KNOWLEDGE WORTH MILLIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SOCIAL STARTUP PROGRAM SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN POLAND

Warsaw, May 2016
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Social StartUp program - Highlights

- 10 companies received advisory and financial support
- 40 advisors working pro bono with the participants
- 23 persons took part in training sessions conducted in addition to the advisory support
- There were more than 50 media materials about the program.
- Thanks to the work of pro-bono advisors every 1 EUR invested in the program, brought benefit worth 6.3 EUR to the participants.
- Participants of the program in cooperation with advisors have created applications that can attract up to 1 000 000 EUR in grants and investments.
- Over 80 persons were offered employment opportunities thanks to the participants of the program.
The Indian Emperor Ashoka through his entrepreneurship has built the foundations of today’s great India. This “Indian Casimir the Great,” as our king, was able to plan, organize, build teams, to achieve goals. And although the methods of discipline and motivation have changed since then, still nothing is more powerful than a good idea in the hands of an entrepreneurial person. And if the idea is focused on promoting the common good, reinforcing others, solving social problems, then you might actually expect the real change to happen. This understanding of social entrepreneurship guided us in the Ashoka Foundation, which is the world’s largest association of social innovators. For many years now we support them in the implementation of ideas that change the world. Some of them such as Wikipedia by Jimmy Wales are generally used and accepted, other are Nobel Prize winners - Kailash Satyarthi or Muhammad Yunus - gaining recognition. Still there are many who are still developing and are looking for the best way to implement their revolutionary ideas. Our entrepreneurs, before they took on their social business interests were doctors, athletes, teachers of mathematics, theater experts, stylists or builders. Therefore, although not lacking in charisma, motivation, creativity and energy, they may lack the tools. And thus Social StartUp program, which we implement in cooperation with UniCredit Foundation and Bank Pekao S.A., and in which we try to raise the business competencies of innovative social entrepreneurs.

We present to you the report of the first pilot edition of the project. Thanking all partners, especially counselors who have worked with us pro bono, I hope that you will find interesting the reflections of participants in this year-long adventure. We have all learnt a lot and we want to share our experience. If someone finds it useful to effectively contribute to solving social problems, we will be fully satisfied.

Agata Stańěj-Bartosik, Director of Ashoka in Poland
Objectives of the Social StartUp program

Social entrepreneurship is, not only in Poland, a sphere of activity which is at an early stage of development and still poorly explored and defined. The biggest challenge for social enterprises is access to Finance, as well as insufficient business know-how and skills. Therefore, next to various forms of financing, it is also necessary to develop a comprehensive substantive support to social entrepreneurs providing them with practical knowledge and skills necessary for the functioning on the market. This will enable better, more efficient cooperation and trust between the business sector and social entrepreneurs, and contribute to the development of social entrepreneurship in Poland.

In order to provide a complex support to the development of professional „social” companies that will be able to successfully combine business with social mission, Ashoka and UniCredit Foundation, in cooperation with Bank Pekao S.A., started on the 15th April 2015 the Social StartUp program. The main objective of the program is to support social enterprises at an early stage of development, in the process of creating or improving business models and preparation of professional business plans. Under the project, 10 social enterprises selected in a competition conducted in the period April 15-June 15, received grants and consulting support from experts from the business sector.

The long-term effect of the initiative will be the construction and promotion of an ecosystem support for social entrepreneurship so that organizations receiving support can achieve and sustain a stable position on the market. The premise of the Social StartUp program is also to raise awareness of social entrepreneurship in Poland, to promote genuine cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experience between the business and social sector, as well as to strengthen the role of competency volunteering as an important part of CSR activities of commercial companies. The purpose of this report is to present the experience, the conclusions and recommendations from the first edition of Social StartUp program from the perspective of its organizers, the founder, the participants, as well as expert-advisors and academics involved in carrying out the program.
Społeczny StartUp („Social StartUp”) is the result of an innovative approach to social enterprise developed from first experiences gained under the cooperation between UniCredit Foundation and Bank Pekao, ably supported by Ashoka Poland. Working together like this is essential if promising social enterprise projects are to become success stories thanks to some key tools stimulating the creation of new competitive social business models that can be replicated elsewhere, also reaching financial sustainability in the long term. For us, this project was a major opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to social inclusion and the social economy, in this case in Poland. It also allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the specific features of the local context and the various activities of those organizations we empowered.

We have supported initiatives that we feel are unique and with great potential for development, providing financial resources and, and in particular, training and mentoring in order to enhance business skills and to cultivate a new „entrepreneurial mindset”. The expertise offered by Ashoka, and the business advisors collaborating within their international network, have enabled us to show our beneficiary projects a high-quality pathway for their growth. This has been complemented by the excellent contribution from Bank Pekao, which has also involved its own staff and generously provided the outstanding in-house expertise you would expect from a bank keen to be closely involved with its local area and the needs of civil society.

For a long time now, our commitment as a Corporate Foundation of UniCredit encouraging solidarity has been embodied in our efforts to support and expand social enterprise, an essential tool for fostering economic and social development, and one of the most innovative means around nowadays. We have always strived to support local communities by being involved and by promoting their well-being – primarily focusing on individual needs – focusing in particular on those in need. This goal it is a distinctive mark of all UniCredit Foundation projects in the countries in which it operates, as well as of the social engagement of the local banks belonging to the UniCredit group. Working together – the Foundation, and the UniCredit local banks – means also multiplying the added value to be generated for local communities.
We promote this “action and cooperation” model both within and outside the Group, continuously making it more tangible and widespread by also engaging UniCredit people, offering them several opportunities to get on board, for example as educators or mentors or also through initiatives such as Your Choice, Your Project. This scheme, which forms an integral part of Społeczny StartUp in its first edition, enables us to get UniCredit employees involved in a different way, by voting for their favorite organizations, willing to implement their social enterprise projects. The organizations are selected from a shortlist prepared by UniCredit Foundation, together with local nonprofit partners like Ashoka: thanks to the bank employees “having their say”, they can get additional grants and financial support to implement their projects.

As we firmly believe in the potential of the Third sector, as UniCredit Foundation we focus our activities primarily on nonprofit organizations, NGOs and similar associations. We are aware that social entrepreneurship still offers significant scope for growth despite the diversity and richness to be found wherever we work, due also to the current differences in local legislations in the field.

Our challenge, therefore, that is connected to our being the Corporate Foundation of a banking group: that is to say, to combine social impact with market-driven models that are economically sustainable in the long term. Our main objective is to create an efficient eco-system that can make use of the tools, combining them with typical business schemes, in order to achieve the goal of increasing social cohesion and community well-being, rather than prioritizing the sole profits-generation.

The experience we have gained since 2003 has shown us that social enterprise is capable of improving socio-economic conditions both locally and nationally: it all starts with the principles of solidarity and active citizenship among people.

Maurizio Carrara, Chairman of UniCredit Foundation
Business means responsibility. A thriving business activity is „flywheel” for the creation of new jobs, transfer of knowledge and technology, infrastructure and public revenue. It is no less important that it creates social capital. The powerful combination of these purposes, enriched with professional business tools and innovative ideas, can create a broad positive social change.

Bank Pekao appreciates the positive impact of social enterprises which can improve the situation of local communities. We are also aware of the limitations associated with the commercial financing of such projects. Therefore, together with UniCredit Foundation and Ashoka. Innovators for the Public, we decided to implement the Social StartUp program. We wanted to address the two major problems that social enterprises face every day: insufficient financial resources and the deficit of business know-how and skills necessary to effectively conduct their companies. Our 10 participants received grants, which helped them to achieve their development plans. Additional funding was granted also to „Zwierzakowo” the project which received the most attention and recognition among the employees of our Bank.

The role of the Bank Pekao in the Social StartUp program is also the substantial support given to the winners of the competition by providing counseling and training programs run by the employees of the Bank. These included personnel management training and the art of presentation course. From our experience we know, that the success of any enterprise is often primarily based on the competencies of the business leaders. The same principle applies to social enterprises.

We are very pleased with the results of the first pilot edition of the program. This kind of cross-sectoral partnership brings multidimensional benefits that allow the transfer of specific know-how and the multiplication of good practice. The experience gained in this edition of the project is going be used in its next installment. We believe that through the role of patron that we have in such initiatives, we contribute to the development of the society in which we operate. We also believe that the winners, with whom we worked and we work, will use well the experience gained and will strengthen the position of their businesses. We cheer them, wishing them a successful implementation of the development plans, which for almost a year of working together have become a reality.

Grzegorz Piwowar
Grzegorz Piwowar, Vice President of the Management Board of Bank Pekao S.A.
In recent years we have seen a growing interest in social economy as a tool to help build a pluralistic and robust market economy. Social enterprises play a significant role in solving social and environmental problems and supporting inclusive growth. Social economy has been addressed in the new EU perspective 2014-2020, which clearly indicated that the European Social Fund should actively support the establishment of social enterprises as a source of employment, especially for those groups of people who, for various reasons, have difficulties in finding jobs (e.g. Youth at risk of social exclusion, disabled persons, inhabitants of rural areas).

In Poland, the development of social economy is an important part of the government policy. According to recent studies the importance and role of social economy in Poland until 2020 will increase considerably. During this period, the number of jobs created by this sector will increase to more than 35,000. According to the National Program for the Development of Social Economy (KPRES) key objectives for the social economy in Poland are to increase business skills and to link social enterprises with local communities.

Social enterprises have the potential to positively and sustainably change the lives of people in need and serve the society by equalizing social opportunities. KPRES indicates that the support and development of social enterprises should focus on the development of managerial skills and communication to grow sustainably over time and bring greater social impact.

(More in the article in the Report of the micro and small companies in 2015)
What is a social enterprise – definition

A social enterprise is an economic subject with following specific characteristics:

- it is an economic entity, organizationally identifiable and accountable;
- the purpose of the economic/commercial activity of that entity focuses on social and professional integration of people at risk of social exclusion (in this case, it is required to employ at least 50% of people from groups at risk of social exclusion and 30% of those with moderate or severe disability) or the provision of social services of general interest, the while the objectives of the pro-employment (employment min. 20% of people with specific groups at risk of social exclusion);
- does not distribute profit and balance surplus to shareholders, but dedicates it to strengthen the capacity of the company as an undivided capital and in a certain part dedicates it on the vocational and social reintegration (in the case of unemployment-related companies) or charitable activities conducted for the benefit of the local community in which the company operates;
- is managed on democratic principles, or at least consults its decisions with the employees and other stakeholders, and the remuneration of management is subject to limits. Status of a social enterprise will be obtained under the provisions of the social enterprise regulations by obtaining an entry in the National Court Register.
The flow of the Social StartUp program – in brief

Social StartUp program began with a competition for social enterprises, which took place from the 15th of April to the 15th of June 2015 in two categories – the „Accelerator for existing projects” and the „Idea for a social enterprise”.

The entrants after a formal selection were 37 entities: non-governmental organizations engaged in economic activities, social cooperatives and non-profit companies. Of the submitted applications, jury selected 10 companies that qualified for the 9-month program of advisory support in the areas necessary for the development of their business plans, identified following a preliminary need-assessment run by Ashoka experts. 40 advisors working pro bono with the participants of the program to develop expertise in areas such as:

- Building and managing a team
- Financial planning
- Marketing and promotion
- Sales strategy
- Supply Chain Management
- Preparation of contracts with suppliers
- Building and maintaining relationships with customers.

In addition to a complex advisory support, participants received financial grants for the development of their business objectives that could not be founded through other means while being a true leverage points for further development of the enterprise.

In frames of the program three two-day trainings were carried out covering the following topics:

- Creating business models and the use of SRS (Social Reporting Standard) - moderated by Agata Stafiej - Bartosik, Director of Ashoka in Poland and Georg Schoen, Director of Ashoka in Austria
- Team building by Marek Koteras, Bank Pekao S.A.
- The art of presentation led by Marek Koteras and Anetta Dabrowska, Bank Pekao S.A.

Individual meetings with advisors significantly helped participants to organize and improve know-how in all areas related to business management. It also made it possible to develop a professional approach to planning of the business activities tailored to the professional budget forecasts, with details of the projected revenues and expenses.

StartUp Social was also supported by ekonomiaspoleczna.pl, egospodarka.pl, CR Navigator, Stocznia and the Responsible Business Forum in the widespread communication activities.
Overview of social enterprises
- participants of the Social StartUp program

The following organizations were the winners and participants of the program, benefiting from the financial and advisory support:

ASSOCIATION WIELKOPOMOC
Number of employed persons: 6

Association Wielkopomoc leading a community house for 24 homeless persons in Posadówek near Lwówek Wielkopolski. Residents of the community, in cooperation with the nearby municipalities, launched a dog shelter in a form of a social enterprise which they manage with great success. The enterprise is constantly expanding and creating new jobs. Three residents of the community and one person from the Municipality Lwówek are employed on a contract of indefinite duration. From March 2016 next 3 residents and one person from the Municipality Lwówek started to work in the form of an internship with a guarantee of subsequent employment. At the moment, „Zwierzakowo” has signed contracts with 7 neighboring municipalities and 66 dogs are staying at the shelter. In the nearest future the leaders of the association plan the expansion of the shelter, as well as development of a new service of dogotherapy for children from nearby special schools and Occupational Therapy Workshops. The Association during the last 3 years has contributed to the successful return to normal life of 11 former residents who now lead an independent life, work and who actively contribute to the social and cultural life. Thanks to the efforts of its leaders the dog shelter has greatly expanded the volunteering practice in the Municipality of Lwówek. Students from high school in Lwówek regularly visit the dogs staying in the shelter, nurturing them, and going for walks. Zwierzakowo is not a regular dog shelter as it goes far beyond the formal requirements of the treatment, care, nutrition of homeless dogs. The Association plans to start as well as cultivation of spelled wheat and the production of pellets.

IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM: the team has developed an action plan for the next three years, together with a projection of the budget, paying special attention to the efficient processes management and improvement of communication.

SEE MORE AT: http://siecbarka.pl/stowarzyszenie-integracji-społeczności-lokalnych-wielkopomoc/

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1 Calculations on employment and additional income generated by participants’ beneficiaries presented in this section of the report is based on data presented by participants as official information.

"Persons employed": subjects who have a stable job and get monthly salary from organizations participating in the Social Startup program.

"Persons generating additional income for their households": subjects actively contributing to the income-generating activities of participant organizations in the Social Startup program. They might get training on the job and they do get paid for their work. In the end they are more prepared for future employment opportunities.
SŁAWEK FOUNDATION
Number of planned workplaces to be created: 20

Sławek Foundation is a nonprofit organization which carries out the difficult mission of assistance to people in prison, former prisoners and their families. It operates since 1998, from the beginning focusing their method on an individual approach to every human being and a comprehensive, tailor made support. The organization was founded by the Łagodziński family – Marek, Danuta, Izabella and Krzysztof. During the 17 years, the Foundation has developed a number of programs and support models that allow an effective social and professional rehabilitation of offenders.

The Sławek Foundation collaborates with the Prison Service, Ministry of Justice, Probation and other community organizations to lead a continuous exploration, development and implementation of effective methods of rehabilitation and social reintegration of the convicted and to create an efficient system of post-penitentiary aid in Poland. The organization runs a Centre for Rehabilitation and Social Re-adaptation in Mienia, close to Minsk Mazowiecki in which accommodation, meals and support programs are provided to persons leaving prisons and detention centers.

Since its inception, the organization engaged in economic activities leading initiatives of social economy and supporting the development of the social enterprise sector in Poland. From the first few years until 2014 the Foundation ran a car repair shop „Fun Service“, in which persons convicted and former prisoners received professional formation and employment. The employees currently run the workshop on their own. The foundation carried out services on the construction market by creating repair teams. In recent years, the organization provided vocational and professional-skills training for disadvantaged groups.

Currently, the great goal of Sławek Foundation is to achieve financial independence through the creation and maintenance of Poland’s first plantation of Lycium Barbarum or goji berries. This project was submitted to the competition in the IDEA category. Over the past several months the idea was developed, and supported in frames of the Social StartUp through advisory as well as financially.

IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM: Sławek Foundation has made a number of comprehensive measures for the sound development of their project, which include: a detailed market analysis; in-depth risk analysis associated with the specifics of the crop; cost/benefit analysis of several scenarios of the business plan; an assessment of the social impact of the success of the project; assessment of the prospects of attracting investment.

SEE MORE AT: http://fundacjaslawek.org/
SYNAPSIS FOUNDATION WILCZA GÓRA CENTER
Number of persons employed: 24

Synapsis Foundation has set up the “Home and Work” Center in Wilcza Góra as a response to the problem of social exclusion of adults with autism, as well as lack of work, rehabilitation and leisure centers for such persons. In 2007 The foundation has launched the Different Things Workshop by SYNAPSIS - producing crafts, organic products, gadgets and giving employment to 24 people with autism. The Workshop has been notified to the competition in the Accelerator category. The whole space of the Workshop has been designed in a way that responds to the specific needs of persons with autism - the building was divided into two zones - the blue defining a working space and green - designed for classes and rehabilitation. The housing project started in autumn 2013. The house is a place where the project is implemented with the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities. People with autism, with the support of therapists learn to be independent. One could say that the whole project is maintained in the „autistic order“ so that persons with autism can stay in a shared space with others.

IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM: the team dealt with fine-tuning of the business model and the improvement of communication and internal processes.

SEE MORE AT: http://pracowniasynapsis.pl/
The Common Table social cooperative, launched its restaurant in August 2015 employing long-term unemployed persons. The restaurant adjacent to the exclusive hotel serves healthy, organic food inspired by the idea of “slow food.” Restaurant is located in Poznan, in Śródką districts and was established in the framework of activities of the Poznan Foundation for Mutual Help Barka. In the past three years, the foundation has created 11 social cooperatives, including five in the Poznan area. One of them is the Common Table cooperative. Currently, the restaurant employs 12 persons, of whom half are long-term unemployed persons returning to the labor market. These are people who have not worked a dozen years, for various reasons; family problems, struggle with addictions, sometimes they are in the retirement age. The second group of employees are students with a commitment to support the restaurant business.

The main piece of equipment in the restaurant premises is a long, five-meter oak table, where almost 20 people can sit. The table has a symbolic dimension - as the creators of the restaurant say - it has to be a place where everyone, despite the diversity feels good, and where everyone is equal. Common Table Restaurant has been notified to the competition in the Accelerator category. It is one of the most popular restaurants in Poznan, not only because of its social mission, but also thanks to the exceptional quality and taste of the dishes served. Booking calendar for company integration meetings and family celebrations in the Common Table is already filled for several months ahead.

IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM: The team devoted a lot of work to their management processes and team management, as well as to designing their financial planning. A very fast success of their idea put the team in front of a necessity of fast and effective planning and an accelerated development of the machine park, as well as the supply chain.

SEE MORE AT: http://www.wspolnystol.org/
The social cooperative FADO was created to alleviate and help alleviate barriers to the provision of goods and services. The priority of the company is to ensure the widest possible participation of people with various disabilities in social, business and professional life. The founders of the cooperative, being persons with various disabilities themselves, know very well the real problem. Therefore, in the scope of its services the cooperative includes products that help the deaf to understand written texts, the blind to use a website and people in wheelchairs to reach any place. Thanks audits of public space conducted by FADO as well as creation of the digital solutions and availability of translations into sign language their customers - offices (Ombudsman, the Provincial Labor Office in Lodz), NGOs (watchdog Polish Foundation Institute for Regional Development) and private companies (Laboratory for Social Research) become accessible to people with disabilities. The cooperative has decided to create a tool with which any organization or company will be able to check in a fast and efficient way to what extent it is accessible to people with disabilities. Easy to use web-based application will transparently check the basic indicators in respect of which it will carry out significant changes and overcome architectural barriers. With the tool Social Cooperative FADO provides, access to services will become a standard that every modern organization and the company should have. This product has been submitted to the competition in the Accelerator category.

**IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM:** During the Social StartUp program FADO started to work on developing a mobile version of the application, as well as to implement professional activities to enhance cooperation with business and obtaining financing.

**SEE MORE AT:** http://www.spoldzieniafado.pl/
SOCIAL BREWERY PUCK

Number of persons employed: 13 osób

The social cooperative Dalba was established in June 2014 by the Municipality of Puck, the Municipality of Krokowa and Puckie Association for the Mentally Handicapped Persons. The cooperative opened a brewery. It currently employs 13 persons, including 10 persons with intellectual disabilities. Employees are graduates of occupational therapy workshops. Cooperative Brewery Puck is the first cooperative brewery in Poland and a sixth of this kind in the world. Dalba offers quality beer of exceptional taste. This initiative breaks the stereotypical approach to people with this type of dysfunction, proving that persons with this kind of conditions are able to fully function in the society. The activities of the brewery are embedded in the regional traditions of Pomerania where Puck lies. The cooperative brewery has been submitted to the competition in the Accelerator category.

IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM: In October 2015 the cooperative has launched a pub. The organization received support in frames of the Social StartUp in the field of management and organization of processes in a multi-tap bar. The team worked as well on team management standards, the business model and the budget design.

SEE MORE AT: http://www.browarspoldzielczy.com/
FOOD FOR GOOD BY THE SELF RELIANT ROBINSONS FOUNDATION

Number of persons getting trained and generating additional income: over 40

The Self-reliant Robinsons Foundation, was established in 2014 as an organization supporting the Robinson Crusoe Foundation. The Foundation provides empowerment and comprehensive support for young people from foster care institutions (orphanages, foster families, family orphanages) at the risk of social exclusion. The beneficiaries of the Foundation are often deprived of family support, and as survivors struggle to cope with feelings of abandonment, helplessness, fear of failure. Due to the lack of confidence and lack of support in the family they often withdraw from situations that require perseverance and let go opportunities that could change their fate. The Foundation teaches young people how to gain economic, social and emotional independence - and how to get skills necessary in order to break the vicious circle of helplessness, how to overcome barriers and how to fight for their place in the world and in the society.

Project Food for Good, or Good-sharing Gingerbread, has been submitted to the competition in the Accelerator category. The creation of this social enterprise was an idea of young people working with the organization. The foundation gave it a more concrete form and a legal framework. The product – a Good-sharing Gingerbread in its very name implies sharing. The gingerbread is an ecological product and it has no chemical additives. The working model is adapted to the participant’s needs and possibilities, production takes place every other weekend, so that students can continue their studies and at the same time have a source of income. The company has its own youth leader and assumes the rotation of employees at different positions depending on their skills and interests. Production takes place in school catering facilities, the school provides a mentor - a chef of confectionery, who watches over the production process and provides advice. The young people share their product with their customers and a company buying it can share it with their stakeholders. The gingerbread baked by young people consists of two parts (sweet and spicy) and breaks easily in two, this way it is easy to share. By working in the program the young persons get the habit of work, they see how working or running business looks like from inside and they get trained to enter the workplace in the future. They are paid for their work so they do generate additional income.

IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM: The foundation, has reformulated and optimized its production and sales processes, embracing the seasonality of the demand, as well as supporting the skills and qualifications of the management team, sales and customer relations.

FAJNA SOCIAL COOPERATIVE  
Number of persons employed: 12

FAJNA Social Cooperative is a social enterprise involved in the activation of persons with disabilities through work and cooperation. As a franchise partner of a British company CLARITY EFBP, FAJNA is engaged in the production of handmade cosmetics. The cooperative offers natural, handmade soaps full of healthy properties. Rich assortment (more than 60 kinds of soaps) makes it suitable for all skin types, regardless of gender and age. They are made only from natural ingredients of plant origin (dyes, extracts, glycerin). The offer of FAJNA is enriched with additional innovative element - dedicated soaps. FAJNA offers design services production of decorative products and handcraft workshops. FAJNA entered the Social StartUp competition with a project of sales-islands in shopping centers, which would sell products and services of social enterprises as thus create new workplaces and income. Each “island” would generate additional employment for two persons. The group of mapped suppliers for the project is composed so far of 10 social enterprises. The project has been submitted in the Accelerator category.

IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM: With the help of a team of consultants FAJNA cooperative worked very hard on the development of this project, developing their competences in legal matters, marketing, sales, and those related to logistics and supply chain. In January 2016 an online store was launched offering products of 10 suppliers with whom the cooperative has been working within the framework of this initiative.

SEE MORE AT: www.fajna.eu
The Serfenta Association is a leading institution in Poland in the field of research on basketry. The Association has had six years of field research, exhibitions, workshops, conferences, book publishing and movies. Through research, the Association got to know craftsmen, artists, instructors, researchers in this field. Answering the question what awaits crafts in the future, the Association finds inspiration in the world of design, the potential benefits of tourism and international organizations connecting artists with the business world. One of the goals of the organization is to improve the economic situation basket makers in the remote rural areas of Poland and that was an impulse to launch a social enterprise. A business idea submitted to the competition is the organization of responsible tourism and fair trade baskets. The Association wants to offer its services and products to foreign customers. The Serfenta Association entered the competition in the Idea Category. Exceptional and unique products offered by Serfenta are increasingly popular among customers, both in Poland and abroad. In Serfenta's model the elderly people from rural areas are not employed but they do generate income for their households through making baskets and getting paid a fair price for their work.

IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM: Pro bono advisory services in frames of the program have helped the team to develop a sales and marketing strategy as well as planning business activities and financial planning.

SEE MORE AT: www.serfenta.pl
DALEJ RAZEM
Number of persons employed: 16 osób

Dalej Razem - a company established by the Association for Assistance to Autistic Persons, which is primarily aimed at professional activation and employment of people with autism spectrum disorders. The company was established with support from the Velux Foundation in 2013. In Poland, apart from Dalej Razem Sp. o.o. there is not a single non-profit company of the limited liability status founded to create jobs for people with autism. The company currently employs 16 people with autism and Asperger’s syndrome, who work in three workshops: culinary, handicraft, multimedia and printing. The latter turned up in May 2014 into a professional printing online business WYDRUKUJEMY.TO. In the bakery of Dalej Razem one can buy gluten-free breads and pastries. In November 2014 an educational portal Dalej Razem Edu was launched. The portal is devoted to autism spectrum disorders. It contains an offer of training tasks for autism therapists, teachers, educational films and therapy aids made at the Dalej Razem workshop. During the Social StartUp program, the portal Dalej Razem Edu has been developed with an „EdWord” module - an application constituting the base of graphics and images with the ability to edit their signatures and print, which Dalej Razem signed up for the competition in the Accelerator Category. The application is a response to the needs of persons with autism who don’t communicate verbally. Access to graphics and photos, for a small subscription fee, will make it easier for people with autism to contact with the world and will improve the comfort of their living. The Dalej Razem Sp. o.o. wants to share with others the knowledge gained during the 14 years of existence of the Association, and thus - to make autistic persons feel comfortable and in a way return them to the world.

IN FRAMES OF THE PROGRAM: Team began to enter the English-speaking markets as well the German-speaking. They have launched the English version of their application. A German version is being further developed.

SEE MORE AT: http://www.firma.dalejrazem.pl/oferta.html

All organizations participating in the program Social StartUp support persons at risk of social exclusion.

Among the beneficiaries of their activities there are:

- persons with intellectual disabilities;
- persons with physical disabilities;
- persons with autism spectrum disorders;
- prisoners and ex-prisoners in the process of return to society and the labor market;
- youth from foster care in the process of becoming independent and gaining initial professional experience;
- people leaving homelessness;
- long-term unemployed persons;
- persons experienced with addiction;
- survivors of domestic violence;
- seniors in rural areas.
Conclusions and recommendations from Social StartUp program from the perspective of business advisors

Aleksandra Stanek-Kowalczyk, Senior Manager, Deloitte Sustainability Consulting Central Europe, Deloitte, pro bono advisor at the Social StartUp program:

A key challenge faced by social enterprises is, paradoxically, the same thing that constitutes their main competitive advantage, a business based on the mission, aimed not only at generating profit but also at solving social problems. Quite often, such companies can't manage to reconcile these two dimensions. Company derived from mature social organizations, supported by a great idea, can't cope with the reality of the market, where it is necessary to think in terms of costs and revenues, and the client becomes a very important stakeholder. This is why, I think, social entrepreneurs should start supplementing their social competencies which exist in their organizations with business skills, but also and perhaps primarily, by changing the way of thinking and looking at the money and the ability to generate profit, not as a side effect of their social activity, but as chance for a stable and long-term development of their organizations.

Elżbieta Rosiak, Managing Director, Human Resources Division, Office of Employee Relations, Bank Pekao S.A., a pro bono advisor at the Social StartUp program:

Through their mission, social enterprises are new and also the specific subjects of our economy. On the basis of the study a long catalog of obstacles to doing business in social economy entities was indicated, but the key challenge is lack of trust in such initiatives and perception of social enterprise as an entity, offering services at a low level due to the operation in the areas of social exclusion. Therefore, in my opinion, the biggest challenge is the commercialization of the „business” idea or the ability to raise funds for the development of it, by demonstrating the social and economic added value of a social enterprise. We must therefore seek opportunities to develop these subjects through extensive promotion of their activities, showing their competitiveness and strengthen cooperation undertaken with local financial institutions and banks.
Social enterprises operate in the same market in which companies that don't have a social mission operate. Therefore, to be able to compete effectively with them, they must observe how they operate, and take over from them their best practices in different areas: marketing, management and sales. Thanks to this they will be able to operate for the benefit of people at risk of exclusion to an even greater extent.

Social enterprises are developing in the world for many years. In Poland, it is also no longer just a fad, but a real work based on the idea and values, which gives the possibility of achievement of social objectives. Through their activities social enterprises broaden the horizons of business. Because they are in direct contact with neglected consumer groups, they understand their needs much better. Drawing simultaneously from profound ethical values and the commitment to social, they forge ideas, inventions and facilities that serve people, especially those who can't cope with their economic or other life limitations.

The experience of social enterprises, their flexibility, and perspective through the prism of human problems can help make decisions so that business doesn't have to choose between profit and social responsibility, but skillfully combine them in one business model and a set of economic chains.

Personally, I see, however, a feature of social enterprises - where their mission and vision of the implementation of the ideas and social objectives collides with laws that (perhaps with some exceptions) determine the success of this type of projects. These are the management rules, teamwork, economics and marketing, which help embed social activities in the realities of the marketplace and prepare the ground for cooperation with for-profits. This of course requires knowledge in these areas, as well as economic experience useful in many business situations. However, everything depends on how and if persons deciding to develop a social enterprise will be ready to dismiss their habits (resulting from previous experience) and instead of thinking in terms of financial gain will be able to switch to working for the social benefit.
Social enterprises should definitely use their values to build a proper organizational culture that will allow them to gain a sustainable competitive advantage in the market.

I am convinced that this type of business will be from year to year more and more visible and influential in the business environment. It is important to cultivate what should be permanent and unchanging, that is, long-term vision and mission and the values and ideals that created the social enterprise. On the other hand, one shouldn’t forget about continuous positive change, achieved through innovation, creativity and continuous improvement of all processes. This mix of tradition and social responsibility, passion and innovation to create if just the right foundation to build truly visionary organizations.

Marek Śliboda, President of the Board, Marco sp. z o.o., a pro bono advisor at the Social StartUp program:

Many civic organizations, planning to launch a social enterprise, lack the broad business know-how. Starting with the skills to build a commercial strategy, linking together different elements and finding synergies between them, and ending on the issues in the area of marketing and sales alignment of internal processes within the organization.

I believe that many such organizations need a business leader, who could lead the organization towards for-profit solutions. Mature enough to take strategic decisions, but also having a real impact on the current activities of the organization.

Marek Niedźwiedź, ex Marketing and CRM Director at Polkomtel Sp. z o.o., a pro bono advisor at the Social StartUp program:
Conclusions and recommendations of social entrepreneurs
- why to participate in the program?

Dorota Poślednia, Dalej Razem Edu

Through participation in the Social Start-Up program we have learned to adopt a more business-like approach. We knew many of the things, but we did not realize that they were so important to our potential business partners. For us, the most important factor is the humanistic value of what we do, because it’s the wellbeing of the beneficiaries of our association that is the driving force behind our actions. We understood, however, that to convince business entrepreneurs, we don’t have to underline so much the weight problem that we face but the economic factors, how well we deal with our business idea.

Participation in the training helped us tame various tools that facilitate contacts between the social entrepreneurs and business.

I think that breaking the barrier in contact with the „real” entrepreneurs and move to a more economical way of thinking about our business is the thing that social enterprises need most to be able to thrive.najbardziej potrzebne do rozwoju.

Magdalena Kępka, Self-efficient Robinsons Foundation:

One of the most important benefits of participation in the Social StartUp program was, in the case of Food for Good support in the areas related to the development of sales, accounting, purchasing software, equipment and many other. On other words, not a direct support for our children but to support administrative facilities. In this process we see the enormous value in the advice from professionals who also have helped to spread the word about our product.

No less important benefit of participation in this project was to learn about other social entrepreneurs. A space where participants could meet during the workshop and talk in the corridors was really bringing us a lot of joy – sharing experience, cheering, comparing and seeing what are the activities, solutions and ideas of other organizations for me was like the experience of MasterCard - PRICELESS.
In addition to the “obvious obviousness” which is the financing of our project, what was essential for the Foundation Slawek was the advisory support provided by both Ashoka Poland and Bank Pekao S.A., as well as by the PwC Poland. As an initiator of the GojiLand I can say with full confidence that the greatest contribution to creating a model of the functioning of our social business came from the Ashoka Poland team. It is thanks to their determination and positive forcing for ever deeper clarification of our business objectives that we have established a professional business plan with a budget containing detailed calculations that are the foundation of our business. Also, largely thanks to Ashoka Poland we have created accurate, factual descriptions of our enterprise, one-pagers, graphics and presentations. Trainings organized by Bank Pekao S.A. and PwC proved to be crucial as well. Thanks to them we were able to professionally prepare to present our idea to investors, identify the main strategic objectives of our business idea and learn how to manage a team. In my opinion the factors described above were determinant in our development and, in addition to the acquisition of money (where Ashoka Poland was very helpful as well), their perseverance in order to contribute to the transformation of our dream in a real project.

A cooperation of NGOs and social enterprises with business is entirely possible what we find even in this moment, using the employee volunteering. Thanks to the cooperation with Pekao S.A. we had the opportunity to participate in very well-prepared trainings (applause for leading them goes to Mr. Marek Koteras) and very effective employee volunteering program. By working with PwC we had an opportunity to participate in a meeting with the best PwC experts from around the world who on basis pro bono bent over our idea GojiLand throughout one whole day, presenting a summary of extremely valuable advice and conclusions.

One of the biggest obstacles to such cooperation may be lack of knowledge from the side of a non-governmental organization, that they may ask for it. Another obstacle may be an unprofessional approach to business representatives (not responding to e-mails, not fulfilling the obligations) by the NGOs. From business side, in turn, expecting too much professionalism or solutions that are ordinary to business from a civic organization, which by its nature is not used to working in a “corporate” way.
Conclusions and recommendations from the Social StartUp program - summary

1. It is important to strengthen the managerial competencies of social entrepreneurs.

2. The challenge for social entrepreneurs is to nurture and combine “business mindset” with the mission.

3. The advantage of social entrepreneurs is the motivation of teams.

4. Networking, experience exchange, building the capital of contacts and relationships with other social and the “traditional” entrepreneurs.

5. The organizational cultures of NGOs from where usually derive social entrepreneurs, and that of business, to which the social enterprises aspire, are very different. To really enter the marketplace and successfully cooperate with commercial companies social entrepreneurs need to change many habits and assumptions. This also applies to purely commercial enterprises willing to cooperate with the entities of the so called “social economy”. It is important to moderate and facilitate these contacts.

6. To develop positive effects, both social and business entrepreneurs, need time for reflection and creative thinking as well as space for meetings, dialogue and co-create solutions, to stimulate innovation and ‘positive contamination’.
Business loves numbers, and social workers prefer people, their stories, needs, fears, happiness, stories. But who said that one excludes the other? Social entrepreneurs often have resistance to present their activities using numbers. Maybe because they do not like it – they want to talk about the human aspects of life, not the cold excel sheets. Or maybe because they simply do not know those numbers. Measuring the impact and results of operations is not a strong point of the founders of the social startups. Meanwhile, if you don’t measure, it can’t improve.

It is necessary to transfer to social entrepreneurs the tools and methods for measuring the efficiency and scale of their activities, tailored to their specific needs. Measuring social entrepreneurship can’t be a simple carbon copy of the business solutions. It requires adaptation, understanding of the specifics of every project, as well as creativity and discipline. It is also necessary to build skills of action planning and that of designing realistic budgets. Realistic does not mean not ambitious, but achievable in the business model associated with it, with its constraints and opportunities that it creates. Finally, we should make every effort to make those involved and motivated persons feel that the numbers are on their side. The numbers are not a boring task, which needs to be taken care of, because those who have money demand numbers. The numbers allow to show the beauty and scale of the noble actions. Sometimes unknown even to those who implement them ...
Conclusions and recommendations from the Social StartUp program
- summary

5 skills social entrepreneurs need
and business people can help them get it

Understand the power of relationship

- We are the good guys and you are the money. Unfortunately, too often, social workers look this way at people working in business. Business is not free from stereotypes either. In consequence one side seems to the other as demanding, and then the other side is often perceived as indifferent, arrogant, insensitive. This kind of a start of the relationship between social business and its patron or a potential investor does not bode well. It is surprising, but quite more often the importance of dialogue, understanding of the needs and mutual benefits is embrace in a purely commercial relationships, than in relationships between a civic organization and a commercial entity providing funds for its activities. One of the key tasks for the representatives of both sectors is to develop the ability to build partnerships - without a sense of superiority of one reason or another. Only then we will be able to realize effective and lasting projects, rewarding for both parties.
The Energy of a leader is very powerful. It is he or she who says the first “I will change it.” They begin to work, earn the first money, the first order, the first machines. But often in the rush they tend to forget about the team. Or they do not forget, but feel they don’t have the money to hire the right people, they do not have time to prepare a job description, they do not have the strength to provide continuity. But the „show must go on”. There are people who count on me. And where are those that I can count on?

One of the main tasks is to strengthen the leadership skills of social entrepreneurs in the area of team building, delegation, development of the team members in a way that allows to manage better and more efficiently the energy of the entire team, including ... the boss. Business has long since discovered that the manager must have the whole set of tools useful in team management, while in the civic sector still too often the team management happens intuitively.

Do not treat the strength of a leader, as the inexhaustible source of energy
Find time to plan

- On a building site a construction worker goes back and forth with empty wheelbarrows. The manager asks: Why do you keep going around with empty wheelbarrows? – Because, boss, there is so much to do that I don’t even have time to load!
- Many social enterprises resemble this building site. For small entities, with their insufficient resources, there is always too much work, too many ongoing needs, which do not allow for a more strategic reflection. It is extremely difficult to find time to think about raising competences, time for training or time for planning. Meanwhile, without it, there is no way forward. Often social entrepreneurs lack motivation, or even logistics capabilities, to leave for a while their everyday tasks and take time to learn, or to discuss. But this is where the difference between the good and the great lies – the great ones do it. To achieve scale, thanks to which we will be able to help even more people, social entrepreneurs must appreciate the importance of strategic planning. In this exercise the task for advisers drawn from business will be to adjust the solutions to the possibilities of social entrepreneurs. Rarely can a social enterprise purchase or commission a market analysis or a customer survey. It should be a common challenge to think how can it be done with the resources available.
There are many studies that show that social leaders differ from business leaders largely when it comes to risk appetite. The former are willing to behave more recklessly, while the second is characterized by greater consideration. Social workers sometimes make something out of nothing. They take up the tasks which the business knows to be “impossible”. Often it works. But often in the area demanding more calculation and planning, such as business, those visions might turn out to be too ambitious. Not because they really are impossible, but because they are not calculated, implemented with no plan, done too quickly, with too large margin of risk. The decision to start a social enterprise should not resemble a jump into a deep water without knowing to swim. It might be a good idea to workout close to the shore first. Lack of business experience may result in social entrepreneurs replanted with optimism, betting too much on one card, thus wasting a lot of time, energy and perhaps even money. It is the open-minded and creative business advisor who can be a valuable source of information. Empathic litmus test that does not undercut the wings, but helps to plan, test, check, until as a result of that cooperation a model is created that will significantly contribute to improving quality of life of as many people as possible.

Agata Stafej-Bartosik
Agata Stafej-Bartosik, Director of Ashoka Poland
Social entrepreneurship and its importance from the perspective of representatives of academia

Andrzej Juroš, PhD, Catholic University of Lublin, juror in the Social StartUp competition:

Social entrepreneurship, built endogenously, based on good community (local) diagnosis of needs (poverty) is growing in Poland slowly but consistently since the early nineties. Examples: Pension and Restaurant „U Pana Cogito“, Re-adaptation Centre EKO „School of Life“ in Wandzin Association Emmaus in Křežnica Jara, Foundation” Happy Childhood “, Foundation for Community Houses Bread of Life. It is worth noting that these actions were initiated not because of a government or international program announced or because a special law has been passed. They were the work of genuine innovators of social entrepreneurship. The main obstacles they have faced were the same that an average Pole encounters on his or her way. These include the ubiquitous bureaucracy, fiscal policy, corruption, appropriation of funds and space by the decision-makers.

The exception to the above negative reflection was EQUAL Community Initiative program. It gave hope. So it was perceived by many. I was able to mobilize people to create a large nationwide partnership „We are building a new Lisków“ to encourage the development of social enterprises in the two provinces - Krzysztof Margol in the Warmia-Mazury, among others, its flagship initiative of the Social Enterprise Pottery Village Sp. z o.o. and myself in province of Biłgoraj with the Social Enterprise Sp. o.o. (It was the first social limited liability company in Poland), then the House of Nasutów - Nasutowskie Social Enterprise Sp. o.o. or the Social Cooperative „Emmaus“ mentioned here above. These companies are the best showcase of the completed project. Unfortunately, although the EQUAL program served the elaboration of mechanisms for implementation of projects with higher levels of risk, which we have developed in our project „Towards the Polish model of social economy - building a new Lisków“ the results were not continued under POKL 2007-2013. The latter ended by „over-training“ of Poland. This „over-training“ and overeating money brought pitiful effects in terms of employment (almost zero).

In the context of the foregoing, I find that there are huge merits of such programs as Social StartUp. It ensures effective support (to know the difference between an effective support and that which presupposes passivity) for genuinely endogenously initiated innovative projects of social entrepreneurship. With the support offered by an interesting formula of the jury involved, the engaged experts and the proposed management tools, each of the projects could benefit of an individual support on its way, in a dynamic process of cooperation. The program has been built on mutual trust between various partners, respecting the autonomy of social entrepreneurs, keeping at the same time the requirement of engagement and rapid acquisition of competence by the participants, which in the mutual evaluation are necessary to achieve the planned results.
Professor Anna Merta, Koźmiński University, a member of the jury and Social StartUp

The modern world is looking for new ways of development. Among them is the development based on collaboration and community. This means admission of diversity in the functioning of the socio-economic system and thereby giving space for both capital based marketplace and shared economy based on cooperation and common good. Social start-ups are part of this concept. Their development accompanies growth of business start-ups. This process accelerates and reaches larger sizes. Overall StartUp market in Poland is estimated at over 10 billion USD. And is the second largest market in Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, in my opinion, there is no doubt on the legitimacy of the further development of programs for social start-ups. Rather they become an important complement of business start-ups, providing diversity of forms of action and interaction, new areas of activity of the society, wider geographical scope and the diversity of the professions involved.

To further develop effectively and fruitfully, the necessary conditions are the same as in any activity undertaken by man:

- perception of this work as a way of life, including earning and being able to satisfy ones needs and at the same time approaching work with passion, not as a necessity,

- courage and perseverance in the pursuit of the aim and the realization of the tasks,

- ability to work in a team, trust to people with different skills and a common sense of responsibility for the success of the entire project,

- directing the main attention in the process of implementation to the satisfaction of the recipients of products and services, and in the language of marketing to create value for customers to meet their needs, and even ahead of them.

At the end, to cheer the hearts I want to add that social start-ups gain crowdfunding support in Poland that I perceive the most valuable form of support and a proof of acceptance of these projects.
The scale and complexity of social problems, especially poverty, violence, corruption and environmental degradation, means that their effective resolution requires the world to constantly seek new ways to engage and involve new groups and communities.

We need pioneers who know how to recognize the source of problems and create ever new and effective solutions. We need people with passion and entrepreneurial proceeding to the implementation and dissemination of solutions on a large scale.

Success seems obvious at the moment “we reach the top of the mountain,” but along the way, especially at the beginning, each pioneer encounters obstacles and resistance, especially if they promote unconventional solutions and try to fundamentally change the thinking about something.

Our mission is to search for such clever, intelligent and brave persons and provide them with adequate support so that they can effectively implement and disseminate their solutions.

Marie Ringler, Director of Ashoka in Central and Eastern Europe