

Problem statement

- Social categories protected against discrimination by EU legislation: Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, which came into force in 1999, forbids to combat discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation
- In Europe, the significance of social enterprises in work integration and social services is acknowledged (European Commission 2015)
- Members of disadvantaged social groups, incl. young mothers, people with disabilities and the Roma, face various challenges connected to social inclusion and equality, e.g. material deprivation, lacking access to or discrimination by the labour market, lack of access to services or isolation from the community at large

Research aim and questions

- Social enterprises often target disadvantaged social groups trying to improve their living conditions in different ways, thus they can play an important role in the social inclusion of these groups. Therefore, our aim is to explore and analyse the inclusion and diversity practices in social enterprises regarding certain social categories protected against discrimination.
- **Overall research questions:**
 - How can social enterprises contribute to easing or solving social problems of women, Roma people and people with disabilities?
 - How do social enterprises themselves contribute to the social inclusion of women, Roma people, and people with disabilities?

People with disabilities

Women

Roma people

Theoretical background

Social enterprises have played an important role in bettering the situation of vulnerable social groups, and often focused on work integration and social and community care services (Defourny and Borzaga 2001)

Agents, purposes, drivers and processes are analysed from three perspectives: social innovation, grassroots innovation, and the capability approach (Pellicer-Sifres et al., 2017)

Business case approach (Bridstock et al., 2010): managing difference in the workplace can contribute to organisational performance

Never social and entrepreneurial enough? (Driver, 2017)

Methodology

Desk research:

- desk research on existing literature about the inclusion and diversity practices in/by social enterprises (literature review)
- document analysis about the social enterprises in the sample

Case study:

- Methods: non-participant observation, interviews, document analysis
- Co-defined research question: Who are we?
- Interview with the founders, customers, and other participants

Qualitative interview series:

- Female, Roma and Disability-focused enterprises (18)
- Sampling: diverse sample according to region, type of settlement, field of activity, year of founding, legal form, etc.

Preliminary findings

- Different types of social exclusion require different objectives and practices
- Social enterprises focusing on the Roma: reducing educational disadvantages
- Social enterprises focusing on PwD: labour market integration
- Social enterprises focusing on women: reducing social isolation by providing places (and occasions) to meet
- Similarities include sensitivity to social problems prior to and leading to starting the enterprise, complex solutions to reach the social objectives and difficulties connected to sustainability

References

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