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Sources of Funding and Revenues of Social Enterprises in Poland in Comparison to Selected European Countries and World-Wide

Abstract

The fundamental ideas and values of the social economy find their expression in the goals of social enterprises and in the ways of their activity. However, they are not the only determinants of their social activity. Diversified financial resources are also necessary to stimulate the creation and development of these enterprises. The objective of the paper is to indicate to what extent social enterprises in Poland use various sources of funding their activity, compared to chosen European countries and world-wide. The analyses were carried out on the basis of data from international SEFORIS reports, covering 1000 social enterprises in Hungary, Romania, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, Russia and China and a sample of 412 Polish social enterprises. The findings of analyses indicate that revenues from business activity are significant financial source of social enterprises in many European countries, including Poland. However, they are not the only way to gain capital. Among other forms of capital contribution, subsidies, donations or membership fees can be singled out. The share of social enterprises using those sources significantly varies in individual countries.

Key words: social enterprises; NGOs; commercial revenue, sources of funding

1. Introduction

Non-profit organizations traditionally operate in the social sector. They affect economic, social and cultural areas threatened by broadly understood marginalization which generate social pathologies. Their negative consequences affect the whole community. To solve or facilitate problems such as homelessness, famine, domestic violence or environmental pollution, NGOs enable the involvement of human

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resources in a complementary way to public and private sectors. Thus, they improve government activities by implementing their own visions of society and innovative undertakings, regardless of government policy. NGOs include groups and institutions that are entirely or largely independent from government and have primarily humanitarian or cooperative rather than commercial objectives.

Necessary funds for the NGOs in order to implement their long-term activities are obtained from public as well as from private donors. In that respect, NGOs must usually rely on various sources of financing. However, increasing number of non-profit organizations are looking for additional revenue, imitating commercial enterprises. They try to attract a bigger number of customers interested in their services that enables them to obtain additional capital.

Therefore, some non-profit organisations, to secure the realisation of their goals, introduce an entrepreneurial activity – a commercial sale of goods and services. Such activities create the possibility to become independent from the public sources or charity. Taking on the activity basing on the commercial sale of goods and services is described as commercialization of social organisations and is the main reason of creation and development of social enterprises. The commercialization of social activity is also a response to some of the crucial issues like an increasing number of people who need support or growing amount of organizations competing for funds to conduct their activity. Business activity aside, the vital distinguishing factors of social enterprises are the issues referring to the profit and the objectives. As Defourn and Nyssens state [2007] the financial surplus is not the absolute rule for the described entities and is used to fulfil social goals. It does not mean that profit is an insignificant economic category. Earnings generate the opportunity to fulfil the essential task of social mission.

Summing up all the above mentioned issues, the aim of the paper is to indicate to what extent do social enterprises in Poland use various sources of funding their activity, compared to chosen European countries and world-wide. The research conducted has revealed the percentage of social enterprise using particular source of financing. Results of the research provide significant input into an international discussion on financing social enterprises and diversifying their support resources.

2. The concept of social economy – from non-profit to not-for-profit activity

The organisational foundation of the third sector (NGO) is a long-term social mission, this is a specified idea aiming at helping the society. NGOs are entities having more complex, flexible and different values and motivation for action than for-profit units. They actively participate in identifying problems of a local environment, on a national level and very often also of an international character. Therefore, the character of activity of those entities is especially significant, most of

all in the context of taking independent actions, for which the organisations were created [Froelich 1999, pp. 246–268].

Obviously, the realisation of autonomic goals requires specified financial sources. In case of non-governmental organisations, the funds are usually obtained from several sources. Among the reasons of gaining diversified financial sources, one can enumerate broadly understood premises connected with independence and autonomy of non-profit organisation within the realisation of social mission [Carroll and Stater 2009, pp. 947–966]. Other premises concern the creation of economic safety of NGOs, expressed in striving for the limitation of the risk of dependence on financial resources suppliers [Frumkin and Keating 2011, pp. 151–164].

Diversification of funding streams introduces opportunities of avoiding the risk of being controlled by public, as well as private, donors, especially when one of them has a dominant share in the funding. Diversification strategy of revenue sources in non-profit organisations increases the autonomy of NGOs in their fulfilment of social mission and diminishes the risk of pressure put on the management, for instance within the change or resignation of formerly approved priorities [Keating et al. 2005].

Another reason among NGOs of revenues diversification are the financial premises connected with the threat of default or insolvency and the decrease of revenues. Numerous research on the economic condition of non-profit organisations shows that the diversified sources of revenues are characteristic of the entities of a better financial situation [Chang and Tuckman 1994, pp. 273–290].

Hager [2001, pp. 376–392] stresses that diversification of revenues increases the probability of organisation's survival. Along with that statement, the researcher also argues that a higher level of concentrated revenues has contributed to the collapse of many organisations. Especially in times of economic deterioration, the decrease in revenues from one source can be compensated by the revenues from another. Carroll and Stater [2009, pp. 947–966] argue that one of the conditions of operational stability of NGOs is the access to diversified streams of funding. Greenlee [2002, pp. 1999–210] also points out the relationship between the stability and predictability of revenues and their differentiation. A similar opinion is expressed by Carmin [2010, pp. 183–202] who stresses that financial stability is vital for NGOs because it not only provides financial support but also enables the fulfilment of organisation's goals and also secures the sources for workers' salaries, purchase of necessary equipment and maintaining posts. In that context Froelich [1999, pp. 246–268] proves that financial stability of the organisation makes it more predictable and the regularity of the access of financial resources makes the action of NGO more dynamic and unswerving.

Among the opportunities to seek additional revenues by NGOs we can also distinguish a commercial sale of goods and services. Taking up a business activity by non-profit organizations is defined as their commercialization or marketisation [Simpson and Cheney 2007, pp. 191–222; Dart 2004a, pp. 290–310 and 2004b,

pp. 411–424] or economization [Dees 1998, pp. 54–69; Eikenberry and Kluever 2004, pp. 132–140; Wygnański 2008]. Realization of commercial sale of goods and services give NGOs the status of social enterprises [Mikołajczak 2017a, pp. 135–144]. It does not mean that sale prices are always created by the market. They very often are defined on a lower level or on the level lower than the manufacturing costs depending on the recipients [Mikołajczak and Czternasty 2015, pp. 420–433]. The idea of marketisation, on the one hand is based on economic stability of NGOs, on the other, however, on becoming independent from financing based on subsidies and philanthropy [Juraszek-Kopacz et al. 2008].

Non-profit organisations, by imitating commercial entities, seek the opportunity to attract a wider range of customers and recipients of their services and this way to gain additional capital. As Foster and Bradach [2005, pp. 92–100] point out the process of economisation requires number of changes appearing in the field of management, stressing organisation's entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency.

The phenomenon of marketisation of non-profit organisations is visible around the world. Its direct consequence, as it was signalled before, is the creation and development of social enterprises. Kerlin and Pollak [2006] highlight that a growing importance of social enterprises is defined by the issues referring to social policy of the state and limited possibilities to finance the activity of enterprises being subjected to such policy. Adaptation of entrepreneurial behaviours to obtain capital for running NGOs and entrepreneurial orientation when generating the revenues is connected to the duality of NGOs' activities which is expressed in the transformation of functioning formula from non-profit to not-for-profit [Grohs et al. 2015, pp. 163–186]. It manifests itself in an immediate entry of the organisation into the market and initiative of the business or a relative form of running another paid business. Thus, the described entities are often perceived as a sub-group of hybrid entities of social economy oriented towards the market and an institutional response of the third sector organisations to their problems with financing their activity [Billis 2010; Evers 2005; Grassl 2012; Mikołajczak 2017b, pp. 56–57].

A lack of legal definition of a social enterprise in many European countries, as well as world-wide results in the description of their peculiarity only through the features which distinguish them from other businesses and functions which they fulfil. As Defourn and Nyssens state [2007] the financial surplus is not the absolute rule for the described entities and is used to fulfil social goals. It does not mean that profit is an insignificant economic category. Earnings generate the opportunity to fulfil the priority task of social mission.

NGOs acting as social enterprises, apart from the revenues from commercial sale to fulfil their social mission, also try to attract the attention of private and institutional donors as their financial and non-financial involvement supports the business activity [Maier et al. 2016, pp. 64–86]. Numerous researchers stress that running a business by social enterprises, on the one hand enables them to become more independent from public administration and philanthropy [Dees 1998, pp. 54–69; Enjolras 2002; King 2006], however, on the other hand it gives them the opportunity

to gain resources from social investors [Geobey and Weber 2013, pp. 124–137], for instance in the form of Social Impact Investing. They represent new kind of activities which are characterised by a special relation of the rate of return and the risk, typical for so-called “patient capital” [O’Donohoe et al. 2010]. These assets are at the same time characterised by features similar to investments of “social impact investments” [Brandstetter and Lehner 2014]. Moreover, social enterprises can use national and foreign funds, including the sources of the EU and other ways of funding offered by, e.g. the European Commission.

3. Data

The data for the analysis of revenues and funding sources has come from international SEFORIS reports, created within a multi-disciplinary research programme, financed by the European Commission, which analyses the potential of a social enterprise in the EU and outside it to increase social integration via growing involvement of parties, promoting civil society and changes in providing social services. SEFORIS combines the observations of decision-makers and social entrepreneurs with the latest research to build solid and new facts about social entrepreneurship. SEFORIS formulates theoretical frames for integration and innovation processes in the context of using new experiments involving social enterprises. Moreover, it creates a unique international database of in-depth case studies, and at the same time, it tests and concludes basing on solid and cross-sectional research. In the period of April 2015 and December 2015 SEFORIS consortium ran a research covering 1000 social enterprises in Hungary, Romania, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, Russia and China. As a result of careful cooperation of social enterprises and the EU financing the biggest and most rigorous panel database of social enterprises world-wide was activated [www.Seforis.eu].

Data for the analyses are collected from the Klon/Jawor Association, which conducted a survey on a representative sample of 3,800 Polish foundations and associations run in the third and fourth quarter of 2015. The survey, commissioned by the Klon/Jawor Association, was conducted by the Millward Brown company. The research was carried out on a random group of associations and foundations drawn from the REGON GUS register (Main Statistical Office) (using December 2014 data), verified on the basis of information obtained from KRS (National Court Register) and data collected in the bazy.ngo.pl network. The data concerning associations and foundations were collected by means of the interview method, which used two research techniques: 1) 2,975 interviews were carried out employing the CAPI technique (direct interviews supported by a computer, conducted by interviewers in an area), 2) 825 interviews were done applying the CAWI technique (an online survey). In both cases, respondents were people performing key functions in their organizations. The data were collected in compliance with the secrecy principle. As part of the report, in the third quarter of 2014, 24 individual in-depth interviews with non-governmental organization employees and leaders were conducted.

In Poland there are 17 thousand foundations and 86 thousand associations that are registered (excluding Voluntary Firefighting Forces). Seventy thousand of these are active. Most non-governmental organizations deal with sport, tourism, recreation and hobby – these are essential activity spheres of 34% of the organizations. The organizations whose major activity sphere is education and upbringing account for 15% of the non-governmental sector. Organizations dealing with art and culture are the third most numerous branch of the sector: associations and foundations active in this field account for 13% of the sector [Raport Klon/Jawor, pp. 175].

The group of entities fully meeting the definition of a social enterprise are social cooperatives. Data from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy show that from 2009 onwards, the number of registered social cooperatives is growing. There is no reliable data on the number of actually operating social cooperatives. According to the opinion of some experts, only ca. 1/3 of them conduct business activity [Schimanek 2015, pp. 7–20].

4. Assumptions and research process

There were several arguments which persuaded the author to use the secondary data made available by Klon/Jawor Association. First and foremost, it enabled to enlarge the research sample, its representativeness and the number of observations which led to broader conclusions in the course of conducted statistical analysis. Moreover, using the existing data, combined with own analyses, made it possible to fulfil also different goals than those initial ones which prompted the collection of data. A significant premise of an economic nature of such approach was the cost of research – much lower compared to original research [Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 2001, pp. 321–323].

On the basis of survey data “*Condition of the third sector in Poland in 2015*”, made available by Klon/Jawor Association, among all the organisations that took part in the research (3800) those NGOs were selected which ran a commercial sale of goods and services – those entities which were qualified into the sector of social enterprises. On that basis, the sample of 412 entities was selected. 25 of those entities did not present the revenues in 2014, therefore, for further analysis a sample of 387 NGOs was selected. Next, the number and share (in %) of social enterprises, using particular sources of financial support of their activity, was verified. The detailed specification of financial resources was presented in table 2. The sources were grouped in 7 categories to enable the comparison of share of social enterprises, using each of the sources with their equivalents in chosen European countries and world-wide. Using the information concerning financial performance of social enterprises, the given number of entities was classified into a specific range of revenues. Values of the latter, to facilitate the comparison, were converted into euro (EUR) based on an average exchange rate of Polish National Bank in 2014.

5. Findings and results

Sources of financing

The research carried out by SEFORİS shows that in 2014 the revenues from commercial sale were the most popular source of revenues among social enterprises in analysed countries. It must be stressed that the percentage of tested entities in Spain indicating the source of gaining capital through commercial sale of goods and services was the highest (74%) followed by Great Britain (64%) and Hungary (62%). In turn, Romania was characterised by the lowest share of social enterprises financing their activity from business revenues.

Subsidies are also significant sources of financing, from the point of view of entities of social economy. That form of gaining capital was declared by a quarter of entities in analysed countries, while the highest percentage was noted in Sweden (36.2%), Portugal (35%) and Great Britain (29.5%) and also in Germany (28.7%). Chinese and Spanish social enterprises declaring that kind of financing constituted the smallest share – (18.9%) and (20.8%) respectively. The countries that were mentioned first, were characterised by the share of 21% compared to other countries when considering financing in a form of investments. In remaining countries, the share of social enterprises gaining capital in such a manner is low and reaches approx. 2%.

In Romania, Russia and Germany, when compared to other countries, the biggest share of discussed entities declared financing in 2014 in a form of subsidies (12.1%, 11.8% and 10.3% respectively), and the lowest in Spain (1.7%), Hungary (1.6%) (see table 1).

Table 1. Sources of financing of social enterprises in chosen countries in 2014 (in %)

Sources of financing	Hungary	Romania	Portugal	Russia	China	Germany	Sweden	Great Britain	Spain
Sale revenues	62	28.5	50.1	60.4	53	43	53	64	74.5
Subsidies	25.3	26.5	35	23.1	18.9	28.7	36.2	29.5	20.8
Investments	2	2	2	3.9	21	6.5	2.1	1.4	0.6
Donations	1.7	12.1	5.6	11.8	4.3	10.3	4.2	2	1.6
Loans	1	-	0.5	-	1	3	4	1	-
Member fees	3	1	1	-	0	1	-	0.5	1.5
Other	5	9	6	-	2	7	1	2.5	0.5

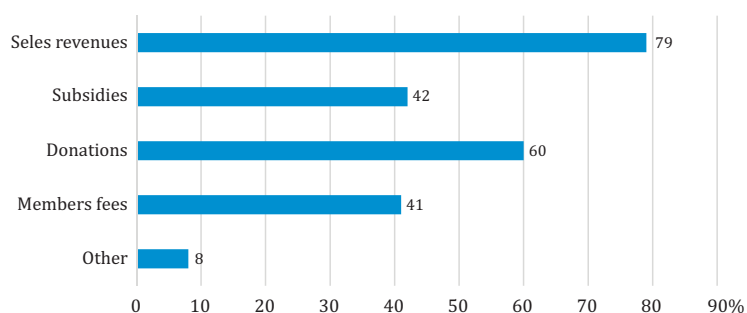
Source: own elaboration on the basis of SEFORİS report [www.Seforis.eu].

However, in Poland in 2014 79% of social enterprises declared the revenues from sale of goods and services as the source of their activity. For about 40% of discussed entities subsidies and membership fees were a source of capital support of their activity. In turn, 60% of a total number of analysed social enterprises pointed to donations. The sources of financing put in a category "Other" characterised 8% of discussed entities. The figures in diagram 1 do not show categories such as investments and loans because enterprises in Poland did not use these forms of financing their activity.

Table 2. Sources of financing social enterprises in Poland in 2014

Sources of financing	Share % (SE)	number of SE
Subsidies		
Local authority	50	208
The EU funds	37	152
Programmes of the European Commission	11	47
Foreign funding (excluding EU)	11	46
Donation from other divisions	3	12
Sales revenues		
Business activity	79	324
Revenues from other paid activity (non-business)	20	83
Donations/contributions		
Financial and non-financial donations from private individuals	45	184
Financial and non-financial donations from institutions, companies	34	141
Revenues from 1% of the income tax	25	105
Support from other national NGOs	14	59
Public fund-raising incomes	11	44
Support from other foreign NGOs	8	33
Membership fees	41	169
Other		
Interests, profits from endowment capital, deposits, shares and stocks	32	130
Revenue from assets	19	80
Other	6	23
Punitive damages	2	9

Source: own elaboration on the basis of a survey data of Klon/Jawor Association research on "Condition of the third sector in Poland in 2015".

Diagram 1. Categories of social enterprises financing in Poland in 2014 (in %)

Source: own elaboration on the basis of a survey data of Klon/Jawor Association research on "Condition of the third sector in Poland in 2015".

Comparing the sources of financing social enterprises in Poland with the entities of social economy of chosen European countries and world-wide, we can notice that in 2014 the percentage of Polish social enterprises indicating the revenues from commercial sale of goods and services as a form of financing their activity, was the highest (79%). However, the differences are not so significant as in case of other categories of funding sources. The share of social enterprises in Spain financing their activity from business was close to the share of Polish entities (74.5%). Among the latter, the capital-gaining categories of subsidies, donations and membership fees, are much more popular, nevertheless in Sweden (36.2%) and Portugal (35%) it was similar. The results of analysis show that social enterprises in Poland, as well as in Romania, Russia and Spain, do not have the access to financing in a form of loans, though in other European countries and in China only few entities used that kind of funding (from 0.5% in Portugal to 3%–4% in Germany and Sweden).

In Poland, the lack of financing in a form of investments into social enterprises is also clearly visible compared to other analysed countries. Except China, where 21% of discussed entities gained such funding, in other analysed countries it did not constitute a significant source of funding social enterprises. The share of assessed entities using other forms of capital contribution in Poland, as well as in Romania and Germany, was similar and reached 7–9%.

6. Revenues

Analysing the revenues of social enterprises in discussed countries, in Great Britain, Portugal, Spain and Germany the biggest share of social enterprises in 2014 reached the revenues level of 1 million euros (55%, 44% and 43% respectively), and the smallest share in Russia – just 5%. However, Russian social enterprises formed the biggest share of entities which had the revenues lower than 80 000 euros, similarly as Chinese enterprises – 52%. In turn, in Great Britain merely 5% of entities of

social economy reached the lowest level (range) of revenues. The biggest share of Swedish, Chinese, Hungarian and Russian entities was placed in the range of 80–200 thousand euros of revenues (33.5%, 24%, 23% and 22% respectively). Revenues exceeding 500 thousand euros were reached by 23% of social enterprises in Hungary and Romania and a bit less (20%) in Great Britain. A similar share – approx. 12% of analysed entities, compared to most of the analysed countries, had the revenues in the range of 0,5–1 million euros.

Summing up, in 2014 the highest revenues (exceeding 1 million euros) were reached by social enterprises operating in Great Britain and Portugal, the lowest (less than 80 thousand euros) in Russia and China. In the same countries, a dominant share of entities that reached the lowest level of revenues is visible. At the same time the trend in Great Britain is opposite (see table 3).

Table 3. Revenues of social enterprises in chosen European countries and world-wide in 2014 (in %)

Revenues (in 1000 EUR)	Hungary	Romania	Portugal	Russia	China	Germany	Sweden	Great Britain	Spain
up to 80	26	33	21	59	52	27	14	5	20
80–200	23	18	9,5	22	24	8	33.5	8	13
200–500	23	23	10.5	9	7	12	19	20	13
500–1000	13	12	15	5	5	12	12	11.5	11
more than 1000	15	14	44	5	12	41	21.5	55.5	43

Source: own elaboration on the basis of SEFORIS report [www.Seforis.eu].

However, in Poland in 2014 the biggest share of social enterprises (50.6%) reached an annual revenue less than 80 thousand euros. 15.5% of NGOs running a business had the annual revenue over 200 thousand euros, however lower than 500 thousand euros. A bit smaller share (13.4%) of social enterprises in Poland reported revenues in the range of 80–200 thousand euros. In turn, 8% of the social economy entities were classified in the range of 0.5–1 million euros. The highest revenues (over 1 million euros per annum) appeared in case of 48 social enterprises (12.4%).

Comparing the revenues of social enterprises in Poland to entities of social economy in analysed European countries and world-wide we can notice that the share of Polish social enterprises (50.6%) which reached their revenues on the lowest level (less than 80 thousand euros) is like the share of entities in China and Russia (respectively 52% and 59%). Similarly, a small share – merely 8% – of Polish social enterprises reached revenues in the range of 0.5–1 million euros in analysed period.

Such share is similar to the share of Russia and China (5%). In turn, when we consider ranges of 80–200 thousand and 200–500 thousand euros that the share of social enterprises in Poland is similar to the share which characterises Spain.

Table 4. Revenues of social enterprises in Poland in 2014

Revenues (in 1000 EUR)	number of SE	share of SE (in %)
up to 80	196	50.6
80–200	52	13.4
200–500	60	15.5
500–1000	31	8
more than 1000	48	12.4

* Exchange rate – 1 euro = 4.1845 PLN

Source: own elaboration on the basis of a survey data of Stowarzyszenie Klon/Jawor research on “*Condition of the third sector in Poland in 2015*”.

7. Conclusions

The phenomenon of marketization of non-profit organisations is expressed in making efforts by these entities to adopt entrepreneurial behaviours, characteristic for commercial enterprises. The foundation of that process is gaining additional capital through commercial sale of goods and services to fulfil social mission. The access to funding is a vital condition for social enterprises to expand their impact. Results of analysis indicate that the revenues from business activity are significant source of social enterprises’ capital in many European countries, including Poland. Obviously, they are not the only way to gain capital. Among other forms of capital contribution, we should single out, among other things, subsidies, donations or membership fees. However, the share of social enterprises using those sources varies in individual countries. In Poland, the share of described entities, which finance their activities from the commercial sale of goods and services, is the biggest compared to other analysed countries, similarly in case of subsidies and donations. Nonetheless, some forms of capital contribution are inaccessible, e.g. investments or loans. Significant differences among the countries are visible also in relation to the level of revenues. Most of Polish social enterprises, as well as Russian, reach revenues which do not exceed the lowest range of revenues (80 thousand euros). Revenues over 1 million euros are characteristic only for few social enterprises in Poland, while in Great Britain, Portugal, Spain, Germany and Sweden the share of such entities is much bigger. Presented results require further research which will explain the reasons of revenue level differentiation reached by social enterprises in the international context.

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