



APPENDIX 4.

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE, SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS, AND RESULTS OF IN- DEPTH INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED IN SIX ORGANIZATIONS FROM POLAND, LITHUANIA, AND ITALY



**INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION**



INNOVATION



DEVELOPMENT



**PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE FUTURE**



Co-funded by
the European Union

Project titled "Inclusion and Integration - Competencies in the
Social Economy Sector," co-financed by the European Union.

INTRODUCTION

This appendix is a comprehensive methodological and empirical documentation of the research carried out as part of the international Erasmus+ project entitled "Inclusion and Integration - Competences in the Field of Social Economy". The aim of the document is to present the research tools used. The appendix compiles a research questionnaire used to quantitatively diagnose the organization's potential and the scenario of an individual in-depth interview (IDI). The surveyed organizations represent three partner countries: Poland (Center for Social Integration and Łomża Center for Social Economy Support), Lithuania (Pirmas Blynas and Vaikų linija) and Italy (Caritas Rimini / Cooperativa Sociale "Madonna della Carità" and Volonta Romagna).

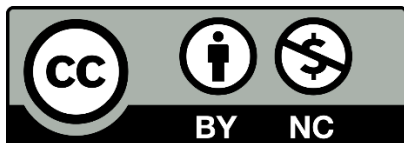
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RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Diagnosis of the potential and conditions of social economy organizations in Poland, Lithuania and Italy

Project:

"Inclusion and Integration – Competences in the Social Economy"

Project No: 2023-1-PL01-KA220-ADU-000164702

Information for the respondent

Dear Sirs,

The questionnaire was developed in order to conduct scientific research on the functioning of social economy organizations in Poland, Lithuania and Italy. The results of the research will be used to develop cooperation models, training programs and recommendations for the development of the social economy.

The survey is anonymous.

Please provide answers that are consistent with the actual functioning of your organization.

PART AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ORGANIZATION

P1.

Country of operation of the organization

- ☐ Poland
- ☐ Lithuania
- ☐ Italy

P2.

Legal form of the organization

- ☐ Foundation
- ☐ Association
- ☐ Social enterprise

- ☐ Social Cooperative
 - ☐ Church organization
 - ☐ Other
-
-

P3.

Period of operation of the organization

- ☐ under 3 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ more than 10 years

P4.

Number of employees

- ☐ 1–5
- ☐ 6–10
- ☐ 11–20
- ☐ 21–50
- ☐ over 50

P5.

Does the organization employ people at risk of social exclusion?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

PART II MISSION OF THE ORGANIZATION

Please assess the relevance of the following objectives to your organisation's operations.

Scale

1 - Definitely irrelevant

2 — Rather irrelevant

3 – Hard to say

4 — Rather important

5 — Very important

Purpose	1	2	3	4	5
Social inclusion					
Professional activation					
Social assistance					
Local development					
Social entrepreneurship					
Education					
Family support					
Mental health					

PART III

MODEL OF FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION

Please rate the degree of compliance with the statements below.

Likert scale

1 - Strongly disagree

5 - Strongly agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
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The organization has a clearly defined development strategy					
The activities carried out correspond to the needs of the local community					
Economic activity supports the achievement of social goals					
The organization has a stable financing model					
The activities carried out are systematically evaluated					

PART IV

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Please rate the level of cooperation with individual partners.

Scale

1 – lack of cooperation

5 – very intensive cooperation

Partner	1	2	3	4	5
Local government					
OPS					
Labour Office					
Non-governmental organizations					
Social enterprises					
Entrepreneurs					
Schools					

Universities					
Healthcare facilities					
Volunteers					

P15.

Which three institutions are the most important partners of your organization?

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.....

PART V

BUSINESS FINANCING

Please specify the importance of each funding source.

Scale

1 - No meaning

5 - Primary source of funding

Source	1	2	3	4	5
Business activity					
EU funds					
Public subsidies					
Grants					
Donations					
Sponsors					
Social Contracts					

P17.

Does the current financing model ensure the stability of the organization?

☐ definitely not

☐ rather not

- ☐ hard to say
- ☐ rather yes
- ☐ definitely yes

PART VI

COMPETENCIES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Please assess the level of competence of employees.

Competence	1	2	3	4	5
Management					
Communication					
Building partnerships					
Fundraising					
Project management					
Social impact assessment					
Facilitation					
Social entrepreneurship					

P19.

Which competencies require the most development?

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PART VII

SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Please specify the degree of compliance.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The organization monitors the results					

The organization uses social indicators					
The organization analyzes the satisfaction of beneficiaries					
The organization uses SROI					
The results of monitoring affect the development of the organization					

PART VIII

BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT

Please assess the significance of the following barriers.

Barrier	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of funding					
No partners					
Lack of competence					
Excessive bureaucracy					
Insufficient legal regulations					
Low social awareness					
Staffing problems					
Limited cross-sectoral cooperation					

PART IX Transfer of good practices

P23.

Which solutions in your organization could be implemented in other countries?

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P24.

Which solutions learned during the Erasmus+ project are the most valuable?

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.....
P25.

What systemic actions should be taken to develop the social economy?

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RESPONDENT'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Position:

- ☐ Director
- ☐ President
- ☐ Project Coordinator
- ☐ Specialist
- ☐ Substantive employee
- ☐ Other

Seniority in the Social Economy

- ☐ under 2 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ more than 10 years

Information clause:

The survey is completely anonymous. The results will be compiled in aggregate and will be used to

for evaluation, quality monitoring and material preparation purposes only

educational activities as part of the project "Inclusion and Integration – Competences in the Area of

social economy".

Thank you for your time and sharing your feedback!

RESEARCH RESULTS

Characteristics of the organization (N = 30)

Variable	Number	%
Poland	10	33,3
Lithuania	10	33,3
Italy	10	33,3

Legal form

Form	Number	%
Foundation	8	26,7
Association	6	20
Social enterprise	7	23,3
Social Cooperative	6	20
Church organization	2	6,7
Other	1	3,3

Period of operation

Period	%
under 3 years	10
3-5 years	17
6-10 years	33
more than 10 years	40

Number of employees

Number	%
1–5	13
6–10	23
11–20	37
21–50	20
>50	7

Organisations employing people at risk of exclusion

YES	93%
NO	7%

Mission of the organization

Average rating (1-5)

Purpose	Visualization (scale 1-5)	Average
Social inclusion		4.93
Professional activation		4.87
Social assistance		4.63
Local development		4.57
Social entrepreneurship		4.47
Education		4.33
Mental health		4.27
Family support		4.10

Social integration and professional activation, which are the basic goals of the activities of most of the surveyed organizations, were rated the highest.

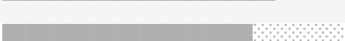
Operating model

Statement	Visualization (scale 1-5)	Average
Activities respond to local needs		4.87
Economic activity supports social goals		4.70
The organization has a growth strategy		4.63
The organization conducts a systematic evaluation		4.37
The organization has stable funding		3.83

The lowest rating was given to the stability of financing, which indicates the need to diversify sources of revenue.

Local partnerships

Average Cooperation Rating

Partner	Visualization (scale 1-5)	Average
Non-governmental organizations		4.83
Local government		4.63
Social enterprises		4.47
Volunteers		4.40
Entrepreneurs		4.13
OPS		4.10
Schools		4.03
Labour Office		3.97
Universities		3.83
Healthcare facilities		3.57

The most frequently indicated partners:

1. Local government
2. Non-governmental organizations
3. Social enterprises

Financing

The importance of sources of funding

Source	Visualization (scale 1-5)	Average
Public subsidies		4.73
EU funds		4.67
Business activity		4.23
Grants		4.10
Donations		3.77
Social Contracts		3.60
Sponsors		3.27

Funding stability

Answer	%
definitely yes	27
rather yes	47
It's hard to say	20
Probably not	6

Competencies

Competence	Visualization (scale 1-5)	Average
Building partnerships		4.70
Project management		4.63
Communication		4.57
Management		4.43
Social entrepreneurship		4.37
Fundraising		4.03
Facilitation		3.93
Social impact assessment		3.77

The most frequently indicated competencies requiring development:

- social impact assessment,
- fundraising,
- SROI measurement,
- digital communication.

Social impact assessment

Statement	Visualization (scale 1-5)	Average
Monitoring of results		4.43
Analysis of beneficiaries' satisfaction		4.33
Monitoring results affect the development of		4.30
Use of social indicators		4.13
Use of SROI		2.97

Only about 30% of organizations declared regular use of the SROI methodology.

Barriers to development

Barrier	Visualization (scale 1-5)	Average
Lack of funding		4.67
Excessive bureaucracy		4.47
Low social awareness		4.20
Staffing problems		4.10
Limited cross-sectoral cooperation		3.93
Legal regulations		3.87
Lack of competence		3.57
No partners		3.27

The most important limitation of the organization's development remains the lack of stable sources of funding and high administrative burdens.

Transfer of good practices

The most frequently indicated solutions that can be implemented in other countries:

- local partnership model,
- OWES support system,
- the model of Italian social cooperatives,
- professional activation of people with disabilities,
- mentoring of social enterprises,
- individual support for beneficiaries,
- cooperation with local governments,
- the use of social entrepreneurship in social services.

The most frequently recommended system actions:

- increasing the sustainability of financing of social enterprises,
- development of cross-sectoral partnerships,
- the creation of a European cooperation network of social economy organisations;
- development of training programs for the sector's staff,
- popularization of methods of measuring social impact,
- development of the profession of facilitator of social economy.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE (IDI)

Diagnosis of models of functioning of social economy organizations in Poland, Lithuania and Italy

Erasmus+ project

Inclusion and Integration – Competences in the Field of Social Economy

Information for the respondent

Dear Sirs,

The interview is carried out as part of the Erasmus+ *Inclusion and Integration – Competences in the Field of Social Economy project*. Its aim is to learn about the experiences of social economy organizations operating in Poland, Lithuania and Italy, as well as to identify good practices, models of cooperation, organizational solutions and directions for the development of the social economy sector.

The information obtained will be used exclusively for scientific purposes and for the development of a manual, cooperation models and system recommendations.

The interview is confidential.

Estimated talk time: 60-90 minutes.

PART I

Organization Information

1. Please briefly introduce the organization.

- Year of establishment
- Legal form
- number of employees
- Main areas of activity
- Audiences

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2. What were the most important premises for the establishment of the organization?

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3. What is the mission of the organization?

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PART II

Organization Operating Model

4. What is the model of functioning of your organization?

Please describe:

- organizational structure,
- management method,
- decision-making,
- work organization.

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5. What elements of your operating model do you consider to be the most important?

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6. What distinguishes your organization from other social enterprises?

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PART III

Professional and social activation

7. What groups of people are supported by the organization?

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8. What does the process of professional activation of beneficiaries look like?

Please describe:

- recruitment,
- diagnosis of needs,
- preparation for work,
- specialist support,
- development of competences,
- Monitoring progress.

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Local partnerships

Please indicate the role:

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12. What are the benefits of partnership?

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13. What barriers hinder cooperation?

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PART V

Financing model

14. What are the main sources of funding for an organization?

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15. How does business activity support the implementation of the social mission?

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16. How does an organization mitigate financial risk?

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17. How do you assess the sustainability of the current financing model?

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PART VI

Organization management and development

18. What does planning activities look like?

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19. How does the organization monitor the achievement of goals?

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20. How do you evaluate your activities?

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21. What indicators do you use to assess social impacts?

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22. Does the organization measure social impact?

If so:

- **What methods are used?**

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PART VII

Employee competencies

23. What competencies are the most important in the work of an organization?

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24. How are employees' competencies developed?

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25. What competencies are most lacking?

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26. Does the organization use mentoring or coaching?

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PART VIII

Good practices

27. What organizational solutions do you consider to be your greatest achievements?

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28. Which actions have proven to be the most effective?

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29. What solutions could be transferred to other organizations?

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30. Are there solutions that can be implemented in other countries as well?

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PART IX

Transfer of experience

31. What solutions learned during the Erasmus+ project do you consider to be the most valuable?

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32. What is worth moving:

to Polish?

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to Lithuania?

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to Italy?

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33. What barriers can hinder the transfer of good practices?

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34. How can they be reduced?

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PART X

Recommendations

35. What systemic changes are needed for the development of the social economy?

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36. What should the cooperation between the administration and social enterprises look like?

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37. What competencies will be the most important for social economy employees in the coming years?

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38. What activities should be included in adult education programmes?

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39. What should be included in the European model of support for social enterprises?

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40. Would you like to provide additional comments or recommendations on the development of the social economy?

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Respondent's Birth Certificate

Country: ☐ Poland

☐ Lithuania ☐ Italy

Position: ☐ **President** ☐ **Director** ☐ **Coordinator** ☐ ☐ **Manager** **Specialist** ☐ **Employee**

Type of organization: ☐ Social ☐ enterprise Non-governmental ☐ organization
Social cooperative ☐ Foundation ☐ ☐ Association Inna

Work experience in the social economy sector: ☐ less than 2 years ☐ 2-5 years
☐ 6-10 years ☐ 11-20 years ☐ over 20 years

INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI)

Organization:

VolontaRomagna – Romagna Volunteer Service Center (Włochy)

Respondent: Director/Coordinator of the Volunteer Support Center

PART I. ORGANISATION INFORMATION

1. Please briefly introduce the organization.

VolontaRomagna is a regional Volunteer Support Centre (CSV) operating in the Romagna area, covering the provinces of Forlì-Cesena, Ravenna and Rimini. The organization was created to support the development of volunteering and strengthen the capacity of third sector organizations by providing free advisory, training, information and organizational services. It functions as an institution supporting the development of civil society and social activity of the region's residents.

The respondent emphasized that the Centre's activities are not limited only to cooperation with voluntary organisations. Support also includes associations, foundations, social benefit organizations, informal groups and people planning to start social activities. Thanks to this, VolontaRomagna serves as a regional competence center for the development of the third sector.

An important element of the organization's activities is also the promotion of a culture of solidarity and active citizenship. The Centre conducts numerous social campaigns, organises educational events and supports the creation of partnerships between social organisations, public administration, schools and businesses.

2. What were the most important premises for the establishment of the organization?

The respondent explained that the establishment of the Centre was a consequence of the development of the Italian system of volunteering support. The need to create an institution that will provide social organizations with professional organizational, legal and training support, enabling more effective implementation of activities for the benefit of local communities, was recognized. The basis for the functioning of the Volunteer Support Centres are the solutions adopted in the Italian legal system concerning non-governmental organisations and volunteering.

The second important goal was to strengthen cooperation between social organizations and increase the involvement of citizens in volunteer activities. The founders decided that the development of civil society requires not only active organizations, but also professional facilities to support their development.

3. What is the mission of the organization?

The mission of VolontaRomagna is to develop a culture of volunteering, support civil society organizations and strengthen cooperation between different sectors of social life. The organization strives to increase civic activity and build local communities based on solidarity, responsibility and cooperation.

The respondent noted that the mission is carried out through comprehensive support for non-governmental organizations at all stages of their functioning – from the moment of creating new initiatives, through the development of the competencies of leaders and volunteers, to the creation of local and international partnerships. Particular attention is paid to improving the quality of services provided by social organizations and increasing their organizational sustainability.

PART II. MODEL OF FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION

4. What does the model of the organization look like?

The respondent explained that VolontaRomagna functions as a regional service center for third sector organizations. The organisational structure includes the management, legal and financial advisory specialists, trainers, local animators and experts dealing with European projects, communication and organisational development.

The basis of the activity is the provision of free services including consulting, training, support in the preparation of projects, promotion of the organization's activities and assistance in building local and international partnerships. The organisation also carries out outreach activities, provides educational materials and supports organisations with their administrative and legal obligations under Italian legislation on the third sector.

The respondent emphasized that the management model is based on team cooperation and constant dialogue with organizations benefiting from the Centre's

support. The scope of services provided is systematically adapted to the needs reported by organizations and changes in the legal and social environment.

5. What elements of the operating model do you consider to be the most important?

According to the respondent, the greatest value of the organization is the comprehensiveness of the support offered. Organizations can get help in the field of creating associations, keeping records, project management, fundraising, social communication and volunteer development.

The second important element is an individual approach to each organization. The scope of support is adapted to the stage of development of the organization, its potential and the specificity of the business. This allows both small local associations and large organizations to benefit from services that meet their real needs.

The respondent also pointed out the importance of networking. The Centre actively supports the creation of partnerships between social organisations, local governments, schools, universities and enterprises, recognising cooperation as one of the most important factors of local development.

6. What distinguishes your organization from other organizations?

The respondent pointed out that the biggest distinguishing feature of VolontaRomagna is that it serves as a regional competence centre for the entire civic sector. The organization does not only implement its own social projects, but above all strengthens the potential of hundreds of organizations operating in the Romagna region.

The second distinguishing element is a strong focus on the development of volunteering. The Centre carries out activities promoting civic activity among children, young people, adults and seniors, while supporting organisations in recruiting and preparing new volunteers.

The respondent also emphasized the organization's extensive experience in implementing international projects, including the Erasmus+ program, the European Solidarity Corps and other European initiatives supporting the development of competences of social organizations and volunteers.

PART III. SOCIAL ACTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF VOLUNTEERING

7. What groups of people are supported by the organization?

The activity of VolontaRomagna is addressed to a very wide audience. The respondent indicated that the support includes non-governmental organizations, foundations,

associations, informal groups, volunteers, young people, seniors, people with disabilities, migrants and residents interested in social engagement.

A significant group of recipients are also leaders of social organizations who benefit from consulting, training and support in the field of organization management and fundraising.

8. What does the process of supporting organizations and volunteers look like?

The respondent explained that cooperation begins with recognizing the needs of an organization or a person interested in social activity. Then, a support plan is prepared, including counselling, participation in training, specialist consultations and assistance in establishing cooperation with other organisations.

In the case of new volunteers, the organization conducts information activities, helps to find a suitable organization and supports the adaptation process. Trainings are also organized to prepare for various forms of volunteer activity.

The respondent emphasized that an important element is the subsequent monitoring of cooperation and providing organizations with opportunities for further development through participation in further educational programs and international projects.

9. What social effects have been achieved?

According to the respondent, the activity of VolontaRomagna contributes primarily to the increase in civic activity and increasing the potential of non-governmental organizations in the region. Thanks to the support of the Centre, many organisations have developed their activities, recruited new volunteers and increased the range of social services provided.

The second important result is the development of cross-sectoral cooperation. The organization effectively connects public administration, social organizations, schools, universities and entrepreneurs, creating partnerships to solve local social problems.

The respondent also emphasized that the Centre's activities contribute to strengthening social capital, the development of volunteering and increasing the competences of people involved in social activities, which is an important element of the development of the social economy in Italy.

PART IV. LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

10. What institutions does the organization cooperate with?

The respondent emphasized that cross-sectoral cooperation is one of the basic pillars of VolontaRomagna's activity. The Centre maintains permanent relations with public administration units, local governments, schools, universities, social welfare

institutions, health care facilities, non-governmental organisations and private enterprises. Such a wide network of partners allows for a more effective response to the needs of local communities and the creation of joint social initiatives.

Particular importance is attached to cooperation with third sector organizations. The Centre supports both established organisations and newly established associations and civic groups. The cooperation includes consulting, exchange of experiences, joint training and preparation of national and international projects.

Schools and universities that participate in activities promoting volunteering and civic education are also an important partner. The organization engages young people in social initiatives, developing attitudes of social responsibility and active participation in the life of local communities.

11. How does the cooperation between the partners work?

The respondent explained that the cooperation is of a partnership nature and is based on regular dialogue and joint planning of activities. The organization acts as a coordinator of many local initiatives, supporting partners at the stage of diagnosing needs, planning projects, their implementation and evaluation of the achieved results.

In practice, cooperation includes the organization of trainings, conferences, social campaigns, events promoting volunteering and joint projects financed from regional, national and European funds. Partners exchange experiences, resources and expertise, which makes it possible to increase the quality of their projects.

The respondent noted that long-term partnerships are of particular value, as they allow to build mutual trust and create sustainable solutions that respond to the needs of the region's residents.

12. What are the benefits of partnership?

According to the respondent, cooperation with various institutions allows for much more effective solving of social problems than actions taken by individual organizations alone. Partnerships allow you to combine the competences, experience and resources of different entities, thanks to which it is possible to prepare more comprehensive projects.

The benefit is also increasing the organization's access to expertise, new sources of funding and specialized training. Cooperation is also conducive to the development of innovative social solutions and the dissemination of good practices between organizations operating in the region.

The respondent emphasized that partnerships strengthen social capital, build mutual trust between institutions and increase the involvement of residents in civic activities.

13. What barriers hinder cooperation?

The respondent indicated that one of the most common difficulties is organizational differences between partners. Individual institutions operate according to different administrative procedures and have different financial and human resources, which sometimes prolongs the process of implementing joint ventures.

The second important barrier is the limited number of people involved in social activities. In many organizations, difficulties are observed in recruiting new volunteers and maintaining their long-term commitment.

The respondent also drew attention to the need to further develop the organizational competencies of NGO leaders, especially in the field of project management, cross-sectoral cooperation and fundraising.

PART V. FINANCING MODEL

14. What are the main sources of funding for the organization?

The respondent explained that the activities of VolontaRomagna are financed primarily under the Italian system of support for Volunteer Support Centers, the aim of which is to provide non-governmental organizations with free access to advisory, training and organizational services. An additional source of funds are projects financed by the European Union, foundations and public institutions.

The organization also participates in the implementation of numerous partnership projects, thanks to which it is possible to develop new services, organize trainings and prepare educational materials. Cooperation with domestic and foreign partners allows us to increase the scope of our activities and adapt the offer to the changing needs of social organizations.

15. How does the organization's activities support the implementation of the social mission?

The respondent emphasized that all the funds raised are allocated to the implementation of the statutory goals of the organization. The funding enables the provision of free consulting services, the organisation of trainings, the development of volunteering and support for non-governmental organisations at various stages of their functioning.

An important element of the activity is also the preparation of educational materials and conducting campaigns promoting civic activity. Thanks to stable financing, the organization can systematically develop new services that respond to the needs of the non-governmental sector.

16. How does the organization mitigate financial risk?

The respondent noted that the basic way to mitigate risk is to diversify sources of financing. The organization does not base its activities solely on one financial program, but actively participates in grant competitions and develops cooperation with national and international partners.

Rational planning of expenses and regular analysis of the financial situation are also of great importance. Each project is subject to detailed monitoring, which allows for the identification of possible threats and corrective actions in good time.

17. How do you assess the sustainability of the current financing model?

The respondent assessed the current financing model as stable, indicating at the same time that social organizations should constantly look for new opportunities for development. Changing social needs and a dynamic legal environment require flexibility and readiness to implement new organizational solutions.

It was emphasized that long-term stability depends not only on the amount of available financial resources, but also on the quality of the services provided, the effectiveness of partnerships and the trust that the organization enjoys in the local environment.

PART VI. MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION

18. What does the planning of activities look like?

The respondent explained that the planning of activities is based on the organization's development strategy and regular analysis of the needs reported by NGOs and volunteers. Each year, an action plan is developed that includes training, counselling, educational events and partnership projects.

An important element of planning is consulting the planned activities with representatives of organizations benefiting from the support of the Centre. Thanks to this, the organization's offer remains tailored to the real needs of the local civil sector.

19. How does the organization monitor the achievement of the goals?

The respondent indicated that the monitoring includes both quantitative and qualitative indicators. The number of organizations using the Centre's services, the number of trainings carried out, event participants, prepared projects and new partnerships are analysed.

At the same time, organizational satisfaction surveys and an analysis of the quality of services provided are conducted. The results of monitoring are used when planning further activities and improving the organization's offer.

20. How do you evaluate your activities?

The respondent explained that the evaluation is carried out in a systematic manner and includes an assessment of the effectiveness of all implemented activities. The organization uses evaluation surveys, interviews with representatives of the organization, analysis of project indicators and consultations with partners.

The results obtained are the basis for introducing organizational changes, developing new services and improving methods of cooperation with social organizations. Particular attention is paid to assessing the impact of the activities carried out on the development of volunteering and the potential of non-governmental organizations in the region.

21. What indicators do you use to assess social impact?

As a Volunteer Support Centre, we focus primarily on indicators showing the development of non-governmental organisations and civic activity. We analyze the number of organizations and volunteers who have used our services, the number of trainings, consultations and events conducted, as well as the number of newly established partnerships and joint initiatives at the local level.

Quality indicators are equally important to us. We collect the opinions of training participants and organizations that use our support, assess the level of satisfaction with the services offered and check whether the knowledge gained has been used in practice. We also observe whether thanks to our activities organizations develop their activity, acquire new volunteers, implement new projects and strengthen cooperation with the local community and institutions. Such information allows us to assess the real impact of our actions and better plan further forms of support.

22. Does the organization measure social impact? If so: • what methods are used?

The organization measures social impact and regularly monitors the effects of its activities. It uses both quantitative and qualitative data to do this. All services provided are recorded in a special IT system, which enables ongoing monitoring of activities and preparation of reports on the number of services provided, recipients of support and achieved results.

An important element of the social impact assessment is also the annual preparation of a social report, in which the organization presents information on the use of resources, implemented activities and achieved effects. This report increases the transparency of activities and allows you to assess the extent to which the organization is fulfilling its mission of supporting volunteering and non-governmental organizations.

In addition, VolontaRomagna uses feedback from organizations and training participants, analyzes the level of use of its services and monitors the quality of the support provided. The results of these analyses are used to improve the offer, plan the next activities and better respond to the needs of local organizations and communities.

PART VII. EMPLOYEE COMPETENCIES

23. What competencies are the most important in the work of an organization?

The respondent emphasized that the activities of the Volunteer Support Center require a wide range of competencies, including both specialist knowledge and interpersonal skills. Employees should have a good knowledge of the functioning of non-governmental organizations, regulations governing the activities of the third sector and the principles of managing social projects.

Particular importance is attached to communication competences. Every day, employees cooperate with representatives of various organizations, public institutions and volunteers, so the ability to conduct dialogue, mediation and build partner relationships is one of the basic conditions for effective work.

The respondent also drew attention to the importance of competencies related to strategic planning, change management and development of international cooperation. Social organizations operate in a dynamically changing environment, so employees must be prepared to respond quickly to new social and organizational challenges.

24. How are employees' competencies developed?

Professional development of employees is treated as a continuous process. The organization systematically organizes internal trainings, specialist workshops and seminars on issues related to social economy, management of non-governmental organizations, social communication and fundraising.

The respondent emphasized that an important element of competence development is the participation of employees in international projects. The exchange of experiences with partners from other countries allows you to learn about new ways of working, innovative organisational solutions and good practices used in the European civil sector.

The organization also encourages employees to participate in scientific conferences, trainings organized by national networks of non-governmental organizations, and courses to improve managerial and advisory skills.

25. What competencies are most lacking?

The respondent indicated that one of the most important challenges is the development of digital competences and the ability to use new technologies in the activities of social organizations. Tools for conducting online training, project management and communication with partner organizations are becoming increasingly important.

The second area requiring further development is competences related to social impact assessment. Non-governmental organizations are increasingly obliged to demonstrate the effects of their activities, which is why the ability to develop indicators and conduct evaluations is becoming extremely important.

The respondent also emphasized the need to develop competences in the field of fundraising and cooperation with the private sector, as diversification of sources of financing is one of the conditions for the stable functioning of the organization.

26. Does the organization use mentoring or coaching?

The respondent explained that the organization has an informal mentoring system based on the cooperation of experienced employees with people starting work at the Center. New employees participate in the onboarding process, which includes learning about the structure of the organization, the principles of cooperation with social organizations and the standards of services provided.

In the case of more complex projects, teams are created in which younger employees can benefit from the knowledge and experience of experts with many years of practice in the non-governmental sector. The respondent noted that this form of cooperation is conducive to the transfer of practical knowledge and building an organizational culture based on cooperation and mutual support.

PART VIII. Good practices

27. What organizational solutions do you consider to be your greatest achievements?

The respondent considered that the greatest achievement of the organization is the creation of a regional support system for non-governmental organizations, which includes comprehensive counseling, training, promotion of volunteering and the development of local partnerships. Thanks to this, social organizations can benefit from professional assistance regardless of the size, experience or area of their activity.

The second important achievement is the development of a wide network of cooperation between social organizations, public administration and the education sector. These partnerships enable the implementation of projects that respond to the real needs of the region's inhabitants.

The respondent also emphasized the importance of activities promoting volunteering, which contribute to the increase in civic activity and increase the number of people involved in social activities.

28. Which activities have been shown to be the most effective?

The most effective activities were considered to be individual support for non-governmental organizations. Comprehensive consulting allows organizations to develop their business more effectively, raise funds and professionalize their management.

Training programs addressed to leaders of social organizations and volunteers also brought very good results. Thanks to them, the competences of people responsible for managing organizations, preparing projects and cooperation with local partners have increased.

The respondent also pointed to the high effectiveness of networking activities of organizations, as they enable the exchange of experiences and the creation of joint social initiatives.

29. What solutions could be transferred to other organizations?

The respondent believes that the model of the Volunteer Support Centre as an institution providing comprehensive services for third sector organisations has the greatest transfer potential. Such a solution could be used in regions where social organisations do not have access to professional advice.

The model of building local partnerships and the system of preparing volunteers are also of great value. These solutions can be successfully adapted by organizations operating in various areas of social services.

30. Are there solutions that can be implemented in other countries as well?

The respondent emphasized that many of the solutions used by VolontaRomagna are universal. This applies primarily to the way of organizing counseling for non-governmental organizations, the training system, methods of building partnerships and the promotion of volunteering.

At the same time, he noted that the implementation of similar solutions should take into account the specificity of national legal systems and socio-cultural conditions. Model adaptation should not be about simply copying solutions, but about adapting them to local needs.

PART IX. TRANSFER OF EXPERIENCE

31. What solutions learned during the Erasmus+ project do you consider to be the most valuable?

The respondent indicated that participation in the Erasmus+ project made it possible to learn about various models of functioning of social economy organizations in Poland and Lithuania. Of particular interest were the solutions concerning the Social Economy Support Centres operating in Poland and the Lithuanian experience related to social enterprises employing people at risk of social exclusion.

The project also created an opportunity to exchange experiences in the field of adult education, development of employee competencies and building international partnerships.

32. What should be transferred to Polish, Lithuania and Italy?

According to the respondent, Poland could use the Italian experience related to the functioning of Volunteer Support Centers and the wide involvement of citizens in social activities.

In Lithuania, solutions related to the creation of regional networks of cooperation between social organizations and the professionalization of volunteering could prove valuable.

In Italy, on the other hand, Polish experiences related to the functioning of Social Economy Support Centers and Lithuanian models of social enterprises conducting business activity while achieving social goals are interesting.

33. What barriers can hinder the transfer of good practices?

The respondent pointed out primarily the differences in legal regulations concerning the functioning of non-governmental organizations and the social economy. Barriers may also result from different funding models and cultural differences affecting the level of civic activity.

At the same time, it was pointed out that most of the good practices can be effectively adapted to local conditions.

34. How can these barriers be reduced?

The respondent emphasized the importance of regular international cooperation, organization of study visits, workshops and experience exchange programs. An important element is also the preparation of joint educational materials and manuals presenting proven organizational solutions.

PART X. RECOMMENDATIONS

35. What systemic changes are needed for the development of the social economy?

The respondent indicated the need to further strengthen cooperation between public administration, social organizations and the private sector. An important direction of development is also to provide stable sources of funding for non-governmental organizations and to develop support systems for volunteering.

36. What should the cooperation between the administration and social organizations look like?

In the respondent's opinion, public administration should treat social organizations as partners co-responsible for the development of local communities. Cooperation should be based on mutual trust, dialogue and long-term planning of joint activities.

37. What competencies will be most important in the coming years?

The respondent indicated competencies related to project management, cross-sectoral cooperation, the use of digital technologies, social impact assessment and fundraising. The ability to build cooperation networks and manage partnerships is also becoming increasingly important.

38. What activities should be included in adult education programmes?

Educational programs should cover issues related to the functioning of non-governmental organizations, volunteer management, social entrepreneurship, fundraising, social communication and social impact assessment. The respondent emphasized that study visits and practical exchange of experience between organizations should also be an important element.

39. What should be included in the European model of support for social organisations?

The respondent indicated the need to create common standards for the quality of services provided by social organizations, to develop European training programs, to support the mobility of workers and volunteers, and to facilitate access to international sources of funding.

40. Would you like to provide additional comments or recommendations on the development of the social economy?

In conclusion, the respondent emphasized that the development of the social economy should be based on cooperation, mutual learning and building lasting partnerships between organizations and institutions. He pointed out that international projects, such as Erasmus+, play an important role in the exchange of experiences, the development of competences and the dissemination of innovative solutions that can be adapted in different European countries. Thanks to this, it is possible to strengthen the civic sector and increase its impact on the development of local communities.



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INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI)

Organization:

Caritas Diocesana Rimini oraz Social Cooperative "Our Lady of Charity" (Włochy)

Respondent: Director/Coordinator of Caritas Rimini

PART I. ORGANISATION INFORMATION

1. Please briefly introduce the organization.

Caritas of the Diocese of Rimini is one of the most important organizations dedicated to social assistance and charitable activities in the Emilia-Romagna region. Its mission is to support people in a difficult life situation by conducting a wide system of social services, educational activities and initiatives aimed at counteracting poverty and social exclusion. The organization carries out its tasks in cooperation with numerous public institutions, non-governmental organizations and local communities. In practice, most of the services are provided by two executive entities – a voluntary association and the Madonna della Carità Social Cooperative.

The respondent emphasized that Cooperativa Sociale "Madonna della Carità" was established to professionally manage social services and conduct social and professional reintegration programs. The cooperative is responsible for the operation of many first and second level support facilities, training apartments, integration programs and projects aimed at migrants, homeless people, families in crisis and people with disabilities.

The organization's activities go beyond providing intervention assistance. Caritas runs a poverty observatory, develops professional activation programs, supports volunteering and carries out numerous educational activities aimed at building social solidarity and strengthening civic responsibility.

2. What were the most important premises for the establishment of the organization?

The respondent explained that the basic premise for the establishment of Caritas was the need to organize a coordinated system of assistance to the most needy people and to develop attitudes of solidarity and responsibility for people in a difficult life situation in the local community.

In the following years, however, it was noticed that traditional aid activities were not enough. More and more people needed not only material support, but also professional social, psychological, housing assistance and the opportunity to return to the labor market. In response to these needs, the Madonna della Carità Social Cooperative was established, whose task was to run specialized social services and implement reintegration projects.

The respondent noted that from the beginning of its activity, the organization was guided by the belief that effective assistance should lead to regaining independence by beneficiaries, and not be limited only to providing ad hoc support.

3. What is the mission of the organization?

The mission of Caritas Rimini is to counteract poverty, social exclusion and marginalization by comprehensively supporting people in a difficult life situation. The organization strives to create a society based on solidarity, mutual responsibility and respect for the dignity of every human being.

The respondent emphasized that the organization's activities focus not only on providing assistance, but above all on rebuilding the independence of people benefiting from support. In practice, this means combining material assistance with counselling, professional activation, psychological support and creating opportunities for social integration.

An important element of the mission is also to educate the public, develop volunteering and promote cooperation between public institutions and social organizations.

PART II. MODEL OF FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION

4. What does the model of the organization look like?

The respondent explained that the model of functioning of Caritas Rimini is based on close cooperation between the church organization, the Madonna della Carità Social Cooperative, volunteers and numerous institutional partners. Thanks to such a structure, it is possible to conduct charity, educational and professional social services at the same time.

The cooperative is responsible for the implementation of most operational services, including the operation of shelters, supported housing, programs for migrants, educational activities and social reintegration projects. Caritas, on the other hand, has a coordinating function, conducts diagnostic activities, develops cooperation with parishes and is responsible for animating volunteering and social education.

The respondent noted that the organization operates in accordance with the principle of comprehensiveness of support. A person seeking help receives not only material support, but also a diagnosis of their life situation and an individual support plan including various forms of support.

5. What elements of the operating model do you consider to be the most important?

The respondent indicated that the greatest value of the organization is the individualization of the assistance process. Each person benefiting from support is

treated as a partner in the process of change, and the help plan is adapted to their life situation, capabilities and needs.

The second important element is close cooperation between the various institutions. The organization does not operate independently, but creates an extensive network of cooperation involving public administration, social organizations, health services, schools and entrepreneurs.

The respondent also emphasized the importance of volunteering. Volunteers are an integral part of the support system and participate in both aid and educational activities.

6. What distinguishes your organization from other organizations?

According to the respondent, the biggest distinguishing feature of Caritas Rimini is the ability to combine charity with a professional system of social services. The organization does not limit itself to providing intervention assistance, but conducts long-term activities aimed at a permanent change in the life situation of beneficiaries.

An important distinguishing feature is also the functioning of the Madonna della Carità Social Cooperative as a specialized entity that carries out social tasks in a professional manner and in accordance with high quality standards.

The respondent also emphasized the importance of long-term cooperation with the local community. Thanks to this, the organization enjoys a high level of trust and can effectively develop new initiatives responding to the changing needs of residents.

PART III. SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL ACTIVATION

7. What groups of people are supported by the organization?

The respondent indicated that the organization's activities are addressed to a very wide audience. Support includes homeless people, people living in poverty, migrants, refugees, people leaving prisons, families in crisis, the elderly, people with disabilities and people experiencing social exclusion.

A significant part of the activities is also addressed to young people and families requiring long-term support in the process of becoming independent.

8. What is the process of social and professional activation of beneficiaries?

The respondent explained that the process begins with a detailed diagnosis of the situation of the person seeking help. Housing, health, family, professional and social needs are analysed. Then, together with the beneficiary, an individual support plan is developed.

Depending on the situation, it includes material assistance, psychological counselling, legal support, Italian language training, vocational training, job placement and participation in reintegration programmes carried out by the Madonna della Carità Social Cooperative.

The respondent noted that special attention is paid to preparing people for independent functioning. The organization supports beneficiaries not only in finding a job, but also in developing social competences, managing the household budget and rebuilding family relationships.

9. What social effects have been achieved?

The respondent emphasized that the most important result of the organization's activity is to improve the quality of life of people in crisis and increase their independence. Many beneficiaries, thanks to comprehensive support, returned to the labour market, obtained stable housing conditions and rebuilt social and family relations.

The second important effect is the development of a local system of cooperation between public institutions, social organizations and volunteers. The organization plays an important role in building local partnerships and developing new forms of support responding to changing social problems.

The respondent also noted that the activities of Caritas Rimini contribute to the increase of civic activity, the development of volunteering and the building of a society based on solidarity and responsibility for the most needy.

PART IV. LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

10. What institutions does the organization cooperate with?

The respondent emphasized that the activity of Caritas Rimini is based on an extensive network of cooperation with public institutions, non-governmental organizations and local social partners. Cooperation with municipalities, social welfare centers, health care facilities, schools, parishes and labor market institutions plays a particularly important role. This makes it possible to provide beneficiaries with comprehensive support that meets their real needs.

The organization also cooperates with private companies that engage in social activities by offering jobs, organizing internships or making in-kind and financial donations. An important partner is also a number of social organisations operating in the province of Rimini, jointly implementing projects on poverty prevention, integration of migrants and activation of people at risk of social exclusion.

The respondent noted that universities and secondary schools that participate in educational activities, volunteer projects and apprenticeship programs are also an important element of cooperation.

11. How does the cooperation between the partners work?

The respondent explained that the cooperation is permanent and based on joint planning of activities and regular exchange of information. Together, the partners identify the most important social problems occurring in the region and prepare projects that respond to the needs of residents.

In practice, cooperation includes the joint implementation of projects financed from public and European funds, the organization of trainings, social campaigns, educational activities and integration initiatives. Individual institutions are responsible for the implementation of those tasks in which they have the greatest experience and competence.

The respondent emphasized that systematic communication between partners is of great value. Regular working meetings make it possible to assess the progress of the activities carried out, identify new needs and jointly search for solutions to emerging problems.

12. What are the benefits of partnership?

According to the respondent, interinstitutional cooperation significantly increases the effectiveness of social activities. Thanks to the combination of resources, experience and competences of various organizations, it is possible to provide beneficiaries with comprehensive assistance including both social, psychological and professional support.

Partnerships also make it possible to make more effective use of available financial resources and to develop new initiatives that respond to current societal challenges. Joint activities are conducive to the exchange of experiences, mutual learning and improving the quality of the services provided.

The respondent also noted that cooperation contributes to strengthening social capital and building greater involvement of residents in volunteer and civic activities.

13. What barriers hinder cooperation?

The respondent indicated that one of the main difficulties is the changing regulations on the financing of social services and a large number of administrative procedures related to the implementation of projects. Organizations often have to adapt the way they operate to new formal requirements, which requires additional organizational resources.

The second important barrier is the growing number of people in need of support while limiting human and financial resources. Social organizations are increasingly carrying out tasks that go beyond their original scope of activity.

The respondent also drew attention to the need to further develop cooperation with the private sector and increase the involvement of local communities in volunteering activities.

PART V. FINANCING MODEL

14. What are the main sources of funding for the organization?

The respondent explained that the activities of Caritas Rimini and the Madonna della Carità Social Cooperative are financed from many complementary sources. A significant part of the budget is made up of funds from the implementation of services commissioned by public administration, regional funds and national and European programs.

The organization also benefits from donations from private individuals, support from parishes, foundations and enterprises involved in corporate social responsibility activities. Projects implemented in cooperation with national and international partners are also an important source of funding.

The respondent emphasized that the diversity of funding sources increases the stability of the organization's functioning and enables the development of new services responding to changing social needs.

15. How does the organization's activities support the implementation of the social mission?

All the funds raised are allocated to the implementation of statutory activities. The funding enables the operation of shelters, supported housing, food aid points, vocational activation programs, psychological counseling and integration projects aimed at migrants and people at risk of social exclusion.

The respondent noted that it is particularly important to invest in activities that enable beneficiaries to regain their independence. This means developing educational programmes, vocational training and support in finding employment.

16. How does the organization mitigate financial risk?

The respondent explained that the organization consistently strives to diversify its sources of funding. In addition to providing public services, it actively participates in grant competitions and develops cooperation with foundations and private donors.

Systematic budget planning and monitoring of operating costs are also of great importance. Each project is subject to a detailed financial analysis, which allows for rational management of funds and risk mitigation.

The organization also tries to develop partnerships with enterprises and institutions that can support the implementation of activities both financially and organizationally.

17. How do you assess the sustainability of the current financing model?

The respondent assessed the financing model as relatively stable, but stressed that social organisations must constantly adapt to changing economic conditions and new societal challenges.

The growing needs of residents make it necessary to look for new sources of financing and develop innovative forms of cooperation with public administration and the private sector. According to the respondent, long-term stability depends primarily on the quality of services provided and the trust that the organization enjoys in the local environment.

PART VI. Organization management and development

18. What does the planning of activities look like?

The respondent explained that the planning of activities is based on a regular analysis of social needs carried out by Caritas Rimini and data collected as part of the poverty observatory. The results of the analyses are the basis for the development of annual action plans and strategies for the development of the organization.

Each new project is preceded by consultations with partners and an assessment of organizational and financial capabilities. Thanks to this, the actions taken correspond to the real needs of the region's residents.

19. How does the organization monitor the achievement of the goals?

The respondent emphasized that the organization conducts systematic monitoring of all activities carried out. The number of people covered by the support, the effectiveness of reintegration programs, the level of professional activation of beneficiaries and the quality of services provided are analyzed.

Feedback from beneficiaries, partners and volunteers is also regularly collected, allowing for the identification of areas for improvement and planning for further activities.

20. How do you evaluate your activities?

The respondent explained that the evaluation is continuous and includes both quantitative and qualitative indicators. The organization evaluates the effectiveness of

individual programs, the degree of achievement of the assumed results and the impact of the implemented activities on improving the situation of beneficiaries.

The evaluation process uses project reports, surveys, interviews with program participants and consultations with institutional partners. The results obtained are used to improve working methods and plan new projects responding to changing social needs.

21. What indicators do you use to assess social impact?

In Caritas, quantitative and qualitative indicators are primarily used to assess social effects. The most important ones include the number of people covered, the number of projects implemented, the value of the material and financial support provided, and the number of volunteers involved. The organization also analyzes the number of families, seniors, people with disabilities or people in a homelessness crisis who have benefited from the help offered.

In addition, indicators relating to changes in the situation of beneficiaries are evaluated, such as improved living conditions, increased independence, taking up employment, completion of activation or therapeutic programmes or increased social inclusion. The selected programmes also take into account the opinions of beneficiaries and the level of their satisfaction with the support received.

22. Does the organization measure social impact? If so: • what methods are used?

The organization monitors the effects of its activities on an ongoing basis and prepares reports summarizing the implemented programs. During the interview, it was indicated that the basis for the assessment of social impact is primarily the analysis of data on the number of people covered, the number of projects implemented, the value of the material and financial support provided, and the involvement of volunteers.

The respondent also emphasized that an important element is the preparation of reports and reports in which both statistical data and a description of the activities carried out and the results achieved are presented.

In some programs, the organization also collects the opinions of beneficiaries through surveys or satisfaction surveys. This allows us to assess the quality of the support provided and better adapt subsequent actions to the needs of the people receiving help.

In addition, monitoring and evaluation of projects are carried out, especially those financed from public or EU funds. In such cases, the degree of achievement of the assumed goals, the effectiveness of the actions taken and the durability of the achieved effects are assessed.

The conversation also highlighted the analysis of social indicators, such as the number of people who, thanks to the support, improved their living situation, found employment, completed a therapeutic program or achieved greater independence.

The interview shows that the measurement of social impact in Caritas focuses primarily on assessing the scale of assistance provided, the effectiveness of the implemented programs and the changes taking place in the situation of beneficiaries. The results obtained are used to improve the activities carried out, plan subsequent initiatives and settle projects with donors and financing institutions.

PART VII. EMPLOYEE COMPETENCIES

23. What competencies are the most important in the work of an organization?

The respondent emphasized that the activities of Caritas Rimini require employees and volunteers to combine professional competences with a high level of social sensitivity. Communication skills, empathy and the ability to build relationships based on trust are crucial. People working with beneficiaries often meet people in a very difficult life situation, so it is extremely important to be able to have a conversation, recognize needs and jointly search for possible solutions.

Teamwork competencies are also important. The organization carries out most of its activities in cooperation with representatives of various institutions, so employees should be able to function in interdisciplinary teams and cooperate effectively with external partners.

The respondent pointed out that in recent years, competences related to project management, fundraising and the use of digital tools supporting work organization and communication with partners have become increasingly important.

24. How are employees' competencies developed?

The respondent explained that the organization attaches great importance to the systematic improvement of the qualifications of employees and volunteers. Each person starting cooperation participates in an introductory training covering the principles of the organization's functioning, standards of providing assistance and ethical issues related to working with people at risk of social exclusion.

Employees regularly participate in specialist training on social assistance, migrant integration, family support, interpersonal communication and project management. The organization also encourages participation in conferences, seminars and international educational projects, which allow you to learn new ways of working and exchange experiences with foreign partners.

Mutual learning within the organization is also an important element of professional development. Employees meet regularly to discuss more difficult cases, analyze experiences and work out best solutions together.

25. What competencies are most lacking?

According to the respondent, the biggest challenge is to develop competences related to the management of increasingly complex social projects and the assessment of their impact on local communities. Social organizations are now obliged not only to implement activities, but also to document their effectiveness and sustainability.

The respondent also pointed to the growing importance of digital competences, especially in the use of modern communication tools, electronic documentation and data management.

Skills related to building international partnerships and preparing projects financed by the European Union are also playing an increasingly important role.

26. Does the organization use mentoring or coaching?

The respondent emphasized that mentoring is an important element of the onboarding process of new employees and volunteers. People starting cooperation have the opportunity to use the support of more experienced employees who help them learn about the specifics of the organization and prepare them to work independently with beneficiaries.

The organization also conducts regular team meetings and consultations with external experts to discuss more difficult cases and look for the best ways to provide support. This form of cooperation is not only conducive to the development of professional competences, but also prevents burnout.

PART VIII. GOOD PRACTICES

27. What organizational solutions do you consider to be your greatest achievements?

The respondent indicated that the greatest achievement of the organization is the creation of an integrated social assistance system that combines intervention activities with a long-term process of social and professional reintegration. The organization does not limit itself to providing emergency assistance, but supports beneficiaries in the next stages of recovering from the crisis.

The development of a model of cooperation between Caritas, the Madonna della Carità Social Cooperative, public administration and numerous social organizations was also

considered particularly valuable. Thanks to this, it is possible to provide beneficiaries with comprehensive support covering various areas of life.

The respondent also emphasized the importance of educational activities and the development of volunteering, which contribute to strengthening the social responsibility of the region's residents.

29. Which activities have been shown to be the most effective?

The greatest effects were brought by individual support programs for beneficiaries, including simultaneous resolution of housing, professional, family and social problems. A comprehensive approach allows to increase the durability of the results achieved and to more effectively prepare people who benefit from the aid to function independently.

Cooperation with enterprises that enable beneficiaries to gain professional experience and take up employment has also brought very good results.

The respondent pointed out that educational activities carried out in schools and parishes are also of great value, thanks to which social awareness of the problems of poverty and social exclusion increases.

29. What solutions could be transferred to other organizations?

The respondent believes that the model of comprehensive support for beneficiaries based on the cooperation of many institutions has the greatest potential for transfer. This solution can be used by both non-governmental organizations and social welfare institutions operating in other countries.

The possibility of adaptation also applies to the model of functioning of a social cooperative as an entity providing professional social services while maintaining the social mission of the organization.

The respondent also emphasized the value of experience related to the organization of volunteering and building local partnerships.

30. Are there solutions that can be implemented in other countries as well?

According to the respondent, most of the solutions used are universal. Particularly valuable are the methods of diagnosing the needs of beneficiaries, developing individual support plans and developing cooperation between social organizations and public administration.

At the same time, it was noted that the implementation of similar models should take into account local legal, organizational and cultural conditions.

PART IX. Transfer of experience

31. What solutions learned during the Erasmus+ project do you consider to be the most valuable?

The respondent indicated that the experience of partners from Polish regarding the functioning of Social Economy Support Centers and the development of social enterprises was particularly valuable. Lithuanian solutions related to the professional activation of people with disabilities and the organization of volunteering also turned out to be interesting.

The project also made it possible to learn about different methods of managing social organizations and ways of building local partnerships.

32. What should be transferred to Polish, Lithuania and Italy?

The respondent believes that Poland could use the Italian experience related to running comprehensive social welfare centers and cooperation between church organizations and social cooperatives.

In Lithuania, solutions regarding individual social reintegration programs and extensive cooperation with volunteers could prove valuable.

In Italy, on the other hand, Polish solutions related to the functioning of Social Economy Support Centres and Lithuanian experience in the field of social education and support for people with disabilities are interesting.

33. What barriers can hinder the transfer of good practices?

The respondent pointed out the differences between national social assistance systems and different regulations concerning the functioning of non-governmental organizations. Barriers can also result from cultural differences and the level of development of local partnerships.

At the same time, it was emphasized that most good practices can be adapted to the conditions in force in other countries.

34. How can these barriers be reduced?

The respondent noted that effective transfer of experience requires systematic international cooperation, organization of study visits, joint trainings and development of materials presenting proven organizational solutions.

It is also important to develop partnerships between social organizations and exchange experiences between employees and volunteers.

PART X. RECOMMENDATIONS

35. What systemic changes are needed for the development of the social economy?

The respondent emphasized the need to increase the stability of funding for social organizations and to develop instruments supporting cooperation between public administration, non-governmental organizations and social enterprises. An important direction of change is also the reduction of administrative burdens and the creation of long-term support programs.

36. What should the cooperation between the administration and social organizations look like?

According to the respondent, public administration should perceive social organizations as partners co-responsible for the implementation of social policy. Cooperation should be based on mutual trust, joint planning of activities and long-term financing of social services.

37. What competencies will be most important in the coming years?

The respondent indicated primarily competences related to project management, cross-sectoral cooperation, the use of digital technologies, social impact assessment and building local and international partnerships.

38. What activities should be included in adult education programmes?

Adult education programmes should cover issues related to social entrepreneurship, work with people at risk of social exclusion, interpersonal communication, management of non-governmental organisations, volunteering, fundraising and evaluation of social projects. Study visits and practical learning of good practices should also be an important element.

39. What should be included in the European model of support for social organisations?

The respondent pointed to the need to create common standards for the quality of social services, develop European training programs, support employee mobility and facilitate the access of organizations to international funding. The model should also promote cross-sectoral cooperation and the exchange of experiences between organisations from different countries.

40. Would you like to provide additional comments or recommendations on the development of the social economy?

In conclusion, the respondent emphasized that effective social assistance requires a long-term approach, based on the cooperation of many institutions and the active involvement of the local community. He pointed out that the social economy should focus not only on solving current problems, but also on creating conditions enabling beneficiaries to regain independence and full participation in social life. In the respondent's opinion, international projects such as Erasmus+ play an important role in disseminating effective solutions and building sustainable cooperation between social organisations in Europe.

INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI)

Organization: Pirmas Blynas (First Community Restaurant), Lithuania

Respondent:

Director/Manager of a Social Enterprise

PART I. ORGANISATION INFORMATION

1. Please briefly introduce the organization.

Pirmas Blynas is one of the most recognizable social enterprises operating in Lithuania. The organization conducts catering activities, the main task of which is to combine economic activity with the achievement of social goals. The restaurant operates on the open market, providing catering services for individual customers, public institutions and enterprises, while creating jobs for people at risk of social exclusion.

Since the beginning of its activity, the organization has focused on employing people with disabilities and people with difficulties entering or returning to the labor market. The company operates in accordance with the principles of social economy, assuming that economic activity is a tool enabling the achievement of social goals, and the funds generated are allocated to the further development of the organization and support for the employees employed.

In addition to gastronomic activities, the organization is also involved in educational activities and promoting the social economy. The restaurant regularly participates in local events, cooperates with non-governmental organizations and public institutions, and presents the model of a social enterprise as an effective form of professional activation.

2. What were the most important premises for the establishment of the organization?

The respondent indicated that the impulse to create the restaurant was to observe the difficulties that people with disabilities encounter when looking for employment. Despite their skills, many of them remained outside the labour market due to social barriers and insufficient preparation of employers to employ people in need of individual support.

The second important reason was the belief that a social enterprise can function effectively on the market without giving up on the achievement of social goals. The founders of the organization wanted to create a place that would be both a stable enterprise and a space enabling the professional development of people at risk of social exclusion.

Building social awareness was also an important element. From the beginning, the restaurant was supposed to show residents that people with disabilities are valuable employees and can perform responsible tasks in direct contact with customers.

3. What is the mission of the organization?

The mission of the organization is to support social inclusion by creating sustainable jobs and building conditions that enable people with disabilities to fully participate in social and professional life.

The respondent emphasized that employment is not treated only as a source of income. Work allows you to develop independence, responsibility, social competences and build self-esteem. Therefore, the restaurant's activity includes not only the performance of professional duties, but also the systematic support of employees in their development.

The organization also sees its role as educational. Daily contact between customers and restaurant employees allows us to break stereotypes and build a more open society.

PART II. MODEL OF FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION

4. What does the model of the organization look like?

The respondent explained that the organization functions as a social enterprise conducting catering activities on market principles. All organizational processes have been designed in such a way as to enable effective business operations while taking into account the needs of employees requiring individual support.

The organizational structure includes the company manager, people responsible for organizing the restaurant's work, cooks, service employees and instructors supporting the professional development of employees. Each employee has a clearly defined scope of duties, but the organization retains a lot of flexibility in adapting workplaces to the capabilities of individual people.

The decision-making process is participatory in nature. The management regularly consults with the team on organizational issues and encourages employees to submit their own ideas for improving the functioning of the restaurant. This way of managing is conducive to building responsibility for jointly pursued goals.

5. What elements of the operating model do you consider to be the most important?

According to the respondent, the greatest value of an organization is an individual approach to each employee. The adaptation process begins with learning about the

capabilities, predispositions and limitations of a given person. Only on this basis are duties selected and a professional development plan prepared.

The second important element is the high quality of the services provided. The restaurant operates on a competitive gastronomic market, so maintaining appropriate standards is a condition for the further functioning of the company.

The respondent also drew attention to the importance of the working atmosphere. Creating an environment based on mutual respect, patience and cooperation affects both the effectiveness of the team and the development of employees' social competences.

6. What distinguishes your organization from other social enterprises?

The respondent indicated that the biggest distinguishing feature of the organization is the full combination of business activity with the implementation of the social mission. The restaurant does not function as an occupational therapy venue, but as a catering service company, whose employees are responsible for the actual production and customer service processes.

The openness of the organization to the local community also plays an important role. The restaurant is a meeting place for residents, social organizations and public institutions. Thanks to this, the company's activity goes beyond the catering itself and becomes a space of social integration.

The respondent also emphasized that the success of the organization results from consistently building customer trust. Many guests visit the restaurant not only because of its social character, but above all because of the high quality of the services offered.

PART III. PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVATION

7. What groups of people are supported by the organization?

The main group of recipients are people with disabilities, in particular people with intellectual and motor disabilities. The organization also cooperates with people who are unemployed for a long time and with people in a difficult life situation.

The respondent noted that the degree of disability does not determine the possibility of employment, but the motivation to work and readiness to develop one's skills. Each person is assessed individually, and the organization tries to create conditions that allow them to use their potential.

8. What is the process of professional activation of beneficiaries?

The process begins with an initial interview and recognizing the needs of the future employee. At this stage, previous work experience, practical skills and employment expectations are assessed.

The next stage is the adaptation period, during which the employee gets to know the organization and learns to perform duties under the supervision of more experienced colleagues and work instructors. The scope of the tasks entrusted to them is gradually increased along with the acquisition of new competencies.

The respondent emphasized that it is very important to systematically monitor progress. Regular interviews allow you to assess the employee's professional development, identify emerging difficulties and adjust the scope of support to current needs.

9. What social effects have been achieved?

The most important effect of the organization's activity is the creation of stable jobs for people who previously had limited employment opportunities. The respondent emphasized that many employees have achieved greater financial independence and developed social and professional competences thanks to working in the restaurant.

The second important result is a change in social attitudes towards people with disabilities. Restaurant customers have the opportunity to have direct contact with employees, which is conducive to breaking stereotypes and building greater social acceptance.

The respondent also pointed out that the organization contributes to the development of the social economy in Lithuania, showing that a social enterprise can operate effectively in a competitive market and at the same time pursue social goals.

PART IV. LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

10. What institutions does the organization cooperate with?

The respondent stressed that the activities of a social enterprise would not be possible without constant cooperation with many partners representing different sectors. The organization cooperates primarily with local government units, social welfare institutions, non-governmental organizations and enterprises operating in Vilnius and the surrounding area. Institutions dealing with the professional activation of people with disabilities and organizations representing the interests of this social group are also important partners.

Cooperation with educational institutions and training centers that refer people undergoing apprenticeships or participating in activation programs to restaurants is also of great importance. Thanks to this, it is possible to prepare candidates for work in advance and gradually introduce them to professional duties.

The organization also maintains contacts with entrepreneurs and local suppliers of food products. This cooperation allows not only to ensure the continuity of catering activities, but also to promote the idea of responsible business and social entrepreneurship.

11. How does the cooperation between the partners work?

The respondent noted that cooperation is based primarily on mutual trust and a clearly defined division of responsibilities. The partners jointly plan activities, consult the needs of beneficiaries and engage in the implementation of social and educational projects.

In practice, cooperation includes the organisation of events promoting the social economy, the implementation of projects financed from national and European funds, as well as the exchange of information on jobseekers. Public institutions support the process of recruiting participants in activation programs, while the organization provides jobs and support for instructors.

Regular working meetings allow you to assess the progress of cooperation and solve problems together. The respondent emphasized that the partnership approach is conducive to building lasting relationships and increases the effectiveness of the actions taken.

12. What are the benefits of partnership?

According to the respondent, cooperation with local partners significantly increases the organization's development opportunities. Thanks to the involvement of various institutions, it is possible to reach people in need of support more effectively and better match the services offered to the needs of the local community.

Partnerships also facilitate information about available funding programmes, enable the organisation of joint events and increase the visibility of the social enterprise. Cooperation with local government and non-governmental organizations strengthens the credibility of the organization and promotes building a positive image of the social economy.

The respondent pointed out that the exchange of experiences between partners allows for improving the solutions used and responding faster to changing social needs.

13. What barriers hinder cooperation?

The most common difficulties relate to the limited financial resources allocated to the implementation of joint initiatives and the different procedures in force in individual institutions. The respondent indicated that organizational differences may prolong the decision-making process and hinder the implementation of some projects.

Another barrier is still insufficient knowledge of the idea of social economy among some employers and institutions. Despite the growing social awareness, there are still situations in which people with disabilities are perceived primarily through the prism of limitations, and not through the prism of competences.

However, the respondent emphasized that most of these problems can be reduced through systematic cooperation, educational activities and joint planning of projects.

PART V. FINANCING MODEL

14. What are the main sources of funding for the organization?

The main source of income is income obtained from catering activities. The sale of meals and the provision of catering services allow us to finance the day-to-day operation of the restaurant and maintain jobs.

The organization also uses programs supporting the employment of people with disabilities and participates in projects financed from national and European funds. The funds raised are primarily used for infrastructure development, employee training and activities related to professional activation.

The respondent emphasized that diversification of sources of financing increases the security of the organization and reduces the risk associated with dependence on one type of support.

15. How does business activity support the implementation of the social mission?

The respondent pointed out that economic activity is the basis for the functioning of a social enterprise. Revenues obtained from the sale of catering services enable the creation of new jobs and maintaining the employment of people at risk of social exclusion.

This model also allows for financing development activities, the purchase of equipment and the organization of training for employees. By operating on the market, an organization maintains greater financial independence and can respond more flexibly to the needs of its beneficiaries.

The respondent emphasized that achieving good economic results is not an end in itself. The most important thing is to use the funds developed to implement the social mission and further development of the organization.

16. How does the organization mitigate financial risk?

The organization systematically develops its gastronomic offer, adapting it to customer expectations and changing market conditions. The catering offer is expanded,

occasional events are organized and cooperation with new service recipients is established.

Participation in projects financed from public and European funds is also an important element. The funds obtained enable the implementation of development activities and reduce the risk resulting from periodic changes in the economic situation.

The respondent also emphasized the importance of rational planning of expenses and systematic monitoring of the company's financial situation.

17. How do you assess the sustainability of the current financing model?

According to the respondent, the financing model can be considered relatively stable, but its maintenance requires continuous adaptation of operations to the needs of the market. The organization is constantly looking for new customers and developing its service offering in order to increase the share of own revenues in the financing structure.

At the same time, the respondent pointed out that social enterprises still need public support instruments, especially in the field of employing people in need of additional support. Combining business activity with properly designed support programs allows to achieve the greatest economic sustainability.

PART VI. MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION

18. What does the planning of activities look like?

Business planning takes place on an annual basis, but individual activities are adapted to the situation of the organization and the needs of employees on an ongoing basis. Both economic and social objectives are taken into account when developing plans.

The respondent emphasized that the planning process includes an analysis of the results achieved in previous periods, an assessment of the financial situation and the identification of new needs of customers and beneficiaries. Thanks to this, the organization can react to emerging challenges in advance.

19. How does the organization monitor the achievement of the goals?

The achievement of goals is monitored on the basis of indicators concerning employment, quality of services provided, sales level and customer satisfaction. At the same time, social effects are analysed, including the development of employees' competences and their professional activity.

Team meetings are regularly held to discuss current results and any issues that require corrective action.

20. How do you evaluate your activities?

The evaluation is continuous and includes both the evaluation of economic and social outcomes. The organization uses feedback from customers, employees and cooperation partners.

The respondent emphasized that individual interviews with employees are of particular value, as they allow them to assess their professional development and the level of satisfaction with their work.

21. How do you evaluate activities?

We try to check on an ongoing basis what effects our actions bring. After the completion of each project, we analyze whether the set goals have been achieved and how many people have been able to really help. We use data on the number of beneficiaries, prepare reports on the implementation of activities and talk to people who benefit from our support and employees or volunteers involved in projects.

If we implement projects financed from public or EU funds, we also conduct an evaluation in accordance with the applicable requirements. Thanks to this, we can assess what has been done well and what is worth improving. The conclusions from such analyses help us to better plan further activities and adapt them to the real needs of the people we help.

22. What indicators do you use to assess social outcomes?

To assess the effects of our activities, we primarily use indicators showing how many people we have managed to reach and what kind of support has been provided. We analyze the number of beneficiaries, the number of implemented programs and the value of the aid provided. We also pay attention to the involvement of volunteers and the number of people using individual forms of support.

In addition to the figures, the effects that have been achieved with the people covered by the assistance are also important to us. We check whether their living situation has improved, whether their independence has increased and whether the support offered really responded to their needs. We also use the opinions of beneficiaries and observations of employees and volunteers, as they allow us to better assess the effectiveness of our activities and plan further initiatives.

PART VII. EMPLOYEE COMPETENCIES

23. What competencies are the most important in the work of an organization?

The respondent emphasized that the activity of a social enterprise requires a combination of professional competences with social skills. In the case of Pirmas Blynas, the ability to cooperate with other employees and build positive relationships with customers is just as important as the catering preparation.

People employed in a restaurant should be responsible, systematic and ready to learn new skills. Interpersonal communication is also important in everyday work, as most of the duties are performed as a team. The respondent noted that the development of social competences affects not only the quality of work, but also increases the independence of employees outside the place of employment.

In the case of managerial staff, skills related to work organization, planning activities, personnel management and obtaining financial resources are particularly important. Managers should also have knowledge of the social economy and experience in working with people in need of individual support.

24. How are employees' competencies developed?

The development of competences takes place primarily through daily work and individual support from instructors and more experienced employees. Newly hired people participate in on-the-job training, during which they learn about the organization of work, customer service standards and safety rules applicable in gastronomy.

The respondent indicated that regular internal training on food preparation, communication with customers and teamwork are also of great importance. The organization also allows participation in external trainings and events devoted to social entrepreneurship and professional development.

An important element of the learning process is also the exchange of experiences between employees. Those with more experience support new team members by providing them with practical knowledge and helping them solve current problems.

25. What competencies are most lacking?

The respondent pointed out that the greatest needs relate to competences related to running a business. In social enterprises, marketing, promotion of services and the use of digital tools to communicate with customers are becoming increasingly important.

The second area requiring development is obtaining funds and preparing projects financed from national and European funds. Social organizations have to constantly

look for new sources of financing, which is why knowledge in this area is becoming increasingly important.

The respondent also pointed to the need to develop competences related to measuring social impact. The ability to document the effects of activities makes it easier to plan subsequent activities, as well as to acquire partners and financial resources.

26. Does the organization use mentoring or coaching?

The respondent explained that there is no formal mentoring program in the organization, but in practice solutions of a similar nature are used. Each new employee receives the support of a more experienced team member who helps to get to know the organization and perform daily duties.

Work instructors also play an important role, observing the progress of employees, giving tips and helping to develop professional and social competences. Such individual support allows to reduce the stress associated with starting work and facilitates the gradual increase in employees' independence.

PART VIII. Good practices

27. What organizational solutions do you consider to be your greatest achievements?

The respondent indicated that the greatest achievement of the organization is the creation of a social enterprise that effectively operates on the open market of catering services and at the same time pursues social goals. The restaurant shows that people with disabilities can perform responsible work and provide services at a high level.

An individual approach to employees was also considered particularly valuable. The organization does not apply uniform solutions to all employees, but adjusts the scope of duties, the pace of implementation and forms of support to the needs of a particular person.

The respondent also emphasized the importance of building positive relations with the local community. Thanks to the openness of the restaurant, residents have the opportunity to learn directly about the idea of social entrepreneurship and daily contact with people employed in the organization.

28. Which activities have been shown to be the most effective?

The greatest effects were brought by combining employment with systematic support of work instructors. Thanks to this, employees could gradually develop their skills and increase the scope of their duties.

The respondent also indicated that cooperation with local institutions and social organizations has worked very well. Partners help in reaching new beneficiaries, organizing events and promoting the company's activities.

Running a business that meets the real needs of the market has also proven to be an effective solution. Thanks to this, the organization maintains a stable economic position and can develop social activities.

29. What solutions could be transferred to other organizations?

The respondent believes that the model of employing people with disabilities in a company operating on market principles has the greatest transfer potential. This solution can be used not only in gastronomy, but also in many other service industries.

The experience of the organization also shows the importance of individual planning of employee development and constant support of work instructors. This approach can be successfully used by other social enterprises and organisations employing people at risk of social exclusion.

30. Are there solutions that can be implemented in other countries as well?

The respondent is convinced that the Pirmas Blynas model can be adapted in many European countries. However, the condition for success is to adapt the way the organization operates to local legal, social and economic conditions.

Solutions concerning the organization of work, cooperation with local partners and combining business activity with the implementation of a social mission seem to be particularly valuable.

PART IX. TRANSFER OF EXPERIENCE

31. What solutions learned during the Erasmus+ project do you consider to be the most valuable?

The respondent emphasized that participation in the project made it possible to learn about various models of functioning of social enterprises and institutions supporting the social economy. Of particular interest were aroused by Polish experiences related to the activities of Social Economy Support Centres and Italian solutions concerning the functioning of social cooperatives.

The exchange of experiences allowed us to look at the activities of our own organization from a broader perspective and identify solutions that can be used in the further development of the company.

32. What should be transferred to Polish, Lithuania and Italy?

According to the respondent, Poland could make more extensive use of the experience of Lithuanian social enterprises conducting service activities on the open market. In Lithuania, on the other hand, it is worth developing solutions used by Polish Social Economy Support Centres, which provide comprehensive advice to organisations.

In Italy, an interesting solution could be experiences related to building local partnerships and professional activation of people with disabilities through catering activities.

33. What barriers can hinder the transfer of good practices?

The biggest obstacle is the differences in legal regulations and financing systems for social enterprises. The respondent also drew attention to the different cultural conditions and the level of development of the social economy sector in individual countries.

At the same time, it was emphasized that most good practices can be adapted after appropriate adaptation to local conditions.

34. How can these barriers be reduced?

The respondent indicated that the basic condition for an effective transfer of experience is the development of international cooperation and the organization of subsequent study visits, trainings and workshops. It is also important to prepare educational materials presenting proven solutions and to create a network of cooperation between social economy organizations.

PART X. RECOMMENDATIONS

35. What systemic changes are needed for the development of the social economy?

The respondent believes that it is necessary to increase the stability of financing social enterprises and to develop instruments to support the employment of people at risk of social exclusion. It is also important to simplify administrative procedures and develop cooperation between the public sector, social organisations and entrepreneurs.

36. What should the cooperation between the administration and social enterprises look like?

Cooperation should be based on partnership and long-term planning of joint activities. Public administration can play an important role by supporting the development of

social enterprises, creating friendly legal conditions and promoting socially responsible public procurement.

37. What competencies will be most important in the coming years?

The respondent indicated primarily managerial competences, the ability to build partnerships, raise funds, use digital technologies and measure social impact. The ability to respond quickly to changing societal needs is also becoming increasingly important.

38. What activities should be included in adult education programmes?

Educational programmes should cover issues related to social entrepreneurship, organisation management, cross-sectoral cooperation, social marketing, business financing and social impact assessment. An important element should also be the development of interpersonal competences and the practical exchange of experience between organizations.

39. What should be included in the European model of support for social enterprises?

The respondent indicated that such a model should be based on sustainable international cooperation, exchange of good practices, joint training programmes and easier access to finance. It should also take into account the diversity of national legal systems, leaving the possibility of adapting solutions to local needs.

40. Would you like to provide additional comments or recommendations on the development of the social economy?

In conclusion, the respondent emphasized that the development of the social economy requires, first of all, a change in the way people at risk of social exclusion are perceived. He pointed out that properly prepared workplaces and professional support allow many people to achieve independence and actively participate in social life. He also added that international projects such as Erasmus+ play an important role in disseminating proven solutions and building cooperation between organizations from different European countries.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE (IDI)

Organization: CIS, Social Worker, Career Counselor

PART I

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

1. Please briefly introduce the organization.

The Centre for Social Integration (CIS) was established and obtained the status of the Voivode several months after the start of the Foundation's extensive statutory activity, being a key tool for the implementation of its mission.

A social employment entity run by a non-governmental organization (Foundation). The full-time staff consists of a reintegration team (CIS manager, social worker, career counsellor) and vocational instructors conducting individual workshops.

Social and professional reintegration of people at risk of social exclusion, implementation of workshops improving qualifications, psychological and therapeutic counselling and conducting production, trade or service activities within workshop groups.

Target groups: long-term unemployed, low-skilled people, looking for a new career path or requiring support in returning to the labour market, residents of the Łomża subregion.

2. What were the most important premises for the establishment of the organization?

The main premise was to identify a group of people in the Łomża region for whom the standard instruments of labour offices turned out to be insufficient. The creation of CIS was a response to the need to create a safe and at the same time real work environment, in which the process of rebuilding social competences goes hand in hand with practical vocational training.

3. What is the mission of the organization?

The mission of the CIS is to restore the ability of excluded people to function independently in society and to fully return to the labour market through a comprehensive social employment programme.

PART II

MODEL OF FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION

4. What is the model of functioning of your organization?

The structure is managed by the CIS Manager, who coordinates the work of the didactic and reintegration team (social worker, counsellor) and instructors responsible for individual workshop sections.

The model is oriented towards the individual path of the participant, with a strong emphasis on synergy between the social and production and service departments. Decisions regarding Individual Social Employment Programmes (IPZS) are made collegially by the team, drawing conclusions from the current work with the participant.

Participants spend time at CIS in accordance with the statutory schedule – part of the time is spent on vocational training and providing services, and part on classes with an advisor, psychologist and competence workshops.

5. What elements of your operating model do you consider to be the most important?

Flexibility and a smooth combination of market requirements (as part of the workshops' service activities) with the care and therapeutic function are crucial. This allows participants to feel real responsibility for the work they do while maintaining a sense of security.

6. What distinguishes your organization from other social enterprises?

We are distinguished by our comprehensiveness – we are not only a company employing people in a difficult situation, but an institution that systematically rebuilds people from scratch. In addition, we strongly integrate modern aspects of competence (e.g. digital basics) into traditional professional profiles.

PART III

PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVATION

7. What groups of people are supported by the organization?

The support is addressed to people who meet the conditions of the Social Employment Act, in particular to the long-term unemployed, struggling with life barriers, with a low financial status, and residents of smaller towns in the Łomża region, who have lost faith in their own professional abilities.

8. What is the process of professional activation of beneficiaries?

The process is carried out in close partnership with local Social Welfare Centers (OPS/CUS) and the District Labor Office, which refer people in need of this type of support to the CIS.

The first step is to develop an Individual Social Employment Program (IPZS), diagnosing social barriers and professional predispositions.

Preparation for work includes training in the field of occupational health and safety, work ergonomics and the basic principles of functioning in an employee team.

Specialist support consists of regular individual and group meetings with a psychologist, therapist and social worker, helping to solve personal problems that make it difficult to take up a job.

The development of competences takes place through practical vocational training under the supervision of instructors within specific service profiles run by the CIS, supplemented by learning how to navigate the modern labour market.

Monitoring of progress is carried out through a monthly assessment of the implementation of the IPZS, verifying both the increase in professional skills and changes in social attitudes.

9. What social effects have been achieved?

The key effect is the independence of the participants – coming out of professional and social inactivity, rebuilding family relationships, repaying debts and returning to the open labour market or a smooth transition to employment in other social economy entities.

PART IV

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

10. What institutions does the organization cooperate with?

The organization cooperates with:

- Commune and county offices – as key recipients of services provided by CIS workshops (m.in. cleaning, greening and renovation works).
- Non-governmental organizations – with the joint implementation of local initiatives and mutual complementarity of the offer of support for residents.
- Local entrepreneurs – who accept CIS participants for internships and then employ graduates of the Centre.
- Schools and universities – in the field of knowledge exchange and organization of student internships for future social workers.
- Labour market institutions – cooperation includes referral of people to CIS and assistance in job placement for graduates.

- OPS/CUS – the most important recruitment partner and institution monitoring the life situation of the participants' families.

11. How does the cooperation between the partners work?

Cooperation is systemic. It is based on the current flow of information on the progress of the participants and on responding flexibly to the local market demand for the services provided by the CIS.

12. What are the benefits of partnership?

The benefit for the local government is the ability to carry out its own tasks (e.g. maintenance of municipal infrastructure) while solving unemployment problems. For CIS, the partnership guarantees the continuity of orders carried out by the workshops and provides participants with real places for professional internships.

13. What barriers hinder cooperation?

The biggest barrier is the budgetary constraints of local government units in the field of commissioning services for the CIS and the still too rare use of social aspects (e.g. social clauses) in public procurement.

PART V

FINANCING MODEL

14. What are the main sources of funding for the organization?

The financing model is based on a financial assembly including:
 subsidies from EU and national funds for the implementation of reintegration projects,
 subjective subsidies (m.in. from the Labour Fund),
 own revenues obtained from manufacturing and service activities conducted by CIS workshops.

15. How does business activity support the implementation of the social mission?

The commercial and service activities of CIS workshops are a practical place for participants to gain professional experience. Every zloty earned is used to finance integration benefits for participants and retrofitting workstations.

16. How does the organization mitigate financial risk?

The risk is reduced by diversifying the range of workshops. Providing a variety of services means that a decrease in the number of orders in one industry can be compensated by an increase in another. It is also important to calculate fixed costs precisely.

17. How do you assess the sustainability of the current financing model?

The combination of system subsidies with revenues obtained from service activities ensures relative financial stability. However, this model requires constant acquisition of new market orders and efficient transition between successive projects financed from public funds.

PART VI

MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION

18. What does the planning of activities look like?

Planning is carried out in two ways:

in the social area – by preparing reintegration plans for groups and individual participants,

in the market area – through service delivery schedules and customer acquisition for CIS workshops.

19. How does the organization monitor the achievement of the goals?

Monitoring is carried out by:

regular meetings of the reintegration team,

analysis of economic indicators of workshop activity,

monitoring attendance and involvement of participants in the implementation of Individual Social Employment Programmes (IPZS).

20. How do you evaluate your activities?

The assessment includes both social effectiveness (changes in participants' attitudes) and employment effectiveness (the percentage of people taking up work after completing their participation in the CIS). The tools used are primarily final interviews and monitoring of the fate of graduates.

21. What indicators do you use to assess social impact?

The following indicators are used in an organization:

the number of successful Individual Social Employment Programmes,
employment efficiency index (number of people taking up employment or setting up their own business/cooperative),
increase in life and social competences measured by self-assessment sheets.

22. Does the organization measure social impact?

If so, what methods are used?

Yes. The organization analyses savings for local budgets resulting from the reduction of payments of benefits from OPS thanks to the independence of participants. In addition, surveys and interviews with the families of CIS graduates are conducted.

PART VII

Employee competencies

23. What competencies are the most important in the work of an organization?

The most important competencies of employees are:

high level of empathy combined with assertiveness,
ability to resolve conflicts,
knowledge of andragogy (teaching adults),
substantive and practical preparation of instructors of the profession.

24. How are employees' competencies developed?

Competencies are developed through:

participation in social work supervision,
training in new methods of reintegration,
participation in international projects, such as Erasmus+, enabling you to learn about foreign support systems.

25. What competencies are most lacking?

The greatest shortage is of vocational instructors who have high technical competences and professional experience, as well as pedagogical preparation or predispositions to work with people in a life crisis.

26. Does the organization use mentoring or coaching?

Yes. The organization benefits from the advice of regional Social Economy Support Centers (OWES) and supervision for the team, which helps prevent burnout.

PART VIII

Good practices

27. What organizational solutions do you consider to be your greatest achievements?

The greatest achievement is the development of an efficient system of rotation of participants and the organization of internships with external employers while still participating in the CIS, which significantly shortens the process of adaptation to a new workplace.

28. Which activities have been shown to be the most effective?

The introduction of microloans and support in getting out of debt as part of economic education was considered to be the most effective. Putting the participants' financial situation in order significantly increases their motivation to take up and maintain employment.

29. What solutions could be transferred to other organizations?

The procedure of trilateral contracting of internships (CIS – Participant – Employer), with a clearly defined division of roles and the support of a supported employment coach, is noteworthy.

30. Are there solutions that can be implemented in other countries as well?

The Polish model of the Centre for Social Integration, which combines the integration benefit paid to participants with real work and comprehensive social reintegration carried out in one place, is a universal tool for professional and social activation.

PART IX

Transfer of experience

31. What solutions learned during the Erasmus+ project do you consider to be the most valuable?

The most valuable solutions are:

Italian social entrepreneurship models based on close cooperation with local business,
Lithuanian graduate tracking systems using digital state tools.

32. What is worth moving?

To Polish

Greater flexibility in determining the length of a participant's stay in the CIS – making the duration of participation dependent on actual progress and not only on a rigid legal framework.

To Lithuania

Organizational model of Social Integration Centres, providing participants with status and social security during the study period.

To Italy

Experience related to flexible adaptation of workshop profiles to the dynamically changing needs of the local labor market.

33. What barriers can hinder the transfer of good practices?

The biggest barriers result from differences in legal definitions of people at risk of social exclusion and different systems of financing social assistance in different countries.

34. How can they be reduced?

By standardizing learning outcomes and social competences at the European level.

PART X

Recommendations

35. What systemic changes are needed for the development of the social economy?

- valorisation of the amount of integration benefits for CIS participants,
- simplification of the rules for settling subsidies,

- creation of tax incentives for entrepreneurs employing graduates of Social Integration Centres.

36. What should the cooperation between the administration and social enterprises look like?

Public administration should first direct simple municipal orders to local entities, such as the CIS, treating it as an investment that limits expenditure on long-term social assistance.

37. What competencies will be the most important for social economy workers in the coming years?

The following will be of the greatest importance:

- the ability to use artificial intelligence (AI) and automation tools to reduce administrative obligations,
- competences in the field of crisis management,
- flexibility in working with people with multiple simultaneous social and occupational deficits.

38. What activities should be included in adult education programmes?

- Adult education programmes should include:
- developing mental resilience,
- learning to cope with stress,
- the basics of digital competences (e-citizen),
- household budget management.

39. What should be included in the European model of support for social enterprises?

A European guarantee fund for social employment entities, facilitating the maintenance of financial liquidity of social economy organisations.

40. Would you like to provide additional comments or recommendations on the development of the social economy?

Social Integration Centres are the foundation of activities to counteract social exclusion. Investing in the CIS, especially in regions such as the Łomża subregion, is

not a cost, but a long-term investment that brings measurable social and economic benefits by bringing active and independent citizens back to the labour market.

INDIVIDUAL IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW (IDI)

Organization:

Łomża Centre for Social Economy Support (ŁOWES)

PART I. ORGANISATION INFORMATION

1. Please briefly introduce the organization.

The Łomża Social Economy Support Centre is an institution supporting the development of social economy in the Łomża subregion. It was established from 01.07.2024 and will operate until 30.06.2027. Number of employees: 20.

The Centre's activities focus on creating conditions conducive to the emergence of new social enterprises, strengthening the potential of existing social economy entities and supporting cooperation between non-governmental organisations, local government units and local partners. The Centre's services are used by non-governmental organisations, social cooperatives, social enterprises, initiative groups and people planning to start their activities in the social economy sector. Number of employees: 20.

2. What were the most important premises for the establishment of the organization?

The basic premise for the establishment of the Centre was the need to create a comprehensive system of support for social economy entities and to increase the social and professional activity of the region's residents. An important goal was also to develop social entrepreneurship as a tool to counteract social exclusion and strengthen local development.

3. What is the mission of the organization?

The mission of ŁOWES is to support the development of the social economy by creating sustainable social enterprises, developing the competences of their employees and building local partnerships enabling more effective solutions to social problems.

PART II. MODEL OF FUNCTIONING OF THE ORGANIZATION

4. What does the model of the organization look like?

ŁOWES functions as a specialized institution providing comprehensive consulting, training and animation services. The organisational structure includes project

management, local animators, business advisors, social entrepreneurship specialists, and legal and financial experts.

Management is based on teamwork and regular planning of activities. Key decisions are made taking into account the needs of local communities and partners cooperating with the Centre.

5. What elements of the operating model do you consider to be the most important?

The most important are an individual approach to each organization, the comprehensiveness of the support offered, cross-sectoral cooperation and long-term accompaniment of social enterprises at the next stages of their development.

6. What distinguishes your organization?

ŁOWES distinguishes a comprehensive support model including local animation, specialist consulting, training, financial support and activities for building local partnerships. Cooperation with local governments and labour market institutions is also an important element of the activity.

PART III. PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVATION

7. What groups of people are supported by the organization?

The support covers people at risk of social exclusion, the unemployed, people with disabilities, seniors, young people and representatives of non-governmental organizations planning the development of social and economic activity.

8. What does the process of professional activation look like?

The process begins with a diagnosis of the needs and an analysis of the potential of the participants. An individual support plan is then prepared, including counselling, training, development of professional competences and assistance in setting up or employing a social enterprise. After the start of the activity, monitoring of the effects and further consulting are carried out.

9. What social effects have been achieved?

The most important results include the creation of new social enterprises, an increase in the employment of people at risk of social exclusion, the development of local partnerships and an increase in the activity of non-governmental organizations in the region.

PART IV. LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

10. What institutions does the organization cooperate with?

ŁOWES cooperates with local government units, District Labour Offices, Social Welfare Centres, universities, schools, social enterprises, non-governmental organisations and local entrepreneurs.

11. How does the cooperation work?

Cooperation is based on joint planning of activities, organization of trainings, implementation of projects, exchange of information and joint diagnosis of the needs of local communities.

12. What are the benefits of partnership?

Partnerships enable more effective use of local resources, the development of new social initiatives, increased availability of services and more effective fundraising.

13. What barriers hinder cooperation?

The most frequently indicated are the limited financial resources of the partners, the diverse administrative procedures and the insufficient knowledge of some institutions about the social economy.

PART V. FINANCING MODEL

14. What are the main sources of funding?

The activity is financed primarily from the European Social Fund Plus, national funds and projects implemented in cooperation with public administration.

15. How does the activity support the social mission?

The implemented projects enable the creation of new jobs, the development of social enterprises and the increase in the professional activity of the region's residents.

16. How does the organization mitigate financial risk?

The Centre diversifies its sources of funding, participates in subsequent project competitions and develops cooperation with public and social partners.

17. How do you assess the sustainability of the financing model?

The model ensures the possibility of conducting business, but its stability depends on the availability of project funds and the continuity of publicly funded programs.

PART VI

MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION

18. What does the planning of activities look like?

The planning is based on a precisely defined material and financial schedule of the OWES project, correlated with the needs reported by local communities and entities of the Łomża subregion.

19. How does the organization monitor the achievement of the goals?

Monitoring is carried out through monthly verification of indicators, such as:

- the number of people trained,
- number of jobs created,
- effectiveness of consulting,

as well as through the reporting system resulting from the Minister's accreditation standards.

20. How do you evaluate your activities?

The evaluation includes:

- survey surveys after training,
- internal audits at beneficiaries,
- analysis of the durability of entities after the end of the bridging support period.

Employee competencies

21. What indicators do you use to assess social impact?

The following indicators are used in an organization:

- the number of permanent jobs saved or newly created for people at risk of social exclusion,

- the number of social economy entities that have increased their turnover or developed their offer thanks to advisory services,
- the number of integrated local communities as part of animation activities.

22. Does the organization measure social impact?

If so, what methods are used?

Yes. The measurement of social impact is carried out by monitoring the survival rate of social economy entities on the market and qualitative analysis, including success stories of beneficiaries who, thanks to the support of ŁOWES, have permanently improved their life and professional situation.

23. What competencies are the most important in the work of an organization?

The most important are:

- expert knowledge in the field of public procurement law,
- knowledge of accounting and labour law,
- high interpersonal competences,
- animation skills,
- mediation skills necessary in field work.

24. How are employees' competencies developed?

Competencies are developed through:

- participation in nationwide OWES forums,
- ministerial training,
- certification of advisors,
- participation in international projects, such as Erasmus+, enabling learning about foreign models of social economy.

25. What competencies are most lacking?

What is most lacking are professional business advisors who have a good understanding of the specifics of the third sector (NGO) and are able to effectively combine market mechanisms with the achievement of social goals.

26. Does the organization use mentoring or coaching?

Yes. The staff benefits from the exchange of experience within the framework of nationwide networks associating accredited Social Economy Support Centers and from the supervision of advisory processes.

PART VIII

GOOD PRACTICES

27. What organizational solutions do you consider to be your greatest achievements?

The greatest achievement is the creation of a flexible and efficient system for the distribution and settlement of grants, which ensures financial security and proper use of funds with minimal bureaucratic burden on beneficiaries.

28. Which activities have been shown to be the most effective?

The initiative of "Kawiarenka Podlaska / Łomża" **was considered to be the most effective** – cyclical, open discussion meetings that effectively reduce the distance between public administration, business and non-governmental organizations.

29. What solutions could be transferred to other organizations?

A mobile, integrated consulting model, in which a lawyer, a business advisor and an animator visit the client together and comprehensively solve their problems on site.

30. Are there solutions that can be implemented in other countries as well?

A comprehensive Polish system of accreditation and OWES standards, guaranteeing the same, high quality of support for social economy entities regardless of the region of the country.

PART IX

TRANSFER OF EXPERIENCE

31. What solutions learned during the Erasmus+ project do you consider to be the most valuable?

The most valuable turned out to be:

- Italian cooperative consortia schemes allowing small operators to bid jointly for large public contracts;
- Lithuanian digital tools supporting the management of organizations.

32. What is worth moving?

To Polish

Italian mechanisms to facilitate access to repayable and commercial capital for social enterprises.

To Lithuania

The model of functioning of institutionalised support centres, such as OWES, providing free and continuous advice to the civil sector.

To Italy

Polish solutions consisting in systematically combining subsidies for the creation of a job with compulsory social reintegration.

33. What barriers can hinder the transfer of good practices?

The most important barriers are:

- legislative differences in the definition of a social enterprise,
- the level of development of cooperative traditions in individual countries.

34. How can they be reduced?

By organizing joint international workshops and expert panels aimed at developing universal organizational models.

PART X

RECOMMENDATIONS

35. What systemic changes are needed for the development of the social economy?

- greater flexibility and simplification of procedures for settling employment indicators in EU projects,
- systemic obligation of local governments to apply social clauses.

36. What should the cooperation between the administration and social enterprises look like?

The administration should play the role of a partner and a responsible contracting authority, treating purchases carried out by social enterprises not as a cost, but as an element of local social policy and development of the subregion.

37. What competencies will be the most important for social economy workers in the coming years?

The most important will be:

- the ability to use generative artificial intelligence (GenAI),
- automation of processes related to social marketing, copywriting and organization of office work,
- competences related to the ecological transition (green social economy).

38. What activities should be included in adult education programmes?

Educational programs should include:

- practical training in digital management of the organization,
- protection of personal data,
- cybersecurity,
- workshops on modern narrative marketing.

39. What should be included in the European model of support for social enterprises?

A single European platform for public procurement and business cooperation for social economy entities from all over Europe.

40. Would you like to provide additional comments or recommendations on the development of the social economy?

The activities of such centres as ŁOWES show that long-term and stable support for social economy entities brings a significant social return. The development of the sector requires predictable support and a strong business component that will enable local entities to become permanent and competitive market participants in the Łomża subregion.

5.1. Characterisation of the sample

The qualitative study was conducted using Individual In-depth Interviews (IDI) with representatives of six social economy organizations participating in the Erasmus+ project "Inclusion and Integration – Competences in the Social Economy". The selection of the organization resulted from a program of study visits carried out in Poland, Lithuania and Italy. Executives, directors, coordinators and specialists responsible for managing organisations, project development and cooperation with partners were interviewed.

The study covered two organisations from each partner country, representing different models of activity in the area of social economy. The use of in-depth interviews made it possible to learn about the respondents' experiences, the way the organization functions and to identify good practices that can be transferred between partner countries. The thematic scope of the interviews included, m.in, the organizational model, local partnerships, sources of funding, competence development, social impact assessment and barriers to the development of the organization.

5.2. Mission and objectives of the organization

The analysis of the interviews indicates that all the surveyed organizations pursue social goals, but the scope of the actions taken depends on local needs and the specificity of the systems functioning in individual countries.

The most frequently indicated areas of activity were:

Purpose of activity	Number of organizations (N=6)
Social inclusion	6
Social education	5
Professional activation	4
Social entrepreneurship	4
Local development	4
Family support	3
Mental health	2

Respondents emphasized that economic and service activities are tools enabling the implementation of the social mission, and the income generated is allocated to the development of the organization and financing activities addressed to beneficiaries and reintegration processes.

5.3. Organisational Functioning Model

Interviews have shown that, despite differences due to national legal conditions, organisations apply similar principles of effective management and support.

The most frequently indicated were:

Organizational model element	Number of indications
A clearly defined mission	6
Development strategy and planning	6
Constant monitoring of activities	6
Development of employee competencies	6
Team/Participatory Management	5
Individual approach to beneficiaries	5

Respondents pointed out that the effectiveness of an organization depends to a large extent on the competences of human resources teams, volunteers, and on the quality and depth of cooperation with local and regional partners.

5.4. Local partnerships

One of the key issues raised by the representatives of the six entities was cross-sectoral cooperation.

The most important partners of the surveyed organizations were:

Partner	Number of organizations
Local government (communes, counties, marshal's offices)	6
Entrepreneurs / employers	6
NGOs/Third Sector	5
Social welfare centres (OPS/CUS)	4
Universities	4

Schools and educational institutions	3
Labour Market Institutions (PUPs)	2

Respondents unanimously indicated that local partnerships enable more effective planning of activities, provide markets and places of practice for participants, and significantly increase access to financial and substantive resources.

5.5. Financing of activities

The surveyed organizations try to mitigate risk by using many complementary sources of financing.

Source of funding	Number of organizations
Grants and public funds	6
European Union Funds	5
Economic and manufacturing and service activities	4
Grants	4
Donations from private individuals	2
Sponsors / Corporate Social Responsibility	2

The majority of respondents emphasized that systematic diversification of revenues increases the independence and financial stability of the organization.

5.6. Employee competences

The development of the studied social economy organizations in the current conditions requires constant improvement of the qualifications of the working teams.

The most frequently indicated and desired competencies are:

Competence	Number of indications
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Interpersonal communication and empathy	6
Digital competences (including modern technologies, AI)	6
Building local/international partnerships	3
Fundraising	3
Project management	2
Legal and business knowledge / social entrepreneurship	2
Organization management	2
Measuring social impact	2

Particular attention was paid to the growing need to implement digital technologies in order to improve communication services and reduce repetitive organizational bureaucracy.

5.7. Social impact assessment

All of the six organizations monitor their activities, but the instruments used are tailored to their unique service profile.

The most commonly used analytical approaches included:

- Regular use of satisfaction surveys or evaluation interviews with support participants and alumni.
- Continuous monitoring of the volume and number of beneficiaries undergoing support processes.
- Assessment of employment indicators, including an analysis of the so-called sustainability of employment / survival of entities on the open market.
- To examine the quality of services provided to target market or institutional customers.
- An extended analysis of savings for local budgets as part of the reduction of expenditure on social assistance.

5.8. Barriers to development

In the examined sample, a number of operational barriers weakening the potential of social enterprises and sector III entities were identified.

Barrier	Number of indications
Shortage of qualified workers, counsellors or volunteers	5
Lack of stable and systemic financing of current activities	4
Extensive requirements, bureaucracy and administrative procedures	3
Low social awareness or stigmatization of excluded people	3
Limited cooperation due to different procedures	2
Variability of local/national laws	1

In the opinion of the respondents, the long-term removal of these restrictions is based on the willingness of the public administration to co-finance and implement social clauses in procurement.

5.9. Transfer of good practices

Six of the surveyed institutions reported openness to the transfer of innovative methods within the EU, emphasizing proven foreign models.

The most frequently indicated were the usefulness of implementation in their ecosystems:

- The professional Polish model of the functioning of Social Economy Support Centres (OWES), including the counselling system for other organisations.

- Polish solutions for Social Integration Centres (CIS), which flexibly combine market requirements with the social protection of the participant.
- Italian mechanisms of cooperation between social cooperatives and regional systems of Volunteer Support Centres.
- Innovative Lithuanian concepts in the field of digitization of management, tools for psychological support at a distance and open education.

5.10. Conclusions from the research

The analysis of six IDI in-depth interviews has unequivocally confirmed that social economy organizations operating in Poland, Lithuania and Italy are focused on converging social goals in their regions. In each of the surveyed institutions, professional activities related to social integration, multi-sectoral partner network and direct activation of the most vulnerable people occupy a strategic place. At the same time, representatives of these institutions unanimously warn about the urgent need for systemic professionalization of the non-governmental sector, flexible updating of the digital competences of the employed staff and stabilization of long-term subsidies.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

A total of 30 organisations took part in the quantitative survey, 10 from each partner country (Poland, Lithuania, Italy). The most frequently represented legal forms in this group were foundations, social enterprises and social cooperatives. The vast majority of the surveyed entities (93%) actively employ people at risk of social exclusion. In turn, 6 selected organizations participated in the qualitative study (IDI), and interviews were conducted with people holding managerial positions, directors and coordinators.

The main area of activity of the surveyed entities is broadly understood social integration and professional activation of disadvantaged people. Economic and service activity is treated by the surveyed entities as a key tool enabling the implementation of the social mission. The funds generated in this way are entirely allocated to the institutional development of the organization and the financing of direct reintegration activities addressed to beneficiaries.

An effective organizational model in the area of social economy is based on a clearly defined development strategy and constant monitoring of the activities carried out. The foundation of efficient functioning is developed cross-sectoral cooperation. The most important partners for the surveyed organizations are local governments, other non-governmental organizations and entrepreneurs. As has been demonstrated, strong partnerships facilitate strategic planning, guarantee access to markets and significantly expand access to financial and substantive resources.

The key sources of funding for the surveyed institutions are public subsidies and European Union funds. These funds are often supplemented by income from business activity and external grants. Organizations strive to systematically diversify their revenue sources, which allows them to increase their independence. The most serious barriers limiting the potential of the third sector include the lack of stable and systemic financing of current activities, extensive bureaucracy and administrative procedures, as well as a shortage of qualified workers or volunteers.

Effective management of social economy organizations requires constant improvement of the qualifications of teams. The most sought-after competencies include interpersonal communication, empathy and digital competences, including knowledge of modern technologies. The research also revealed a competence gap in the areas of partnership building, project management, fundraising and social impact measurement. For example, only about 30% of organizations declare regular use of the SROI (Social Return on Investment) methodology.

All of the organizations subjected to qualitative research conduct continuous monitoring of the effects of their activities, m.in. through the analysis of employment indicators or evaluation with the participation of beneficiaries. These institutions express great openness to the implementation of proven foreign solutions. The great potential for transfer to other countries, m.in. the Polish model of Social Economy

Support Centres (OWES) and Social Integration Centres (CIS), Italian mechanisms of cooperation between social cooperatives and innovative Lithuanian solutions in the field of digitisation of management was indicated.