

# Preface

This collection of papers, *The Social Entrepreneurship in South East Europe*, is part of the project iPRESENT (Installation Project for REsearch about Social ENTrepreneurship), funded by the Croatian Science Foundation. The authors have produced valuable works on the current situation and changes in the area of social entrepreneurship in their countries of origin and also place the entire sector within the European context, main theoretical approaches and model analyses that have emerged from or are related to the social economy.

The social economy and social entrepreneurship are rapidly growing phenomena in the countries of the region where the authors of these papers come from. We can conclude that these phenomena have been more accepted in Slovenia, where they have better prospects for further development. We believe that these papers will provide a good superstructure for understanding the phenomena of the social economy and entrepreneurship, acquaint readers with the major challenges facing this sector in the region and identify changes that decision-makers need to make in their approaches to the issue in the authors' respective countries.

In this collection, we present ten papers by authors from Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, which analyze the main topic from various angles and theoretical positions, focusing on the sector in general or some of its significant manifestations and activities in the overall ecosystem. In this context, this collection provides a point of reference for understanding the state of social entrepreneurship in the region, and also presents scientists and researchers in the field to colleagues from the European Union and elsewhere. Since there are exceptionally few works on the topic of this collection published in the English language, we believe that these papers will contribute to greater familiarity with the situation of social entrepreneurship in the region and outside its borders.

The collection begins with a paper by Dolores Kores, who problematizes the prospects of social entrepreneurship in the context of the Social Entrepreneurship Act of 2011 adopted in Slovenia. Her paper presents a challenging view of the European concept of social enterprises and how the three actors from the sector stud-

ied can position themselves within this new concept in relation to the well-established understanding and legislative framework of social entrepreneurship in Slovenia.

We then move to Croatia with three papers that respectively analyze the state of the sector of social entrepreneurship, its individual actors and legal models. This part begins with a general review of the situation in the paper *Social Entrepreneurship in Croatia: Its Future, the Actors' Database and the Strategy* by the authors Dražen Šimleša, Jelena Puđak and Anita Tonković Bušljeta, which presents the database on the actors in social entrepreneurship in Croatia, with information on their numbers, distribution, number of employees, incomes and other relevant indicators. Moreover, the relevant strategy and ecosystem of social entrepreneurship in Croatia were discussed.

In the next paper, which is linked to some extent with the previous one, the author Davorka Vidović writes about the state of social cooperatives in Croatia and analyzes the emergence of this relatively new phenomenon in the world of cooperatives and its position within the insufficiently supportive legislative and institutional framework for the cooperative sector in Croatia. The next paper is signed by the same author together with Paul Stubbs, in which they analyze the situation and employee attitudes in our largest actors in the social economy, the ACT Group of Čakovec, through the approach of ethnographic studies. In addition to the paucity of general works on the topic of social entrepreneurship, there is a particular dearth of papers based on fieldwork and, therefore, this paper is of special importance.

In the first of two papers from Serbia, Slobodan Cvejić analyzes the impact of social enterprises in Serbia, according to the results of a survey conducted by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia. Measuring the social impact of the actors from the sector is increasingly becoming not only a praiseworthy attempt to establish their legitimacy and justify investments but is also provides the necessary basis for their transparency, on the one hand, and an important tool for communicating with the public and interested stakeholders, on the other hand. A paper by Dina Rakin deals with the exceptionally important area of the level of development and public policies, as well as the institutional framework that regulates the area of social entrepreneurship and, in this sense, is similar in intention to the paper with which we open this part of the collection on the situation in Croatia. The author examines the range and intentions of public policies in Serbia toward the overall sector and questions the purpose and quality of specific public policies.

The collection concludes with works by authors from the region of Southeastern Europe, who approach the main topic with less focus on the situations in the countries of the region and more attention to some of the main determinants of the social economy and entrepreneurship. A paper by Danijel Baturina is a praisewor-

thy attempt by a young researcher to deal with demanding issues, such as the aforementioned measurement of the social impact of social entrepreneurship in Croatia. As evident from the title, *The Challenges of Measuring the Impact of Social Entrepreneurship in Croatia*, the author touches on the situation in Croatia. However, we have decided to present the paper separately and call attention to it because the majority of the papers are directed toward acquainting the reader with the conceptual definitions of various models for measuring social impact and explaining the measurement tools, i.e., the reasons why the society and actors in social entrepreneurship have to measure their impact.

In the second paper in this part of the collection, *Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Entrepreneurship: Exploring Models of Inter-Organizational Relationships*, the authors Tina Lee Odinsky-Zec and Julia Perić also touch upon the exceptionally important and frequently controversial topic of the relationship between the corporate sector and the actors of social entrepreneurship. These are two worlds that are similar in terms of business and market orientation but quite different when it comes to profit management and sharing. The authors investigate possibilities for increasing the compatibility of these two forms of operations, especially in the context of socially responsible operations.

The next paper in this part does not deal with the situation in one of the countries of the region but, since it involves domestic authors, it was very important for us to present it because it is based on work by our colleague Filip Majetić on the iPRESENT project during his postdoctoral studies at the Section for Business Studies, University of Uppsali, and the Stockholm Business School, Management Section, in Sweden, from which he graduated in early 2017. He made the work with his colleagues Svitlana Pinchuk and Tihana Brkljačić.

The last paper in this part of the collection, *From the European Cooperative to the Principles of European Cooperative Law*, also extends outside the framework of the region, as the Slovenian author Franci Avsec takes us on a major investigative journey toward the European legislative framework for cooperatives, the implementation of which is extremely difficult in practice owing to the differences in status afforded to cooperatives in the countries of the EU.

The preparation of this collection was a demanding task, primarily because our authors are distinguished scientists involved in extensive activities. Therefore, we are honored and grateful that they found the time and were willing to share their research with us. Moreover, it was challenging to coordinate the situations in the countries of the region, which most often use the term social entrepreneurship in various ways, sometimes as synonymous with the social economy, sometimes with social enterprises or workers' cooperatives, and in the European context a considerable number of authors and scientific communities very clearly separate all these

concepts and models for a strong and ethical economy. Therefore, we are very grateful to the international reviewers who performed the incredible task of contributing to the “polishing” of the papers, improving their coherence and intelligibility, and critically examining the writing styles and contexts in which said terms were used. We thank Nadia Johanišová, Ph.D., of the Department of Environmental Studies, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University in Brno; Mihaela Lambu, Ph.D., of the Department of Social Work, University of Bucharest; and, especially, Giulia Galera, Ph.D., Senior Researcher at Euricse (European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises) in Trento, one of the most respected scientific and research centers in its field in Europe. Giulia Galera has devoted herself to studying social enterprises in Central Eastern Europe and is outstandingly knowledgeable concerning the situation and development of the sector in this part of Europe. She provided an immeasurable contribution to the final appearance of the collection, focusing on the smallest details in order to improve the papers. If there had not been a deadline for printing the collection, she was prepared to provide additional editing of the individual papers and the final outcome is our responsibility. We can declare that after several rounds of corrections, the papers are now ready for publication. We also thank the domestic reviewers, Marina Milić Babić, Ph.D., of the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb; and Kristina Afrić Rakitovac, Ph.D., of the Dr. Mijo Mirković Faculty of Economics and Tourism, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, who provided us with expert support when we applied to the competition for the publication of scientific works by the Ministry of Science and Education, which provided the funding for the printing of this collection.

We should like this collection to serve as an educational tool for understanding the situation and process of social entrepreneurship in Croatia and the countries in the region, in order for us to approach, at least to some extent, the scientific output of the countries of the EU, where the scientific and educational sectors have developed as important parts of the overall ecosystem of social entrepreneurship.

*Dražen Šimleša*