

# Social entrepreneurship in Croatia: Do regional disparities influence young people's perception of social entrepreneurship as a potential career path?

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Source / Izvornik: **Ekonomski vjesnik : Review of Contemporary Entrepreneurship, Business, and Economic Issues, 2014, XXVII, 81 - 92**

Journal article, Published version

Rad u časopisu, Objavljena verzija rada (izdavačev PDF)

Permanent link / Trajna poveznica: <https://um.nsk.hr/um:nbn:hr:145:146177>

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Download date / Datum preuzimanja: **2025-03-12**



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UDK 65.012.2(497.5)  
*Preliminary communication*

*Received: April 28, 2014*  
*Accepted for publishing: May 30, 2014*

# **SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN CROATIA: DO REGIONAL DISPARITIES INFLUENCE YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A POTENTIAL CAREER PATH?**

## **ABSTRACT**

The process of creating a better life in society requires the engagement of all the actors of society. The level of personal readiness to participate actively in the community is a prerequisite for building social responsibilities of all individuals. It also influences the development of social entrepreneurship, which, by integrating economic and social values, offers more sustainable solutions for a variety of social problems and the removal of traditional boundaries between government, business community, academia and civil society. This paper will look into the level of personal readiness of individuals in Croatia, by placing a special emphasis on youth because their energy and potential represent the pillar of future development of the society. At the same time, their inertness and passivity point out that young people are not aware of their important role in society.

This paper compares young people's perception of social entrepreneurship in Croatia and its importance in the process of personal and community development. By researching young people (students) from different regions (the City of Zagreb, as the most developed region, and in the City of Osijek, as the centre of one of the least developed regions in Croatia) and with different educational orientation (business, electronic engineering and art) the paper explores whether students recognize social entrepreneurship as a new approach for solving various social problems but also as a possible career option with which they can make a profit.

**Keywords:** social entrepreneurship, regional disparities, youth

## 1. Introduction

Intensity of changes, combined with the war destruction led to crises of morals and values that have caused, especially among youth, the loss of the sense of personal responsibility for society's problems and personal contribution to the process of improving the quality of life in a community. According to the UNDP, the quality of life concept refers to the overall well-being in society and is focused on enabling every member of society to achieve their own goals<sup>1</sup>. The quality of life concept does not rely only on material indicators (indicators of income inequality, poverty rates, etc.), but also on various subjective factors that affect human life (e.g. social relations, security, mental health, quality of environment, leisure, cultural resources, etc.)<sup>2</sup>. According to the research done in 2006 by the Office of UNDP in Croatia, there are significant regional disparities in the quality of life in Croatia. This is particularly true for regional disparities in areas of education, employment, and feelings of happiness and personal satisfaction. The citizens of the capital (Zagreb) have the highest score in all three areas, mostly because life satisfaction is associated with a higher disposable income and a level of education, and employment is associated with inter-county differences in the degree of urbanization, demographics, educational and employment structure. The research results indicate that the economic prosperity of the region has significant impact on optimistic expectations of people, but also that regional differences are deepened due to the emigration of people from less developed to more developed areas.

In order to overcome various social problems, EU and OECD countries are strongly ahead with developing social entrepreneurship as new vehicles for sustainable development and innovative tools for improving job opportunities for all and strengthening social cohesion.<sup>3</sup> Croatia still lags behind in recognizing social entrepreneurship as an important concept that builds entrepreneurial behavior and creates innovative solutions that will eliminate regional differences, decrease unemployment and enable a better life and development of underdeveloped regions. Unfortunately, it also lags behind in recognizing its youth as a cornerstone of positive social change. There is a significant need for encouraging young people to carry out their activities with the aim of both personal development and the development of their society. Recognizing social

entrepreneurship as a potential career path, young people can develop critical skills and competences that will help them to become important actors in decision-making processes and active agents of positive social change.

The paper argues that the application of entrepreneurial principles in all activities of society (economic, social, political and educational) is contributing to better utilization of available resources and creation of an environment in which young people can find a purpose to create a better future for themselves and the society as a whole. Using business principles and techniques, social entrepreneurship creates positive social change and represents an important module for the development of regional communities (McConachie and Simpson, 2003). Social entrepreneurship as an innovative approach responds to major social problems, develops new conceptual frameworks, creatively combines, and accepts the social and business approaches in order to create social value. Such entrepreneurial approach to social problems should be encouraged in all sectors, at all levels and in all educational areas. That is why this paper researches students from different departments (business, electronic engineering and art) in order to, among other things, answer the question whether educational orientation also can influence the decision to choose social entrepreneurship as a potential career path. The answer to this question will create a foundation for further research and give the notion of relationship between social entrepreneurship and educational orientation, development of personal social responsibility and a process of including young people in solving various social problems and enhancing the quality of life in a community.

## 2. The importance of social entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is not a new phenomenon, although it seems as if it has just begun attracting more and more attention. The roots of social entrepreneurship go back to the 18th century when industrialists like Robert Owen<sup>4</sup> started to protect employees by seeking to improve their working conditions, provide adequate education for them and their families and involve them in various cultural activities (Shaw and Carter 2007:419). In publication, the term *social entrepreneurship* could be

found for the first time in 1972, thanks to Bill Drayton, the founder of Ashoka. Drayton recognized social entrepreneurship as an innovative approach by which individuals can solve serious social problems that their communities face. (*"The job of social entrepreneur is to recognize when a part of society is stuck and to provide new ways to get it unstuck"*, W. Drayton). By promoting people that continuously work on the development of social entrepreneurship, such as Muhammad Yunus, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, Drayton emphasizes that social entrepreneurship is an important tool for economic and social development not just for underdeveloped countries but for developing and developed countries as well.

According to Hayden (2005) social entrepreneurship represents a revolution in the process of doing business because, through the development of knowledge society, social problems and the "feel good" factor (Thompson, 2002:413) are becoming almost even more important than profit making. The old paradigm in which "the *personal profit* is a central engine that powers *private enterprise and social wealth*" (Schumpeter, cited in Mair and Marti, 2005:5) does not correspond well to the present conditions, such as a greater gap between rich and poor, the increase of unemployment and the decrease of social sensibility, mainly because it does not direct its attention to those who are the most affected by the negative effects of globalization.

Public institutions are often unable to recognize and solve those social issues. However, those who cannot remain indifferent to injustice and inequality do improve the quality of life of their communities on a daily basis. Those people, using their determination, social sensitivity and continuous innovativeness, have created a new business paradigm – social entrepreneurship – whose priority is to generate social good and solve problems in a more responsible, innovative and entrepreneurial way. Social entrepreneurship, as a new way of doing business is becoming a more and more popular catalyst that influences the development of social responsibilities of all actors in society.

However, despite the growing popularity of social entrepreneurship, in academic circles it is still an under-explored and not well-defined area, as evidenced by the different definitions and understandings. Some authors associate social entrepreneurship with non-profit organizations, philanthropy, charities and other social responsible events

(knowledge@warthon, 2003), while others consider it as a part of traditional entrepreneurship (Dees, 2001; Peredo and McLean, 2005).

Social entrepreneurship represents a new and innovative approach in dealing with unsolved economic and social issues. As such, it is based on the concept and characteristics of traditional entrepreneurship, because social entrepreneurs also use business principles and entrepreneurial skills and they achieve their goals with the same determination, creativity and resourcefulness as traditional entrepreneurs. Therefore, just like traditional entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs must be innovators (Schumpeter, 1883–1950), must recognize and exploit perceived opportunities and take risks (Drucker 1909–2005), and they must not allow that the limiting factors, such as lack of resources, decrease the possibility of idea realization (Stevenson, 2007). However, social entrepreneurs, unlike traditional entrepreneurs, do not use business principles exclusively to generate profit, but rather to solve important social problems.

Peredo and McLean (2006:64) argue that social entrepreneurship is manifested in those situations when an individual (or a group):

1. aim(s) at creating social value, either exclusively or at least in some prominent way;
2. show(s) a capacity to recognize and take advantage of opportunities;
3. to create that value ("envision");
4. employ(s) innovation, ranging from outright invention to adapting someone else's novelty, in creating and/or distributing social value;
5. is/are willing to accept an above-average degree of risk in creating and disseminating social value tolerates the risk; and
6. is/are unusually resourceful in being relatively undaunted by scarce assets in pursuing their social venture.

Charles Leadbeater (1997:11), a well-known researcher in the field of social entrepreneurship, also thinks that the main goal of social entrepreneurs is not profit. The main driving force of these people, according to the author, is the fact that they are simply not satisfied with the way things are happening

in the environment, while profit falls entirely into the background. Such an exclusive way of thinking is very often criticized because some authors (Boschee and McClurg, 2003; Shaw and Carter, 2007; Simpson, 2007) argue that it is missing an important "ingredient" – *economic profit*. Although the mission of social entrepreneurship is to generate social value, social entrepreneurs must also generate financial profit in order for their mission to be sustainable. Economic value does not represent the ultimate goal; but still it needs to be seriously taken into account because it represents an important side effect that ensures the sustainability of innovation, initiatives and financing (Mair and Marti 2005:39). Therefore, regardless of their focus and the way their goals are being achieved, in order for social entrepreneurs to be successful on a long term basis, critics (Boschee and McClurg, 2003) argue that they, as well as traditional entrepreneurs, must maintain their performance with profit and not only with subventions and donations.

So, although there is no universal definition of social entrepreneurship, it can be seen that the mission of solving social problems and creation of social value represent the basis of every definition.

There are more and more individuals who use their determination, will and passion to change the world. There are also more and more organizations that in their performance include the *triple bottom line* approach proving that they understand the importance of their own contribution in the process of community development. Social entrepreneurship has the ability and power to change the way local institutions, groups and individuals face social issues, create solutions for unresolved social problems and ensure better life in their community.

## **2. Regional disparities in Croatia – a fertile ground for social entrepreneurship development**

The war and transition process (from wartime to peace, change of politics and economic system, privatization process) boosted regional development imbalances in Croatia and dramatic economic delay in eastern Croatia. Osijek-Baranja County is above average when it comes to availability and quality of important natural resources (land, water, forests and air) but according to many development indica-

tors it still lags behind.

According to the research done in 2006 by the Office of UNDP in Croatia there are significant regional disparities in the quality of life in Croatia<sup>5</sup>. This is particularly true for regional disparities in the areas of education, employment, and feelings of happiness and personal satisfaction. Citizens of the City of Zagreb have the highest score in all three areas. Measured by gross domestic product per capita, regional disparity ranges from US\$3,074 in Osijek-Baranja County to US\$18,843 in the City of Zagreb. The differences in unemployment are even higher: 6.1% in the City of Zagreb and 23.3% in Osijek-Baranja County (5% among higher educated people).<sup>6</sup> In addition, Osijek-Baranja County has more economically inactive (more than 58%) and significantly less active agricultural population (60%).

When it comes to education, Osijek-Baranja County has a significantly higher number of uneducated people (more than 20%) than the City of Zagreb (8.6%), and less higher educated people (6.1%) than the City of Zagreb (16.6%).<sup>7</sup>

The mentioned results confirm that the governments and public institutions in Croatia are losing the fight against major regional disparities and various social problems caused by bureaucracy, tardiness, and by lack of entrepreneurial activities, innovativeness, support for young people and ability to create an entrepreneurial environment that would ensure a higher quality of living. The above-average unemployment in Osijek-Baranja County and the greater number of dependent population are alerting that something needs to be done in order to decrease regional disparities. Since regional disparities and social issues in Croatia increasingly transcend the capabilities and capacities of institutions responsible for solving them, the process of creating a better life in societies requires the engagement of all actors of society.

A prerequisite for the construction of social responsibilities of all individuals, regardless of what sector they come from, is the level of personal readiness to participate actively in the community. Active participation in community development influences the creation of social entrepreneurship, which, by integrating economic and social value, offers solutions for a variety of social problems and removes traditional boundaries between government, business community, academia and civil society.

## 2.1 Social entrepreneurship in Croatia

The concept of social entrepreneurship in Croatia has become recognizable in the last several years mostly because of initiatives from nonprofit organizations. Due to insufficient funding, these organizations are increasingly turning to social entrepreneurship as the self-financing practice.

Although social entrepreneurship as a new paradigm in dealing with social problems is increasingly popularized in the world, organizations and individuals that are part of the social entrepreneurship development in Croatia are faced with various problems, such as misunderstanding of the concept and the lack of clarity about responsibilities for its implementation by institutions dealing with social issues.

In Croatia, all of the social enterprises are run by civil society organizations, and although, according to NESsT, there are around 30000 CSOs, only about 25% of them are active<sup>8</sup>. Still, not all CSOs are social enterprises; moreover, it is still a rare practice. Those that can be called social enterprises have a wide range of activities, mostly in the field of environmental study, social services, education and research, culture and community development. As social enterprises, they do generate profit, but it is mostly comprised of fees for services.

Social enterprises in Croatia can operate within an existing legal entity (which allows better access to resources) or through a separate for-profit entity. However, there is no formal legislative framework for social enterprises, which causes many limitations to their performance:<sup>9</sup>

- vague interpretations, leaving wide room for discretion:
  - “unjustified privilege on the market”,
  - unclear whether commercial activity should be explicit,
- narrow definition of public benefit status:
  - no direct recognition of public benefit status,
  - no uniform definition; unclear regulations on criteria, benefits,
- little involvement from CSOs in policy-making and legislative process,

- other practical implications:
  - VAT filing requirements.

In addition, besides the legislative framework limitations, social enterprises in Croatia are facing other obstacles as well, such as lack of financing for start-ups, lack of supporting environment (due to a lack of awareness of social entrepreneurship) and lack of infrastructure.

In order to address the obstacles social enterprises in Croatia are facing, and to increase the visibility of social entrepreneurship, the Forum of Social Entrepreneurs was established and the development of this area has been introduced as an important component of the National Strategy for Creating an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development from 2006 - 2011. Despite these initiatives, the development of social entrepreneurship in Croatia is still happening at a relatively slow pace.

## 2.2. Young people's perception of social entrepreneurship – do regional disparities matter?

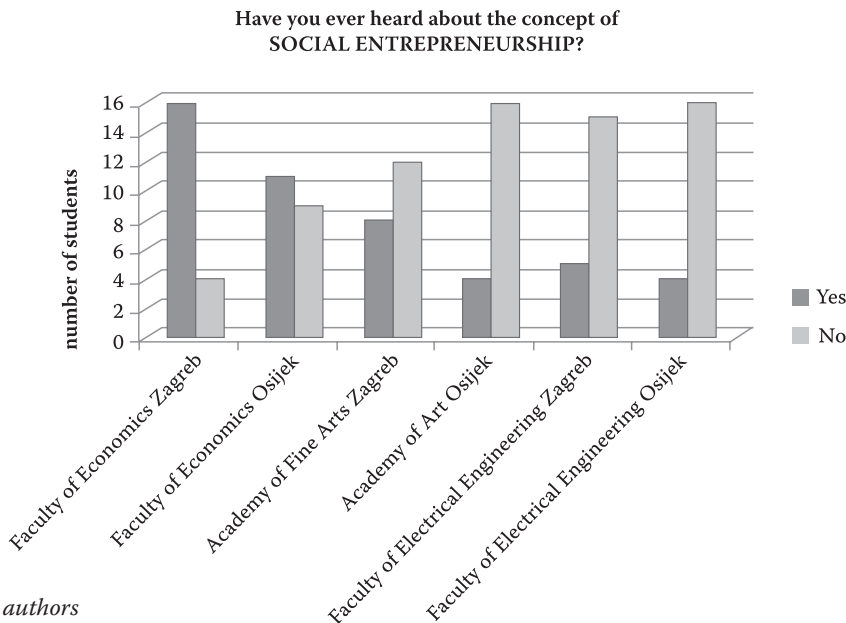
Social entrepreneurship represents an important concept that builds entrepreneurial behavior and creates innovative solutions that can eliminate regional differences and secure a better life for everyone. However, Croatia still lags behind in supporting the development of social entrepreneurship and awareness of the importance of individual and social responsibility, especially among young people who have the capacity to make positive social changes and the potential to become the pillars of future development of society.

But how do young people in Croatia perceive social entrepreneurship? Are they aware that social entrepreneurship as an innovative activity can respond to major social problems, develop new conceptual frameworks and creatively combine and accept the social and commercial approaches in order to create social value? And, do regional disparities and/or different educational backgrounds of young people influence the perception of social entrepreneurship as a potential component of personal (a potential career path) and community development (a problem solving method)?

In order to answer these questions a research was conducted among 120 students, 60 of whom were from the City of Zagreb (as the capital of Croatia) and 60 from Osijek (as the capital of one of the least developed regions in Croatia). Furthermore, this research was conducted among students from three different departments in both cities: Faculty of Economics in Zagreb (20 students) and Osijek (20 students), Faculty of Electrical Engineering in Zagreb (20 students) and Osijek (20 students) and Academy of Arts in Zagreb (20 students) and Osijek (20 students).

Out of 120 students, 60% of them have never heard about the concept of social entrepreneurship. The first graph points out that out of 40 students from Faculties of Economics in Zagreb and Osijek, 27 of them (67%) were introduced to the concept of social entrepreneurship (mostly because it is incorporated within their curriculum). However, in other departments in both cities there are more of those students that have never encountered this concept. When looking from the regional perspective, the concept of social entrepreneurship was more known to students from Zagreb, than to students from Osijek.

**Graph 1. Have you ever heard about the concept of social entrepreneurship?**

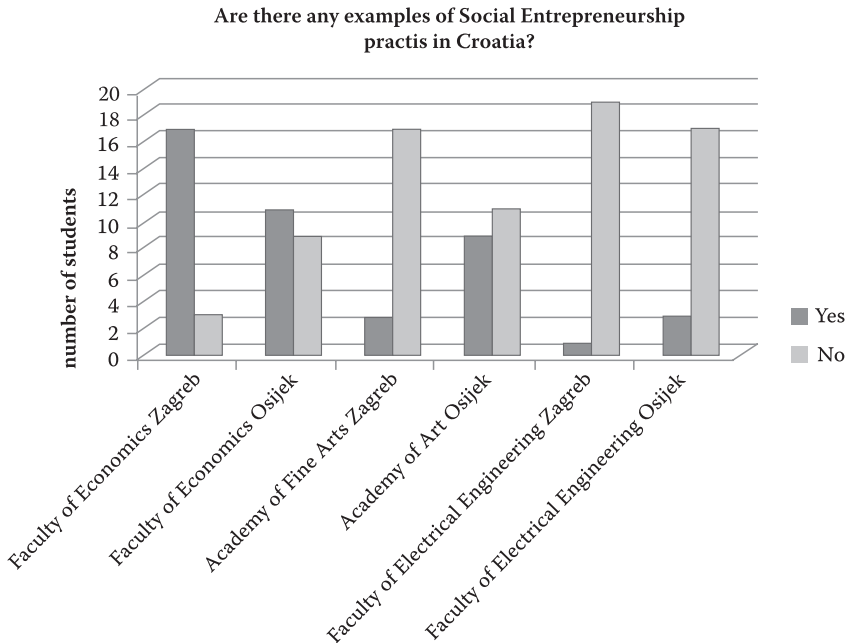


Source: authors

When asked if they can name an example of social entrepreneurship students have replied very similarly as to the previous question. Most of the students think that there are no examples of social entrepreneurship practice in Croatia. Again, students from Faculties of Economics, because of the same reason, have named some of the examples of social entrepreneurship; however, most of the examples were familiar non-profit organizations or large companies that are known for their involvement in the community. Their examples confirm the argument that students associate social entrepreneurship with the work of NPOs and corporate social responsibility. Among those students who responded negatively to this question, there are those who say that the examples of social entrepreneurship practice probably exist but that the media do not cover their stories well enough. However, when looking from the regional perspective, more examples were given by Osijek students (23) than by Zagreb students (21).

Although more than half of surveyed students have never heard about the concept of social entrepreneurship, 97 of them (almost 81%) said that social entrepreneurship could help in solving many social issues. Out of 97 students, 50 of them come from Osijek. However, most of them argued that social entrepreneurship might have some influence in solving social problems, but it cannot be the solu-

*Graph 2. Examples of social entrepreneurship practice in Croatia*



Source: authors

tion for the problems Croatia is facing. Some of the issues that can be addressed by social entrepreneurship, according to students are:

**Unemployment** – many students think that by supporting the development of social entrepreneurship socially disadvantaged groups of people can be hired,

**Generating social value rather than profit** – many students argue that Croatia is a corrupted country with people that primarily think about themselves and the ways of earning money. Students think that social entrepreneurship might raise the social sensitivity and awareness of the responsibility of those people towards their own communities,

**Self-employment** – students view social entrepreneurship as a way to decrease unemployment by supporting individuals to start their own businesses and employ other people,

**Education** – according to students, social entrepreneurship can develop knowledge and skills by organizing workshops, creative seminars and other various events for children, young people, the un-

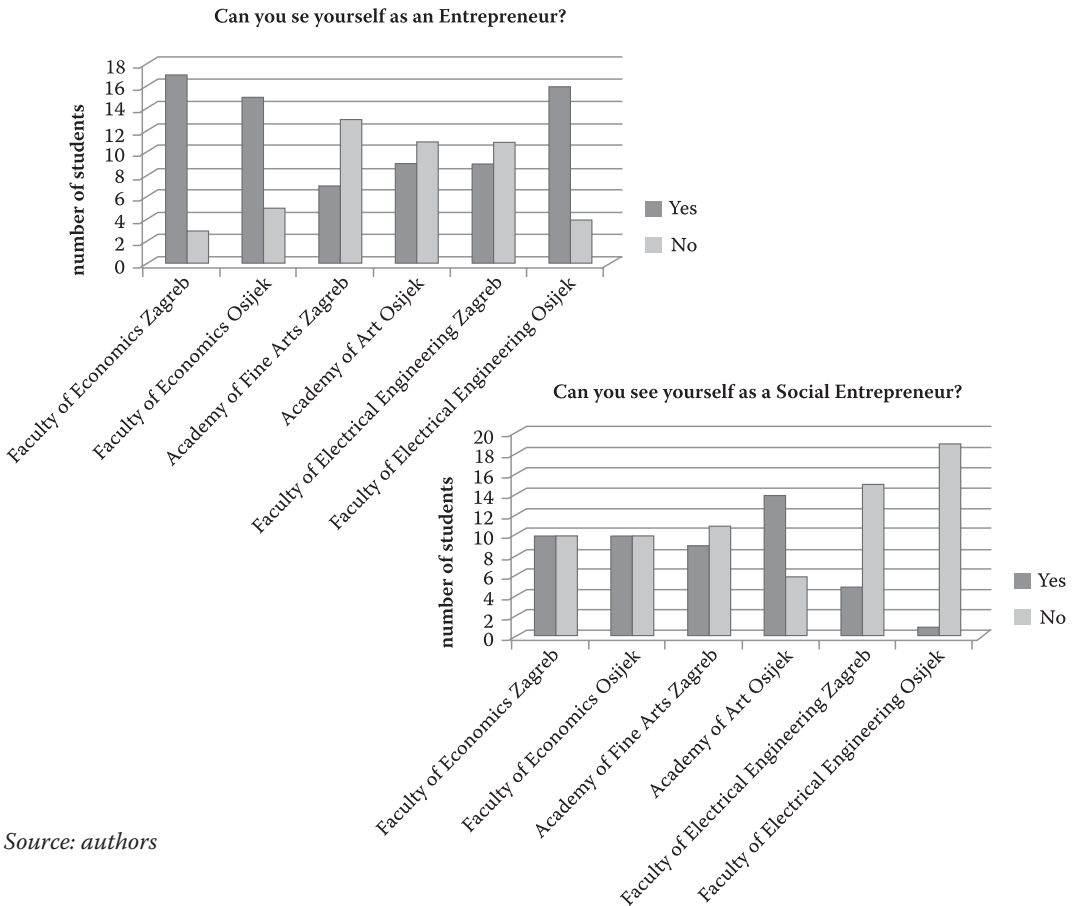
employed, or the marginalized parts of the community.

Those students who said that social entrepreneurship cannot respond to social problems think that people in Croatia are oriented far more towards money than towards other people, and that Croatia has far too many problems, such as conservatism, nepotism, corruption, lack of political will and poor government and management in all sectors. In addition, some students argue that social entrepreneurship does not generate any profit, which can be the reason why, both individuals and institutions, are losing interest in supporting social entrepreneurship. It is significant to note that this kind of attitude mostly comes from students from Osijek (as a less developed region).

When talking about entrepreneurship as a potential career path for students, 73 of them (almost 61%) see themselves as being entrepreneurs one day. The most recognized reason for that is that students want to be their own bosses and they want to manage their professional life and their time by themselves.



**Graph 3. and 4. Becoming an entrepreneur/ becoming a social entrepreneur**



Source: authors

Those who said that they do not want to become entrepreneurs have mentioned corruption (among other problems Croatia is facing), competition, fear of risk, lack of skills, lack of financial and other resources and lack of interest as their main reasons. However, it is a different situation when it comes to the question of being a social entrepreneur. Seventy-one students (59%) said that they do not see themselves as social entrepreneurs mostly because (a) they do not quite understand what social entrepreneurship is and how it works, (b) social entrepreneurship cannot be connected with their own field of interest (especially according to the students from Faculties of Electrical Engineering), (c) it is not

profitable (most of them want a profitable business), and (d) they do not have the necessary skills (creativity, motivation, will).

When looking from the regional perspective, students from Osijek are more interested in becoming entrepreneurs (both traditional and social) than students from Zagreb. It is assumed that the reason for this lies in the possibility of finding a job, which is substantially lower in Osijek. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor<sup>10</sup> Eastern Croatia has much more entrepreneurs out of necessity – people who have been forced by unsatisfactory circumstances to become entrepreneurs. Most of the students argue that being an entrepreneur is

the only possible way to survive in a country with so many political, economic and social problems, such as Croatia.

It is also valuable to mention, as can be seen in Graph 4, that students from the Academy of Arts in Osijek (but it can be also seen from the comments of students from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb) are much more socially sensitive than students from other departments. Most of them view social entrepreneurship through the prisms of culture elevation, connecting it with the projects that can help children (especially from correctional homes and homes for abandoned children), young people (especially those who are unemployed) and the elderly, by developing skills that will enhance the quality of their lives. Most of them said that they wanted to spend their professional lives both investing in their own future and helping others as well.

The research has shown that students, regardless of the region they come from, recognize social entrepreneurship as a possible approach in solving various social problems. However, most of the students are not familiar with the concept, do not quite understand it, and do not see themselves becoming social entrepreneurs. This observation, confirmed by the study, leads to the conclusion that there is much to be done to create a better foundation in the process of developing social entrepreneurship as an approach that can create positive social changes, especially in the area of education.

### 3. Educating students to become social entrepreneurs

In the process of supporting development and recognition of social entrepreneurship as an important career path and innovative approach in solving regional disparities, Croatia is missing an important component – the educational one. Many universities worldwide have recognized the importance of their own contribution to sustainable development of both their local communities and their national economies by encouraging the development of social entrepreneurship and the sense of social responsibility in young people. Hayden (2008) argues that social entrepreneurship is not an idea but rather a global movement. This statement can be confirmed by a large number of famous universities, such as Harvard Business School, whose missions are based

on social responsible performance and which have created a curricula that incorporates social entrepreneurship as an innovative approach in addressing social issues. (*“Harvard University is proud to be an integral part of Greater Boston. The vitality of our host communities, united with the academic and cultural power of Harvard, results in extraordinary, mutually beneficial relationships that enrich lives both at Harvard and in the community.”*)

Brock (2008) argues that teaching students how to apply knowledge and skills into real life situations can be extremely rewarding for both students and teachers. This author testifies that the interest for social entrepreneurship education has increased significantly in the last twenty years. Arriving at Harvard, in the early 1990s, Brock proposed a course titled “Social Entrepreneurship”. Her request was denied on the grounds that such a course was not appropriate for a business school. Several years later, social entrepreneurship started becoming an increasingly important research field, so Harvard founded the so-called Initiative on Social Enterprise within which Brock started the course “Entrepreneurship in the Social Sector”.

Social entrepreneurship education has grown dramatically, which can be seen in many programs and initiatives around the world that offer a variety of opportunities for students to learn about social entrepreneurship and to transfer gained knowledge into various community projects<sup>11</sup>:

- Center for Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship at Duke University,
- Berea College Entrepreneurship for the Public Good,
- Skoll Centre for Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University,
- The Asian Institute of Management Social and Development Entrepreneurship,
- The Sustainable Venturing Initiative at the University of Colorado marries social entrepreneurship and sustainability,
- Tata Institute of Social Sciences has developed the first Masters in Social Entrepreneurship in India,
- Collaboration between the Catholic University of Louvain and University of Liege in Belgium offered the first PhD course in social entrepreneurship,

- A number of programs in the United Kingdom and the University of Cork in Ireland offer masters degrees in Social Enterprise,
- As the demand for social entrepreneurs to help alleviate some of the world's social problems grows, the number of majors, minors and certificate programs has increased.

In Croatia, only several faculties (Faculty of Economics in Zagreb, the Zagreb School of Economics and Management, Faculty of Economics in Osijek) educate students on social entrepreneurship, but only as part of the *entrepreneurship* course. This lack of education can be seen in the conducted research as well. Social entrepreneurship is still seen as a marginal activity of non-profit organizations or as a component of corporate social responsibility. For this reason, or just neglecting the issue, Croatian universities are not sufficiently active in incorporating social entrepreneurship into curriculum and educational programs, which makes Croatian students unable to recognize the importance of social entrepreneurship for their own personal development and for the development of their community as well.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Although there are individual attempts to develop social entrepreneurship in Croatia, mostly by non-profit organizations, in order to get better results there is need for systematic support and intersectoral cooperation. Research has shown that students from the less developed region are more likely to become entrepreneurs, both traditional and social. Still, it seems as though many students do not understand the impact they can make by being social entrepreneurs. There is still a significant need for encouraging young people to carry out their activities with the aim of both personal development and development of their society – the responsibility for which lies on universities. Croatian universities must take the initiative through education, and show that social entrepreneurship promotes society's common interests and that it can only be understood with a responsible attitude towards the community. By recognizing social entrepreneurship as a potential career path, young people can develop critical skills and competences that will help them become important actors in the decision-making process and active agents of positive social change.

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## (ENDNOTES)

- 1 <http://www.undp.hr/show.jsp?page=86767>
- 2 <http://www.undp.hr/show.jsp?page=86767>
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## **SOCIJALNO PODUZETNIŠTVO U HRVATSKOJ: UTJEČU LI REGIONALNE NEJEDNAKOSTI NA PERCEPCIJU MLADIH LJUDI O SOCIJALNOM PODUZETNIŠTVU KAO POTENCIJALNOJ KARIJERI?**

### **SAŽETAK**

Proces stvaranja boljeg života u društvima zahtijeva uključenost svih sudionika društva. Razina osobne spremnosti za aktivno sudjelovanje u zajednici preduvjet je za izgradnju društvene odgovornosti svih pojedinaca. Ona također utječe na razvoj socijalnog poduzetništva, koje, integriranjem ekonomskih i društvenih vrijednosti, nudi održivija rješenja za niz društvenih problema i uklanjanje tradicionalnih granica između vlade, poslovne zajednice, akademske zajednice i civilnog društva. Ovaj rad će istražiti razinu osobne spremnosti pojedinaca u Hrvatskoj, s posebnim naglaskom na mlade, jer njihova energija i potencijal predstavljaju temelj budućega razvitka društva. Istovremeno, njihova inercija i pasivnost ukazuju da mladi nisu svjesni svoje važne uloge u društvu.

Ovaj rad uspoređuje percepciju mladih o socijalnom poduzetništvu u Hrvatskoj i njegovom značaju u procesu osobnoga razvitka i razvitka zajednice. Istražujući mlade ljude (studente) iz različitih regija (grad Zagreb, kao najrazvijenija regija i grad Osijek, kao glavni grad jedne od najslabije razvijenih regija u Hrvatskoj) i različitih obrazovnih usmjerenja (ekonomija, elektronički inženjering i umjetnost) rad ispituje prepoznaju li studenti socijalno poduzetništvo kao novi pristup za rješavanje različitih društvenih problema, ali i kao moguć izbor karijere s kojom mogu ostvariti dobit.

**Ključne riječi:** socijalno poduzetništvo, regionalne nejednakosti, mladi