to scaling and growth.

One approach is to assess these different points inductively based on experiences in different countries; another approach is to consider supply and demand and mediating/institutional factors i.e. how does the supply of social entrepreneurs emerge, gain support, acquire resources, gain legitimacy, develop business plans and

launch a social enterprise? And similarly, on the demand side how do markets open for customers, including through state procurement contracts, to purchase from social enterprises; and then how can barriers be lifted between social enterprises and their customers, and markets mediated for smooth and effective exchange?

4.2.2 The concept of ecosystem

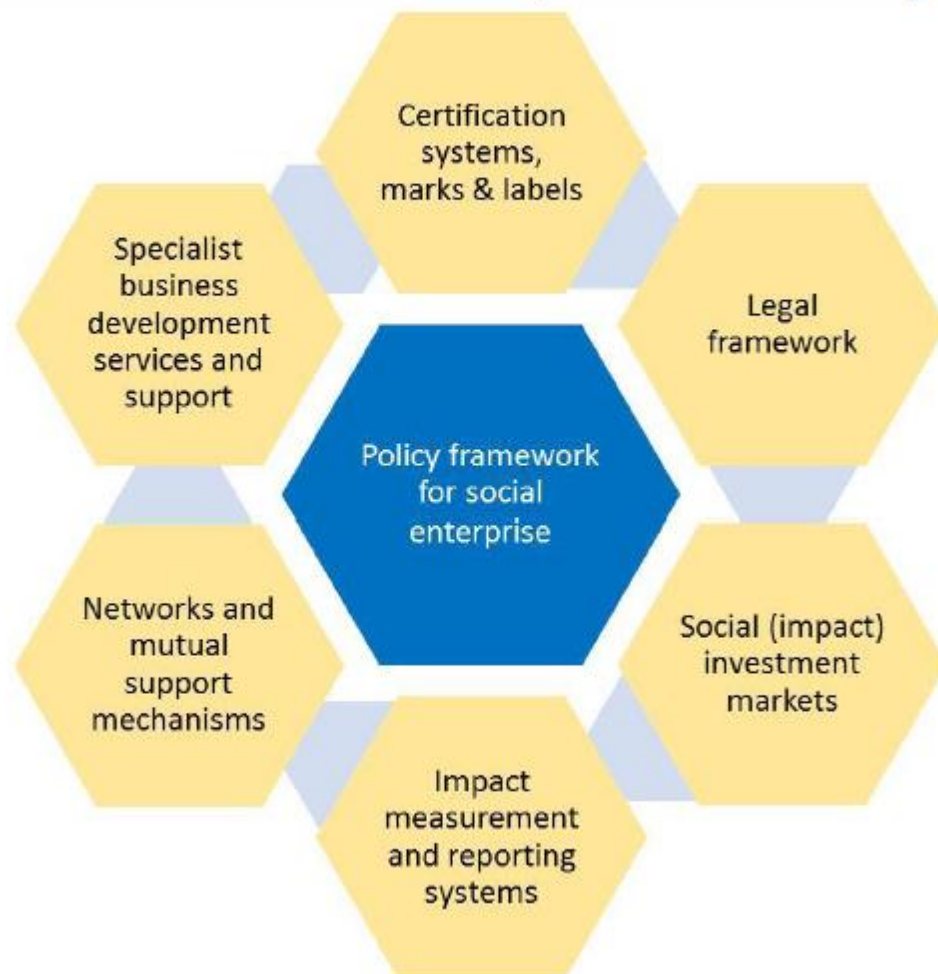
The suite of measures to support social entrepreneurship and social enterprise has recently been re-conceptualised as an ecosystem. This metaphor recognises that we can move from a market failure perspective on social entrepreneurship which confines it to a sticking plaster role, to a more pluralistic perspective where the social enterprise sector forms a distinctiveness where people can consume differently, produce differently, invest and save differently as well as manage differently. This plural economy perspective gives greater resilience because of the different attributes of its different segments. In a plural/diverse economy, different economic species require different configurations of resources and other factors of production which need to be customised to their specific needs.

A well-regarded policy framework for developing a social enterprise sector was established in the UK in 2002 which had three themes: 1) develop better business; 2) create an enabling environment; and 3) establish the value of social enterprise (by developing research, recognition, and trust). This policy framework has similarities with the the European Commission's Social Business Initiative (see also sub-section 2.2) of which the broad aims are: to encourage responsible business (CSR), to facilitate social entrepreneurship, and to cut red tape for SMEs. Furthermore, the Social Business Initiative has three main themes that emphasise finance and the role of government:

- Improving access to funding:
 - Facilitating access to private funding;
 - Mobilisation of EU funds.
- Increasing the visibility of social entrepreneurship:
 - Developing tools to gain a better understanding of the sector and increase the visibility of social entrepreneurship;
 - Reinforcing the managerial capacities, professionalism and networking of social businesses.
- Improving the legal environment:
 - Developing appropriate European legal forms which could be used in European social entrepreneurship;
 - Public procurement;
 - State aid.

The European mapping study of social enterprise and their ecosystems (EC, 2015) developed a more comprehensive framework for ecosystems:

Figure ES1.4 Select features of an eco-system for social enterprise



Since then, other studies and reports have continued to echo this ecosystem perspective - the OECD (2015) emphasised legal frameworks, access to markets, access to finance, support structures, and education and skills. The Social Entrepreneurship Network produced a comprehensive report (2015), particularly strong on the use of ESF funds to support social entrepreneurship; the GECES report (EC, 2016) had 4 themes – increase visibility, recognition and identity, access to funding, legal environment, and international development and growth; and it proposed 13 recommendations. Note that the development of an ecosystem is not just about supporting start-ups, but about capacity building for scaling and growth, as well as about developing a vibrant resilient sector.

4.2.3 Cooperation between key actors

This sub-section covers cooperation and networks, as well as the related area of procurement.

Cooperation, Networks, and Mutual Support

Most countries have collaborative arrangements between the state and third sector/social enterprise; although in Bulgaria and Malta they are less developed (data up to 2014). But increasingly collaborations with other stakeholders are seen as important: a good example of a corporate partnership is that between the Danish social enterprise Specialisterne and the German software company SAP, their "Autism at Work Programme" operates in eight countries to provide jobs for high capability autistic people in the software industry; and the Norwegian company FERD shows how CSR can be developed into social entrepreneurship, by helping to establish sustainable social enterprise (<http://ferd.no/en/social-entrepreneurs/about-fse>). Junior Achievement Europe (JA Europe) is a large non-profit coordinating a pan-European

network of 40 organisations which produce educational and training packages to develop entrepreneurship mindsets and skills targeting young people (including budding social entrepreneurs). This methodology consists in learning by doing and using volunteers from the business sector for mentoring young people (countries include the Nordics, the Baltics and Bulgaria). Part of the programme is about developing social enterprise in eight countries including Denmark and Malta (OECD/EU (2017)). Another programme - Social Innovation Relay - involves student team working to develop their ideas into business plans. Since 2010 it has involved 134 000 students in 25 countries, including currently: Bulgaria, Czech Republic and Hungary.

Social innovation centres and hubs are seen as increasingly important to address social inclusion and growth. They often work through multi-sectoral partnerships, with universities playing a resource and brokering role. One multi-sectoral partnership is a collaboration between the Stena foundation (linked to Novo Nordisk) and various cities globally (including Copenhagen) and health researchers to address risks of diabetes, which are typically faced by those with multiple disadvantages.

Finland is involved in a European partnership supported by Interreg Europe: Social Entrepreneurship in Sparsely Populated Areas (SOCENT SPAs) which operates through public private partnership to improve the effectiveness of regional policies to increase the visibility and support for social entrepreneurs (and other forms) for inclusive growth. Over 30 years, the outstanding Swedish network, Coompanion, has played a central role, often through partnerships with municipalities, and with the use of structural funds in brokering social and public innovation particularly in work integration.

Finland has also developed a highly integrated support system for SMEs and social enterprise - also known as braided support. It used ESF money to develop 'Enterprising Together!' which provides specialist support for social enterprise; this operates through a one-stop shop for all enterprises. It combines a website and knowledge bank with counselling, telephone support, training material and events; and this is supported by a network of local business advisers all over the country.

A key factor for social enterprise to develop strategically with their own identity is to have a broad network or membership body which allows social enterprises to represent themselves and negotiate their interests in relation to other stakeholders, particularly government. In this way, a process of co-governance of strategy and policy can be achieved. In 2014 Finland established a union of social enterprises called ARVO to help achieve this. TESSEA was established in the Czech Republic in 2009 as an opinion platform, and in 2015 became a network to support the development of the social enterprise through its activities including surveys, developing a database, and sharing good practices. Italy has one of the most established structures with an institutionalised national federal structure: Consorzio Nazionale della Cooperazione Sociale Gino Mattarelli (CGM).

Procurement

Procurement may be seen as a form of partnership, but it can be problematic for social enterprise since in most countries contracts are awarded mainly on price. Another major factor in many countries is that contract size may severely limit the access of small and medium-size social enterprise to the procurement market. In some countries (e.g. UK) there has been some innovative attempts to establish B2B relationships between social enterprise and large private sector contractors; and this B2B relationship can also be seen in initiatives by social enterprise to gain access to supply chains of larger commercial businesses, for good economic as well as CSR reasons.

Another relevant theme is strengthening the social dimension of procurement. For example, in Lithuania and the Czech Republic social factors may be taken into account particularly at the local level. One useful model is the Social Value Act (UK) which requires commissioners of public services to consider the social, environmental, and

economic impact of the services to be procured in a contract area. Despite being established several years ago in 2013, consistent practices are still being developed - and improvements seem to be achieved by developing pre-contract partnerships between commissioners and groups of social enterprise.

Some further innovations in procurement can be seen with the advent of social impact bonds (SIBs), these may be seen as an experimental platform for exploring socially innovative programmes. They involve investors taking the risk and sharing the rewards, in contracts with government. One of the pioneering examples in the UK was the Peterborough recidivism SIB. This involved coordinated action by a number of third sector social enterprise to manage ex-prisoners as they emerged from the prison gate to integrating them back into society and work and with their families and children. SIBs have been used as experimental platforms to examine preventative measures, including for homeless people, prisoner recidivism and a large proportion of UK SIBs concern children and young people at risk. (Nicholls, Paton, Emerson, 2015). Often they use social enterprise as service providers e.g. Action for Children provided services for the Essex Social Impact Bond, which 'aims to reduce care days for children on the edge of care or custody, focussing on those aged 11-16 years. The programme uses the evidence-based Multi-Systemic Therapy to deliver services over five years to 380 children and their families.'⁵

4.2.4 Broader Ecosystems of Support

This sub-section provides a brief overview of other dimensions of the ecosystem in the different countries and regions.

Legal frameworks

The transition countries often have restrictive legal forms such as barriers to income generation for nonprofits and NGOs. Cooperatives often have a bad name due to too close an association with the previous state regime. However, the model of social co-operatives in Italy has been very influential in Europe. For example, Hungary has a social co-operative form, as does the Czech Republic, which also has a public benefit corporation which can act like a social enterprise. On the other hand, there are often traditions of employing people with disabilities in cooperatives, and some of these have survived transition. However, registration systems may be overly complex and costly compared to commercial legal forms, so for example in Bulgaria cooperatives for people with disabilities have to register as cooperatives then as cooperatives for people with disabilities. Bulgaria also has 'integration enterprises' which may be established by any legal form. In some countries (Bulgaria and the Czech Republic) legal definitions of 'public benefit' may limit the scope of social enterprise.

Non-profit structures are one of the three most commonly used forms of social enterprise in Europe: in 23 out of the 29 countries, it was among the top three forms used. This was followed by cooperatives which were one of the three most commonly used forms of social enterprise in 15 of the 29 countries. 18 countries have developed legal structures specifically for social enterprise⁶ of which half concerned some form of social cooperative. The Italian social cooperatives have often served as a model and has two categories: type A which is concerned with providing social services, and type B which is concerned with work integration - in both cases a wide range of beneficiaries are served, young and old as well as those with disadvantages and disabilities. There are over 10 000 social cooperatives in Italy, typically organised in local federations (consorzi), and they are well institutionalised having contract arrangements with local municipalities for both types of services.

Clearly it is particularly important to ensure that the nonprofit form (including foundations) is able to operate effectively to generate income in the market and

⁵ <https://emmatomkinson.com/2014/07/17/social-impact-bonds-in-the-uk-an-overview/>

⁶ These include the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary and Lithuania whereas Latvia and Malta are in the process of discussing legislation.

secure procurement contracts. In Hungary the non-profit form is rather closely linked to the public sector. Cooperatives usually have that capability, but in countries where cooperatives are not seen as attractive either because they've been too closely tied to the state, or they have become too much like conventional business, developing the social cooperative form might seem a good option particularly in countries with strong cooperative traditions. Discussions about the importance of special social enterprise legislation are based on the desire to create a recognisable identity, but perhaps a first step is to ensure that existing third sector legal forms are well adapted to the social enterprise form.

The fiscal implications of choice of legal form are also important, so that social enterprise do not find themselves disadvantaged. Indeed, many countries recognise the social dimension of non-profits and give them tax breaks (including Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Latvia).

Business Development and Incubators

International NGOs such as the British Council, Ashoka and NESsT have been important development organisations in CEE countries. NESsT operates by developing skills, capacity building and providing finance for early stage social enterprise. It currently operates in five countries including Hungary and has an annual budget of more than €2 million.

Incubators have become an important way of effectively supporting start up social enterprise. Copenhagen Project House (KPH) is a Danish incubator that supports the entrepreneurial process both for social enterprises and other forms of innovative business which have a strong social, cultural or environmental theme. It very much emphasises a collaborative workspace philosophy where entrepreneurs support each other but it also draws in partners providing advice and resources through its networks.

While support for start-ups is high on the policy agenda, well designed business development and training capabilities should target all stages of the life-cycle of social enterprise. Therefore, capacity building of established organisations is also recognised as an area where great impact can be achieved – not just in terms of visibility, but also to access procurement markets and establish a more vigorous and sustainable sector. Training, consultancy and loans for growth have been an important part of capacity building. Not all social enterprises are particularly concerned with growth, some may find it more appropriate to limit growth so as to be close to their community roots. This leads to strategies of replication (e.g. a homeless newspaper in every big city) and includes social franchises. For example, Le Mat is a hotel social franchise employing people with disadvantages in five countries including Hungary. Furthermore, some social enterprise may emphasise scaling impact by improving the know-how about how they achieve effectiveness.

Social Investment Market for hybridised resources

Social finance has developed enormously over the last ten years, with specialist institutions now operating at local, regional, and national levels in many countries. Social investment markets are concerned with giving social enterprise access to a wide range of resources. Most social enterprise do not use equity investment with loans and grants being the major forms used and there have been innovations in financial instruments such as 'patient capital' which mimics the flexibility of equity but through debt finance. Especially in sectors where it is difficult to achieve sustainability through market income alone – such as work integration of the most disadvantaged – a hybrid mix of resources is usually required including subsidies and volunteer work. Typically, social investment funds develop a closer relationship with their borrowers, providing more supportive strategic development advice.

All five of the transition countries (and Malta) have limited publicly funded support for social enterprise, substantially relying on structural funds - the ESF may continue to be an important driver in the 2014 – 2020 period. For transition countries, the

experience of Poland is noteworthy particularly in its use of ESF funding. Similarly, the Czech Republic has a good record of using structural funds to support different stages of development of social enterprise. Two funds were established to provide grants to more than 150 new work integration social enterprise, targeting jobs for disadvantaged people. In 2012 TISE⁷ launched ESFund, a very successful loan fund for social enterprises in Poland, which provided an advisory business support service. TISE still operates under its own name, but was taken over in 2008 by Cr dit Coop ratif, which describes itself as a bank for the social economy. TISE has expanded to operate in neighbouring countries including Hungary and it has inspired replication in other countries, including with some adaptations in Hungary.

Marks and certification systems

Finland has a social enterprise 'Mark' with three themes (social goal, limited profit distribution, and transparency/openness), and alongside this there is a 'Butterfly Mark' for work integration enterprises of any complexion. Both marks enjoy attractive designs. The Czech Republic had a mark for work integration (but can gain visibility through a CSR award where social enterprise have a category) whereas Bulgaria is considering a mark as part of its Action Plan for the Social Economy.

Impact measurement and reporting systems

Assessing how well social enterprise are doing is very attractive for managers, policy makers, funders, beneficiaries, and the general public. And yet it is riven with difficulties and challenges, not least because there may be tendencies to over-claim, or boost the apparent performance. Nonetheless, it is a theme that is being advocated strongly by the European Commission and many national governments. GECES (2014).

4.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship has a number of strengths and weaknesses, which are articulated below. Some of these are due to the diversity of forms of social enterprise, the over claiming of success and under reporting of failures. There are also features of policy, which undermine the potential and effectiveness of social enterprise - these are also addressed below.

4.3.1 Enabling and challenging factors inherent to social entrepreneurship

Diversity: Social enterprise are quite diverse, the cooperative and non-profit forms often have a bottom-up entrepreneurial dynamic involving civil society. They also often have a multi-stakeholder structure which helps strengthen social capital. They have often been a socially innovative example pioneering work integration social enterprise, but this may be followed by public sector innovation or business adopting the same innovation on a larger scale. For example, in the UK work integration is now mainly carried out by large sector contractors, sometimes with social enterprise in their supply chain. Profit social enterprise can have admirable scaling and growth ambitions but need to navigate the line between profit and ethics e.g. ensuring profit is appropriately distributed and avoiding isomorphic decline of values/ethics.

Failure: Social enterprise are like small businesses. They can fail, particularly in the early years of start-up. There is some evidence to suggest that they are more resilient than SMEs (Ref Birchall & Ketilson, 2009), but social entrepreneurs, funders, and policy makers need to recognise these risks.

Boosterism: Information about social enterprise often has a self-promotional dimension with a tendency to over claim the outcomes. This is not only useful for the social enterprise, but it may also be convenient for funders and policymakers to tell stories of success. There seems to be a lack of rigorous comparative research and analysis of the performance of social enterprise, combined with a predominance of

⁷ TISE is a Polish financial institution set up in 1991.

case studies. This is not to argue that there are not outstanding examples of success but a critical view needs to be developed. In addition, social enterprises are usually just one part of a broader strategy to address issues of disadvantage and social exclusion – on their own they are not a silver bullet.

Social innovation: Bottom-up social entrepreneurial processes together with multi-stakeholder governance structures fit well with current approaches to social innovation in response to social needs. However, the degree of innovation may often be incremental and it may be contingent upon the way government frames its service requirements, i.e. social enterprises play the game of social innovation and government set the rules (Osborne, Chew & McLaughlin, 2008).

Place-based strategy: There is UK evidence to suggest that social enterprises are found in more disadvantaged areas (Thirlaway, Haugh, & Robson, 2014) possibly due to bottom-up initiatives by local communities. They also tend to retain resource flows in those communities and support local consumption, rather than paying wages and sending profit outside the area; also they strengthen social capital in those communities. However, bootstrapping strategies tend not to work in the most disadvantaged communities where people have desperately low levels of resources.

They also support diversity, and evidence from UK indicates good representation from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people in employment, and board membership (SEUK, 2015).

4.3.2 Policy factors undermining the effectiveness of social enterprise

Procurement policy: Sometimes there is a policy rhetoric favouring social enterprise in practice may be a barrier. Often the contract size is large, thereby precluding tenders from SMEs and social enterprise. Similarly, there may be a policy prioritising cost over quality and a failure to recognise the added value of social enterprise. The use of criteria to social value in procurement may be done through social clauses (below a certain size of contract). But the U.K.'s Social Value Act points to a more comprehensive way of addressing the issue.

Over-expectation: Boosterism and a lack of understanding can also undermine the effectiveness of support structures. For example, in the UK some social finance suppliers appear not to have realistic expectations about potential investment returns whereas some studies indicate no problems with the supply of finance but a problem of demand, with a lack of investor ready social enterprise.

Silo structure and mentality of government departments: Social enterprises very often have outcomes relevant to a number of different policy areas, but governments tend to have bureaucratic departmental structures which can make it difficult to coordinate support across departmental boundaries. For example, Blue Sky is a UK social enterprise, where the basic requirement to be employed is to have a criminal record! It addresses prisoner recidivism by giving employment and training to ex-prisoners while conducting contracts for environmental improvement, i.e. its outcomes benefit three different government departments. An associated issue is that the ministerial responsibility for social entrepreneurship will have an important bearing on the way in which social entrepreneurship is framed. For example, placing the responsibility for social entrepreneurship in the Ministry of Labour may tend to limit social entrepreneurship to work integration. Therefore, coordinating policy for social entrepreneurship through an intergovernmental body is more likely to broaden its base and potential. A similar point applies to the vertical integration of policy from national, to regional, and local levels.

Emphasising low cost solutions, while at the same time overloading social enterprise with unrealistic expectations, together with an unwillingness to contribute to the additionality (social value) of social enterprise.

Ghettoisation of social enterprise: Social enterprise risks being seen as a residual category dealing with market failures, rather than pressuring mainstream business to

be more responsible. For example, with regard to employment of people with disabilities, in some European countries there is labour market policy stating that firms over a certain size should employ a certain percentage of people with disabilities. Some employers request that all the current employees fully document their current disabilities. However, many employers fail to meet the required targets, and some countries use disability funds to support the development of social enterprise employing people disabilities. While it could be argued that this is good social enterprise, the broader question is whether it is good for society and the beneficiaries.

Managing risk:

- for beneficiaries – managing the transition from welfare to employment contract, possibly with relaxed criteria the continued use of benefits during the first stage of employment.
- For the social enterprise – managing the risks of start-up and failure;
- for funders – managing the social and financial risks (e.g. by distributing risks, and the use of guarantee systems).

Changing a project culture: It can be challenging to move from an experimental project culture to sustainable social enterprise (with hybrid resources). It requires carefully designed policies to gradually improve the earned income of a project so that it can move towards becoming more sustainable.

5 Conclusions

This paper has sought to draw on European experience of social entrepreneurship for tackling unmet social challenges and it has been concerned to move beyond individual examples of effective social enterprise to consider more broadly how to improve the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship through support and funding in partnership with key stakeholders.

The paper has provided evidence that the socially excluded and those at risk of poverty can face even greater disadvantage if they are persistently poor and excluded, since not only is it more difficult for them to escape that situation, but there are intergenerational consequences for transmission of poverty to their children. And even in rich countries pockets of poverty and exclusion are present. The paper went on to discuss how the EU 2020 strategy aims not only for growth but also for inclusivity and this is a demand that has become ever more pressing in an era of globalisation, with winners and losers. The European Union has established and arranged policies and programmes to support its aim for sustainable and inclusive growth, not least of which is an emphasis on social entrepreneurship which can be seen in the launch of the Social Business Initiative, and subsequently linked measures.

Research, policy and practices relating to social entrepreneurship and social enterprise have become much more developed in recent years. We now have a greater understanding of the different types of social enterprise that may be identified, including cooperative, non-profit, public sector, and social business models. Recognition that these models include new start-ups, as well as the reconfiguration of existing organisational forms towards socially entrepreneurial ones, typically through the exigencies of the market extending into more and more areas of society. This led to a recognition that social entrepreneurship is not just about individual entrepreneurs starting up a new social enterprise, but many other social entrepreneurship models and pathways have been identified and described.

The paper has focused on social entrepreneurship addressing the needs of two sets of target groups: work integration for those more distant from the market, and children and young people (and families) suffering from social exclusion. It has described four different types of work integration. And it has shown that work integration social enterprise policies and practices are much more institutionalised within Europe, with

well-established models, such as in Italy, which in some cases have inspired adaptation/replication in other countries.

For the second target group, children and young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, it has noted a much less level of institutionalisation in Europe. But it has provided many examples of the rich diversity of social entrepreneurial initiatives that have been undertaken in many countries. And it has identified some models and pathways which can inspire adaptation/replication in other countries.

The diversity of social entrepreneurship models and their pathways requires a broad approach to support not just for the start-ups but also for established social enterprise. This has led to a detailed consideration of how collaboration, state support and ecosystems can play important roles in strengthening social entrepreneurship. With regard to developing a more established sector of social enterprise, the importance of ecosystems of support has achieved a greater conceptual understanding and policy recognition with the growing numbers of studies of policy and practice in this area. The paper examines good practices in the six themes identified as key parts of the ecosystem for social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it has attempted to bring out the relevant experiences of countries in this peer review particularly focusing on the two areas of concern: work integration and children and young people at risk.

The paper has discussed strategies to engage target groups and concluded with a critical reflection on the effectiveness of these measures, both with regard to social entrepreneurship and policies supporting it.

The following are some points for reflection which country representatives may wish to consider prior to the Peer Review Meeting.

Which of the four models of work integration are developed in each country, and what is the experience, positive and negative?

For addressing the needs of children and young people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, which of the models described (p9-10) can be seen in each country and what are the issues they face?

How are social entrepreneurship start-ups in the two fields of interest supported in each country? And how are established social enterprise in these two fields supported to grow and scale?

What experience is there of effectively involving target groups in social entrepreneurial activities?

What partnerships and collaborations for social entrepreneurship can be seen in these two fields? And which stakeholders have been the most effective?

How is the state supporting social entrepreneurship in these two fields? And are procurement markets accessible by social enterprise, and if so, how is their additionality (social value) recognised?

To what extent are there barriers to social entrepreneurship in each country - this includes access to appropriate legislation (adapting non-profit legislation, creating social coops; or developing new social enterprise legal structures; and whether to base this on an adaptation of cooperative or non-profit, or company legislation; or whether to use a registration system (open to all forms of organisations);

What are the priorities for the development of an ecosystem, in relation to the current stage of development of the social enterprise sector? And, are there specific developments in the two fields of interest that have proved worthwhile?

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