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SOCIAL ENTERPRISES AS A TOOL FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION IN SLOVAKIA

Sociálne podniky ako nástroj implementácie udržateľných rozvojových cieľov na Slovensku

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Annotation

The Slovak Republic as a member of the United Nations agreed to contribute to the fulfilment of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) defined in the document Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite the efforts at the national level, the actual implementation of national priorities, derived from SDGs, at local level is lacking a systematic approach. When it comes to the territorial development, however, Slovakia has recognized the potential of social economy and social enterprises in particular. Concrete steps were taken to stimulate occurrence of this phenomenon especially in the lagging behind regions. The attempt to intersect these two aspects represents the main objective of the presented paper together with an answer to the research question – to what extent can social enterprises be considered as a tool for SDGs' implementation in Slovakia. Through an extensive work with scientific and grey literature and through the analytical lenses when processing secondary data from the Registry of Social Enterprises of Slovakia, we identified numerous linkages between the reality of social enterprises and their contribution to the SDGs mainly in the area of poverty reduction and inclusion, education, job market, circular economy, usage of local resources and environmental protection.

Key words

Agenda 2030, sustainable development goals, social enterprises, social economy, sustainability

Anotácia

Slovenská republika ako člen OSN pristúpila k napĺňaniu 17 udržateľných rozvojových cieľov zadaných v dokumente Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Napriek úsiliu na národnej úrovni, implementácii národných priorít, odvodených z udržateľných rozvojových cieľov, na lokálnej úrovni chýba systematický prístup. V otázkach územného rozvoja si však Slovensko uvedomilo potenciál sociálnej ekonomiky a sociálnych podnikov. Vláda SR prijala konkrétne kroky na stimuláciu zakladania sociálnych podnikov najmä v zaostávajúcich regiónoch. Pokus o prienik týchto dvoch aspektov predstavuje hlavný cieľ predloženého príspevku spolu s odpoveďou na výskumnú otázku - do akej miery možno sociálne podniky považovať za nástroj implementácie udržateľných rozvojových cieľov na Slovensku. Prostredníctvom rozsiahlej práce s vedeckou a sivou literatúrou a prostredníctvom analytického posudzovania sekundárnych údajov z Registra sociálnych podnikov sme identifikovali početné prepojenia medzi realitou sociálnych podnikov a ich prínosom k udržateľným rozvojovým cieľom najmä v oblasti eliminácie chudoby a sociálnej inklúzie, vzdelávania, pracovného trhu, cirkulárnej ekonomiky, využívania miestnych zdrojov a ochrany životného prostredia.

Kľúčové slová

Agenda 2030, udržateľné rozvojové ciele, sociálne podniky, sociálna ekonomika, udržateľnosť

JEL classification: O20, O35, L31,

1. Introduction

The Slovak Republic, similarly to other countries worldwide, has adopted the UN's document Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) and has committed to contribution of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. The Agenda 2030 aims at eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions and also at bringing the world to the path of sustainable development, while it considers all three dimensions of sustainability, namely economic, social and environmental in an integrated and interlinked manner (UN, 2015). One key feature is that the SDGs are global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account national realities, capacities and levels of development and specific challenges (European Commission, n.a.).

It is clear that not all involved countries have sufficient capacities and resources to cover all the SDGs and targets. Additionally, some of the objectives do not represent a burning issue in all the countries involved. Therefore, individual countries transformed the document into the national context and Slovakia was not an exception. The transformation process was made while maintaining the principle of relevance, urgency and Slovakia's ability to influence the projection of global megatrends at the national level (Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Investments and Informatization SR (DPMOII SR), 2018, b). As a result, the representatives of the Slovak Government, together with other stakeholders involved in a participative process, defined a set of 6 national priorities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda including 29 challenges. The priorities were defined as follows (DPMOII, 2018, a):

- Education for dignified life,
- Transformation towards a knowledge-based and environmentally sustainable economy in the face of changing demography and global context,
- Poverty reduction and social inclusion,
- Sustainable settlements, regions and landscapes in the face of climate change,
- Rule of law, democracy and security,
- Good health.

Regarding the implementation efforts and reaching of the SDGs, all countries have a shared responsibility to achieve the SDGs, and all have a meaningful role to play locally, nationally as well as on the global scale (European Commission, n.a.). Several studies claim the importance of local activities, for example Fenton, Gustaffson (2017) stated that cities and human settlements are critical sites for implementation of these universal objectives, indicating the need for local action that serves global and local interests. Similar approach was stressed by Eversole, Barraket, Luke (2013), Wittmayer et al. (2015), Koch, Krellenberg (2018) or Salvia et al. (2019).

Despite the indisputable importance of the local level, some authors claim that this may require additional decentralization and devolution, so that municipal powers are concomitant with responsibilities (Fenton, Gustaffson, 2017) or that the local authorities are not given a stronger voice in international deliberations and decision-making (Graute, 2016).

At the moment we can claim that SDGs implementation in Slovakia at the local level is lacking efficient approach and efforts can be identified mainly at the national level (see e.g. Čepelová, Douša (2020) or Gazdová et al. (2020)). This is apparently not just issue of Slovakia as Fenton, Gustaffson (2017) stated that research can do more to support municipal action by illustrating how and in what ways municipalities can rapidly integrate and align the SDGs in existing strategy, policy and practice. For example, it is important to map what different types of actor do or can be expected to do in relation to the different SDGs, and to develop a structure for how efforts may be coordinated locally.

Simultaneously with the SDGs efforts being approved and initiated in Slovakia, the Slovak Government launched also other initiatives to stimulate territorial development. In particular it was Act no. 336/2015 Coll. on the support for the least developed districts as amended. This law allows the concentration of instruments, measures and natural and financial resources to stimulate economic and social development and employment. Among other measures, the act introduced also support for the subjects of the social economy (social enterprises) as a way how to address issues in the struggling territories. The rationale of this step was based on the idea that the social economy is seen as a tool for implementing the neo-endogenous approach, which aims at maximizing the sustainability of territorial utility by effective usage of local physical and human capacities and the concept of need, capacity and perspective of local inhabitants (Ray, 2006). Additionally, the core principle of social enterprise lies in pursuing socially beneficial activities with the help of economic tools (Nová, 2018).

It can be stated that such approach is not unique as the importance of entrepreneurship and local small and medium size businesses for development of territory e.g. through increased resilience can be found in the work of many scholars (Steiner, Atterton (2014) or Kubíčková et al. (2017) among others). Following these tendencies, the issue of social enterprises started to be a more frequent topic in Slovakia, when territorial development was in question. In Slovakia, the first social enterprises were established in 2005, but it was not until 2018 that a law was adopted that regulates the support of social enterprises comprehensively (Chreneková, Klapková, Svetlíková, 2020). In particular, it is Act no. 112/2018 Coll. on the social economy and social enterprises. The law defines a social enterprise and an enterprise with social impact as an entity of social economy that carries out an economic activity with the aim of achieving a positive social impact. The condition is to reinvest more than 50 % of the profits into achieving social goals. These entities can be registered while there are two types of registered social enterprises - public benefit enterprises and community benefit enterprises. Both of them are oriented on provision of socially beneficial services, which for the purposes of this Act are defined as follows:

- a) provision of health care,
- b) provision of social assistance and humanitarian care,
- c) creation, development, protection, restoration and presentation of spiritual and cultural values,
- d) protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- e) education, upbringing and development of physical culture,
- f) research, development, scientific and technical services and information services,
- g) creation and protection of the environment and protection of public health,
- h) services to support regional development and employment,
- i) providing housing, administration, maintenance and renewal of the housing stock,
- j) the provision of financial resources to social economy entities for the performance of a socially beneficial service pursuant to points (a) to (i).

Based on the focus of the registered social enterprise it can be classified as a work integration enterprise, whose task is to support employment through the employment of disadvantaged or vulnerable persons, a social housing enterprise (its positive effect is the provision of socially beneficial rental housing) and a general social enterprise. When studying the social enterprises established in Slovakia and their outcomes, we came to the conclusion that as the principles of the social entrepreneurship are based on the idea of triple bottom line (Elkington, 1999), which is an accounting framework incorporating social, environmental and financial dimension of performance of social enterprises, similarly the Agenda 2030 recognizes three dimension of sustainability – environmental, social and economy. Additional argument speaking in favour of this intersection is fact that social enterprises have numerous multidimensional effects on the immediate environment, which can, in fact, enhance also other developing tendencies, such as local implementation of the SDGs, which is currently lacking systematic approach.

2. Material and Methods

The main reasoning behind the presented research is an attempt to answer the research questions: to what extent can social enterprises be considered as a tool for SDGs' implementation in Slovakia. As explained in the previous chapter, the research question was created on the background of the current efforts in reaching sustainable development in Slovakia.

For answering the question mainly data of secondary nature were used such as grey literature containing mostly the national documents designed for the Agenda 2030 implementation. Further, we used the studies on the phenomena of social enterprises and their effects on sustainable local development. This information was completed by data retrieved from the Registry of Social Enterprises of the Slovak Republic (Ministry of labour, social affairs and family of the SR, 2021). A substantial part of the analysis, however, lies in the personal knowledge of the environment and expertise of the authors in the given field.

The methodology of the analysis was then based on synthesizing efforts to find linkages between the priorities and challenges, which were formulated for the SDGs' implementation in Slovakia, and multisectoral effects of the social enterprises established in Slovakia as important local stakeholders stimulating sustainable local development. In particular, through an analytical lens we tried to find out whether social enterprises as local actors can contribute to addressing the identified issues. Some findings presented later in the text may seem to be of an anecdotal nature, on the other hand, they stress out the embeddedness of the social enterprises in the various contexts and it also reflects the multidisciplinary of the phenomena.

3. Results

Up to 1st March 2020 there were 289 social enterprises (SE) operating in Slovakia (Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, 2021). Most of them are located in the Košice and Trenčín regions (8,2

per 1000 inhabitants), the least in Bratislava region (1,4 per 1000 inhabitants). These enterprises are established by actors representing private, public as well as civic sector. Labour integration is the goal of 99,3% of enterprises (their impact is measured by the number of employed disadvantaged in the labour market or other vulnerable groups) and housing 0,7% of enterprises. The major economic activities of work integration enterprises cover construction (32%), manufacturing (21%), agriculture and forestry (17%), hospitality and food (11%). Share of general social enterprises on the total number of registered SEs is 10,4%. Up to 60% of them are engaged in socially beneficial activities in the field of education and physical culture, 36,66% in environmental protection, 26,66% creation, development, protection, renewal and presentation of spiritual and cultural values, 13,33 % social and humanitarian aid and 10% research, development, scientific, technical and information services. The social impact of these companies is assessed on the basis of the fact that they provide the service.

In the following text each priority defined for Slovak implementation of SDGs is interlinked with features of the social enterprises, which can contribute to the fulfilment of these commitments. The priorities are ordered in the same way as in the national documents what does not reflect their importance.

3.1 Priority- Education for dignified life

This priority tackles the SDG 4, 8 and 10. The challenges of this priority are dealing with topics as quality of education, enhancing the social status of teachers, inclusion in the education system, ensuring equal opportunities for all, availability of quality employment opportunities, overcoming structural imbalances between labour force supply and labour market demand, increasing the readiness of workforce for labour market needs, providing sufficient opportunities for the lifelong learning of individuals and stabilisation of talent and qualified workforce.

This priority approaches the concept of education and employment from different angles and it has apparent integrational character. Therefore, numerous links with the SEs can be identified. On the labour market, inequalities and stigmatisation persist, especially in case of marginalised Roma communities and people with disabilities (DPMOII SR, 2018c). These are also the main target groups when it comes to SEs in Slovakia, as more than 90 % of them focus on work integration of disadvantaged groups (Ministry of labour, social affairs and family, 2021). Through these integration efforts, therefore, SEs naturally deal with the harmonization of labour force supply and labour market demand, as well as the availability of quality employment opportunities.

Despite the fact that SEs are not primarily actors in the formal education system, they are an important integration force when it comes to marginalized groups. These forces can be recognized in three main aspects. Firstly, through providing employment to family members, SEs contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic background of pupils (children and relatives of the SEs' employees), their school attendance may increase, as according to the OECD (2014) this is the most significant precondition of students' learning outcomes in Slovakia.

Secondly, learning outcomes of pupils, students, but also other age groups can be also enhanced by SEs that run a community centre (e.g. V.I.A.C. - Inštitút pre podporu a rozvoj mládeže zo Slovenska or Komunitné centrum HOREHRONIE). Community centres serve for socially disadvantaged citizens of municipalities and provide them a common space for meeting, implementing their ideas and finding solutions to their problems, especially social ones (Mačáková, Pollák et al., 2008). Community centres provide also educational activities for all age groups in formal and informal forms, which apparently can be also seen as a life-long learning activity. Needless to say, that there exist other SEs, which do not operate a community centre but also provide educational and training activities. Third aspect how SEs are enhancing education level is again derived from their integrating nature. These enterprises equip their employees with working habits and new skills that they can, and preferably also will, use in their future careers. Such spin-off activities were reported e.g. by Chreneková (2019). A direct linkage between education and SEs can be also seen in case of social enterprises that serve directly as a part of dual education in a partnership with secondary schools (e.g. Agro – drevinový ekosystém BBSK, s.r.o.).

3.2 Priority - Transformation towards a knowledge-based and environmentally sustainable economy in the face of changing demography and global context

SDGs covered by this priority are SDG 7, 8, 9, 10, 12. Challenges that need to be addressed within this priority contain: transition to intensive sources of economic development, greater added value and sustainable use of domestic resources, strengthening the economic self-sufficiency of regions, environmentally and socially sustainable production and consumption, circular economy, building sustainable energy and transport infrastructure, development of a low-carbon energy economy, development of a low-emission transport and logistics system, ensuring the fiscal sustainability of demographic change and generating public revenues to maintain government social services for an aging population.

The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is an opportunity to promote transformation towards an environmentally sustainable economy. The objective of economic development must be (i) to move from an economy based on low wages and taxes to a knowledge-based economy grounded on higher wages, well-adjusted taxes and innovations and (ii) to move from the current economic model to an environmentally sustainable economy while minimising undesirable externalities (DPMOII SR, 2018b).

When it comes to the first objective, SEs can play role in securing decent wages especially for less qualified labour force as it is one of their primal focus. Social innovations derived from subjects of social economy can also be seen beneficial when considering the innovation aspect of this objective. The main points, however, where SEs can be active, within this priority, is strengthening the locally based, environmentally and socially sustainable production with emphasis on circular economy.

Regarding the second objective defined above, SEs can be seen as entities contributing to the self-sufficiency of the areas as they are typically enterprises oriented on local markets and fulfilling local needs (Eversole, Barraket, Luke, 2013). Additionally, as defined by Ray (2006), SEs belong to the crucial actors stimulating the neo-endogenous territorial development efforts, which stresses mobilising local human, physical and natural resources. Since these enterprises are not primarily oriented on profit, they can, till certain point, sacrifice the pressure on productivity and economy of scale to more environmentally friendly practices and circular economy. There are numerous examples among SEs in Slovakia including the elements of circular economy into their operations, e.g. AfB Slovakia s.r.o., Hrhovské služby, s.r.o. or OZ Ekosocia, etc. Moreover, there is an example of SE that is specifically focused on extension activities related to implementing circular economy practices into value chains of SEs and training activities in this respect already took place.

Additionally, the environmental and local aspect of the production and consumption is typically presented in the case of SEs in Slovakia that focus on agricultural production, e.g. Agro – drevinový ekosystém BBSK, s.r.o., Obecné služby Raslavice, s.r.o. Experience from other countries also indicate this direction of development of social enterprises (see e.g. Moruzzo et al., 2020 or European Commission, 2019 for more comprehensive overview).

3.3 Priority - Poverty reduction and social inclusion

This priority is focused on SDG 1, 2, 10. Main challenges identified within this priority were defined as follows: reducing social and economic inequalities, increasing the integration rate of marginalised Roma population, enhancing equal opportunities for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion by enhancing the quality and accessibility of public services and by combatting discrimination, strengthening the principle of solidarity in the redistribution of available resources and ensuring access to adequate housing for people at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

Among all priorities defined in the Slovak context, this is the one to which SEs are contributing the most significantly. As it was already mentioned, majority of SEs in Slovakia, namely 287 out of 289 SEs (Ministry of labour, social affairs and family of the SR, 2021), focus on work integration of groups that are otherwise facing difficulties to enter the labour market. These groups are characterized as disadvantaged or vulnerable groups and they are often dealing with marginalization, poverty and social exclusion, these are e.g. people with disabilities, young people and young adults in difficult life situation, people without shelter and after serving a sentence, people with addictions, ethnic minorities or the long-term unemployed (Chrenková, 2019). The most numerous of the marginalized groups in Slovakia are marginalized Roma communities. According to the Atlas of Roma Communities (UNDP, 2014) approximately 200 000 of inhabitants living in these communities suffer from material deprivation and social deprivation and, overall, significantly reduced living opportunities. In addition to the lack of competitiveness on the labour market (due to low educational and qualification levels and skills), the exclusion of Roma from the formal labour market is also caused by other factors, namely: presence of discrimination against the Roma ethnic group by the majority, spatial location of settlements, very low standard of living and poor health (Baláž et al., 2017).

The efforts of SEs in Slovakia are generally aiming at improving the overall living situation of the mentioned groups. Firstly, through employment but also through other direct and indirect effects. In the previous study of Chrenková (2019) following effects of SEs were recognized: breaking the cycle of poverty, improvement of the social status of households, social inclusion of individuals and groups threatened by exclusion, improvement of the quality of human capital, construction of lower-cost rental flats, an increase in the number of sports and cultural activities, improving the supply and quality of social services, increase in the school attendance of Roma children, reduction of social tensions, improving personal relations between citizens, increase in the quality of social capital, increase in the participation of citizens in public activities and community social work. Similar effects of SEs,

however not in Slovak conditions, were reported e.g. by Steiner, Teasdale (2017), Eversole, Barraket, Luke (2013), Anderson, Lent (2019), Pinheiro, Daniel, Moreira (2020) and many more.

3.4 Priority - Sustainable settlements, regions and landscapes in the face of climate change

The orientation of this priority is on SDG 6, 7, 11, 13, 15. The challenges covered by this priority include inclusive and sustainable urban and regional development, integrated and participative territorial and strategic planning, access to basic services and resources, including affordable mobility, energy, potable water and sanitation for all, while respecting environmental sustainability and the principle of minimising emissions, adapting human settlements and the countryside to the adverse effects of climate change, while improving the quality of life of the population and maintaining stable and healthy ecosystems, reducing the pollution and contamination of all elements, nature conservation and landscape development, aimed at ensuring the health and stability of ecosystems, enhancing the abilities of the countryside to provide necessary ecosystem services, and at halting the loss of biodiversity.

Despite the majority of the challenges identified within this priority are of environmental nature, the integrated participative territorial and strategic planning can be seen as a cross-cutting issue. One of the key stakeholders mediating the design of such documents are territorial self-governments. Intersection between this fact and SEs can be seen in the fact that approximately one third of SEs in Slovakia have been established by municipalities or other public sector agents. Therefore, they are directly influencing the existence of SEs. Additionally, municipalities consider SEs as a mean for reaching their strategic goals and they even admit the closing of such enterprises after completing their role in the territorial development (Chreneková, 2019). Therefore, at the local level, those are mainly municipalities that can facilitate the developing tendencies and consider the potential role SEs can play. Via strategic planning they can then place the SEs into the developing tendencies in a suitable and well thought-through manner.

Another aspect of SEs intersecting with this priority is a fact that local enterprises can leverage the endogenous potential of the territory and via establishment of a meaningful activities they do not only employ the local population but also prevent skilful labour to leave the region (reported e.g. by Hadjimichalis, Hudson, 2007, Fuller-Love, Midmore, Thomas, 2006). Due to the SEs people feel stronger attachments to the place and feel “rooted”. It is, however, needed to say that SEs can also contribute to migration from the region. This is the case of SEs, which function as intermediate job markets. In case of these SEs, the employees after gaining skills have the tendency to enter regular job market and possibly find a job in another region.

The overlaps between the SEs’ activities and the usage of local resources and/or complying with environmentally friendly practices were already mentioned in the text above, same as the active role of SEs in awareness raising regarding sustainability. Thus, these we will not mention due to the limited scope of the paper. What we, however, cannot omit here, is the active role SEs are playing when it comes to enabling access to basic services for everyone including marginalized groups. Especially SEs established by municipalities often focus on fulfilment of orders for the founder or neighbouring municipalities. As the main task of municipalities is to secure provision of public services and generally the execution of competences for the overall development of the territory, it is apparent that SEs are participating in these processes.

There are also other efforts in this respect, such as activities that are provided by Hrhovské služby, s.r.o., when the construction section of the SE does not just execute the municipal orders but gradually helps the employees with improving their private houses or with connectivity to technical infrastructure. These influences are of a secondary and indirect nature that, however, does not make them any less meaningful for the local communities.

3.5 Priority - Rule of law, democracy and security and Priority - Good health

Priority Rule of law, democracy and security includes the SDG 5 and 16 and Priority Good health covers SDG 3 and 10.

The first of the mentioned priorities deals with improving law enforcement, access to justice for all, protecting and supporting human rights, transparent and effective public administration, policy-making based on data, ensuring effective control of public authorities, fighting corruption, supporting civil society and participation, ensuring public access to objective sources of information, independence of media, critical thinking and media literacy, improvement of the society’s resilience towards threats to the rule of law, democracy and security.

The second of the mentioned priorities focuses on supporting healthy lifestyles, prevention and individuals' responsibility for their own health, ensuring quality healthcare for the whole population, identifying inequalities in the health status of the population, detecting causes and finding solutions.

We decided to merge these two priorities as SEs represent a tool for their implementation or addressing the targeted challenges to a limited extent. In case of the Good health priority, there exist SEs which are directly involved in offering health services. These are, however, rather individual cases. Additionally, they are often enterprises not listed among the registered SEs, therefore, it is difficult to formally track them and claim their number.

On the other hand, indirect effects can be identified within both priorities. In case of the first priority, enhanced level of education together with the improvement in the overall socio-economic situation of the marginalized communities has significant effects on their empowerment and represent a support for these people to become active members of the civil society.

In case of the "Good health" priority, similar effects can be assumed as increased quality of life in all other aspects of life of marginalized communities, especially those suffering from poverty, leads to enabled access to health care and understanding of importance of prevention.

4. Conclusions

In 2016, Slovakia signed the Agenda 2030 as an umbrella document for integrated efforts to support sustainability in all its three dimensions. Years coming after the adoption were dedicated to adjusting the document to the national conditions. Within this process, 6 main priorities were identified covering all 17 SDGs. Despite the fact that the documents at the national level include some concrete measures for aiming towards sustainability, a systematic approach at local level is currently not in place. On the other hand, concrete steps are being implemented at local level in order to enhance the situation especially in regions that are lagging behind. Orientation on social economy through establishment of social enterprises was identified as one of them.

The objective of the paper was to seek intersection between the concept of SDGs implementation and social enterprises in order to answer the research question: to what extent can social enterprises be considered as a tool for SDGs' implementation in Slovakia.

Based on analysing and synthesizing data from different studies on social enterprises together with the experience from the field, we can state that direct linkages between SEs and SDGs implementation could be identified in 4 out of 6 priorities designed for Slovakia. Taking into account the nature and characteristics of SEs, it is only natural that the strongest impact of SEs can be seen in case of poverty reduction and social inclusion (Priority - Poverty reduction and social inclusion) as more than 90 % of SEs in Slovakia are classified as operations oriented on work integration. Through spill over effects of different kinds, SEs consequently influence also the access to education, availability of employment opportunities and life-long learning opportunities (Priority – Education for dignified life). When adopting different optics for assessing the impacts of SEs, we can conclude that as these enterprises are not purely oriented on reaching profit, it is somewhat easier for them to implement environmentally friendly, sustainable approach or operate within the framework of circular economy (Priority - Transformation towards a knowledge- based and environmentally sustainable economy in the face of changing demography and global context). Several examples of SEs maintaining these principles could be identified in Slovak conditions. Additionally, SEs are typically established as a response to needs that arise from local context, therefore, their scope of operation including the employment of resources is typically significantly embedded in the immediate, local environment. Regarding the Priority - Sustainable settlements, regions and landscapes in the face of climate change, we believe that establishment of SEs can be used as a meaningful instrument when designing integrated developing strategies, especially at the level of municipalities and self-governing regions. Additionally, well-operating SEs can, in our opinion, contribute to prevention of migration from struggling territories. Some effects, however of a rather anecdotal and indirect nature, could be also seen when interlinking SEs and Priority - Rule of law, democracy and security and Priority - Good health.

For the conclusion, we would like to stress out that the ambition of the authors is not to promote social entrepreneurship as a panacea when it comes to SDGs implementation or when addressing the developmental needs of particular territories. We are aware of limitations of such approach. On the other hand, the effort was to indicate a potential tool that could contribute to SDGs implementation at the local level in Slovakia and we suppose that there are numerous intersections between these two phenomena. Piling up to the many studies that stress out the importance of local actions when addressing issues on national or even international and global scale, we

believe that strategic placement of social enterprises especially in struggling regions would be a good starting point when addressing issues indicated by Agenda 2030.

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