

BOOK REVIEW

MODELS OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES FOR ROMA

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Employment of vulnerable people in social enterprises is one of the challenges of public policies focus on social inclusion. According to European Union recommendations regarding the development of the social economy (Stănescu, Luca and Rusu 2012, pp. 5-7, 19) social enterprises can play a role in promoting social inclusion by facilitating access to the labor market. The analysis of the Romanian volumes dedicated social economy indicates that the Roma minority is the vulnerable group most frequently addressed within this context (Stănescu 2013, p. 47).

The volume "Models of social enterprises for persons of Roma" has been developed within the project "The model of social economy in Romania", cofinanced by the European Social Fund (ESF). The paper is divided into four sections: methodology, social economy in support of the Roma population, social enterprises models and the phases of setting up a social enterprise. The originality of the volume is that responds to the demand for "information that provides to entrepreneurs models easy to be understood and followed" and "complements the existing framework with new ideas to inspire and mobilize those interested in establishing a social enterprise" (Stănescu *et al* 2013a, p. 10).

According to the methodology, the volume is based on diagnostic analysis of the current situation and qualitative research. The second chapter consists of an introduction to the problematic of the social economy, being also presented specific elements for the Roma minority.

The third chapter is a true inspiration resource for anyone who wants to establish a social enterprise in general and specifically to support the Roma entrepreneurship initiatives. The seven models of social enterprises were selected by the UNDP expert team with regard both to the problematic of the social economy and of the Roma minority.

The first set of models of social enterprise is Romano Cher, an ESF cofinanced project awarded in 2013 at European level. The three Romano Butiq handcraft cooperatives analyzed are based in Moțca village, in Iași Municipality and in Mironeasa village, Iasi County. "Vibration of handmade craft: Roma craftsmen from Moțca" is a revival of silversmith and blacksmith crafts. "Balkan rock in Iași,

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reinterpreting of traditional Romani folklore" is the initiative of five young Roma from families of traditional musicians, graduates of the Conservatory, University of Arts "George Enescu" of Iași. "Traditional Roma crafts are intertwined in Mironeasa" brings to the fore the art of making objects of wicker, rush, maize husks and objects carved of wood.

Other social enterprises models for Roma are success stories from agriculture ("The Earth rewards those who work it: agricultural cooperative society "Drum bun"), production of jewelry by mothers in difficulty ("Jewelry from soul to soul: Touched Collection"), personal care ("PACT for community: hair salon in village Iancu Jianu"), wickerwork ("Because they care! Wickerwork workshop in Tâmașda"). "In Costesti the future goes through the events hall" is a fortunate identification of a funding opportunity. The revenue from rental of events hall of Hercule Association Costești (Arges county) are used to provide daily meals and homework support for 55 children from families in need, most receiving minimum income guaranteed. "Roma of Petrila are building their own present" was initiated due to the fact that people "thought to take life into their own hands and set up a social enterprise with the profile of production of artificial stone and artifacts, using the stone as raw material" (Alexandrescu 2013, p. 45).

The final chapter of the volume includes information about the phases of establishing a social enterprise: motivation, training, evaluation, testing and the business plan. Information on in-force regulations and funding sources complements the information for entrepreneurs.

Annexes of the publication include contact details of relevant institutions for entrepreneurs: National Agency for Employment and the territorial agencies (annex 1); County Offices for Roma (annex 2); Agency for the Implementation of Projects and Programmes for Small and Medium Enterprises and its regional offices (annex 3); Trade Register Offices (annex 4); National Agency for Social Payments and Inspection and its territorial agencies (annex 5) and the General Directorates for Social Assistance and Child Protection (annex 6). A separate annex describes the funding sources that can be accessed for financing social enterprises (annex 7).

The research team from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Romania contributed to the development of other three complementary volumes following the same structure: "Models of social enterprises for the beneficiaries of minimum income guaranteed" (Stănescu *et al.* 2013d), "Models of social enterprises for young people over 18 who leave the child protection system" (Stănescu *et al.* 2013b) and "Models of social enterprises for people with disabilities" (Stănescu *et al.* 2013c). Except the chapter dedicated to information about how to establish a social enterprise, each of the four publications provide relevant information for each of the four vulnerable groups. In addition, the set of appendices contain contact details of relevant institutions for specific problems of each group, but also to promote entrepreneurial initiatives, including sources of funding for social economy activities.

Promoting employment of vulnerable people in social enterprises implies "not only informing and training employees and employers, but also a policy that

includes effective mechanisms for financial support" (Stănescu, Asiminei and Vîrjan 2013, p. 22).

We recommend the lecture of this publication by those interested both in employment for the Roma minority and in the social economy in Romania.

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