

The Role of Higher Education Institutions in the Development of Social Entrepreneurship: The Case of Slovenia

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Abstract

Social enterprise is a relatively new concept in Slovenia. It was first introduced in the context of ESF-funded pilot projects launched in 2009 to support social enterprise development. The social enterprise 'space' has seen an increase in interest and activity since then. The economic crisis and the ensuing disenchantment with capitalism, which gave rise to movements favoring alternative economic structures, are partially responsible for this interest.

Higher education (HE) in Slovenia is starting to provide modest but steady support to the social entrepreneurship sector. While some HE Institutions (HEIs) are conducting research on social enterprise, others are integrating the idea into their academic programs. Practices such as offering elective courses on social entrepreneurship, implementing national and international research projects on social entrepreneurship, and establishing university incubators demonstrate that social entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly relevant in the HE sector.

Slovenian Higher Education Institutions will likely support social entrepreneurship models that boost employment, further international development objectives, or improve education and literacy. Their primary strategy for working with social entrepreneurs is institutional commitment made through partnerships, joint ventures, or projects. Offering instruction, knowledge, or research possibilities are a few examples.

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